

THE ECONOMIC ACTORS IN BRUSSELS AND THE PRESENCE OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS: HOTELS, RESTAURANTS AND THE CATERING SECTOR (HORECA)

Inés Mariana Marín Parra¹

Orcid: 0000-0001-7371-1100

Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo (ESPOCH)

imarin@epoch.edu.ec

David Rodolfo Guambi Espinosa²

Orcid: 0000-0001-7371-1100

Universidad Internacional del Ecuador (UIDE)

imarin@epoch.edu.ec

Ronald Gerardo Guambi Espinosa³

Orcid: 0000-0002-7704-1578

Universidad Libre de Bruselas (ULB)

ronald.guambi@ulb.be

Abstract

The European Union has been synonymous with trade or common market; however, on the local scene in Brussels, the institutions of the European Union have begun to influence the city's business environment, conditioning or assisting the city's development. In some areas, the presence of European institutions and their buildings has led to important social and economic changes, and the institutions have become essential elements of the local economy. For the present study, the Hotels, Restaurants and Catering (HORECA) sector are addressed as an economic actor in the economic and social dynamics and behavior, as well as the influence in the labor field. To support the analysis of this article, the bases of the work are mainly qualitative sources and, to a lesser extent, quantitative data. The main sources of information are secondary sources, such as studies and reports, written mainly by authors specialized in migration and trade issues in the European Union.

Keywords: *economic stakeholder, hotels, restaurants, cafés, horeca sector, free mobility, sustainable development goals*

Resumen

La Unión Europea ha sido sinónimo de comercio o mercado común, sin embargo, en la escena local en Bruselas en particular, las instituciones de la Unión Europea han comenzado a influir en el entorno empresarial de la ciudad, condicionando o ayudando al desarrollo de la misma. En

algunas zonas, la presencia de las instituciones europeas y sus edificios ha provocado importantes cambios sociales y económicos, y las instituciones se han convertido en elementos importantes de la economía local. Para el presente estudio se abordará en el sector de Hoteles, Restaurantes y Catering (HORECA) como actor económico en la dinámica y comportamiento económico y social, así como la influencia en el campo laboral. Para apoyar el análisis de este artículo, las bases del trabajo son principalmente fuentes cualitativas y también, aunque en menor medida datos cuantitativos. Las principales fuentes de información son fuentes secundarias, como estudios e informes, escritos principalmente por autores especializados en temas de migración y comercio en la Unión Europea.

Palabras clave: *actor económico, hoteles, restaurantes, cafés, sector horeca, libre movilidad, objetivos de desarrollo sostenible*

1. Introduction

One of the main purposes of the European Union is the consolidation of a single internal market, where there is free circulation of goods, services, people and capital; a market with a substantial structure where consumers and companies are favored by impartial competitiveness, with projection to growth and possibilities of employability, investment and capital flow.

The regional integration achieved by the European Union brings with it the potential of a single market. “The dynamics of integration arise from the increasing openness and interdependence of political and economic openness among the participating countries” (Hitiris & Vallés, 1999), which leads to migratory benefits for the region, free mobility, sovereignty and interdependence of the countries that make up the organization; therefore, this has provided the basis for a full commitment aligned with development objectives.

About the EU, the 2030 Agenda is adopted in a particular way since the member countries have the characteristic of being part of a community that allows their integration into a common model based on three pillars defined in the Maastricht Treaty (1992). The Community pillar with supranational competences, the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and Justice and Home Affairs. This unification is fundamental in the progress of the SDGs since the EU member countries start from a solid position in terms of sustainable development, and the European Commission is involved in such a way that the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda is among its main priorities, adding European sustainable development actions to national competences (Lorenzo, 2020).

The beginning of a new political cycle for the European Union, building a “stronger and better Europe,” with emphasis on prosperity, people and planet as the three pillars, required setting priorities such as the urgent need for a single market, a common currency, a single trade policy

and finally a competition and innovation policy, with the European system demonstrating a real capacity for competitiveness and economic sustainability.

In 2019, the European economy experienced its seventh consecutive year of growth, [...] The EU has made the most of its budget to stimulate investment through innovative programs such as the Investment Plan for Europe. By October, almost one million SMEs had already benefited from the Plan, and the total amount of investments mobilized exceeded €439.4 billion (Europa.eu, 2019).

In this sense, the will to build a European project requires the efforts and interactions of all European actors to be put into practice to achieve proper European integration. The European Parliament defines the internal market at the heart of this project as an area of “prosperity and freedom that allows access to goods, services, employment, business opportunities and cultural wealth (Fernandez, 2007).

“European Business” is defined as the set of strategies, efforts and interactions of European economic actors to build a successful European project. Economic actors are the state, entrepreneurs, workers, cooperatives, individual owners, self-employed, investors, and families and individuals who carry out economic activities of this nature (Perez, 2005).

Bussineseuropa is also known as the business network that seeks to boost the growth and competitiveness of European companies of all sizes. It aims to ensure that the voice of business is heard during European policy-making. It regularly interacts with the European Parliament, Commission and Council and other actors in the policy community (EU-LAC, 2018).

In general terms, “the business” can be considered as the organization of actors striving to achieve common goals and objectives. A business organization needs to have a vision that implies what it intends to achieve in the future and values that represent its integrity. The fundamental idea of “the business” is that it is an economic activity and that the decision-making of “the business” is economical.

In this research, “Business in Europe” refers to all European economic actors’ strategies, efforts and interactions to build a successful European project in the context of European globalization.

2. Development

Economic globalization brings benefits, challenges and opportunities; therefore, the European trade regime and trade agreements have turned the EU into a favorable sector for doing business, being a partner of more than 80 countries and becoming one of the main players in

international trade together with the United States and China. It should be noted that 15% of world exports correspond to this sector, and more than 80% of European exporters are SMEs. Furthermore, the product of this positive economic movement has generated employment opportunities so that in 2017 they had more than 36 million jobs supported by exports (oas.org, n/d).

Another effect of economic globalization is that consumers benefit from imports. Thanks to these agreements, there are a variety of products and services on the market at more affordable prices, which means savings of 24 billion euros per year. (oas.org, n.d.)

Finally, the most important benefit has been to eliminate trade barriers between EU countries by promoting intra-EU trade, it should be noted that this economic space has more than 500 million inhabitants with a GDP of approximately 13 trillion euros. (WTO, 2019)

Eliminating certain trade barriers also leads to internal and external migratory flows. For the EU, there are three fundamental axes in the established migration policy: integration policy, control policies and the challenge of eliminating the possible causes that promote migration from the countries or regions of origin. (IOM, n.d.)

Public policies on migration issues constitute a challenge and, at the same time, generate obstacles for development, where uncontrolled migratory flows are evidenced, scarce cross-cutting integration and development policies for people on the move. In addition, there are several international problems, the migration crisis of 2015 and 2016, migration flows from countries in economic crisis, and currency instability in certain member countries such as Poland and Hungary, which represents a real challenge for the European Union (Maldonado et al., 2018).

The number of people working in a country other than their origin is increasing dramatically in Europe. Recent trends in geographic mobility, demographic changes in this group of workers, and the factors that determine them. It is also based on previous research, information, and statistics provided by Eurostat and the European Commission in Belgium and exclusively in the Horeca sector.

HORECA sector as a hub of integral dynamism in Brussels

Horeca is an acronym used to simplify everything related to the catering market, H and O come from the word Hotels, R and E come from the word restaurants and C and A from Catering; this term was used in Holland to refer not only to catering but also to supply chains, important sectors such as transport and suppliers, digital and technological transformation and the consumer environment in this sector (Azkoyen, n/d).

The tourism industry is an important factor in the economies of the countries that make up the European Union and therefore represents an essential part of this world panorama, with tourist arrivals amounting to 290.3 million, a figure that represents 41.3 percent of the world's total. However, it should be borne in mind that the European Union has been losing ground since 1990, when it accounted for 44.5 percent of the world total, although in absolute terms, growth has continued, and there has been a certain recovery recently (Valdéz, 2004).

This background shows the importance and direct dynamics of the food and beverage, hotel and restaurant establishments sector (HORECA) and the importance of the labor situation in societies largely occupied by internal and external migration. According to the Secretary of State for Trade in the report prepared by the economic and commercial office of Spain in Brussels (2020) points out that: One of the critical axes in terms of the development of a single market with freedoms of development should highlight different aspects to promote the economy of the city, especially in the sectors :

1. The hotel, restaurant and café sector. (Economic and Commercial Office of Spain in Brussels, 2020).
2. The textile and fashion sector. (Economic and Commercial Office of Spain in Brussels, 2020).
3. The tourism sector. (Economic and Commercial Office of Spain in Brussels, 2020).
4. The food industry, beverages, wines and spirits and gastronomy products. (Economic and Commercial Office of Spain in Brussels, 2020).
5. Services to companies (Economic and Commercial Office of Spain in Brussels, 2020).

As can be seen, in 5 of the proposed economic axes, 4 are part of the HORECA sector. Therefore, there are demands from the guilds, requesting conditions that encourage, promote and provide opportunities in the labor field.

This sector also benefits from the tax advantages introduced by the "Tax-Shif" tax reform, which reduces labor taxation and will consequently reduce social security contributions in the coming years. However, it should be noted that these reductions in employer social contributions are only applicable if the worker has an employment contract with a minimum regime of 50% of the full working day or if they have provided in a quarter a minimum of 27.50% of the working days corresponding to a full working day (MITES, 2017).

Research methodology

The inductive method, which starts from a conclusion and develops the hypotheses from a particular reasoning, does not respond to the specific needs of this research since it makes the theory implied in the hypotheses more flexible and is subject to an interpretation of the same.

This research does not use a hypothesis based on assumptions to affirm then or deny the reasoning put forward; the characteristics of the precise data would generate conclusions with a high content of bias. The analytical method would divide the causes and the defects to understand the phenomenon; however, this research tries to answer and to know the defects. The cognitive process of this research is not detailed as required by this method. The synthetic method, although it would help us to extract the general laws of the problematic and unifies the dispersed components within the object of study to develop them in their totality by its extension and its application of the results and the components of these, would extend this investigation to transversal answers.

The method used is the hypothetical deductive method since it combines reality, rational vision and theoretical sources. It is worth mentioning that this method is based on observation and the deductive aspect of those reported in the hypothesis. The deductive method is a procedure that starts from an assertion or a denial, deducing conclusions that confront the qualitative results collected from the interviews conducted. This procedure discovers the conclusions to combine rational thinking with empirical observation of the answers obtained. It starts from observing a phenomenon, with the information obtained during the state-of-the-art to propose a hypothesis to explain the phenomenon better.

This research applies a hypothetical deductive method that focuses on three important concepts highlighted in state of the art: mobility, European institutions, and European companies. First, this research uses previous statistical data and European literature to establish a relevant theoretical framework; these concepts are important to answer the hypothesis: “free movement in the European Union facilitates business in Brussels”. This research uses free movement as the dependent variable. To explain this variable, relevant demographic and migration data are used to demonstrate whether or not the hypothesis is valid.

The European institutions and their role in Brussels are studied as a dependent variable. To observe specific results, the sample to be analyzed in this research is only in the European district and the center of Brussels. To ensure a relevant result, qualitative data collection is used to be numerically formalized to analyze the information.

The sample is divided into 4 groups with 10 individuals, group 1 consists of the response of employers, group 2 focuses on foreigners employed and with a CDI work status, group 3 contemplates foreigners with a work status limited to 1 year, and finally, group 4 focuses on people with a limited work status with a type C permit, students and refugees.

The method of data collection is the interview due to 2 fundamental aspects; this research aims to deepen some personal aspects of each of the individuals who participate in the sample, such as beliefs, feeling of integration, work motivations involved in the Horeca sector, and possible ways of acting depending on their country of origin, the interviews can provide us with information on the states of the opinion of the different groups that manufacture. The interview, being a flexible

technique, becomes a dynamic tool for elaborating and interpreting the results. The interpersonal communication established between the researcher and the subject of the study is essential since obtaining verbal answers to the questions is the source of the qualitative data; the interview is conducted using a mixed model, a combination of closed and open questions. Although this mixed interview requires more resources and time in data collection, it shows a greater richness in the information obtained and gives rise to a fundamental interaction for understanding the data obtained and the problem posed. The interviewees are expected to answer at least 8 questions that guarantee useful information.

The method of data formalization in social sciences used for the analysis is binary, in which a value of 10 is given to a response that indicates a strong link with the hypothesis, 5 to a response that contains neutral content or does not indicate more information, and a value of 0 to the mean of the responses that do not contain a value for the hypothesis raised.

These questions do not include possible follow-up questions to help establish the feasibility of the interview.

This table also includes informal responses that are highly important and relative to the hypothesis.

It should be noted that all study subjects are not informed of the core of this research to ensure that there is no information bias.

The 8 basic questions are as follows:

- a) What are the commercial advantages offered by Brussels?
- b) Do European institutions influence your work?
- c) Do European institutions influence your career development?
- d) Do you only interact with the locals at your workplace?
- e) Does it facilitate the free movement of workers in their activities?
- f) Have you gone to an organization or institution for job-related information?
- g) What are the working conditions in Brussels for a foreigner?
- h) What obstacles did you encounter in Brussels to get involved in your work?
- i) Are there neighborhoods in Brussels where foreigners with the same cultural characteristics or the same nationality are concentrated?

3. Results

The Belgian federal public service estimates 350,000 workers are foreign nationals, representing more than 8% of the working population of the Walloon, Flemish and Brussels regions. For a foreigner to exercise the right to work, he must have a valid work permit, and this permit does not apply to a person with the nationality of a European Union member state. In

Belgium, there are three types of permits: A, B and C, of which the employer must demand A and B, and the last one is a right to work; however, this permit has limitations.

The type A permit has an unlimited duration; however, it must be renewed every 5 years. This administrative document is only for foreigners with a legal stay of more than 10 years. The type B permit is a Belgian document that also concerns foreigners, but unlike the type A permit, the type B permit has a duration limited to one year. And finally, the type C permit is granted to foreigners with a specific visa, such as students, refugee candidates, or visitors staying for more than 3 months.

In Belgium, there are 9 types of contracts that allow the right to work in the country, however, for foreigners there are only 3 types of contracts as they have a direct link with the legal status or visa in the country. The first one is the open-ended contract or CDI; this type of contract contains the same rights and privileges as a local or European citizen; the rupture of this contract guarantees all the indemnities given by law; the contract of limited duration or CDD is a contract as its name mentions it has a limited duration of one to 2 and maximum 3 years. Once the duration has ended, the employer is the only natural or legal person who can renew the right to renewal is only of the employer since he must demonstrate why he has a contractual relationship with a foreigner and not with a person coming from the European Union. Finally, there is the replacement contract, and this type of special contract indicates that it does not have a direct link with the status of the foreigner, but rather it depend on the return of the person who is replaced. It should be noted that this type of contract is usually one of the most used for a short period. Although these contracts guarantee labor rights in Belgium, they do not respond to social security benefits, such as unemployment benefits, reduced tax costs and compensation for untimely dismissal.

Currently, 14.1% of employment contracts are concluded with a non-Belgian worker. Of these, 6.4% are European, and 7.7% were born outside the European borders. Both groups have grown more or less equally over the last five years. From which countries do these non-Belgian workers come? The Netherlands is the most important European country, while Morocco provides the largest share of non-European workers (Bureau of Diplomatic Information, 2022).

In Brussels, the percentage of non-Belgian workers is higher: 1 in 4 of the workforce has another nationality. This is related to supply and demand: the more diverse the population, the more diverse the labor market. Moreover, the more job opportunities there are, the more labor migration is expected; from a sociological approach, it shows that foreigners often monopolize specific markets as access to certain jobs can be more direct by having connections with foreigners already established in that market.

There are twice as many non-Belgian foreign workers in Belgium. In the non-commercial sector, less than one in ten workers is foreign, significantly lower than the national average of 14.1%. However, it is not easy to fill vacancies in this. Therefore, a reinforcement from abroad

would be welcome. On the other hand, the self-employed also include non-Belgians out of every 100 self-employed, 11 non-Belgians work in Belgium. (Vittin-Balima, 2002)

One of the most important problems in Belgium is searching for and obtaining jobs. One out of two foreigners do not obtain jobs in European Union countries only because of the prejudice of discrimination. Also, according to the European statistics office Eurostat one of the main problems in entering the labor market are the linguistic, cultural and social requirements.

The increase in flows is related, among other factors, to the enlargement of the European Union, total freedom of movement and socio-economic differences between countries of origin and destination. Most movements cover short distances and are highly asymmetric. In extra-European mobility, post-communist countries provide labor to Western countries such as Belgium, especially to its capital Brussels, where since 2018, it is estimated that the employment of foreign workers in Belgium has almost quadrupled in four years.

In the European Union, the free movement of workers is one of the four freedoms on which the single market is based, along with the free movement of goods, capital and services. This concept of labor mobility implies the abolition of discrimination in all Member States on the grounds of nationality in employment, remuneration and other conditions of work and employment.

In 2015, some 11.3 million EU-28 citizens of working age resided in an EU Member State other than their own. This represents 3.7% of the total EU working-age population (European Court of Auditors, 2018)

This section describes the evolution of this law and analyzes the current legal framework for worker mobility in the European Union.

The “free movement of workers” originates in the 1957 Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, where it was formally recognized in Council Regulation (EEC) No. 161/68 of 15 October 1968 on freedom of movement for workers within the Community. Since that date, EU nationals are understood to have the right to seek employment and work in another Member State and to be assisted by the employment services of the country of destination in their job search (European Court of Auditors, 2018)

Workers from another EU member state are entitled to receive the same treatment regarding employment conditions, benefits and social and tax obligations. They also have the right of residence for themselves and their family members. However, in this constitutive treaty, there is no clear reference for foreigners coming from a country outside the borders of the European Union, where there is a gray zone in which each country is sovereign in the legal interpretation, i.e., the residence rights of both for the foreign worker, the members of his family, the regrouping are fixed by the local laws of each country or state.

On the other hand, regarding assessing legislation, the free movement of workers is currently based on Article 3.2 of the Lisbon Treaty and Articles 4.2.a), 20, 26 and 45-48 of the treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The Treaty of Lisbon recognizes that “every citizen of the Union has the freedom to seek employment, to work, to exercise the right of establishment and to provide services in any Member State” (Article 15.2 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of 7 December 2000). Whereas the treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) determines (a) that the competences shared between the Union and the Member States apply to the internal market; (b) establishes the creation of citizenship of the Union and determines that citizens of the Union have the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States; (c) determines that the internal market is “an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured in accordance with the provisions of the Treaties”; (d) determines that the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is guaranteed following the provisions of the Treaties; d) determines that the free movement of workers is guaranteed within the Union. Freedom of movement implies the abolition of any discrimination based on nationality between workers of the Member States regarding employment, remuneration and other work conditions.

In addition, in terms of the legal framework, Directive 2004/38/EC is the main regulation on the free movement of workers. It brings together the complex body of existing legislation on the right of entry and residence of Union citizens in a single text. It is complemented by Regulation (EU) No. 492/211, which prohibits, among other things, special procedures for the recruitment of foreign workers and limitations on the publication of job vacancies or the imposition of specific conditions, such as registration with employment offices, for those from another Member State.

In the demography of a city, there is one factor that brings about important changes in the composition of the city: migration. Brussels is a city that has changed dramatically since it became one of the most important cities in Europe and on the international political scene. Brussels has always had a growing population, but since 2002 and 2003, migration flows have had a greater impact. Every year, however, it also loses a part of its population to foreigners. In Europe, migratory flows contribute to mobility in the capitals, but in Belgium, a small country, they also influence the city’s growth, age and birth rate.

The birth rate in Brussels is steadily increasing, but more than 48% of the children born in Brussels are not born to Belgian parents but to parents who have been naturalized in Belgium, where migration flows are relevant; Poland, Albania, Turkey and Morocco are the main nationalities of foreign parents in Brussels. This socio-economic divide has led to a high population density in some parts of the city and a low population per square meter in others. This socio-economic gap has led to a high population density in some parts of the city and a low population per square meter in others. The periphery of Brussels has become increasingly dispersed due to internal migration of wealthier citizens.

Brussels is a city that plays an essential role in the integration process of these migratory flows because all these born or naturalized children enter the city's labor market.

The European Commission employs more than 21,680 people, not counting national consultants, intermediaries and trainees. The European Parliament also employs 5,549 people in Brussels, and these figures do not include the 736 MEPs, as they are not permanent residents in Brussels, nor the 5,200 workers on fixed-term contracts as advisors or assistants to MEPs. The European Union, as an international organization, has found in Brussels an urban center in which to establish its institutions, thus stimulating urban development, occupying more than 2 million square meters of the total 3.3 million square meters available in Brussels for offices and meeting places alone. The labor supply is also a variable that is affected since these institutions have had great importance in shaping the city, giving importance to the local economy; however, not all the results are positive due to the European institutions, the high salaries of the workers of these institutions have also been subject to criticism as a variable in the increase of the price in the housing market, a phenomenon that affects the entire working population that does not belong or receive a salary from the European institutions. Therefore, this research considers the European institutions as a fundamental concept to illustrate the phenomena and impacts in Brussels.

Generally, a business could be considered an organization of actors striving to achieve common goals and objectives. A business organization needs to have a vision that implies what it intends to achieve in the future and values that represent its integrity. The fundamental idea about business is that it is an economic activity and business decision-making is an economical process.

In this research, "Business in Europe" is focused on addressing the set of strategies, efforts and interactions of European economic actors to build a successful European project in the framework of European globalization.

This globalization brings benefits, challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, it could be said that the European trade regime is favorable to qualify Europe as an ideal region to do business since it is the trading partner of more than 80 countries, making the EU one of the main players in international trade. As a second element of globalization, it is possible to discuss job opportunities. In this sense, in 2017, more than 36 million jobs in the Union were supported by EU exports. As a third element, it addresses the advantages for the consumer, i.e., the benefits of globalization and trade on the consumer. Finally, and as the most important element, intra-EU trade in this context is important since the EU focuses on eliminating barriers to trade between EU countries through the single European market.

Table 1. Formalization of qualitative data

	Question 1	Numerical value	Question 2	Numerical value	Ask	Numerical value	Ask	Numerical value	Ask 5	Numerical value	Ask	Numerical value	Ask	Numerical value	Ask	Numerical value
Survey group 1	In my case, no problem	0	yes		no		yes		no	0	No response	0	Languages	0	yes	
Survey group 2	Various		yes		no		yes		Interim	5	The same as for a Belgian citizen		Regionalism	0	yes	
Group 3 survey	I don't remember it, others do.	5	Not always.	5	no		I have clients from all over the world		Welfare payments during detention	5	Recruitment of more foreigners		The foreign recruitment system	0	Brussels is multicultural	0
Group 4 survey	I recall two specific cases	5	yes		I started my work in the confinement	0	I have never had any problems because of my nationality			no	0	No	5	No	there is no barracks like it	0
Media		5														5

1. Discussion of results

Economic effects of labor mobility

The costs and benefits of labor mobility in the European Union have been the subject of research in recent years and have become important in policy debates and economic decisions. However, it still seems difficult to reach a clear conclusion on the positive and negative effects of

labor mobility at the EU level, so this research focuses on the specific case study of mobility and its impact on demographic change in Brussels.

Why Brussels? What does it offer in terms of commercial advantages, and what influence does the presence of international institutions have in the center of the capital?

According to the Business Belgium portal, an entity belonging to the Belgian Federal Public Service, Belgium has an open economy, i.e., it is one of the world's leading exporting countries, is characterized by the absence of trade restrictions and has a favorable business climate. Secondly, it is an ideal base for the European consumer market, as it has more than 500 million consumers within a radius of 800 km, and the cultural diversity resulting from its varied demographic composition makes it an ideal test market for new products. Thirdly, Brussels has established itself as an international decision-making center, hosting the most important international European institutions and a strong presence of influential lobbyists, diplomats and press groups.

Most recent studies (Dustmann et al., 2010; Vargas-Silva, 2013; Baas and Brücker, 2011; Ruist, 2014) have found positive effects for destination countries, both in terms of economic growth and higher public revenues. The magnitude of the benefit depends on factors such as workers' skill and wage profiles and family composition, as well as the overall design of the welfare state, e.g., the cost of social benefits (Barslund and Busse, 2014). Immigrants increase tax revenues but also use public services and have access to employment and social benefits, such as family and housing allowances. At the local and regional level, immigrants can add pressure to public services, such as schools, housing, health care and transportation, especially if these services have to serve a larger number of people in a relatively short time (Barslund and Busse, 2014).

At the European level, by contrast, mobility is one of the most beneficial factors in economic terms. First, mobility is necessary for the single market to reach its full potential and generate prosperity. A single market must ensure the free movement of capital, goods and services, but above all, workers.

Increased labor mobility increases the allocation of resources through workers' skills relative to job vacancies within the European Union (ECB, 2006; Kahanec, 2013; European Commission, 2012). Unemployed people moving to another country to find work improves the allocation of resources at the European level, just as if they move from a low-productivity to a high-productivity sector or from a low-skilled to a high-skilled job. In this way, labor mobility contributes to the better functioning of European labor markets and thus contributes to what we define in this paper as a "European Business" in terms of integration.

Migration also creates cross-border social linkages and flows of goods, services, ideas and capital, as well as new knowledge (Kahanec, 2013). Moreover, high mobility can enhance people's

entrepreneurial skills and capabilities, as well as the diffusion of ideas and knowledge, and thus foster innovation and productivity growth (Barslund and Busse, 2014).

A truly integrated labor market is also more attractive for highly skilled third-country nationals, even if they do not have the right to move freely within the Union. Their contribution is increasingly important, given the aging and declining population in the EU (Barslund and Busse, 2014).

Finally, intra-European labor mobility helps individuals develop a common European identity and national identity (Barslund and Busse, 2014).

European identity adds to national identities and promotes the political and economic integration of the European Union.

However, although the free movement of people is one of the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the 1958 Treaty of Rome, labor mobility contributes to balancing the supply and demand of workers and is a mechanism to address inefficiencies in national labor markets; however, despite the increase in commuting, intra-European mobility is relatively low, it is because people tend to look for work in their country, even if the external labor supply is close to their place of residence. This attitude reduces worker opportunities and slows the consolidation of the European labor market.

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