



On the Government's Coalition Agreement

Politics of Migration and Integration in Germany

8 March 2018

POSITION

The coalition agreement ('Agreement') of Germany's grand coalition is commendable in some respects. However, it is problematic as well as insufficiently demanding and ambitious in certain other areas.

- As regards **migration policy**, the SVR specifically welcomes the future government's plan to create an act concerning the immigration of skilled labour – an act that would implement better immigration opportunities for qualified skilled workers and persons with extensive work experience. 'However, we advocate doing this within the broader framework of a German Immigration Code' says Thomas Bauer, Chairman of the Expert Council.
- As regards **refugee policy**, the Agreement does seek to strike a balance between integration and regulatory policy interests, albeit considerable work still needs to be done in this area. The SVR supports, in particular, the objective to ensure that legal advice for asylum seekers regarding the asylum procedure is provided consistently across Germany. However, the design and planning of new reception centres ('Ankerzentren') must be done so as to ensure that persons who can be expected to stay in Germany for a longer period (be it for legal or other reasons) are not impeded by regulations when seeking to integrate. Finally, the SVR lauds the Agreement's commitment to the Common European Asylum System as well as the efforts towards its reform and expansion in the spirit of European integration.
- As regards **integration and participation policy**, Prof. Bauer states: 'The future government should build on and develop the basic approach of the Agreement in keeping with integration policy-related mainstreaming. The goal is to design and implement a participatory policy that addresses and includes all people regardless of their social background and whether or not they are immigrants. To achieve this goal, institutions and processes have to be readied to deal with "Germany as an immigration country" as the normal scenario, whereby special programmes would remain exception of the rule.'

The position of the SVR regarding the individual fields of action are as follows:

Focus on persons with qualified vocational training and with extensive work experience; create a larger framework by developing a German Immigration Code

In view of the demographic transition, attracting skilled workers is a key political challenge. The SVR commends the Agreement for announcing a **set of rules governing immigration into the labour market** that will not only facilitate the immigration of university graduates and **skilled workers** with certification for a trade or profession **but also of persons with extensive work experience**. Especially as regards skilled workers without academic degrees, there still is scope for regulatory action within current law. Hence, what is new is that people with work experience will likewise get the opportunity to immigrate.



The SVR also welcomes the objective of the Agreement to maintain national regulatory options of labour migration alongside the EU Blue Card.

Moreover, the SVR supports the ambition to expedite the process whereby the equivalence of qualifications is verified. In addition, the Council proposes testing the 'two plus' model as a way to reduce the burden put on labour immigrants of having to prove that their **vocational qualification acquired abroad is recognised as equivalent to German standards**. Indeed, the model would allow to focus on the criteria prioritised in the Agreement, being usefulness of a given qualification for the Germany economy, qualification, age and language. In the model, whenever a skilled labourer with a qualification acquired abroad can present an employment contract that secures her or his livelihood with a German company, then the demand for proof that their training is equivalent to German standards is dropped if and when that proof can be substituted by at least one alternative criterion – for example by proficiency in German or by a minimum salary. Finally, the SVR is supportive of the further waiver of the **priority review** in order to reduce bureaucracy; albeit that review had already been dispensed with in its entirety for certain groups (Blue Card holders, resident foreign students, researchers and employees in shortage occupations) as well as for asylum applicants and refugees with tolerated status in most regions.

The SVR encourages putting the planned reform of the immigration of skilled workers in the larger context of an immigration code (*Einwanderungsgesetzbuch, EGB*). This would offer the opportunity to restructure immigration policy and to bundle all regulations of immigrant law into one immigration code. Such a code could remarkably reduce the complexity of the existing regulations insofar as it would be a simplified and newly structured legal framework. It would also contribute to the discussion of the important questions of how much immigration a country essentially needs in view of the demographic transition and how much immigration is desirable (compare SVR 2017d).

Embed refugee policy into a coherent external migration policy; expand common EU-wide asylum law; improve the balancing of regulatory measures and integration

Germany should advocate a **binding and coherent global migration policy** that balances the interests of countries of origin, transit countries and receiving countries and that places special focus on human rights. In this respect, the cooperation between the European Union and Africa will be of essential importance. Here, more efforts should be made to recognise the legitimate concerns and priorities of the countries of origin and transit countries rather than viewing these countries as mere 'service providers' in migration control. Sustainable improvements of the situation on the ground as well as the opening and expansion of legal migration channels to Europe will play a key role in this process. In this sense, Germany should also actively engage in the international negotiations on the *Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration*.

The SVR welcomes the **full commitment to the existing legal and humanitarian obligations** (Basic Right to Asylum, GRC, EU-Acquis, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ECHR). The future government anticipates receiving 180,000 to 220,000 refugees per year, a range intended as a political guideline and not as a binding upper limit.

The declarations of intent as regards **addressing the causes of flight** meet the SVR's request to focus on a **whole-of-government approach** in migration policy. The SVR welcomes the political commitment to development cooperation, the expansion of international involvement and peacekeeping as well as fair trade and agricultural policy, climate protection and a restrictive arms exports policy. In the long term, development cooperation can contribute to the improvement of living conditions in partner states in the global south. However, migration researchers are sceptical about the expectation that development cooperation will help to reduce migration movement (see SVR 2016b: 158–175). The future government plans to establish a **Commission on the 'Causes of Flight'** in the German Bundestag, whose members



are to make concrete proposals to the German Federal Government and the German Bundestag on the treatment of flight causes. The SVR appreciates this intention and offers its cooperation.

The SVR welcomes the commitment to a common refugee and migration policy in the European Union based on solidarity, partnership and cooperation that meets humanitarian responsibilities while also improving migration management and control. In principle, the SVR agrees with the coalition partners that **the proposed reform of the Dublin system should be pursued**. However, the endeavour to develop a common system for determining the competent bodies for asylum applications that would correspond to the aspired-for principles of fairness and solidarity is not likely to generate a consensus at the EU level in the foreseeable future. Hence, the SVR considers the intensification of the German-French cooperation on asylum and migration policy announced in the chapter on Europe to be decisive. The chapter states that a 'fair distribution mechanism for people in need of protection' shall be instituted while retaining the principle of the responsibility of the country of first entry for asylum applicants (i.e., the key criteria of the Dublin procedure). This means that the procedures shall usually be carried out within the countries at their external borders. Yet, the statement that the responsibility of the countries of first entry shall not persist permanently is unclear.

The SVR continues to stress the need for **effective measures** financed by all member states of the European Union **to relieve and support** countries of first entry such as Italy and Greece to a far greater extent than in the past, in order to realise faster and fairer asylum procedures. In this sense, the SVR explicitly supports the idea of 'common procedures' at the external borders with the assistance of a to-be-bolstered European Asylum Support Office (EASO). This would facilitate the distribution of people in need of protection within the EU and the return of rejected asylum seekers. Indeed, this is the right step toward 'more Europe' with the long-term goal of a common 'EU-BAMF' (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees of the EU) (see SVR 2017a: 35).

The SVR has already made relevant proposals for more solidarity and shared responsibility among the member states in its Annual Report 2017 (SVR 2017a: 41–45): (freedom of movement 'light', mobility rights with 'socio-political claim waiting periods', more Europe with modified task sharing). The SVR is sceptical of the idea that an **obligatory distribution mechanism** for beneficiaries of protection (i.e., people who are entitled to protection) can work for all EU member states subsequent to the asylum procedures and prevent secondary migration. Therefore, for the group of refugees who have been recognised as entitled to protection, the SVR recommends, among other steps (see *ibid.*), a model for the **conditional freedom of movement** – a model that would significantly respond to the demands for a 'common EU asylum area'. For example, the model would allow refugees entitled to protection to, under certain circumstances (such as when they have an employment contract), decide on their own in which country they want to live. Integration costs could be shared among the member states, and welfare benefits should only be paid at the end of a claim waiting period.

Concerning the idea of common asylum procedures at the external borders, the SVR points to the detailed comments on the advantages and disadvantages of possible procedures in its Annual Report 2017 (SVR 2017a: 58–59). Moreover, the SVR stresses the need to drive supra-nationalisation through the pending **reform of the EASO** and by establishing a **full-fledged EU-asylum agency** that would better harmonise the decision-taking process and the asylum procedures. At present, both the acceptance rates and the kind of protection EU countries grant in case of a positive asylum decision sometimes vary dramatically depending on the respective member state. At the same time, tasks and competences of the **European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex)** must be enhanced so that internal border controls can be dismantled as soon as possible. In this sense, the SVR welcomes the development of Frontex into a 'real border police' as announced in the Agreement.

One goal of the Agreement is a closer **cooperation with UNHCR, IOM as well as the countries of origin and transit countries**. From the SVR's point of view, this goal should be seen as a continuation of the considerations on the granting of protection in the context of the common EU refugee policy of the past few years. In last year's Annual Report, the SVR made detailed comments on the advantages and disadvantages of these ideas as well as on possible problems. The SVR points to the complexity of the



procedural aspects that would have to be discussed prior to such a 'delegation' and emphasises the fact that a successful and promising externalisation can only work within an international network and subsequent to a basic and substantial harmonisation of the reception policy of the EU member states – the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

The Agreement mentions an adequate contribution of Germany to the **resettlement** process; yet a future (international) strategy is still missing. The SVR recommends that the European Union and Germany continue to extend their own resettlement programmes and actively share their experience and expertise in a UN-supported, global and binding resettlement system. Most predictable and calculable quotas would enable supporting organisations such as the UNHCR and IOM to provide the respective resources for the implementation of resettlement programmes and to coordinate them with the resettlement framework that the European Commission has proposed. The new government should embrace and accept this obligation and decide on generous resettlement quotas.

The SVR has recently published a press statement on the **management of family reunification of people entitled to subsidiary protection** (SVR 2018). The SVR is against permanent suspension of family reunification. Instead, procedures should be reorganised to allow those who are entitled to subsidiary protection to reunify with their core families under certain conditions. The compromise of a quota-based management of family reunification fixed in the Agreement does not answer the question of whether the future government plans to totally exclude reunification of family members with unaccompanied minors who are entitled to subsidiary protection; the SVR supports the idea of allowing reunification where appropriate under certain conditions or depending on the minors' age. With a view to practical questions concerning a **quota-based reunification**, the SVR recommends assessing the costs, benefits and risks in preparation of the legislation planned for the summer in a transparent way and determining the criteria for this as precisely as possible in order to guarantee uniform administrative implementation.

In addition, the **visa granting process** should be optimised and, where necessary, more staff should be employed in the respective German diplomatic representations. With regard to the children concerned, this position is in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which demands that the applications 'shall be dealt with ... in a positive, humane and expeditious manner' (Art. 10.1 OHCHR). At present, the family reunification process is marked by a 'double bottle neck,' which partly results in very long wait times. Sometimes, it takes a long time until close relatives even get an appointment for application in a consulate; and after that, the time for processing and granting a visa usually takes another couple of months. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that the persons eligible for reunification have already been separated for several months during the asylum procedure itself. In practice, the length of time during which family members are actually separated often adds up to several years. The SVR therefore recommends improving the efficiency and transparency of the visa granting process.

The differentiation between people seeking protection during the asylum procedure according to their prospects for residence as regards integration courses was acceptable as a crisis instrument. As concerns the quite difficult balancing of regulatory and integration policy interests, the SVR has already, as early as 2016, advocated that measures for the promotion of social participation be expanded to include those with medium-term prospects for residence, in order to accelerate their integration (SVR 2016a). Many of these asylum seekers have good chances of being accepted. Moreover, as experience has shown, the asylum application procedures in this group often take very long, due to their complexity. The SVR would thus prefer to open up the offers on the basis of an evaluation of the applicants' individual prospects for residence than to implement an across-the-board exclusion. The best prerequisite for integration, however, would be the creation of quick asylum procedures (see below). The SVR also expects the planned **differentiation of courses according to the applicant's knowledge** to improve the quality of the courses. Subsequent occupation-related language courses could facilitate access to the labour market even more.

The SVR welcomes the idea that the German federal government plans to '**make the network of already existing integration measures transparent**'. The experience made in 2015 shows that in light of the great number of new offers and regulations, not only refugees but also (and especially) administrative staff



and volunteers and staff working directly with the refugees are challenged to have an overview of the relevant offers and measures and to use them adequately. The intention to increase control and monitoring of the effectiveness (in the sense of scientific evaluation) of the measures (often developed within a short time) is likewise well received. This is above all true for digital offers, the benefit of which has been questionable up to now.

The SVR also supports the intention, as part of a pragmatic integration policy, to **create offers for language learning and employment for people with a 'tolerated' status** and whose departure cannot be expected in the short term (here the definition of the phrase 'cannot be expected in the short term' must be clarified). In addition, the SVR commends the goal to improve those provisions of the right of residence without a cut-off date of sections 25 a and b of the Residence Act, and to change and standardise the **3+2 regulation for access to vocational career training** to secure uniform nationwide implementation and with a view to its purpose. However, it remains unclear how the phrase 'without leading to a consolidation of the right of residence (...)' could be interpreted; a more precise definition would be necessary to secure a uniform nationwide implementation.

Without reservation, the SVR welcomes the intention to promptly evaluate the **residence regulation** of section 12 of the Residence Act. The SVR recommends deliberating on a prolongation (and if necessary also on the scope and duration of the prolongation), depending on the results of this evaluation – and to not fix the prolongation ex ante. The SVR has regarded the residence regulation to be an appropriate, if temporal, measure and advocates 'abolishing residency restrictions in the medium term' with decreasing numbers of immigrants. The fact that 'recognised refugees move to certain areas and remain there should primarily be a result of attractive living environments and not of restrictions on the freedom of movement' (SVR 2017a: 118).

The Agreement's commitment to **fast, comprehensive and legally certain asylum procedures** is yet another strong point. However, a maximum duration of standard procedures, as aspired for by the parties of the grand coalition in 2013 – three months – is not set. Nonetheless, the SVR assumes that the three-month limit is still considered a goal, especially in light of the fact that asylum seekers will only be accommodated 'in initial reception, decision-taking and deportation centres'. According to the SVR, given the binding obligation to **accommodate people in the planned Anker centres**, there is the indispensable need to improve the quality of asylum procedures and to secure a fast and effective procedure and legal protection in coordination with the federal states (Länder) to make sure that only rejected asylum seekers who are obliged to leave and who will be deported rapidly will have to stay in such a facility up to a maximum duration. The wording that the maximum length of stay should 'usually' not exceed 18 months leaves much room for manoeuvre for limiting or extending the duration of stay; a more binding term would be desirable. Access to integration courses, consulting and other assistance services as well as access to cultural and social activities should be retained at all reception centres. In addition, the number and (maximum) size of such planned institutions remain vague. Possible effects on the integration processes as well as their potential for conflict are to be assessed in the planning stage. When establishing such a facility, it will be of essential importance to make sure that the improvements in access to education and vocational training for children and youths achieved in the past will not be cancelled out by new restrictions. Most importantly, children and teenagers must be given the opportunity to exercise their right (and obligation) to attend school at the latest after three months (according to the EU Reception Directive) through appropriate educational infrastructures in the Anker centres or through effective access to schools close to the centres.

In practice, the duration of stay in the Anker centres for rejected asylum applicants who have no protection status under German, European or international law will depend on whether the **return policy** is effectively designed and supported. However, an effective return policy – as is requested, in fact, by European treaties and basic rights – can be achieved by measures that are not primarily legal. A national return policy always depends, among other factors, on both the administrative management within the country and on the cooperation with the countries of origin. In this regard, the SVR has made several proposals in its 2017 Annual Report (SVR 2017a. 86–100). In order to maintain the credibility of the asylum system, refugees have to leave the country if there are no sufficient reasons for granting them a permanent stay and if a



conscientious examination excludes serious danger to life and limb were they to leave the country. In these cases, the SVR pushes for voluntary departure and for carrying out deportations, when necessary, as humane and quickly as possible (see SVR 2017a: 15).

The SVR advocates the Swiss model of state-funded legal aid for each asylum applicant; in this sense, the SVR appreciates the Agreement's stipulation that asylum seekers must be guaranteed independent and **nationwide legal counselling on asylum procedures**.

As to the government parties' intention to declare the Maghreb countries to be safe countries of origin in the asylum procedures, the SVR once again suggests that the Federal Government work towards an EU-wide uniform list of safe countries of origin (see SVR 2017a: 16). Such an **EU-wide uniform and binding list of safe countries of origin** would strengthen the European Union's role and foster equal treatment of asylum seekers in the member states. The same applies to the return policy. In this respect, the EU could, if it spoke with one voice, reach better solutions in negotiations with the countries of origin than each member state on its own, both as regards cases of voluntary departure and deportation.

Develop integration policy towards a policy of participation for all

The SVR defines integration as the equal opportunity (or as equal as possible) of all members of society to participate in all key areas of life. These areas are education and early education in families as well as pre-school public institutions, school education, professional education, and a life and subsistence ensured by the proceeds of one's work (rather than on transfer payments), political participation and participation in various protection and welfare systems in a social welfare state based on the rule of law. As a consequence, integration policy needs to be a cross-cutting policy.

1. Principles of integration policy, monitoring, citizenship

The Agreement has a perspective on integration processes that is very much influenced by refugee immigration and which therefore is rather narrow. Yet, cultural diversity in the immigration country Germany, where more than one out of five residents has a migrant background, has long been the norm. Migrants actively participate in and contribute to our country – this reality is not new. The Agreement could have highlighted this participation and contribution more so than it did, which would have, in turn, allowed **to steer the current discourse away from its present focus on the challenges of migration**. As a result, politicians and policy-makers will have to work extra hard in the next legislative period to emphasise said contributions and convey a climate of hope and trust that immigration can be, and is already, well managed.

The guiding principle for German integration policy must continue to be that of supporting participation. For this, the SVR recommends a **policy of mainstreaming** by opening the usual national standards as much as possible for all people, alongside appropriate approaches in areas such as education, labour market, housing and health. For example, the planned expansion and improvement in the quality of child care and school teaching makes sense in order to achieve more equal participation as regards both education and integration policy. This also applies to the planned initiative for the construction and supply of affordable housing, which includes social housing, as well as the planned measures to bring long-term unemployed persons back to work. Such a **policy of participation for all** requires consistent and rigorous support and development. In addition, the SVR welcomes the fact that the Agreement looks into the needs of the migrant workers of the 1950s and 1960s with regard to **nursing and home care**. Indeed, the SVR Integration Barometer survey showed as early as 2015 that migrant workers have special needs (SVR Research Unit 2015a). To strengthen participation, it is necessary to fight and prevent unequal treatment, discrimination but also tendencies for radicalisation of any kind.

The **representation of people with a migrant background** in companies, social institutions and above all in public service must be improved at all costs. This effort can be supported among others through the anonymisation of job application procedures, training campaigns and setting of targets. Moreover, **the**



potential of migrant organisations as a motor for integration must be strengthened. As regards the reception of refugees over the past few years, many of these organisations have proven that they are an integral part of a civil society that is strong and capable of mobilising volunteers.

Functioning government institutions and coordination between governmental and non-governmental actors, both between the departments on the horizontal level as well as vertically between federal, state and local authorities, are of decisive importance. The next government's intention **to remarkably improve coordination between the different government levels** and to pursue a more efficient exercise of responsibilities must therefore be supported. To achieve this goal, the National Action Plan on Integration can be revived and a whole-of-government approach be followed. The SVR welcomes the plans to **support municipalities with additional federal funds**, as **municipalities are essential for integration**.

The next government plans **to strengthen migration and integration research** as well as **to intensify the measurement of integration in terms of real integration monitoring**. This is very commendable in view of the increased and continuing importance of this policy field. In the course of this process, the existing diversity of actors in the German science and research system with its university and non-university institutions should be taken into account. The next federal government should invest in the consolidation of science-based independent and non-partisan policy advice – which is one of the main missions of the Expert Council of German Foundations. The SVR offers its cooperation for the planned expert committees (regarding the causes of flight as well as integration capabilities). In August 2017, the SVR made recommendations for the further development of integration monitoring; it is important that such a monitoring process consider not only structural indicators such as participation and success in education and the labour market but also cultural and social aspects. The SVR has developed methodical suggestions to improve integration monitoring, both at the federal and state levels, and to track integration processes (SVR 2017c). With its Integration Barometer, it regularly collects representative data on the integration climate in Germany, and did so for the year 2018 on behalf of several federal states (*Länder*).

The question of **citizenship** is not dealt with in the Agreement – yet only citizenship can allow for complete political participation. In view of increasing migration, national governments face the challenge of determining to whom they want to grant this complete access to all civil rights and obligations. In order to meet the real-life situation of people with a migrant background as well as their actual connection to the country of origin on the one hand and the receiving country on the other, the SVR suggested **dual citizenship with a generation cut** (see SVR 2017b). This solution would grant multiple citizenship to one or more generations in a transition period and at the same time prevent descendants of migrants from being bound to the nationality of their parents' country of origin for centuries to come. This would ensure that people could not vote in countries their ancestors have already left and whose laws would not, or hardly, affect them. Moreover, the SVR recommends **facilitating the naturalisation process** for well-integrated foreigners to foster the necessary and desirable political participation of migrants. It would be conceivable, for example, to introduce the possibility of 'turbo-naturalisation' and to reduce, under certain conditions, the waiting period from eight years to four. Naturalisation initiatives, already introduced in several German states, to increase the naturalisation rates are a useful instrument.

2. Educational integration: strengthen the quality focus, reduce segregation, facilitate labour market transition for international students

For many years, PISA and TIMSS education data has shown that in Germany **children's success at school is closely linked to their social origin**. On average, people with a migrant background have a lower socio-economic status and are thus doubly disadvantaged. It is therefore necessary to fight unequal opportunities and to **decouple educational success from social origin** – also as regards children and teenagers who have no migrant background.

The SVR therefore welcomes the fact that, as regards **early childhood education**, the Agreement advocates 'that children get the **same opportunities for social participation** and for developing their abilities regardless of their home environment', and that it commits to, for this purpose, 'improve



performance, abolish obstacles for access, as well as monitor and actively increase effects.' Early childhood education is of special importance as it lays the basis for the future education process. Hence, **expansion and promotion of quality in day-care facilities** is indispensable. Language – one of the keys to social participation – can be learned playfully in day-care facilities and in kindergartens. Thus, the SVR supports the plan to continue and expand, for instance, the federal '**Language day-care centre**' programme. This principle should be implemented extensively and include measures to foster parents' participation at an early stage and integrate the acquisition of intercultural competences and the competent handling of different educational backgrounds into the education and professional training of pedagogical staff. The SVR recommends a **quality campaign for education in day-care facilities** together with a corresponding programme for the education of preschool teachers – comparable to the **quality campaign regarding the education of school teachers**.

As for **education at schools**, the SVR appreciates the fact that the coalition partners plan to continue their efforts to improve educational opportunities in Germany. The announced **legal entitlement to all-day-care for all children in primary school** is a key element in these efforts. Yet, the SVR underlines the importance to improve the quality of all-day schools by means of a targeted schedule in which lessons and recreational breaks are meaningfully aligned to compensate educational disadvantages.

In a school system in which language and cultural diversity has in the meantime become normal, prospective and currently active **teachers should be offered more education and training courses on language learning and diversity management**. It is reasonable to set up curriculum concepts for the acquisition of relevant key competencies in all teaching degree programmes.

More attention should be paid to **preventing any additional segregation** of children entering the school system, as segregation has been shown to increase when newly arrived children stay among themselves for too long (SVR Research Unit 2018:4). Instead of distributing newly arrived school-aged children to schools merely on the basis of free spots, schools and the authorities in charge should place more emphasis on the social, language and cultural structure in the particular learning groups on site. A higher percentage of refugee children requires more financial resources, as does a high percentage of children with special needs (regardless of which kind). Moreover, not only children with a migrant background benefit from support for schools in challenging surroundings. The SVR therefore regards the planned '**Investment Offensive for Schools**' and the planned '**Research Practice Programme**' designed to strengthen schools in disadvantaged social surroundings as steps in the right direction.

In Germany, **school-aged refugee children** are entitled to education. In the reception centres and in the planned Anker centres, the maximum length of stay for families with minors is 'usually' six months, whereby that of adult refugees unaccompanied by minors is 18 months (Section 47, paragraphs 1a and 1b of the Asylum Law shall remain unaffected by this). From the SVR's point of view, there should be a guarantee (since the present situation in some federal states is otherwise) that children be promptly educated at regular schools (after a maximum of three months, in accordance with the European Reception Directive). This also has to be ensured when setting up the planned new Anker centres. Otherwise, there is the risk that children miss too much schooling.

The SVR advocates a **quality campaign** to develop good strategies throughout Germany and to evaluate how newly-arrived school children are given, from the moment they enter Germany onwards, the support they need in order to move on as fast as possible into the regular school system. Schooling in separate preparatory classrooms over prolonged periods of time is bound to hamper integration.

The SVR welcomes the commitment **to attract academic professionals** and points to an especially important group of professionals that is coveted internationally: **international students** who have graduated from a German university. In order to facilitate a fast and successful entry into the labour market



for this target group, the SVR recommends a more active organisation of the transition period (SVR Research Unit 2015b). In this respect, the federal government could innovate by supporting universities in the organisation of the graduate's transition into a career by an appropriate support programme that addresses universities, companies and other local actors and that helps to implement a regional transition management. The existing legal opportunities for third country nationals to stay in Germany for 18 months following their graduation in order to find an appropriate job (Section 16, paragraph 4 of the Residence Act) are competitive by international comparison, especially because international students have already been granted the privilege with Section 18b of the Residence Act to obtain a permanent residence permit after 24 months of employment in Germany.

The SVR supports the coalition partners' planned commitment to **foster student refugees**, yet points to the fact that refugees need more information about the higher education system after their arrival. In order to pave the way to university or vocational education for more refugees and teenagers of socially deprived families, the existing offers for making this group of people aware of their educational opportunities need to be enhanced.

3. Labour market integration

The SVR endorses the plans to continue with the development of information, consultation and support programmes to provide assistance with the **Recognition Act**. The Recognition Act is a contribution to a process in which the German society and economy learns to appreciate the life achievements of migrants and to make better use of their qualification potential. Here the aim should be – not only in the context of the future integration of refugees – to expand the already existing **approaches for monitoring non-formal and informal competences**, and to interlock and evaluate them regularly (SVR 2017a).

The SVR supports the coalition partners' intention to create novel incentives to **make existing education systems in vocational training more flexible**, especially considering that the vocational education systems in many countries of origin are different from the German system and that many if not most refugees have been forced to interrupt their program of study or to drop out of school due to having been displaced. In addition to the classic vocational education model, the SVR recommends, for example, module-based consecutive courses that can be combined as needed. It would also be conceivable to complement the classic two- to three-year vocational education model with part-time programmes – similar to existing offers aimed at reconciling family and work life. This would allow for parallel employment, perhaps using skills learned in the programme. Essentially, this opportunity to start a dual education programme would appeal not only to refugees. For example, other segments of the population, such as long-term unemployed people or single parents, could complete their training with these flexible programmes and thereby improve their employability. However, to prevent the formation of a two-tier education system, flexible education models should always be aligned with the standards of traditional full-time programmes of study as well as with the demands of the labour market.

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Chairman

Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration (SVR)



Other publications of the Expert Council and the Expert Council's Research Unit (German)

SVR 2016a: Stellungnahme von Dr. Cornelia Schu, Geschäftsführerin der Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration GmbH (SVR). Öffentliche Anhörung von Sachverständigen im Ausschuss für Arbeit und Soziales des Deutschen Bundestages zum vorgelegten Integrationsgesetz am 20.06.2016, Berlin.

SVR 2016b: Viele Götter, ein Staat. Religiöse Vielfalt und Teilhabe im Einwanderungsland. Jahresgutachten 2016 mit Integrationsbarometer, Berlin.

SVR 2017a: Chancen in der Krise: Zur Zukunft der Flüchtlingspolitik in Deutschland und Europa. Jahresgutachten 2017, Berlin.

SVR 2017b: Der Doppelpass mit Generationenschnitt. Perspektiven für ein modernes Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht. Positionspapier, Berlin.

SVR 2017c: Die Messung von Integration in Deutschland und Europa. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen bestehender Integrationsmonitorings, Berlin.

SVR 2017d: Neuordnung der Einwanderungspolitik. Ein Einwanderungsgesetzbuch für Deutschland. Positionspapier, Berlin.

SVR 2018: SVR: Familiennachzug fördert Integration von Schutzberechtigten. Pressemitteilung vom 29.01.2018, Berlin.

SVR-Forschungsbereich 2015a: In Vielfalt altern. Pflege und Pflegepräferenzen im Einwanderungsland Deutschland, Berlin.

SVR-Forschungsbereich 2015b: Zugangstor Hochschule: Internationale Studierende als Fachkräfte von morgen gewinnen, Berlin.

SVR-Forschungsbereich 2018: Schule als Sackgasse? Jugendliche Flüchtlinge an segregierten Schulen, Berlin.



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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 and the Vodafone Foundation Germany. The Expert Council is an independent and interdisciplinary committee of experts 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. Thomas K. Bauer (Chairman), Prof. Dr. Haci Halil Uslucan (Vice-Chairman), Prof. Dr. Petra Bendel, Prof. Dr. Claudia Diehl, Prof. Dr. Viola B. Georgi, Prof. Dr. Christian Joppke, Prof. Dr. Sieglinde Rosenberger, Prof. Dr. Daniel Thym and Prof. Dr. Hans Vorländer.

More information can be found at www.svr-migration.de/en