

# THE OECD AND THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY SINCE 1948

Edited by Matthieu Leimgruber & Matthias Schmelzer



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Economy Since 1948

Matthieu Leimgruber · Matthias Schmelzer  
Editors

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## ABBREVIATIONS

BIAC	Business and Industry Advisory Committee (OECD)
BIS	Bank for International Settlements
CEEC	Committee of European Economic Co-operation
CERI	Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (OECD)
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CSTP	Committee for Scientific and Technical Personnel (OECD)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DAG	Development Assistance Group (OEEC)
ECA	Economic Cooperation Administration
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDRC	Economic and Development Review Committee (OECD)
EEC	European Economic Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EPA	European Productivity Agency (OEEC)
EPC	Economic Policy Committee (OECD)
EPU	European Payments Union (OEEC)
ERP	European Recovery Program
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
G10	Group of Ten of the International Monetary Fund
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MSAC	Manpower and Social Affairs Committee (OECD)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization



ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEEC	Organization for European Economic Co-operation
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment (OECD)
PPP	Polluter Pays Principle
TUAC	Trade Union Advisory Council (OECD)
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organization
WP3	Working Party 3 of the EPC (OECD)

# The Narrowing-Down of the OEEC/ OECD Migration Functions, 1947–1986

*Emmanuel Comte and Simone Paoli*

This chapter shows how member states gradually defined the functions of the OEEC, later the OECD, in the field of migration policies, from its inception in 1947 until the mid-1980s, when those functions were finally stabilized. When the Organization was created, it was supposed to be influential in migration politics in Western Europe. The functions of an international organization might vary and range toward an increasing role to govern international relations. With *information* functions, an organization is mainly in charge of studies in order to advise member states implementing national policies.<sup>1</sup> With *coordination* functions, the organization serves as a forum to specify member states' respective national actions so as to reduce friction between those actions, using binding norms (*strong coordination*) or not (*weak coordination*).<sup>2</sup>

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Emmanuel Comte is primarily responsible for the introduction and the first part while Simone Paoli is primarily responsible for the second part and the conclusion.

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When an organization assumes *cooperation* functions, member states use the organization to carry out joint actions in that domain, which implies devolving responsibility for the management of those joint actions to one or several international institutions. Finally, when member states give an organization *integration* functions, the complete management of a defined domain of their relations is transferred to the organization and no longer pertains to the level of national policy.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter shows that member states initially expected the OEEC to perform functions at the level of *cooperation*, or even *integration* in migration policies, but that over time it came to assume functions at the level of *coordination*, and more and more at the strict level of *information*. To analyze the underlying reasons for these shifts, we scrutinize the debates within the Organization and pay particular attention to the strategies and preferences of the most important states in the Western European migration system. These included the United States, one of the main actors within the Organization in general, but also major Western European immigration states, namely France, Britain, and West Germany. Diplomats and experts represented those national governments in the OEEC/OECD. We also scrutinize the role of the OECD Secretariat in developing *information* functions in the 1970s and 1980s.

This chapter is based on documents held in the archives of the OECD in Paris, in particular those of the Manpower Committee. In addition, we have used targeted documents from French, German, Italian, and US archives to complete our sources about OEEC negotiations. The first part of this chapter is devoted to the early years of the Cold War, from 1947 to the aftermath of the re-foundation of the OECD in 1961. The second part analyzes the period starting with the restrictive shift in national migration policies in Western Europe in the late 1960s up to the mid-1980s.

### FACILITATING MIGRATION IN WESTERN EUROPE IN THE EARLY COLD WAR, 1947 TO MID-1960s

When founding the OEEC to administer Marshall Plan aid, member states agreed on broad ambitions to solve disturbing migratory tensions in the Cold War context. Unemployment in West Germany and Italy in the late 1940s threatened political stability and favored Communist parties, which endangered the cohesion of Western Europe. Facilitating migration movements between member countries could reduce unemployment and contribute to the containment of Soviet influence.

Moreover, regular flows of migrants continued to arrive in Western countries from Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>4</sup> The countries of first arrival of those migrants, namely West Germany, Austria, Italy, and Greece, were already affected by internal labor tensions and threatened to close their borders to those Eastern migrants without broader cooperation at the West European level to manage and absorb those flows. In that context, Cold War interests encouraged cooperation in the field of migration policies in Western Europe.

The weight of the United States in Western Europe in those years implied that Cold War interests defined the priorities of the newly founded OEEC. The US government was regularly pushing for developing more cooperative migratory arrangements between OEEC member states. As early as summer 1947, US Under-Secretary of State for Economic Affairs William L. Clayton invited French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault to promote a European customs union, whose definition was then as large as involving migratory issues.<sup>5</sup> Around 1949–1950, increasing unemployment in West Germany in the face of continued immigration from Eastern Europe created a worrying situation for the US government and threatened to destabilize a strategic country in the Western alliance. The US government was therefore eager to use the OEEC framework to develop migration opportunities in Western Europe for Germans. US leaders also considered high unemployment in Italy as a threat to Western unity and a waste of productive resources. After the outbreak of the Korean War, NATO member states gathered in Lisbon in February 1952 for a special summit to discuss deeper cooperation. In the wake of the summit, US Special Representative in Europe for Economic Affairs Paul R. Porter wrote to the Chairman of the OEEC Council, Dutch Foreign Minister Dirk Stikker: An “area which we feel needs more attention and renewed effort is the whole question of utilization of European manpower.... An attack needs to be made on the obstacles to labor mobility, particularly as they impede essential production.”<sup>6</sup>

Cold War interests and US pressure translated into broad ambitions to develop an open migration regime through the OEEC. France, eager to benefit from US payments, defended new migration arrangements among member states already at the foundational conference in Paris in July 1947. Addressing the Committee of European Economic Cooperation, French representative Hervé Alphand promoted “a freer movement of persons between the various European countries.”<sup>7</sup>

The French delegation was responsible for the creation of a special expert committee in charge of evaluating the needs and availabilities in manpower of participating countries and deciding about transfers of workers between these countries.<sup>8</sup> The Convention of European Economic Cooperation, signed on 16 April 1948 and instituting the OEEC, stipulated in Article 8 that OEEC member states would “take the necessary measures to facilitate the movement of workers and to ensure their settlement” and would “co-operate in the progressive reduction of obstacles to the free movement of persons.”<sup>9</sup> On this legal basis, in March 1952, following the aforementioned US impulsion, the OEEC Ministerial Council founded a working party to liberalize manpower migration. The working party was in charge of ensuring that “maximum possible progress” was achieved in abolishing “restrictive regulations, formalities and other barriers to free movement of workers between member countries.”<sup>10</sup> At the OEEC’s foundation, member states envisioned thus a deepening process of integration, with binding regulations to remove national restrictive practices. However, several factors caused those ambitions to fail.

The first and most important factor was that Western Europe’s labor markets were highly unbalanced, with the overall supply of labor exceeding demand. Several member countries were either poor or affected by high unemployment. Italy, Greece, Turkey, Spain, and Portugal faced both problems. High unemployment was also rampant in Ireland, Austria, and West Germany. For example, unemployment in West Germany increased throughout 1949 and affected 1.8 million people in the first months of 1950.<sup>11</sup> France, Belgium, Switzerland, Britain, and Sweden were immigration countries among the OEEC, but their labor demand fluctuated in the five years following the creation of the Organization and was low in most years.<sup>12</sup>

The migration pressure within the OEEC was therefore high, which created the prospect of painful adjustments for national workers in immigration countries in the event of liberalization. In the context of the Korean War and US requests, the British representative within the Executive Committee of the OEEC, Edmund Hall Patch, considered in May 1951 that there were no needs for more manpower within Britain. On the contrary, he said, manpower availability was superior to needs.<sup>13</sup> In July 1952, Giovanni Malagodi, an Italian delegate to the OEEC, reported to Italian Foreign Minister Alcide De Gasperi about an informal conversation he had with an unnamed delegate of an immigration

country, who feared that any “breaking of the dam” would open the way to a “flood” of Italian workers.<sup>14</sup> The lack of a labor demand in immigration countries commensurate to the labor supply in emigration countries hindered a successful deal between the two groups of member countries.

Furthermore, the external migratory pressure that Western Europe was facing impaired new migration arrangements. In January 1951, the West German government counted on its territory almost 9.5 million migrants from Eastern Europe, mostly German expellees. They were responsible for acute tensions on the German labor market. In border Länder, where those Eastern immigrants had arrived, the unemployment rate was higher than in the rest of the country, reaching 23% in Schleswig-Holstein and around 14% in Niedersachsen and Bayern as early as October 1949.<sup>15</sup> At the end of July 1950, the West German government informed British, French, and US governments that “1.3 million people” were in West Germany “available for emigration” further west.<sup>16</sup> To achieve this, Otto Rieck, a director in the West German ministry for the Marshall Plan, considered during a West German inter-ministerial meeting in January 1950 that “the free movement of workers was indispensable within Europe.”<sup>17</sup> In early spring 1952, the West German representative in the OEEC Manpower Committee continued to stress that the population problem, resulting from the continuous influx of migrants from Eastern Europe, had reached extreme severity.<sup>18</sup>

Already in January 1948, a conference organized by the Manpower Committee of the Committee of European Economic Cooperation concluded that resolving the problem of surplus manpower was impossible in the European framework and that overseas emigration was necessary.<sup>19</sup> The Belgian and British governments also made clear in December 1950 and January 1951 that the solution had to be found in overseas emigration.<sup>20</sup>

Given that the OEEC included almost all Western European countries, and given both the internal and external migratory pressures affecting that regional group, the OEEC was not appropriate for more open migration arrangements. In addition, this organization was ill-suited for cooperation regarding overseas emigration. Already in December 1949, Philip W. Bonsal, on behalf of the Office of the Special Representative in Europe of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), recognized in a letter to OEEC Secretary-General Robert Marjolin that an overseas emigration program was necessary. However, the letter continued, the Organization lacked both weight and experience in this domain,

and given that it did not include overseas immigration countries, the OEEC would need to transfer funding for such a program to the International Labor Organization (ILO). Thus, in July 1950 and June 1951 the OEEC Council decided to transfer ECA funds to the ILO.<sup>21</sup> This program included missions to study emigration opportunities in Italy, Germany, and Austria, and immigration opportunities in Latin America.<sup>22</sup>

When the US Congress recognized that broader cooperation including emigrants' transportation was necessary, again the OEEC lacked the administration and was not in a position to benefit from American financial aid. In the fall of 1951, the US Congress voted a credit of 10 million dollars to transport emigrants from Western Europe. To achieve this, an international conference in Brussels in November 1951 set up a new organization, which later became the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration.<sup>23</sup>

After those failures, member states redefined the role of the OEEC in the field of migration policies to implement the objectives that the 1948 Convention had provided for. First, the Organization served as a forum for the weak coordination of short-term visa practices in Western Europe. In the early 1950s, most OEEC member states continued to require a visa from German nationals to prevent tensions associated with German immigration. A June 1948 report within the French Ministry of the Interior underlined that the liberalization of the circulation of persons between France and Germany could create tensions, "especially... in the departments of Alsace and Lorraine, and in particular Moselle."<sup>24</sup> The resentment against German occupation and, more generally, the willingness to avoid the immigration of former Nazis supported those practices. They affected the migratory and commercial flows between West Germany and the rest of Western Europe. Within the OEEC Manpower Committee in February 1950, the West German delegation wished that "only those who are recognized as really dangerous would be excluded from immigration and not anymore entire groups without individual checks."<sup>25</sup> Discussing these issues within the Organization created pressure on immigration member states to generalize to all OEEC countries the special arrangements they had concluded with just a few of them. In February 1953, the OEEC Ministerial Council recommended the removal of systematic visa requirements for German nationals. In the following months, most OEEC member states abolished such a requirement.<sup>26</sup> The Organization thus played a role in accompanying

the spectacular growth of tourist flows within Western Europe, which increased from 25 million to around 290 million people between 1950 and 1980 and accounted then for half of the global tourist flow.<sup>27</sup>

Nevertheless, German requests for passports were less successful, showing that this mere forum of coordination did not infringe on the autonomy of immigration states. West Germany favored abolishing passport requirements to travel between OEEC member countries. By contrast, within the OEEC Tourism Committee, British and French representatives declared that passports remained useful tools to control immigration. The date of entry in the territory was written on passports, which prevented tourists from overstaying the legal 3-month period.<sup>28</sup> In April 1956, those representatives also made clear that the special arrangements their governments had with some other OEEC governments regarding the abolition of passports were not likely to be extended to all OEEC countries. The reason was, as the French representative put it, “the necessity to maintain a control of labor immigration” in relation with “a certain number of European countries.”<sup>29</sup> In the end, negotiations thus failed because of the economic heterogeneity that existed among member countries, creating a vast emigration potential in some of them.

Second, OEEC member states agreed to coordinate their foreign labor recruitment procedures. The Italian government unsuccessfully tried to use the OEEC as a framework to obtain the abolition of labor immigration controls. A 1952 Italian plan submitted to the OEEC envisioned the abolition of work permits for OEEC nationals. This plan was unacceptable for British and French representatives, given the large labor surplus existing within the OEEC.<sup>30</sup> The main decision adopted within the OEEC to facilitate the movement of workers as per Article 8 of the 1948 Convention was the October 1953 Council decision governing the employment of nationals of member countries.<sup>31</sup> This decision did not abolish work permits or other types of devices intended to control and limit immigration, but only specified the process through which states could use those instruments. In particular, the main point of the decision was that work permits should be granted to nationals of other member states when national candidates could not be found one month after the release of a job offer.

This instrument was legally binding and thus amounted to *strong coordination*. However, a more detailed analysis reveals various loopholes and limits. Member states maintained the option to extend the one-month period to two months. France, the main immigration country



within the OEEC at the time, used this option to find jobs for unemployed Algerian workers.<sup>32</sup> Even in 1956, France, Austria, and Denmark were still using the two-months limit. Moreover, this act amounted to a codification of practices that most member states already applied. Sweden, another important immigration country within the OEEC, “already applied most of the principles present in the Council resolution.”<sup>33</sup> Indeed, it was rarely in national economic interest to prevent immigrant workers from taking up job offers when no national candidate had applied during more than one month.

The third field of action for the OEEC pertained to weak coordination efforts to host migrants from Eastern Europe. At the time in Western Europe, there was a continuous inflow of migrants from Communist countries in Eastern Europe. They arrived mainly in West Germany, but also in Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, and Greece. In March 1954, the OEEC Council extended the 1953 decision to those migrants.<sup>34</sup> But, again, wide divergences existed among member states. In the late 1950s, France was worried that it could not expel those refugees from Eastern Europe who had arrived on its territory after transiting within Western countries closer to Eastern Europe because their right of return to those countries of first arrival had elapsed. As a condition to accept more refugees, France wanted an extension of their right of return in the country of their first arrival, while countries of first arrival, mainly West Germany, wanted precisely the opposite, so that once refugees had left their territories, they could not come back.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, Western European states had to solve a coordination problem to ensure that refugees move further west.

In October 1958, the OEEC Council finally agreed on a non-binding recommendation for a two-year right of return for refugees in the country of their first arrival.<sup>36</sup> The West German government made clear that it would not take action against German Länder that would limit the right of return of refugees to less than two years.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, in contact with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the OEEC Council recommended in May 1960 that visas be delivered without costs to refugees and that the length of validity of their work permits should not be lower than one year in principle. However, during the session when the Council adopted this recommendation, British representative Stewart Crawford reserved the position of his government regarding visas, since a number of provisions of the recommendation did not match “completely” current British practices.<sup>38</sup>

More generally, the competition of the new European Economic Community (EEC) created by the March 1957 Rome Treaty heavily affected the OEEC's role in migration policies. Thanks to its more homogeneous membership, the EEC became the main forum for strong coordination and cooperation about manpower migration in Western Europe in the following years.<sup>39</sup> The transformation of the OEEC into the OECD in 1961 did not change much in the field of migration policies. The 1953 decision remained in force. All the acts of the OEEC related to migration were unified in one single act, but without, in the words of the Manpower Committee, "bringing any changes to the substance of the earlier acts."<sup>40</sup> And the new member states—the United States and Canada, and then Japan from 1964 onward—did not participate in the 1953 decision.<sup>41</sup>

The functions that the OEEC/OECD developed in the field of migration policies until the early 1960s were therefore those of a weak coordination forum on issues that mattered to Western interests. But the economic heterogeneity among member countries and the resulting conflict between emigration and immigration countries prevented this forum from enacting binding provisions. To monitor the various OECD recommendations for migration policies, the OECD Secretariat started preparing several reports on the recruitment practices of member states, which, in the absence of binding commitments, had primarily an informative value.<sup>42</sup> In the following years, the functions of the Organization evolved thus mainly in the direction of information. As discussed in the next section, migration policies in Western Europe changed deeply from the mid-1960s onward, with increased migration pressure and more restrictive immigration policies, subjecting the relationships between emigration and immigration countries within the Organization to even greater tension.

### MITIGATING RESTRICTIVE NATIONAL MIGRATION POLICIES, MID-1960s TO 1987

The second stage in the definition of the functions of the Organization took place in the wake of the shift toward more restrictive migration policies in Western Europe in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In this new context, the political equilibrium previously reached within the OECD between emigration and immigration countries persisted, but the information function of the Organization was expanded to orient national

migration policies toward economic growth in Western Europe and the new member countries.

Between 1968 and 1969, as demonstrated by the annual reports on the application of the 1953 decision drafted by the Manpower and Social Affairs Committee (MSAC), both Switzerland and Belgium inaugurated policies aimed at containing the immigration of foreign workers and, in the following years, similar developments took place in the Netherlands, Denmark, West Germany, and France.<sup>43</sup> The Council of Europe and the EEC noticed this new trend at a very early stage.<sup>44</sup> The European Commission, in particular, drew up a comparative study on the immigration policies of EEC members in 1970, which began to draw attention to the emerging change in attitudes toward third-country migrants in Western Europe.<sup>45</sup>

The OECD, however, was the first international organization that investigated the reasons for this change and that inferred a political motive, rather than an economic one, behind the adoption of restrictive policies. Between 1968 and 1970, the economies of all the Northern European members of the OECD were booming, which brought an increased demand for foreign labor. This did not mean, however, that there was an accompanying relaxation of controls; “in fact, there has been the same tendency, and in some places a greater tendency, to impose a degree of order on migration movements.”<sup>46</sup> The MSAC reported that member states, when restricting immigration, emphasized the supposed need to guarantee migrant workers’ security of employment and housing, plus social protection. Moreover, the Committee highlighted changes in public attitudes: “With an increase in the number of immigrants, there is reason to fear them being more and more unfavorably viewed by the home population and in particular by the less well-educated actors at the lower end of the social scale.”<sup>47</sup> Growing migration flows from Africa and Asia, which occurred throughout the 1960s, also stimulated the rise in anti-immigrant sentiment in former colonial countries.<sup>48</sup>

After the early restrictive migration policies adopted in the late 1960s, all immigration countries in Western Europe unilaterally decided to interrupt further foreign labor inflows during the economic crisis of the 1970s.<sup>49</sup> This strategy dealt a shattering blow to Mediterranean emigration countries. The immediate effect of border closure was to redistribute the burden of unemployment to those countries least able to cope with the problem; this had potential implications not only for the social

cohesion but also for the political stability of the countries involved. In the longer term, in addition, border closure might mean a severe reduction in remittances to emigration countries; an ultimate decline in remittances, in turn, could lead to a further deterioration in already serious balance of payments difficulties and lower the already uncertain development prospects of most Mediterranean countries.<sup>50</sup>

On the basis of the debates in the MSAC, and particularly of those held by its Working Party on Migration (WPM), the Secretariat of the OECD realized that a renewal of the migration strategy of the Organization was imperative. Secretary-General Emile van Lennep took the lead and played an active role in shaping this process. Bearing in mind the failed attempt of the 1950s to consider the Organization as a normative framework able to enact binding legal stipulations, the Secretariat favored setting out only general principles for migration policy. Moreover, the Secretariat assumed that the conceptual apparatus of those responsible for decision-making in this highly sensitive area was not always appropriate and that the instruments at the disposal of governments to approach the problems that faced them were not always adequate. There was the need, consequently, to provide member countries with accurate statistics and information, and with up-to-date tools and concepts. This new awareness led the Secretariat to propose three kinds of action.<sup>51</sup>

The first action entailed the provision of information not only to discern in a timely manner any change in both facts and policies, but also to distribute this information as quickly as possible to interested parties. To this end, the Continuous Reporting System on Migration (SOPEMI) was established in 1973 at the request of the WPM. The extent of SOPEMI's mission caused at first tensions, notably between British representatives which thought that SOPEMI should restrict itself to the provision of data and French delegates which held that it should also analyze and interpret these data.<sup>52</sup> Yet, by the mid-1970s, SOPEMI was fully on stream and generally considered a precious instrument for dealing with migration matters. The core of its work was implemented by a group of national experts, the so-called "correspondents," who prepared annual reports on the migration situation in their respective countries, a summary of which was published annually.<sup>53</sup>

The second action dealt with thematic examinations. The Secretariat aimed at constructing a more coherent body of doctrine, designing a conceptual framework to facilitate decision-making at government policy

level and identifying recommendations and principles for international action and coordination. Unsurprisingly, national delegates in the MSAC disagreed over the study priorities. While representatives from emigration countries put special emphasis on the integration of return migrants, those from immigration countries focused on foreign investments as an alternative to migratory movements.<sup>54</sup>

The Secretariat suggested thirdly the formulation of coordination principles to harmonize national policies. Predictably, this proposal gave rise to much dispute. Representatives from emigration countries, including Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, and Yugoslavia, plus an immigration country, Denmark, required binding principles.<sup>55</sup> As argued by the Danish delegate, in fact, "if the countries concerned were allowed to choose 'à la carte' the principles which suited them, the guiding principles...would not have any great impact on member countries' policies in this field."<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, representatives from immigration countries, apart from Denmark, opposed the adoption of binding principles in order to maintain full sovereignty over migration policies. Representatives from emigration countries, including Turkey, Portugal, and Yugoslavia, also hinted at a financial contribution from immigration countries to accompany and, to a certain extent, compensate for restrictive policies. However, representatives from immigration countries, especially Germany, made it adamantly clear that "activities in this area should not lead to a request for additional resources."<sup>57</sup>

The debate in the OECD culminated in 1975 with the publication of *The OECD and International Migration*, a report based on work undertaken by the MSAC's Working Party on Migration and published under the responsibility of Secretary-General van Lennep. The study analyzed the role of the Organization in the migration sector from the initial emphasis on the removal of barriers to free movement of workers to the contemporary preoccupations with coordinated policies between immigration and emigration countries. The report stressed in particular that the Euro-Mediterranean region was becoming increasingly interdependent because of migration. Accordingly, if receiving countries in Western Europe wanted to restrict immigration to preserve internal cohesion and stability, they had no alternative but to promote economic cooperation aimed at raising the standard of living in Southern countries. At the same time, if sending countries in the Mediterranean wished to mitigate the negative repercussions of restrictive policies, they had every interest

in adopting a conciliatory attitude rather than impeding emigration or exploiting nationalist ideologies.

The OECD, the report claimed, could make a valuable contribution to the search for “new solutions to a problem which reformulates the whole question of development and cooperation between OECD countries.”<sup>58</sup> In particular, due to its mission, experience, and membership, the Organization might provide a suitable forum to discuss and adopt guiding principles for facilitating the orientation of national policies and their coordination at international level. The report also condemned the unilateral and short-term approach to migration policies recently taken in receiving countries and advocated cooperation between immigration and emigration countries.

Emboldened by these conclusions, representatives from emigration countries used the meeting of the MSAC at ministerial level that took place in Paris in March 1976 to advocate a fairer redistribution of the cost of restrictive policies. In response to these demands, ministers concluded the meeting by calling for intensified cooperation between immigration and emigration countries to share more equitably the burden of adjustment.<sup>59</sup>

Shortly afterward, the Secretariat further showed its interest in this issue by commissioning four studies on migration, which were published between 1977 and 1979. Although they did not make a great impact on the OECD, not least because of opposition from immigration countries, these studies signaled the Secretariat’s intention to strengthen the role of the Organization in this field and to use it to enhance coordination and cooperation between immigration and emigration countries.<sup>60</sup>

The first study, written by the French economists François Bourguignon, Georges Gallais-Hamonno, and Bernard Fernet was entitled *International Labor Migrations and Economic Choices. The European Case*. It discussed, without giving a definite answer, whether there existed alternatives to manpower migration and to what extent it was in the interests of sending and receiving countries to support such alternatives.<sup>61</sup> The second study, *Return Migration and Reintegration Services*, prepared by Dutch economist Rien van Gendt in consultation with Spanish expert Garcia Passigli, aimed at helping emigration countries develop a comprehensive approach to the reintegration of return migrants into their respective socio-economic systems.<sup>62</sup> The third study, *The Migratory Chain*, was drawn up with the collaboration of the Director of the Immigration Policy Division of the Swedish Ministry of

Labor, Jonas Widgren. It analyzed the extent to which the migration and manpower policies of immigration countries could be better related to measures for employment creation and regional development in emigration countries. According to the report, the organization of the migratory chain meant to try to arrange the various stages of the complex process of migration to increase the range of choice open to the workers and the countries involved. This, of course, implied cooperation between immigration and emigration countries.<sup>63</sup>

The fourth study, *Migration, Growth and Development*, was the most ambitious and contentious one developed by the OECD in that period. The research was a consequence of a request from Portuguese and Turkish delegates at the aforementioned 1976 meeting of the MSAC at ministerial level. Following that meeting, Secretary-General van Lennep invited a group of independent experts "to study the problems of employment and manpower in a long-term perspective and to work out a development strategy in a context of migration problems."<sup>64</sup> This group, chaired by the prominent American economic historian Charles Poor Kindleberger, displayed an almost perfect balance between immigration and emigration countries. Politically, however, they were overwhelmingly liberal.<sup>65</sup> After a year and a half of meetings with administrators, planners, as well as employers', employees', and migrants' representatives in France, West Germany, Portugal, and Turkey and further of analysis of reports submitted by officials from Greece and Yugoslavia, the Kindleberger Group presented a report that was widely discussed in both the Council and the MSAC.

The 1979 report was resolute in recommending that the OECD should provide machinery for consultation between immigration and emigration countries. In the short term, this system should enable these two groups of countries to embark on bilateral consultations to avoid unilateral actions. In the medium term, it should promote agreements, going beyond the traditional "manpower agreements," to coordinate policies and to better organize the international utilization of manpower. In the longer term, finally, it should encourage the development of programs so that policies leading to the termination of migration flows were tied to employment creation in emigration countries; this, of course, implied an intensification of economic cooperation with the objective of a development strategy in favor of poorer countries.

This approach was naturally welcomed by the governments of emigration countries and met with skepticism in those of receiving countries.

Immigration states were not ready to let the OECD play an incisive role in this policy area. Nor were they willing to spend significant resources to help emigration countries manage the negative repercussions of restrictive policies. Regarding this, the MSAC delegate for Britain was quick in highlighting that “as this was the report of Professor Kindleberger, all the points could not necessarily be expected to be acceptable to all member countries. [After all], the Report was [only] a contribution to the subject.”<sup>66</sup>

Due to opposition from immigration countries’ representatives, the Kindleberger study did not exert a strong influence; despite high hopes, its most innovative proposals were quickly dismissed on political and financial grounds. In the same period, further disagreements emerged over the specific issue of the return and reintegration of migrant workers. During the 1976 meeting of the MSAC at ministerial level, which also led to the Kindleberger report, the Greek Minister of Labor, Konstantinos Laskaris, proposed a system to facilitate such return migration flows through an OECD Special Fund. While representatives from all emigration countries supported that proposal, delegates from immigration countries, especially the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, and West Germany, rejected it. During two years of fruitless discussions, the immigration bloc remained unwilling to pay for policies that exclusively benefited sending countries and argued against any active role of the OECD in this delicate policy area. As emphasized by the Swiss representative in the MSAC, “multilateralism should be completely excluded and national autonomy must not be hindered by the proposed machinery.”<sup>67</sup> As a consequence of this strong opposition, the Greek proposal came to nothing: all the work and discussions resulted in the preparation of a Model Machinery, a detailed project plan which remained a paper exercise.<sup>68</sup> The failure of the Greek proposal was crucial in undermining Southern members’ trust in the potential of the OECD to coordinate migration policies. Meanwhile, the Mediterranean enlargement of the European Community, combined with the increasing part played by the EEC in the migration field, further contributed to the marginalization of the OECD.<sup>69</sup>

The MSAC continued to discuss the matter, promote studies, facilitate exchanges of experiences and opinions, and develop the SOPEMI’s activities. However, the Secretariat and the MSAC, in particular representatives from emigration countries, were constrained to abandon the ambitions developed during the 1970s. In addition, in the late 1970s



and early 1980s the MSAC gradually shifted its emphasis from emigration countries' priorities to issues that were important to immigration countries, including concerns about illegal immigration and flows of asylum seekers.<sup>70</sup> This shift was spurred by an increase in migration and refugee pressure and a parallel politicization of these issues in Western European countries, in particular in France and West Germany.<sup>71</sup> This evolution, along with the restrictive and unilateral approach that immigration countries continued to follow, increasingly embittered the governments of the emigration countries within the OECD, Greece, Turkey, Portugal, and Yugoslavia in particular.<sup>72</sup>

To give new impetus to a multilateral approach to migration politics and revitalize the role of the OECD in this field, representatives from emigration countries within the WPM proposed in mid-1983 convening a conference on international migration under the aegis of the OECD.<sup>73</sup> That proposal immediately met with resistance in the delegations of immigration countries. Delegates from Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and West Germany, in particular, "were much more cautious in their approach to the idea, given the abundance of international conferences recently on the subject."<sup>74</sup> They accepted the idea only when they succeeded in forcing their priorities onto the agenda, ruling out policy conclusions and having participants speak only as experts, whatever their level of representation decided upon by countries when forming their delegations to the conference.<sup>75</sup>

The meeting, which was entitled *The Future of Migration* and took place in Paris in May 1986, was nevertheless important because "[subsequent OECD] work on migration followed up on [its] results."<sup>76</sup> The conference, in particular, underscored governments' growing concern about illegal immigration and the difficulty of containing such movements; on the other hand, it highlighted the negative consequences that strict controls by certain countries might have for others equipped with fewer controls or whose attitudes were more liberal. Moreover, the conference emphasized that entry controls and the coordinated fight against illegal immigration should be accompanied by improvements in international trade relations, by the revival of development policies, by the reorganization of labor markets, and by the restructuring of economic and demographic dynamics in emigration regions.<sup>77</sup> The conference, however, confirmed for good the status of the OECD as a forum for debate and exchange of information, rather than as a medium for initiatives of strong coordination.<sup>78</sup>

## CONCLUSION

When the OEEC was established in 1948, it was expected to play a major role in the multilateral liberalization of the circulation of the European workforce. This was especially important for the United States, preoccupied with the social tensions associated with Eastern immigration in West Germany and with manpower surplus in the least developed members on the periphery of Western Europe. These tensions could politically destabilize those countries and jeopardize their participation in the Western camp in the context of the Cold War. As we have shown, however, heterogeneity among OEEC members undermined the Organization's position. Because of the divergence of interests between immigration and emigration countries, combined with the formation of a more economically homogeneous regional organization allowing the free movement of workers, namely the European Community, the Organization found itself in the 1960s assuming migration functions only at the level of weak coordination and information.

The shift from liberal to restrictive migration policies in Western Europe in the late 1960s and early 1970s appeared to open a window of opportunity for the OECD. Turkey, Portugal, and Greece, which as emigration countries were faced with the negative repercussions of restrictive policies adopted by immigration countries, tried to develop cooperation to redistribute these costs. The Secretariat and a group of experts close to the OECD supported this strategy. By defending the interests of Southern European countries, the Secretariat then acted as a facilitator for the continued cohesion of the West. This attempt, however, met with opposition from immigration countries. Again, the heterogeneity among member countries, namely the opposition between immigration and emigration countries, prevented the adoption of binding norms and the commitment of financial resources. In addition to disagreements within its heterogeneous membership, the OECD also suffered competition again from the European Community.

But in the field of information provision—in order to promote migration policies conducive to economic growth—the Organization's role became more important. The OECD, in particular, became prominent in providing trustworthy data, statistics, and arguments, which generally stressed the need to adopt a long-term approach to migration policies and emphasized the potential of well-regulated migration flows.

## NOTES

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