

INTRODUCTION

Guy Liagre

Dear participants,

In the Western Christian Tradition, we just entered the time of advent. In this period of the year we underline that God travels wonderful ways with human beings, but he does not comply with the views and opinions of people. God does not go the way that people want to prescribe for him; rather, his way is beyond all comprehension, free and self-determined beyond all proof. And he chooses people as his instruments and performs his wonders where one would least expect them.

At least one lesson we have already learned during the last weeks: Openness to God demands our growing acceptance that we cannot create blueprints for our own lives and future societies. Nonetheless the deep message when preparing Christmas is that it almost doesn't matter what mood we're in or what kind of a year we've had - it's a fresh start. This is our message. That's our hope.

Let me just say this, against the background of the recent attacks and treats, since we cannot avoid to mention them. There is always an element of realpolitik that has to be present in the conduct of any nation's national and also European security affairs. At the same time, looking to the way migrants are perceived today, we have to also have a balance between realpolitik and principles of freedom and democracy and human rights. And maintaining that balance is the greatest challenge that we in the West, have to face because it's many times a very difficult decision-making process.

But let's go to the subject of today. Let me start my brief introduction to our dialogue seminar on Migration and integration of migrants in the Labour Market with a quote of a philosopher. It goes right to the heart of the problem.

"In world history," says Hegel, "we are concerned only with those peoples that have formed states [because] all the value that human beings possess, all of their spiritual reality, they have through the State alone."

This has been, at least since since the 19th century, a solution for the regulation of social life. Today, it is also the problem.

Place-bound membership in a society is still today assumed as primary. And the problem is that from a statistic perspective at the turn of the 21st century, there were more regional and international migrants than ever before in recorded history.

We speak about 14 percent of the World Population according to the International Organization on Migration.¹

And it is not yet finished.

In the next twenty-five years, the rate of migration is predicted to be higher than during the last twenty-five years.

Economic, and political instability and Climate change, in particular, may cause international migration to double over the next forty years.²

That's why right wing political parties like to underline that a spectre haunts the world and it is the spectre of migration.

For some of you, movement offers opportunity and profit.

For others, movement is dangerous and constrained.

Their *movement* can result in expulsion from their territorial, political, juridical, or economic status.

The removal of territorial ownership or access, the loss of the political right to vote or to receive social welfare, the loss of legal status to work are only some of the negative aspects of migration.

Migrants may decide to move, but they do not get to decide the social conditions of their movement or the degree to which they may be expelled from certain social orders as a consequence.

Thus, if we want to understand the figure of the migrant, we must also understand *society itself*.

That's one of the central concerns for today

As we said, the migrant has been predominantly understood from the perspective of *states*.

It is the conduct and legislation of states that has rendered the migrant "ahistorical", to use Hegel's terminology.

It is my hope that this dialogue seminar allows us an exchange of positive and negative experiences, but that it also helps us to conceptualize the emergence of the socio-political conditions that gave rise to different types of social exclusion.

At different points in history, migratory movement resulted in different types and degrees of political, juridical, social and economic exclusion.

We will not tackle all the questions today.

This is too large a task.

Also, we are not able to be sensitive to all of the European territories or countries.

The aim of this dialogue seminar is more modest: to provide an analysis of mechanisms for excluding and exchange good practices of inclusion including migrants into the labour market.

It will allow us to analyse the effects on the Labour market of contemporary migration, at the same time projecting an image of coexisting and overlapping social forces of expulsion.

¹ http://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/Newsrelease/docs/WM2010_FINAL_23_11_2010.pdf

² <http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/what-we-do/migration-and-climate-change/a-complex-nexus.html>

The same techniques of territorial, political, juridical, and economic expulsion of the migrants that have emerged and repeated themselves in history are still at work today.

Today, the figure of the migrant exposes an important truth: future social life in Western Europe will be determined by the social inclusion or exclusion of migrants.

The twenty-first century will be the century of the migrant not only because of the record number of migrants today.

Also because this is the century in which all the previous forms of social expulsion and migratory resistance have re-emerged and become more active than ever before.

The migrant is the political figure of our time.

Rather than view human migration as the exception to the rule of political fixity and citizenship, we have to see it as a permanent reality.

Migration is not a secondary phenomenon that simply occurs between states.

Rather, migration will become the primary condition by which something like societies and states is established.

Migration is an essential part of how societies move.

However, there is still much work to be done in this area.

So many migrant social exclusion of the labour market is happening today.

Thus, future work remains to be done.

No doubt this seminar will help us in the reflexion providing step stones in this long march into the future.

The Pontifical Council underlined that on their existential pilgrimage towards a better future, migrants carry with them feelings of faith and hope, even if they are not yet aware exactly what they are searching for.

This is exactly the heart of the message of Advent.

We could not have chosen a better moment to discuss the problem than today.

I wish all of you a good meeting.

Guy Liagre