

Support fund for the reception and integration of immigrants and their educational support

Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

1. Introduction:

As one of the peer countries in this Peer Review meeting in El Escorial the 20th and 21st October 2008, we are pleased to contribute to the discussion and we would like to thank the Commission, ÖSB and our Spanish hosts for the invitation. The topic of this Peer Review is highly relevant seen from both our national and a European perspective.

Below, we are giving a brief overlook of the 'new' German Integration Plan. For Germany this is the first time that all stake holder of the society are developing a common approach to integrate immigrants. This overlook will be followed by a brief assessment of the similarities and the differences between the German Integration Plan and the Spanish Strategic Citizen and Integration Plan and the presented Spanish Support Fund for the reception and integration of immigrants and their educational support.

2. Integration –a central task of society

Approximately 15 million people living in Germany have an immigrant background. This amounts to more than 18 percent of the population. Integration is a task of national importance. Apart from our values and our cultural self-conception, it is based on the liberal democratic constitutional system, as it has developed from the German and the European history, and has found its constitutional characteristic in the Basic Law.

Integration cannot be decreed. It requires an effort from everyone, from government and society. Decisive is the migrants' willingness to get involved with life in our society, to unconditionally accept our Basic Law and our entire legal system and, in particular, to visibly demonstrate the belonging to Germany by learning the German language. On the side of the host society, acceptance, tolerance, civic commitment and willingness to honestly welcome people living lawfully among us, are essential: Integration – an opportunity for our country! The diverse migrants' abilities have not been sufficiently acknowledged and promoted thus far. The Federal Government would like to change this in the future. All people living permanently in Germany shall be able to develop their talents and gain security through education and work.

3. The National Integration Plan

Successful integration means equal participation in social life and accepting responsibility. This requires efforts from government and society, as well as from the immigrants themselves.

In July 2006, an integration summit took place for the first time, including all those dealing with integration in politics and in society: Federal Government, Länder (Federal States), local authorities, migrants, institutions and organizations from science, media, culture, sports, trade

and industry, trade unions and religious groups. The objective was to prepare a joint strategy on integration policy by summer 2007.

The result has been presented at the second integration summit in July 2007: The National Integration Plan.

It was developed with regard to two guidelines:

1. in dialogue with migrants,
2. precisely: demanding commitment from each participant, because everyone can contribute to the success of integration.

In it the German Government, together with the federal Länder and local authorities, associations of migrants and numerous other non-government players, has adopted more than 400 measures and voluntary commitments relating to integration. A **progress report** on the implementation of the National Integration Plan is to be drawn up in autumn 2008. Progress will be monitored by a set of 100 Indicators.

The most important issues of the **National Integration Plan** are:

- improving integration courses,
- promoting the German language from the very start;
- ensuring good education and vocational training, improving labour market opportunities;
- improving the life situation of women and girls; achieving gender equality;
- supporting integration in the communities;
- living cultural diversity;
- integration through sports;
- using the diversity of the media;
- strengthening integration through civic commitment and equal participation;
- science – open-minded.

Regarding the commitments of the different participants:

The Federal Government will

- extend integration courses for learning the German language;
- increase the number of full-day schools and child care, in cooperation with Länder (Federal States) and local authorities;
- reduce the number of school drop-outs with the model programme "2nd Chance";
- promote children and juveniles with the network "Bildungspaten" (godfathers/godmothers for education)
- increase the chances for a high-quality vocational training and successful studies through specific measures.

The Länder (Federal States) will

- increase the promotion of the German language starting from kindergarten to school up to vocational training;
- recruit more migrants as kindergarten teachers and school teachers;
- improve migrants' access to health services, care services and services for senior citizens.

The central associations of local authorities recommend

- to support migrants through “integration counsellors”;
- to strengthen the participation of migrants in decision and arrangement procedures in the communities;
- to promote cohabitation of the population groups in quarters with integration deficits, through quarter management and establishing networks.

The migrant organisations will

- carry out a campaign “Women have rights”;
- improve the participation of young migrants in education, through specific parent work and education godparents.

Trade and Industry will

- create 10,000 additional vacancies for vocational training in companies run by migrants;
- improve vocational training and labour market integration with the “Charta of Diversity”.

The German Olympic Sports Confederation and the German Football Association will

- communicate to the clubs the importance of integration as a key issue of sports;
- offer training courses for coaches and canvass members in migrant families.

The foundations will

- develop integration as a key goal of their civic commitment and their scholarships for the gifted.

The German and foreign media will

- have journalists and actors of foreign origin increasingly included in editorial departments and programmes;
- intensify media research and promote media skills.

4. Reporting and Monitoring

Concerning the integration of immigration Germany has long reporting history. Every two years the commissioner of immigration, refugees and integration analyses the situation of immigrants. The 7th report was published in December 2007.

As result of the consultations during the development of the National Integration Plan an additional monitoring process is launched. Therefore a set of indicators was developed to monitor progress made in 14 key policy fields:

- legal status;
- language promotion and education in early childhood;
- education;
- schooling and formation;
- integration in the labour market;
- social inclusion and income;
- integration in the society;
- housing;
- health;
- demography;
- media;

- intercultural;
- opening administration and social services;
- policy;
- delinquency, violence and xenophobia.

The aim of the monitoring is to indicate progress made in the various policy fields and supports evidence based strategies to fight exclusion of migrants. The monitoring will be tested during the legislative period and an interval between 2 and 4 years is scheduled. It depends on the availability of the underlying surveys and statistics. Therefore step by step the definition of people with an immigrant background should be available in most of the underlying databases. Today in the majority of the surveys and statistics we can only distinguish between foreigners and Germans.

5. Similarities and differences of the policy in Germany and Spain

Spain and Germany are federal states. In both countries a centralistic approach is not possible by constitutional reasons. Spain and Germany are larger countries. Given the multifaceted nature of integration the central government are not able to govern the variety of programmes needed. Therefore a common policy approach requires in both countries that the central government convince the Länder and the local governments to cooperate (by example through incentives).

A significant difference between Spain and Germany is that Germany faced immigration since a longer period and that the integration of migrants of the second and third generation is a main policy challenge too.

Despite of the long experience of immigration the public discourse negated for a long time that Germany is an immigration country. This discourse obstructed a coordinated policy approach. Furthermore the German experience of immigration covers various business cycles and contains various examples of the conflict of short term labour market policies and long-term integration policies. A situation Spain is facing now.

Regarding the monitoring aspect there are two challenges: The monitoring of the overall integration policy and the systematic evaluation of the outcome of various initiatives. While in Germany monitoring progress on national level is the main focus of the federal government, Spain focus on the evaluation process with the support fund.

6. Key challenges and potential transferability of the policies

We will elaborate on the transferability on the basis of the following key challenges during the Peer Review.

- evaluation of supported/ funded initiatives;
- mainstreaming of successful initiatives;
- measuring the success of policies in the field of integration;
- acceptance of a common policy approach by the regions (cc.aa.) and the local governments.