



## Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration

### 15 core messages of the annual report 2010

Society and economy, politics, culture and various aspects of social life are being transformed by the immigration society's dynamics and, in turn, influence these in their own distinctive way. The following core messages are based on findings of the annual report and the SVR's Integration Barometer. They represent starting points for trend tracking, impact assessments, descriptions and evaluations.

1. **Migration Country:** Germany is a demographically shrinking and ageing migration country with a high degree of transnational, in particular, inner-European mobility. A migration balance with a trend towards equilibrium implies that the immigration and emigration rates are roughly the same. Today, Germany is neither a country of immigration nor of emigration, but a migration country that lies in the statistical mean between immigration and emigration country.
2. **Immigration Society:** An immigration society is developing within the boundaries of the migration country. For demographic reasons, its heterogeneity continues to grow dynamically despite the decrease in immigration.
3. **Migrant Backgrounds:** An immigration society consists of different generations of immigrants and very diverging experiences with integration. This has generated multifaceted and internally split *Erinnerungskulturen* (memory cultures) which often differ from the native population and on which assessments of the current situation and future expectations are based.
4. **Accomplishments in Integration:** By international comparison, integration in Germany has by no means failed. In fact, the degree of integration is quite satisfactory or even good for many empirically measurable variables. Moreover, both sides of the immigration society have a pragmatic and positive approach to immigration and integration. The basic elements of Germany's migration and integration policies hardly differ from those of its European neighbours.
5. **Elite Discourse:** The published elite discourses on the crisis and failure of integration, on the one hand, and the marginalisation and exclusion of the immigrant population, on the other, seem to have little in common with the everyday realities of the immigration society.
6. **Mainstream:** Following a long period of denial ('The Federal Republic of Germany is not an immigration country'), integration and migration have finally entered the political mainstream. Much has been achieved. Yet some political initiatives even if declared priorities remain quite remote for the addressees.
7. **Potential for Tension:** Due to the historical neglect of both integration and integration policy, distributional conflicts over scarce resources (work, income, public space, social status) today assume an ethnic component with a growing potential for social tension.
8. **Integration as Participation:** An essential feature of social peace in an immigration society is the acknowledgement that integration means equal participation to the furthest extent possible in key areas of social life. In an immigration society, which is becoming increasingly heterogeneous for other reasons as well, the criterion migrant background is only one among many socioeconomic indicators that denotes a potential need for assistance. It must however be allocated sufficient importance until it can be replaced by criteria related to milieu-specific needs. We have not yet arrived at this point.
9. **Education is the Primary Challenge of Integration Policy:** In addition to many other unfinished tasks related to integration in the immigration society, significant challenges continue to exist in the area of education. One can neither yet speak of equal educational opportunities nor of equal educational attainment between youths with and without a migrant background. One



underlying reason for this is at the same time also a paradox: The native as well as the immigrant population associates mostly positive personal experiences with ethnic heterogeneity in schools, but has a largely negative perception of the performance of schools in an ethnically diverse setting.

10. **Migration and Social Reform:** In a welfare state with a demographically shrinking and ageing population, increasing emigration and decreasing immigration of working age individuals intensifies the pressure for social welfare system reform. The welfare state, however, derives a considerable degree of its political legitimacy from the success of redistributive economic and social intervention. The intensified need for drastic social reforms due to changes in migration patterns therefore raises profound legitimacy problems.
11. **Human Resource Problems of 'Enterprise Germany':** Germany has both a quantitative as well as qualitative migration problem. Consequently, in addition to an education and qualification campaign, Germany must pursue a proactive immigration policy internally, become more attractive for qualified immigrants, but also convince those potential emigrants, who are qualified and contribute to the welfare state, to remain in Germany.
12. **Immigrants without Citizenship:** The increasing gap between citizens and denizens poses a serious risk for the quality of democracy in an immigration society. Persuading immigrants to accept German citizenship must today be considered a fundamental German interest in a country that for a long time resisted becoming an immigration country. Germany can no longer choose its de facto immigrants, but can only invite them to become de jure immigrants.
13. **The Option Model as a Dead End Street:** The option model was an emergency compromise with ill-conceived consequences. It should be replaced by a five-year interim solution, which grants dual citizenship to all individuals who submit an application. Concurrently, immigrants from third countries who have grown old in Germany should be offered dual citizenship. During the transition period, a new overall solution is to be developed that meets the challenges of the immigration society and the related heterogenisation of the population without, however, concealing the legal problems associated with the phenomenon of multiple nationalities.
14. **Migration and Humanitarian Issues:** Admitting refugees is a humanitarian duty. The interests of the receiving country determine the legal admission of economic migrants. Due to the existence to some extent of fluid boundaries between economic and refugee migration, an appropriate investigation of migration motives is necessary. Nation states that are overwhelmed by an influx of refugees end up managing the fate of the refugees at their disadvantage. In the long term, only European concepts can effectively deal with the worldwide increase in refugee migration and offer solutions that comply with humanitarian principles.
15. **Misguidance and Control Errors:** Migration, integration and the immigration society are dimensions with a high degree of social momentum, in which the economic and social consequences are difficult to conceive on a time axis. Legal and political interventions must, therefore, always bear in mind the limitations with reference to the shaping of the immigration society, the dangers of misguidance, of unintended consequences and of unintentional deprivation. A fairly modest combination of a flexible, concept-oriented and pragmatic design is more effective and sustainable in this regard than an overarching long-term scheme, where failure to meet the targets is directly linked with substantial social costs.