



## SVR Integration Barometer 2012

### Summary

Integration has been the subject of intense discussion in the last two years. To date, it has been unclear as to whether the debates, some of which have been polemic and disparaging, have changed the integration climate in Germany's immigration society and mutual perceptions of who is responsible for integration. This is the question raised by the 2012 Integration Barometer compared to the results of the 2010 Integration Barometer and the 2011 Migration Barometer. The 2012 annual report focuses on integration and integration policy in the federal multi-level governance system and it takes a special look at the municipalities. The final third of the 2012 Integration Barometer therefore examines the positive and negative sides of integration at a local level (info box: Comments on the methodology used in the SVR Integration Barometer).

Politically speaking, 2011 was both a good and bad year for integration policy: even though this year's media and political discussions were often extraneous, populist and polemic, they ultimately increased the sociopolitical importance attached to integration policy and raised public awareness about this issue even more. There was reason to fear that prominently placed media articles that issued divisive warnings and even made sweeping generalisations about the ability of individual migrant groups to integrate could have caused long-term damage to the climate in the immigration society. The Integration Barometer shows that these fears have proven unfounded. Despite some upheaval on the fringes of society as noted in the Migration Barometer in 2010, the positive and pragmatic integration climate among the broadly based centre of the immigration society, which was first measured in 2009, was reinforced in 2011.

- 1) This stability can be seen, on the one hand, in people's perception of integration policy: 47.6 per cent of respondents from the migrant population in western Germany believe that the integration policy of the last five years has encouraged integration; only 17.6 per cent feel that the situation has deteriorated. Among the native population, more than half of those surveyed (53.4%) even felt that integration policy had made a positive contribution while only around one in ten respondents (10.4%) rated its impact as negative. In terms of what is expected from policy in the future, the Barometer values for 2011 were much higher even than the figures for 2009. Currently, more than half of respondents with and without a migration background (54.5% and 56.9% respectively) expect policy to improve integration while only a small minority fears a change for the worse (15.9% and 12.1% respectively).
- 2) A similar picture emerges for mutual perceptions of the willingness to integrate. The population remains cautiously optimistic but expresses much stronger opinions: on the one hand, the group of people with a pessimistic attitude about integration (who believe either that the other side has no interest in integration or even that both sides are uninterested) grew moderately. While only 32.0 per cent of respondents



from the native population perceived a lack of interest in integration among the migrant population in the first wave of the Integration Barometer (2009), for example, this figure increased to 40.7 per cent in 2011. In a similar trend, far more people with a migration background (25.0%) think that the native population is not willing to contribute to integration compared to two years ago (20.1%). On the other hand, the number of people optimistic about integration remained stable (e.g. 45.3% of the native population in response to the question about the willingness of migrants to integrate and almost 68 per cent of migrants in response to the question of the native population's interest in integration). In contrast, the number of people who don't feel capable of assessing the willingness of one side or the other to integrate in the immigration society fell considerably. This is an indication that the integration climate has not deteriorated but that the native and migrant populations have concerned themselves more with the issue of integration and have simultaneously formed stronger opinions.

- 3) Integration has also gained in significance in the public debate: more respondents have formed an opinion about integration issues and increasing numbers of people consider integration an important task. Mutual feelings of responsibility increased substantially from 2009 to 2011. In particular, the native population's own sense of responsibility for integration rose by 17.3 per cent. The percentages of respondents with no opinion about integration issues have generally declined.
- 4) The immigration society is in agreement about a negative bias in the public debate on integration: more than 50 per cent of those surveyed both with and without a migration background in eastern and western Germany complain that the debate about integration was "more often than not" negative or "much too" negative. Following the integration discussions last year, many feared polarisation, i.e. that people without a migration background would complain that integration problems were being glossed over while migrants would withdraw to their own groups, frustrated by the negative and divisive coverage in the media. This polarisation of the immigration society did not materialise. One-third of respondents with a migration background even think that the public debate about integration is too positive. These figures are slightly lower among the native population at 28.5 per cent in western Germany and 30.2 per cent in eastern Germany.
- 5) The 2012 Integration Barometer makes it possible to compare eastern and western Germany for the first time. It shows that the integration climate between the migrant and native populations is perceived to be slightly more negative in eastern Germany than in the west. The native and immigrant populations also have a poorer opinion of past and future integration policy (1.5-2.3 percentage points more negative) in eastern Germany, and they ascribe more responsibility to the state for integration than in western Germany (approximately 3 percentage points more). While migrants in eastern and western Germany rate their own willingness to integrate similarly high, both the migrant and native populations in eastern Germany feel that the native population in the eastern Laender (federal states) is less willing to integrate. For example, 57.9 per cent of Germans without a migration background in eastern Germany believe that the native population is interested in integration while this value is higher by more than 7 percentage points in the old western Laender at 65.3 per cent (almost 13%).



- 6) The Index on the Integration Climate (IIC), calculated for the first time in 2010, which captures the extremely varied experiences of integration by both sides of the immigration society in various areas on a scale of 0 (worst integration climate) to 4 (best integration climate), remains largely stable in 2012. Overall, migrants give the integration climate a more positive rating with an IIC of 2.87 compared to the native population (2.66). Both IIC values are above the mean of 2, an indication of an integration climate that continues to be generally friendly. This also holds true at a slightly lower level for the survey regions in eastern Germany.
- 7) It is not surprising that people of Turkish descent have experienced the integration debate as particularly negatively distorted: they have often been in the spotlight of reproachful political and public debate due to their supposed 'refusal to integrate', for example. On a scale of 0 (much too negative) to 4 (much too positive), they maintain that the public discourse on integration is much too negative, giving it an average score of 1.4 compared to Germans without a migration background (1.7) or other migrant groups (1.8). They also take a more negative view of the integration climate in Germany compared to other migrant groups surveyed (with an IIC of 2.73 compared to the average IIC of 2.89). However, the difference between people of Turkish descent and other migrant groups has narrowed over the course of the last two years. The respondents of Turkish descent share their somewhat greater scepticism about integration with those from the native population.
- 8) The 2012 Integration Barometer shows a continued need for action in the realm of education. Respondents' concrete personal experiences e.g. with ethnically diverse schools are quite positive. Still, the performance of schools with a high percentage of migrants continues to be perceived as low as is the willingness to send one's own children to these schools. Even migrants who think that the performance of ethnically diverse schools was much higher in 2011 than in 2009, still show little willingness to send their own children to these types of schools.

Overall, the Integration Barometer is evidence that the population does not let itself be misled by heated or even hysterical discussions about integration. Instead, the two main attitudes that dominate the 2012 Integration Barometer on both sides of the immigration society are those who have a critical yet pragmatic mindset about integration and those with a cautious yet optimistic mindset. People have long found acceptable ways to live together in their local communities in the everyday life of the immigration society - with few conflicts and mutual acceptance.

Moreover, how are the specific opportunities for integration assessed locally within the community, a topic that is a special focus of the 2012 annual report? Bearing in mind the belief that "Integration takes place locally", various actors are lobbying to shift the authority for integration policy from the federal and Laender level to the municipal level. The municipalities undoubtedly have an important role to play in successful integration. The individual chapters of the annual report show, however, that the call to address integration policy at a mainly local level should be met with caution. The Integration Barometer asks how the local opportunities for participation are perceived and how people view the commitment to integration policy of the various federal levels.



- 9) People tend to think that the integration process taking place in their own community is better than elsewhere. The gap between pragmatic, positive experiences at the community level and the more negative representations of the integration process in Germany overall clearly shows that integration in people's everyday lives is often much less problematic than is portrayed by disparaging media reports.
- 10) The reason often given for the disputes about the controversial railway and urban development project, Stuttgart 21, is that the population finds the opportunities for participating in local politics generally insufficient. Consistent with this, within the framework of this year's Integration Barometer, people with and without a migration background were asked to evaluate the possibilities that they believe exist in their communities for participating in discussions and decisions. Contrary to widely held beliefs that there is extensive dissatisfaction with the existing possibilities for participation, almost 60 per cent of respondents without a migration background and more than 70 per cent with a migration background who hold a German passport consider these possibilities for participation to be "fully" satisfactory or at least as satisfactory "more often than not".
- 11) Even two-thirds of migrants from third countries who are not allowed to vote at local level, are happy with the existing possibilities for participating in the public debate. This group is thus even larger than the number of Germans without a migration background who have all forms of political participation open to them. This finding gives an interesting insight into the demand for the introduction of local voting rights for foreigners: only 30.7 per cent of respondents from third countries (i.e. the group without any voting rights at all in Germany) believe that the options open to them for political participation are either "not really" or "not at all" sufficient. More than twice as many respondents (66.2%) are at least "more often than not" satisfied (37.0%) or even "fully" satisfied (29.2%). Local political participation, e.g. through the right for foreigners to vote in local elections, appear much less important to those affected than often assumed.
- 12) While the federal government and several Laender ignored the de facto immigration situation for many decades, thus blocking effective integration policy and contributing to a considerable backlog of problems, the local municipalities, which were often left on their own with these problems, were forced to take action. Still, respondents with and without a migration background do not view the local municipalities as more active in integration policy than the federal or Laender governments. While significantly more than half of all those surveyed without a migration background and almost two-thirds of those surveyed with a migration background feel that the federal government and Laender are actively committed to integration policy, local politicians are far less frequently perceived as active in integration policy (44.0% and 48.8% respectively) The reason for this might be that local policy measures are not considered "integration policy" but business as usual at the local level and that this crucial work receives much less media attention than say, an integration summit explicitly presented as such in the Chancellor's Office.



### Comments on the methodology used in the SVR Integration Barometer

The Integration Barometer measures everyday integration in Germany's immigration society. To this end, the survey is conducted with both sides of the immigration society, i.e. people with and without a migration background. The data for the Integration Barometer was once again collected in the three major regions of Rhine-Ruhr, Stuttgart and Rhine-Main as well as in the large eastern German regions of Berlin-Brandenburg and Halle-Leipzig. The regions surveyed in both the west and the east of the country are densely populated urban areas with a long history of immigration where the coexistence of people with and without a migration background is highly relevant on a day-to-day basis.

To reflect the diversity that exists in Germany as a migration country, interviews were conducted with people of Turkish descent, Spät-/Aussiedler (repatriated ethnic Germans), migrants from other EU countries which have become more important as a group over the last few years, people from non-EU Europe as well as from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Targets were defined for the six groups of people surveyed in the city centre, in the suburbs and in non-urban residential areas in each of the regions.

In total, more than 9,200 people with and without a migration background were interviewed for the Integration Barometer; 8.1 per cent of respondents had already participated in the 2009 survey and were polled again in 2011. This subset makes it possible to track changes over time at the level of the individual respondent – however, this is only possible in the three western survey regions where the Integration Barometer had already been carried out in 2009. The total sample is comprised of 76.8 per cent people with a migration background<sup>1</sup> and 23.2 per cent of people without a migration background. Of the total sample, 15.5 per cent came to Germany as Spät-/Aussiedler or one or both of their parents fell into this category, 13.3 per cent have a Turkish background, 17.4 per cent are from countries in the European Union or one or both of their parents are, 16.1 per cent are from European countries outside of the European Union and 14.6 per cent are from African, Asian or Latin American countries. The strength of the Barometer is its high proportion of people with a migration background which makes it possible to carry out statistical analyses for one group or the other. Various weighting factors are used to reconcile the actual population percentages, making a representative analysis possible.

The telephone numbers used for the survey were taken from the pool of numbers of the Arbeitskreis Deutscher Markt- und Sozialforschungsinstitute e. V. The numbers were randomly selected, i.e. they are primarily (63.0%) a stratified random sample. Telephone numbers selected on a name-related basis were also used to more effectively target people with a migration background particularly in the eastern German survey regions. Telephone numbers selected this way accounted for 37.0 per cent of the sample.

One person aged 16 years or older who was randomly selected by date of birth was surveyed per household. Bilingual interviewers offered the survey in Russian, Turkish and Vietnamese. It was not possible to conduct interviews with 2.0 per cent of the households

<sup>1</sup> The term migration background is used in this survey to mean if the person interviewed was himself born abroad or at least one of his parents was. The country of origin was determined based on the country of birth of the person surveyed or his parents. If the parents' countries of birth were different, the father's country of birth was used to determine the country of origin.



called as a result of communication problems. Before carrying out the survey, the German, Russian, Turkish and Vietnamese questionnaires were subject to a cognitive pre-test to ensure that they were comprehensible. This was followed by a quantitative pre-test under real conditions with people with and without a migration background in all five survey regions. The interviews were carried out by BIK Aschpurwis + Behrens GmbH. The questionnaire contains questions about sociodemographic information, experiences and perceptions in various areas of coexistence, attitudes about integration policy and the integration process, experiences of discrimination and trust in groups from certain countries. Other structural data such as the unemployment rate and the percentage of foreigners can be allocated to the data of the respondents via the community indicators.