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BELGIQUE
One of pillars of the G7 2017 summit was the adaptation of human capital to the digitalization and innovative technologies, and the challenges brought by international migration. The discussion on migration was centered on the migrant and refugee crisis and not on the general question of the design of immigration or emigration policies in the face of changing labor market brought by innovative technologies or demographic conditions.

Mobility of the labor force, within a country, across sectors, or between countries, has been documented to be a source of growth. Unfortunately, most of the current discussion, either in the G7 past summit or in local politics, is about the negative aspects of migration (illegal migrants, the refugee crisis) rather than the benefits that migration may bring (to the sending or the receiving country).

The positive view towards migration is validated by econometric studies that show that development and migration can complement each other, and that emigration can naturally accompany the development of a country. This research overturns the common perception that development and emigration undermine development (e.g., brain drain), or that low development is the cause of emigration. For “receiving” countries, immigration of high skill individuals contributes to innovation and growth, while immigration of low or middle skill individuals alleviates the deficient local labor supply for certain jobs or negative demographic trends.

As a recent World Bank report emphasizes, it is time for a serious partnership between sending and receiving countries. Part of this partnership may have to take the form of helping the development of the “sending” country rather than inducing it to control more tightly its frontiers; hence the design of policies that increase the match value between the migrant and the labor market needs.

Such initiatives exist. For instance, labor migration is one of the four key policy areas of the African Union Commission Ouagadougou + 10 Plan of Action. The implementation of mobility policies (at different the regional or country levels) is facilitated by programs developed by the International Labour Organization, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

The EU has made strong progress towards facilitating mobility of its citizens. But the EU has not been successful in developing agreements for immigration; this failure may reflect a lack of interest, the belief that migration creates negative externalities, or the use of instruments, like the mobility partnerships, which had little effect on mobility. Designing migration policies is challenging, especially when there are unanticipated flows of migrants and when the flows of migrants are not uniformly distributed.

For these reasons, we make the following recommendations to the G7 leaders:

1. Develop bilateral agreements (potentially coordinated within the G7) with countries that are natural sources of immigration in order to coordinate emigration and immigration policies.

2. The design of these policies should be done outside the immediate silo of immigration, and include investments in education or training, which (if there is complementarity between development and

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1 This note reflects many discussions with my colleagues at the IEE, in particular Philippe de Bruycker and Anne Weyemberg.
migration) will benefit both the recipient of these efforts but also the countries that are potential immigration targets. This is especially important for low and middle skill levels.

3. Such agreements should reflect the needs of both partners, and the long-term benefits of migration. For instance, subsidizing another country for controlling (preventing) emigration may lead to a short-run benefit but a long-term loss.

4. In general, immigration policies should be based on long term evaluations (currently lacking) of the flows of migrants, of the needs of the labor markets and the costs and benefits of limiting or facilitating legal migration. The statistical institutes of the G7 should be induced to develop methodologies and datasets that will facilitate such evaluations.