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The Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration (CARIM) was created at the European University Institute (EUI, Florence), in February 2004 and co-financed by the European Commission, DG AidCo, currently under the Thematic programme for the cooperation with third countries in the areas of migration and asylum.

Within this framework, CARIM aims, in an academic perspective, to observe, analyse, and forecast migration in Southern & Eastern Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Countries (hereafter Region).

CARIM is composed of a coordinating unit established at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS) of the European University Institute (EUI, Florence), and a network of scientific correspondents based in the 17 countries observed by CARIM: Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Palestine, Senegal, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey.

All are studied as origin, transit and immigration countries. External experts from the European Union and countries of the Region also contribute to CARIM activities.

CARIM carries out the following activities:

- Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan migration database;
- Research and publications;
- Meetings of academics and between experts and policy makers;
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- Outreach.

The activities of CARIM cover three aspects of international migration in the Region: economic and demographic, legal, and socio-political.

Results of the above activities are made available for public consultation through the website of the project: www.carim.org

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Abstract

This study argues that the Egyptian government both prior to and after the January 25th revolution encourages the migration of Egyptians abroad, in order to lower unemployment, and to increase remittances. Bilateral agreements on temporary and irregular migration have been signed with different governments, of which the Egyptian-Italian agreement on migration remains the most important. Moreover, the Egyptian government applies stricter rules concerning foreign workers in Egypt. Finally, the Libyan crisis poses a challenge to the Egyptian policy makers, with almost 1.5 Egyptian return migrants who represent a burden on the economy.

Résumé

Cet article montre que le gouvernement égyptien, avant et après la révolution du 25 janvier 2011, encourage l'émigration, afin de limiter le chômage et de développer les remises. Plusieurs accords bilatéraux sur la migration temporaire et irrégulière ont été conclus, parmi lesquels l'accord Egypto-Italien est le plus important. Par ailleurs, le gouvernement égyptien applique sévèrement la législation relative aux travailleurs étrangers en Egypte. Enfin, la crise libyenne représente un défi pour les dirigeants égyptiens avec le retour de près de 1,5 million de migrants égyptiens qui représentent un fardeau pour l'économie.

The number of Egyptian migrants has not changed significantly in the past five years, with the migrant stock being almost 0.3 percent of the total Egyptian population 2005 to 2010. Even though the percentage is not as high as in other Arab countries, like Jordan whose migrant stock was 45.9 percent in 2010; migration is an important phenomenon in Egypt, particularly given the large remittances received from migrants abroad, which contribute to economic growth. Remittances amounted to USD 7.8 billion in 2009 or 5.3 percent of its GDP, which means Egypt stands as the 14th most important remittance receiving country in the world (IOM, 2010). From the 1970s until the 1990s, Egypt was mainly a migrant sending country, nevertheless, with the new millennium, its migration status has been constantly changing and it has also become an important transit and receiving country. Irregular migration to and from Egypt has also increased through much of the past decade. Therefore, migration has been at the heart of debates and policy initiatives within the government and public opinion in Egypt, particularly in the last years.

Egyptian policy makers have been committed right through the past decade to increasing Egyptian emigration, in an effort to reduce the socio-economic pressures of unemployment at home and to generate income through remittances. The main destination for Egyptian migrants in 2010 was the Gulf Cooperation Council, followed by other MENA countries, and then the European Union (IOM, 2010: 207). The international financial crisis has had a severe effect on the percentage of remittances sent from countries of destination to Egypt, with the steepest decline being remittances from the main EU destination countries. For example, during the third quarter of 2008, the percentage of remittances sent from EU countries was the highest, a 22 percent growth compared to 20 percent growth in the fourth quarter of 2008 from Arab countries. Nevertheless, the decline was highest in percentage terms from the EU, falling to negative 29 percent in the third quarter of 2009, compared to negative 11 percent during the same quarter from Arab countries. However, Egyptian migrants still strive to migrate to Europe through irregular migration. This can be attributed to the fact that salaries are higher in EU countries for Egyptians, compared to the GCC, whereby the number of migrants to GCC far exceeds that of EU migration, while before the financial crisis, the percentage of remittance inflow from the second was higher.

Egyptian Government Policies on Migration

According to the Minister of Manpower and Migration, the number of Egyptian migrants reached almost 5 million individuals in 2010. Accordingly the government needs to enact and develop its laws for their protection, and to facilitate their migration. For example, the Minister of Manpower and Migration announced in June 2010, the importance of reforming labour law 12/2003, particularly the section concerning migration. Herein, it is proposed to develop a whole section concerning the criminalization of irregular migration. Then another section should be developed to enhance the employment opportunities of Egyptians working abroad. In this sense, the government contends that it did, in fact, create 363,000 employment opportunities for Egyptians abroad in 2009 (Migration, Ministry of Manpower and, 2010).

The Egyptian-Italian agreement on migration cooperation remains the most important agreement in the field of Egyptian migration. The most important initiative within the agreement was the Integrated Migration Information System (IMIS), of 2001 and the IMIS Plus of 2008, ending in 2010. The Italian government funded these two projects with the assistance of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Its main purpose was to help the Ministry of Manpower and Migration manage the migration flows of regular Egyptian migrants, to improve the social status of migrants, and to effectively utilize the human and financial resources of Egyptian Migrants (IOM, 2010). By 2007, almost 8000 job opportunities for Egyptians in Italy were created. Five thousand irregular Egyptian workers were legalized under this agreement, supporting the Egyptian governments attempts to develop migration to the EU (Ministry of Manpower and Migration, 2010). The main objectives of both IMIS and IMIS Plus, are to:

- Support the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, in particular the Emigration of Egyptians Abroad Sector (EEAS), in managing regular migration flows from Egypt
- Create a database accessible via a website that would allow job matches to be made between Egyptian jobseekers and prospective employers abroad
- Strengthen the ties between the Egyptians abroad and their homeland (IOM, 2010).

In this regard, IMIS developed the website and the data center for migration, to advance the Ministry of Manpower and Migration's skills in information technology. The IMIS Plus builds on the achievements of the first phase, and enhances the ties between Egyptians abroad and Egypt so as to promote more effective migration management systems, and to develop the economy through different investments. It also focuses on the application of Egyptian migrant workers in the Italian labour market, by providing the necessary information for investments and for the promotion of remittances transfers (IOM, 2010). As a consequence, the Egyptian government, especially the Ministry of Manpower and Migration have been treating these goals for the management of Egyptian labour migration as general ones, with a wider application than just Italy.

In accordance with this policy, the Egyptian government has enacted bilateral agreements with 12 Arab countries, for receiving and legalizing Egyptian migration. For example, amongst these twelve countries, there have been persistent developments in enhancing and/or the re-enactment of already existing contracts of Egyptians living abroad in Jordan, Libya, and Qatar. For instance, in Jordan 111,000 Egyptian workers had received employment contracts by the end of 2009, and for 2010, it is expected that there will have been almost 70,000 employment contracts (Saadeddin, 2010). Cooperation with Libyan policy makers was also carried out in 2010 for the facilitation of match-making attempts for Egyptian workers who want to migrate to Libya, to combat the increasing numbers of Egyptian migrants travelling to that country. An Egyptian fact finding mission has been sent to Libya to observe the working conditions of Egyptians there, after the change in Libyan migration and employment laws. Moreover, these fact-finding missions have also been sent to ensure the elimination of the irregular migration of Egyptians from the Libyan coasts to the EU (Ministry of Manpower and Migration, 2010).

Egypt is developing a new project in cooperation with UNDP, the government of Spain and the Ministry of Manpower and Migration for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through migration (Ministry of Manpower and Migration, 2010 a).

As a form of protecting Egyptian migrants abroad, the Ministry of Manpower and Migration declared in 2010, a ban on cooperation with 42 Arab corporations, because of their violations of Egyptians' workers rights. Moreover, the Minister articulated the intent of the Ministry to develop a fund for the protection of Egyptians abroad in cooperation with Egyptian businesses to provide services and consultations for migrant workers (Ministry of Manpower and Migration, 2010). A new law concerning social insurance and pensions, Law 24/2010 was initiated concerning the Insurance of Egyptian Migrants abroad, to facilitate migration, to encourage workers to migrate and redeem the benefits of their work inside Egypt, and to develop close contacts between Egyptian migrant workers and their families.

Strengthening ties with Egyptians abroad has been tackled from the perspective of both eliminating brain-drain effects, and also with the hope of developing investment opportunities for Egyptian migrants in Egypt. For instance, during the November 2009 National Democratic Party's (NDP) annual conference, policy makers adopted the strategy of developing these ties through both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Manpower and Migration. The government, as represented by the NDP majority created four main strategies for the enhancement of the migration regime in Egypt. First, it set the importance of developing bilateral agreements with both Arab and European countries to liberalize and legalize migration between these regimes. Second, it decided on the importance of encouraging Egyptians from second and third generations abroad to invest in Egypt by facilitating new means of investments in the Egyptian economy for these members of the diaspora.

In this regard, the first general conference for Egyptians took place in July 2009 under the slogan 'Communication-Welfare-and Development' (NDP, 2009). The importance of this conference was accentuated through the involvement of the prime minister and the first lady in the conference proceedings. Policies herein tackle the importance of eliminating the brain drain effect of highly-skilled Egyptian migrants, developing programs in cooperation with the Society of Egyptian Scholars Abroad. Strengthening ties and cooperation strategies for these scholars and highly-skilled migrants with their Egyptian counterparts should be conducted through conferences and workshops in addition to training sessions for the development of specific professions, especially in the fields of science, medicine, engineering, agriculture and the social sciences. (Ministry of Manpower and Migration, 2010a). It is most likely that these strategies will be strengthened in the future, especially if Egyptian migrants play a significant role in mobilizing Egyptians against the Mubarak regime. With the ousting of Mubarak, and the consequent economic problems facing the nation, migrants' economic support for the troubled Egyptian economy will be of the greatest importance.

Migration development and the facilitation of migration have also been on the government's agenda, through cooperation between different ministries. For instance the Minister of Manpower and migration proposed to representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the Ministry of Communication, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Finance, the importance of reforming law 111/1983 concerning Egyptian migration and Egyptians abroad (Ministry of Manpower and Migration, 2010).

Migration Policies after January the 25th 2011 Revolution

Unemployment amongst the young, inequality of income distribution and socio-economic injustice were amongst the most important reasons behind the January 25 revolution in Egypt. With the emergence of a new ministerial council, employment and migration issues have become essential in tackling major socio-economic problems. Policies for the protection of Egyptian workers in Egypt and abroad are essential in the phase of political transition.

First, the government is applying stricter rules concerning foreign workers in Egypt. No work permits will be granted to foreign workers, unless under very strict rules and when there are no Egyptians capable of doing the same work. Any foreign expert working on Egyptian soil, is obliged to hire two Egyptian assistants before arriving in Egypt. Whoever does not apply these rules, will be subjected to expulsion from the country (Hassan, 2011).

Second, new attempts for cooperation with the EU are emerging. For instance, the EU and the Ministry are planning new projects to decrease the gap between educational inputs in Egypt and the needed outputs in the employment market. Moreover, the IOM is working up new projects for the migration, mobility and employment of Egyptians (Hassan, 2011).

Egyptians living abroad will be more involved in the political structure of the regime in the future. They have already been implicated within the Egyptian revolution and in the affairs of the country following on from this event. Many solidarity initiatives have been conducted in their host countries with Egyptian revolutionaries. They have also lobbied extensively for their right to vote from abroad in the elections. And, on April 11, 2011, the Ministerial Legislative council approved the migrants' right to vote from abroad.

The Libyan Crisis and Egyptian Migrants

The Libyan crisis of February 2011, will have a profound impact on the Egyptian economy, and on bilateral agreements between Egypt and Libya. Almost 1.5 million Egyptian workers reside in Libya, whose remittances run to almost 33 million US Dollars per year. By early March, 2011, almost

147,800 Egyptian migrants had returned from Libya, posing increasing challenges to the already vulnerable Egyptian economy (IOM, 2011). The Libyan crisis, made Egyptian authorities open the borders between both countries, for humanitarian purposes. Many African and Asian asylum seekers arrived through this border. However, the Egyptian authorities evacuated them to their country of origin through IOM and the UN (IOM, 2011). The Egyptian return migrants will pose more economic difficulties for the Egyptian economy, given their vast numbers and the importance of their remittances for the economy.

Irregular Migration

Irregular Migration is a relatively new phenomenon among Egyptians, especially in comparison with the Maghreb countries. The new current of irregular Egyptian migrants started in the early 2000s, with a large number of fresh graduates and unskilled young deciding to either overstay their visas or to pass through Libya into the Mediterranean and, from there, on to Europe (Roman, 2009). Combating Irregular Migration in the Arab world, especially migration corridors between Egypt and Libya to the EU, has been an important policy initiative of the Egyptian government, through for instance the aforementioned agreement and fact-finding mission between Egypt and Libya.

In 2010, the incidences of discrimination, criminalization, abduction and the imprisonment of Egyptians abroad led to increased public attention and debates. These debates led to pressure on Egyptian policy makers for better migration regimes to protect Egyptian migrants. The readmission agreement between Egypt and Italy in 2007, was amongst the most important vehicles in combating irregular migration. For instance, it is argued that this agreement was key in getting Egypt a bilateral debt swap agreement, in addition to agricultural trade concessions for Egyptian agricultural products along with the IMIS agreement. Moreover, as a result of this agreement, Egypt took part in the G14 summit, which was held in Italy in July 2009 (Cassarino, 2010).

The migration corridor between Egypt and Israel, is an important venue for an increasing number of irregular African migrants, especially from Ethiopia and Eritrea. Nevertheless, their status as 'irregular migrants' is contested with the Egyptian government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) disagreeing. 'UNHCR's eligibility guidelines consider that most Eritreans fleeing their country should be considered as refugees' (UNHCR, 2010). According to Egyptian officials, on the other hand, most African migrants, and especially those from Ethiopia and Eritrea seek employment in Israel through irregular migration and smuggling across the Sinai Peninsula (Al Ahram, 2010). This area is also believed to be infested with human traffickers who kidnap some of the irregular migrants. In April 2010, the police force imprisoned almost 50 individuals from seven different nationalities including Egyptians, who are believed to be part of the largest organization in smuggling migrants to Israel and Arab countries. In fact, according to the Ministry of Interior, these individuals smuggle Africans from the southern Sudanese borders with Egypt through Sinai to Israel (Khatib, 2010). Nevertheless, the Egyptian government has been accused of using force and of human-rights violations against the latter's. According to Amnesty International 2009 Report, 28 individuals were killed by the Egyptian police during migrants' attempts to cross the Egyptian border to Israel. In addition almost 1200 have been sentenced in Egyptian military courts and were arrested by the Egyptian authorities in the same year.

Irregular migrants seeking employment in Egypt are a relatively new phenomenon, which caused a lot of debates in 2010. Irregular migrants from India and Bangladesh seeking employment in different economic fields, especially in clothes manufacturing, have been among the most controversial matters in the past year. This phenomenon, according to Egyptian public opinion is reducing the limited employment opportunities for Egyptian workers. The Egyptian government is also trying to reduce irregular migrants from the sub-continent, by implementing strict measures for the protection of Egyptian workers. For instance, in August 2010, a campaign for combating irregular migrant workers in Egypt was carried out. Fact-finding missions from the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of

Manpower and Migration took place in different factories, and almost 1000 irregular foreign workers were found therein, facing arrest and some were expelled from Egypt. The quota for foreign nationals in any business should not exceed 10 percent according to Egyptian labour law number 12/2003. Moreover, according to this law, foreign workers are only allowed employment in certain fields, e.g. Information Technology and Petro-Chemical jobs and only in the absence of the Egyptian skills. Moreover, the law contends that these workers should have a one-year contract, in which they should train Egyptian workers to do their own job in the future (Ministry of Manpower and Migration, 2010 b). Thus, Egypt supports Egyptian labour emigration. However, when it comes to migration to Egypt, strict measures are implemented to alleviate the problems of Egyptian unemployment. Self-criticism in this regard is important, whereby many policy officials and scholars have flagged up the inefficiency of the Egyptian education system in educating a skilled workforce incapable of adapting new technologies in highly skilled jobs. Certainly there is a mismatch between the output of the education system and the employment market (Galal, 2002; Assaad, 2008).

Conclusion

The recent migration phenomena as presented in this chapter, show positive developments in the field of migration policies, especially concerning the enhancement of migration information systems, bilateral treaties, and contacts with Egyptians abroad. The advancement of the January 25 revolution in Egypt is a positive development for migratory regimes, with better prospects for cooperation and development with Egyptians living abroad. Nevertheless, irregular migration, to and from Egypt needs more development and policy initiatives. There should be more effective cooperation between different ministries, especially the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; for reducing the mismatch between educated individuals and the employment market, for the reduction of irregular migration of Egyptians and for the better treatment of irregular migrants residing in Egypt.

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