



## PRESS RELEASE

Presentation of first annual report of the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration

### **Immigration Society: Integration Significantly Better Than Its Reputation**

General public satisfied with integration and integration policy. Social tensions, backlog of problems in the area of education and the need for immigration policy reform remain.

**Germany has become an immigration society. This is the main finding of the annual report of the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration (SVR). In everyday social life, integration can be considered a success, in particular by European comparison. According to the SVR's Integration Barometer, a representative survey of over 5.600 individuals, the general public displays "pragmatic optimism towards integration" and "resilient mutual trust", to quote SVR Chairman Klaus J. Bade. Immigrants, in part, trust Germans more than their own ethnic group, and some actually trust Germans more than even Germans themselves do. The Index on the Integration Climate (IIC), which the Integration Barometer has measured for the first time, determined a positive average value: On a scale from 0 (very bad) to 4 (very good), the IIC for the year 2009 lies at 2,77 (native population) and even at 2,93 (immigrant population). Policymakers have also recognised that integration is a key socio-political issue.**

**The Expert Council, however, also identified certain problem areas and calls for the effective reduction of backlog and the reform of unresolved political issues: The backlog of problems with reference to the level of education among youths with a migrant background negatively affects the labour market and may pose a threat to social peace. Stagnating immigration and increasing emigration further exacerbates the skilled labour shortage and intensifies the pressure for social welfare system reform. The Expert Council calls for the initiation of a targeted and long overdue education and qualification campaign, the implementation of a demand-oriented immigration policy focussed on skilled workers, and a self-critical evaluation about the reasons for the rise in the emigration of skilled workers.**

**Berlin, 19 May 2010.** "Despite some problem areas, integration in Germany can be described as a success story in social and political terms. By international comparison, integration is significantly better than its reputation within the country." Prof. Dr. Klaus J. Bade, Chairman of the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration (SVR), reached this conclusion at the presentation of the Expert Council's first annual report in Berlin. The assessment and results presented by the SVR contradict the negative representations of the integration process as a 'failure', which generally prevail in the public debate.

This assessment is supported by the Expert Council's Integration Barometer. The representative survey of over 5.600 individuals was conducted for the first time and takes account of the mutual perceptions of persons with and without a migrant background. According to Bade, "the SVR Integration Barometer signals cautious optimism towards integration on both sides of the immigration society, a shared pragmatic approach towards integration issues and resilient mutual trust". Immigrants, in part, trust the native population more than their own or other ethnic groups. Some even trust Germans more than Germans trust themselves. The number of those who support the Government's integration policy (54% of the native and nearly 50% of the immigrant population)



exceeds by far the number of those who disapprove of it (9% of the native and nearly 15% of the immigrant population).

The Index on the Integration Climate (IIC), which was measured within the scope of the SVR's Integration Barometer for the first time, also gives cause for cautious optimism: The Index evaluates respondents' experiences in and attitudes towards different spheres of integration, including the labour market, their neighbourhood or school. On a scale from 0 (very bad) to 4 (very good), the IIC achieved a positive average rating of 2,77 by the native population and of 2,93 by the immigrant population.

For the Expert Council, measurable integration implies recognition through equal participation to the furthest extent possible in key areas of social life. An overview of these areas also reveals that significant progress in integration has been made, especially by international comparison. Exceptions among different groups and areas, however, prove the rule. Hence, the unemployment rate of individuals with a migrant background in Germany continues to be one-and-a-half times higher than of the native population. In other European immigration countries, such as the Netherlands and Sweden, an immigrant's odds of becoming unemployed are nearly three times higher.

With reference to the increasing focus of policymakers on integration, the Chairman of the SVR asserts: "Policymakers have also come to terms with the immigration society and have finally accepted that integration is a crucial socio-political issue." Political grandstanding, however, tends to occasionally confuse cause and effect. Politics did not play a leading role in the decade-long and peaceful evolvement of the immigration society. Instead, politics usually adapted to the development much later and rather grudgingly, and only determinedly replaced its apprehensive and defensive approach to integration with a proactive and effective one in the last 10 years. Furthermore, the "beacon of immigration policy", the National Integration Plan, may have provided an important impetus for the native population, specifically in terms of networking activities, but, as is the case for the German Islam Conference, the majority of the immigrant population is only to a limited extent or not at all aware of such activities.

Despite the visibly increasing progress achieved in integration and integration policy, the SVR warns against euphoria; after all, certain problem areas continue to exist. One cannot yet, for example, speak of equal educational opportunities or educational attainment among youths with and without a migrant background. Bade refers here to the "double integration paradox".

The immigration society is characterised by a peaceful and increasingly pragmatic approach to integration. At the same time, however, increasing social polarisation brings with it a rise in the number of social losers from both the native and the immigrant population at the base of the social pyramid. The increasingly antagonistic tension at the base could pose a threat to social peace, while many youths' insufficient qualifications limit their employment prospects, restrict the supply of labour and strains the social welfare budget. A targeted and long overdue education and qualification campaign is necessary, which would reduce the inheritance of inherent social disadvantages. Bade points out: "Investments in education are more sustainable than subsidies for banks".

Yet precisely here lies the second "integration paradox": According to the SVR's Integration Barometer, parents with a higher level of education from both the native and immigrant populations certainly support the equality of educational opportunity. However, they usually have a negative outlook on the performance of schools with an ethnically heterogeneous student body and, therefore, are not willing to 'risk' sending their own children to ethnically diverse schools. This is also true for households with a migrant background that experienced upward mobility. This dilemma can, according to the experts, only be reduced if the attractiveness of heterogeneous schools increases



through innovative forms of involvement, and through conceptual, personnel and material investments.

The Expert Council has also identified a need to update and reform migration policy: Today, Germany is both an immigration and emigration country with a high degree of inner-European mobility. The decrease in immigration and the rise in emigration of working age individuals not only aggravate the lack of skilled workers on the labour market, but also intensify the pressure for social welfare system reforms. In addition to an internal education and qualification campaign, Germany needs to implement a demand-oriented policy to attract immigrants from countries outside of the EU based on a point system grounded in the labour market. Making Germany attractive for migrants is, however, more important than reinforcing administrative structures, considering that migration within Europe can no longer be controlled. According to Bade, Germany must therefore become "more attractive for skilled workers, who are thinking about emigrating and for those who are hesitant about immigrating to Germany". Moreover, there are considerable challenges at and in front of Europe's borders, as well as with regard to the division of tasks in Europe on humanitarian issues, including questions on refugees and asylum seekers, and in the fight against the causes of involuntary migration from the country of origin.

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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. It consists of eight member foundations. Apart from the Stiftung Mercator and the VolkswagenStiftung, these include: Bertelsmann Stiftung, Freudenberg Stiftung, Gemeinnützige Hertie-Stiftung, Körber Foundation, Vodafone Foundation Germany and the ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius. The Expert Council is an independent and non-profit monitoring, evaluating and advisory council, which takes a stand on integration and migration policy-relevant issues, and offers practical 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. Klaus J. Bade (Chairman), Prof. Dr. Ursula Neumann (Vice Chairman), as well as Prof. Dr. Michael Bommers, Prof. Dr. Heinz Faßmann, Prof. Dr. Yasemin Karakaşoğlu, Prof. Dr. Christine Langenfeld, Prof. Dr. Werner Schiffauer, Prof. Dr. Thomas Straubhaar and Prof. Dr. Steven Vertovec.

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