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Time to translate research findings into policies: EU should lead on climate change and migration

“Climate change will increase migration flows, in particular from the world’s poorest and most crisis-prone countries”, says Bastian Hermisson, Director of the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Brussels Office. “The time is ripe for the European Union to develop a coherent approach on climate change and migration and to translate research findings into policy practice.”

The report *‘Time to Act – How the EU can lead on Climate Change and Migration’*, published today by the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung European Union, debunks some common myths and provides an understanding of key characteristics of migration in the context of climate change. With a focus on EU policies and legal frameworks in the area of migration and asylum policies, the report presents a series of policy recommendations to the EU.

“The upcoming Italian Presidency of the Council of the EU, the newly elected European Parliament and the Commission should advance a new EU migration agenda including a more coherent policy on climate-linked migration”, according to Silvia Brugger, Climate and Energy Programme Director at the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung in Brussels. “The complex relationship between climate change and migration should not be used as an excuse for not addressing the issue. Research projects have provided a better understanding of environment-related migration and displacement and of corresponding legal and policy gaps. The EU should focus on what we already understand about the links between climate change and migration as a starting point for a political response.”

By taking into account the phenomenon of climate change and migration, the EU can create a humane and functioning immigration and asylum system that is fit for purpose. The report highlights that by creating legal immigration channels, the EU can avoid the distress and deaths of persons en route to Europe. The EU should set up rules of how and when to provide refuge and protection during increasingly severe climate linked disasters.

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