



These are challenging times when it comes to migration, and rhetoric is mostly toxic and based on fear instead of on facts and real data. In addition, better migration data could be worth over 35 billion US dollars.

This was one of the key messages during a press conference in connection to the launch of the report “ [More Than Numbers: How migration data can deliver real-life benefits](#) ” in Brussels today, co-hosted by the UN Migration Agency’s (IOM) Global Migration Data Analysis Centre ([GMDAC](#)), working with the McKinsey Centre for Government (MCG).

“The relevant message is the title”, said Eugenio Ambrosi, Regional Director of IOM’s Regional Office for the EU, Norway and Switzerland. “For years we have been used to talk, think and act just in numbers. How many migrants have we sent back? How many have we saved? How many are kept in detention centres? We need a different outlook.”

The main report launch was held simultaneously in Geneva, where IOM Director-General William Lacy Swing explained: “Too often, data are seen as the abstract business of experts

operating in backrooms. Yet data are essential to produce real-life results such as protecting migrants in vulnerable situations, fill labour market shortages and improve integration, manage asylum procedures, ensure the humane return of migrants ordered to leave or increase remittance flows”.

The report provides detailed calculations of these results and benefits across a range of different policy areas for both developed and developing countries.

For instance, many of the migrants in the European Union have skills that do not match their jobs. By using data to reduce over-qualification, the income of migrants in the EU could be increased by 6 billion Euros, according to the report – a huge benefit for the European economy.

Accurate, concerted data is especially crucial today, as UN Member States have begun their negotiations for the adoption of a [Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration](#) .

“Once we have reliable data, we have to ensure that decision makers actually use it”, concludes Mr. Ambrosi, “and not ignore it.”