Migration is Essential to Western Europe

Tuesday 24 February, 2015

Inaugural lecture by Ronald Skeldon, endowed professor of Human Geography

"Migration is often seen as a problem. For Western Europe and most developed parts of the world, however, immigration is essential to meeting labour demands, and not only for low-skilled work." This is the stance Professor Ronald Skeldon will take during his inaugural lecture on Wednesday 25 February in acceptance of his appointment as endowed professor of Human Geography at Maastricht University. According to Skeldon, it is a misconception that immigration is only a problem. "Not only do we need immigrants to meet labour demands, they also have a positive impact on birth rates in the country in which they settle," he says.

According to Skeldon, we should not focus on migration but on mobility. A growing number of migrant workers are settling in other countries for shorter periods in search of more, or more challenging work. This not only includes low-skilled jobs, but also highly educated young people who are becoming increasingly mobile. While most countries register the number of immigrants, they often fail to register how many people re-immigrate or stay for shorter periods. This makes it difficult to generate accurate migration figures.

Regular labour market
Migration, according to Skeldon, is first and foremost a question of supply and demand on the labour market. 'Politicians think they can solve immigration problems with policy measures. The first misconception is that immigration is a problem. The truth is, we can only control the factors that trigger migration: economic, social and political changes. Skeldon believes we cannot stop migration prompted by economic differences and new work opportunities in another country. 'What we need to focus on are the conditions and laws we use to regulate the labour market.'

Births
Of course, many immigrants settle permanently in a new country and make an important contribution to the local workforce. 'Birth rates are dropping in many countries, including the Netherlands. But immigrants have more children on average than Dutch women and other Western European women. This trend is reflected in other countries with high immigration rates, such as the US and the UK, where the birth rate is dropping less rapidly than in other countries. In the UK, one in four children were born to non-native mothers.'

Note for the press:
Professor Ronald Skeldon will deliver his inaugural lecture entitled, 'Realities and Illusions of Human Migration: A Geographical Perspective', on Wednesday 25 February at 16.30 at Maastricht University (Aula, Administrative Building, Minderbroedersberg 4–6).

For more information on the content of this press release, please contact UM Press Officer Flore Clerkx on +31 43 388 5230 or email flore.clerkx@maastrichtuniversity.nl.

The UM Marketing & Communications Department can be contacted on +31 43 388 5222 or at pers@maastrichtuniversity.nl. For urgent matters outside office hours, please call +31 6 2455 7245.

Media:

Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits :: Education & Human Resources :: Government ::

Related Keywords:

Migration :: Labour :: Refugee :: Migrant :: Immigrant ::

Scan Me:

Company Contact:

United Nations University - MERIT

T. +31 43 388 44 00
E. info@merit.unu.edu
W. https://www.merit.unu.edu/

Additional Contact(s):
Howard Hudson, Head of Communications
hudson@merit.unu.edu
+31 43 388 44 30

View Online

Additional Assets:
http://www.merit.unu.edu/ronald-skeldon-inaugural-lecture-25-feb-2015/

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
https://www.unu-merit.pressat.co.uk