



## PRESS RELEASE

### **German think tank publishes international comparison of migration and integration policies – Recommends increased collective reception of refugees in EU**

**In its Annual Report, now out in English, the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration (SVR) compares Germany's migration and integration policies with the policies of selected EU countries as well as with traditional immigration countries such as Canada and the USA. In its recommendations for action, the SVR advocates fair burden-sharing in the EU: collective reception measures for refugees from crisis-torn countries are needed. For the future, SVR proposes evaluating a new procedure for EU refugee policy: refugees, after their asylum petition has been approved, would be allowed to move to the EU country of their choice, particularly to look for work; the principle of the basic responsibility of the country of first entry (Dublin Regulation) would be retained and strengthened for the asylum process.**

**Berlin, 17 July 2015.** "Germany has joined the ranks of progressive immigration countries in an international comparison," said Prof. Dr. Christine Langenfeld, Chairwoman of the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration (SVR) to mark publication of the English translation of SVR's 2015 Annual Report entitled "Immigration Countries: Germany in an International Comparison". Germany has made great strides in many areas of migration management and integration policy in a political and conceptual sense over the last few years and its achievements are impressive compared to traditional immigration countries. "Germany's good performance, however, doesn't mean that we can rest on our laurels. An overall migration policy strategy is still lacking. Germany's self-image as an immigration country also needs to be reinforced," said Langenfeld.

#### **SVR presses for a package solution to address the European refugee crisis**

The structural problems of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) were already evident for quite some time, even before the mass exodus from Syria focused public attention on European refugee and asylum policy again. In the run-up to the discussions of the EU Ministers of the Interior and Justice to be held in Brussels on 20 July, the SVR recommends more collective reception of refugees from crisis-torn countries and fair and equitable sharing of responsibility and financial burdens in Europe as an immediate measure. "The EU finally has to find a common answer to the refugee crisis at its doorstep. We urgently need more collective reception of refugees from war and crisis zones. All EU member states, to the extent possible, have to play a part in taking in refugees so that responsibility is fairly distributed throughout Europe," said the SVR Chairwoman Prof. Dr. Christine Langenfeld. European Union law (Art. 78 para. 3 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union - TFEU) provides for support to member states that are overwhelmed by the influx of refugees, including sharing the responsibility for refugee reception. "Europe must find a solution and prove its capacity for effective action – in the interest of protecting refugees, but also in the interest of the EU member states to preserve the idea of a shared European community of values."

In its annual report, the SVR advocates an "immediate assistance programme" which would provide the framework for collective acceptance procedures to supplement individual asylum and in which all EU countries would participate in the spirit of burden-sharing. A suitable instrument, the Directive on temporary protection, has been in place for many years at European level. It could currently offer Syrian refugees in particular a fast and unbureaucratic alternative to individual asylum procedures. The



Directive has failed to enter into force, however, due to a lack of consensus in the EU Council of Ministers.

To make European asylum policy viable for the future, the SVR proposes restructuring the CEAS. This new structure would, on the one hand, retain the Dublin principle of the responsibility of the country of first entry, but would also link 'Dublin' to the principle of free choice of EU country *after* a refugee's asylum petition has been approved: the country of first entry would still be responsible for reception, the asylum procedure and the return of refugees whose status is not recognised. Financial and logistical support would be provided to countries that reach the objective limits of their capacity due to a heavy influx of asylum seekers. The right to freedom of movement within the EU for recognised refugees could be introduced in a second step. "The key innovation in the SVR model is that *after* refugees have been granted refugee status in the asylum procedure (for which there are already European regulations in existence), they may move to the EU country of their choice if they think they have good job prospects or have family members living there," said Langenfeld. "This gives recognised refugees greater rights and allows them to move freely within the EU for the first time. We would move closer to establishing a European right of residence for recognised refugees," said Langenfeld. "This new process would also be a clear demonstration of European solidarity and burden-sharing in terms of accepting refugees."

"The rising numbers of asylum applications, particularly in Italy, Greece and Hungary, are evidence of the need for a common European refugee policy," said Langenfeld. In addition, a lot more should be done to encourage the integration of refugees into the European reception countries given the high level of protection required and the currently doubtful odds that many refugees will be able to return home.

The Annual Report systematically compares Germany's migration and integration policies to the policies mainly of countries perceived to be particularly successful and therefore considered potential migration and integration policy role models by the public (Canada, USA and Sweden as well as other European countries). The country comparison looks at three core areas of German migration and integration policy: labour migration, citizenship law and asylum policy. A key finding is a notable tendency towards convergence – with the result that the policies in many immigration countries are drawing closer and becoming increasingly similar. The labour migration policies of Canada and Germany in particular have come to resemble one another much more closely: Canada has waved goodbye to its purely human capital-based system, i.e. a scheme that awarded points for the applicant's qualifications (immigration is now determined mainly by whether the applicant has an employment contract), while Germany has abandoned its exclusive principle of 'no immigration without an employment contract'. Since 2012, third country nationals with a university degree have been issued visas to look for work without an employment contract (Section 18c of the German Residence Act (Aufenthaltsgesetz). A similar regulation for non-academic skilled workers was passed in July (Section 17a of the law to redefine the right for leave to remain and the termination of residence). Calls to introduce a point system like the one in Canada fail to recognise these measures.

"A successful migration and integration policy, however, encompasses far more than just liberal laws," said Langenfeld. "Germany has to credibly define and position itself much more as an immigration country, not just internationally, but also internally. A modern immigration country needs a clear self-image and unambiguous rules for immigration and coexistence. In Germany, these values are captured in the Basic Law that everyone is called on to respect.

You can download the SVR Annual Report "Immigration Countries: Germany in an International Comparison" from <http://www.svr-migration.de/en/publications/>



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**About the Expert Council**

The Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration is based on an initiative of the Stiftung Mercator and the VolkswagenStiftung and consists of seven member foundations. In addition to the Stiftung Mercator and the VolkswagenStiftung, these are: Bertelsmann Stiftung, Freudenberg Stiftung, Robert Bosch Stiftung, Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft and the Vodafone Foundation Germany. The Expert Council is an independent and non-profit monitoring, evaluating and advisory council which takes a stand on issues relevant to integration and migration policy and offers practically oriented policy consultation. The results of its work are published in an annual report.

The SVR includes nine researchers from different disciplines and research institutes: Prof. Dr. Christine Langenfeld (Chairwoman), Prof. Dr. Ludger Pries (Deputy Chairman) and Prof. Dr. Gianni D'Amato, Prof. Dr. Thomas K. Bauer, Prof. Dr. Wilfried Bos, Prof. Dr. Claudia Diehl (from 2015), Prof. Dr. Heinz Faßmann, Prof. Dr. Christian Joppke (from 2015), Prof. Dr. Yasemin Karakaşoğlu (until 2015), Prof. Dr. Ursula Neumann (until 2015) and Prof. Dr. Hacı Halil Uslucan.

More information can be found at: [www.svr-migration.de](http://www.svr-migration.de)