



Europe as a Successful Model? Consequences and Challenges for Germany Posed by Free Movement within the EU

2013 Annual Report with Migration Barometer

Summary of the 2013 SVR Migration Barometer

In the current political debate about the future of the EU, the European Union is faced with conflicting expectations: one camp criticises it as an elite project with no backing from the populace. This group wants to return decision-making processes to the national level because it considers the nation state qualified to solve economic, social and environmental challenges. The other camp believes that the problems of the nation state can be overcome through the process of European unification and views the European Union as a successful model of modern statehood.

More than 2,200 people with and without a migration background were interviewed in Germany about their perceptions and opinions of Europe and freedom of movement within the EU for the Migration Barometer. The survey included inner-European mobility patterns and identification with and solidarity within the European Union. The results show that elevating Europe's importance as a place of primary emotional affiliation has just as little to do with reality as devaluing Europe as an artificial entity with no relevance for people's lives and identity. Instead, a pragmatic identification with Europe shaped by concrete day-to-day experiences prevails in Germany. Europe does not replace the nation state as the driver and facilitator of emotional identity, but complements it. Underlying the sober, realistic view of the European Union as a place where people have the right to freedom of movement is a positive sentiment.

1) Germany perceived as benefitting from the European migration zone

Four out of five people surveyed with and without a migration background think that Germany benefits from free movement within the European Union either disproportionately more than or the same as other countries. Just around one-third of migrants are convinced that Germany stands to gain more from freedom of movement than other EU countries. In contrast, only one in five respondents with and without a migration background assumes that Germany benefits less than other EU member states in the unified European migration zone.

2) Full advantage taken of the right to freedom of movement

The mobility rights guaranteed by EU citizenship are highly regarded by the majority of the population. They are not just paying lip service. The Migration Barometer suggests that respondents also exercise these rights: around six out of ten surveyed – regardless of migration background – stayed at least one day in another country of the European Union over the last 12 months; every fourth person interviewed



– 26.8 per cent of the native population and 28.3 per cent of people with a migration background – at least three times or more.

3) Identification with Europe is established

Despite widespread reports that the EU is in crisis, no evidence was found that the population feels alienated from Europe. On the contrary: the German population tends to identify with Europe; significantly more than half of the native (54.2%) and migrant population (54.7%) currently have a (strong) European identity; this is true for more than three-quarters (77.0%) of migrants from the EU. Only around every ninth individual (11.8%) without a migration background, every eighth migrant from third countries (12.4%) and every 26th (3.8%) migrant with an EU migration background barely identifies with Europe or not at all. The higher the level of education and income, the stronger identification with Europe is. Migrants and individuals without a migration background, however, are more tentative about their future identification with Europe, the number of sceptics is gradually on the rise.

4) Europe as the primary emotional affiliation is important but not dominant

In dynamic immigration societies, it is often difficult to answer the question of to what extent its inhabitants feel more emotionally tied to the region, the nation state or to a different level because it is more the rule than the exception emotional dimensions overlap. The Migration Barometer provides evidence of a trend of people's inability to develop a unique, territorially defined feeling of belonging. People with and without a migration background usually identify most strongly with the district or city they live in and the nation state as their primary affiliation; the region is also important for the native population. The EU only plays a secondary role; however, if the question can be answered with a first and second choice, i.e. combined affiliations, the EU becomes more important. In this case, almost 15 per cent of the native population and just under eight per cent of migrants specify the EU as their second most important geographic affiliation. The more respondents travelled in the EU last year, the more strongly they identified with Europe as their home. The feeling of affiliation with Europe therefore increases as individuals experience the EU through mobility and free movement.

5) Social participation and solidarity within Europe is acknowledged

Particularly when compared to other countries with federal systems such as the USA or Switzerland, cross-border social solidarity within the EU has already been largely achieved. With few exceptions, the EU member states cannot refuse EU citizens from other countries social benefits granted to their own citizens. The Migration Barometer shows that there is a high degree of acceptance among respondents in Germany for this pronounced inner-European solidarity: more than two-thirds of those surveyed are of the opinion that newly immigrated employees in various groups (French, Polish and Turkish citizens as non-EU members) should have the right to receive social benefits if they become unemployed in



Germany. There are, however, differences from group to group. For example, one-fourth of respondents think or are inclined to think that newly arrived Turks should not be entitled to social benefits if they become unemployed in Germany. 20.4 per cent of respondents felt this way about French citizens while the figure for Poland lies between the two. EU membership and the duration of membership also play a role.

The SVR Migration Barometer shows that the European Union is (still) not currently able to convey a sense of "home" at least when compared to local, regional and national ties. The simple narratives, the symbols and the identification figures that have been historically construed over a long period of time for a city, a region and a country are lacking. The European Union has to be – and is – understood as a rational concept, but the emotional commitment is not easy for many people. On the other hand, the freedoms associated with the EU are widely accepted, and an overall positive "feeling of being a European" is evident among people both with and without a migration background that politicians can build on.

Info box 1: Survey for the SVR Migration Barometer

The SVR Migration Barometer is based on a computer-assisted telephone interview of people with and without a migration background conducted in August and September 2012 in the regions Rhine-Ruhr, Stuttgart, Rhine-Main, Berlin and Halle-Leipzig. The total number of people interviewed (N = 2,243) comprises 74.8 per cent with a migration background and 25.2 per cent without a migration background. These individuals were already polled in the 2011 SVR Integration Barometer and were willing to be interviewed again. 15.9 per cent of the total sample is made up of *Spät-/Aussiedler* (repatriated ethnic Germans) or their descendants; 11.8 per cent have a Turkish migration background. Another 17.7 per cent come from countries in the European Union or have at least one parent who migrated from one of these countries. 15.6 per cent of interviewees come from European countries outside of the European Union. A total of 13.8 per cent have a Latin American, African or Asian migration background. The people with a migration background included 72.5 per cent first generation (personal migration experience) and 27.5 per cent second generation (born in Germany). The survey is representative for the population with and without a migration background in the five regions surveyed. Weightings were used to compensate for the disproportionality between the groups from specific countries and adjusted to the actual percentage-based distribution of people with and without migration background in the total population in Germany. Bilingual interviewers offered the survey in Russian, Turkish or Vietnamese in addition to German. The interviews were carried out by BIK Aschpurwis + Behrens GmbH.