

The climate change & migration nexus in a global context. What role for the EU in protecting climate migrants?

Programme

Time: 23 June 2016, 18:30-20:00 followed by a networking reception

Venue: Leopold Hotel Brussels EU, Rue du Luxembourg 35, 1050 Brussels

Policy context

Climate change and environmental degradation have accelerated global migration flows and are continuously impacting the livelihood and mobility patterns of vulnerable populations across the world. As the scale of these interregional and cross-border flows continues to rise, the consequences for the life and survival of the most vulnerable communities are becoming devastating. Women are seen as especially vulnerable to climate change's effects in many countries, because they often lack the resources, education and decision-making powers to move across borders. Although the links between climate change and migration are complex and difficult to identify, there is an increasing recognition among researchers and policy-makers about the growing importance of environmental factors as an additional trigger for displacement and migration. Given the increasing urgency of this phenomenon, putting research evidence into practice and developing comprehensive and adequate policies at EU and international level is essential.

The Paris agreement refers to human rights, migrants and vulnerable communities in its preamble; however, it does not carry any legal weight or obligation. Despite the months-long efforts of a broader civil society coalition, the reference to these vulnerable groups was not anchored in Art.2 of the Treaty (defining the purpose of the agreement) to provide a human rights-based framework for climate actions. A major question arising in this context is how we can ensure protection for these vulnerable communities and environmentally-displaced individuals through international policy and legal actions.

Given its historical responsibility as one of the major emitters of greenhouse gas emissions, the EU should take a leading role in addressing this challenge and implementing actions on climate-induced migration. However, the current EU legal framework does not provide adequate protection for climate migrants. How can the EU make use of its existing legal and policy instruments in the context of environment-related forms of migration and displacement? How could complementary legal tools such as the subsidiary protection under the Qualification Directive and Temporary Protection Directive be made operational in order to tackle this challenge? Could EU labour migration policies be seen as an additional strategy for adaptation? Will the review of the Warsaw International Mechanism for 'Loss and Damage' during COP22

lead to recognizing 'loss and damage' as a core element of climate action and guide the design of long-term financial and legal instruments to address it?

The evening debate will start with the presentation of the first Atlas of Environmental Migration - a publication which, for the first time, brings together existing knowledge, research and country-level case studies exploring the links between migration, environment and climate change. The Atlas focuses on key challenges and opportunities for the affected populations and for policy making, existing governance mechanisms and gaps, good policy practices to address environmental migration, as well as a number of cross-cutting topics including gender, health, and human rights. The evening debate aims to raise awareness about the complex interactions between climate change and migration, and communicate scientific findings to policy makers and the general public. Against this policy background, we would also like to discuss how the EU could implement actions on climate change and migration through its legal tools and contribute to the global discourses on environment-induced migration.

Speakers

Klaus LINSSENMEIER, Office Director, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung European Union (opening remarks)

Dina IONESCO, Head of Migration, Environment and Climate Change, International Organization for Migration (via Skype)

Daria MOKHNACHEVA, Thematic Specialist, Migration, Environment and Climate Change Division, International Organization for Migration

Dr. François GEMENNE, Executive Director, Politics of the Earth, Sciences Po – Medialab/FNRS Senior Research Associate, Observatory of Environmental Migration – Ulg

Leonello GABRICI, Head of Division Global Issues, European External Action Service (EEAS)

Maria Giovanna MANIERI, Political Advisor on Migration and Asylum for the Greens/EFA group, European Parliament

Guigone CAMUS, Scientific Advisor, Ocean& Climate Platform

Moderation: Dr. Radostina Primova, Director Climate and Sustainable Development Programme, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung European Union

As space is limited, we kindly ask you to register by Friday, 17 June, via the following link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1CB_-ImqYiJnI9MDm6Mx0fYqsL2IzL61BBg48akQzf6M/viewform?c=0&w=1

We look forward to your participation!