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PUBLIC LECTURE

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"Environmentally Induced Migration: Challenges for Europe"

Tuesday, May 17, 2011, 17.00 pm
IHS, Stumpergasse 56
1060 Vienna, Lecture Room SZ VI

Climate change and migration rank among the most serious future challenges for policymakers. This paper examines the phenomenon of environmentally induced migration (EIM), refines the concept, disentangles environmental factors from other causes of migration, explores its extent and analyzes coping strategies. It also demonstrates the potential ramifications for Europe.

The potential impact of EIM is enormous. Recent publications assume up to 200 million such migrants by 2050 (Stern Report 2006, Brown 2007:11), while more dramatic estimates count up to a billion potential migrants. However, sceptical analysts (Kibreab 1994, Black 1998, 2001) question the assumptions underlying these dramatic figures and criticize an often imprecise use of terminology (Black 1998, 2001) and consequently a slightly distorted policy debate.

Though some promising work has recently emerged (Each-For 2007, Black et al. 2008, Laczko and Aghazarm 2009), the topic remains underresearched. To demonstrate empirically a monocausal relationship between environmental degradation and migration decisions appears difficult or even impossible, but there is a pressing need to disentangle environmental from other factors, weigh their relative significance and assess the implications for the affected regions. Climate change is having the most dramatic impact in the Global South and the first environmentally induced migration movements are to be expected to occur in Africa, Asia and Latin America: "between 1990 and 1998, 94 percent of the world's disasters and 97 percent of all natural-disaster-related deaths occurred in developing countries" (Roberts and Parks 2007: 10).

Georg Menz is Reader in Political Economy at Goldsmiths College, University of London. Recent book publications include "The Political Economy of Managed Migration" (Oxford), "Varieties of Capitalism and Europeanization" (Oxford), "Labour Migration in Europe" (Palgrave) and "Internalizing Globalization: The Rise of Neoliberalism and the Decline of National Varieties of Capitalism" (Palgrave). He has also published numerous articles in learned journals on questions of migration, the effects of Europeanization and economic liberalization, and labour and social policy. He has served as Visiting Scholar at Pittsburgh, EUI Florence, ANU, Oxford, and MPI Cologne.