**EMN Norway /EMN conference in Norway House, Brussels 13. December 2018**

***Sustainable Migration in Europe***

**Introduction (Øyvind Jaer, EMN Norway coordinator)**

Good afternoon! Heartly welcome to Norway House and to our conference *Sustainable migration in Europe*. Special welcome to speakers and panellists from Oxford, Brussels and Oslo, and to all of you who have taken time off to listen and to share your reflections on this most topical of issues.

My name is Øyvind Jaer, coordinator of EMN Norway and senior advisor in the department of Immigration, Ministry of Justice and public security in Oslo, Norway. I will be your conference guide today. And I will first give you some background information on what we may call “The Sustainable Migration Approach”.

“Sustainable migration” is a new concept that is rapidly gaining interest. When googled in late 2016 we found a couple of hits, today you will find thousands. In Norway “sustainable” was officially first linked to the migration field in the 2018 National Budget published October 2017. And in the European context, the Commission introduced its *Political roadmap for a sustainable migration policy* 7 December 2017. These and other documents aiming at “sustainable migration” seem to use the concept more in an honorific manner and do not refer to any definition or theory that help us better understand the concept.

Given the inclusion of migration in the 2030 SDG Agenda, many may understand “sustainable *migration*” as migration contributing to sustainable *development* in poor countries. A global approach to migration must, however, be broader in scope and also take account of implications for hosting countries with respect to their economy and welfare system, their cultural and social developments as well as political acceptability. International obligations must be taken into account as well.

The Global Compact on Migration adopted in Marrakesh two days ago states that the Compact “promotes the well-being of migrants and the members of communities in countries of origin, transit and destination.” However, there is as you know an ongoing debate in many countries whether the Global Compact takes sufficient account of implications for hosting countries to ensure sustainable migration for all parties involved.

Professor Collier’s last book from October this year: *The future of capitalism. Facing the new anxieties*, has a section titled *Migration mea Culpa* – mea culpa on behalf of economists and social scientists who have so far seen migration in the light of the theory of comparative advantages and thus as a globally efficient system. Collier’s well argued and well documented point in *The Future of Capitalism* is that migration is good for some, maybe sometimes good for many, but there will always be someone and sometimes even many, who stand to loose - in the country of origin as well as in the hosting country. Whether migration is globally efficient at any point of time is an empirical question. Obviously, migration is a part of the anxieties faced by many of our fellow men in this current phase of capitalism.

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EMN Norway commissioned Professors Collier and Betts November 2017. The key objective of the assignment was to develop a definition as well as a sustainable migration framework to inform research, policy debates and policy development regarding migration from poor to rich countries. The specification “from poor to rich countries” was required to make the topic most relevant for immigration and integration authorities in hosting countries like Norway and the EU Member States.

In the mandate given to the professors, we referred to Collier’s book *Exodus* (2013) where it is stated: Whether *«’migration is good or bad?’.. is the wrong question ... the pertinent question is not good or bad, but* ***how much...and what kind of composition ... is best****.» (Exodus p. 26 and p. 260).* This question is key to the sustainable migration approach and implies a commitment to knowledge-based political regulation of volume and composition of flows. But, mind you not necessarily always in a restrictive way which some researchers seem to think. It is an empirical question whether it should be more or less.

Collier and Bett’s work *Refuge* from 2017 extends Exodus’ sustainable migration perspectives to refugee policy, as they make the case for regional solutions to refugee flows. Indeed, *Refuge* can well be conceived as a proposal for rethinking and redesigning the refugee and asylum system.

We read both *Exodus* and *Refuge* as contributions to a “sustainable migration approach” even though the concept «sustainable migration» is not listed in the books’ indexes. The perspective is implicit. We wanted to see it developed in an explicit manner.

We also wanted *sustainable migration* to be a comprehensive approach to migration which, in principle consider all interests involved in relation to i) countries of origin and ***e***migration, ii) regional havens and local communities and iii) host countries and ***i***migration. Sustainability analyzes should also be done in relation to economic, social and cultural variables. Examples of empirical questions to be asked within this comprehensive framework are: Are the current flows and stocks of – of emigrants or immigrants as the case maybe - too big or too small? What about their composition: low skilled, high skilled, humanitarian flows, labour migration, values, culture etc.? In protection situations international obligations must also be assessed.

Collier and Betts submitted their paper *Sustainable Migration Framework* spring 2018 for presentation and constructive debate in EMN Norway’s conference *Sustainable migration from poor to rich Countries. Towards a new refugee and migration system* in Oslo 21st. June this year.

One of the speakers at this conference was Magnus Ovilius, our chair of the EMN Nettwork and Head of DG Home Return Sector and Irregular Migration. Magnus must have been inspired by the Framework paper and the conference proceedings as he strongly suggested a follow up in Brussels with a shorter and more EU relevant paper like todays key paper *Sustainable Migration in Europe*.

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So here we are in Brussels with a follow up conference we hope will bring the Sustainable Migration Approach a couple of steps ahead as well as making the approach known to the Brussels audience.

We also hope that today’s proceedings about sustainable migration will prove useful in relation to the “gap statement” in the Commission’s recent Communication dated 4.12.2018 where it is stated on page 2 that *“....we have not yet built a sustainable system capable of preventing and mitigating future challenges.”*.

Our aim is not to offer technical solutions to that system, but more to offer a framework for a common and unifying language that is ethically grounded and politically engaged, as Collier and Betts put it – a framework which gives direction to empirical research and political development of relevance and value to EU’s Comprehensive approach to migration.

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We hope this will be an interactive and innovative conference and will therefore proceed according to the Chatham House rules where everybody is free to state their mind irrespective of institutional link. We will of course, report arguments and propositions outside of this conference room, but not who said what. If there are any journalists present who would like to quote somebody directly, kindly obtain that person’s consent before doing so. Finally, the *Sustainable Migration Approach* is work in progress and speakers here today will appreciate your constructive comments and suggestions.