

BSPC
BALTIC SEA PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

Working Group on Migration and Integration

Mid-Way Report



Working Group on Migration and Integration

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The BSPC Rapporteur on Working Group on
Migration and Integration

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The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) was established in 1991 as a forum for political dialogue between parliamentarians from the Baltic Sea Region. BSPC aims at raising awareness and opinion on issues of current political interest and relevance for the Baltic Sea Region. It promotes and drives various initiatives and efforts to support a sustainable environmental, social and economic development of the Baltic Sea Region. It strives at enhancing the visibility of the Baltic Sea Region and its issues in a wider European context.

BSPC gathers parliamentarians from 11 national parliaments, 11 regional parliaments and 5 parliamentary organisations around the Baltic Sea. The BSPC thus constitutes a unique parliamentary bridge between all the EU- and non-EU countries of the Baltic Sea Region.

BSPC external interfaces include parliamentary, governmental, sub-regional and other organizations in the Baltic Sea Region and the Northern Dimension area, among them CBSS, HELCOM, the Northern Dimension Partnership in Health and Social Well-Being (NDPHS), the Baltic Sea Labour Forum (BSLF), the Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation (BSSSC) and the Baltic Development Forum.

BSPC shall initiate and guide political activities in the region; support and strengthen democratic institutions in the participating states; improve dialogue between governments, parliaments and civil society; strengthen the common identity of the Baltic Sea Region by means of close co-operation between national and regional parliaments on the basis of equality; and initiate and guide political activities in the Baltic Sea Region, endowing them with additional democratic legitimacy and parliamentary authority.

The political recommendations of the annual Parliamentary Conferences are expressed in a Conference Resolution adopted by consensus by the Conference. The adopted Resolution shall be submitted to the governments of the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS and the EU, and disseminated to other relevant national, regional and local stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region and its neighbourhood.

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Hans Wallmark

Introduction

Ladies and gentlemen,

The BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration was launched by the 26th BSPC in Hamburg on 5 September 2017. The topic for the Working Group is a reflection of the events that took place in 2015 with the so-called refugee crises and the shared – although various - challenges it created in our region.

The Working Group is constituted as an ad-hoc working group under the auspices of the Standing Committee of the BSPC in accordance with the BSPC Rules of Procedure. The primary outcome of the activities of the working group is to elaborate political recommendations on the topic of migration and integration.

It is a well-known fact that we all have very different traditions when it comes to migration. Some of us have been receiving immigrants for a considerable time whilst others rather been countries of emigration, not immigration. Hopefully our different historical experiences can serve as a strength as it enables us to discuss the problems from a wide scope of different perspectives. By highlighting and discussing best practices, it is my firm belief that we all have something to learn. And learning from each other is precisely what we have done ever since our first meeting in December in Hamburg, over the meetings in Stockholm in March and in Copenhagen in June. As this mid-way report will show, we have, among many other things, learned about German historical experiences of migration, the role that sports can play, Swedish integration policies and the latest findings of Danish research on migration.

At the inaugural meeting of the Working Group Ms. Carola Veit, Hamburg, was elected vice-chair. Ms. Veit most successfully chaired the first meeting of the Working Group held in Hamburg in December 2017. I would thus like to thank Ms. Veit for her excellent work in setting the direction for the Working Group as well as for initiating the intergovernmental survey that has been carried out. In addition, I would like to thank my fellow Swedish colleague Mr. Pyry Niemi who chaired the third meeting of the Working Group in Copenhagen in June 2018 in my absence. Furthermore, I would like to thank all the members of the Working Group for their high-quality contributions, the intensive discussions as well as the harmonious atmosphere.

This mid-way report is an overview of the first results of our work. The main focus is on the political recommendations which were elaborated during the meetings and have been forwarded to the 27th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Mariehamn, 26 – 28 August 2018. Thereby, this report should be considered a strategic summary of our work. Detailed information concerning the content issues will be part of the final report of the Working Group.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Wallmark', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Hans Wallmark

Member of the Parliament of Sweden
Chairman of the Working Group on Migration and Integration

Mid-Way Report

BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration

The BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration was established by a corresponding decision of the BSPC Standing Committee on 3 September 2017 by the Baltic Parliamentary Conference on 5 September 2017 at its 26th annual conference in Hamburg. **Mr Hans Wallmark** - in his absence, represented by **Mr Pyry Niemi** -, Sweden, is the Chair of the WG and **Ms Carola Veit**, Hamburg, is the Vice-Chair.

The overarching objective of the Working Group is to elaborate political positions and recommendations pertaining to migration and integration.

The scope of work of the Working Group should cover, but not be limited to, issues such as

- The state of the refugee crisis, migration and integration in the Baltic Sea Region;
- Best practices in migration and integration;
- Measures to solve current challenges;
- Challenges and opportunities for integration;

The Working Group and its members should – according to their mandate determined by the Standing Committee of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference - aim at raising the political attention on migration and integration and contribute to the exchange of knowledge and best practices within its area of responsibility.

For this purpose, the Working Group should establish and maintain contacts with relevant institutions, organizations and other actors in the Baltic Sea Region and furthermore help to actively drive co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region as well as to follow and influence political initiatives.

1. Purpose

The purpose of the mid-way report is to present a first set of political recommendations from the BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration (WG MI) to the 27th BSPC in Mariehamn 26-28 August 2018. This is pursuant to the mandate of the WG.

The report also gives a cursory account of some challenges that the WG has discussed with a number of experts. It includes also the statements and answers received from the governments of the Baltic Sea States to a number of questions. On these documents it will be possible to identify similarities and differences and to draw conclusions for the possibilities of joint action.

2. Mandate

The BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration was established by a corresponding decision of the BSPC Standing Committee on 3 September 2017 by the Baltic Parliamentary Conference on 5 September 2017 at its 26th annual conference in Hamburg.

In accordance with this decision, the scope of work of WG MI should cover, but not be limited to the following main items:

A. Migration and integration in the Baltic Sea region - a survey on the current situation

The refugee crisis as well as the topic of migration and integration defer in the Baltic Sea region states. To find a common platform for deliberations about common activities it seems to be necessary, that the working group elaborates a common fundament for the discussion by collecting information about the current situation in the Baltic Sea region countries and its immigration policies.

The information base should cover migration routes not only from the South and East to the West and North of Europe but also from other continents to Europe.

B. Best practice examples

The WG should, through e.g. expert presentations, study visits and questionnaires, collect and compile examples of best practices, integration programmes and measures, follow and influence political initiatives.

The issues should embrace various aspects related to migration and integration. The aim is to get an impression of the state of migration and integration in the Baltic Sea Region and to identify where common action is possible and further action is needed. This will form one part of the base for the political recommendations of the WG. It should also be examined how the BSR countries could benefit from the experience of other countries.

C. Measures to Promote Integration

The WG should, by means of e.g. expert presentations, study visits and questionnaires, collect and compile examples of measures to promote integration.

The aim is to identify typical measures that have been applied and to assess the achievements made. This also serves to identify gaps and needs for measures to promote integration. This will form another part of the base for the political recommendations of the WG. The WG should further help to actively drive cooperation and develop recommendations for improving collaboration and exchange of information between Baltic Sea countries in matters related to immigration and migratory flows between various authorities, organisations and other operators.

D. Political Recommendations

The primary outcome of the activities of the WG is to elaborate political recommendations migration and integration. The political recommendations should be based on an assessment of the specific role and added value that the parliamentarians can contribute for the promotion of integration. The political recommendations constitute a manifestation of the joint political push that parliamentarians of the BSPC can exert on the governments of the Baltic Sea Region.

3. Objectives

The overarching objective of the Working Group is to elaborate political positions and recommendations pertaining to migration and integration. For this purpose, the Working Group should establish and maintain contacts with relevant institutions, organizations and other actors in the Baltic Sea Region.

The scope of work of the Working Group should cover, but not be limited to, issues such as

- The state of the refugee crisis, migration and integration in the Baltic Sea Region;
- Best practices in migration and integration;
- Measures to solve current challenges;
- Challenges and opportunities for integration;

The Working Group and its members should aim at raising the political attention on migration and integration, for instance by pursuing those issues in the national parliaments of the members of the Working Group. Moreover, the Working Group should contribute to the exchange of knowledge and best practices within its area of responsibility. It should furthermore help to actively drive cooperation in the BSR on this policy field and to follow and influence political initiatives.

The Working Group should provide political input to the Conference resolutions of the 27th and the 28th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conferences.

4. Scope of Work – Programme and Work in Progress

At its first meeting in Hamburg on 5 December 2017, the Working Group discussed the following Scope of Work and agreed with its contents:

4.1

The 24th BSPC Resolution in 2015, the 25th BSPC Resolution in 2016 and the 26th BSPC Resolution in 2017 included sections on Migration and Integration, as follows:

1. Expressing against the background of the current situation their solidarity with the refugees which are forced to flee their homelands, being aware of the big challenge to secure a safe residence (2015);
2. to educate and integrate refugees into the labour market as soon as possible and to exchange experiences with best practice examples within the Baltic Sea Region. And also embed the social partners comprehensively and at an early stage in these efforts (2016) and
3. being convinced that the issues of Migration and Integration pose a tremendous challenge to all countries in the Baltic Sea Region as well as a great chance for their further development. Those issues call for intensive dialogue as well as close cooperation and coordinated policies also between the Baltic Sea States (2017).

The BSPC Standing Committee had intensive discussions on the situation of refugees in Europe and on the topics of migration and integration in its meetings on 6 November 2014 in Riga, on 28 January 2016 in Brussels, on 15 November 2016 in Hamburg, on 23 January 2017 in Brussels and on 28 April 2017 in Hamburg. The members of the Standing Committee reported on the different situations and discussions in the BSR member countries. It was pointed out, that this topic is of great significance and poses a tremendous challenge to all countries in the Baltic Sea region. The Standing Committee was highlighting that it is necessary to exchange views on own experiences, political approaches and perspectives

among the parliamentarians Working on migration and integration is furthermore one of the BSPC Priorities in 2017 - 2018, especially finding solutions based on mutual information and best practices.

In their speeches on Migration and Integration the 26th BSPC in Hamburg 2017 Pedro Roque, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, and Isabel Santos, Vice-President of OSCE PA and the Vice-Chair of the OSCE PA ad hoc Committee on Migration, pointed out, the only solution to cope with the migration challenge is more solidarity and more collaboration by cooperating closely on the regional, European and global level and to start having a dialogue on what type of migration policy can be developed together in Europe.

4.2

The purpose of this Scope of Work (SoW) is to provide a background and framework for deliberations on the scope and issues of Migration and Integration, as well as on the added-value and recommendations that the Working Group (WG) could deliver to deal with the challenges of migration and integration.

The draft SoW is a living document that will be adjusted and amended continuously. The SoW contains descriptions and analyses of relevant issues within the field of migration and integration, together with examples of practical efforts to promote integration of migrants. Input is gathered from topical external sources and can be added from the Homework carried out by the WG members themselves. This material constitutes the basis for the WG's assessment of possible action needs and political recommendations with regard to Migration & Integration.

The draft SoW could also serve as a template and raw material for the structure and content of the mid-way report and the final report of the WG.

4.2.1 Objective and Scope of the WG

The overarching objective of the Working Group is to elaborate political positions and recommendations pertaining to Migration & Integration. Strong emphasis should be placed on integration. Insights from previous BSPC Working Groups on Labour Mobility, Labour Market and Social Welfare as well as on Human Trafficking could be incorporated.

The scope of the Working Group should include, but not be limited to, areas such as

- A clear definition of which kinds of migration the WG would like to discuss (refugees, migrant workers, smuggling & trafficking etc.)
- Causes of flight;
- Migration policy goals;
- Governance guidelines;
- Demographic development and migration;
- Status and trends in migration;
- Challenges of migration;
- Challenges of integration;
- Prospects of migration;
- Best-practice examples of integration.

The Working Group and its members should deepen the political attention on migration & integration, for instance by pursuing those issues in the parliaments of the members of the Working Group. Moreover, the Working Group should contribute to the exchange of knowledge and best practices within its area of responsibility. For this purpose, the Working Group should establish and maintain contacts with relevant institutions, organizations and other actors in the Baltic Sea Region and beyond.

4.2.2 Defining Migrants and Refugees

With more than 65 million people forcibly displaced globally and boat crossings of the Mediterranean still regularly in the headlines, the terms ‘refugee’ and ‘migrant’ are frequently used interchangeably in media and public discourse. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the two terms have distinct and different meanings¹:

1 See: <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html> and: <http://www.oecd.org/els/international-migration-outlook-1999124x.htm>

Refugees are persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution. There were 21.3 million of them worldwide at the end of 2015. Their situation is often so perilous and intolerable that they cross national borders to seek safety in nearby countries, and thus become internationally recognized as “refugees” with access to assistance from states, UNHCR, and other organizations. They are so recognized precisely because it is too dangerous for them to return home, and they need sanctuary elsewhere. These are people for whom denial of asylum has potentially deadly consequences.

Refugees are defined and protected in international law. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol as well as other legal texts, such as the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention, remain the cornerstone of modern refugee protection. The legal principles they enshrine have permeated into countless other international, regional, and national laws and practices. The 1951 Convention defines who is a refugee and outlines the basic rights which states should afford to refugees. One of the most fundamental principles laid down in international law is that refugees should not be expelled or returned to situations where their life and freedom would be under threat.

The protection of refugees has many aspects. These include safety from being returned to the dangers they have fled; access to asylum procedures that are fair and efficient; and measures to ensure that their basic human rights are respected to allow them to live in dignity and safety while helping them to find a longer-term solution. States bear the primary responsibility for this protection.

Migrants choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons. Unlike refugees who cannot safely return home, migrants face no such impediment to return. If they choose to return home, they will continue to receive the protection of their government.

According to the UNHCR, the distinction is important for individual governments. Countries deal with migrants under their own immigration laws and processes. Countries deal with refugees through norms of refugee protection and asylum that are defined in both national legislation and international law. Countries have specific responsibilities towards anyone seeking asylum on their territories or at their borders. Conflating refugees and migrants could have serious consequences for the lives and safety of refugees. Blurring the two terms takes attention away from the specific legal protections refugees require. It could undermine public support for refugees and the institution of asylum.

4.2.3. Status and Trends in Migration and Flight

At the end of 2016 more than 65,5 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide, 22,5 million of them are **refugees**. 55 % of the refugees worldwide came from three countries: South Sudan 1,4 million, Afghanistan 2,5 million and Syria 5,5 million. Over half of the 22,5 million refugees are under the age of 18. More than 60 % of the refugees worldwide are Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), forcibly displaced in their own country. (Figures published by the UNHCR on the 19th of June 2017.)²

The following stats are extracted from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division's report "International Migration Report 2015"³:

The number of international **migrants** worldwide has continued to grow rapidly over the past fifteen years reaching 244 million in 2015, up from 222 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000.

Nearly two thirds of all international migrants live in Europe (76 million) or Asia (75 million). Northern America hosted the third largest number of international migrants (54 million), followed by Africa (21 million), Latin America and the Caribbean (9 million) and Oceania (8 million).

Between 2000 and 2015, positive net migration contributed to 42 per cent of the population growth in Northern America and 32 per cent in Oceania. In Europe the size of the population would have fallen between 2000 and 2015 in the absence of positive net migration.

The following topics are to be deepened in the further course of the work:

4.2.4. Causes of flight and migration

- poverty
- crisis and wars

2 <http://www.bpb.de/politik/hintergrund-aktuell/250498/weltfluechtlingstag-20-06-2017> and <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>
 3 See: <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2015.pdf>, <http://gmdac.iom.int/global-migration-trends-factsheet> and <http://gmdac.iom.int/oecd-iom-and-undes-organise-first-international-forum-migration-statistics>

4.2.5. Migration policy goals *concerning among others*

- integration of women, children and juveniles in terms of
 - safety
 - education
 - work
- prevention of terror and recruitment of terrorists in our nations

4.2.6. Governance guidelines *regarding among others*

- welcoming culture
- joint standards
- joint political messages
- conditions in the countries of arrival (like housing ...)

4.2.7. Demographic development and migration

- Perception of interdependencies
- to take appropriate joint steps

4.2.8. Challenges and prospects of refugees, migration & integration

Past BSPC Working Groups on Labour Mobility, Labour Market and Social Welfare as well as on Human Trafficking partially dealt already with the challenges and topics of migration & integration. In its final report to the 18th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Nyborg in 2009, the BSPC WG “Labour Market and Social Welfare” wrote, for instance:

In the Working Group’s discussions, it became apparent that cross-border labour markets can contribute to improving employment opportunities and to dynamic regional development, which benefits the economy, business and employees. Such markets promote flexibility, open up options for experiencing different working conditions, resolving conflicts in different ways, and conveying other hierarchical structures, cultures and values.

All the same, challenges exist, like information deficits, imbalances between freedoms and rights on the labour market, uneven regional developments, demographic challenges, labour shortages, labour deficits in certain professions and various economic sectors, migration of young and qualified employees, illegal labour, wage

dumping and working conditions, social-security issues when working in two countries, rehabilitation options, unemployment-benefit issues in the case of casual work, vocational training, taxation of companies employing temps, lack of language skills, poor traffic infrastructures, deficits in the social dialogue between government, authorities, companies and trade unions, etc.

Experience has shown that, when a decision is taken to seek work in another country or even in a neighbouring country, a whole host of questions emerge for employees, but also for employers. In the social area, these concern social-security issues, all the way from health, long-term care and accident to unemployment and pension insurance. Labour-law questions, like protection against unlawful dismissal, collective wage agreements or employee rights in a company, play a similarly large role. To this must be added – against a backdrop of different fiscal regulations – questions of tax law. Other subjects include the specific statutory social benefits, e.g. for children or families.

Some regions and countries have already responded in recent years by setting up information centres, info points, Internet platforms or cross-border commuter projects. In other areas, comparable initiatives do not exist.

5. Working Group Meetings 1-3

Since the BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration was launched by the 26th BSPC in Hamburg on 4 September 2018, three meetings took place. Currently, up to three more meetings are planned. During the Working Group meetings different thematic priorities were chosen and reflected in the expert presentations.

This report is supposed to be a mid-way report. Thus, the summaries of the expert presentations as well as the intensive discussions during the Working Group meetings will be part of the final report of the Working Group.

5.1 The Working Group on Migration and Integration, held its first meeting on the premises of the Hamburg Parliament, the so-called Bürgerschaft, on 5 December 2017. Delegations from the Baltic Assembly, Denmark, Estonia, Hamburg, Latvia, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Norway, Schleswig-Holstein and Sweden participated in the meeting. The meeting was chaired by BSPC Vice-President and Vice-Chair of the Working Group, the President of the Hamburg Parliament, Carola Veit.



Mandate, Scope of Work and Work Programme

At the beginning of the meeting, a number of key issues for the next two years were discussed. The mandate of the Standing Committee was confirmed, and an extensive work programme was adopted. The first step in said programme is to develop an overview of the different approaches to migration policy and existing integration projects in the Baltic Sea countries.

The scope of work covers primarily: a survey on the current situation of migration and integration in the Baltic Sea region, best practice examples and political recommendations.

The Working Group plans to discuss the causes of flight and migration, migration policy goals, governance guidelines, demographic development and migration, status and trends in migration, challenges and prospects of migration and of integration.

Speeches and presentations

Presentation by Ms Aydan Özoğuz

http://www.bspc.net/ozoguz-bspc-migration-and-integration_5-12-2107hamburg/

Ms Aydan Özoğuz stated that it was an honour to speak on this occasion. She applauded the BSPC's decision to focus on migration and integration as a timely and well-chosen signal. This underlined the urgency of the challenge all the represented countries were facing. In her understanding, all parliaments agreed upon these issues having a significant influence on policies, economies and societies as well as day-to-day lives – both in the present and in the future.

In that regard, she noted the history of the Baltic Sea which saw the start of one of the most influential migration processes in human history, the so-called “Völkerwanderung”. In the first millennium BC, tribes from southern Scandinavia and northern Germany had begun moving out of their ancestral territories to settle in the west and the south. Intensifying in the following centuries, the migration period had culminated in the so-called barbarian invasions, changing the face of Europe most significantly. Current findings show that this period had not nearly been as barbaric and warlike as general belief has it but instead had seen, aside from conflict, also cooperation and exchange between different groups of migrants and

locals. This exchange, the speaker went on, had stimulated trade, science and art.

Hamburg, Ms Özoğuz said, served as a great example for the linkage between trade and migration. As part of the Hanseatic League, which had connected the region from the twelfth century onward and made Hamburg wealthy, Hamburg had been importing salted herrings from Sweden and dried fish from Norway, from Russia had come furs, wax and timber, while grain had been brought in from Mecklenburg – because Hamburg had been the most important centre for beer brewing at that time. In turn, the speaker went on, the beer from Hamburg – as well as other goods – had found a ready market in the Baltic Sea region.

The speaker emphasised that migration between the regions had also been increasing at that time: The booming cities along the Baltic Sea had experienced a strong rise in appeal, which would be described today as a “pull factor”. As an example, Ms Özoğuz noted a large movement of people from Bremen to the Baltic Sea Region in the 14th century. Sweden had established special rules for German immigrants who had come to work as traders, merchants and warehousemen. In the Russian City of Novgorod, Germans had even founded their own marketplace numbering almost 1,000 people, at an incredibly large scale for that period.

Ms Özoğuz underlined that everyone had benefitted from trade, exchange and migration within the Baltic Sea region during the last centuries. For that reason, she considered it all the more astonishing that people tended to forget that migration was the rule rather than the exception. Migration had been normal in the history of Germany and in all societies of the BSPC.

To underscore this, she pointed out some numbers from Germany’s perspective:

In the late 19th century, hundreds of thousands of Polish people had come to the mining industry in the Ruhr District. After the Second World War, 12.5 million displaced persons from the former eastern territories of the German Reich had been successfully settled.

Starting in 1955, 14 million so-called “guest” and contract workers had been recruited to Germany, more than 3 million of whom had settled and started families in the country. More than 350,000 refugees had come during the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s. Immigration from EU countries had increased both in the 1990s and following the EU’s eastward enlargement in 2004, thanks to the right of free movement. For example, the speaker continued, there had

been influxes of 900,000 people in both 2014 and 2015. These had not been a topic of conversation because at the same time in 2015, over 1.3 million people, mostly from Syria, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan, had sought protection in Germany.

Nonetheless, the speaker cautioned, it should not be forgotten that in the same period, millions of people had also moved out of Germany. Ms Özoğuz noted, they weren't only coming, but also going. Most of these had been former immigrants. Since 1991, for example, between 600,000 and one million people had left each year. That, she said, was migration.

With regard to the countries of the Baltic Sea, the speaker mentioned that in the present day, more than 1.9 million people with a Polish background were living in Germany. Some 400,000 of them had been born in the country. People of Polish descent were the second largest group of people with a diverse background in Germany. The third largest group were men and women with a Russian background, 1.2 million people.

By stating these numbers, Ms Özoğuz wanted to make clear that the parliament's work and politics should not be marked by fear. The challenges of migration and integration were not totally new.

Yes, she agreed, more integration and social participation was needed in German society. As she pointed out, much was expected from people coming to Germany: learning the difficult host language, showing some interest in the host nation's culture and of course respecting its rules. But integration was not only a challenge for migrants and their descendants. It was equally a challenge for all 82 million people in Germany.

She said that societies had to be shaped in which all could live together peacefully. Societies had to be developed into communities offering a future to all their members: graduating from school, obtaining professional education or achieving integration into the labour market; for each and every individual.

Ms Özoğuz stated that, when she had taken office in January 2014, there had been a strong focus on dealing with the extensive abolishment of the so called "Optionspflicht" – which could simply be described as a national law forcing young people with foreign parents to decide between the German or their parents' citizenship upon turning 18 years of age. Exceptions had included for example EU members. An interesting outcome of that was that Polish people were allowed dual citizenship, but Russian were not. This had been a highly disputed matter during the earlier coalition talks. After her



appointment, as a member of the Federal Government, she and her team had been able to change this matter together with the minister of justice as well as the other ministries.

Furthermore, Germany had back then registered a high number of people from Bulgaria and Romania coming to the country. This development had caused a debate under the buzzword of “poverty migration”. The speaker stated that many of these people from Eastern Europe had come to already financially strapped communities in Germany, such as North Rhine-Westphalia or Berlin, settling in dilapidated houses. Sometimes, 5 to 7 people had shared a single room. The neighbourhood had not accepted this process, forcing the government to find ways to close down this kind of irregular migration.

But of course, Ms Özoğuz noted, the most challenging topic in the last years – the arrival and integration of high numbers of refugees – had still been in the future. Her team had already noticed and monitored the rising numbers of refugees in 2014 and had launched initiatives to support the many volunteer helpers. She noted that she had even held a Christmas reception in 2014 for a few hundred volunteers in order to thank them and exchange thoughts.

She went on to note that she and her office had actively accompanied the developments in the following years, when more and more people had been coming to Germany after Chancellor Merkel’s decision to receive those stranded in Hungary in the summer of 2015.

She and her team had been able to support the legislative processes as well as the very practical challenges involved with integrating the refugees. They had continued and enlarged a project for training and advising volunteers in the field of integration. The speaker pointed out that volunteers had always been an important pillar of helping and integrating refugees.

Other focal points of her work had been the integration of refugees into sports, projects with migrant organizations and mosque communities as well as the empowerment of female refugees.

She had to admit, though, that the arrival of so many refugees had tied up a great deal of strength and resources – sometimes eclipsing other ongoing integration processes. It was still necessary to deal with those that had not come as refugees but subsequently as spouses, those who had arrived as students or workers, not to mention the problems and needs of those that had lived in Germany for two or three generations.

Another concern to her was that many people with a diverse background did not have the same opportunities despite having lived in the country for years or having been born in Germany. This was due to names that did not sound German, an appearance that differed from what some would define as German or the educational background of their parents.

Ms Özoğuz said she had wanted to change this and thus had been fostering the dialogue between the civil society and the Federal Government. Once a year, she had invited representatives of civil society and especially of migrant organisations to talk with the German Chancellor and the federal ministers about a special subject of current challenges. These “Integration Summits”, she said, had become an important element in German integration policy.

The year before, the Office for the Equal Treatment of EU Workers – a very new institution – had become part of her remit. She expressed her joy over having managed to successfully establish this office, because the right to free movement for workers and their equal treatment was an essential part of the European identity. She further admitted that, as was widely known, that progress in this respect was not yet satisfying. Ms Özoğuz mentioned additional areas of her work – the fight against any kind of xenophobia and hatred, such as racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia or Islamism – but added that sadly, the work in these fields had become more and more important over the last years. This, she assumed, was reflected in the countries of the meeting participants.

She went on to clarify that no society was immune to xenophobia, no society was immune to radicalism, no society was immune to hatred. As sad as it might be, these attitudes were present in every society. What was new, she said, was the scope of the right-wing populist threat they were facing as democrats. In her opinion, there were two key elements helping these political arsonists gain ground at the moment: on the one hand, the popularity of an anti-establishment rhetoric that could easily be exploited by anti-democrats; on the other hand, the public discourse about migration and integration, which could all too easily be influenced by generalizations and regrettably also many lies.

It would be necessary to address both problems to turn the tide. Otherwise, more and more people would be turning away from liberal democracy in their search for simple but false answers to complex questions. She noted that they were seeing these tendencies already all across Europe – as well as in the US -: populist parties were gaining more and more influence. Sometimes they had already become part of government coalitions or were even leading respective governments. A further topic that would have to be dealt with were the results of the harsh and confrontational discussion that had preceded the Brexit referendum in the UK.

As for Germany, she stated that there were also strong concerns in parts of the country's society. People were feeling overwhelmed by immigrants. Some were fearing what they call Islamisation, despite Islam having been a part of Germany's reality for more than fifty years – and less than 5% of people in Germany being Muslim. Most of the fears, Ms Özoğuz said, were based on subjective perceptions, fake news and right-wing propaganda. This development had to be taken seriously. The way diversity and equal participation was handled served an indicator of the state of a nation's democracy, social peace and security. This development showed the deep divisions in society and that many people were feeling left behind. To that, she added that this had rather little to do with migration or immigrants.

Concluding her presentation, she shared some of her thoughts on the matter with this working group:

When it came to migration, they were facing an extremely emotional debate, making it much more difficult to talk about facts and find solutions.

Instead, the focus should be more on the fact that history showed that migration and diversity had benefits for all members of society. If people understood the rules for migration, she noted, and that they were convinced that everything was under control, these

problems and fears would shrink compared to the situation of 2015. Therefore, what was needed were immigration laws making immigration more transparent. In addition, with regard to refugee politics, a European agreement was needed, detailing how to deal with such situations in the future. Ms Özoğuz was convinced that a fair distribution key could help everyone.

In addition, she said that it was necessary to keep in mind that the fields of migration and integration were complex and constantly changing. They should stop trying to make it seem easy. The circumstances of the preceding two years had shrunk the topic of migration and integration to refugees and measures for this group. She pointed out the tendency to forget that there already was a diverse society with many challenges that also required attention.

Furthermore, she emphasized that terrorism would not stop if refugees or migrants were treated badly or if it was made it as hard as possible for them to integrate into society.

Last but not least, she pleaded not to stop searching for data and facts that would help to make migration and integration explainable and understandable. The better these were understood, the better it could be explained what to do. Moreover, that would make it much more difficult for demagogues to sell their stories to the public.

Presentation by Mr Ulrich Weinbrenner

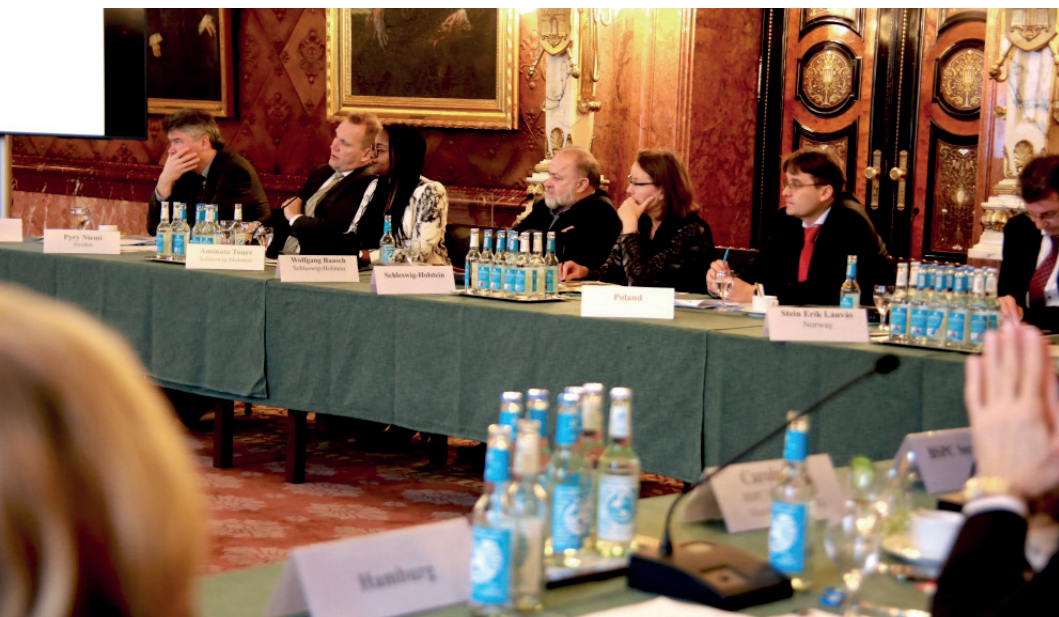
http://www.bspc.net/171204_presentation_lstabgz_hamburguw/

Mr **Ulrich Weinbrenner** thanked President Veit and noted he was happy to speak to the Working Group. He said he would be brief in his presentation to allow more time for discussion later. Nevertheless, he wanted to focus on a few points. First of all, he was clarifying his position and the role of the Ministry of the Interior in migration and integration. The German Ministry of the Interior, as in many other countries, was mainly a security institution but also had other not strictly security-oriented tasks, among them integration. As a result of the so-called refugee crisis in 2016 and 2017, they had created the Staff Unit for Social Cohesion and Integration which he was heading. The idea was to put the integration representatives from the migration office under the new headline of cohesion with

other tasks of the Ministry of the Interior which served as the overall game of the social cohesion, i.e., crime prevention, violence prevention, terrorism prevention that was carried out in his directory. About 50 million euros were spent in the field of civil education, in the “Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung”, which was a state-run agency with interesting publications to continue discussions and provide facts on an array of topics.

He noted as an example of the outreach programs the established relationship between the Ministry of the Interior and the Jewish community in Germany. They were supported with yearly funding of 10 million euros. Furthermore, he noted the Islam Conference which had been created 11 years previously, with structured dialogue between the Ministry of the Interior and other ministries and a number of Islamic organizations in Germany. All of this was carried out in his directory, under the umbrella of social cohesion. Demography, he noted, was also part of his remit.

Mr Weinbrenner said he would focus on the activities carried out in the mainstream, the language courses. It was only reasonable to say that the important ministries were involved in the integration business. After the crisis of 2016/17, a wide range of coordination meetings had been established between the various ministries. Educational work, support in the scientific field to support integration, the ministry of defence at the peak of the influx was influenced in the matter of housing. All the ministries had been involved in resolving the active crisis, and even at this point, there was still a great deal of work



carried out, from the diverse ministries to support integrative measures. On that count, Mr Weinbrenner pointed out that the federal level was only one level, there was also the level of the federal states each of which was running their own programs, and the local level where lots of activities were also being carried out. On top of that were citizen-run programs, with volunteers in the integration business. All of these many activities had to come together.

One of the major challenges, he said, was something everyone involved in the practical side said, namely that it was not that easy to know who was doing what, who was coordinating. A great deal of money was being put into the integration, but coordination was the true challenge.

After that preamble, Mr Weinbrenner went on to provide an insight into the actual situation in Germany by providing a graph on the demographic distribution at the moment, overlaying the representation of people with a migration background over those without. At the top of the age graph, at 95 years of age, there was a surplus of people without a migration background, while at the base of the graph, Mr Weinbrenner identified near equality of both population groups. This indicated the challenge and the development of the demography.

Next, he briefly provided an overview of the situation in 2015 and 2016 when the number of asylum applications peaked at 750,000 in the latter year, with processing of these applications taking a very long time. In response, the German Integration Act had been passed. This had also marked the first time that the word integration had been used in the title of a piece of federal legislation. The Integration Act encompassed *inter alia* early participation in integration courses, legal certainty during training, better management owing to allocation of a place of residence, employment opportunities for refugees, no labour market priority check, settlement permits dependent on integration. The goal of the act was to provide early intervention, with a focus on language and employment. The act had been passed on 6 August 2016.

He described the integrated management of refugees, beginning with the first phase of arrival and registration. In the second phase, the individual case would be heard. Then the third phase was either integration measures or, if the application was rejected, measures to return the individual to their country of origin. This, Mr Weinbrenner noted, was the general structure of the process.

Switching to the topic of language courses, he noted the integration courses which had been established in 2005 with the New

Residence Act. These were aimed at individually training people in the use of the German language. Such a course totalled 600 hours, five hours a day. This also included around 100 hours on German values, the culture and the like. Every person individually given the right to stay was also entitled to attend such a course.

During the phase when application processing took a very long time, people from Syria, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Eritrea were allowed to participate in such a course even if their application had not yet been processed. As for the overall numbers, 340,000 had newly started courses in 2016, while in 2017, the number was at 257,000 at the start of December. Nonetheless, a considerably larger group of people had been entitled to attend these courses. But, as Mr Weinbrenner pointed out, many of these simply hadn't appeared at the courses. His staff unit was investigating the reasons, with the goal of closing the gap between entitlements and attendance.

He went on to note the funding: In 2017, they were spending 850 million euros on the courses all across Germany. By comparison, the financing had been in the 200 million prior to the influx of the refugees.

He noted that the integration courses had been established with the New Residence Act in 2005, with the purpose of unifying language tuition and pulling together several systems. The goal for the participants was to reach language level B1 along with knowledge on society, politics, culture, history and so on. The latter was provided in the so-called orientation course following the language course. Special courses had also been established because, as Mr Weinbrenner noted, they wanted to have as good an offering as possible to the migrants arriving, for young adults, women, parents, illiterate persons and those who had learnt German in a non-educational context. Furthermore, there was also the fast track option of completing the integration course in only 430 lessons.

The goal was to provide every entitled person with an individual course as soon as possible. For a course to become financially viable, it was necessary to put together 20 people for one course at its start. For example, in rural areas, this meant that it would take some time to offer a new course for illiterate persons. This was a major organizational and management problem, to avoid people having to wait too long for their courses.

At the end of each course, there was a final test. Then there was a 300-lesson repetition scheme for those who had not achieved the intended B1 level.

Mr Weinbrenner pointed out that work had also been done on the qualifications of teachers, producing standardized criteria. There were actually only 51.4 % of the people attending the courses who qualified for level B1 while 38.5 % reached level A2. This statistic, he noted, only encompassed those who were completing the courses, leaving out those who had left the courses earlier. As such, Mr Weinbrenner returned to the original statistic, only one out of two people taking the exam were achieving the course goal of level B2. This was a concern that he and his team were constantly keeping an eye on and trying to improve.

The teachers had to play a key role. Because teaching positions could not be filled to cover the vast increase of individuals entitled for the courses, there had been a pay increase to attract more. The speaker noted that the teacher problem was now solved.

The second pillar of operations at the Ministry of the Interior was “migration advisory services”. These were targeted at adult immigrants. The budget, he stated, had risen from an average 25 million euros in the years preceding the huge influx in 2015 to a 2017 budget of nearly 50 million euros. The distribution of advisory offices was matching the spread of immigrants; in other words, of the ca. 1,000 locations, rather few were found in eastern Germany while there was a dense concentration in North Rhine-Westphalia as well as in the Frankfurt region and e.g. Baden-Württemberg.

Furthermore, Mr Weinbrenner mentioned immigration projects aimed at the social integration of migrants, strengthening their skills and active participation as well as improving mutual acceptance. 200 of such projects had been set up all across Germany, involving all the various ministries and institutions. The challenge, he pointed out, was the coordination of these.

In closing, the speaker pointed out that Germany was in the process of assembling a new government. While it was still unclear what form said government would take, he was certain that migration and integration form an important part. Next to digitalization, social security would very much put a focus on integration, undoubtedly. From the administrative point of view of Mr Weinbrenner, he noted that they were willing to do their utmost to work in this challenging field.

The Working Group further discussed common questions to be sent by each delegation to their respective governments. This way, the Working Group wants to obtain a better survey and results regarding the situation in the whole region, learn from best practice examples and develop proposals to improve cooperation in the integration of migrants.

5.2 The Working Group held its second meeting on the premises of the Swedish Parliament in Stockholm on 19 March 2018. Delegations from the Baltic Assembly, Nordic Council, Åland, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hamburg, Latvia, Lithuania, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Norway, Poland, Schleswig-Holstein and Sweden participated in the meeting. The meeting was chaired by the Chairman of the Working Group, Hans Wallmark, Member of the Swedish Parliament.

The Working Group discussed in its first meeting common questions to be sent by each delegation to their respective governments. This way, the Working Group wants to obtain a better overview and results regarding the situation in the whole region, learn from best practice examples and develop proposals to improve cooperation in the integration of migrants. BSPC Vice-President and WG Vice-Chair Ms Carola Veit – who had summarized the questions and developed a list to be sent to the respective governments as homework assignments – informed the group at the beginning of the meeting on the preliminary results of the survey of the WG and the first answers of the governments.

By the time of the meeting in Stockholm, the survey had been answered by the governments of Åland, Denmark, Hamburg, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden.



Ms Carola Veit briefed the WG about first reactions which included detailed answers.

A comprehensive comparison of the responses received will be submitted to the next meeting of the WG in Copenhagen.

Expert presentations

The meeting was provided with a number of very informative expert presentations and had a lively discussion with the experts.

Presentation by Mr Bernd Hemingway, Deputy Director-General of the CBSS Secretariat

<http://www.bspc.net/cbss-soft-security-and-migration-in-the-baltic-sea-region-003/>

Mr **Bernd Hemingway**, Deputy Director-General of the CBSS Secretariat, reminded the Working Group that migration was back on the agenda of the Council of the Baltic Sea States with the ministerial declarations of Warsaw and Reykjavík. These had been basically a reaction to the events of 2015. This had focused more on the topic of refugees rather than migration governance. Mr Hemingway pointed out that migration fit into all long-term regional priorities of the CBSS, because migration in itself was a horizontal policy area. Migration was also related to security management as well as part of social politics, education politics, health politics, foreign affairs regarding migration flows and also development cooperation and many other areas. He noted that this led to the disadvantage that migration policy often had no specific home. In governments, it was most commonly the responsibility of the ministries of the interior. For the CBSS, it was important that the migration area should not be left in the hands of populist politicians. Furthermore, Mr Hemingway referred to a couple of activities by the CBSS in this policy area and to the results and recommendations by the soft security conference in Helsinki. He especially mentioned the recommendation to implement one-stop shops where migrants were able to receive all necessary services in one place. For further details, he referred to the PowerPoint presentation distributed to every participant.

Presentation by the Swedish Migration Agency representatives, Mr. Marco Roman Loi and Mr Björn Bergström, specialists at the International Affairs Department

<http://www.bspc.net/swedish-migration-agency-ppt/>

Mr **Marco Roman Loi** and Mr **Björn Bergström**, specialists at the International Affairs Department of the Swedish Migration Agency, provided detailed information on the development of migration. In addition, they spoke about the numbers of asylum seekers from 2010 to the present day in Sweden and the shares of the individual countries of origin as well as migrant labourers, approved work permit applications and guest students

They provided some historic background on immigration and emigration to and from Sweden. In the last 50 years, there had been peaks concerning immigration to Sweden. The first had been in the late 1960s when Sweden had demanded lots of labour, and people from the former Yugoslavia, Italy and Greece had made their way up north. The second peak had come in the mid-1990s during the war in the Balkans when people from that region sought refuge in Sweden. The third peak had come in 2015 when around 160,000 people applied for asylum in Sweden. They had mainly escaped from the war in Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia. Many of them were young unaccompanied males.

In late 2015, the situation had become uncontrollable. In the late fall of 2015, around 10,000 asylum seekers a week had been knocking on Sweden's door. On November 24 2015, the government had announced that the situation had got out of hand and that Sweden would apply the EU minimum standard for immigration. The result, the experts noted, was that the number of asylum seekers at Swedish borders quickly dropped. Today, they said, Sweden was back to more 'normal' figures with around 30,000 asylum seekers per year.

Last year, for example, Sweden had received 25,666 asylum seekers. By far the most represented country in this respect was Syria, followed by Iraq, Eritrea and Afghanistan.

In 2017, some 135,529 persons had received residence permits in Sweden. The largest part, 48,046 persons, were granted residence so they could be reunited with their families. The second largest part were migrant labourers (32,294 people), and the third largest part were refugees and other grounds of protection (31,685).

The specialists further pointed out that Sweden had one of the world's most liberal immigration policies regarding migrant labourers. It was

not up to the government to decide which businesses required extra labour – that was the task of the companies themselves. By far the largest group (over 8,000 people) who had come to Sweden on a working visa the previous year had been citizens from India (mainly in computer programming). Other significant groups were citizens of Thailand, China and the USA.

Guest students were another group that had to be taken into account. In the preceding year, Sweden had received a total of 13,426 students from outside the EU/EES. The largest group had come from China, followed by India, Pakistan and Iran. The number of foreign guest students from outside the EU had dropped in recent years, since the government had decided that they (unlike Swedish and EU citizens) had to pay a fee for studying at Swedish universities.

Presentation by Mr Per Aldskogius from the Ministry of Employment

http://www.bspc.net/bspc-wg-integration_180319/

Mr **Per Aldskogius** from the Swedish Ministry of Employment informed the Working Group on the reception and integration of newly arrived immigrants in Sweden. He underlined the principles of the Swedish migration policy. The goal was to ensure equal rights, obligations and opportunities for all, irrespective of their ethnic and cultural background. The reception of newly arrived refugees was a shared responsibility on a national, regional and local level. The policy objective was establishing work, education or training normally within two years after the issuing of a residence permit during the introduction programme. These objectives were to be achieved primarily through general policy measures, supplemented by targeted support for the introduction of newcomers.

In his presentation, Mr Aldskogius pointed out both the main challenges and opportunities. He mentioned as main challenges: prolonged waiting times; a lack of housing – uneven reception and settlement between different regions and municipalities –; insufficient capacities in society, e.g. a lack of teachers and interpreters; early and efficient access to the labour market and education for those granted asylum and, finally, increased segregation. He highlighted as opportunities: a strong economy; a high employment rate and relatively low unemployment; a high demand for labour meeting a labour shortage in many professions; many newly arrived migrants were young and well educated; job opportunities were good.

Mr Aldskogius also informed the Working Group about the main integration measures between 2016 and 2018 in Sweden, specifically: increased state funding to municipalities; a new reimbursement system for reception of unaccompanied minors; early measures for asylum seekers; a new law forcing all municipalities to settle migrants granted asylum; several new initiatives in labour market policy, e.g. fast tracks, employment support as well as several new initiatives in most policy areas, e.g. education, social and housing policy. Mr Aldskogius further briefed the WG about a 2-year introduction programme for new arrivals, coordinated by the Public Employment Service, including an individual introduction plan, based on the person's needs and previous experience. As part of this programme, he noted that the Public Employment Service and the social partners were also implementing tailor-made 'fast tracks' for occupations with labour shortages. He pointed out that this was a new concept created in close collaboration with employers. It included tripartite talks with the social partners, the Public Employment Service and other relevant government agencies regarding the employer's needs, validation of skills, vocational training and work. The first fast track had been presented in 2015, creating opportunities for chefs, and extended to fast tracks in 14 industries by October 2017.

Since the time from arrival to holding a steady job was a long time for many immigrants, the government had introduced the so-called 'fast track' for newly arrivals.

For a long time, only 50 percent of the new arrivals had acquired a regular job after seven or eight years in Sweden. No one gained from that system, not the Swedish state and certainly not the immigrants themselves. That was one of the reasons the government had introduced the fast track for immigrants – shortening the time from arrival to work and independence.

Now, Mr Aldskogius specified, the focus was on employment from day one in Sweden. The first measure was mapping out the individual. Who was this person? What skills did he/she have? What were the future aspirations?

Levels of education varied widely between immigrants and within immigrant groups. For that reason, an individual introduction plan was of utmost importance. Those immigrants with skills in shortage occupations, such as for example engineers, could receive a tailor-made fast track to a job.

In order to speed up the process, parallel activities were being used. The immigrant was able to study Swedish, get civic orientation and have a subsidised job at the same time. The important thing was to

keep them active, with a constant focus on getting real employment soon. Subsidised employment was another alternative where the government paid a large part of the immigrants' wages, in order to make immigrants more attractive to hire.

While it was the state's role to provide reception of asylum seekers and to coordinate the introduction programmes, the municipalities were responsible for housing, education, civic orientation and Swedish language courses. Lately, the state funding for municipalities had increased to facilitate the introduction to living in Sweden. A new law had also been passed that could force unwilling municipalities to receive immigrants although they did not wish to do so.

There were, however, Mr Aldskogius admitted, also some challenges in offering everyone a smooth start. Due to the number of immigrants coming to Sweden, waiting times tended to be long. A lack of housing, teachers and interpreters occurred not only in the large cities, but also in other places. This often led to increased segregation. Another problematic factor was that many new arrivals did not have higher secondary education.

On the other hand, Mr Aldskogius said, there were also advantages and opportunities. For the moment, Sweden was benefiting from a strong economy with a high employment rate and relatively low unemployment. The demand for labour was still high in many fields, and those immigrants with a higher education should be able to find an occupation with relative ease.

Presentation of how integration works in the Solna municipality in northern Stockholm by Arion Chryssafis, Deputy Mayor for Social Service

<http://www.bspc.net/solna-ok-english-ostersjol>

Mr Arion Chryssafis, Deputy Mayor for Social Services of the Solna municipality to the north of Stockholm, reported on the special situation in Solna. This was characterized by 35 percent foreign-born adult residents; 98 percent of the population lived in flats, a typical suburb with the resulting challenges. The Solna municipality north of Stockholm had been portrayed as ideal for integrating immigrants. Since the municipalities were responsible for the integration and introduction to a life in Sweden, they were playing an important role. Mr Chryssafis described how Solna, a municipality with a history of high unemployment, social problems and high costs for



social benefits, had made a journey to something much more successful.

Today, it was a city with low taxes, a good economy and known for being business-friendly etc. Mr Chryssafis informed the Working Group about the ‘Solna Model’ including systematic efforts to assist Solna residents on income support to become self-sufficient through work, self-employment or studying. The ‘Solna Model’ was characterised by good cooperation with the local enterprises, good knowledge of each participant’s experience and by further efforts to find a way into the labour market, and it was seen as a model allowing the municipality to fight unemployment, especially among young people.

While foreign-born nationals tended towards a much higher unemployment rate than people born in Sweden, Solna showed a significantly lower unemployment rate for foreign-born people than most other municipalities in Sweden. In the whole country, unemployment among foreign-born persons was at 21 percent, but it was now down to 9.1 percent in Solna. Overall unemployment in Sweden in early 2018 had reached 7.7 percent in Sweden, but only 4.1 percent in Solna. This did not only have to do with Solna being part of a vibrant big city region, since Solna’s figures were lower than those of the municipality of Stockholm as well. Instead, according to Mr. Chryssafis, it had to do with the aforementioned ‘Solna Model’, with its strong focus on work and not being dependent on social welfare.

The ‘Solna Model’ could in short be described as systematic efforts to assist residents on income support to support themselves through work, self-employment or studying. This was done through mapping and creating an individual action plan for every newly arrived person. With the help of coaching, career guidance and matching,

each individual was offered a programme that hopefully would lead to either employment, entrepreneurship or attending studies.

Mr Chryssafis mentioned as success factors the ‘Solna Model’: coaching – “Identify and overcome all obstacles on the way to get a job” –; training; good relations with local and regional employers; education; matching employers and employees as well as the speed of delivery of the work force. He noted that Solna was affected by the refugee flow in the short term since temporary housing was needed – limited housing space was available – along with a rising demand for more and new municipal services and increased diversity. In the long term, effects included changes in the work force as well as growing tax revenues and diversity. The reception for adults and families with residence permits allotted to Solna according to national/regional quotas included housing, settlement support, civics orientation, Swedish for immigrants training, pre-school and school education as well as social services support if needed.

Those moving to Solna on their own received Swedish for immigrants training, civics orientation, pre-school and school education as well as support by social services if needed. Mr Chryssafis considered as main challenges the very long, often inactive, asylum process period – affecting the motivation and well-being of asylum seekers – as well as the severe lack of housing in the Stockholm region. Further obstacles to overcome were the involvement of a large number of authorities and stakeholders where smooth collaboration was needed, where temporary solutions were required as well as strategies on how to move from temporary to permanent housing. He added that employment measures during the first two years should be seen as a national responsibility rather than a municipal task, that it was difficult to organise efficient school education for newly arrived youths due to extreme variations in educational backgrounds and that temporary residence permits made it difficult to work with long-term integration initiatives.

Presentation by Ms Lillemor Lindell from the Swedish Sports Confederation on how they handle integration

http://www.bspc.net/ostersjosamarbete_19-mars_2018_riksidrottsforbundet-002/

Ms **Lillemor Lindell** from the Swedish Sports Confederation gave a very insightful presentation about the structure, funding and efforts of sports in Swedish society and how the field was handling

integration, a field that is perhaps often overlooked when it came to integration.

In order to achieve an environment where everyone, regardless of age, gender, social class, religion, cultural and ethnical background etc., felt that they belonged, she pointed out the necessity of an intersectional perspective. She explained intersectionality as a theoretical idea and an analytical tool used to understand how different norms and power structures together create inequality, discrimination and oppression. She also highlighted sports as a way toward inclusion, enveloping people in the community.

Of about 10 million inhabitants, more than 3 million were members in sports clubs, Ms Lindell said.

Most of the sports clubs were very welcoming to new members; 73 percent of the clubs were organising sport-for-all activities for adults and 86 percent of all clubs were offering activities for children and for youths. Volunteers were responsible for a very large part of all the work in the sport clubs.

The idea of using sports as a tool for integration, she admitted, was not new, but it had become even more important in Sweden due to the increased immigration over the last years.

Sports could be accessible or non-accessible in different ways. Accessibility could be more abstract and allude to structural problems. Despite the best intentions, it was not always easy to be an open organisation. Many challenges and obstacles had to be met, and some were easier to overcome than others.

There were different types of barriers regarding integration and sports. Communicating without mastering the language was a challenge and could create barriers. However, research had shown that sports could be of great help to learn a new language and that, after mastering it, it was easier to take on other parts of society and to create a network of contacts.

Ms Lindell went on to note that physical barriers were another problem that could not be ignored. Some neighbourhoods might be perceived to have a negative image for those who did not live in the area. That image had an impact on the inhabitants who were faced with prejudice or perceptions that were not created on the basis of knowledge or facts. This might lead to some sports organisations not wanting to establish themselves in the area. Or that they would use the venue or training site without involving or inviting people living close by.

It was also important to have an open mind and be open to new types of sports from a different country of origin. When population of immigrants arrived, they might bring with them sports that were not popular in their new country.

Lastly, sports activities were not something only for children and youths. The idea was that everyone should be able to participate at his or her level. Ms Lindell presented some examples on how to reach more than just a few people.

- Activities for mothers: Significant importance is placed on involving parents; one way of doing so involved sporting activities for mothers. By reaching mothers, it was also possible to contact younger children who might not get in touch with sporting organisations on their own outside of school. Some organisations set up walking groups which Ms Lindell considered a great way to combine walking with socialising. That could become a natural pathway into society by meeting friends and creating a network.
- Language training for adults and sport: In Sweden, there were examples of some sports organisations offering language training for adults. Combining language training with education in health and sports gave parents the same level of knowledge as the rest of the country's parents. Thus, parents received help to just be parents for their children.
- Open training: A club could organise open training sessions where the aim was to meet and exercise. There was no prerequisite and no expectations on achieving certain results; instead, the focus was on having fun and offering both a context and something to occupy oneself.

Achieving integration through sports not only happened in Sweden. There was also a European initiative in this field - ASPIRE - Activity, Sport and Play for the Inclusion of Refugees in Europe 2017-2019.

Ms Lindell said that ASPIRE was an international collaborative project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, seeking to find out how to best support migrants and refugees, building on the wide popularity of sports and other forms of physical activity. ASPIRE could serve as a pioneer in the long-term perspective, offering a positive, evidence-based response with the help of sports to the many problems of inclusion related to the current migrant and refugee crises, during and after their settlement facilitating their access to social services.

5.3 The BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration held its third meeting on the premises of the Danish Parliament on 21 June 2018. Delegations from the Baltic Assembly, Nordic Council, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hamburg, Latvia, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Norway, Poland, Russia, Schleswig-Holstein and Sweden participated in the meeting. Chaired by Mr Pyry Niemi, Member of the Swedish Parliament, the Working Group discussed expert presentations, results of an intergovernmental survey, possible recommendations for the resolution of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference and possible contents of a mid-way report.

Presentation by Ms Ninna Nyberg Sørensen

<http://www.bspc.net/pp-parlamentarisk-ostersosamarbejdel>

The meeting was provided with a very informative expert introductory presentation by **Ms Ninna Nyberg Sørensen**, research coordinator and senior researcher at the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) on Migration, Research and Policy Dialogue. She informed about the work of the institute and referred to some of its current research reports.



Ms Sørensen pointed out that a main role for research was questioning some of the political assumptions taken for granted, underlying the policies implemented. Considering what had been called since 2015 the unprecedented migration crisis, she appreciated that the raw numbers were unmatched at any point in history. Current estimates were that there were 244 million (including refugees) international migrants globally (or 3.3% of the world's population). While the vast majority of people in the world continued to live in the country in which they were born, more people were migrating to other countries, especially those within their region. Many others were migrating to high-income countries that are further afield. Work was the major reason that people migrated internationally, and migrant workers constituted a large majority of the world's international migrants, with most living in high-income countries and many engaged in the service sector. Global displacement was at a record high, with the number of internally displaced at over 40 million and the number of refugees more than 22 million. (IOM World Migration Report 2018). Taking the historical perspective, the historical migrations out of Europe were larger when one considered the respective percentages of the population. It could also be seen that recent history had seen higher percentages of migrants among the global population, such as the 1960s and the 1990s, than in the recent crisis, reaching a little above 3 per cent of the total population. As a matter of fact, migration and refugee flows were changing over time, she noted, mimicking a wave motion.

She posed the question whether migration was out of control again, what control itself was, and which control mechanisms were put in place. Furthermore, she asked if some political measures already in place could be contributing to pushing migration out of control. As an example, she mentioned an analysis conducted by her institute on the European agreement with Turkey where the latter country had taken on the role of a European border guard. The result was that the agreement worked. Regarding stemming a migration flow, she pointed out that such an agreement was very effective. But when security concerns were taken into consideration, as well as human rights and other concerns, questions could reasonably be asked about the long-term implications of that kind of deal.

As for reasons why people migrate, Ms Sørensen noted that it would be better to inquire how and when people were migrating. Many more people than the three per cent of the population – most of whom were westerners, she mentioned as an aside – were thinking about moving between countries but were not doing so due to barriers between countries that sometimes were not conducive to other forms of policies, be these trade policies or labour policies or filling particular labour markets. Posing the right questions might be the important aspect.

Ms Sørensen considered the various types of migrations, noting that they were all subject to the global media discussion which sometimes inflated contexts. So, it was important to agree on the terms used. In general, every mobile person was a migrant, e.g. moving from the countryside to the city, but of concern in this context were international migrants, such as people moving abroad for work for more than twelve months. These were economic migrants, also including international students or reunited families. Another group was posed by asylum-seekers, i.e. people who were fleeing for fear of persecution or their lives but had not yet gained refugee status. When asylum claims were accepted, that person would gain certain social rights. Ms Sørensen pointed out that 86 per cent of global refugees were in developing countries, so these kinds of rights might be questionable; she raised the question if, in that regard, the international system was effective in offering adequate asylum conditions.

Most of today's refugees were actually internally displaced persons rather than international refugees. So, the largest problems were in conflict areas. She noted another category, that of climate or environmental refugees, such as people fleeing catastrophes or slow climate change onset in their lives. This was an area with enormous political interest, but it was again an area with a lot of uncertainties involved. The estimates of how environmental change would influence future refugee flows, Ms Sørensen stated, were quite uncertain. Estimates were varying tremendously. Looking back historically at past climate change, migration had always been an adaptive strategy to such change. Accordingly, the analysis should include how migration could be a positive factor on climate and environmental policies.

Migration research, Ms Sørensen went on, had a long history. Migration had been generally considered a positive influence as migrants had contributed to the development of the countries to which they had come, but they had also sent back goods and financial resources to their homes. Migrants had also contributed to the democratization of Europe, finding new ways of thinking about politics in foreign destinations. In that theoretical framework, migrants were usually understood as someone who, of their own free will, made the decision to migrate. It was a free choice in those theories, allowing the migrants active agency, to do something to improve their own and their family's economic situations.

Refugee studies as an academic discipline on the other hand had a much shorter history. It was a post-World War II academic field. She underlined that the common idea of refugees saw them as lacking agency, as persons without any choice, so that they deserved – if



they lived up to conventions – to be protected. But the present kinds of protection, she noted, often did not leave open e.g. access to the labour market, to education and so on. These were the actual pathways for refugees to better their own situations.

Ms Sørensen said that these theoretical implications were important for how foreign nationals were handled in the migration and refugee systems. The same applied to the labour market systems. She introduced an analytical framework developed by DIIS to understand current global migration flows, called “migration industrial analysis”. To be underlined was that in most policy debates, there was much talk of the so-called migration facilitation industry, especially the human smugglers and traffickers, which was what policies were combating, unless these industry actors were labour recruiters bringing in needed labour. Another industry much larger in terms of global earnings was the migration control industry which over the past 20 years had developed enormously. It encompassed security firms which, also in the European Union, were conducting security analyses of which kinds of border control measures were needed. These companies also sold their ideas as well as techniques required to control borders. Countries and the European Union were using this industry to secure their borders, but they were also outsourcing and externalising parts of their politics to some of these control actors. The final industry in this regard was what the institute had termed the rescue industry, i.e. the NGOs and the faith-based organizations, the humanitarian actors intervening. These were important because states were more and more outsourcing traditional state functions to civil society actors, be that handling asylum centres or assisting refugees upon return.

With the goal of understanding migration issues more broadly, as was often the case in discussions of these issues, Ms Sørensen stated her view that all these actors had to be seen in how they were influencing each other and how this outsourcing of political control to private actors might actually intervene in policies.

She expressed her hope that the BSPC and DIIS could collaborate in the future.

Introduction to the compilation of the answers of the governments in the Baltic Sea Region to the questionnaire of the BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration by BSPC Vice- President and WG Vice-Chair Ms Carola Veit

http://www.bspc.net/2018-06-21-komplett-charts_umfrage_bspc_2018/

The Working Group had already discussed in Hamburg common questions to be sent by each delegation to their respective governments. This way, the Working Group wanted to obtain a better survey regarding the situation in the whole region, learn from best practise examples and develop proposals to improve cooperation in the integration of migrants. The BSPC Vice- President and WG Vice-chair **Ms Carola Veit** had summarised the questions and developed a list to be sent to the governments as homework assignments. Ms Veit presented the summary of answers delivered by the governments with regard to the Migration and Integration issue in respective countries and regions.

She started with demographics and pointed out that the submitted numbers had shown significant variation in type, allowing only a few demographic comparisons. The homework assignment had only requested numbers concerning migration. While that might have been too unspecific, the numbers still presented a basis for investigation. Ms Veit noted that, on the regional level, about a third of the inhabitants of Åland and Hamburg were migrants. In Hamburg, half the population of minors had migration backgrounds.

She considered the percentage of people with a migration background within each age range: The largest age group were the 26- to 40-year-olds, except for Lithuania where the age group between 51 and 64 dominated, followed by the over 65-year-olds. This could perhaps be informative on the reasons for migration. For example, comparing Hamburg to Åland, the under 25-year-olds comprised a much larger group in the former than in the latter region. On the

other hand, Åland had a greater proportion of over 25-year-olds of this grouping. That indicated at which time these migrants had arrived in the respective regions.

Ms Veit further stated that each country in the Baltic Sea region had its own set of immigration, asylum or aliens laws which were included in the rules of immigration. Ms Veit mentioned a few examples: Germany had both a residence as well as an integration act; Lithuania had referred to a law on the legal status of aliens; for its immigration law, Poland had included a two-tier administrative procedure, the protection of the national work force, and the future possibility to determine how many people were admitted into the country.

Another topic of the survey had been the requirements for requesting asylum. The criteria were defined in the previously mentioned laws of the respective countries. Due to the Geneva Convention or the conventions and international agreements on refugees adopted by such nations, there were some similarities. In EU countries, European-level initiatives also provided some more streamlining and similarities. For example, Sweden had listed as reasons for asylum the death penalty, torture, internal armed conflict as well as environmental disasters. Like Estonia, it also included the topic of stateless persons here. Germany concentrated on serious harm, concrete danger to life, discrimination, violence of international law, and internal armed conflict. Some other exceptions were mentioned in Norway where the right to be recognized as a refugee did not apply if the foreign national could obtain effective protection in other areas of his or her country of origin than the area from which the applicant had fled. In Latvia, a person might not apply for refugee status if he or she was a national of more than one country and did not use legal protection in any of the other countries without justifying reason.

Regarding dual citizenship, there were different answers: Sweden allowed additional dual citizenships, while Norway was preparing for such a regulation. In Lithuania and Estonia, one might acquire a citizenship by grant of refugee status or if he or she was a beneficiary of international protection granted by Estonia or any other EU member state. Of interest were the different principles allowing exceptions. Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Poland, and Latvia by law allowed dual citizenships, defining the requirements by certain rules listed in the materials. These countries had originally not accepted multiple citizenships. Germany had indicated that “multiple citizenship should be avoided”.

With regard to the topic of work permits, all responses, Ms Veit pointed out, had indicated that foreigners immigrating for

economic reasons must be granted a work permit before entering the country. They were required to meet the labour market needs of the EU member states. Except for Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, and Germany, the answers to this question had not referred specifically to refugees and asylum-seekers. Germany had specified that people from so-called safe countries were prohibited from working.

All answers showed that advisory and legal services to foreigners, migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees were differentiated by the status of the beneficiary. They existed to a certain extent in each country and region. Against this background, Ms Veit had chosen to highlight two best practise examples, i.e. Lithuania and Hamburg. In Lithuania, there were three foreign integration centres in Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda. They aimed to provide a “one-stop shop” for foreigners, to facilitate them with a wide range of services at one desk, so as to speed up the integration into society and the labour market. In Hamburg, apart from the reception centre, where new arrivals were registered and given medical examinations, a program had started in 2015, called W.I.R. (Work and Integration for Refugees), founded to help refugees in a holistic manner. The major concern was to integrate them into the labour market.

Regarding language instruction, in most of the countries and regions participating in the survey so far, there were language courses as well as courses for civic education, less often vocational training. Depending on their respective status, foreigners, refugees and asylum-seekers were commonly allowed to participate, and most of the countries offered the courses free of charge. Five countries to some degree obligated asylum-seekers to take part in the various integration courses offered by the authorities. In Poland, participation was exclusively voluntary.

Ms Veit moved on to the topic of benefits. Most of the participating countries had yielded comprehensive information about these, such as benefit payments, special requirements for eligibility to some benefits, the monthly subsistence for asylum-seekers in euros or the respective currencies and how this related to the national income. Nonetheless, Ms Veit conceded that comparison was very difficult. She mentioned one example: In 2015, the average taxable income in Finland was 28,000 € a year, i.e. approximately 2,300 € per month. When comparing the average income to the allowances for asylum-seekers, it had to be taken into account that the latter were provided at least with accommodation and necessary health and social services for free. Accordingly, that was difficult to compare, and it was up for discussion how deeply that should be investigated. For Lithuania, the official minimum wage was set at 380 € per month; the medium was 360 € per month; the monthly benefits for

asylum-seekers were set at 10 per cent of the state-supported income amount.

Family reunification was the next aspect raised by Ms Veit. This part concentrated on family reunification for asylum-seekers and refugees. Every country granted family reunification to a certain extent, with some restrictions and narrative definitions of family. Her examples included: The immigration rules in Estonia aimed to support family migration; Estonia had transposed the family reunification directive for relevant asylum-seekers of the EU; beneficiaries of international protection could reunify their families. Latvia stated that a refugee or asylum-seeker, having resided in the country for at least 2 years, had the right to reunite with family members in foreign countries. An unaccompanied minor who had been granted international protection and was not married had the right to receive mother and father arriving from a foreign country. Since July 2016, there had been a temporary act in Sweden, limiting the rights of family reunifications for those who were eligible for subsidiary protection; the law would remain applicable until July 2019. The same applied to Germany. In Poland, marriage had to be recognised by Polish law, thus leaving out polygamous or same-sex marriages.

Regarding minors, the answers given showed that every country tried to do its best to support unaccompanied minors. All these matters, including best practise examples, should be discussed by the Working Group.

The next item concerned accommodation. The housing situation depended on the asylum-seeker's respective status – asylum-seekers waiting for a decision, granted asylum, or an alternative status, an unaccompanied minor or a detained foreigner. Every country provided accommodation in some form to the migrants. Usually, asylum-seekers were first housed at reception facilities. In Germany, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Estonia, and Latvia, these were called transit centres or temporary accommodation, while Poland had settled on the name accommodation centres.

As for volunteers and the organization of their involvement, she said that civil society was playing a vital role in every country in the region. Its involvement was encouraged by the state or by NGOs. Voluntary work was supported through civil society, governments and other actors in the public sector. She mentioned best practise examples in Denmark, Germany and Sweden.

Ms Veit concluded that the responses and statements by the Baltic Sea Region governments in the BSPC Working Group's survey were a good basis for further research.

Presentation by Mr Veiko Spolitis

http://www.bspc.net/roots-of-the-refugee-dilemma_copenhagen/

Mr Veiko Spolitis, Member of the Latvian Parliament, in line with an agreement of the WG in Copenhagen, gave a speech on the historic context of migration after the Second World War. He pointed out that his presentation specifically considered the Baltic Sea region after the second world war because he was concerned why there were different perceptions on what migration was, what refugees were in Scandinavian countries, Finland, Germany, Poland, and the Baltic states.

These considerations formed the first part of his working paper, he said. His approach was to look at the reasons for these differences which were objectively real, before investigating the problems of the crises, such as wars. He agreed with Ms Sørensen that there was nothing extraordinary to what they were witnessing these days. He referred to the Yugoslavian wars in the 1990s and earlier, the second world war.

The problem of migration as seen from the Baltic perspective was very often muddled. Mr Spolitis had looked at two specific aspects as understood by common people on the street. These were economic migrants and refugees. Both were covered by the United Nations conventions, with very simple to understand definitions. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Migrants for example defined the migrant worker as a person who used to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state in which he or she is not a national. Refugees differed from these economic migrants because economic migration usually took place in a world governed by laws whereas refugees were left alone. Accordingly, there was a need for UNHCR, the Red Cross, and the Red Crescent – all these organizations helping those downtrodden people who had to flee their homes. The UN definition of the 1951 convention stated very specifically that a refugee was someone who had been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee had a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they could not return home or were afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal, religious violence were stated as the leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.

Given such clear definitions, the question was why there were such different perceptions in the Baltic Sea area where most of the

countries were members in the Schengen area, the EU, and NATO. In the Baltic Sea region, he considered such a development inevitable, since only one totalitarian regime had been abolished after the second world war, while another – the Soviet Union – had still stayed intact. Mr Spolitis cited an example for the different development: After World War II, twelve million Germans had had to be relocated back from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, and so forth. However, Mr Spolitis went on, in Germany, in Scandinavian countries, in Finland, it had been possible to accept the migrations in a democratic way because there had been political parties, meetings, discussions, and what he considered most important: These nations had dealt with it as the current migration was handled, as shown by Ms Veit's presentation, on the municipal level. When the refugees had been received, they had lived with the original inhabitants in the same municipalities. He stressed that municipalities had to have a say in these matters.

Differently, in the Soviet Union, which had occupied nations such as Poland and East Germany, the locals had no influence at all in these migration flows. People had simply come and gone, with the communist party dictating the rules all the way to 1975. At that point, the Helsinki Acts had finally implemented changes, and human rights had been admitted at the highest level of the CPSU in Moscow. That was the greatest difference, Mr Spolitis pointed out, why there was inertia stemming from the Soviet totalitarian past, that there was a certain perception what refugees meant and how to deal with them.

There was another very important detail in the reception of these millions of refugees. It had been rather easy for Germany to accept most of the Germans because they were speaking the same language, they were akin, so there had been no cultural clashes. Mr Spolitis noted that such clashes always occurred to some degree, but by and large, these had been the same European people who had been relocated because of war ravages. Moreover, they had also received help from such organizations as the Red Cross and the Red Crescent. In the Soviet Union, though, the Red Cross had unfortunately been forbidden from operating.

In a nutshell, Mr Spolitis summarised, these were the determining factors for the different cultures of receptivity towards migration that had developed. In Sweden, in Germany, in the Scandinavian countries as a total, these populations had been part of the development of economic boom after these relocations. They had learned the language, they had learned the skills, and then they could decide whether they wanted to stay in this newly adopted country or whether they wanted to relocate back. Accordingly, the waves of the

Portuguese, the Italians, and afterwards the Yugoslavians and the Turkish ‘gastarbeiters’ (guest workers) – everything went well because they had been integrated into society. Political parties had been making decisions, and on the municipal level, they had been accepted. This had been part of the bargain, Mr Spolitis stated. Everyone had shared the same views on how to deal with this, whereas in Poland, or in the Baltic states, or in East Germany – considering the differences in public opinion –, that had never been the case, as everything had been decided by the communist party.

He next considered the end of the cold war when large numbers of economic migrants had moved from the Baltic states and Poland in particular to Ireland and Great Britain. These had also followed the same procedure, acquiring new skills and a new language. Important here was that it had been the European Union which had fostered this movement, because one of the three liberties of the European Union was free labour, next to free capital movement and a free market of goods and services. Aside from the free movement of labour, another focus was the convergence of policies. Such policies had been developed, particularly at the insistence of Germany – which could afford such and had been a driving force along with France –, that there would always be labour movement from the economic periphery. But with convergence policies working, it was possible to see that most Italian and Portuguese who had arrived in Germany in the 1950s had gone back to their native countries because their economic fortunes had risen.

The same had also applied to the Turkish population, despite the recent backlash because of the political situation in Turkey. For a while, greater numbers of Turkish people had moved back from Germany to Turkey rather than the opposite way. Nowadays, this movement had reversed.

Mr Spolitis also considered the causes of the current refugee crisis. Outlined in broad strokes, Mr Spolitis saw that, in light of global warming, natural disasters were accepted. Whenever there was a natural disaster, people were very receptive, regardless of the regime, to refugees. A man-made disaster, though, was a different affair. Such could be a technological disaster but also wars. Whenever there was a man-made disaster, Mr Spolitis pointed out, people started questioning the influx of refugees. In democracies, after all, there was a right to question.

Looking at what was happening in the Baltic Sea region over the past twenty-seven years, there had been a tremendous transformation in the Baltic states and Poland. Most of the work had dealt with making the living conditions acceptable to the population.

People living in the Scandinavian countries and Germany, he noted, accepted the fact that they could build and plan their lives as something acceptable. For many countries in the world, Mr Spolitis stressed, this was a luxury. Coming back to your country to raise your children in peace, where you could make plans based on your annual income, where you could raise your children and send them to school, that was often something unattainable. Accordingly, a major policy goal for the Baltic states and Poland was to ensure that people would start coming back. Considering the trends for the last one-and-a-half years, that process had just started. People were beginning to trickle back from Ireland and Great Britain.

Basically, Mr Spolitis continued, post-war lessons had taught the European Union how to manage labour shortages, how to manage the reform of governance and education systems, and how to converge economies. These lessons could be applied both in a good or bad manner, depending on the political culture. But one thing could not be managed from within, namely external shocks or wars.

Mr Spolitis noted that it was often difficult to understand and grasp that Europeans could also work to end a war driving migration flows in the Baltic Sea region. At the moment, he mentioned, there were two such wars: the war in Ukraine and the war in Syria.

Since 2015, there had been media hype related to refugees, such as the reestablishment of the border between Sweden and Denmark, the still ongoing debate in Germany had even threatened the government, and there was the forty-fifth president of the United States intruding in the whole debate.

The bottom line, Mr Spolitis said, was that there were two million internally displaced persons in the Ukraine for example. There were also internally displaced persons in Russia, and two million had moved from the Ukraine into Poland. At the same time, these Ukrainians were an economic boon for the Polish economy – while representing a brain drain for the Ukraine. With that in mind, it had to be understood that war was never good. The only ones to profit off war were the immoral businessmen who were e.g. selling arms or shipping people.

Mr Spolitis accordingly also looked at the United Nations charter. He emphasised because, as he said, it was always good to look at the basic documents. Article 1 of the charter was very clear: ‘We have to maintain international peace and security to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principles of equal right and self-determination of peoples to achieve international cooperation and solving international problems and



encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. States must follow the basic principles as outlined in Article 2 of the Charter.’ Article 2, Mr Spolitis explained, clarified how this must be achieved. These basic documents had been written by people who had known that there could not be greater disasters than war. Out of the ravages of war, in San Francisco, in 1945 and in 1948 when the International Charter of Human Rights had been written, they had understood that peace must be kept. Therefore, he found Article 2 interesting, explaining explained how this peace had to be kept: ‘Nothing containing the present charter shall authorise the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the member states to matters or settlements under the present charter.’ He pointed out that this showed the embeddedness of the Security Council.

Therefore, having these principles of international law, it was possible to discuss this because the BSPC was an international organisation. War and the breaching of basic tenets of human rights was unacceptable behaviour in today’s European region, called one of the most prosperous, most open and most liberal regions. In 2015, uncontrolled migration had made headlines in many media, and it could be clearly said that the European public, including the media, had not been prepared in 2015, unlike in the 1990s, as could be seen from newspapers and other resources. Mr Spolitis said that Europeans had become complacent, that they had forgotten about these problems but had to be ready for them.

So, in 2015, it was learned that the Dublin directive of 2003 about asylum-seekers was defective. Without any international crisis, without war, the Dublin directive had managed migration pretty well. But it became problematic in a crisis where the flows of mass migration due to war were overwhelming the bordering areas. Mr Spolitis pointed out that the debate accusing Hungary had been pointless, and instead, the discussion should have dealt with the problems with the Dublin directive. He predicted that the Dublin III directive would fail again.

Accordingly, it was necessary to fix these matters on a fundamental level. As a historic note, Mr Spolitis said, in 1997, prior to the Amsterdam Treaty, there had been debate about following up on Maastricht and introducing a common migration policy. Unfortunately, at that time, Helmut Kohl had an agreement with Jacques Chirac but not the support of the German federal states in the Bundesrat. Therefore, a common migration policy had failed in 1997 because Helmut Kohl didn't have the necessary support back home. As a result, Europeans now had to live with a defective system where politicians tried ad hoc fixes here and there, with crises here and there. But, Mr Spolitis underlined, without a common migration policy, they were in the same position as they had been in 2015.

Coming to the conclusion of his presentation, Mr Spolitis said that they had been speaking about possible policy responses in this broad track of problems concerning perception, with an eye on the wars in their immediate neighbourhood – i.e. Ukraine and Syria. Equally of concern were economic migrants and their countries of origin, such as the Maghreb nations in northern Africa as well as Ethiopia and Eritrea, both with authoritarian regimes. All these matters had to be dealt with. Lacking a common migration policy, it wasn't enough to strengthen Frontex and fix the Dublin directive because disagreements were rising in bordering areas, particularly Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, and Spain where the greatest pressure was experienced. Moreover, the Dublin directive stated quite directly that countries had to deal with these issues on their own merits. At the same time, in 27+ EU member states, there were different levels of understanding, different levels of reception, and different levels of remuneration, as Ms Veit had outlined by the example of the Baltic Sea area countries.

Therefore, possible policy responses had to first of all raise the awareness of these differences in our society. Mr Spolitis stated that it was the role of parliamentarians to go out and approach media and explain that the differences were due to specific, historic developments.

Second, he said, they should not be shy to resist political correctness and call facts and arguments by their own names.

The third response suggested by Mr Spolitis was that parliamentary assemblies – such as the BSPC itself – could appeal to the super-regional organizations, e.g. the Council of the Baltic Sea Countries, the Council of Baltic Cities, or the United Nations to raise awareness. Another possibility was to demand of the heads of states to also raise this issue during the General Assembly Meeting in September, if the group decided to do so and agreed on the goal. Regarding the previous discussion, it could be seen that this process could not continue and that impartiality was not acceptable.

Finally, but not least, a fourth proposal was that the BSPC as an organisation could coordinate information with like-minded super-regional organisations in this Baltic Sea area and jointly appeal to the European Council to continue work in order to establish a common EU migration policy.

Further procedure

The Working Group further discussed possible recommendations for the resolution of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference and possible contents of a mid-way report. In addition, the Working Group agreed to hold the next meeting in Kiel on 17 December 2018.

6. Intergovernmental Survey

The Working Group had already discussed in Hamburg common questions to be sent by each delegation to their respective governments. This way, the Working Group wanted to obtain a better survey regarding the situation in the whole region, learn from best practise examples and develop proposals to improve cooperation in the integration of migrants. The BSPC Vice- President and WG Vice-chair Carola Veit had summarised the questions and developed a list to be sent to the governments as homework assignments. Ms Veit presented the summary of answers delivered by the governments with regard to the Migration and Integration issue in respective countries and regions.

14 governments from the Baltic Sea Region have provided detailed comments and responses to the working group's surveys.

Link to the website – WG MeI - Documents

Ms Carola Veit gave an Introduction to the compilation of the answers of the governments in the Baltic Sea Region to the questionnaire at the third meeting in Copenhagen (see 5.3).

7. Best practices – Examples

One of the best ways to improve integration policies is to learn from each other. For this reason, the working group has decided to gather best practices from all members. Only in this way can we get more knowledge and share it.

The BSPC Vice- President and WG Vice-chair Carola Veit has been responsible for gathering different data from the member countries in a survey in order to find best practices in each country.

Each country in the Baltic Sea region has its own set of immigration, asylum or aliens laws which are included in the rules of immigration. For example: Germany has both a residence as well as an integration act; Lithuania has referred to a law on the legal status of aliens; for its immigration law, Poland has included a two-tier administrative procedure, the protection of the national work force, and the future possibility to determine how many people are admitted into the country.

Another topic of the survey has been the requirements for requesting asylum. The criteria are defined in the previously mentioned laws of the respective countries. Due to the Geneva Convention or the conventions and international agreements on refugees adopted by such nations, there are some similarities. In EU countries, European-level initiatives also provide some more streamlining and similarities. For example, Sweden has listed as reasons for asylum the death penalty, torture, internal armed conflict as well as environmental disasters. Like Estonia, it also includes the topic of stateless persons here. Germany concentrated on serious harm, concrete danger to life, discrimination, violence of international law, and internal armed conflict. Some other exceptions are mentioned in Norway where the right to be recognized as a refugee does not apply if the foreign national can obtain effective protection in other areas of his or her country of origin than the area from which the applicant has fled. In Latvia, a person might not apply for refugee status if he or she is a national of more than one country and does not use legal protection in any of the other countries without justifying reason.

Regarding dual citizenship, there are different answers: Sweden allows additional dual citizenships, while Norway is preparing for such a regulation. In Lithuania and Estonia, one might acquire a citizenship by grant of refugee status or if he or she is a beneficiary of international protection granted by Estonia or any other EU member state.

When it comes to housing, it depends on the asylum-seeker's respective status – asylum-seekers waiting for a decision, granted asylum, or an alternative status, an unaccompanied minor or a detained foreigner. Every country provide accommodation in some form to the migrants. Usually, asylum-seekers are first housed at reception facilities. In Germany, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Estonia, and Latvia, these are referred to as transit centres or temporary accommodation, while Poland has settled on the name accommodation centres.

In Sweden, the goal is to ensure equal rights, obligations and opportunities for all, irrespective of their ethnic and cultural background. The reception of newly arrived refugees is a shared responsibility on a national, regional and local level. The policy objective is work, education or training normally within two years after the issuing of a residence permit during the introduction programme. These objectives are to be achieved primarily through general policy measures, supplemented by targeted support for the introduction of newcomers.

The main challenges in Sweden include prolonged waiting times; a lack of housing – uneven reception and settlement between different regions and municipalities –; insufficient capacities in society, e.g. a lack of teachers and interpreters; an early and efficient access to the labour market and education for those granted asylum and, finally, increased segregation.

There are, however, also opportunities: a strong economy; a high employment rate and relatively low unemployment; a high demand for labour meets a labour shortage in many professions: many newly arrived migrants are young and well educated; job opportunities are good.

Right after the migration crisis in 2015, between 2016 and 2018, there was an increased state funding to municipalities. A new reimbursement system for reception of unaccompanied minors; early measures for asylum seekers; a new law forcing all municipalities to settle migrants granted asylum; several new initiatives in labour market policy, e.g. fast tracks, employment support as well as several new initiatives in most policy areas, e.g. education, social and housing policy.

There is also a 2-year introduction programme for new arrivals, co-ordinated by the Public Employment Service, including an individual introduction plan, based on the person's needs and previous experience. As part of this programme, the Public Employment Service and the social partners are also implementing tailor-made “fast

tracks” for occupations with labour shortages. This is a new concept created in close collaboration with employers. It includes tripartite talks with the social partners, the Public Employment Service and other relevant government agencies regarding the employer’s needs, validation of skills, vocational training and work. The first fast track was introduced in 2015, creating opportunities for chefs, and extended to fast tracks in 14 industries by October 2017.

Another concrete example comes from Solna municipality north of Stockholm. It is in many ways a typical suburb where 98 percent of the population live in apartments and the foreign-born inhabitants are about 35 percent of the whole population.

Here, the “Solna Model” was launched. It includes systematic efforts to assist Solna residents on income support to become self-sufficient through work, self-employment or studies. The ‘Solna Model’ is characterised by good cooperation with the local enterprises, good knowledge of each participants’ experiences and by further efforts to find a way into the labour market, and it is seen as a model allowing the municipality to fight unemployment, especially among young people.

Success factors of the ‘Solna Model’: coaching – “Identify and overcome all obstacles on the way to get a job” –; training; good relations with local and regional employers; education; matching employers and employees as well as the speed of delivery of workforce.

Like many other Swedish municipalities, Solna was affected by the refugee flow in the short term since temporary housing was needed – there was limited housing space available –, the demand for more and new municipal services and increased diversity. In the long-term, effects included changes in the work force as well as growing tax revenues and diversity. The reception for adults and families with residence permits allotted to Solna according to national/regional quota included housing, settlement support, civics orientation, Swedish for immigrants training, pre-school and school education as well as social services support if needed.

Yet another example on how to facilitate integration is through sports, which has a long tradition in Sweden. In order to achieve an environment where everyone, regardless of age, gender, social class, religion, cultural and ethnical background feel they can take part. Sports as a way toward inclusion, enveloping people in the community.

In this respect, ASPIRE, an international collaborative project co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, is

paramount. It is seeking to find out how to best support migrants and refugees, building on the wide popularity of sports and other forms of physical activity. ASPIRE can serve as a pioneer in the long-term perspective, offering a positive, evidence-based response with the help of sports to the many problems of inclusion related to the current migrant and refugee crises, during and after the settlement of migrants and refugees with regard to facilitating the access of refugees to social services

Sweden is by no means the only country that can share their best practices when it comes to integration. All other member states can contribute as well. The working group will continue its work by focusing on best practices from the other members and that will be addressed in the final report.

8. Political Recommendations

On the basis of its mandate, the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference Working Group on Migration and Integration has discussed first political recommendations as a result of its work. The following recommendations have been incorporated into the draft resolution of the 27th BSPC in Mariehamn 26 – 28 August 2018:

Regarding Migration and Integration, to

1. acknowledge objective differences in the political system as well as in the historical and cultural background due to the scars of the Second World War, continue discussions and reflections about flight and migration, and share best governance practices to raise awareness in our societies;
2. initiate a Baltic Sea-wide data basis on integration conditions and measures to improve the public discussion on a factual basis;
3. intensify the dialogue on migration and integration between the countries bordering the Baltic Sea;
4. increase the offer of migration-specific advisory services and language training in order to intensify integration efforts;
5. enlarge projects for advising and supporting volunteers, local institutions and civil society organizations working in the field of integration and taking into account the unifying and integrating role of sports;
6. consider migration and security perspectives in relevant other political agendas such as trade, labour rights and environmental preservation.
7. seek holistic and multi-faceted solutions to the challenges posed by refugee and migration policies which include a well-coordinated combination of migration management, humanitarian assistance, political solutions, European and international collaboration, fair trade agreements and development assistance.

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