



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration (SVR): Free movement in the EU is a successful model**

**SVR presents 2013 annual report on internal EU migration. Almost two-thirds of immigrants to Germany come from an EU member state. They are, on average, younger and better educated than the native population in Germany. SVR recommends a National Migration Action Plan to develop a consistent migration policy.**

**Berlin, 12 April 2013.** Germany has become a magnet for skilled immigrants from the EU. In the first half of 2012, more than two-thirds of all immigrants were EU citizens. There are three ways that Germany benefits from the new upsurge in mobility in the EU: the immigrants are young, highly skilled and are arriving in great numbers. They are an average of ten years younger than the German native population and are also more likely to have a university degree. "Germany is reaping the measurable rewards of free movement thanks to skilled immigrants from other EU countries. This has received too little attention to date," said SVR Chairman Prof. Dr. Christine Langenfeld today at the press conference to present the annual report in Berlin. The annual report will be presented to the Federal President, Joachim Gauck, in a public ceremony at the Bellevue Palace, the official residence of the Federal President. The members of the Expert Council will then meet with the Federal President to exchange their ideas.

As the SVR annual report shows, the percentage of highly skilled workers between the ages of 25 and 44 who have immigrated since 2004 is higher than the percentage in the native population in the same age group: one in five immigrants (20.7%) from a member state that joined the EU in 2004 (including Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary) has a university degree. The same holds true for 20.9 per cent of immigrants from Romania and Bulgaria. The percentage with university degrees in the same age group of the native population in Germany is lower at 18.1 per cent.

Skilled immigration also strengthens the social security systems. Only as a result of the immigration of EU citizens, Germany's net migration has once again reached a level not seen for 15 years that can absorb demographic change and its effects on the social security systems. Germany has thus become an immigration country. The trend that saw mainly high- and medium-skilled workers emigrating from Germany and the arrival of low-skilled workers to Germany has come to an end.

"Freedom of movement in the European Union is a successful model. A true European labour market is emerging," said SVR Chairman Langenfeld. "Free movement in the EU has proven successful particularly during this era of the sovereign debt crisis." Unemployed immigrants from EU 'crisis countries' can find jobs in Germany and help counteract the shortage of skilled employees that threatens a number of sectors. The social transfer payments in the countries they come from are lowered. However, there are still barriers to migration that play a role in keeping internal EU migration at a relatively low level overall. As a result, the overall conditions for mobility in Europe have to be further improved.

"Europe, however, is much more than an economic zone, Europe also shapes identity. As the SVR 2013 Migration Barometer shows, a pragmatic identification with Europe shaped by concrete day-to-day experiences prevails in Germany," explained the SVR Chairman. "People who take advantage of the opportunity to move freely within Europe identify more strongly with Europe. The feeling of affiliation with Europe therefore increases as individuals experience the EU through mobility and free movement." Consequently, policymakers should thus further strengthen Europe as a mobility zone despite the current financial and economic crisis. "Europe has to stop being just a rational concept, it needs to find its way into people's hearts. This is the only way to win people over to the cause of Europe," said Langefeld.



For the 2013 Migration Barometer, more than 2200 people with and without a migration background were interviewed on their assessment of freedom of movement in the EU, to what extent they take advantage of this freedom and how strongly they identify with the EU. The results show: the German population tend to identify with Europe. Both in the native (54.2%) and migrant populations (54.7%), more than half of those interviewed have a "strong" or even "very strong" European identification. The strongest affiliation with Europe can be seen among interviewees who emigrated from an EU country to Germany (77.0%). "The results of the Migration Barometer refute the myth that Europe is an elite project with no backing from the populace. In truth, the rights to freedom of movement associated with the EU are widely accepted," said the SVR Chairman. "An overall positive 'feeling of being European' is evident among people both with and without a migration background that politicians can build on."

The Migration Barometer also shows a high level of social solidarity with EU citizens. More than 70 per cent of all respondents with and without a migration background agree that newly immigrated EU citizens who become unemployed in Germany be entitled to social benefits. Entitlements to social benefits are, particularly when compared to other countries with federal systems such as the USA, very strong in the EU thanks in part to legislation passed by the European Court of Justice. But the SVR annual report also gives reason to believe that solidarity has limits. As a result, social security systems should be further opened cautiously and carefully so as not to ultimately put consent for the European project overall at risk. The primary goal has to be to reduce economic inequalities between the member states.

### **Migration to Germany's social systems exception not the rule**

In its annual report, the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration also explores the question of whether migration to Germany's social system occurred. The often mentioned fear that EU expansion could encourage migration to Germany's social systems has proven unfounded to date. 72.1 per cent of Bulgarians and Romanians who moved to Germany after 2007 and are between 25 and 44 years old are gainfully employed. The new arrivals are therefore well-integrated into the labour market. The extent to which EU immigrants receive social benefits in Germany is regularly exaggerated in the public and political discussion. "Until now, the migration of low-skilled workers caused by a precarious economic situation in their home countries has been the exception, not the rule," said Langenfeld. But the possibility cannot be ruled out that if the gap between rich and poor countries continues to widen in the EU that social benefits in Germany will play a role in migration decisions. This applies in particular to the accession states of Romania and Bulgaria where full freedom of movement will be granted to workers starting in 2014. The economic performance of these countries is far below the EU average.

Some of the immigrants from these two recent EU accession countries are Roma who live on the fringes of society in Romania and Bulgaria and hardly have access to education and employment. Until now only a small number of cities have been affected such as Duisburg, Dortmund, Mannheim or Berlin-Neukölln. In these cities the influx of Roma families has intensified problematic situations in urban areas where social problems already existed. Many of the newly immigrated Roma are exploited on the labour market and are often forced to pay exorbitant rents for poor housing. The Federal Government which ignored the problem for a long time now has to undertake suitable measures with the *Länder*, municipalities and the EU. "Financially weak municipalities in particular need financial support from the federal, *Land* and EU level," said Langenfeld. "Integrating such an ostracised group is a lengthy process. We need to take a deep breath."

As the SVR sees it, a promising strategy would be to work with representatives of Roma interests to assess what would make practical sense in the context of a specific community or a specific objective. This way a set of integration policy instruments could be adapted to the Roma and the regional circumstances that is not 'exclusively Roma'. "Policies at district level need to include low-threshold integration programmes like German courses that also teach reading and writing," said Langenfeld. In the SVR's opinion, a 'special Roma strategy' like the one defined by the European Commission is less promising because it cements the special status of the Roma.



In addition, the Federal Government must work at EU level to improve the situation of the Roma in their countries of origin. This concerns both Roma in the EU member states of Bulgaria and Romania as well as Roma in non-EU countries like Serbia and Macedonia who submit asylum applications in Germany with no prospect of success to escape their extremely precarious living conditions. "The countries of origin have to be more accountable for improving the living conditions of Roma," said Langenfeld.

### **Eliminate barriers for European labour migration**

Europe is still not a perfect migration zone. A series of barriers hinders mobility within Europe. These mainly include the different education and training systems and the wide range of languages. The SVR thus recommends a number of measures to further facilitate mobility within Europe. The example of recognising foreign qualifications shows that a standardisation rule imposed on member states by the EU not only encouraged mobility, it also served as model in Germany for creating similar rules for third country nationals. "The Recognition Act is an important way to jump start integration," said SVR Chairman Langenfeld. It is even more important to eliminate remaining obstacles. The German *Länder* have to ensure that the recognition of foreign professional qualifications is standardised as much as possible throughout Germany. This must be kept in mind when passing the remaining eleven state laws. The Federal Government and the *Länder* also still need to solve a number of problems in the practical recognition of jobs in the healthcare sector. In addition, the *Länder* should grant licenses to teachers trained and accredited in the EU who only have one teaching subject even if two subjects are normally required for a teaching qualification. Hamburg has shown that this is possible.

Funding for subsequent training is still inadequately resolved. Until now, if a professional qualification was recognised in part, there haven't been many possibilities to pursue subsequent training. These options are also not transparent to prospective candidates and are regulated differently from *Land* to *Land*. The employment agencies only provide funding for those who are unemployed or at risk of unemployment if subsequent training appears necessary for integration into the labour market. Those who work below their qualification level are left out in the cold. "To ensure that better use can be made of subsequent training opportunities, the funding options have to be improved and the existing ones communicated more effectively," recommended the SVR Chairman. In addition, the employment agencies should give priority to lasting employment consistent with skills and be more generous in approving subsequent training.

Integrating new immigrants – even those from EU countries – doesn't just happen on its own. Providing support for language acquisition plays an important role here. Many new immigrants from the EU don't speak German well enough. They should be given more support for language acquisition. They can only currently participate in integration courses if there are spots available. The SVR therefore also proposes strengthening the entitlement for EU citizens to participate in integration courses. It should also be made easier for EU citizens to participate in job-related language courses that are supported by the European Social Fund.

### **Universities as migration magnets and engines of integration**

Freedom of movement in the EU allows EU citizens to study in all EU member states. The rising number of students from the EU shows that Germany is an attractive destination: with 30,265 first-year students from EU countries in the 2010/2011 academic year, 21.0 per cent more EU citizens came to Germany to study than in the 2009/2010 academic year. From the SVR's perspective, efforts to keep international graduates in Germany after they have completed their degree should be stepped up. "Students from EU countries are the highly skilled labour force of tomorrow and they have already experienced Germany first-hand," said Langenfeld. "The role of universities as migration magnets and engines of integration should thus be strengthened." To fulfil their new role in immigration policy, the universities also need to be given adequate financial resources.

### **Bundle migration policy in a National Migration Action Plan**

In the last 15 years, Germany has gained a great deal of ground in integration and immigration management. The goal now is to establish correlations between the various migration policy issues which, until now, have been discussed independently and far removed from one another. Immigration of EU citizens, on the one hand, and immigration of third country nationals on the other, should be brought



together under the scope of a "National Migration Action Plan". "This type of Migration Action Plan should draft a consistent migration policy," said SVR Chairman Christine Langenfeld. "The National Migration Action Plan should identify the mechanisms and instruments to be used to meet and coordinate the need for high-, medium- and low-skilled immigration." Germany's humanitarian obligations to protect refugees also have to be taken into account here.

As a demographically aging country, Germany must attract immigrants over the next few years to make up for its shortage of skilled workers over the long run. The liberalisation of migration management has already set the course in this direction. "It is now important to also communicate these regulations more effectively. Germany must actively work to change its image to one that sends a signal of openness to migration".

You can download the annual report and a selection of graphics from [www.svr-migration.de](http://www.svr-migration.de).

**Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions:**

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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 eight member foundations. In addition to the Stiftung Mercator and the VolkswagenStiftung, these are: Bertelsmann Stiftung, Freudenberg Stiftung, Gemeinnützige Hertie-Stiftung, Körber Foundation, 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 (Vorsitzende), Prof. Dr. Ludger Pries (Stellvertretender Vorsitzender) sowie Prof. Dr. Gianni D'Amato, Prof. Dr. Thomas K. Bauer, Prof. Dr. Wilfried Bos, Prof. Dr. Heinz Faßmann, Prof. Dr. Yasemin Karakaşoğlu, Prof. Dr. Ursula Neumann and Prof. Dr. Hacı Halil Uslucan.

More information is available at: [www.svr-migration.de](http://www.svr-migration.de)