

Managing Integration - European experiences and perspectives¹

Werner Weidenfeld / May 2009

Introduction

Migration is a worldwide phenomenon. Europe has received a significant share of this migration. According to statistics², 33.6 % of the immigrants of the world live in Europe (28% in Asia, 26.8 % in America, 9% in Africa and 2.6% Oceania). Hence, it is clear that Europe, since the 1960s, has become a principal destination of worldwide migration flows. Currently, nearly all countries in Europe act simultaneously as sending, receiving and transit countries of migration. Estimates by the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development)³ place the documented migrant population in the European Economic Area – excluding naturalized or undocumented migrants, or those awaiting asylum procedure – at more than 20 million foreigners, or 5.3 % of the population. Other estimates, for example by the IOM (International Organization for Migration⁴), state that migrant stocks are significantly higher, at around 56 million foreigners or 7.7 % of the European continent's total population.⁵ Concerning the 27 member states of the European Union, there are 23 million foreigners which is 4.7 % of the population. 14.5 million are foreigners from outside the EU which is 2.9 %⁶. The numbers have to be differentiated concerning the different member states of the European Union: countries like Spain and Italy have much immigration at the moment, while e.g. the Baltic states, Bulgaria and Poland have emigration. The amount of foreign population differs vastly: Slovakia records only 1 % of foreign population, while Luxembourg records 39 %.

These migration movements have a variety of causes and factors. On the supply side of migration, issues such as poverty, social inequality, political instability, and broad access to information and geographical mobility have increased migration pressure. On the demand side of migration, economic and demographic developments have channeled migration flows to some countries, increasing migration pressure.⁷

1 The author thanks Florian M. Wenzel, Center for Applied Policy Research Munich, for his constructive support on this paper

2 International Migration 2006, Department of economical and social affairs of the United Nations.

3 OECD 2008: A profile of immigrant populations in the 21st century. Data from the OECD countries.

4 International Organization for Migration 2008: World Migration 2008. Managing Labour Mobility in the Evolving Global Economy.

5 Compare Commission of the European Communities 2007: Third Annual report on Migration and Integration. (COM(2007) 512 final)

6 For the following statistics compare Lavenex, Sandra / HamburgischesWeltWirtschaftsinstitut 2009: focus migration nr. 17. Länderprofil Europäische Union.

7 Penninx, Rinus: Integration Policies for Europe's Immigrants: Performance, Conditions and Challenges. An expert paper for the Independent Council of Experts on Migration and Integration, 2004, p. 5

Reactions to diversity

Reactions to these developments differ across Europe. Attitudes to diversity and cultural identity have been studied comprehensively in 2002 for the Member countries of the EU-15. These reactions are ambivalent. In a comprehensive study a “tolerance typology”⁸ shows four different attitudes towards minority groups. They show basic patterns of dealing with diversity which are reflected in different policy approaches to the issue:

- Actively tolerant - minority groups are regarded as having an enriching and positive influence on society. Assimilation of culture is not favoured and active policies of integration are being supported.
- Passively tolerant – minority groups are welcomed as they can enrich society, but should not be actively supported. A restricted acceptance and the stance of *laissez-faire* predominate.
- Ambivalent – minority groups make no substantial contributions to society and should be assimilated to majority society. Yet they do not disturb majority society in any problematic way.
- Intolerant – Minority groups are a source of disturbance for society and have no positive effects on society. Limited access, assimilation and repatriation are necessary measures to be taken.

8 Institute for Social Research and Analysis 2002. Attitudes towards minorities in the European Union. 2002: p. 24

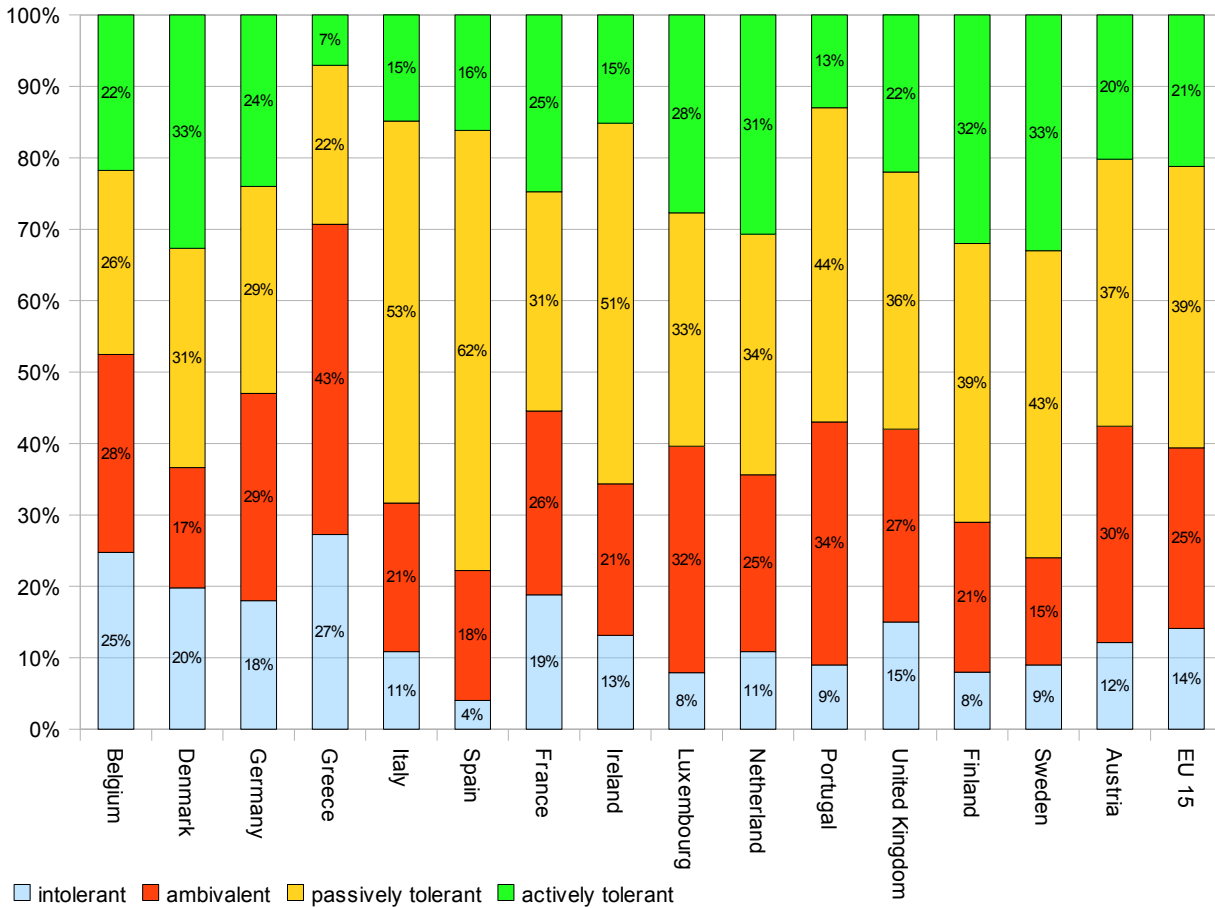


Figure 1: Typology of attitudes of people in the EU towards minority groups.

Differences of 6 % and more are statistically significant

While there is a significant minority of 14 % being intolerant and 21 % actively tolerant, almost 2/3 of EU-15 population are uncertain about the chances and risks of diversity. There are greater amounts of freedom found in society, politics and economy which are appreciated. Options for individual, social, political and economic opportunities are

increasingly accessible. But plurality does not only open up choices, it forces choices upon individuals and societies. This can lead to stress and the inability to design the future proactively. Tensions and conflicts resulting from plurality are met by reactions trying to prevent them instead of embracing their chances. A defence of a once established or chosen identity as an act of self-assurance bears a great variety of dangers. Although lacking a new comprehensive study for the EU-27, it is to be assumed that with the recent rapid and vast enlargement of the European Union the figures will rather tend to show the increased uncertainty concerning minority populations.

Action is needed to strengthen those factors leading to actively tolerant attitudes that shape a pluralistic society. Even more importantly, measures have to be taken to show the majority of Europeans in the EU how the uncertainty concerning pluralistic societies can be converted into creative opportunities for living “harmony in difference”.

European policies

There is a growing understanding in the international community that no country can manage migration through unilateral policies alone. But for the last decades, political decision-makers on all levels demonstrated only limited readiness to perceive immigration as a part of the social and economic reality. This tendency has been accompanied by disagreement on the necessity of immigration, how to structure immigration flows as well as the extent societal integration should be facilitated.

If one compares the immigration policies of European countries during the last three decades with those of countries such as Canada, Australia and the United States, it becomes apparent that European migration policies have been characterized by reactive, shortsighted measures with an emphasis on control. Migration policy has only recently begun changing from a primarily defensive to a pro-active policy focused on a more comprehensive and coherent approach.

Therefore, one of the enlarged European Union’s biggest tests in the years to come will be how it manages immigration and integration. If European Member States rise to this challenge, they will be able to harness the benefits that immigration can trigger. If they fail to do so, immigration could harm Member States’ long-term economic and

social prospects or create social division.

Europe can neither construct impermeable borders that prevent immigration, nor can it integrate all immigrants wishing to come to Europe. A central issue in the enlarged European Union is how to successfully organize plural, open societies with growing multicultural and multinational elements. Europe no longer faces the question of »whether« to do this, but rather the question of »how« this can best be done. At the Tampere Summit 1999 European Member States made progress on this issue by setting the elements for a common EU immigration policy. The approach agreed in Tampere in 1999 was confirmed in 2004 with the adoption of The Hague programme, which sets the objectives for strengthening freedom, security and justice in the EU for the period 2005-2010. In December 2009 the new Stockholm programme is to be adopted, which will set a new and comprehensive agenda for Justice and Home Affairs and therefore also affect migration policy. Up to now the European Commission has no clear-cut migration and integration policy in one scheme, but puts together and documents the different policies concerning these issues.⁹

The Common European Assessment

Seven key developments will force the European Union to take up greater responsibilities in the area of immigration and integration in the future:

- Immigration is a growing and permanent part of Europe's future.
- All Member States of the European Union are affected by the flow of international migration.
- During the 1990s migration became the largest component of population change in most Member States. Migratory pressure is likely to remain high in the foreseeable future, given the rapid expansion of young adult populations in many developing countries, economic and social differences, as well as political instability.
- As ten new Member States joined the EU in 2004 and another two in 2007, summing up to a total of 27 Member States of the European Union, some

⁹ The overview can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/fsj/immigration/fsj_immigration_intro_en.htm. The European Parliament is also monitoring European activities on migration and integration and adding its own proposals at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/comparl/libe/elsj/scoreboard/asylum/default_en.htm

migratory flows that were viewed as immigration prior to EU expansion will now be understood as internal mobility in the expanded European Union.

- Issues of security have become more urgent since September 11, 2001. Ensuing policies have also contributed to a different perception of migrants in the European Union. Therefore anti-discrimination policies have become one focus of integration for balancing out freedom and security.
- Beyond the need for internal reforms, demographic developments in all European countries necessitate the implementation of new measures to attract highly skilled immigrants as well as qualified labour migrants in select branches of the economy where temporary labour shortages emerge.
- The freedom of movement and the removal of many internal borders in the European Union make immigration to a key common issue; flawed integration policies in one country have an pronounced affect on the European Union as a whole.

European integration policy has changed in most EU Member States. The main difference has been the introduction of language courses and courses that familiarize migrants with the host country's constitution and culture. Since the terror attacks on September 11, 2001, not only has security been tightened, but debates on the peaceful co-existence of people from different cultures has intensified. This debate has focused on migrants from Islamic countries. Debates have encompassed such issues as the relationship of the state and religion, the freedom to wear a headscarf or other religious symbols in public schools, as well as religion in school curricula.

These developments have led to growing recognition that Europe not only needs immigration but that it must also manage migration by acting collectively at the European level:

We now face the challenge of moving from good ideas and intentions to implementing policies that shape European politics. The task of the European Union and its Member States is to formulate a comprehensive migration and integration policy and to establish a sustainable co-operation in the controversial area of integration. It is important not to deny or ignore people's fears relating to migration. These fears are often based on real problems and conflicts that have resulted from shortsighted

migration management and from misguided policies. A central part of migration policy in the expanded European Union will be to create a comprehensive framework for migration and integration in the EU. Even though each Member State has its unique approach to managing migration and fostering integration according to its history, culture and economic development; Europe must develop a common, coherent framework for immigration and integration policy with clear guiding principles and objectives.

Europe needs a common integration policy that:

- can enjoy the support of its people and the support of a parliamentary majority;
- addresses current integration deficits;
- is attractive to high-skilled migrants;
- creates synergy by networking the effects of scattered or uncoordinated integration efforts in the Member States;
- ensures transparency, as well as builds trust between native and immigrant societies in Europe.

Defining Integration

In order to create effective integration policies in Europe, two issues must be clarified among its Member States:

1. On which persons or groups should integration policies focus?
2. In which ways and to what degree should integration be pursued (language skills, economic integration, social integration, cultural integration, political participation, etc.)?

These two questions must be answered together, forming a comprehensive context for integration. The European Commission has put down 11 Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU in 2004¹⁰ in order to provide answers to these questions. A general principle that should always apply is that all immigrants must be

¹⁰ Commission of the European communities 2004: Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU. (COM(2005) 0389 final)

integrated, regardless of the motivation for immigration or duration of stay. However, the integration of long-term or permanent immigrants should be more comprehensive than that of temporary immigrants. For temporary immigrants, policies should focus on labour market integration as well as language skills; in the case of long-term immigrants, policies should focus on societal, cultural and political integration, language skills, as well as integration into the labour market.

Social integration can have various aims: on the one hand, it can strive to create a »melting pot« model of social co-habitation, whereby cultural traditions of immigrants fuse with those of the host country. On the other hand, it can strive to create a »salad bowl« model of social co-habitation, whereby different cultures and traditions peacefully co-exist, without dissipating or fusing together.

Individual Member States as well as the EU as a whole are based on pluralistic social structures that respect cultural diversity. This contradicts social models that promote complete homogenization or assimilation of immigrants. Pluralistic societies have the duty to grant immigrants the freedom of self-organization and to remain open to cultural diversity.

Integration must, therefore, not be characterized by forced assimilation, but must offer both sides – immigrants and the population of the host country alike – the opportunity to be receptive to each other. This is not at odds with the expectation that immigrants respect and abide by the basic values of the host country. Integration is the process of becoming an accepted part of a foreign society and of accepting that society, based on the principles of equality, human rights, diversity and inclusion. The most important factor of integration is acceptance and that means maintaining a positive perception and appreciation of diversity. Integration is a long-term process with short term targets. It is a two-way process based on rights and obligations of both the immigrant and the host society.

Integration is a key issue in molding communities according to the values and norms of European democracy. Integration does not mean that migrants culturally assimilate into the dominate culture of a host society, shedding their identity; rather, integration consists of recognizing and respecting a host country's constitution and laws. Integration means more than having shelter and protection in a host country. Issues

such as legal certainty (visa status), compliance with national laws, peaceful co-existence and access to education, employment, social security and civil rights are central aspects of integration. Having the ability to communicate and access to employment are necessities not only for immigrants but also for citizens of a host society. Integration is a complex process that is by no means free of conflict. Integration requires great effort from both immigrants and citizens of the host society. Without acceptance, tolerance and a positive climate for integration, the complex process of integration can not be successful.

The successful integration of immigrants ensures, on the one hand, that immigrants are able to participate in economic, social, cultural, religious, political and civic life of its host society, and on the other hand, that immigrants respect the fundamental norms and values of the host society and participate actively in the integration process.

Integration requires a multi-dimensional definition, which must also be based on a balanced policy-mix of horizontal and vertical integration. Horizontally, comprehensive integration policies should contain economic, social, cultural, religious, political and civic integration. Vertically, policies should include not only local and regional measures, which directly manage integration, but also broader instruments at the national and the European level. Integration policies should focus on helping immigrants strengthen their ties to destination countries, rather than on temporary or rotational immigration.

Building a European Framework

European migration and integration policies need to be secured in a long-term, coherent framework, and at the same time they should be responsive and tailored to the diverse needs of Member States. The success of such policies will depend on deepening partnerships between a wide range of political and civic actors, as well as on a proper allocation of resources. In addition to governmental actors at the local, national and European level, numerous non-governmental actors, such as churches, trade unions, political parties, migrant organizations and the media, strongly influence the integration process. Thus, forward-looking integration policies need to involve not only immigrants, governments and state authorities at all levels (federal, state, local),

but also civil society; above all, however, these policies must involve immigrants.

A coherent top-down and bottom-up integration policy must take into account the different perspectives of both the immigrants – understanding immigrants as individuals and as institutional partners representing their communities – and the society of the host country. It must clearly formulate the rights and obligations of both. A European framework that considers the multi-dimensional nature integration policy will:

- provide orientation for immigrants and the host society alike by complementing national regulations without rendering them invalid;
- clearly lay down the basic rules for the European Union for peaceful coexistence between different cultures, both inside and outside its borders; provide means to compare, measure and evaluate integration policies.

Such a framework could be seen as a central element of the vigorous integration policies called for in Tampere and continued in The Hague.

A European framework should contain the following elements:

Family

The legal, economic and social protection of family members of legal residents is explicitly stated for the first time in Article 33 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The family also has a central role to play in the integration of immigrants as it represents a fixed point of reference for them in the host country. The question of family reunification, therefore, not only has to do with steering migration, but is also closely linked to integration policy. Today, people entering the EU within the framework of family reunification already represent a considerable percentage of total immigration. It is therefore necessary to differentiate between the importance of family reunification for integration policy purposes, and reunification as a means of immigration. In order that family reunification does not dominate other channels of immigration, only the core family (parents and their children) of immigrants legally residing in an EU Member State should have the right of reunification. As far as

children are concerned, younger children generally have better chances of successful integration. The maximum age of family reunification should be uniform throughout the EU.

Family members should also be granted broad access to the host society following family reunification. Besides access to education and training opportunities, family members must also be allowed the right to pursue employment or self-employment. Immigrant families should not be subject to any discrimination with respect to the purchase of residential property.

Education and the Labour Market

Immigrants need to become familiar with the social order of the host country in order to live and work independently. Integration courses are an appropriate and reasonable instrument for doing this. These courses should equip immigrants with basic language skills and with knowledge of the constitutional and legal system of the host country. Integration courses should be obligatory. Refusal to attend should have consequences, while participation should be positively reinforced. A challenge for the host country is to make integration courses and systems of schooling and training accessible to immigrants, while keeping standards in these institutions high.

Integration into the labour market is of equal importance¹¹. It is therefore essential that immigrants receive a work permit soon after entering the country. To offer incentives in this field, firms that provide legal foreign workers with training aimed at labour market integration, for instance, should be eligible for special assistance. Advisory and assistance programmes for foreign workers who wish to set up in business on their own must also be expanded. At the same time, it is necessary to strike a balance between employment initiatives for national labour and programmes aimed at the rapid integration of legal foreign workers into the labour market. EU citizens should be guaranteed preference for six weeks on job openings before non-residents can be considered. This would be published on the EURES network (European electronic employment services system).

It is also necessary to foster the mobility not just of EU citizens, but also of immigrants. Permanent residents within the EU should likewise be granted freedom of movement

¹¹ Commission of the European Communities 2004: Green Paper on an EU approach to managing economic migration (COM(2004) 0811 final)

for purposes of work. International students who graduate from a university in the EU should be granted a work permit on completion of their courses. Improving the acceptance of foreign degrees is also necessary in order to make European universities and the European labour market more attractive to international students.

Social Security

One sensitive issue is that of integrating immigrants into the social security systems of host countries. In principle, there are two possibilities: delayed integration and immediate integration. Linking insurance and social benefits to the national citizenship of an EU country would mean a restriction on individual rights of immigrants. Article 12 of the EC Treaty, prohibiting discrimination, must be incorporated into EU regulations concerning the integration of immigrants into social security systems of host countries. Most immigrants pay taxes and social security contributions in their host country and are able to claim benefits in return.

Therefore, the aim of EU policies in this area should be to integrate immigrants into the social security systems of host countries immediately. For immigrants, this means that besides benefiting from the associated rights, they also assume obligations in the host country. Equal access to the social security systems is therefore of high integrative and identity-forming significance.

Citizenship and Political Participation

Permanent residents residing in any EU Member State must be granted a right to naturalization after a minimum stay. This period of time must be harmonized in all EU Member States. Dual citizenship should be possible. A special residence status, civic citizenship, for third-country nationals with long-term residency, supplemented by a separate residence status for family members joining them under family reunification should be created. The period of time after which this status would be granted should be uniform throughout the EU. The concept of civic citizenship as outlined in the Tampere and Thessaloniki conclusions must become an irreplaceable instrument for integration in this context. It offers an attractive package of rights to persons who reside in a Member State for a period of five years and longer. Civic citizenship does

not offer a separate set of rights for third-country nationals, but rather a common baseline of rights and obligations shared by all residents in the Union irrespective of their nationality.

Integration also means political participation, which in turn constitutes a significant element of identification with the host country. Granting immigrants the right to political participation at the local level means that they can become involved in political processes in their immediate environment by voting and by assuming office. Therefore, after a specified waiting period, which should be the same in all Member States, third country nationals should be granted both the right to vote and to serve in elected office at the local level. This should constitute a central element within the concept of civic citizenship and is based on the EU-Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The European Union has introduced the idea of a “civil citizenship” (Tampere conclusions 1999) for third country residents. The EU defines itself as a community of citizens. Civil citizenship offers a common baseline of rights and obligations shared by all residents in the Union irrespective of their nationality. Participation in the local level should be fostered since it is in local contexts that integration occurs – integration courses can prepare immigrants as well as majority society for this task: economic and social rights, access to social security, legal and political rights as well as consultative structures are part and parcel of civil citizenship.

A European civil citizenship could provide for a secure and common basis for all residents of the European Union. It is an important tool for integration and fostering social cohesion. The notion of civil citizenship is conceivable only on the basis of some common understanding of what it means to be European.

Religion and Culture

The EU respects the diversity of culture, religion and language. The Member States must therefore enforce these freedoms. Strengthening these rights means empowering immigrants and therefore minorities. For example, introducing the teaching of Islam as part of religious curricula, or teaching anti-racism in schools, as stated in the EU directive, would reinforce these freedoms. Additionally, greater support should be given to intercultural institutions that allow immigrants and the native population to interact. While promoting tolerance and understanding from an early age cannot completely

prevent conflicts of culture and values in a society, it can help to deal with these conflicts constructively and peacefully.

Transparency and Effectiveness – The Open Method of Coordination (OMC)

Besides these core elements, concrete goals and policy objectives are required at the EU-level, which can be translated into national, regional and local policies. One of the best instruments to this end – the OMC – was introduced by the European Commission. The OMC's strength is that it initiates a cross-national learning process, based on common indicators, benchmarking and monitoring. Its advantage lies in the free exchange of policy ideas and best practices on integration measures by the Member States. Consistent data on commonly agreed indicators that measure integration would enhance this exchange. In principle these indicators can be divided into three categories: legal and political, economic and social, as well as cultural.

The OMC is an important means for the EU to creating competitive integration policies. Competition, when used as a tool, can promote national and regional integration policies in an objective and transparent way. Through competition, Member States are able to objectively compare their policies. Moreover, competitive integration will trigger a healthy sense of innovation and motivation between Member States, encouraging them to raise their standards of integration at a national level. The EU needs a competitive integration policy if it is to attract economically prosperous immigrants.

Towards a Holistic European Integration Policy

Integration is a long-term process. Although it is unclear how current policies will effect long-term-integration, integration through the competitive policies between Member States will help determine best practice. Integration, therefore, means taking seriously social concerns in the development of pluralistic societies.

Immigration and integration need to be seen and defined as a common European task. The following challenges have to be taken up if the Stockholm programme from 2010 to 2015 should provide a new quality in migration policies of the European Union¹²:

¹² Compare Bendel, Petra 2009: Europäische Migrationspolitik. Bestandsaufnahme und Trends (European Migration Policy. Current status and trends). Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Bonn.

1. Strengthening the coherence between the different levels of the European multi-level-system

Regional, national and European policies on migration have to be coordinated in a more systematic way. Very often national or even regional competencies (e.g. Education) are blocking approaches of European migration policy. Equally regional or national policies on migration stay short of their possible impact because of the lack of a coherent European approach.

2. Establishing transparency inside and between the different bodies of the European Union.

The responsibility for migration policy is linked with the European Council (council of the heads of member states), the European Commission, the Council of the European Union (council of the ministers of member states) and the European Parliament.

The European Commission has taken over the agenda setting for migration policy since about 2004. The European Parliament has to be integrated more intensely in the development of European migration policy for democratically legitimizing it in the future.

3. Creating new institutions which give credit to migration policy as a cross-section policy.

Cooperation between the home affairs dimension, the foreign affairs dimension and the development policy dimension of migration policy is necessary. Only thus different rationales on the same issue can be systematically discussed and be unified. Different actors from politics as well as NGOs should be brought together for strengthening a comprehensive discourse in the development of European migration policy.

4. Establishing coherence concerning the contents and paying attention to new tendencies.

Migration policy is focused on issues on which the member countries achieve quick consensus. Aspects of control and security are being successfully implemented, while aspects of anti-discrimination and protection are on the agenda, but often not being implemented. A coherent migration policy will pay more attention to the goals of human rights as key component of the European Union.

New tendencies like climate change, environmental pollution and wars about resources will heighten the need for migration policy as a comprehensive approach to these challenges. Migration policy and development policy will move together more intensely in this context the role of NGOs could provide a linkage for opening up to new fields of cooperation integration in establishing a coherent policy.