The Governance of Migration in Africa's Regional Economic Communities. Current state of affairs and the way forward

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Abstract: On the African continent, migration – especially within the sub-regions – has always been part of everyday life, with the causes for migration being different from region to region. This paper assesses the current state of affairs and the way forward for regional migration governance in the African continent. The assessment fulfils two specific objectives. First, to provide an overview over the current migration policies of the African Union (AU) and of selected regional economic communities (RECs) including, the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Second, to develop a set of criteria and recommendations to further develop and improve these policies and their implementation. An in-depth analysis of existing migration policies and practices at the African continental level and in the three RECs was conducted. Relevant scientific publications and policy reports, and global, continental and regional legislation on migration were also thoroughly reviewed. Furthermore, an experts' workshop of experts and practitioners on African migration from civil society and government was also hosted. The workshop concluded with a scenario exercise that scoped future macro dynamics for regional migration in Africa. The future of migration in Africa will be shaped by the degree of political and economic inclusivity. In the next decade or so, Africa may be faced with a combination of increasingly inclusive or exclusive political systems and, simultaneously, economic growth may lead to an exclusive or inclusive development trajectory. The combination of these two structural forces helps identify four potential scenarios for African migration, by 2030. The first presents a progressive case, in which inclusive political governance and equitable development create a fertile terrain for free moment across the regions and Africa. The second and third scenarios outline intermediate cases, in which the degree of inclusivity is mixed, leading to a localization of migration and tensions at the borders. The fourth scenario constitutes complete exclusivity, leading to instabilities across the regions, across Africa, and to migration crises. Based on this, the paper makes a series of policy recommendations to shape migration governance towards a more favorable outcome including, the establishment of integrated economies, regional innovations, circular migration, awareness campaigns and structural redistribution.

Keywords: regional migration governance; migration legislation; migration policy; EAC; ECOWAS; SADC; AU

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