Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 13843
02 July 2015

Chinese migration to Europe: challenges and opportunities

Report[1]
Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons
Rapporteur: Mr Thierry MARIANI, France, Group of the European People's Party

Summary

The report gives a general picture of Chinese migration to Europe, beginning with the historical waves of migration and highlighting a number of specific issues unique to Chinese immigration, which presents both challenges that policy makers must address and opportunities to be seized.

Member States should take a number of measures to maximise the benefits of increased migration between China and Europe, including in particular: co-operation with the relevant Chinese authorities concerning data collection on irregular migration, criminal investigations to identify trafficking and smuggling networks operating between Europe and China, the promotion of training programmes for Chinese immigration officials, police officers and consular officers, as well as for travel agencies, concerning fraudulent documents and trafficking risks.

The report also calls for more opportunities for Chinese migrants to work legally in Europe under safe and regulated conditions, the development of policies that facilitate the possibilities for qualified students to find work in Europe after completing their studies and the signature of bilateral agreements with China on social security, education and other integration-related issues. To facilitate the integration of migrants, it is necessary to develop dialogue with Chinese organisations and civil society, so as to establish projects responding to the integration needs of Chinese communities.

1. Reference to committee: Doc. 13197, Reference 3968 of 24 June 2013.

Contents **Page**

A. Draft resolution 3
B. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Mariani, rapporteur 5
1. Introduction 5
2. History of Chinese migration in Europe 5
2.1. Migration waves 5
2.2. Number of Chinese migrants in Europe 6
3. Current trends of Chinese migration 6
3.1. “Push” and “pull” factors of migration from China to Europe 6
3.2. Chinese migration to Russia and eastern Europe 8
3.3. Chinese migration to southern Europe 8
3.4. Diversification of Chinese communities 10
4. New challenges 10
4.1. Development of organised human trafficking 10
4.2. Employment conditions and protection of rights of migrants 10
4.3. Integration problems 11
5. Opportunities for Europe 11
5.1. Investment opportunities in the European Union 11
5.2. Student mobility 11
6. European response to new challenges of Chinese migration 12
6.1. Co-operation on border management and combating irregular migration 12
6.2. Promotion of safe and regular migration 12
6.3. Good practices of integration strategies for Chinese communities 13
7. Conclusions and recommendations 13

A. Draft resolution[2]

1. With China becoming the largest economy in the world, the migration flows with Europe have increased exponentially in recent decades. Following the liberalisation of the Chinese economy and the relaxation of Chinese mobility restrictions, Europe has become a popular destination for Chinese migrants. Around 2.8 million Chinese citizens currently reside legally in Council of Europe member States, with the largest groups in France, Italy, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom. Well-established family networks have allowed migrants to follow their friends and relatives to communities in cities across Europe, in many cases using irregular paths.

2. The Parliamentary Assembly considers that the growing Chinese population across Europe presents a number of opportunities but also important challenges, which should be addressed through legislation and policy both in individual member States and at European level.

3. The Assembly is concerned that many Chinese migrants use illegal smuggling networks to reach Europe and are exploited by traffickers. These irregular migrants are not entitled to any legal protection and are often faced with extremely dangerous and poor working conditions.

4. The issue of integrating Chinese migrants represents another challenge for European migration policies. The problem of the isolation of Chinese communities in many European cities requires strong political will at all administrative levels to encourage a dialogue with Chinese organisations and their involvement in the decision making process on issues concerning them.

5. The Assembly also believes that the influx of Chinese migrants to Europe should be viewed in terms of the inherent potential for economic growth which these migrants present. Both China and Europe stand to gain a great deal from increased relations and mutual investment.

6. With the aim of maximising the benefits of increased migration between China and Europe, the Assembly calls on its member States to:

6.1. develop co-operation with the relevant Chinese authorities on data collection and reporting on irregular migration;

6.2. enhance collaboration with the Chinese authorities on criminal investigations to identify trafficking and smuggling networks operating between Europe and China;

6.3. provide training programmes for Chinese immigration officials, police, consular officers and travel agencies on fraudulent documents and risks of smuggling;

6.4. provide more legal opportunities for Chinese labour migrants to work in Europe under safe and regulated conditions;

6.5. facilitate access to the nationality of the host country and grant long-term residence permits to Chinese migrants;

6.6. develop policies that facilitate the possibilities for qualified students to find work in Europe after their studies;

6.7. sign bilateral agreements with China on social security, education and other integration-related issues;

6.8. facilitate the creation of Chinese schools in the regions with a high presence of Chinese communities;

6.9. promote a positive image of Chinese migration in Europe, focusing on its benefits and the new opportunities it brings;

6.10. promote intercultural dialogue between Chinese communities and the communities of the host countries, including other migrant communities;

6.11. develop dialogue with Chinese organisations and civil society to create projects responding to the integration needs of Chinese communities;

6.12. identify and promote the best practices of Chinese integration in Europe;

6.13. encourage the representation of Chinese communities at local level;

---

2. Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the committee on 23 April 2015.

6.14. facilitate the preservation of links between Chinese migrants and their country of origin by supporting projects promoting the use of new communication technologies in the Chinese language.

7. The Assembly invites the European Union and relevant international organisations, in particular the International Organization for Migration (IOM), to develop targeted programmes aimed at promoting co-operation between Europe and China in the field of migration.

B. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Mariani, rapporteur

1. Introduction

1. Chinese migration to Europe has become a more visible topic in recent years due to the increase in international migration from China after the liberalisation of the country's travel regime during the 1980s.[3] Although Chinese migration to Europe is not a new phenomenon, Chinese communities in Europe have become much more diverse, varying widely in their origins, social background, and professions. An estimated 2.8 million Chinese citizens currently reside legally in Council of Europe member States, with the largest populations in France, Italy, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom. Additionally, registered Chinese populations in southern and central Europe have increased, in some cases due to regularisation programmes.

2. Furthermore, often in response to more stringent border controls, the practice of illegal smuggling and trafficking networks has expanded in scope. Many Chinese are obliged to work illegally after being exploited by unscrupulous Chinese traffickers. These workers are not entitled to any legal protection and their working conditions are more often than not a new form of slavery. Frequently, these workers create friction with the host societies, in competing work sectors, as operating costs are substantially reduced when illegal labour is utilised.

3. Finally, there remain concerns in some parts of the host population as regard the ability of Chinese migrant communities to fully integrate into the host societies. However, overall, it appears that Chinese migrants integrate well in most host countries. China ranks second among the largest remittance receiving countries with over US$25 billion sent home by nationals working abroad.[4]

4. Overall, the rapid growth of the Chinese economy in the past few decades has created both new challenges and opportunities in Europe having an impact not only on industry, schools and universities, but also raising questions regarding the potential for intercultural dialogue and integration of the Chinese populations spread across Europe.

5. This report will provide a broad-brush picture of Chinese migration to Europe, beginning with historical waves of migration and moving into current trends. I will highlight a couple of specific issues unique to Chinese immigration, which present both challenges policy makers must address and opportunities we should seize. In addition to providing insight on the response and best practices which address Chinese migration, I will provide recommendations for further co-operation not only between member States but also for improving bilateral co-operation with China in this area.

2. History of Chinese migration in Europe

6. The influx of Chinese migrants to Europe has ebbed and flowed with different phases of both Chinese domestic policy as well as historical interactions with European countries. These waves were relatively small compared to the current outflow of migrants prompted by Chinese liberalisation of domestic restrictions on migration. Historical Chinese migration continues to have an impact on current trends and policy, especially with regard to regional source areas, which are tied to specific destinations in Europe.

2.1. Migration waves

7. The first waves of Chinese migrants to Europe can be traced back to the First Opium War (1839-41), when China was forced to open its doors to western traders. Hong Kong was established as a British colony in 1841; however it was not until 1860 that China allowed its nationals the right to go abroad. These early migrant workers, especially Chinese seamen, founded communities in Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Subsequent waves of Chinese migrants correspond to the First and Second World Wars. During the First World War, over 100 000 Chinese labourers came to Europe to dig trenches in France and Belgium, however most of them left Europe after the work was completed.[5]

---

3. The Chinese in Europe: Origins and Transformations, G. Benton, *Religions and Christianity in Today's China*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 62-70.
4. Recent Trends in Migration from China to Europe, R. Anich and F. Laczko, Research and Publications Division, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Geneva, Switzerland, December 2008, December 2008, p. 12.
5. Chinese Migration into the EU: new trends, dynamics and implications, K. Latham and B. Wu, Europe China Research and Advice Network (ECRAN), p. 16.

8. Colonial connections became more relevant with regard to the next large wave of Chinese migrants to Europe after the Second World War. Thousands of Chinese, mainly from Hong Kong, migrated to the United Kingdom and a few neighbouring countries during the post-war period, many of them opening Chinese restaurants. However, during the communist economy of Mao Zedong and after the formation of the People's Republic in 1949, migration was tightly controlled by the State and, at times, emigration was even prohibited.

9. It was in the late 1970s and early 1980s that Chinese migration to Europe began to accelerate at unprecedented rates. The catalyst for this movement occurred in December 1978, when the Chinese Communist Party enacted economic reforms with more open policies, establishing formal diplomatic relations with the United States in January 1979. These events brought about not only an increase in the volume of migrants coming to Europe, but also an increase in their diversity. Additional reforms in the mid-1980s allowed for more mobility within China and the ability to leave the country for private reasons.[6] The issuance of identity cards to Chinese residents meant that people could seek work in coastal areas without having to first obtain permission from local authorities. These reforms, which initially primarily affected internal mobility, eventually spilled over into international migratory trends to Europe. In recent years, local Chinese officials have even begun to help facilitate migration from regions which are common source regions for Europe. They have recognised the economic benefits and do not seem particularly concerned about brain drain as talent is quite mobile within China, with eastern boom towns like Shanghai still attracting talent from inland regions.[7]

2.2. Number of Chinese migrants in Europe

10. Since the relaxation of Chinese mobility restrictions, Europe has become an increasingly popular destination for Chinese migrants. There were an estimated 600 000 Chinese legal migrants in Europe in 1980 compared to 2.15 million in 2007, ranking Europe second in growth rate behind Africa.[8]

11. However, the sheer size of the total Chinese population somewhat distorts the magnitude of the flows to Europe. China's emigration rate compared to countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is relatively low (only 0.2% of the population). OECD data on Chinese inflows to Europe also indicate that rates have stabilised and that there is unlikely to be much of an increase in the near term. Any major fluctuations in recent years can primarily be attributed to countries such as Spain and Italy, which adopted large regularisation programmes. Chinese migrants to other parts of Europe still register lower numbers than western Europe; however there might be some evidence of an increasing trend in Hungary. For the most part, it seems that Chinese migrants still view eastern Europe and the Russian Federation as a transit destination and the media tend to exaggerate the flow of Chinese into the far east of the Russian Federation.

12. It is important to note here that data on Chinese migrants in Europe is not entirely reliable due to increasing irregular migration flows. The use of paid migration brokers, referred to as "snake heads", has become more common as migration restrictions have tightened with economic downturns.

3. Current trends of Chinese migration

13. Current trends in Chinese migration to Europe reflect a complex interaction between "push" factors from China and "pull" factors to Europe. In this section, I will cover trends in Russia and eastern Europe, as well as in southern Europe, which have become areas of particular focus for national policy makers in recent years. Additionally, it is very important to stress here the diversity of the Chinese migrant communities across Europe. Through understanding how regional source areas in China are linked to specific member States, it will become clearer how bilateral agreements with China could be facilitated, especially with regional Chinese authorities.

3.1. "Push" and "pull" factors of migration from China to Europe

14. The rise in Chinese migration to Europe stems from a variety of factors which have encouraged migrants to leave China and pursue work or study in European countries. Liberalisation of the Chinese economy and growing international trade between China and Europe have contributed significantly to migration flows. Furthermore, well-established family networks have allowed migrants to follow their friends and relatives to established communities in cities across Europe, using in many cases irregular paths.

---

6. Migration from China, R. Skeldon, *Journal of International Affairs*, 1996, p. 4.
7. Recent Trends in Migration from China to Europe, op. cit., p. 12.
8. Chinese Migration into the EU: new trends, dynamics and implications, op. cit., p. 18.

3.1.1. Liberalisation of Chinese policy

15. As mentioned, the meteoric rise of the Chinese economy in the 1990s was largely a result of liberalisation of Chinese policy, spurring growth in many sectors and the reorganisation of formerly State-owned enterprises. Not only did trade and foreign direct investment increase, but State-owned enterprise reform in the late 1990s had varied effects, impacting regions in China differently. This reform led to the closure or transfer of many small and medium-sized businesses into private hands or joint holdings, creating redundancies for tens of millions of employees of former State-owned enterprises. This heavily impacted China's industrial heartland in the north-east. Most of these redundant workers migrated internally in China; however, a large portion of them also went to Europe in search of new opportunities.[9] Additionally, the relaxation of mobility restrictions within China represents a nearly complete reversal in the attitude of the Chinese Government officials towards Chinese nationals leaving the country: rather than restricting mobility, they seem to welcome these outward flows as an opportunity for increased growth. In Beijing and Wenzhou, local authorities attempt to brand themselves as migrant-exporting regions.[10]

3.1.2. Development of irregular migration

16. The liberalisation of Chinese policy provoked a significant increase in different forms of irregular migration. It is difficult to estimate the exact number of irregular migrants from China due to the difficulties in obtaining information on unauthorised stays. China is nevertheless considered as a one of the main sources of irregular migration to Europe.[11]

17. A large number of smuggling and human trafficking networks run by "snake-heads" from the south-eastern provinces of China exploit the important difference in economic development between the north and the south of China. They smuggle migrants mostly to the eastern European countries proposing them work and accommodation in exchange for large sums of money.

18. In recent years, the problem of irregular migrants from China has still been acute, although their number has reduced due to the recession. China has also engaged in dialogue with the European Union on migration issues with the aim of opening new legal ways of mobility to Europe. In September 2013, the EU–China High-level Summit was organised to deal with migration-related issues, including trafficking. China has also adopted its National Plan against Trafficking in Persons for 2013-2020.

3.1.3. Impact of the economic crisis

19. The present global economic crisis has had a negative impact on migration flows from China to Europe, due to less demand for labour. However, as tends to be the case with illegal migratory flows, lowered quotas and fewer possibilities for legal entry into Europe have bolstered demand for paid facilitation of illegal avenues.

3.1.4. Well-established family networks

20. Chinese migrants living and working abroad tend to maintain a close relationship to China, particularly with regard to sending remittances. Estimates of remittances place China second only to India with US $25 billion sent home per year and still increasing.[12] This seems to confirm the idea that Chinese diasporas maintain strong familial ties through financial support. There is also strong evidence to suggest that family networks facilitate movement abroad due to region-to-region connections between China and Europe.

3.1.5. Globalisation of Chinese business

21. Chinese entrepreneurship has gone global and migrants have established themselves in niche fields throughout Europe, not just in the traditional take-away food business, but by moving into struggling fields and revitalising them. On a macro level, trade between Europe and China has increased 6.26 fold, rising from US $68.1 billion in 1999 to US$427 billion in 2009.[13] The situation in the town of Prato provides an interesting example of this phenomenon. Prato (north of Florence), once a stronghold of the Italian textile industry, began to have trouble competing on the international market in the 1980s. The traditional family firms went into crisis

9. Chinese Migration into the EU: new trends, dynamics and implications, op. cit., p. 19.
10. The Chinese in Europe: Origins and Transformations, G. Benton, op. cit., p.5.
11. Recent trends in migration from China to Europe, op. cit., p. 23.
12. Ibid., op. cit., p. 12.
13. Chinese Migration into the EU: new trends, dynamics and implications, op. cit., p. 20.

and over time, new migrants from the Wenzhou region took over parts of the textile industry. Therefore, rather than being the source of the textile crisis in Prato, the Chinese migrants filled a hole in the market and became a response to it.

3.1.6. Educational opportunities

22. The increasing level of wealth in China has provided more middle-class Chinese families with the means to send their children to universities abroad. Europe has become a more popular choice for Chinese students, to some extent due to some waning interest in the United States after post 9/11 immigration stringencies. Many Chinese students who come to Europe for their studies eventually return to China. However, some remain if job opportunities present themselves, adding to the stock of highly-educated immigrants in Europe. The United Kingdom, Germany and France are the most popular European countries for student migration, but the Netherlands and Ireland have also had increases due to the vast selection of university courses offered in English.[14]

3.2. Chinese migration to Russia and eastern Europe

23. There has been some concern among political leaders that Chinese migration to Russia and eastern Europe has become a more popular choice for organised labour trafficking. While this is true to some extent, OECD figures indicate that the number of Chinese nationals in these countries is still lower than in western Europe.[15] While there is an increasing trend in eastern European member States, the sharpest increases have been in Hungary. This is in part due to the more relaxed visa requirements, during the 1990s in particular, but also as a result of previous political linkages with China during Hungary's communist past.[16]

24. In the Russian Federation, media reports frequently exaggerate the number of Chinese migrants in the Russian Far East. These reports add to a fear that a flood of Chinese migrants will flow into the eastern territories which border China with a population 20 times the size of the Russian side. However, in reality, the Chinese represent a small portion of the population in the Russian Far East. The Russian media claims that the numbers are as high as 4 million, which would make Chinese the fourth largest ethnic group in Russia. Although accurate numbers are always difficult to ascertain due to illegal flows, the Institute of Asia and Africa at Moscow State University put the figure for Chinese residing in Russia between 200 000 and 450 000. The greatest discrepancies in estimates are in the Russian Far East; however, it appears that many of these individuals are just passing through, using Russia as a transit corridor.[17] The Russian Federation faces similar demographic problems to western Europe in terms of population decline. Chinese migrants from north-east China might represent an opportunity to meet this challenge regarding future labour shortages.

25. Chinese migrants in Russia and eastern Europe make very little effort to integrate into host communities. Their communication with the local population is very limited due to language problems and their self-isolation. As their main reason for migration is to gain money, they don't see their country of residence as a destination country and prefer to stay in their own closed environment. This creates a negative perception of Chinese migrants among the local communities, who very often link them to illegal activities.

3.3. Chinese migration to southern Europe

26. The countries in southern Europe that have seen the largest increases in Chinese migrants have been Italy and Spain, where large regularisation programmes changed the status of many irregular immigrants already living in these countries. In fact, the economic crisis in these countries has almost certainly had a negative effect on Chinese labour migration. However, Italy in particular has seen a large concentration of Chinese migrants moving into the textile industry near Florence. Chinese businesses import cheaper materials from China and sometimes use illegal labour, making it difficult for other vendors to compete with these low-end retailers, on top of the human rights issues deriving from the irregular situation of many workers. Additionally, some of the Chinese businesses seem to be applying a strategy to avoid paying taxes. This involves opening a business, closing it before tax police can register it, and then reopening in the same space using a new tax code.[18]

---

14. Recent Trends in Migration from China to Europe, op. cit., p. 15.
15. Ibid., p. 10.
16. Chinese Migration into the EU: new trends, dynamics and implications, op. cit., p. 20.
17. Chinese Migration to Russia: Missed Opportunities, M. Repnikova and H. Blazer, Woodrow Wilson International Center for scholars, Washington, D.C., p. 7.
18. Ibid.

27. As in the Russian Federation and eastern Europe, there are concerns that the Chinese communities in southern Europe are showing poor levels of integration. In northern Italy, tensions with the Italian community are exacerbated by cultural and language differences and a tendency for the Chinese community to appear somewhat insular. This can create a situation in which migrant workers are more vulnerable to employment abuse as they are more dependent on the employer. It is estimated that in the textile industry, one in ten Chinese workers do not have a residence permit.[19]

3.3.1. The Prato case

28. The first Chinese migrants arrived in Italy between the 1950s and the 1970s to work in garment factories for Italian companies. Soon after, they started to open their own small enterprises. After the year 2000, the number of Chinese migrants tripled and they now represent 20% of the total immigration population.

29. In general, these Chinese enterprises on Italian territory are very small and usually comprise members of the family and friends of the owner. The owner provides workers with accommodation and board and often they live on the same premises as they work. Working hours are not limited and they are paid at a piece-rate.

30. Many of these enterprises employ undocumented migrants and do not respect the Italian employment legislation: few of them pay taxes. Very often they do not respect security and sanitary conditions. Such a situation led to an accident on 1 December 2013 in Prato, where seven Chinese migrants died during a fire at one of these premises.

31. After this accident, the Italian authorities started to pay more attention to the working conditions of these enterprises and sent 73 inspectors to check the standards in place. In 2014, during these inspections, it was ascertained that 20% of Chinese migrants are in an irregular situation.

32. In Prato, a city with a population of 190 000, 36 000 are foreigners with more than 30 different nationalities and among them 15 000 are documented Chinese migrants. It is the biggest Chinese community in Italy. The majority of them came from the Chinese province of Wenzhou and they have established approximately 2 200 garment enterprises.

33. They produce goods amounting to a value of 3 billion euros a year, but this money does not stay in Italy. The only advantages Italy earns from these businesses is the cheap merchandise for Italian and other European enterprises, and the revenue from renting premises to these Chinese firms.

34. In recent years, due to the economic crisis, there has been some tension between the Chinese community and other migrant communities in Prato. Very often, Chinese migrants are attacked or robbed.

35. The local authorities have tried to react to this situation and have organised Italian language courses and cultural integration activities, but these efforts are not reaching the Chinese immigrants, as they prefer to remain in their own community. There is also the problem of communication between Italians living in Prato and the Chinese, as there is also little interest shown on the Italian side to co-operate and interact with the migrants.

36. The main concern of the Chinese associations registered in Prato is the absence of dialogue between the Italian community and themselves on issues of mutual concern. They are also very unhappy with the present labour and migration legislation in Italy. They consider that the Government of Italy should amend its tax legislation allowing irregular enterprises a transitional period for regularisation; and that it is also important to adopt a legislation introducing a minimum salary for workers in Italy, as well as short-term contracts.

37. In my opinion, Chinese migration to Italy can provide new opportunities for the Tuscany region. The region has already developed new business contacts with China in different sectors, in particular the wine industry, railway communications, transport and medicine.

38. Unfortunately, the Chinese Government does not allow dual nationality, which creates problems for many Chinese families living in Europe who wish to keep links with their country of origin.

39. As regards the specific problem of the city of Prato, I think that the local authorities should sign ethics pacts with Chinese enterprises, which will oblige them to implement the labour legislation in force and respect normal working conditions and security measures. It is also important to ensure that working migrants are represented politically at local level.

---

19. Better Business: Integrating the Chinese Business Community into the Mainstream, Bologna, Italy, http://citiesofmigration.ca.

3.4. Diversification of Chinese communities

40. Although Chinese migrants are often spoken about as being a somewhat homogeneous group, they are actually very diverse, differing in language, regional origin, religion, etc.[20] They are also becoming more divided generationally, as European Chinese grow up with different values and customs than their parents.

41. Aside from these differences, the main regions from which Chinese migrants to Europe come have been changing over the past few decades. Historically, "old" immigrants to Europe came from Hong Kong and Indochina, but newer waves come predominantly from the Zheijiang and Fujian provinces. Europe's Chinese immigrant origins are thus shifting to China's Dongbei (north-east) region. This shift corresponds to changing preferences of the labour model favoured by different groups, with the new immigrants from Zheijiang and Fujian tending toward more entrepreneurial career paths.[21] The differences between Chinese communities in each of the member States should be considered within the context of policy formulation. Taking into account the regional origin and labour market preferences of the Chinese community in each context is necessary in order to adequately deal with each group.

4. New challenges

42. The increased Chinese population across Europe presents a number of important challenges, which will have to be addressed through legislation and policy both in individual member States and potentially through bilateral agreements with China. The increasingly codified systems of illegal smuggling and trafficking present a major threat to migrants themselves. Furthermore, there have been tragic episodes of deaths of migrant workers who are often put in extremely dangerous and poor working conditions. It is therefore necessary to protect the rights of labour migrants who are subjected to these conditions, and to work with Chinese officials to prevent the smuggling and trafficking rings which facilitate these situations upon their arrival in Europe.

4.1. Development of organised human trafficking

43. The use of paid migration brokers, referred to as "snake heads", varies according to where the migrants originate from and where they plan to travel to in Europe. For instance, nearly all migration from the Fujian province to the United Kingdom is irregular. These migrants mostly come from the Fuzhou area, where local authorities tightly control emigration and coming to the United Kingdom presents more geographic obstacles than going to continental Europe. These illegal networks also work to exploit differences in national migration legislation. Until recently, the United Kingdom provided asylum applicants with the right to work after staying in the country for six months.[22] Migrants often pay an extremely high price to "snake heads". A recent police operation in Spain and France raided a human trafficking ring, which was charging €40 000 to €50 000 per person to smuggle Chinese migrants to Europe and the United States.[23]

44. In order to combat these organised trafficking networks, it will be necessary for the European Union and member States to work closely with China, to identify avenues of collaboration. The Capacity Building for Migration Management in China (CBMM-China) project highlighted areas where a joint approach between China and Europe could prove the most effective, namely criminal investigation to identify smuggling and trafficking networks operating between China and Europe. Furthermore, exchanges between Chinese and European prosecutors ensure admissibility in court and exchange of intelligence.[24] Member States should also collaborate with the Chinese Ministry of Public Security to identify irregular Chinese migrants being held in European reception centres.

4.2. Employment conditions and protection of rights of migrants

45. As labour migrants, the Chinese sometimes face extremely challenging or unsafe working conditions, working for very little pay in many cases. Due to the structure of migration flows, the migrants can find themselves in a position of dependency on the employer, especially for instance when the migrant does not speak the language of the destination country well.

---

20. The Chinese in Europe: origins and Transformations, G. Benton, op. cit., p. 5.
21. Chinese Migration into the EU: new trends, dynamics and implications, op. cit., p. 20.
22. Chinese Globalisation and Migration to Europe, F. Pieke, ESRC Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), Institute of Chinese Studies, University of Oxford, p. 4.
23. Chinese illegal immigrants live in the shadows, L. Jono, 29 August 2013, swissinfo.ch, p. 2.
24. Recent trends in Migration from China to Europe, Frank Laczko. Presentation at the Council of Europe, 30 January 2014.

46. With the recent ten-year anniversary of the tragic drowning of 23 Chinese cockle pickers in Morecambe Bay, the event lives on in the British public consciousness. On the evening of 5 February 2004, 40 Chinese workers were picking cockles in the bay, working against tidal charts and safety codes. The recruiter and manager, Ah Ren, in order to maximise profits, had the workers out in the Bay until 8:30 p.m., two hours after they should have been told to leave. There were 16 survivors. All but one of the 23 victims were from Fujian, many of them having left their families back in China crippled with debt. To avoid a tragedy like this happening again, member States should work with Chinese officials to prevent the flow of illegal workers and provide more legal avenues for labour migrants to work in Europe under safe, regulated conditions.

4.3. Integration problems

47. The issue of integrating Chinese migrants into European cities has become a challenge that member States must find ways to address. The problem seems more serious in Russia and eastern Europe, where Chinese migrants still view their stay as temporary and therefore make less of an effort to integrate. The Chinese community in Italy also merits particular consideration in this regard. Italy is home to one of the largest Chinese populations in Europe, with Chinese-owned craft workshops representing 20% of the companies in the Emilia Romagna region in northern Italy.[25] Both the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Consorzio Spinner, a local consortium of research groups, have provided examples of how communication between the Italian authorities and Chinese business owners can be improved to encourage regularisation of these businesses. Providing platforms for exchange and workshops can help integration of this somewhat insular group.

48. There is also a new problem of second and even third-generation Chinese migrants in Europe. These young people were brought up and educated in the host communities; they speak the local language and sometimes do not even understand Chinese. Usually, they do not have any special attachment to China – as their parents had – and they see their future in Europe. Unfortunately, very often they are also faced with discrimination and non-acceptance by the host communities. Therefore, they have difficulties in integrating into the local communities and, as a result, in finding jobs. I would support the point of view of a young man representing one Chinese cultural association in Prato, who believes that only by promoting formal and non-formal cultural and economic exchanges with host communities will it be possible to eliminate the barriers and gain access to the labour market.

5. Opportunities for Europe

49. The influx of Chinese migrants to Europe should also be viewed in terms of the inherent potential for growth which these migrants present. Europe has already seen tremendous benefits from exponentially increasing trade with China and Chinese investment in Europe. Both China and Europe stand to gain a great deal from increased interconnectivity and mutual investment.

5.1. Investment opportunities in the European Union

50. Although trade between the European Union and China has increased tremendously, foreign direct investment (FDI) from Europe to China has grown at a relatively constant rate. On the other hand, outward direct investment (ODI) from China to Europe has shown a rapid rate of growth during the same period.[26] This level of investment in Europe not only presents an important opportunity for growth, but also suggests there will be no immediate halt to demand for immigrants in these increasingly diversified Chinese businesses.

5.2. Student mobility

51. China remains the largest source country for international students globally, with the United Kingdom receiving the largest share (65 906 or about half of the total Chinese student population in Europe).[27] This growth in Europe's ability to attract Chinese students presents an opportunity for member States to convert this trend into more high skilled labour. Germany in particular has taken the lead in facilitating the ease with which international students may stay on if they are able to find work after their studies have concluded. New legislation introduced in 2012 will give students and academics less restrictions on their ability to seek work, giving students 18 instead of 12 months to look for work and consent from the Federal Labour Agency is not

25. Better Business: Integrating the Chinese Business Community into the Mainstream, op. cit.
26. Chinese Migration into the EU: new trends, dynamics and implications, op. cit., p. 20.
27. Recent trends in Migration from China to Europe, Frank Laczko. Presentation at the Council of Europe, 30 January 2014.

required.[28] Measures like these could be adopted in other member States to encourage more students, and thus high skilled labour, to stay. Recent immigration policy changes in China also indicate a shift in Chinese policy to promote the attraction of high skilled labour; therefore this could be something on which European member States will soon be competing with China.[29]

6. European response to new challenges of Chinese migration

52. The European response to some of the challenges resulting from Chinese migration to Europe has been primarily in the form of efforts to work with China on many of these issues. This has been done not only through bilateral agreements between China and individual member States, but also on a multilateral basis providing participants from both Europe and China with a platform for exchange.

6.1. Co-operation on border management and combating irregular migration

53. The Capacity Building for Migration Management in China Project has provided policy makers and migration authorities with a platform for co-operation. This project is a joint undertaking, which has involved co-ordination with the IOM, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the European Union and various member States. It is primarily funded by the European Commission, with co-funding from the Italian Ministry of the Interior and the United Kingdom Border Agency. Chinese authorities have been able to engage with European Union officials and to exchange ideas and practices, enhancing top-level dialogue, but also by providing technical support through training and best practices.

54. On 5 and 6 September 2013, under the framework of the CBMM project, the EU–China Seminar on Migration and Mobility brought together over 120 senior government officials from the European Union and China in Beijing. During this exchange, Mr Xie Luning, Deputy Director of the Ministry of Public Security, spoke about China's second National Plan of Action to combat trafficking in human beings. He emphasised the importance of international collaboration on border management, international policing, and the efficient return and reintegration of trafficking victims. In turn, Ms Katelijne Bergans, Vice-Director-General of the Belgian Immigration Office presented Belgium's four-phase approach to identification and protection of trafficking victims.[30] These examples show that workshops and policy dialogues provide a valuable forum for information exchange and the formulation of joint, practical steps towards preventing labour exploitation.

55. In the framework of informal bilateral collaboration, the Belgian authorities reached an understanding with the Chinese embassy that identification and removal of Chinese irregular migrants could be made on the basis of nationality, rather than purely on identity. These migrants often do not possess a valid passport and are unwilling to co-operate with European officials, but once they are returned to China, they typically reveal their true identity to Chinese officials. Unfortunately, the Chinese authorities have ceased this practice without explaining why, but if official bilateral agreements of this sort could be signed with the Chinese Government, safer, efficient returns could be facilitated for irregular migrants in Europe.[31]

6.2. Promotion of safe and regular migration

56. In order to promote safe and regular migration, the CBMM project identified three provinces that have been associated with irregular migration (namely Fujian, Shandong and Liaoning), and mounted awareness-raising campaigns targeted at potential migrants in these areas. The objective of these efforts was to prevent irregular migration and encourage migration through safe channels by increasing the potential migrants' knowledge of their options.[32]

28. Foreign students win better deal in face of entrenched discrimination, Michael Gardener, University World News, 6 May 2012.
29. Recent trends in Migration from China to Europe, Frank Laczko. Presentation at the Council of Europe, 30 January 2014.
30. EU–China seminar on Migration and Mobility (Conclusions), 5-6 September 2013, Beijing, China.
31. Ibid.
32. Capacity Building for Migration Management in China Update 2 – January-June 2010, CBMM China Newsletter, IOM.

6.3. Good practices of integration strategies for Chinese communities

57. There are a couple of notable examples of bilateral agreements between China and individual member States, which could serve as examples of best practices for integrating local Chinese communities. In 2003, roughly 7% of immigrants in Hungary were Chinese, thus leading to a bilateral agreement between the Chinese and Hungarian Governments to open a Chinese school in Budapest. Accepting both Chinese and Hungarian children, the school emphasises a "double" identity, tolerance and cultural dialogue.[33]

58. In 2013, the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and Integration signed a bilateral social security agreement with the Chinese Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, which entered into force in May 2014.[34] This agreement enabled Chinese employees employed in Denmark by Chinese enterprises to remain covered by Chinese social security and exempted Danish employees posted in China from paying contributions to Chinese old-age pension.

59. Another example of good practice can be taken from civil society in Italy. In 2000, Consorzio Spinner initiated a project to connect with the Chinese community in northern Italy in an attempt to encourage Chinese entrepreneurs to regularise their business practices in the textile industry. In order to breakdown linguistic and cultural barriers, Spinner sent Chinese intercultural intermediaries into different firms as liaison officers. Spinner also produced a bilingual manual in Chinese and Italian, containing comprehensive guidelines for running a business in Italy.[35]

60. Both these examples highlight creative approaches to reaching out to the unique situation of Chinese migrants in these member States. The member States of the Council of Europe should consider which approach would best address the situation of the Chinese community present in their own country.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

61. In this report, I have illustrated some of the most visible challenges and opportunities which Chinese immigration to Europe presents. Although Chinese migration to Europe presents human rights concerns with regard to trafficking and smuggling rings, as well as the poor working conditions these migrants often face when they arrive in Europe through these means, we should not forget the multitude of positive opportunities that legal Chinese migration presents. Member States should find ways to work with Chinese officials to protect individuals from falling prey to illegal networks and poor work conditions, but member States should also create policies that encourage highly skilled students to remain in Europe after they have finished their studies.

62. Furthermore, we should encourage member States to find a dialogue with Chinese organisations and civil society to create projects which can be tailored to the integration needs of the local Chinese communities. The examples in Italy and Hungary show positive steps to engage directly Chinese communities in these countries.

33. Ibid.
34. Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and Integration signs bilateral social security agreement, 10 December 2013, site of the Embassy of Denmark in China
35. Better Business: Integrating the Chinese Business Community into the Mainstream, op. cit.