



## Immigration Countries: Germany in an International Comparison

### SVR 2015 Annual Report

## Ten Core Messages

The 2015 Annual Report has a broad focus and examines a wide range of different issues: it adopts the approach of 'learning from others' to consider the entire spectrum of migration and integration related topics. In doing so, it seeks to answer two main questions: what are the main aims behind Germany's migration and integration policies and how successful is the country compared to other countries of immigration?

The international comparative study comes to a somewhat surprising conclusion, which challenges the widely accepted public discourse on migration and integration in the country. Germany has in a political and conceptual sense rapidly improved its migration management scheme and introduced a much greater range of measures aimed at easing migrant integration and social participation in course of the last few years. With these reforms the country has caught up with the group of immigration countries widely regarded as having progressive migration and integration schemes. This finding is all the more remarkable given that the study does not compare Germany with the 'stragglers' in integration and migration policy, but instead with states judged as being 'model pupils', such as Canada, Sweden or the Netherlands.

In this context, is self-contentedness called for? This would be the wrong approach, as the Annual Report, which also reveals a number of deficits and failures in German migration and integration policy, makes clear. The following core messages thus mainly focus on areas in which policymakers are required to implement urgently needed reforms. At the same time, the Annual Report also makes clear that measures identified as best practice in other countries cannot be simply transferred into German policy without further thought. Germany needs to instead find its own path which considers the specific circumstances in the country and is guided by the principle of safeguarding the country's future (see Chapter C).



The first six core messages mainly concentrate on different areas of migration policy, whereas the final four pay more attention to integration policy.

## **1. Market Germany's progressive labour market policy in an adequate fashion**

In course of the last few years, and without drawing a great deal of attention to itself, Germany has developed and implemented a progressive, forward looking migration policy (for nationals of third countries), which can easily hold pace with the Canadian immigration regime, which is generally regarded as being exemplary. With the introduction of section 18c of the Residence Act, the large reduction in the minimum period of residence required from EU Blue Card holders wishing to obtain a permanent residence permit and most recently a further opening of the labour market for non-academic skilled migrants, the country has chosen to adopt a hybrid model of labour migrant policy. In this sense, Germany is – at least in legal and institutional sense – well placed in the global competition to attract 'the best people'. This has, however, still not been recognised in all quarters. It is not enough to develop and implement new migration and integration policy; the new measures also need to be made public and the world needs to be told that Germany is a modern country of immigration, whose doors are open to the world's talents. The country thus can and should continue to learn from the classical countries of immigration in terms of marketing its progressive and liberal migration provisions.

As practically all industrialised countries with stagnating or shrinking economies are keen to attract and retain suitably qualified migrants, the need to successfully market Germany to the world will acquire further importance in the future. The competition for qualified personnel will increase and migrants from European countries will no longer provide enough workers for the German labour market. Indeed, the changing demographic situation in Southern, Central and Eastern European EU countries means that these countries' importance as a source of labour for Germany will decline in the future. Germany must therefore also make efforts to convince non-EU nationals that they are welcome and required. A number of political actors, such as the Federal



Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy or the Federal Foreign Office have consequently begun to take up the issue of the recruitment of skilled migrants within the context of their particular area of responsibility. In addition, the online platform [www.make-it-in-germany.com](http://www.make-it-in-germany.com) is increasingly becoming an important first source of information for people considering migrating to Germany. However, these efforts are not sufficient. Germany requires an overarching national agenda on migration (see core message 2), which encompasses both the marketing and a longer-term strategy.

Besides aiming to attract migrants to come to or to remain in Germany, the new conceptual framework must also be explained to the German population and the benefits supposed by an offensive migration policy must be stressed. All political parties represented in the German Federal Parliament and the great majority of civil society actors support the new orientation of the country's migration and integration policy, and differ only as regards small details. This new approach is Germany's answer to a number of challenges facing the country. These include demographic, labour market and socio-political changes coupled with human rights and international law-based obligations. The new approach in migration policy must be explained and regularly substantiated as being a step forward for Germany and as being an unavoidable prerequisite for a sustainable societal development in Germany, Europe and the rest of the world. Whereas policymakers sometimes modify legal provisions in order to bring them into line with societal changes which have long been accepted by much of the general public, the opposite is true as regards migration and integration related issues: while the political and legal framework has already been greatly modified in these policy areas, the support of sections of the population for these modifications must now be obtained. As the Pegida-movement,<sup>1</sup> which emerged relatively suddenly in late 2014, has demonstrated, a more intensive and evidence-based discussion over the economic, cultural, political, social and legal changes together with the opportunities and challenges of migration must be held. German policymakers and politicians need to be active in this field.

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<sup>1</sup> Pegida is the abbreviation for Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West (*Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*), a far right movement formed in late 2014.



*(For further information and recommendations for action see Chapter A.1)*

## **2. Develop a cross-departmental national agenda instead of implementing migration policy 'at a whim'**

A number of improvements have been made to German integration and migration policy, most notably as regards labour migration, in the last few years. Whilst these improvements mean that, in a legal sense, the country has no need to feel ashamed of its migration and integration policy, there is still no discernible 'common thread' running through the various integration and migration related measures. In this context, an overarching plan needs to be developed which encompasses the whole range of migration-related issues. This plan should conceive migration and integration policy as a cross-departmental and holistic task, deal with the issues at hand first and place party-political expediency onto the back-burner. Coordinated migration and integration policies should be implemented which commence at German embassies abroad and end in local communities. This goal can best be achieved by actively involving and integrating a number of different institutional actors into the process. These include the responsible ministries together with employers' associations and trade unions in their role as social partner organisations. They also include further and higher education institutes and research establishments as well as the German regions as responsible bodies for schools together with companies and organisations of civil society.

A practical and rapidly implementable first step would be the creation of an executive committee entrusted with overseeing the design and the structure of an overarching concept on migration and integration. In this committee, the individual areas of operation (such as labour and family migration, refugee and asylum seeker migration, foreign student migration and their stay in the country, recognition of vocational credentials obtained abroad, assistance granted to small and medium sized companies to recruit and integrate migrants etc.) would have to be clearly defined and implementation measures developed. In addition, expert working groups would have to be formed for each individual area of operation. These would then engage with specific



and complex questions, such as the regulation and management of skilled labour migration.

To cite one example: an expert working group could examine the advantages and disadvantages of recruiting non-academic skilled workers for occupations in which a labour shortage exists, something which German migration law permits in some situations. In some specific occupational segments of the German labour market migration appears at first sight to counteract an ascertained shortage of skilled labour without negatively impacting on the earning power or the employment chances of the local (non-immigrant) population. However, it is in practice extremely difficult to identify which occupations suffer from a shortage of skilled workers. Indeed, the absence of relevant data and the lack of satisfactory (long-term) forecasts over labour market developments mean that it is almost impossible to identify occupations which are likely to suffer from a long-term shortage of skilled labour in the future with any degree of certainty. In addition, the factors occasioning a shortage of skilled workers in some occupational branches are also unclear. In this context, the following questions need to be discussed: are shortages of skilled labour caused by wage rigidity, the lack of mobility on the part of the local workforce or merely cyclical fluctuations in production? And, is migration, or the attempt to channel migrants into certain segments of the labour market, in a structural sense beneficial for Germany?

Complex questions such as these cannot be discussed in isolation. They can instead only be satisfactorily answered when embedded in an overarching strategy which considers societal and migration-related issues. A National Migration Action Plan (*Nationaler Aktionsplan Migration, NAM*) could represent a central element in the formulation of a strategy of this nature. An important step in this direction was the formation of the cross-departmental working group of state secretaries on international migration in autumn 2014. This group could and should build the nucleus of the above-mentioned process.

*(For further information and recommendations for action see Chapters A.1, A.2., A.3, A.4)*



### **3. Retain the Blue Card: sustained migration policy is also a task for the entire European Union**

Classical countries of immigration, such as the USA, Canada and Australia, have undeniable advantages recruiting the best skilled migrants. They are perceived – not just because of the language – as being attractive destinations. Highly qualified and migration-willing people from countries such as India, Brazil, China or Vietnam are not sufficiently motivated by the existing European migration management systems – irrespective of their names and their individual peculiarities – to migrate to Germany, Austria or Sweden. One of the great advantages of the American Green Card is that it grants its holder access to a labour market that extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean and from Alaska to Florida.

The introduction of the Blue Card was in this context an important development, as it supposed a European answer to the legal migration opportunities offered by the giants of migrant-targeted labour market policy, such as the USA, Canada or Australia. It is therefore all the more regrettable that the Blue Card, though a success in Germany, has turned out to be a failure in the rest of the continent. More than nine-tenths of all Blue Cards issued in Europe herald from Germany. Other states, while having dutifully introduced the Blue Card, have continued to prioritise their own recruitment instruments, thus placing the Blue Card on the back-burner or completely ignoring it. This approach has undermined the intention coupled with the Blue Card to make the 'immigration continent' Europe more attractive for labour migrants.

In order to strengthen Europe's position as a continent of immigration for highly qualified, internationally-courted migrants, EU member states would be well advised to develop a plan for retaining the Blue Card. These countries should develop a common strategy which makes effective use of the existing European framework for migrant labour while simultaneously considering the specificities of each country's labour market policy. Germany should continue to campaign for the Blue Card at the European Level and should strive to convince other member states that a migration zone containing nearly 30 different regulations is opaque and unattractive.

*(For further information and recommendations for action see Chapter A.1)*



#### **4. Highly qualified migrants are already here: keep foreigners who have studied in Germany in the country**

The migration of foreign students is – put very simply – the perfect form of labour migration. This is because former students become graduates who are not just professionally qualified in a particular field, but have also already started to integrate into society. A country of immigration must make early efforts to retain young foreign talent. Germany has greatly improved both the legal and institutional situation of international students studying at German institutes of higher education and international students' and graduates' labour market access in the last few years. The comparison of the provisions governing former students' entitlement to stay in certain selected countries contained in this report has illustrated that Germany is now one of the more liberal countries in this respect. Furthermore, many graduates indeed want to stay.

However, no reliable data is available documenting the proportion of those graduates wishing to stay in Germany who successfully master the transition from university into the German labour market. The only certainty is that the legal changes implemented in the last few years are not sufficient to ensure that international students find a job matching their credentials following graduation. Foreign graduates in Germany – and also in other countries – thus report facing great challenges mastering the transition into the labour market. These challenges include language problems, the absence of personal and vocational networks and the reluctance of small and medium-sized firms to recruit applicants whose native tongue is not German. These entry barriers can be reduced by providing both international students and prospective employers with more intensive guidance and by organising mentoring programmes. The results of pilot projects carried out in differing university regions offer first glimpses into the measures which positively influence labour market entry chances. Universities, companies, authorities, recruitment agencies (including job centres) and other regional actors are called upon to initiate a labour market entry programme for international students which pays especial attention to the needs of skilled workers. To ensure the success of



such a programme, however, further research needs to be conducted, concrete decisions taken and other issues clarified. In this context, who exactly should take responsibility for developing a labour market entry programme of this nature? And, who is to fund and commission the programme and which body should monitor its progress? Policymakers are called upon to take the lead here.

*(For further information and recommendations for action see Chapter A.2)*

## **5. Refugees and asylum seekers: reconcile Dublin and the principle of free choice**

In no other aspect of the policy area 'migration and integration' are reforms as patently necessary as in the refugee and asylum system. Rising numbers of asylum seekers together with daily images of refugee ships attempting to reach safe European ports demand political action. Particularly the Dublin Regulation, one of the cornerstones of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), is coming increasingly under pressure. This convention determines which country is responsible for processing asylum petitions. It obliges the country through which a refugee has first entered the EU (i.e. the country of first entry) to take responsibility for his asylum petition. Italy, in particular, is suspected of deliberately ignoring this principle and allowing refugees to migrate further north without having first verified their identity. The country has thus, so widely speculated, attempted to acquire indirect compensation for the costs incurred in sea-rescue operations and in initial migrant reception, both of which the country entirely pays for through its own financial means. This inappropriate 'cold boycott' of the Dublin agreement highlights a structural problem in the Common European Asylum System: countries on the external border of the EU are saddled with most of the asylum-related tasks for which all EU-countries are in theory responsible. These tasks include protecting the EU-external borders, carrying out sea-rescue operations, processing and taking in refugees, ensuring refugees' material and physical welfare and processing their asylum petitions. At the same time, this and any other attempts at undermining the Dublin system risk placing asylum and refugee policy once more in the hands of nationalists and thereby renationalising the entire process.



A proposed reform best known as 'free choice' is currently being discussed by opponents of the Dublin scheme. Under this system, the country in which a refugee first enters the EU would no longer be responsible for processing his asylum petition. Refugees would instead be granted the chance to freely select the country in which they wished to lodge their asylum petition.

The SVR suggests a course of action which would enable both the retention of the Dublin principle and its combination with the notion of free choice. It proposes leaving the initial reception of refugees, the processing of asylum claims and the repatriation of failed asylum seekers in the hands of the countries of first entry. However, the SVR recommends providing these countries with guaranteed financial and logistical assistance in order that they are able to undertake a great part of the responsibility for protecting the EU's external borders, for rescuing migrants stranded at sea, for providing refugees with accommodation and for processing individual asylum petitions. In return, the countries of first entry would have to promise to strictly observe the standards laid down in the Common European Asylum System regarding accommodation and the asylum procedure. If this proposal proved to be successful and a similar percentage of asylum petitions were recognised in Southern European countries as in the rest of the continent, a further step could be undertaken: the acknowledgement of the right to freely select a place of residence *after* asylum cases have been concluded. This proposal is new and is not currently envisaged in the European asylum system. Recognised asylum seekers (i.e. people whose asylum petition has been granted) would have the chance to leave the country in which they first entered the EU and migrate to a country of their choice. Recognised asylum seekers would receive a Europe-wide mobility option and thus rights to which they are not currently entitled. This proposal is however contingent on countries adhering to the principles contained in the Dublin Regulation to a greater extent than is currently the case and keeping to the European standards regarding accommodation and the procedure for recognising asylum claims.

The proposed reform would have, if implemented, obvious advantages for member states. Southern European countries, which as 'countries of first entry' bear the bulk of



the responsibility for the initial reception of refugees, would receive on the one hand financial and logistic assistance. They would have on the other a guarantee that at least some of the recognised asylum seekers would migrate further to Northern and Western European countries and be granted residence in these countries. Northern European countries would admit an increased number of people who are entitled asylum, but fewer asylum seekers, seeing as at present Southern European countries export a part of the problems associated with refugees to the north of the continent. The reform would impact on Germany in two ways: whilst there would be fewer asylum applicants in the country, the number of recognised asylum seekers in the country would rise. The latter would also be granted immediate access to the labour market and hence the opportunity to earn their own living.

This solution might appear far-fetched. However, it has become clear in the last few months that the European Union has enormous problems dealing with asylum seekers and refugees, and that less short-term repairs, and more a large-scale reform of the European asylum system is required. This reform should contain measures aimed at combatting the factors obliging people to flee their home countries at the same time as enabling the creation of mobility programmes permitting legal and circular labour migration flows. Germany, as a European political and economic powerhouse, should lead the way in this process and take a far-sighted approach towards developing new strategies which are only implementable in the long and medium-term.

*(For further information and recommendations for action see Chapter A.4)*

## **6. Family migration: do not follow the American example**

While for many countries of immigration the influx of family members of migrants already present in the country (i.e. family migration) represent a central form of migration, the subject does not attract the same media and public interest as other migration flows, such as labour migration, asylum seekers and refugees. However, family migration is in social policy terms highly relevant for three reasons. There is firstly a direct link between measures adopted to regulate family migration and labour migration on the one hand and the connected efforts to attract skilled foreign nationals



on the other. Secondly, authorities are unable to steer family migration by controlling for the credentials of migrants; in this context concerns over the influx of people who are only to a limited extent able to integrate into the German labour market and whose presence generates costs for the social state are always virulently present in the public discourse. Thirdly, the arrival of family members in the host country has a particularly strong integrative and personality-stabilising function for the individuals involved: the social support thus provided can strengthen the societal inclusion of migrants, enhance their sense of wellbeing and as a result contribute to their identification with host society.

The strategy employed by states to regulate family migration is highly dependent on the definition of 'family' employed by the appropriate state. So the USA, which adopts a much broader definition of the family than European countries of immigration and thus appears at first glance to take a more open approach towards this form of migration, shuts itself off by employing a quota-system with extremely long waiting times for potential migrants. This approach contrasts greatly with that employed in the EU-countries, which while employing a more 'narrow' definition of the family unit, attach considerable moral and legal importance to the right of individuals to be reunited with their families in the host country. A family-reunification strategy based on quotas is not planned and would be incompatible with the European Directive on the Right to Family Reunification (2003/86/EC). Further to this, the analysis reveals that even Sweden, which is considered to be especially liberal in many areas of migration and integration policy, introduced measures in 2010 obliging prospective family migrants to provide evidence of minimum earnings and adequate accommodation in the host country.

In the context of demographic changes and an increasing paucity of skilled workers, migrants joining their families in Germany should be granted improved labour market perspectives. Steps must be taken to ensure that family migrants also profit from the enhanced language learning infrastructure and are better able juggle the demands of family and employment, so that especially women can gain access to the labour market. This process should be frequently monitored. It is also important to ensure that the requirement that third-country family migrants demonstrate basic German



language skills positively impacts upon the integration process, and does not hinder migration flows. The newly established exceptional hardship clause, which allows people under certain circumstances to join their partners in Germany without demonstrating knowledge of the German language, is thus to be welcomed. Nevertheless, it should only be employed for people genuinely suffering extreme hardship.

*(For further information and recommendations for action see Chapter A.3)*

## **7. Education policy: prevent the development of an underclass and enable migrants' upward mobility**

Germany insisted for too long that it was not a country of immigration. Political paradigms such as 'fostering migrants' willingness to return home' (*Rückkehrförderung*) or 'short-term migration' (*Migration auf Zeit*) prevented the implementation of integration measures that had long been introduced in other countries of immigration. As a result, the country must now compensate for a lack of forward-planning in the past. For many years, predominately low-qualified migrants were recruited for chiefly menial tasks which were often scorned by the local population, and the German school system (in contrast to, for example, the English, Swedish or Dutch systems) did not enable school children to progress up the educational ladder to the necessary extent. As a result, a new underclass of people from both immigrant and non-immigrant families has developed which is spatially manifest and socially consolidated. These precarious social milieus are multigenerational and are only rarely penetrated or broken up.

The education system is at the heart of state integration policy. The aforementioned vicious circle can only be broken if educational conditions are put in place that enable the upward mobility of young people with migration backgrounds. Further efforts are therefore urgently needed in this area: playschools must be recognised as educational establishments and the acquisition of German language skills must be promoted from an early age, in order that children – irrespective of their citizenship and migration background – are not disadvantaged when starting school. In addition, it is of utmost



importance that complementary German language tuition becomes a standard feature in German schools. This is important so that children with migration backgrounds can continuously improve their German language proficiency – something indispensable in (especially) secondary and tertiary education – throughout their time at school. Trainee teachers and those already in employment should furthermore receive a comprehensive intercultural training which equips them to deal with increasing linguistic, social and cultural diversity in schools. This is especially pertinent as regards dealing with students in the immediate classroom environment and when cooperating with fellow teachers and parents. School lessons and the entire school environment must be planned from an intercultural point of view. As a further measure, children and youths entering the country's school system after the official school entrance age (i.e. because they have previously lived in another country) should receive targeted German-language support. It might also be worth considering allocating special funds to schools which are located in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods and face especially large integrational challenges. The eligibility for this funding could be determined based on an index of social deprivation. This measure might contribute to improving the quality and attractiveness of these schools to such an extent that the ethnic and social mixture of the population has a beneficial impact on processes of school integration. Programmes of this nature should be implemented, but also made subject to a regular evaluation.

*(For further information and recommendations for action see Chapter B.1)*

## **8. Citizenship: modern societies shaped by immigration require a modern citizenship concept**

The purportedly simplistic citizenship concepts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are in a globalised world long since out of date. In order to deal with the challenges posed by increased and increasing spatial mobility, states are attempting to find the right balance between *ius sanguinis* and *ius soli* in their citizenship legislations. As the birthplace and the later place of residence increasingly differ from one another and a sedentary way of life is the less common than in the past, the SVR recommends adopting a new citizenship



concept. This new concept should pay considerably more attention to immigrants' life situation as well as their actual links to their home countries and to host society than has been the case until present.

The SVR recommends a reform of German citizenship legislation consisting of various elements. The first two elements would be comparatively easy to implement: 1) a 'turbo-naturalisation' with reduced minimum residence times for well-integrated migrants and 2) a naturalisation offensive in which the state actively emphasises the benefits of naturalisation, gets in touch with people eligible for naturalisation and encourages them to naturalise. Somewhat more complex is 3) a model already publically advocated by the SVR in 2014. This reform seeks to provide countries of immigration with an adequate response to rising migration and mobility and is, as detailed in this Annual Report, already employed – at least when dealing with nationals living abroad – by some countries widely regarded as having progressive integration policies. This citizenship model would be able to break the dual-passport asymmetry currently contained in German citizenship law. Thus while the current provisions usually confer dual-citizenship on children of foreign citizens born and brought up in the country, they do not grant naturalisation candidates the same opportunity. The legal provisions could be modified without a general and unconditional acceptance of dual-citizenship; the SVR had already rejected this option as a result of legal and democratic-theoretical concerns before first advocating reform in 2014. The SVR recommends instead permitting naturalisation candidates to retain their initial citizenship(s) whilst simultaneously endeavouring to prevent this/these citizenship(s) from being passed on over multiple generations, something currently possible due to the principle of *ius sanguinis* contained in German citizenship legislation. The country should thus introduce a 'generational cut-off' (i.e. prevent people from a certain generation onwards from automatically acquiring the relevant foreign citizenship) in negotiation with the most important countries of origin. Both Germany and other countries such as Canada and Sweden already employ a 'generational cut-off' with respect to their own citizens living abroad. Germany should consequently promote this mechanism, which the country already employs when dealing with its own citizens



abroad, in negotiations with important countries of origin of migrants, and thus tailor its citizenship legislation to the needs and reality of the 'age of migration'.

Although citizenship legislation is entirely in the hands of the nation states and the EU has no competences in this field, state policy on this issue does have a European dimension. This is because the citizenship of the European Union and the associated entitlements which go with it are also acquired with the passport of an EU-member state. Against this background not just the 'citizenship for sale' policy pursued by Malta and Portugal, which have recently come to public attention, but also the extreme divergences between the naturalisation requirements in individual EU-states should be critically seen. An increased cooperation between EU-states on this issue, perhaps in the form of countries agreeing to set their naturalisation requirements within agreed parameters, would here be helpful.

*(For further information and recommendations for action see Chapter B.4)*

## **9. Terminology: employ more sensitive terms and retain established statistical criteria**

A detailed consideration of migrants' chances of societal participation and of their perceptions of belonging first became possible with the introduction of the category 'persons with a migration background' in the 2005 micro-census. The criticism of the new category formulated by both migrants and academics attests to the term's ambivalence. Indeed, the term has acquired a negative connotation among large sections of the German population and has gradually become a type of 'catch-all' term used to refer to all 'problematic population groups' and 'people in need of support'. However, in order to ascertain the extent to which certain migrant groups suffer from systematic discrimination, it is necessary to collate information about their migration status and that of their parents' generation. This is because measures aimed at managing diversity and enabling a greater proportion of the migrant population to participate in, and identify with German society can only be developed if these categories have first been measured and explicated.



The German category 'person with migration background' has no genuine role models and has not been imitated in other countries. Whereas tendencies towards convergence can be observed in many other fields of migration and integration policy and country-specific differences are gradually dissolving, there continue to be large differences in the terminology used (by states) to refer to migrants and migration-related issues. The two most extreme positions are marked by the French republican tradition on the one hand and the Anglo-Saxon tradition on the other: whilst societal differences relevant for the migration discussion have scarcely been mentioned in the French public discourse, an increasing amount of information about migration-relevant features and social groups is collected in Anglo-Saxon countries. The SVR does not regard either of these models as being a genuine option for Germany. Instead, it recommends retaining the category 'migration background' as a useful statistical category. In addition, the SVR also considers it to be of the utmost importance that inclusive, and not exclusive terminologies and narratives are developed which highlight the role which migration has played in shaping German society. This migration narrative should thus critically examine the terminology employed in the public discourse to refer to migration- and integration-related issues in the past. In doing so, special attention should be paid to the 'guest worker' policies adopted in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A positively charged migration narrative of this nature can help firstly to prevent the spread of nationalism, particularism and populist movements seeking to exclude minorities and secondly to construct a society which is fit for future challenges and attractive for immigrants.

*(For further information and recommendations for action see Chapters B.5, B.6)*

## **10. Tenacity and patience: integration processes are inter-generational processes**

While widely-heard phrases such as 'rights and responsibilities' and 'integration is not a one-way street' may appear to be worn out due to their omnipresence in political discussions, the media and the public arena, they nevertheless draw attention to a crucial aspect of integration discourse: integration is not special or clientele policy



aimed merely at a small proportion of the population. Instead, both sections of society – the immigrant and the native populations – should be addressed and activated as part of the process of integration.

This strategy of granting migrants a series of rights on the one hand and expecting them to actively contribute to their societal integration on the other is currently employed in all European countries of immigration. This method seeks to provide individuals with the ability to be economically autonomous and free of state assistance (in short: self-determination). In order to achieve this 'liberal' aim, liberal states are also making use of predominately 'illiberal' methods, such as compelling migrants to attend language and integration courses and threatening to suspend welfare payments if they do not cooperate. Nevertheless, it is clear that the state must remain within the fundamentally liberal coordinates which modern democratic countries have given themselves; i.e. the aim of state migration policy must not be to assimilate migrants, but instead to enable all parts of society to participate as equal members of a free and democratic community.

The combination of supporting and demanding is the common thread running through integration policy currently employed by European countries of immigration. This approach marks a transition from a period in which integration policy was shaped by illusions and technical master plans to one characterised by a process-oriented political pragmatism. However, such integration processes require time and are often cross-generational projects, and success is not immediately measurable. People believing that migrants become 'Germans' – whatever one might understand under the term – in a few months or years have not learned anything from the history of migration and integration.

All immigration societies are characterised by increasing heterogeneity. They have to free themselves from the illusion that migrants are merely guests in the country, and they have to accept – also in terms of the termini they employ – that people whose families have lived in the host country for several generations are no longer migrants. With time, migrants gradually become Germans, although not as members of a community of ethnic descent, but as German residents who possess the same rights



and duties as the autochthonous population and are committed to the country. While they will have heterogeneous ethnic backgrounds and possibly different skin colours, they all form part of this pluralistic society. Society has always been pluralistic, and modern society merely adopts an increasingly plural and differentiated form. This increasing plurality does not destabilise society as long as a solid foundation of generally binding values together with a commitment to society, to the principle of mutual consent, the rule of law and to freedom and liberty are present. In a perfect situation, the constant struggle to achieve these goals can itself contribute towards generating social cohesion.

*(For further information and recommendations for action see Chapters B.2, B.3, B.6)*