



## 10 Core Messages of the Annual Report 2012

Integration is making headway in Germany. Integration policy has gained intensive momentum at the federal, Länder (federal state) and municipal levels. Active acceptance of cultural diversity has stabilised at the centre of the immigration society, somewhere between a cautious yet optimistic attitude towards integration and a critical yet pragmatic view. Beyond this, there are xenophobic and especially anti-Islamic currents which, while conspicuous, still remain on the periphery. Advantage should be taken of the acceptance of the growing diversity in the immigration society to push through legal, institutional and political reforms. Efforts at reform, however, face a dual problem quite apart from any conflicting interests that may exist between the political parties.

### Core message 1:

**Integration – unclear observation field that requires a complex approach**

**On the one hand, one integration model for one society simply does not exist. The SVR thus assumes that integration is understood as being oriented around different areas of society and participation in it: the SVR defines integration as the empirically measurable participation in key areas of social life. Integration spans early childhood education, schooling, professional training and access to economic life, the labour market in particular, through to the social welfare system and all the way to (status-dependent) political participation.** It explicitly involves people

with and without a migration background. Consistent with its mandate, the SVR, for its part, focuses on the group with a migration background. Accordingly, the SVR sees promoting integration as endeavouring to achieve equal participation in the key areas of social life.

To obtain an empirically reliable basis for analyses and evaluations, the complex and unclear field of integration must be broken down into individual areas that can be captured in statistics. Diversity, complexity and constant change, the core elements of integration in the immigration society, will not become more straightforward through selective analyses alone. As a result, they must be continuously combined and recombined to create an overall picture with specific areas of focus. This is one of the goals of the SVR annual report – the third after the 2010 annual report which focused on integration ("Immigration Society 2010") and the 2011 annual report which focused on migration ("Migration Country 2011").

*(For more information and recommendations for action, see Chaps. 1, 3, 4 and 5.)*

### Core message 2:

**Integration policy – complexity in the multi-level governance system**

**Germany, on the other hand, does not have one single integration policy. Instead, responsibilities for integration policy, with different legal and political definitions, exist at federal, Länder and local level. These are distinct from one another yet still overlap in some areas.** The actors in the political sphere and in government



agencies pursue their own, often very different, integration policy agendas at these three levels. The discussion about integration policy in Germany usually overlooks the fact that, in a federal system, it is not possible to have a uniform integration policy due to the plurality of actors at these various levels. Ambiguities and misinterpretations in people's perceptions of Germany's integration policy thus often arise from a lack of insight into the complex and unclear federal multi-level governance system which also serves as the structural framework for integration policy. This is the starting point for the SVR's 2012 Integration Barometer.

*(For more information and recommendations for action, see Chap. 6.)*

### Core message 3:

**Integration and integration policy – the positive and negative sides of federalism**

**In terms of integration policy, the federal system, which also grants the municipalities the right to self-government, has both a positive and a negative side, as is the case in other areas: on the positive side, it gives the municipalities relative institutional freedom to take action vis-à-vis the central government.** At best, this could create a kind of "test lab": actors at the Länder and municipal level try out concepts and measures and, if successful, they can be implemented elsewhere where similar conditions exist. But these types of ideal expectations don't usually have much to do with reality.

The negative side of the federal multi-level governance system is particularly evident when it comes to integration policy. The uncoordinated cooperation between, or even just the side-by-side existence of, various political actors has resulted in extremely varied

individual integration policy measures which often reinvent the wheel over and over again. **Differences in logic, scope and complexity of integration policy measures but also party-political tinges can mean that the transformative potential of federal structures is only insufficiently used, does not lead to productive synergy effects in everyone's interest or is stifled in reciprocal blockades.** This is particularly true when administratively higher-ranking decision-making bodies have to reach a unanimous consensus (e.g. all Länder have to vote in favour) and thus remain at the lowest common denominator despite a shared awareness of the need for extensive reforms and/or when the mutual approval and coordination required to implement the necessary measures is not achieved. **In this way, the federal system can also tend toward political sclerosis with rigid and reform-resistant structures. It can also, however, give rise to an unclear and uncoordinated variety of policies that even stray from the set goal of equal living conditions.** This finding is exacerbated by the widely different financial resources available to the Länder and municipalities (see also the examples in Chap. 8). The municipalities are often assigned the crucial role in the integration process. While the importance of the municipalities in this context must be recognised and help them live up to their responsibility in the area of integration, at the same time, care must be taken to not see "municipalisation", or shifting decision-making powers from the Länder level to the municipalities, something that is happening much too fast and is called for across the board, as a cure-all for integration problems.

*(For more information and recommendations for action, see Chaps. 1, 4 and 6.)*



#### Core message 4:

### **Integration in practice – not enough synergy effects in the decision-making, financing and implementing bodies**

*Employment agencies:* How radical "municipalisation" can lead to excessive complexity and a counterproductive increase in the plurality of actors in the federal system can be seen in the example of the employment agency reform which is also significant for integration policy. With the reform of Book II of the German Social Code (Sozialgesetzbuch - SGB II), basic social security benefits were consolidated and the responsibility for managing them given to new social welfare offices. The bodies overseeing these new offices are the German Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit - BA) along with the self-governing towns or cities for which working groups will be set up. The reform also alternatively provided for purely local responsibility (known as Optionskommunen, or local municipalities that have the option of taking full responsibility for the supervision of welfare recipients in their communities). Any attempts on the part of municipalities to go it alone in job placement thus compete with the cooperation models that are in place between the federal government and municipalities. The SVR has described this plurality and had it empirically analysed on the basis of an external evaluation. This analysis arrives at a surprising conclusion: cooperation solutions in which the federal government works together with the municipalities to organise labour market integration are more successful particularly among jobseekers with a migration background than organisational forms that are implemented purely at local level (see Chap. 4).

*Social housing:* The situation is also complex in this area. The federal government exercised its right to

concurrent legislation until the reform of the federal system (2006) and incorporated the key measures into laws (Housing Act (Wohnungsbaugesetz), Promotion of Social Housing (soziale Wohnraumförderung)). Following the reform of the federal system, the legislative power for promoting social housing was transferred completely to the Länder. However, the federal law on the promotion of social housing continues to be valid as long as it is not replaced by a law at Länder level. Most of the Länder have passed their own social housing laws in the meantime. Most of these laws strengthen municipal responsibility for promoting social housing. Since the reform of the federal system, however, the Länder are also required to take into account the housing needs of the municipalities. They, in turn, have to come up with housing supply concepts in order to receive subsidies. Supplying housing to the population – both with and without a migration background – is thus part of a complex and inconsistent structure of responsibilities at the federal, Länder and municipal levels, all of which also carry out their own strategies and measures without always coordinating them with one another. Some municipalities also have their own housing or housing associations and try to limit ethnic or social segregation or concentration and to encourage the development of specific city districts by means of formal or informal quota rules. Other municipalities don't think much of these strategies, cannot afford these kinds of activities from a budgetary standpoint or even deny the actual existence of these problems in their communities. While some municipalities have integration success stories and others just muddle through with a weak concept or none at all, there are also implementation obstacles, financial hurdles and even paralysing perception problems.

*School education:* One of the core elements of the Länder's autonomy is their Kulturhoheit, or independence in internal



cultural and educational affairs, which firmly places responsibility, particularly for school education, in their hands. These responsibilities include defining types of schools, setting teaching and educational objectives, defining course content and class distribution as well as setting performance and testing requirements for students and training future teachers. The municipalities, on the other hand, are basically responsible for external school affairs, in other words, constructing, maintaining, changing and closing schools and for providing the material resources they need, such as classroom equipment. For example, if a municipality wants to set up more all-day schools in its area of responsibility because they expect this move to encourage integration on a practical level, the municipality has to raise its own funds to provide the buildings needed and hire administrative personnel. At the same time, however, it needs approval from the Land which bears the personnel costs for teachers and other pedagogical staff.

*Early childhood education:* The situation for early childhood education, which can also have a considerable impact on the practical side of integration, is completely different. In legal terms, early childhood education, in contrast to school education, does not fall under the government's educational mandate. This is reflected, on the one hand, in the fact that nursery school (Kindertagesstätte - Kita) attendance is voluntary. On the other hand, as the legislator, it is not just the federal government that is responsible but also the Länder for out-of-school care of children and young people and thus also for day care programmes. The federal government exercised its right to concurrent legislation, among other things, by adopting Book VIII of the German Social Code (Sozialgesetzbuch - SGB VIII). The scope and content of the respective functions and services are, however, regulated in more detail by laws at Länder level. According to legislation at Länder

level, the functions and services are then assigned in turn to the counties or cities and, in some cases, to communities that are part of counties. Nursery school operation is financed by the Länder and municipalities, the federal government is only responsible for investment costs.

**A glance at how integration is practised in the relevant individual areas shows that, in many cases, the decision-making, financing and implementing bodies do not work in sync with one another in the federal multi-level governance system and can even have a counterproductive impact by drifting apart. This makes integration policy measures more difficult and makes the need for vigorous reform evident.**

*(For more information and recommendations for action, see Chaps. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9.)*

#### **Core message 5:**

#### **The German federal government – laggard in integration policy**

The federal government only discovered the issue of integration quite late in the day and, to quote the German Federal President in 2006, Horst Köhler, really "overslept". The defensive refusal to acknowledge reality – "Germany is not a migration country" – remained the recurring mantra of political actors mainly at federal level for decades, guiding their actions and resistance. It blocked the proactive creation of a reality-based and simultaneously concept-oriented structure for integration issues at an early stage. The result was an unnecessary backlog of problems that left formative historic marks and prevented a centrally coordinated integration policy from being established with the respective institutions at federal level for a long time. It has only been in the last decade that the federal government has gone to great lengths to enhance its integration expertise. The



Immigration Act (Zuwanderungsgesetz - ZuwG) that came into force in 2005 gave the state an important integration policy instrument with the integration courses. The courses are managed centrally and coordinated down to the local level by regional coordinators from the successor to the Federal Office for the Recognition of Foreign Refugees (Bundesamt für die Anerkennung ausländischer Flüchtlinge), the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge - BAMF), that could have been more aptly called the "Federal Office for Migration and Integration" to more accurately reflect the focus of the issues it works on. But admittedly, this initiative also came more than a quarter of a century too late because the largest waves of immigration to Germany, which also played a key role in shaping the immigrant population, already occurred in the previous decades.

In addition, the federal government retains centralised controlling powers to control policy fields, which, even though they do not only affect people with a migration background, are still critical to successful integration. The state maintains these controlling powers in the areas of the labour market, the welfare system, the economy and domestic affairs and thus in different departments and government agencies. It would make sense to coordinate integration policy measures more effectively at the level of these departments. At present, coordination is inadequate. Even though an inter-ministerial working group for integration has been appointed and integration has become a focus to a varying degree in almost all the ministries affected or separate departments have been created, these are merely band-aids added on as afterthoughts whose functionality is not anchored institutionally and thus remains dependent on the actors and their willingness to approach one another. Also involved are the Minister of State in the Federal Chancellery who is responsible for

migration, refugees and integration and the central Federal Office for Migration and Refugees mentioned above, which does not report to the Minister of State in the Federal Chancellery but to the Federal Ministry of the Interior (Bundesministerium des Innern). **The complex institutional structure needs to be clarified and a coherent and concept-oriented integration policy with clear goals that are transparent to citizens must be defined.** The environment is favourable: the critical yet pragmatic attitude of citizens captured in the SVR Integration Barometer not only makes it possible to come up with these kinds of conceptual, political responses, people demand them.

*(For more information and recommendations for action, see Chaps. 1, 2, 6 and 9.)*

#### **Core message 6:**

#### **The Länder – less efficiency as a result of overlapping powers**

The Länder are the key integration policy actors in Germany. Their prominent position in this field of activity is structurally determined by the federal system. This role was strengthened by the decades-long lethargy in integration policy at the federal level that also coloured the situation in some Länder due to party-political interests. Traditionally, the Länder have autonomy over cultural and educational affairs and thus the central power to structure the educational realm which is of central importance to integration. The reform of the federal system that took place in 2006 further strengthened their role as key actors in education and integration policy. As a result of the newly introduced ban on cooperation, the federal government no longer has the power to act in matters involving general school education. But even with their core competence in relation to integration policy – education



policy – the Länder may not make autonomous decisions; when it comes to questions about school education, they are dependent on the municipalities as school providers and on the federal government in the area of early childhood education. In addition, different federal requirements exist for other areas relevant to integration policy such as recognising qualifications acquired abroad, encouraging language proficiency in German and implementing immigration management.

The specific integration policy measures of the Länder themselves are also dependent on the different financial means they have at their disposal. It is thus difficult or even impossible to uphold high quality standards at Länder level in this area. **The Länder are thus key integration policy actors. However, because they are embedded in a complex multi-level governance system with different, and in some cases overlapping, decision-making powers and responsibilities it makes fulfilling their integration policy tasks efficiently and systematically more difficult.**

*(For more information and recommendations for action, see Chaps. 1 and 2.)*

#### Core message 7:

**The municipalities – too little recognition despite successful integration work**

The municipalities have the longest and most in-depth experience with integration in the federal system of the Federal Republic of Germany. They often felt justifiably, that they have been left on their own as is currently the case with the issue of how to deal with the mandatory integration of Roma immigrants from Romania and Bulgaria as members of EU states, an issue that has been insufficiently clarified at federal and

Länder level. The municipalities were in no position to engage in lengthy and paralysing fundamental discussions about whether or not Germany is an immigration country because they were forced to pragmatically resolve concrete integration problems at a local level often without the assistance of the federal government and the Länder. This applied completely independently of the question of whether they themselves even considered these kinds of local challenges to be integration or not. This assessment has consequences for how people in local communities and in the wider public perceive the municipality's commitment to integration as shown by the SVR's 2012 Integration Barometer: while significantly more than half of all those surveyed without a migration background and almost two-thirds of those surveyed with a migration background perceive that the federal government and Länder are actively committed to integration policy, local politicians are far less frequently perceived as active in integration policy (37% and 50% respectively). **In contrast to symbolically charged and high-profile concepts and measures introduced by the federal government and Länder and running under the lofty label of state integration policy, the successful and pragmatic integration work carried out by the municipalities with their diverse initiatives is often not even perceived by citizens as integration policy unless these activities and the events that go along with them are expressly labelled as such by mayors or integration officials. The contribution made to integration by the municipalities measured in terms of their success receives little or no recognition.**

In addition, successful integration at local level always remains inconspicuous. Only unsuccessful integration in the shape of integration problems attracts a lot of attention, which



is then often transferred to an entire place. For example, the integration problems in the ethnically diverse districts of Berlin, Kreuzberg or Nordneukölln, are transferred to Berlin as a whole.

*(For more information and recommendations for action, see SVR Integration Barometer and 9.)*

### **Core message 8:**

#### **Integration policy at local level – strengthening networks and learning from one another**

As already mentioned, a wide range of integration policy concepts and measures exist at the local level but there are also measures without concepts and even concepts without sufficient measures. Municipalities can create integration-friendly environments. They can, to name just a few examples, prevent or defuse conflicts in city districts through mediation, management and structural investments and ensure a mix in urban areas that encourages integration; they can expand early childhood and school education as a whole and target schools in disadvantaged city districts with funding; push for more all-day care of children and young people, also to compensate for the negative effects of socialisation in less-educated households; they can involve migration organisations in designing integration policy concepts, etc.

**The municipal actors in integration policy have to resist the danger of barricading themselves in their own areas of responsibility, separate from the Basic Law, federal and Länder laws, and trying to reinvent the wheel for themselves behind this wall. A central service agency for municipal integration policy could be helpful here.** Its functions would revolve around vertical and horizontal networking, information transfer and accompanying advice in applying concepts and models tested

elsewhere. This kind of service agency could fulfil coordinating functions similar to the German Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit - BA), which has regional offices for labour market policy. A new agency could be created. Alternatively, a clearly cheaper option would be to connect it to existing institutions such as the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees or the local government office for municipal administration (Kommunale Gemeinschaftsstelle für Verwaltungsmanagement - KGSt).

*(For more information and recommendations for action, see Chaps. 6, 7, 8 and 9.)*

### **Core message 9:**

#### **Proactive integration policy – more synergy effects and greater efficiency in the federal multi-level governance system**

The issue of integration policy once again attracted a lot of political attention at the federal level in 2011. However, the momentous delay, which Germany has already become notorious for in its history of structuring policies and laws in this area, has continued. The situation regarding migration in 2005 with respect to the Immigration Act and the establishment of a central migration agency with its nationwide standardised and coordinated integration courses still applies today, e.g. in the area of integration with respect to the Recognition Act (Anerkennungsgesetz) that facilitates and accelerates the process of assessing and recognising professional qualifications acquired abroad. This legal initiative which people have been calling for in vain for a long time is extremely relevant to integration policy but comes ten years too late – too late for many hundreds of thousands of well-qualified and, in some cases, highly qualified immigrants who have long since built up substitute careers



far below their qualification level or have retired as taxi drivers or caretakers.

**Until Germany frees itself from the cycle of reciprocal blockades and delayed learning processes largely brought about by party politics, the costs of delayed investments in integration policy will be disproportionately high and their effects disproportionately limited. It will no longer be possible to recover from the historic delays arising from a lack of proactive policies. Reactive band-aid policies can only try to confine the resulting – preventable and thus unnecessary – social and fiscal costs that usually require a disproportionately high amount of effort and have a relatively minor impact.** The idea is to learn from the costs caused by historic delays and push for a proactive integration policy. At the same time, it is necessary to eliminate the traces of institutional tensions and blockades at and between the levels of the federal system in integration policy matters, to shift from uncoordinated side-by-side efforts to productive collaboration in everyone's interest and to improve ineffective vertical and horizontal networks. This should make it possible to successfully limit the negative sides of the federal multi-level governance system and foster its positive sides by capitalising on more synergy effects and greater efficiency.

*(For more information and recommendations for action, see Chap. 6.)*

### **Core message 10:**

**Civil society – more progressive than politicians with a critical yet pragmatic attitude towards integration**

Even though Germany has lagged behind considerably in integration policy over the last few years compared to the municipal

level, it has made decisive headway at the federal and, in some cases, the Länder level. This progress is also confirmed by the federal government's second Integration Indicator Report. Proactive, concept-oriented activities are, however, despite many political proclamations and appeals, still a foreign word in concrete integration policy.

This leads to disappointment and irritation among the citizens living in Germany's immigration society. Their pragmatic insight into the problems is often underestimated by politicians who believe that they are protecting their citizens from their own fears about migration and integration in a kind of kindergarten for adults. But the citizens of the immigration society have a lot more clarity with their critical yet pragmatic attitude towards integration than politicians believe. More harshly put: citizens have thoroughly mature ideas that should put politicians under pressure to take action.

The SVR 2011 Migration Barometer has already showed that the majority of the population with and without a migration background in Germany (almost 60%) is in favour of more immigration of highly qualified professionals. An even higher percentage (almost 70%) is against more immigration of low-skilled workers. And almost half (just under 50%) of Germans without a migration background and approx. 40 per cent of respondents with a migration background are in favour of accepting more refugees, only one-third objects. If – in terms of ideas about a population that supposedly tends toward hysteria and panic when it comes to migration and integration – this is not a relatively predictable or even reliable basic mood indicator for reforms in migration and refugee policy, serious questions would then have to be asked about what this basic mood should be.

A similar relaxed and positive basic attitude towards integration can also be found in the results of the 2012





Integration Barometer presented here, which has been conducted for the second time. They confirm a trend already validated by the 2010 Integration Barometer (conducted at the end of 2009) and the 2011 Migration Barometer (conducted at the end of 2010): **in many respects, the population is much farther along in migration and integration policy than politicians believe and doesn't let itself be misled by heated discussions about integration.** Instead, the two main attitudes that dominate the 2012 Integration Barometer (conducted at the end of 2011) on both sides of the immigration society are a critical yet pragmatic mindset about integration and a cautious yet optimistic mindset. This is expressed not only based on the continued high approval of integration policy and correspondingly positive future expectations: around 50 per cent of respondents with and without a migration background in eastern and western Germany acknowledge and expect successful integration processes; only between 10 and 20 per cent of respondents see or expect a deterioration. This is an indication that the mutual perceptions of the interest in and willingness to integrate have remained stable at a high level. The Index on the Integration Climate (IIC) arrives at a similar conclusion. Conducted for the first time at the end of 2009 and published in 2010, it captured the extremely varied experiences of integration by both sides of the immigration society in various areas on a scale of 0 (minimum value, i.e. worst

integration climate) to 4 (maximum value, i.e. best integration climate): in 2012 it remains largely stable at 2.66 for the native population and 2.87 for the migrant population. The panicked debates about integration that were observed in different areas in 2010 in Germany have thus not resulted in a fundamental shift in the integration climate. A high level of calm and willingness to invest in integration prevails at the centre of the immigration society. Intermittent cloudy periods at the edges of the opinion spectrum that became apparent in the 2011 Migration Barometer as to the question of an untroubled coexistence of people with and without a migration background, for example, have turned out to represent only a snapshot in time and not a long-term phenomenon.

**The majority of the population thus has a much more clear-sighted viewpoint than many political actors appear to believe. A pragmatic yet cautiously positive integration climate continues to prevail in the immigration society despite all the disruptions from the right-wing fringe and vis-à-vis individual groups. Politicians should boldly use this climate to bring about other conceptual and institutional reforms at, and most importantly, between the levels of the federal multi-level governance system.**

*(For more information and recommendations for action, see Chap. SVR Integration Barometer, 6 and 9.)*