

Conference News

EIGHTH
INTERNATIONAL
METROPOLIS
CONFERENCE

Gaining from Migration

Vienna 2003

Daily Bulletin
Wednesday
17.09.03

» Migrants: Travellers between Cultures «

“Migration is not a problem to be solved, but a positive net game.” This statement of T. Alexander Aleinikoff sums up the core message of Plenary Session 1.2

Until today, most decisions regarding immigration have been taken by individual states, trying to get the best out of bi- and multi-lateral agreements for themselves. The partners of this agreement were not taken into consideration. “But the awareness is slowly changing”, says Rita Süßmuth of the Independent Council of Experts on Immigration and Integration in Berlin. “Even today, refugees are often considered as being weak and a burden for the welfare state. But they only get weak in their receiving countries.” Süßmuth is convinced that culture is a vital aspect of migration which is often forgotten, but of which ever more people become aware.

This is also Juan Hernandez’ opinion who grew up in Texas and is still travelling between the Mexican and Northern American cultures in his functions as university professor in Dallas,

Texas, and Chronieler to the Mexican President in Mexico City. In Mexico, the migrants already provide half of the nation’s income as they send money back to their families. This is why the Mexican state has decided to enable dual nationality as well as set up a programme to stimulate investments by returning migrants.

“Migrants are travellers between the cultures and maintain closer links with their home countries today than ever before as all parts of the world are connected via telephone and e-mail”, says Graeme Hugo. Like Juan Hernandez he is convinced that today we are not talking about migration and assimilation any longer, but about circulation. This means that “migrants are no longer transplanted into another culture, but that the cultures are moving”, as Alexander Aleinikoff put it. Up to now,



migrants were seen as a cheap labour force and had to assimilate in the new culture. This is why in Germany, where there is the highest percentage of people of Turkish decent within the immigrants, there is still no awareness of the Turkish culture. However, the country loses a lot with this attitude. Because also international businesses can only flourish when the staff understands the cultures they are dealing with. This is why we have to learn to see “immigration is a gain, not a burden”, as Rita Süßmuth put it.

As a matter of fact, many migrants come from very rich cultural backgrounds. And most of them are not unskilled, but often their training is not recognised in their receiving country. That’s why Alexander Aleinikoff argues for a “world migration institution” to make the nations aware of existing legal norms and to close the gaps. In the end, “the people do not have one identity, but can acquire many ‘part-identities’ from their contact with different cultures”, confirmed Rita Süßmuth.

Today’s Keynote Speakers



Session 2.1
Economic and political integration in regional migration systems – Between national priorities and supra-national harmonisation

Rainer Münz, migration researcher, Vienna

Rainer Münz was born in Basel (Switzerland), and earned his PhD at the University of Vienna in 1978. Until 1992, he was Director of the Institute of Demography at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, then Head of the Department of Demography at Humboldt University, Berlin. He is member of several advisory boards, e.g. the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Geneva.

He also is one of the scientific coordinators of the Eighth Metropolis Conference. Efforts towards regional integration take various forms and inevitably affect migration patterns. EU enlargement is an ex-

ample of how accession states can gain from increased access to the labour markets of highly developed countries and transform themselves into immigration countries. Rainer Münz will highlight impacts of past and future EU enlargements on the European migration pattern. A particular focus will be put on next year’s accession of new Central European member states.



György Konrád, author in Budapest and Berlin

György Konrád was born in Debrecen (Hungary). He studied literature, sociology

Session 2.2
The impact of migration on national identities – Comparing ideas about membership and minority rights in receiving countries

and psychology in Budapest. In the 1960s, he wrote his first essays and worked as a sociologist at the Budapest Institute for Urban Planning. His first novel was published in 1969. The publication of “The Intellectual on the Road to Class Power” led to the loss of work and to arrest. Political attacks and a long publication ban in Hungary made him a migrant himself and entailed several stays abroad. Since 1993, he has been Vice-President of the International P.E.N. Club. He was awarded the German Booksellers’ Peace Award in 1991. György Konrád was President of the Academy of Arts Berlin from 1997 to 2003. György Konrád will reflect on the right, motives and reasons to emigrate. He describes migration from the perspective of an author in exile, partly from his own experience. He draws an authentic picture of what it is like to be a foreigner and how people react to foreigners, telling us about the ambiguity of being abroad.

Daily Programme

Regional Integration and Migration

9:00 – 10:45 Session 2.1

11:15 – 13:00 Session 2.2

14:30 – 18:00 Workshops

Changes in the Programme:

At plenary session 2.1 Irina Lipowicz (Ambassador of the Republic of Poland) will speak instead of Danuta Hübner.

Erratum

In the Tuesday issue of the Conference News (article Integrationshaus) the photo credits do not lie with Wiener Integrationsfonds, but with Integrationshaus. We apologize!

Contributions: Astrid Kuffner (editor-in-chief), Laurence Reis
Design: neuwirth&steinborn
Print: MA54

September 15 – 19, 2003

What is your impression of Vienna as a multicultural city?



Gro Bogen Nilsen
Refugee and Immigrant Office (Norway)
In the city centre you do not see many immigrants or refugees. But what a change in the quarters of the 16th and 17th district, which we visited: we were shown – also historical – tracks of migration.



Bong-Hwan Kim
The Korean-Canadian Association of Winnipeg (Canada)
Coming to Vienna is almost a positive cultural shock, when you are used to North America. Although people are helpful, I find it hard to find my way as a foreigner.



Hoan Thu Nguyen
Immigration, Multicultural & Indigenous Affairs (Australia)
In the school in Geblergasse we learned about their multicultural curriculum. The children with migrant background have special German and integration classes. This is an interesting approach!



Björn Colliander
Swedish Integration Board (Sweden)
The concept of multiculturalism is not used that much in Sweden, but I like the approach of strengthening the cultural identity of migrants. The mosque we saw yesterday was very interesting in this context.



Christian Råbergh
Equal NTG (Sweden)
It is important to have migration policies, but they also have to work. At the study tour yesterday we visited a school where the concept of multiculturalism does seem to work.

Following the tracks of multicultural Vienna



The tour 16/17 provided us with a glimpse on everyday life, housing conditions, school situation and religious institutions in one of Vienna's most colourful neighbourhoods.

Vienna is not only Schönbrunn castle, St. Stephan's Cathedral and the Boys' Choir, Vienna is a lot more: a multicultural city. Especially in the 16th and 17th districts you can discover this other face of Vienna guided by the team of the Vienna Integration Fund. But Tour 16/17 also helps to overcome prejudices by showing that no "ghettoes" developed in Viennese districts with a high migrant share (up to 24%). The guests were invited to ask questions e.g. at the mosque in Bachgasse, which opens its doors regularly for an exchange between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Another station of the tour was the daily market in Brunnengasse, whose mainly Turkish vendors are an important source of supply with food for the whole area. They have found their niche in a field abandoned by Austrians, offering local foodstuffs as well as specialities from their home countries. Yppenplatz is a good example for the development of a park in line with the demands of

its users, who are an extremely varied mix: old people, mothers with babies, children and young people. To minimise user conflicts, a code of conduct has been set up.

The Vienna Integration Fund is in charge of intercultural conflict management. It manages conflicts between Austrians, neo-Austrians and migrants at the "Bassena Talks", named after the communal water-taps of 19th-century housing. These are moderated discussions in large-scale social and municipal housing developments.

Two schools in Geblergasse offer integrative language projects to help bridge the gap for kids with migrant backgrounds as well as their parents. Further stations were the African doctor, the Serbian Orthodox Church, the food-shop Horvath (Hungarian for "Croat"), the Czech sports club "Sokol" of 1867, the memorial tablet for a synagogue in Hubergasse and social housing in Weyprechtgasse.

The Women's Health Centre F.E.M. Süd

Efforts to promote women's health without barriers

F.E.M. Süd is one of two specialised women's health centres in Vienna. It was established in the spring of 1999 in the southern part of Vienna, which has a high number of foreign inhabitants. This health centre for women, parents and girls counsels women and girls in all life phases, irrespective of their age, level of education and cultural affiliation, in close co-operation with the staff of Kaiser Franz Josef Hospital.

Breaking down barriers that impede access to the healthcare sector and promoting initiatives of socially disadvantaged women and migrants are amongst its main tasks. In order to meet the needs of a high proportion of migrants, F.E.M. Süd offers information and counselling services in Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian and Turkish. Evaluations have shown that 25% of the F.E.M. Süd clients come from Turkey and former Yugoslavia. The acceptance and utilisation rates are high, which shows that the facilities correspond to the current needs of women.

Women may use a phone hotline or seek counselling by psychologists, physicians and gynaecologists. A wide range of affordable courses, workshops, group discussions and information events are offered on topics such as partnership and sexuality, pregnancy, birth and childbed, parenthood, education, menopause, life crises, unemployment, physical/sexual assaults, psychological problems, nutrition and eating disorders, stress management and personality development.

www.fem.at

Discover Vienna

Experience the multicultural flair of Vienna's Naschmarkt close to Karlsplatz Underground station. This market is reached via the Underground lines U4, U2 or U1. On the way, you will pass the famous Karlskirche church and the Secession building.

ICMPD

International Centre for Migration Policy Development
Solving migration challenges in innovative ways

The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) is an intergovernmental organisation founded in 1993 and seated in Vienna. Its purpose is to promote innovative, comprehensive and sustainable migration policies and to function as a service exchange mechanism for governments and organisations concerned with European migration issues. It concentrates on policy development and fosters a long-term approach with a profound understanding of salient immigration management issues confronting sovereign states.

It was a Swiss initiative launched in 1992 that led to the creation of ICMPD. At the time, Western Europe was in the midst of an asylum crisis calling for innovative collective measures to reform asylum and refugee reception systems. Migration from and through the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe was on the rise, and the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina had led to mass displacement, requiring international co-operation. Today a total of 25 governments support its work. Humane migration policies cannot exist without enforcement measures, such as the repatriation of rejected asylum seekers, or without efficient border control and other migration-regulating instruments. ICMPD actively supports the improvement of such measures together with its partners and donors: the UNHCR, the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

The Budapest process deals with harmonising accession to Europe. In 1991, the ICMPD countries felt that a support mechanism was needed to provide a platform for informal consultations in the emerging landscape of multilateral immigration and the necessity of asylum co-operation. The aim was to co-operate with the new democracies in the European migration regime and to counteract the risk of increased illegal migration. The last ministerial conference was held in July 2003 in Rhodes during the Greek EU presidency. Its conclusions placed an emphasis on the neighbours of the enlarged European Union. This implies that the process will concentrate on countries such as Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, on South-eastern European countries and on Turkey.

The Source Country Information Systems (SCIS) serves as an objective and transparent source for asylum processing, durable return operations and effective screening of potential migrants. Its primary characteristic is to obtain field-based and case-specific country-of-origin information upon request, e.g. background checks or verification of identity and personal circumstances (currently for Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Kosovo). A high standard of personal data protection is applied.

www.icmpd.org



Facts Migrants in Austria

Demographics According to the 2001 census; 710,926 residents with foreign citizenship in Austria (8.9% of total population, Vienna: 248,264 or 16.0%); almost two thirds of the immigrant population come from ex-Yugoslavia (322,261), 127,226 are from Turkey. About 15% of the foreign population are citizens of EU countries, 11% come from CEE states; 12.5% of Austria's population were born abroad (in Vienna 23.6%).

History of immigration 1960s to 1974: share of foreign citizens increased from approx. 100,000 to 310,000 as mainly young male workers from Turkey and ex-Yugoslavia were recruited to face manpower shortage; further increase as a result of family reunification. 1989 to 1993: after the dismantling of the Iron Curtain and due to the war in former Yugoslavia, the foreign population nearly doubled (355,000 to over 700,000). Since 1993: migration restricted by annual quotas (2003: 8,070).

Legal situation Labour permits for non-EU citizens are issued independently of residence permits and vice versa (may not exceed 8% of the workforce). This might improve due to a recently introduced work and residence permit in one, if special requirements are fulfilled. Integration Agreement since 2003: Newly arrived immigrants are obliged to complete German and integration courses. If they do not pass the exams within four years, they might lose their residence permit (see Friday's Conference News for Vienna's critical position). Permanent immigration is restricted to key personnel but employment of seasonal workers has been extended (no right to family reunification or unemployment benefits).