TRANSATLANTIC COUNCIL on MIGRATION

A Project of the Migration Policy Institute

Attracting and Utilising Foreign Talent: The International Experience

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Outline

- **Relevance of foreign talent in national labour markets**
- **Methods of attracting foreign talent**
  - Systems
  - Advantages
  - Incentives
- **Utilising foreign talent effectively**
  - Recognition
  - Development
- **Conclusions**

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Foreign Talent

Big role in both industrialised & developing economies:

- United States – in 2007, 39% of science & engineering doctoral degree holders were foreign-born
- Singapore – skilled immigrants contributed 37% to total GDP growth during 1990s (only 13% of total workforce in 2006)

Many different functions:

- Critical expertise – health, engineering
- Creativity – literature, architecture, technical innovation
- Entrepreneurship – business creation & development
- Leadership – CEOs, politicians, cultural figures

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Immigration Systems

Wide variety of approaches:

- Sweden – open employer-led system
- Canada – points-based system
- Other approaches – salary, education level, sector shortages

Context is key, what works for one country may not work for another.

But some elements critical:

- Transparent, clear rules of entry
- Pathway to permanence
- Fast, unbureaucratic procedures

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Attractiveness

Inherent conditions in country may attract:

- US – R&D, universities, business clusters, etc.
- Europe – social welfare, lifestyle, etc.
- UK/Ireland/Canada/Aus/NZ – language, welcoming attitude

This may be enhanced through policy:

- China – enticing emigrants home with research centres
- Singapore/Ireland – enticing companies with favourable conditions, and thus their talent
- Denmark – promoting English language possibilities

How can a country capitalise on its competitive advantage, and market itself to talented migrants?

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Incentives

Both immigration conditions and other policies can be used to offer incentives:

- EU Blue Card: spousal right to work, fast-track status
- EU ICT proposal (upcoming 2010): improving ability of multinationals to move key personnel
- Denmark/Netherlands and others: preferential taxation for skilled foreign nationals

Broader policy areas should also be considered central:

- Integration and anti-discrimination policies
- Quality of education, health, pension systems

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Utilising Talent

Not just about attracting talent, but using it to its fullest potential:

- **Skills Recognition**
  - EU various – recognition processes such as EQF
  - Canadian provinces – improving information for employers
- **Bridging programmes**
  - Portugal – training/internships for foreign-born doctors
  - Sweden - public-private work-experience programmes
- **Skills Development**
  - Equal access to in-job training
  - Avoid skills depreciation

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Conclusions

- Context is key
- Expand competitive advantage
- Offer opportunities to develop talent
- Involve other actors, and policy areas

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Thank you

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