

Conference News

EIGHTH
INTERNATIONAL
METROPOLIS
CONFERENCE

Gaining from Migration

Vienna 2003

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Policy Development: A Contradictory Affair



“How can we make believe the European citizens that we need migration?” was the question EU Commissioner Antonio Vitorino posed in session 3.2. The answer: migration has to become compatible with the population.

“In the 90s, most Germans thought that Germany was not an immigration country even if more than ten percent of the population were of foreign decent”, Ute Vogt, the Secretary of State of the German Ministry of the Interior, re-

ports. Today the mood has changed. “With the help of the most varied groups, such as NGOs, economic leaders and the church, 60 percent of the Germans consider immigration as being important.” In Hungary, the mood

is still different. With the immigration figures rising ten percent in 2002, the country is still moving from a sending to a receiving country. “In Hungary, most migrants come from the neighbouring countries”, the Hungarian Minister for Internal Affairs reports.

“What we need is a common platform for migration, although the various questions have to be solved on a local or regional level where the people really live”, stresses Vitorino. Still there has to be enough room for national solutions. While some European countries stress that they need above all qualified migration, EU Commissioner Antonio Vitorino says that unskilled labourers are as important for the EU. “The jobs the non-qualified migrants take are those the residents don’t want anyway”, he confirms. As the age average keeps rising in Europe, there is a need for a non-demagogic approach to migration.

“It doesn’t make sense to open or close doors, if you don’t have the design for a room”, Jan Niessen, the head of

the Migration Policy Group (MPG) in Brussels says. This means that Europe has to know what it wants from its migrants. “If we want to gain from migration, we need to have a strategy which is drawing the stakeholders into the debate”, he confirms.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, when the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl asked for help in Brussels to deal with the flow of asylum seekers from ex-Yugoslavia and the Tampere Document which was signed in 1999, the EU has come a large way. While in the 1990s the politicians still sought how to protect the EU from refugees, it is agreed today, that migration is necessary. “What the EU needs is planned integration”, says Jonas Widgren head of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development.

“The EU has the most structured approach to migration and is thus an example to the world”, Gervais Appave of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Geneva says. In a time where regionalisation is on the agenda, regional consultative circles become necessary as the international community is not ready for a global solution yet. “But we have to keep the general aim in mind to initiate a coherent policy”, he stresses.

Today's Keynote Speakers



Session 4.1
Gaining locally: From minority policies to diversity management – Options for mutual learning and co-operation between cities

Morton Weinfeld,
McGill University, Montreal
(Canada)

Morton Weinfeld earned his PhD at Harvard University in 1977 and became professor at McGill University. He is Chair in Canadian Ethnic Studies and in this capacity has organised various symposia on areas related to ethnicity and race in Canada. His current research focuses on areas of ethnicity and public policy and the role of minority-origin professionals in various policy domains.

Urban areas with a high proportion of immigrants can no longer be ruled with little comprehensive government policy direction. The desire to introduce efficient urban-migrant policies leads to identifying

and copying “best practices”, but cities have to move from a series of case studies to comparative evaluation. Morton Weinfeld will focus on common questions regarding immigrant integration that might foster policy development: what is the broad policy objective in terms of cultural/communal retention to comprehensive integration? In what policies are these objectives to be applied? Are the policies directed at immigrants funded and managed by government and at what level? To what extent are the practices within these organisations culturally sensitive?



Session 4.2
City versus State?
Perspectives on urban citizenship in multi-cultural immigrant societies

Kent Andersson,
Vice-Mayor of Malmö, Sweden

Kent Andersson is Vice-Mayor and elected

Councillor for labour market, adult education and integration in the City of Malmö, member of the City Council and Executive Board. He was appointed by the Swedish government as special investigator for “Swedish for immigrants” and will publish an official report this autumn. He is a member of the board of Malmö University and was board member of the school of IMER (International Migration and Ethnic Relations) until this summer. Since January 2003, he has been serving as chairman of the Eurocities Social Welfare Committee.

The conferment of citizenship and the traditional rights that have followed it has conventionally been a privilege of the state. With Malmö as his starting-point, Kent Andersson will discuss the interrelationship of identity and geographical place and how this can affect the city, the state and the relations between them.

Daily Programme

Multiple Dimensions of
Integration and Diversity Policies
9:00–10:45 Session 4.1
Break
11:15–13:00 Session 4.2
Lunch break
14:30–18:00 Workshops
(incl. a break)

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What will you bring back of this conference?



Serge Weber
researcher (France)

The most important thing is the link between research and action. I really hope that this will have an influence on the political decision-making process on international level.



Jean Kunz
Policy Research Initiative (Canada)

An integrative approach of policy development in the field of integration and immigration – including immigrant communities, Governmental Organisations and NGOs. Immigrants are a diverse community which cannot be represented by one organisation.



Veena Gill
Refugee Services
Local Gov. of Kvam (Norway)

We have to link and establish an interactive dialogue between the local and governmental level as well as the researchers so that a useful agenda can be set up.



Stuart Rosewarne
The University of Sydney (Australia)

I am concerned that migrant organisations are still not enough involved in the Metropolis network – maybe it is because of the expenses for the conference. Also women still lack an equal share of representation in the panels.



Neil G. Ruiz
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA)

We face a lot of gaps in research and policy development. A lot of work still has to be done. For instance we have to foster development in the sending countries.

Co-operative migration management

International, national and local answers

9th International Metropolis Conference
27 September – 1 October 2004 University of Geneva (Uni-Mail), Switzerland

In line with the debates held in Oslo (the co-existence and respect for individuality and diversity) and here in Vienna (a global and positive concept of international migration flows), Geneva 2004 will take a look at the different levels that permit the co-operative management of the phenomena of migration. The choice of this proposed theme is supported by the fact that it is closely related to issues the world is now concerned with while making great sense being debated in Switzerland and more precisely in Geneva.

International migration now sits high on the agenda of multilateral bodies and for numerous individual states worldwide. The issue is not only whether but also how to manage the complex phenomena associated with international migration as well as how to manage the flows themselves. Of central importance is whether co-operative migration management can create mutual advantages for both countries of origin and destination.

Recently, we have seen not only the Metropolis Project; also the United Nations, the International Organization for Migration, the UNHCR, the International Labour Organization, the Society for International Development and others look carefully at how international co-operation will be able to help all countries involved in migration benefit from the phenomenon. The Geneva conference will see speakers at the forefront of this issue describe the current state of the discussions and consider what lies ahead for the international community.

On the national and local levels, governments are confronting the same issue of managing migration flows and, consequently, the plurality that is characteristic of today's societies. One of the issues of our discussion will be the role of dialogue between all levels of government, international organisations and civil society to overcome those fears and barriers to successful migration management that often arise in our contemporary multicultural societies.

Switzerland's political and historical background makes it an ideal venue for discussing forms of dialogue that will take us into the future. Switzerland aspires to reach a consensus on migration through dialogue, to use clear and open communication as a key instrument to manage the challenges of our pluralistic societies and to inspire democratic public spheres. On the international level, Switzerland has recently initiated the development of an international agenda for migration management (the "Berne Initiative").

The Geneva conference will be organised by the Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies (SFM) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in collaboration with numerous local and international partners. Being held in Geneva,

the event will enable the participants of the Metropolis Project to meet and hold discussions with representatives of the many international organisations headquartered there. A witness of a rich past reflecting on its present, Geneva is also a modern international centre of worldwide importance as well as a charming and welcoming small city.

A city of immigrants (approximately 40% of its population is foreign-born), headquarters to many international organisations and a city of peace, Geneva is looking forward to hosting these debates in the framework of the Ninth International Metropolis Conference in September 2004. ●

Further Information and Publications

The programme, abstracts, biographies, workshop papers and proceedings as well as a selection of pictures of the Eighth Metropolis Conference – Gaining from Migration can be downloaded at www.metropolis2003.at.

Vienna Integration Fund

All publications of the Vienna Integration Fund including facts & figures, information material, folders, activity reports, etc. can be ordered via www.wif.wien.at.

Europaforum Wien

Center for Urban Dialogue and European Policy
www.europaforum.or.at

Useful Links

Vienna Integration Fund (WIF)
www.wif.wien.at

EQUAL Programme
www.gleiche-chancen.at/
http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equal/index_en.html

Facts

Integration Agreement/Language programme

The "Integration Agreement" of the Austrian federal government obliges migrants to learn German. If they don't, sanctions that may even lead to the loss of their residence permit are imposed on them. This approach is not shared by Vienna. A voluntary language programme, a welcome package and orientation interviews in the respective mother tongues tailor the offer for migrants in Vienna to their needs. Over 25,000 persons have attended German classes since 1998. Languages classes (from basic to technical) as well as useful information about Austria are offered. Participants pay 20% of the cost at most, the rest is covered by the City of Vienna. In 2002, the successful programme received an award by the Federal Ministry of Education for improving social conditions especially for women (proved by a female-attendance ratio of 70% in 2002). German courses are also held in temples and mosques. The "Triangle" project is to improve communication between kindergarten staff, parents and children of migrant families. Learning German in this context helps to overcome self-consciousness as well as social barriers.

One can learn anything The EU subsidises a centre for autonomous learning of the Vienna Integration Fund (WIF) to improve job opportunities of persons facing social constraints, e.g. women, migrants and young people. At this intercultural learning centre, inhabitants of Objective II areas of Vienna attend language and EDP classes. The aims are to learn how to learn and to lower the unemployment rate. Tailored education and counselling are offered; learning objectives are set individually.

