

SPEAKING POINTS

**International Conference on Regional Governance, Migration, and Social Policy,
Department of Political Sciences, Pretoria University, 19th April 2012**

**Opening Remarks by Richard Young, Head of Development Cooperation, EU
Delegation to the Republic of South Africa**

Acting Dean of the Faculty of Humanities

Ladies and Gentlemen

I was asked to give some opening remarks at this workshop sometime in January...

And if anybody asks you to give opening remarks in January for a workshop in April, and you do not have a full agenda like me, and unlike important dignitaries like Barak Obama, or Princess Anne, you say yes, yes...

But why am I here?

I am here because I am a representative of the European Union in South Africa – I head a group of almost 25 people who run a host of programmes from on employment, education, health, justice, parliament,... here is South Africa

Working with Government and civil society to support objectives of reducing poverty and inequality – if you like working with all those who wish to overcome the legacy of apartheid.

I am here because of the support that the Jean Monnet programme provides to the University of Pretoria under what is called the life-long learning programme

Jean Monnet was a modest civil servant, who worked tirelessly for European Union. But he was so modest that few realise that the institution he designed – the European Union – grew from a seed he planted.

He was the person who planted seeds about "ever closer union"; about ensuring national governments are responsible for implementation of regulations and directives from the EU; for in many senses creating the dynamic that led to greater and greater integration in Europe over a larger and larger space.

One person described it as the "worm in the bottle". Not a very elegant phrase. Perhaps better to see it as a seed that was planted, that created its own dynamic, generated its own fertilizer, if you will, that *pace* the difficulties of today has inspired many for the future.

Given his power in influencing European integration, the Jean Monnet programme aims to provide knowledge and information on European integration, notably at university level

The broader picture

But let me place this support in the broader context

The European Union has an important and growing relationship with South Africa

It is one of nine countries with which we have a strategic partnership

This means that we have regular dialogues on a host of areas with South Africa

This means that we have an Annual summit at presidential level

It is a recognition of the importance we attach to overcoming the legacy of Apartheid

It is a recognition of the importance we accord South Africa because of its role in the World – alongside other countries with which we have strategic partnerships such as China, India, the United States

A programme, however modest, such as that before us is in its own modest way an expression of this commitment

What have we before us?

When you look at the agenda before us we have three themes

- Regional governance
- Migration
- Social Policy

If you had to discuss each one of these subjects you would have a seminar that would occupy us for more than the two days in front of you the participants

Fortunately the organisers have combined these three themes, and by creating a collective phrase have narrowed the task before us.

We have instead Regional Governance of migration and social policy.

For the untrained like me, this is quite tough.

How do I make sense of this?

What I do is reverse the whole phrase – start at the end and work back.

If I do this, I see it is about social policy applied to migration in a regional context

Now it becomes clearer to me

This is actually a workshop not about regional policy as the starting point, but rather about social policy as the starting point and about how you apply social policy to migration in a regional context.

I do not want to dwell on the costs and benefits of migration; of the impact on receiving and sending countries; on the macro and micro economic impact of migration.

Or on the potential benefits of migration to the migrant, to the receiving country, or the sending country.

Rather I would like to make three points for your consideration: and here I draw upon European experience, paying particular emphasis to the social policy, or more broadly the policy context.

First at a regional level the European Union has a policy that goes by the initials AFSJ

A nice acronym, not because it sounds nice, but rather for what it stands – Area of Freedom Security and Justice.

For those who like that sort of thing you can find it in your Lisbon Treaty, Title V

Freedom, Security, Justice

What this means is that the Europe Union offers its citizens, freedom, security, justice without internal frontiers; and with freedom of movement

But with – as the phrase goes – “appropriate measures” with respect to border control, asylum, immigration, and combating crime.

I personally find this concept quite liberating – the former perhaps more than the second, but I have to reluctantly accept “appropriate measures” – but the whole idea of a space, area, where freedom, security and justice is worked for, monitored and assured is quite powerful.

I must add here that this is not a “done game”; in Europe this is not a finished struggle.

Some may be surprised.

I can assure you that there is no reason to be surprised.

Even in the European area, there are notable countries – Denmark, Ireland, the UK – that have opt out and opt in out clauses on these elements. So that not all rules apply directly to the area.

There are also sometimes practical issues

Some of you may have followed debates about the treatment of Roma people in Europe – perhaps around 10-12 million people an fifth of the population of South Africa.

One member state nearly had an “infringement” procedure brought against it because of the treatment of Roma people, until it changed its policies; another has been fined because of its treatment of refugees.

The fact is that we have some agreed policies, we have some principles related to fundamental values; and we have mechanisms to deal with infringements. This is what guides what we do.

This brings me to the second point

Second, to back up this policy, the European Union is to develop a common immigration policy.

It is here that we face challenges.

Here the Lisbon Treaty again provides a starting point.

Article 79 of the Lisbon Treaty states that "the Union shall develop a common immigration policy"

But it is perhaps a slow process – once again reflecting, perhaps, the approach of Jean Monnet to slowly grow the necessary changes.

It is here that we have invented another acronym – GAMM.

Another nice acronym – this stands for Global Approach to Migration and Mobility

It used to be simply GAM – but another M was added – from the Global Approach to Migration, it became the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility.

So instead of saying GAM, we now say GAMM!

It is this concept that is guiding our thinking in having a common immigration policy.

In many respects, although this policy has been developing, it has been given a new immediacy by the events of the Arab spring, which have deeply affected the way Europe thinks about its neighbours.

And it has led to two important policy themes

- That we in Europe should offer what are called "**Mobility Partnerships**" to our immediate neighbours – Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt – so as to facilitate and organise legal migration, reinforce the developmental impact of migration through visa facilitation and readmission agreements
- For other countries we would aim to have "**Common Agendas on Migration and Mobility**" to ensure what is called an "advance level of cooperation" In fact we aim in our discussion between the European Union and South Africa to adopt a Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility. The talks are on-going.

Underlying these policy themes are four pillars for action

- Organising and facilitating legal migration and mobility
- Preventing and reducing irregular migration and trafficking in human beings

- Promoting international protection and enhancing the external dimension of asylum policy
- Maximising the development impact of migration and mobility

What is interesting, I think, about this approach is the manner in which immediate neighbours are treated differently from others; it is also interesting to see the call for a better integration of development policy with these objectives.

I should also add that much of the work in this area is to be carried out in a manner that is consistent with enhancing development in all countries – this goes by the phrase PCD – Policy Coherence for Development...

But would this really be possible in the South African context? Or in the Southern Africa context. There may be different historical links and imperatives that lead to different conclusions?

That is my second point – the push of a common immigration policy in the EU and thinking about the possible implications.

Third, to complement the AFSJ and the GAMM (remember what they stand for?) we have we have a policy that is best described as “integration as a way of realising the potential of migration”

This policy could go by the name of “IRPM”, but it does not; sadly we do not have an acronym; unless we decide to invent it today...which I have just done.

Personally I find this area the most interesting.

With a population in Europe of 500m we have a around 33m non-nationals in EU Member States representing about 6-7 per cent of the total population.

We do not have to look far to realise that there are issues here that need to be looked at.

We find some pressing challenges

- Low employment levels, especially amongst women
- Rising unemployment – that paradoxically goes with “over-qualification” (a sign of discrimination)
- Risks of social exclusion
- Gaps in educational achievement
- Public concern with lack of integration of migrants

These “pressing challenges” may sound eerily familiar; or they may need to be added to, and taken away to get the right mix for what is right here in Southern Africa.

To address these issues there is a cast of characters, but I find it interesting, just to mention them.

We have three big themes – our trinity of actions.

On one corner of the triangle we have ***“integration through participation”***, but which we mean:

- Learn the language
- Improve participation in the labour market [to be developed]
- Improve education – migrants on the whole do not perform as well as other – this requires special actions on the part of teachers...
- Improve living conditions – on the whole addressing the traumatic experience of many migrants [check]
- Use of existing funds to address migration issues
- Ensuring equal treatment – application of non-discrimination legislation

On another corner of the triangle is ***“more action at the local level”***

- Address especially disadvantaged urban areas
- Improvement of multi-level cooperation – preparation of “territorial pacts” – getting the different layers, spheres, of government to cooperate with each other to address the challenges of integration

And on the third corner of the triangle we have the ***“involvement of countries of origin”***

- Pre-departure measures to help in integration
- Beneficial contacts with diaspora communities
- Circular migration – to allow legal migration to take place combined with return

To sum up my contribution

I think it is excellent that such an important subject is discussed. Not just because it is important, but also because it is sensitive.

I have mentioned three themes that I think are important for Europe's policy in relation to migration.

What we are addressing it through two existing acronyms and one new acronym!

- AFSJ – An Area of Freedom, Security and Justice
- GAMM – A Global Approach to Migration and Mobility
- IRPI – this is our invention – Integration as a way to Realise the Potential of Immigration

Looking at all of the three themes from Europe, there is almost an off-the-shelf menu of "things to do"

But as always we must be very careful about transposing ideas from one part of the world to another; we must adapt, modify change

We must be very careful with the use of the word "best practice"; or what might even be called "international best practice"; I also think the increasing use of the word "good practice" must be looked at carefully.

Instead of the search for best, good, or whatever "practice" we should have a search for understanding what others are doing

And with that understanding we can think better about moulding, adapting, modifying what we do in relation to the context that we face.

You will therefore be pleased to hear that I have no comments, views, opinions, prescriptions, advice, on what should happen in Southern Africa.

I have just – very briefly – shared with you how we in Europe are addressing the issue of migration

With a commitment to ensuring the benefits of migration, I fully believe, the same is and will happen the world over

I wish you all success in your conference over the coming days.

Thank-you