



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
JUSTICE FREEDOM AND SECURITY

Minutes of the German Advisory Committee Meetings

Date: Various

Location: Berlin and Essen (North Rhine-Westphalia)

German Partner:

NETZWERK
MIGRATION
IN EUROPA

Participants:

The German team partner established two Advisory Committees. So far they met in Berlin and Essen (North Rhine-Westphalia) seven times (three times in Berlin, four times in Essen) (see attached schedule and presentations). Each Advisory Committee was put together in the form of a roundtable. The roundtable in each city comprised ca. 25 representatives of state organization, immigrant organizations, NGOs, researchers, international organizations and foundations (see attachment). The invitation for the roundtables was co-organized by two major German Foundations which hosted the meetings (Hertie Foundation in Berlin and Foundation Mercator in Essen). Both foundations are involved in the area of immigrant integration and run various programs on the issue. Participation of the members fluctuated between 14 and 23 persons.

Minutes:

Both initial meetings were structured along the same rationale. The welcome was followed by the introduction of the participants. Then the INTI project was presented including the Portuguese DVD on the One Stop Shop Model. An invited speaker provided an input statement before a discussion followed. In Berlin the invited speaker was Berlin's Commissioner for Integration and Migration, in Essen it was Prof. Roderich Kulbach from the University of Applied Sciences in Bochum. The general topic of the roundtable referred to the idea of a One Stop Shop Model, however, the heading under which representatives were invited was the wider area of "Immigrant Reception and Inclusion as Service". As the One Stop Shop does not ring a bell in the German integration discourse this wider topic was chosen. The meetings each lasted two to three hours.

The presentation of the DVD and the expert presentation generated lively discussions and debates among the participants. An immediate reaction from most sides was that the Portuguese looks interesting, but can hardly be transferred to an old country of immigration. An argument made at both roundtables was that the most important challenge in German society, namely the integration of immigrants who have been around for a long time and the children of immigrant families, cannot be tackled with this instrument or administrative structure. Thus, it was suggested that the roundtable

discussion should rather focus on newcomers than old immigrants and their children (second generation). However, the current numbers of new immigrants are rather low. It was argued if one wanted to implement the OSS idea in Germany for new immigrants it would probably rather be a concept for the future (i.e. a time of larger numbers of immigrants) than an answer for the present.

Nevertheless some details of the Portuguese model were picked up and discussed intensively, namely the coherent approach of an integration policy by way of a centralized agency and the synergy effects of cooperation among government agencies. To a much lesser degree the cooperation between government agencies and immigrant organizations and the role of socio-cultural mediators found interest. The former was seen sceptical, in particular by immigrant organizations and NGOs who complained about the asymmetric relation between government and immigrant organizations/NGOs. The fact that Germany has been a country of immigration for more than fifty years with on the one hand a complete infrastructure of self-organizations and on the other hand grown mistrust between NGOs and the government was obvious in the discussions. Yet, some steps towards a more coherent integration policy following an OSS model were discussed, namely the examples of reforming the Foreigners' Offices in Berlin and Dortmund (March 31 in Berlin and September 2 in Essen) towards a service agency and its ever closer cooperation with welfare organizations.

Both roundtables included speakers from Germany's central integration agency (*Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge/BAMF*) to discuss language courses and linguistic integration (June 17 in Essen and July 9 in Berlin). As these courses were only started recently (in 2005) results are still sketchy. However, both presentations in Berlin and Essen showed that experiences within the first three years resulted into reforms, such as tailor made language courses and more coherent entrance exams. Moreover, courses were also opened for immigrants with a longer time of residence and "second generation" immigrants. The presentation on language courses in Berlin was combined with a presentation and discussion of the Federal Agency for Employment (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit*), Germany's state agency that is responsible for labour market integration of the unemployed. As the BAMF and the *Bundesagentur für Arbeit*

closely cooperate in integrating unemployed immigrants it made sense to combine these two presentations. The discussion showed that interaction between and among various state actors is already very close, though not formally institutionalised in most cases. The state actors show an intensified interest in working together with NGOs, in particular with immigrant NGOs. Both speakers underlined the fact that they recently managed to list all state and non-state initiative in Berlin, dealing with questions of language integration. A total number of eighty such initiatives were located alone in Berlin. The BAMF presentation in Essen was commented by a speaker of the Association of Spanish Parents (*Spanischer Elternverein*), an immigrant NGO with long-standing experience in language integration.

The roundtable in Essen also dedicated one session to the presentation of an immigrant NGO (April 14) and one to the most relevant state actor for immigrant integration, the Ministry for Integration. As immigrant NGO the Münster based Refugee Aid Council (*GGUA Flüchtlingshilfe Münster*) was invited. The speaker analysed the overall German integration policy emphasizing its shortcoming since Germany's Immigration Law came into force in 2005. The picture portrayed by the speaker of the Ministry for Integration differed somewhat. He saw Germany's integration policy in general and the one of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia in particular on a good way. In particular the newly established Ministry for Integration (created in 2005) succeeded in binding together the various local and regional integration efforts, both on the state and the NGO level. If Germany is on its way towards a one stop shop model, thus the conclusion went, it is on its way in the federal state (*Land*) of North Rhine-Westphalia.