

Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference Working Group on Migration and Integration

2nd Interim Report



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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), and the Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Cooperation (BSSSC).

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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Introduction

Hans Wallmark

Ladies and gentlemen,

Migration and integration continue to be central themes of political discussion and debate in our countries. In some election campaigns in particular, the discussion of these issues often still plays a decisive role, even though other areas - such as the climate debate, but also the increase in international tensions - have moved more to the fore in the meantime.

Internationally, for the first time, there has been a comprehensive agreement on the subject at the global level. The overwhelming majority of the countries around the world have adopted the United Nations GLOBAL COMPACT FOR SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION although this has been linked to some discussions in some countries and not all countries have signed the agreement. The European Union has presented in March a Progress report on the Implementation of the European Agenda on Migration. Russia has launched a migration strategy. The discussions in the individual countries are - although no longer in the fierceness as they were about 3 years ago - still often conducted very emotionally and with reference to ideological basic views.

Against this background, the working group has further deepened the topic with the focus on the Baltic Sea region. On the one hand, the consultation of governments on the subject was continued and extended. A number of best-practice examples from different regions were introduced into the discussion and discussed. A scientific analysis of the results of the interviews was commissioned from the Migration Institute of Finland in Turku and is included in this report. This needs to be further refined. Further conclusions must be drawn from this.

The working group was informed in detail about the situation in Russia during a meeting in Kaliningrad, so that the information base covers the entire Baltic Sea region.

During a 2-day Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum in Schwerin, the topic was discussed by the working group together with young people from the Baltic Sea countries.

The results were and are taken into account in the work of the working group and presented by representatives of the young people involved during the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference.

Since the working group, like the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, can only pass unanimous resolutions and submit corresponding recommendations for action, consensus-oriented recommendations for action for the entire Baltic Sea region have been and are being developed. Against this background, the work focuses primarily on the discussion of best practice examples and projects that can be recommended as examples for the entire Baltic Sea region.

Discussions during this year's annual conference are also expected to make a further contribution to this.

Since integration as a result of migration processes takes place particularly at the municipal level, it is important to convey relevant approaches to solutions in this area.

Recent stocktaking and reports on integration measures in the regional and municipal areas in particular show that after the migration waves of 2014 to 2016, which in part led to excessive demands on the ground due to the speed and extent of the migration, a situation has now arisen that has led to more structured approaches through intensive measures and comprehensive cooperation between a wide range of stakeholders. As a result, successful paths have been taken with regard to integration processes, which have noticeably reduced uncertainty and emotionality in the manageability of the topic.

The next meeting of the working group will take place in October in Hamburg in the context of a migration forum attended by more than one hundred experts and project leaders.

The governments of the entire Baltic Sea region have commented on the initial recommendations for action already made at the last Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. The results are published on the BSPC website. Governments are also invited to comment on this year's further recommendations for action.

I would like to thank Ms Carola Veit, the President of the State Parliament of Hamburg and Vice-Chair of the working group for chairing the working group meeting in Kaliningrad and co-financing the policy analysis of the surveys as well as my fellow Swedish colleague Pyry Niemi for chairing the working group meeting in Kiel when I had to fulfill other parliamentary duties. My thanks also go to the President of the State Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein for hosting the meeting in Kiel, to the President of the Regional Duma of Kaliningrad and the Russian State Duma for hosting the meeting in Kaliningrad as well as to the President of the State Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern for hosting and organizing the meeting and the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum in Schwerin. Furthermore, I would like to thank all the members of the Working Group for their high-quality contributions, the intensive discussions and the harmonious atmosphere as well as all those who support the work of the Group with the highest level of commitment. Only through such highly committed cooperation is it possible to achieve results in such a difficult policy area that will bring us forward in reality.

The working group will prepare its final report with final recommendations in the spring of next year and present it to the next conference in Vilnius in August 2020.

Irrespective of progress in the field of integration, the issue of migration remains a central issue of international policy. Only through far-sighted agreements to solve the causes and by avoiding wars, natural disasters and famines can migration be controlled and integration be successful in the medium and long term with a high degree of acceptance.

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

Chair of the Working Group on Migration and Integration

0. Summary

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.

Regarding the associated complexity of the issue, the BSPC Standing Committee in Trondheim decided to extend the mandate of the BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration by a further year. Therefore, the Working Group decided to present a 2nd interim report for the Annual Conference in Oslo.

This opened the opportunity to build on the results of the work to date and, with due thoroughness and within the available timeframe, to achieve further results that are suitable for advancing the issue in the Baltic Sea region. The Working Group will present the final report with further recommendations and calls for action to the governments of the Baltic Sea Region at the Annual Conference 2020 in Vilnius.

The scope of work of the Working Group covers, but is not 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 established and maintains 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.

During the past year, the Working Group held 3 further meetings with a large number of experts in Kiel in December 2019, in Kaliningrad at the end of March 2020 and in Schwerin at the end of May 2020.

The meeting in Schwerin was held in conjunction with a Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum. The young participants involved had been nominated by the member parliaments and discussed the topic with the working group members. The results will be presented during the annual conference in Oslo and will be taken into account in the further deliberations of the working group.

During the first year of its activity, the working group had conducted a survey among the governments of the Baltic Sea Region. The governments have commented on a number of issues. This survey was deepened and expanded during the past year. The government statements constitute a unique compilation of information on the issue from across the Baltic Sea region. The Standing Committee and the working group have commissioned a political science analysis. This was carried out by the Institute for Migration in Finland. The results will be presented during the annual conference in Oslo and incorporated into further discussions.

The working group's recommendations for action, which were incorporated into last year's 27th resolution, were forwarded to the governments of the member parliaments for their comments as part of the overall Mariehamn resolution. The statements of the governments have been incorporated into the further work and will be discussed again. The recommendations for action of the annual conference in Oslo will also be sent to the governments with a request for a statement on implementation. This will provide the working group with an overview of the results of its work and recommendations for government action during the running work.

The next meeting of the working group will take place from 24 to 27 October 2019 in Hamburg in conjunction with a migration forum. This opens up the possibility of coming into contact with around 100 experts and project participants from the entire field of migration and integration and of incorporating the results of their work into further consultations. Further meetings are scheduled for late January 2020 in Berlin and April 2020 on the Åland Islands. The working group will present its final report with further recommendations for action during the Annual Conference 2020 in Vilnius.

1. Purpose

The purpose of the 2nd Interim Report is to present a further set of political recommendations from the BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration (WG MI) to the 28th BSPC in Oslo 25- 27 August 2019. 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 during the second year of its work. It includes also the statements and answers received from the governments of the Baltic Sea States to a second survey among the governments. 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. The BSPC Standing Committee in Trondheim decided on 13 November 2018 to extend the mandate of the BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration by a further year.

In accordance with this decision, the scope of work of WG MI covers, but is not 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 established and maintains contacts with relevant institutions, organizations and other actors in the Baltic Sea Region.

The scope of work of the Working Group covers but is not 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 provided political input to the Conference resolutions of the 27th and the 28th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conferences and will provide further input to the 29th annual conference 2020 in Vilnius.

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 home-lands, 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 co-operating 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:

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

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>

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 Groups’ 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 so-cial 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 com-pany, play a similarly large role. To this must be added – against a backdrop of different fiscal regulations – questions of tax law. Oth-er subjects include the specific statutory social benefits, e.g. for chil-dren 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.

In the course of its activities over the past year, the working group has been increasingly concerned with integration issues and best practice examples in the field of integration. At the same time, reference was made during the deliberations to reports from other institutions in which basic questions, facts and trends of migration were presented and dealt with in detail. The extent to which the various aspects of the scope of work have played a role in the past year can be seen from the following presentation of the outcome of the deliberations and the stocktaking of the individual meetings since the presentation of the first interim report 2017 in Mariehamn.

5. Working Group Meetings four, five and six

5.1 The Working Group on Migration and Integration, held its fourth meeting on the premises of State Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein in Kiel on 17 December 2018. Delegations from the Denmark, Finland, Hamburg, German Bundestag, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Nordic Council, Norway, Poland, Russian State Duma, Schleswig-Holstein and Sweden participated in the meeting. The meeting was chaired by Pyry Niemi, representing the Chairman of the WG during the Swedish Chairmanship.

The Working Group discussed the following expert presentations, a second intergovernmental survey of the Working Group, as well as the upcoming activities and meetings.



Expert Presentations

Presentation by Ms Sabine Hahn, Coordinator of the Policy Area Education, Hamburg Institute for Vocational Education and Training on “EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region - presentation of the new action “Recognising potential - easing the way for newly arrived refugees”

http://www.bspc.net/?attachment_id=8397

Ms Sabine Hahn, Coordinator of the Policy Area Education, Hamburg Institute for Vocational Education, informed the Working Group on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region’s new action “Recognising potential – easing the way for newly arrived refugees”. Ms Hahn explained that they were working on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region with four sub-areas: education, research, employability as well as the integration of refugees. The latter point had been added because of the refugee crisis in 2015. Of the actions listed in the EU Strategy, she said she would focus on the fifth item: recognising potential – easing the way for migrants. In 2015, there had been a huge inflow of migrants to Europe. While the inflow had shrunk in 2016, Ms Hahn believed the current situation to be more of a pause. As such, it was still a common challenge in the Baltic Sea area to integrate these people into society. At the same time, she noted the demographic change. People also had to be integrated into the labour market. There was a high demand for labour, yet there was a mismatch of these components. Ms Hahn stressed that this was not only on the Working Group’s agenda but also on that of her institute.

She described the Baltic Sea area as a set of similar countries that nonetheless had different mindsets regarding their openness towards migrants. More cooperation was required. Therefore, they were aiming to create transnational actions, binding together governments, to create and improve integrated measures for migrants. This would come together in a new flagship.

The actions already established so far focused on the exchange of best practices, as called for in the Action Plan for the Baltic Sea States. A platform for said exchange was in place; in addition, methods and systems were being developed and tested. Once validated, the goal was to allow local actors to use these, facilitating entry into the labour market. Among the challenges was the need of countries with aging populations to add to the labour force; yet, there were various respective attitudes around the Baltic Sea. What was needed to deliver on that need was an insurance that migrants would learn

a new language and would obtain access to work-based learning so as to be eventually integrated into the labour market.

Ms Hahn next spoke about the emerging flagship. One of their goals was to separate the policy sub area “integration” from the existing flagship “School to Work” and create a new one, which would be an MRS cross-cutting flagship, involving all macro regions. She stressed that it would not be limited to the Baltic Sea but rather envelop all the macro-regional strategies of the EU. They were currently in a dialogue with stakeholders in Northern Germany on possibly providing anchoring for this flagship; no decision had yet been made. The financing would possibly be enabled through a co-ordinated ESF call in 2019, targeting the integration of migrants. The plan called for the flagship to be established in 2019, with a kick-off meeting in Hamburg. That meeting was expected to take the form of a conference or a forum on the integration of migrants.

Preparations for that forum had already begun. The goal was to bring together 100 participants, representing the public and private sector. Thus, best practices could be shared, and knowledge exchanged. To that end, 30 workshops were planned, with 5 running in parallel, respectively. Accordingly, each participant could take part in up to 6 workshops. Two half days were planned. Discussion would concentrate on the needs and gaps of the issue.

Presentation by Mr Matti Mäkelä, Head of the Project Management Office, City of Turku/Education Division

on “Knowledge platform – integration of newly arrived refugees”

http://www.bspc.net/?attachment_id=8398

Mr Matti Mäkelä, Head of the Project Management Office, City of Turku/Education Division, began his presentation on “Knowledge platform – integration of newly arrived refugees” by informing the working group about the flagship School to Work, a platform for transnational cooperation, allowing policy-makers to zero in on target groups, learn from each other and to develop new ideas. The platform further permitted exchange of best practices as well as the launch of new initiatives and projects. He went on to describe the structure of the flagship, with Sweden’s SALAR as the leader, overseeing three sub-platforms, namely the NEET knowledge platform

operated by Norden in Sweden as well as the two platforms Early School Leaving and Newly Arrived Refugees, both run by the Finnish city of Turku.

For Mr Mäkelä, the way this had come about was a good example for regional cooperation. He noted that he was also the chairman of the Baltic Sea task force for employment and well-being. This task had proved very similar to the flagship School to Work. Accordingly, three years ago, it had been decided to work together instead of pursuing the same work separately. This was one of the main ideas in their work load, to collaborate. All the materials, seminars, policy recommendations, events, information about conferences had been gathered in a development report, which also contained best practices.

The goal was to allow people to join the flagship with its sub platforms, no matter at which stage of transnational cooperation they were. The very first level consisted of collaboration through meetings or study visits, allowing the exchange of ideas. On the next level, there was cooperation, including benchmarking, shadowing and peer review. All of this was leading to an ever-closer cooperation in pursuit of the joint goals, exchanging best practices. Learning from each other was one of the primary concerns; Mr Mäkelä pointed out that this was the only way to prevent each nation from making the same mistakes another country may have already made.

He went on to note the case of BSR Integrate Now, a project focused on the exchange of best practices to smooth integration into society as well as the development and testing of methods and systems supporting integration. The city of Turku was the coordinator, coming together with their partners from Sweden, Stockholm's SALAR and SALA from Malmö as well as the Norden Association. Rather unusual, he noted, was the final partner, namely the Thomas More University College from Belgium which helped them to create and study new ways of guidance for migrants and refugees. He pointed out that these were just the partners with funding from the project. The knowledge platform in total counted some sixty members, and if one included all organisations in some way associated with the platform, the number would skyrocket to well over 100. As such, Mr Mäkelä said, this provided a good basis for the creation of a new flagship.

Although a comparatively long time ago, he noted the events of 2017, with a kick-off seminar in Stockholm in June and a number of workshops which had led into the transnational cooperation events of 2018, starting with a March conference on the integration of newly arrived migrants and refugees in Rostock, Germany, under the heading "Sharing the European Dream". The goal was to create



a vision for immigration in 2038 in the Baltic Sea region. The responsibility on the side of Mr Mäkelä's team covered eight workshops on labour market integration along with study visits, training sessions on entrepreneurship and appreciative inquiries as well as the collection and dissemination of good practices through the knowledge platform on their website. Furthermore, they worked on widening the national and Baltic Sea region networks.

In these two years of operations, Mr Mäkelä noted that they had learned a number of lessons. First of these was that transnational cooperation truly worked and created added value. For example, the city of Turku had learned much about the mentoring process in Hamburg which had by now been implemented in the Finnish city. Other best practices adopted from Baltic Sea countries included the integration knowledge centre that would be launched in Turku in 2019.

Another lesson was that new working models were required. As an example, he noted their work on "study visits 2.0", based on the idea that there had to be a better follow-up to the visit, elaborating what added value had been generated for each organisation. During the study visits themselves, there should also be more input gathering for the Baltic Sea region.

Furthermore, Mr Mäkelä pointed out that the cooperation both on the Baltic Sea and the European level should be mainstream work, to get the best out of the cooperation as well as the available resources. With the new flagship emerging, he expected there to be some very interesting discussions and work ahead.

Presentation by Mr Niklas Muhlack, AWO regional association Schleswig-Holstein, Integration Center Kiel, on the project “Landgewinn” – empowerment of migrants in rural areas through social and democratic participation”

http://www.bspc.net/?attachment_id=8399

Mr Niklas Muhlack, “Arbeiterwohlfahrt (= a national workers’ welfare association) (AWO) Schleswig-Holstein”, presented the project “Landgewinn” – empowerment of migrants in rural areas through social and democratic participation”. Specifically, their task was empowering migrants in rural areas through social and democratic participation. The programme had been launched in October 2017, scheduled to last until the end of 2019. Funding had been provided by the federal programme “Demokratie leben!” (“Living Democracy!”) and the ministry of the interior of Schleswig-Holstein. With their core idea of empowering migrants to participate socially and politically, their goal was not merely to provide shelter and food for new arrivals but also to give them the opportunity to have their voices heard. They approached this through a political mentoring programme between migrants (“mentees”) as well as local and regional politicians (“mentors”).

He further noted that “Landgewinn” had succeeded another AWO programme which had suffered from the problem that the countryside had always been a blind spot. Because the challenges in rural areas differed from urban areas, the former had been selected as the



focal point. In “Landgewinn”, each mentoring scheme lasted four months per region. The project had begun in the north of Schleswig-Holstein, moving gradually further south. The idea was that there were one or two individual meetings between the mentee and the mentor each month. Here, the mentee might accompany the mentor to a political party’s conference or to a local or regional parliament. This would provide the mentee with an idea of how politics worked and what politicians in Germany were doing, even on the local level. In addition, mentees attended six-day-long workshops on various political topics, for example on human rights, federalism or the different roles played by the political institutions in Germany. The project also offered an educational trip to Berlin per invitation of a member of the federal parliament, providing a rounded picture of the entire political scheme of Germany by visiting the parliament and several ministries.

The main goals of the project were that migrants would acquire basic knowledge about politics in Germany and get to know the structure of civil society. Moreover, they would obtain an overview about existing associations, organisations and parties, entering into contact with these institutions. The project was aiming to empower the migrants to build personal networks for their own social and political participation. Mr Muhlack considered the latter to be a very important aspect. He noted that some of the mentees had become politically active after their time in the project. The speaker pointed out that the original implementation in the first two regions had worked as a “kick-starter” for political participation. Currently, the project was talking to the district administration on how to use the structure created by “Landgewinn” and turn this into a permanent institution. This could be handled by founding clubs or other structures that had been non-existent in the rural area so far.

Presentation by Ms Vanessa Perbos, AWO regional association Schleswig-Holstein, Integration Center Kiel, on the project “Hayati” (Arabic: my life) – Integration of female migrants in the labour market, on “Knowledge platform – integration of newly arrived refugees”

Ms Vanessa Perbos, AWO regional association Schleswig-Holstein, Integration Center Kiel, informed the Working Group on the project “Hayati” (Arabic: my life) – Integration of female migrants in the labour market. This project had been designed for refugee women in Kiel who were unable to take German language courses because they had to take care of their young children at home, not least because of the paucity of appropriate child care facilities in

Kiel. “Hayati” had been conceived to give these women the space to learn and at the same time provide child care for their children.

The project had run from November 2017 to May 2018 and had been funded by the Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of Economics, Labour, Transport and Technology as well as the Job Centre of Kiel. The target group had been refugee women and their children under the age of six, without alternative child care options. 26 women and 19 children had been involved in the project, forming a highly diverse group, considering the country of origin, the time spent in Germany or the educational background. The project had been staffed with two project coordinators, two interpreters and four child carers. The time frame had been Mondays to Fridays, from 09:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m., with an additional one-hour meeting per month with the coordinators.

“Hayati” had primarily aimed to empower refugee women, to allow them to integrate into society and to prepare them for their academic or professional future – an important goal for the ministry – as well as for a German integration course. The project’s structure was based on the one hand on daily child care.

In the project, the first challenge had been building trust within the group. This, Ms Perbos stressed, did not simply refer to the women on the one side and the staff on the other but also between the



women themselves. After that, the next challenge had been how the women understood their roles in the family and in society. Yet another challenge had been posed by the mental health of the women. Some of them had seen horrific things on the way to Germany, had suffered through very difficult living conditions or had lost members of their family back in Syria or Afghanistan.

Ms Perbos went on to describe the successes of the project: Child-care was one of these as it had enabled the women to have time for themselves. The children themselves had also benefited, showing quick development in their motor skills. All participants also benefited from strong linguistic development. It had been gratifying for the staff members to witness the strong bond between the women that had formed during the project and was still in existence at this time. Moreover, the women had been empowered. They had also developed a better understanding of the system, with some of them forming concrete aspirations for their professional lives. Last but not least, the high participation rate of the women in the integration course was also considered a great success. Six months after the completion of the project, a large portion of the women were still attending that course on a daily basis.

Presentation by Mr Aljoscha Tischkau, Turkish Community in Schleswig-Holstein, on the project “Diss-kriminierung – empowerment of young participants against discrimination”

http://www.bspc.net/?attachment_id=8400

Mr Aljoscha Tischkau, Turkish Community in Schleswig-Holstein, presented the project “Diss-kriminierung – empowerment of young participants against discrimination”. In the project’s title, “Diss” stood for diversity, inclusion and self-confidence as well as self-empowerment. The project was targeting youths with migrational backgrounds from various origins that were often facing problems. Mr Tischkau described the maxims and goals of the project as empowerment as well as life-world orientation. The speaker presented a short video featuring various modern music elements, and he stressed that the entire video from start to finish, including the presented songs, had been created in the project’s workshops.

Their work, Mr Tischkau said, consisted of workshops and mini projects as both medium and method.

The programme was funded by “Demokratie Leben” and the Turkish Community.

A series of workshops had been started that would run until February 2019, with different topics about power structure, execution approaches, exchanges of experiences, legal frameworks of conditions, development of options for action and empowerment. In the second phase, begun in April 2018, multiplier training had been started so they could launch their own mini projects which were to be run from February 2019 to the end of that year. Also, part of this phase had been “Beats in the Park”, a youth festival where they could present their own topics. Some two thousand people had attended the event. The series of workshops had been set at twelve events.

The idea of the project had been to begin with state-wide workshops, leading into the multiplier training, all to strengthen the overall goals of providing support and guidance on the issue of discrimination among young people and to empower them. A primary motto here was “Each one, teach one”, meaning that you could give back what you deserve from society. Mr Tischkau stated that the project was aiming at strengthening youths in their experiences and their subjectivity while treating each other with appreciation and esteem. Thus, exclusionary experiences were recognized and perceived.

Next, Mr Tischkau spoke about empowerment which he described as taking control of your own life at the individual level and determining your own identity. Here, he pointed out that they were considering empowerment at three levels: the personal, group and social levels. Bringing these topics and people together was very important for the empowerment process. Another aspect was teaching to give something back to society. He stressed that all these three levels had to be addressed, also in parliamentary debate.

Empowerment was a bottom-up process facing numerous challenges.

Mr Tischkau also explained that the group conducted media work – including studio and video production –, allowing the participating youths to bring their work to the public. Mini projects were being conducted at schools or youth centres.

5.2 The BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration held its fifth meeting in the plenary hall of the State Duma of Kaliningrad on 29 March. Delegations from Åland, Finland, Germany, Hamburg, Latvia, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Nordic Council, Poland, Russia and Sweden participated in the meeting. Chaired by Ms Carola Veit, Vice-Chair of the Working Group and President of the Hamburg State Parliament the Working Group discussed the below listed expert presentations on the Russian perspective on migration and integration, current aspects of the issue from the perspective of the CBSS as well as upcoming activities and meetings.

Welcome speeches were given by Ms Marina Orgeeva, Chairperson of the Kaliningrad Regional Duma, and by Ms Valentina Pivnenko, Head of the Delegation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation to the BSPC.

Marina Orgeeva pointed out that migration played an important role in Kaliningrad. Most migrants had come from other parts of Russia such as Siberia or the Russian Far East. Because of the



vibrant economy of the region, an influx of labour was in demand. The speaker stressed that new businesses in the region demanded more people. For this reason, she concluded, migration was welcomed in Kaliningrad.

Valentina Pivnenko expressed her strong opinion that issues concerning migration must be solved together and that cooperation with the rest of Europe in these matters was essential. She also described how the Kaliningrad region was trying to attract more people to come there. One concrete way was that migrants from the Russian Far East were given one hectare of farming land if they decided to settle down in the Kaliningrad region. At the same time, she stressed, it was important to fight illegal immigration into the country.

Carola Veit stressed that the meeting in Kaliningrad was fulfilling a requirement that the working group set itself from the outset: The WG wanted to have an overall picture of the issue of the working group from the entire Baltic Sea region and incorporate the situation in all states and regions of the members into its discussions and recommendations. That is why the WG had conducted surveys together. That also meant that the WG was visiting the individual countries and regions, with local experts reporting on the respective situation. In this way, the WG achieved a broader information base than was otherwise available in other formations. The questions related to the topic of the working group were often discussed very emotionally and controversially in all countries. She explained that these issues were influencing the situation not only in these nations but also in neighbouring countries and beyond, touching on fundamental values and moral concepts. Carola Veit referred additionally to the United Nations Migration Compact, the Progress report on the implementation of the European Agenda on Migration as well as the Russian Action Plan on Migration.

Expert Presentations

Presentation by Kirill Adzinov, Head of the Department for the organisation of visa work at the Main Department for Migration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia

Kirill Adzinov stated that another way of making migration easier was the abolition of visa requirements. He expressed his conviction that in the near future it would be possible to issue an electronic visa through a web-based system. The aim of modern visa systems was to facilitate visits to Kaliningrad for not least the large groups of visitors from Poland and Finland. Mr Adzinov informed his audience that Russia had introduced a new law on asylum in 1993. Since then, there had been many dramatic changes in and around Russia. The conflict in Ukraine had led to 271,000 asylum seekers coming to Russia in 2014. Three years later, there were only some 9,000 Ukrainians seeking asylum in Russia. Around 500 of those persons granted asylum in Russia had ended up in Kaliningrad. These were mostly Ukrainians, but also some Afghans.

Presentation by Ms Victoria Ledeneva, Head of the Department for methodological support of social and cultural adaptation and integration of foreign citizens at the Federal Agency for Nationalities of Russia

<https://www.bspc.net/ledeneva/>

Victoria Ledeneva explained that many people were coming to Kaliningrad to work for a limited amount of time before returning to their country of origin. For those who decided to stay, a state policy measuring integration should be applied. The goal was to avoid all possible tensions between the migrants and the Russian society. In that regard, the speaker noted that in Kaliningrad, and in Russia as a whole, there was a very strong emphasis on social adaptation and integration, not least on a regional or local level. It was a priority that newly arrived migrants were introduced to Russian customs, laws and culture as well as to the Russian language. Thus, the exclusion and segregation, as well as the creation of ethnic enclaves, were avoided. Migrant adaptation was described by the expert as a complex process where the migrant had to adapt not only to a new geographical environment but also to a new set of social, political, cultural and economic realities. In order to succeed with this task, a



number of agencies and local society cooperated with each other. In various Russian regions, newly arrived migrants were offered help by migration centres where fingerprint registration was being performed as well as a medical examination, registration for health insurance policy, translation of documents and testing of language skills and knowledge of Russian history. There were also call centres for migrants, information portals online in different languages and a sort of “Sunday school” for migrants.

Victoria Ledeneva responded to a number of questions and comments, especially from Prof Jānis Vucāns and Maria Tolppanen.

Because of the mentioned measures, ethnic enclaves were not a great problem in Russia, according to Ms Ledeneva. Some 80 per cent of all the migration labour came from Uzbekistan and they had all been thoroughly checked before entering into Russia.

She concluded by pointing out that currently, residence permits were issued for a period of five years. That, however, was soon to be changed. Late in the previous year, a new concept for migration in the Russian Federation had been adopted for the years 2019-2025. One of the new policies was that residence permits could be issued for an unlimited period of time.

Presentation by Mr Victor Musikhin, Director, private institution for additional education, “Practices of the Center for Assistance to Migrants on organized recruitment and involvement of foreign citizens for temporary employment in the Kaliningrad region, their social adaptation and integration”.

<https://www.bspc.net/центр-помощи-мигрантам/>

Victor Musikhin informed the Standing Committee about the activities of private companies facilitating the migration of workers to the Kaliningrad region. The companies, including the one he represented acted as a sort of intermediary, provided additional education and attracted migrant workers. He mentioned that there were other similar organisations in other parts of Russia, but he believed that his was among the better organized ones. Mr Musikhin explained that every year, around 2,000 migrants were seeking his organisation’s help. They might come from neighbouring countries such as Poland or Lithuania, or from places like Germany, Italy or China. The vast majority, however, was from Uzbekistan. There was even a direct flight service between Kaliningrad and Uzbekistan. Typically, a company in Kaliningrad would contact the organisation with a request for what kind of employee they were looking for. The organisation would then search for a suitable employee (proof of asked for skills and a clean criminal record were demanded) and would send the request to the Office of Labour Migration. After that, interviews would be carried out over Skype. If the interview would turn out satisfactory, an invitation would be extended, and the company would meet the migrant at the airport, helping him or her with all the paper work and could even provide a low-interest loan to get settled before the first salary.

Concluding his presentation, Mr Musikhin stressed that even though it all sounded fairly smooth, there was still too much bureaucracy surrounding the whole process.

In response to questions from Victoria Ledeneva, Prof Jānis Vucāns and Bodo Bahr, Victor Musikhin pointed out that it would be much easier if there were only one state agency dealing with these questions instead of several. A more standardized process would run faster and smoother.

Presentation by Ms Vladlena Avdeeva, Project Manager at the NGO Stellit in St Petersburg

https://www.bspc.net/children-at-high-risk-of-humantrafficking_participation-in-the-decision-making-process/

Vladlena Avdeeva emphasised that unlike some other countries around the Baltic Sea, there were few unaccompanied minors in Russia. One reason for that was that Russian immigration always demanded a valid passport or ID to cross their borders.

Although the numbers of unaccompanied minors were relatively low in Russia, that did not mean that there was no such problem. Ms Avdeeva described her organisation's work dealing with children at high risk of human trafficking. She pointed out that according to UNICEF, about 28 percent of the victims of trafficking worldwide were children. In 2016, about 10 million children had been victims of trafficking. The real number was likely even higher as many cases had never been detected or reported. Stellit had done research on 113 children from Russia, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan living in shelters in St Petersburg. According to results of their consultations with children, one of the most important characteristics of providing assistance for children was taking their opinions into account and informing them about the situation. The speaker noted that the components of the "ideal" shelter for children included giving them the opportunity to develop everyday skills and to have private space as well as providing opportunities for creative activities aimed at self-realization, sports and education. She summed up her speech by stating that consultations with children as "experts" could be used in developing preventative programs and recommendations for professionals involved in the identification and rehabilitation of children who had suffered from abuse, exploitation and human trafficking.

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

<https://www.bspc.net/bspc-on-migration-and-integration/>

Bernd Hemingway emphasised in his presentation that migration was growing in the Baltic region and that it was now the largest component of demographic change. Member states were still struggling with the large influx of asylum seekers in 2015. At the same time, other countries in the Baltic region were facing the opposite problem – that of high emigration. He stated that in 2015, there

had been around 10 million Russians living abroad while in that same year, Russia had hosted over 11.6 million migrants. Similar trends could be seen in Poland and the Baltic states. Mr Hemingway warned that these countries were running the risk of suffering from a brain drain.

He pointed out three fundamental factors for successful integration: labour and the possibility to provide for your own means of living, language skills and, thirdly, education and health care. One could also add a fourth factor: a welcoming culture in the host society.

Mr Hemingway also stressed that demography played an important role. While not the only answer to the problems posed by an ageing population and declining birth rates, migration certainly could make a difference. Fears that labour migration would result in higher unemployment among citizens in the host country were, in his opinion, exaggerated. Especially when highly skilled migrant workers were taken into account, the effect could be the contrary – their contribution could make the whole economy grow. The problem of recognizing foreign diplomas in many countries, though, still needed to be solved.

He emphasised that for those reasons, we should welcome migration but also make sure that the people coming to work in our countries were treated fairly and given the same fundamental social rights as everyone else. He noted Belgium as an example where care givers (a much-needed profession in our ageing societies) were provided with good working conditions.

Mr Hemingway mentioned that in order to have a successful influx, immigrants' access to health care for all was of utmost importance. That included health care being offered in different languages and in different cultural contexts. Another important task he mentioned was making sure that the children of immigrants succeeded in school. Today, far too many did not finish their education.

Lastly, he mentioned the important role of the media in this respect. Of course, the media were free to cover whatever they wanted, but they should be careful about which words they used when describing migration. There was a tremendous need to refrain from using discriminatory and xenophobic language.

5.3 The BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration held its sixth meeting together with the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum in the plenary hall of the Castle in Schwerin from 27 till 28 May 2019. Delegations from Åland, Baltic Assembly, Finland, Germany, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Norway, Poland, Russia, 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.

5.3.1 Working Group meeting, 27 May 2019

The Chairman of the Working Group, **Hans Wallmark**, reminded that the Working Group had conducted two surveys of the governments regarding its target issues and had received responses from most governments. Subsequently, the group had decided to commission a political analysis based on the responses and statements. A first version had been received in May, with a revised version following shortly thereafter incorporating comments and remarks by members of the Working Group.



Presentation by Ms Carola Veit on the results of the Statements and Answers of the Governments in the Baltic Sea Region to the surveys of the BSPC WG and the Policy Assessment and Recommendations of the Migration Institute of Finland on Baltic Sea Region Governments' Immigration and Integration Policy

<https://we.tl/t-VyXNJosad4>

Carola Veit, President of the State Parliament of Hamburg and BSPC WG Vice-Chair provided a presentation on the Results of the Statements and Answers of the Governments in the Baltic Sea Region to the surveys of the BSPC WG and the Policy Assessment and Recommendations of the Migration Institute of Finland on Baltic Sea Region Governments' Immigration and Integration Policy. She pointed out that this Working Group is a very good example of the collaborative approach to work at the BSPC. The speaker explained that the Working Group on Migration and Integration had been established at the 26th BSPC conference in September 2017, nearly two years earlier, in the light of the so-called irregular immigration of 2015 and 2016. In that respect, after listening to presentations on migrational history, the aim of the group had been to rather target the integration issue, looking for best practice examples. They had looked at several such examples at their meetings, with the last having been held at Kaliningrad in March. There, they had obtained a general overview as well as a number of details on the Russian migration experience and integration policy. This, she underlined, had been new territory for them. Ms Veit also thanked Ms Valentina Pivnenko for allowing them to take such a deep dive into the Russian migration policy which was a very educational experience.

The speaker noted that the Working Group had debated common questions to be included in the surveys which were sent to the respective governments by each delegation. That had been at the very beginning. Their goal was to learn from the best practice examples and develop proposals to improve cooperation regarding integration. Afterwards, they had prepared a second survey, specifying items of interest, and had decided to prepare a more expert-level assessment, to get a significantly more professional and in-depth analysis and interpretation of this data. They had received the this expert analysis of the responses of the Baltic Sea governments and administrations on integration policy from the Migration Institute in Turku, Finland.

For future work and discussion needs, Ms Veit offered a presentation consisting of the findings by the Migration Institute and the second questionnaire, thus giving an overview of the assignment so far.

The first catalogue of questions had been answered by 10 countries and 4 regions, the second had received replies from 10 countries and 3 regions. In the second round, the Working Group had aimed at comparing different costs of accommodation, numbers of applicants and measurements taken by the governments to better integrate asylum-seekers. The replies to the second round had been discussed at the Working Group meeting in Copenhagen in the previous year.

It had become apparent that that a comparison of data was not easy as there was no common database.

Ms Veit presented the topics of the questionnaire, pointing out that the Migration Institute had generated main subjects such as common settlements or common practices and enhanced discussion on finding more common ground in integration policy among BSPC governments.

Addressing the surveys themselves, she noted that they had had to assume that the numbers would strongly diverge. Some demographic comparisons had been possible, though. The percentage of people with or without migrational background had been one of the questions. On the national level for example, the highest level of inhabitant migration had been shown by Latvia and Estonia at 40 per cent, followed by Sweden and Germany, Norway and Denmark. On the regional level, it was interesting to know that in Åland and Hamburg, one third of all inhabitants had a migrational background. Regarding the age range of people with migrational background, the largest group was between 20 and 24 years old, with the exception of Lithuania where the dominant age range was between 51 and 64 years of age. Each nation around the Baltic Sea had its own set of immigration and integration policies.

Another question in the survey had concerned the requirements for asylum, dual citizenship and work permits. Advisory services for migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees had been differentiated by state and beneficiary. For example, Lithuania offered a one-stop shop integration programme, unlike most other countries. With respect to languages, most regions and countries were offering language courses, while vocational training was more rarely on offer. They had also looked at the topic of family reunification. That had been the field where the analysis of the Institute had taken the lead regarded detentions and involuntary evictions. They had received more numbers regarding evictions. Nonetheless, it had been difficult to compare these figures. Now, though, they had arrived at an overview of comparable figures, based on the numbers of asylum-seekers in the various years of concern. The highest numbers in

some countries, she pointed out, had been reached in the years 2015, with Germany for instance taking in more asylum-seekers than in 2016. Ms Veit also compared the numbers of asylum-seekers in Sweden and Germany, showing a very different development. Regarding voluntary returns, the numbers were highest in Germany, followed by Poland and Sweden. In terms of evictions, the numbers in Poland were significant, she said, noting the stark increase. Norway showed a decline of evictions from 2015 to 2017. For countries like Germany, Sweden, Estonia and Finland, the numbers of forced returns were first listed for 2015 and afterwards. In Norway and Poland, for instance, the number of forced returns had dropped after 2015.

Regarding minors, the questions to the survey showed that each country was trying its best to support the minors. The Working Group had discussed best practices in the regions and countries, not least at its latest meeting in Kaliningrad. In the survey, costs had been another topic which had proved difficult to derive an overview. Regarding accommodation, all countries and regions were united in the importance of volunteer work.

Ms Veit moved on to the suggestions and questions posed by the Migration Institute, such as enhancing and stimulating conversation among BSPC members. The politicians had to focus on which points they could work further. The Institute had suggested that the questions of the study should be improved, with emphasis on local differences as well as the diverging political goals. It had also provided questions and suggestions regarding asylum policy. Ms Veit noted that these might be discussed at the Working Group's next meeting, after proper preparation. The Institute had also elaborated questions on immigrant integration, specifically on the multifaceted character of immigration, working conditions, three-way integration and public action.

Ms Veit considered the future of the survey, that the overall goal should be discussed. The question was whether the convergence between the BSPC states and regions should be augmented or whether the focus should be put on finding best practice examples or similarities. Ms Veit called for a decision on which matter was more current, asylum seekers or immigrant integration. Regarding integration, a consensus had already formed. Putting this together with the analysis, the Migration Institute might be able to present the results at the BSPC's next conference or the Working Group's meeting.

During that meeting the **Working Group** also took note of the compilation of the governments' statements and responses to the

demands concerning migration and integration of the 27th resolution (See chapter 7 of this report).

The **Working Group** further agreed to hold the next meeting on 23 - 25 October in Hamburg, back-to-back with the European Forum on the Integration of Migrants and Refugees which will take place on 24-25 October 2019.

The **Working Group** also underlined to hold two more meetings in 2020. The first meeting in 2020 is planned for the end of January in Berlin, the second meeting at the beginning of April on Åland to forward the final results to the BSPP to the 29th BSPP in Vilnius.

The **Working Group** further on confirmed to publish a Second Interim Report.

5.3.2 Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum

During the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum – hosted by the State Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern - politicians and a number of experts made comprehensive contributions to the topic of migration and integration. Building on this, the young participants, who had been nominated by the member parliaments, discussed the topic intensively with the members of parliament and experts in several rounds of discussions, taking various aspects into account, and drew conclusions. The results will be presented by 2 representatives of the young participants during the annual conference in Oslo and will be included in the further discussions of the working group.

The main contents of the speeches and presentations are presented below:

Opening of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum

Schwerin, State Parliament, Plenary Hall, 28 May 2019

Chaired by Beate Schlupp, First Vice President of the State Parliament

Opening address by Ms Birgit Hesse, President of the Landtag Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

The Youth Forum was opened with the address by Ms **Birgit Hesse**, President of the State Parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. She began by addressing the moving times the parliament – and she personally – had gone through recently, after the tragic loss of her esteemed predecessor, their colleague and friend Sylvia Bretschneider. She assured her listeners that they would keep her in mind, adding that some had said their farewells to Ms Bretschneider at the state mourning ceremony, the first in the history of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, while others could express their grief in the book of condolence in the castle.

After only having been elected into office five days earlier, Ms Hesse already had the opportunity to open this important international meeting. She pointed out that it stood for two points dear to her heart: openness to the world and the involvement of young people.



These points were of the utmost importance for a society thinking about and for the future, indicating the value of the forum for a good and socially balanced development. She hoped that the involvement of the young delegates from the BSPC member regions would provide new perspectives and impulses. The dialogue between established politicians and the younger generation should be fruitful for both, perhaps especially with regard to the topic. She noted that “migration and integration” had also seemed predominant in the run-up to the European elections of the previous day which had led to a political reorientation of the continent. Ms Hesse was quite convinced that the results of these elections in the different countries would also play an important role in the discussions at the brink of this meeting. She added that she was a European and proud to be a European.

She was delighted to welcome the attendees to the castle, one of the most beautiful state parliament seats in Germany. Together with the ‘Residence Ensemble’, it was also on the German tentative list as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site. She went on to note that the plenary hall was a particular highlight of the castle. The heart of the political Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, it had been opened one and a half years earlier by Ms Bretschneider. Meeting there, Ms Hesse stressed, underlined the importance of the Working Group meeting, since the federal state was committed to promoting cross-border cooperation, especially in the Baltic Sea region. She also mentioned the beauty in general of her state, noting that it was on the top as a tourist destination in Germany.

Ms Hesse mentioned that, in her former political office as minister responsible for health policy, she had given a presentation at a BSPC Standing Committee meeting. There, she had focused on the challenges of medical care in rural regions – a topic that had been picked up by the annual BSPC conference in Rostock Warnemünde. The meeting had taken place in Stralsund nearly four years earlier, at the end of May 2015. Professor Jānis Vucāns, she remembered, had been both at that meeting and was present that day. The presentation had been an exceptional and gladly remembered experience for the speaker.

She concluded by wishing the attendees a successful meeting and fruitful debates, then yielded the floor to the first vice president of the Landtag Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Ms Beate Schlupp. Ms Schlupp, as Ms Hesse pointed out, was both a member of the Working Group and would serve as chairperson for the remainder of the opening section.

Opening address by Ms Beate Schlupp, Vice-President of the Landtag of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Ms **Beate Schlupp** welcomed the attendees in her capacity as a member of the Working Group on Migration and Integration of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. Ms Schlupp further noted that the Working Group was special in being given three rather than two years of service while the present meeting was special because it was combined with the Youth Forum. This, she went on, underlined the importance of the topic of migration and integration which indeed was a highly relevant political issue that had played a significant role in the discussions around the European elections. The speaker also expressed her gratitude for the high level of participation from the partner parliaments for the sixth working group meeting and the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum.

Ms Schlupp stated that the focus of the entire session would be on the integration of migrants – both in the labour market and in schools and training companies. There would be high-profile expert presentations. All in all, she clarified that the goal was about working out political recommendations for the BSPC resolution.

As for the agenda, Ms Schlupp mentioned that Dr Stefan Rudolph, the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Secretary of State from the Ministry of Economics, Employment and Health, would provide a first overview about the situation in that federal state with a specific focus on the economy. Afterwards the Commissioner on Integration of the Government Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Ms Dagmar Kase-litz, would focus on the issue of migration and integration from more societal perspective. At that point, Ms Schlupp would hand the chair over to Mr Hans Wallmark, chairman of the Working Group, who would welcome representatives from the Federal Employment Agency, the Schwerin Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

She also joined Ms Hesse in hoping that the attendees would enjoy the castle and its surrounding, welcoming the efforts to establish it as an UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site. In particular, she highlighted persons such as Prof Vucāns who had first seen the castle before the fall of the Iron Curtain and could now see the changes made to it.

Ms Schlupp extended a very warm welcome to the participants of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Youth Forum. She urged them to actively participate and to bring in their wishes and ideas. After all, migration and integration were societal issues strongly connected to the future. That also meant that sustainable solutions had to be found.

The speaker also noted that this was the third instalment of the Youth Forum, after two having been held in Kiel in 2017 and 2015, and she hoped that there would be more such forums, establishing a tradition.

She also stated how painful it was for her to hold this meeting without the late Ms Bretschneider and noted that the book of condolence was still open.

Opening address by Mr Hans Wallmark, Member of the Swedish parliament, chairman of the BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration

Mr **Hans Wallmark** began by thanking the president and vice-president of the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern State Parliament for their introductions. He then noted that the BSPC in total was still deeply marked by the loss of their long-time colleague, Ms Sylvia Bretschneider. She had been extraordinarily involved in the Baltic Sea cooperation, in particular in the work of the BSPC. With her, they had lost one of the long-standing pillars of international parliamentary cooperation in the Baltic Sea region and a very good friend. Ms Bretschneider had been president of the BSPC from 2014 – 2015, a member of the Standing and Drafting Committee since 2002. From that time on, she had been on the BSPC observer team. She had chaired the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism and then took on the duty as rapporteur on that topic. She had been the head of the delegations of her parliament. Moreover, she had represented the BSPC at numerous events throughout the Baltic Sea region: the Northern Dimension, the Conference of Presidents of Parliaments of Europe in Oslo and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Northern Dimension in Reykjavik. She had fought with passion for the BSPC's goals and positions, for a better environment, for the protection of the Baltic Sea and again and again for the issue of migration. Not only had she been intensely involved in this work, aside from her duties as President of the Landtag, she had taken part in many events, but she also made the capacities of her administration and parliament available for this work.

It was very painful that she was no longer with them that day and that her fervent wish to be present at this event had not been fulfilled. The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference would always remember her with gratitude. He noted that Ms Veit had already honoured Ms Bretschneider and her commitment during the state mourning in Neubrandenburg and the previous Monday at the assembly of parliamentary presidents.



Mr Wallmark said that they had the opportunity to honour Ms Bretschneider's memory in her very own plenary hall and asked everyone to rise for a joint moment of silence.

On the part of the BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration, he also extended his welcome to the attendees. As a member of the Swedish parliament, he noted that he was particularly pleased that this meeting and forum were being held in Schwerin, in this castle. Sweden and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern had historically been closely connected for centuries. One of the dukes of Mecklenburg, for example, had been King Albrecht of Sweden 650 years earlier. He had also been the founder of one of the strongest Swedish symbols, the three golden crowns. Every year, the neighbouring town of Wismar provided a reminder of this connection with its Swedish festival. In earlier centuries, the Baltic Sea region had often been marred by conflicts and up to some 30 years ago by the Cold War. That day, they were meeting in a situation of close and friendly cooperation, with the benefit of the entire Baltic Sea region being present. Even though the overall situation had become tense in recent years, parliaments had managed to work together and cooperate throughout. The BSPC had managed to work together and cooperate throughout. The BSPC with its 22 member parliaments and 5 parliamentary organisations had stood since 1991 as a platform for cooperation, commitment and confidence to political dialogue between parliaments, governments and all civil

societies in the Baltic Sea region. Its goal was to ensure peaceful and close neighbourliness in close cooperation based on democracy, the rule of law, human rights and equal opportunities for all. To this end, the BSPC wanted to pursue all the possibilities of parliament, of governmental or social exchange for democratic dialogue among neighbours. Achieving and safeguarding peace and overcoming conflict through dialogue was one of the more fundamental concerns. That was why it was so crucial for the BSPC to engage with the topic of refugees, integration and migration. That was why they had been discussing this topic for years in the Standing Committee of the BSPC and established this Working Group in Hamburg two years earlier. That was why the BSPC had adopted recommendations in the previous year, unanimously calling for action in their resolution.

It was high time for young people from their member states were involved in this discussion process and to promote the decision-making in our parliaments. Recent electoral moments had also been electrified by discussions about migration and integration. In country after country, this had happened. So, there was a reason to approach this topic with great alacrity as the topic itself was very explosive. Finding common ground or the smallest common denominator could be difficult in itself. That was why the issue had to be approached with more low-key, resolute voices. We had to listen to each other than to use short, sharp messages in 140 or 280 characters.

It was a well-known fact that they all had different positions on migration. Some of their number had been receiving immigrants for a considerable time while other countries had dealt with emigration rather than immigration. Mr Wallmark believed that their different historical experiences could serve as a strength, as they enabled them to discuss the problems from a multitude of different perspectives. By highlighting and discussing best practices, they could see that they all had something to learn. Sharing information and learning from each other was at the very heart of the Working Group. In essence, it all boiled down to intensifying the dialogue on migration and integration between the countries bordering the Baltic Sea and in our society, including the young generation.

Parliamentary youth forums had already been successfully run twice before in Kiel, in each case on the topic of the respective Working Group. In Mr Wallmark's view, this was an ideal opportunity for young people to discuss an issue that would continue to challenge everyone intensively in the future, despite all the calming of the current situation compared to the hustle and bustle of 2015. They would also have a lasting influence on society. The young people

and the parliamentarians would be discussing a topic that in some cases had determined the outcome of parliamentary elections. There was no better place to debate such an issue than in the plenary hall of a parliament and no better group of people to discuss this with than young people, the future decision-makers. Mr Wallmark said that the future was with them, inside a building marked by so much history. He pointed out that the parliamentarians wanted to listen to the young people, wanted to find further solutions together with them. What the two groups would be doing on that day and the next was a unique task – young people developing their ideas in connection with the discussions with members of parliament, bringing them into the decision-making process of 22 parliaments across the Baltic Sea which would pass those ideas on to 22 governments, to the Council of the Baltic Sea States and to other institutions. The parliamentarians wanted to pick up on the young people's suggestions.

The Standing Committee of the BSPC had planned that two of the participants attending this forum would present the entire forum's results during the BSPC's annual conference in Oslo in August 2019. The BSPC conference in Oslo would be on 25 – 27 August 2019, offering dialogue, debate, resolutions, friendship and a strong will to increase cooperation for a peaceful Baltic Sea.

Sometimes, Mr Wallmark mused, members of parliaments were subject to constraints they could not escape. His colleague, Pyry Niemi, and Mr Wallmark himself had to be in Stockholm the next day because they had to take part in a no-confidence vote which required them to cast their votes in person. However, the chairman assured the forum that they would deal very intensively with the young people's results. The results of the discussions with experts and with the representatives of the young generation would be closely scrutinized. The parliamentarians supported the young people as far as possible.

Mr Wallmark concluded his introduction quoting a message from Ms Sylvia Bretschneider to the first parliamentary youth forum of the BSPC several years earlier: 'We would not get anywhere without you. We want to listen to your experience, your appraisal and your opinions. We want to discuss them. It is going to be an exciting experience.'

Presentation by Dr Stefan Rudolph, Secretary of State in the Ministry for Economics, Employment and Health in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Dr **Stefan Rudolph** was delighted that they could jointly discuss the topic of migration and integration so as to be even more successful in the future. As the forum would deal intensively with the topic of integration, he wanted to use the opportunity to thank them for this – from the perspective of the state's economy. Engaging with such a topic, looking for solutions helped better position the entire Baltic Sea region economically. When dealing with the topic of migration and integration in the Baltic Sea area, that was not a banal undertaking but rather about the question of how to make the societies of the region fit for the future, if they would accept the competition with other regions in the world. That was why here in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, also from the point of view of the state's economy, the question was not whether they had to deal with migration and integration, whether they had to integrate, but rather it was only about how to better integrate, how to better learn to better work together.

The speaker went on that he wanted to show the importance of the topic of migration and integration for Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, for the state's own economy, in three simple examples. He stressed that it was not about the immigrants doing something good for the ones already living in a place, but it was about the latter asking the former for help. That would lead to a good joint future, in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and in the entire Baltic Sea region.

The first example he mentioned concerned the aspect of the aging population. Statistically speaking, the girls born these days in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern might get to be 100 years old. That was excellent, but this raised the challenge of how to associate high age with comfort and well-being. Already today, in this federal state, they were facing the challenge of filling a nursing position – no matter if it's a trainee or regular position. That already took about 160 days to even fill this vacancy. Accordingly, there was concern about being able to fill such positions. But with the population growing older and older, it was known today that by 2020, in addition to those that would have to be replaced, another 2,917 nursing positions would have to be created in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. By 2030, yet another 1,430 positions would be required. If one claimed that they would advertise this among the extant population and then they would find these workers, Dr Rudolph pointed out that in 2018, there had been 880 young people leaving school that had applied for a vocational position. 880 individuals had wanted to learn a vocation. The economy in 2018, though, had not offered

880 positions but rather 10,810. This already highlighted the discrepancy between young people that were available for training and the number of people that were needed.

Looking at the entire Baltic Sea region, continuing to move into a stable future required an answer to this challenge. That was why the Youth Forum was so important. Migration and integration in the Baltic Sea region could not be valued highly enough. Dr Rudolph extended his gratitude to the attendees for thinking intensively about ways and options, about ideas to find solutions. Thus, they provided essential assistance to everyone, including, of course, themselves but also to the entire civil society.

The topic of migration and integration was as important in this country as in many other nations bordering on the Baltic Sea. In 2015/2016, when the great challenges of migration and integration had been palpable, he had been state secretary of building, and the question had been how to organise living space in an uncomplicated manner to master the situation. Dr Rudolph said that they had managed to do so. The entire state government had come together with many industrious helpers across the entire state. Thus, they knew how dear this topic was to the citizens of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. That was clearly evidenced by the people.

But primarily from the point of view of the economy, there was one decisive step in migration and integration, namely the opportunity to offer the people coming here the chance to get a job. It was not about just hailing them welcome and then just leaving them alone. They had to be integrated into the world of labour and society. This task of integration into the world of labour was a great challenge facing all of them.

He wondered why that was the case. To him, the reason was that the people who had arrived and who were still arriving symbolized the melting pot of the Earth. The most diverse ways of thinking, the most diverse cultures, the most different approaches to daily work – all of these had to be unified into a chain of decisions so as to find the best solution for the individual. That was why the State Ministry of Economy had undertaken something that Dr Rudolph presented with some pride: They had hired 22 employees who were devoted to dealing concretely with the institutions for immigrants, not from an administrative position but as personal contact partners who were offering practical help, going to the authorities and companies. These ‘job navigators’ as they were calling them were individually taking care of immigrants looking for a job or training position. More and more, they were gathering positive experience. By that time, in the past twelve months, they had been able to offer

employment to some 700 individuals from the main origin countries of asylum-seekers. These were excelling in their new positions. In many cases, he conceded, this was in rather simple occupations, but while working in these companies, they were being trained, thus increasing their career opportunities in these enterprises.

Regarding these specific qualification characteristics, he noted that his colleague Al-Khouri would provide further explanations.

In the task of integrating refugees into the labour market, the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern had already achieved good results, yet it remained true that Germany as a whole needed a foundation to lift all federal states from the experimenting state. That was why they required a system of immigration for qualified workers from other countries to gain access to the German labour market. Dr Rudolph expected that such a system would be implemented in this year.

He mentioned that he had to leave soon to go to Berlin where he would be dealing with the question whether migration and integration could focus solely on qualified labour or whether regulations had to be implemented for potential trainees from respective other countries. That day, in Berlin, they would be discussing a qualification standardisation.



Dr Rudolph reiterated how glad he was that the forum was taking on the topic of migration and integration. He had only touched on a small part of the entire topic. Much more had to be taken into account, to be planned. Again, he thanked the attendees for helping the governments in solving a fundamental topic, to be able to head into a more stable future.

Presentation by Ms Dagmar Kaselitz, Commissioner on Integration, associated with the Ministry of Social Affairs in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Ms **Dagmar Kaselitz** was happy to greet them in her capacity as Commissioner on Integration. That post had only existed since December 2016 and was associated with the Ministry of Social Affairs. In the minister's name, she relayed the latter's greetings and gratitude for the forum dealing with the topics of migration and integration. In her post, she was working with the commissioners on integration on the federal level as well as the state and communal level. She was contact person for all migrants and those who are working on integration either full-time or as volunteers. Ms Kaselitz noted that she was a member of the state's advisory board on integration.

To reduce barriers to integration, she was collaborating with colleagues from other ministries, the Centre for Political Education and many other social actors. She considered herself both an advisor as well as a bridge-builder between the numerous networks and administrations. The focus of her work, *inter alia*, was supporting volunteer work, the cooperation with migrants and the protection of refugees.

The speaker explained that she was active in the anti-discrimination work and was supporting the reduction of racism, anti-semitism and violence. She was promoting inter-cultural understanding, so that all people could live together, sensitive to each other's culture. Furthermore, she was also working to expand the intercultural opening of all social aspects. One of her goals was for the task of integration as a cross-section topic to be recognized at all levels and immigrants as well as the majority ethnic group in society to always be included.

In past years, the federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern had visibly become an immigration state. She pointed out that the numbers she would mention in her presentation had been extracted from the immigration monitoring of the federal states in Germany and the information from the Statistical Office of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Specifically, they had been raised in 2017.

In Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, among the 1.6 million inhabitants, there were 74,000 people without German citizenship. In 2012, that number had been 34,000. Within only five years, this means an increase of 2.1 to 4.6 per cent of the population of the state. Migrants were coming from 142 countries. These included 13,400 people from Syria but also 12,100 from Poland. In the years 2015 – 2017, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern took in 32,300 asylum seekers. Among those, in 2015, 23,000 people had arrived. By comparison, in 2017, there had been 3,200. In particular, taking in refugees had led in 2015 to overwhelming initiatives. There had been an impressive engagement by civil society and volunteers. Jointly assuming responsibility, politicians and administrations on the federal, state and communal levels had undertaken necessary decisions together, enabling a quick accommodation fit for human beings, medical care and social support for the new arrivals. Even today, state and communes coordinate their measures regarding integration, agreements between state governments and communal leading associations are continued. The government parties of CDU and SPD in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern had included topics of integration in their coalition agreements for the current legislative period.

The structures supported by the state regarding integration also encompassed the advisory board on integration. With one vote each, it included welfare societies, the employer association, the German association of unions, the integration special services, the refugee council, the service for German as a second language, the Muslim communities, the evangelical and catholic churches, the Jewish community, the association of cities and municipalities, the conference for communal commissioners on integration, the federal employment agency, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs and finally Ms Kaselitz herself as State Commissioner on Integration. Migranet, as the umbrella organisation of migrants, was represented with two votes in the advisory board on integration. Under the leadership of the advisory board on integration, the conception of the state integration measures was currently being continued. The board expected the conception to be passed to the state parliament after the summer break.

Ms Kaselitz said that those who demanded integration also had to promote integration. Integration required structures, consistent contact persons at all levels, meeting places and people filling those places with life. For that, guaranteed financing was necessary. The integration of people was a vital task especially now, which would require much more time. Also needed was long-lasting financial endowment. At this point, the federal level was involved with a flat integration allowance in the integration costs by states and municipalities. The state was passing on part of the federal money to cover the

inherent costs to the municipal counties and independent towns. This distribution was often the subject of hard debates by the parties. Since 2016, the places actually taking in refugees were receiving aid of 100 euros per year for each accepted refugee. Moreover, the state with its integration fund from 2016 – 2019 had contributed a total of four million euros to promote integration projects. For long-term integration to succeed and participation to increase, it was vital for the necessary support not to fail because finances might run low. It was important for them that the federal government continues to be involved in the financing of integration measures. For Ms Kaselitz, only this would allow the social cohesion to be guaranteed.

Important structures for the state-level integration had been organised by the federal government, such as integration courses, consulting for migrants, both for adults and minors. The state Mecklenburg-Vorpommern here was supporting such consulting services with further offices of its own. The project Integration by Qualification by the network Labour for Refugees was one such effort. Integration special services in three branches had been established in the state. Financial support continued to be provided by the state for language courses and psycho-social consulting. An interactive map had been developed as a welcome portal, listing all important contact points for refugees.

At the municipal level, the integration structures were very diverse, Ms Kaselitz pointed out. Numerous networks or round tables had grown up around the topic of integration. Four out of six counties and two independent towns were connected via federal education program coordinators. For refugees who had been accepted and granted safe shelter, so-called integration navigators were available for the first two years. Nonetheless, the speaker conceded that some counties no longer offered such navigator services while navigators had become full-time employees in other districts. Five out of six counties employed commissioners on integration or integration coordinators. The same applied for the two independent towns. Only three further places offered full-time integration officers. All extant integration officers, the migrant organisations, the refugee council and soon the state sports association were forming the working group on migration in the county association.

The Ministry of Social Affairs regularly invited the municipal commissioners on integration. Organised by the Ministry of the Interior, there were follow-up conversations with all relevant ministries for the municipal commissioners and in particular for the refugee council and representatives of churches and welfare societies.

Ms Kaselitz stressed that this enumeration of services regarding integration in no way should be seen as complete. There were further initiatives, such as by the Ministry of Education, or in the areas of schools and universities or promoting projects. Other such initiatives were being promoted by the Ministry of Economy as well as by the job centres. She pointed out the state-wide organisation of the Intercultural Weeks, the Week Against Racism, the Day of the Refugee, the Development Policy Days and other events which increasingly refer to topics of migration and refugees. Native people as well as migrants were taking part together in such events.

The speaker added her insight into the integration of children and teenagers. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, behind Saxony and Brandenburg, had the third-highest proportion of under-18-year-olds with a migrational background at 28.6 per cent of the population. The share of the under-18-year-olds with a migrational background in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern had risen from 2015 to 2017 saw the greatest rise compared with all other federal states. This led to particular challenges regarding childcare institutions, school enrolments from the first day, attending vocational preparation classes and subsequent vocational training. Especially clubs and associations active in child and youth work, such as cultural and sports societies, were active for these age groups.

At the Conference of Integration Ministers in April 2019, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern had addressed the participation of young migrants in the educational area and introduced an application to enable children and youths from third-party countries with resident permits to take part in club journeys to other countries. Here, an agreement on the EU level is required, similar to the one already made for school journeys. This initiative was supported by all 16 German federal states.

Cohesion in society had to be lived and filled with meaning. For Ms Kaselitz, migrant organisations were important partners. In Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, more than 50 clubs of migrants had come together under the umbrella organisation Migranet e.V. At their thirteenth annual conference this year, they had celebrated their tenth anniversary. The speaker considered it a great benefit to have an interest group of migrants in the federal state, with such a wide variety of countries of origin as well as languages, cultures and religions. They had become an indispensable partner for many actors in the state. The state government appreciated them deeply and that they were co-operating so well. With their great competence and personal experience, she considered migrants irreplaceable partners in questions of integration. They were politically active and, among others, brought their resolutions to public awareness. In this year, resolutions were

passed on the following topics: a call to vote in the municipal and European elections, connected to the demand for municipal voting rights for everyone living and working in the state; a reinforced support for language teaching in child care institutions and schools as well as a call for individual access by children and youths with migrational background to all educational levels. The representatives of migrant organisations had expressed their opposition to the planned detention prior to deportation in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. They had demanded, as part of the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, that women be protected from violence, no matter their resident status. There had been comprehensive calls for equal rights for migrants but also for lesbians, homosexuals, transsexuals and intersexuals – groups that were often the target of discrimination. Migranet had actively participated in the foundation of the umbrella organisation of migrant organisations for eastern Germany.

She further noted that there was also cooperation with the umbrella organisation of female migrants. As Commissioner on Integration, Ms Kaselitz had been preparing since the previous year with active partners the expert conference on integration. In 2019, it would be held in November on the topic of the contribution by migrant organisations and religious communities for coexistence in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. This was how she honoured the great commitment by migrants and the partially already ongoing inter-religious dialogue in the state.

Nonetheless, in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, high social engagement and volunteer work were sometimes opposed by xenophobia, right-wing populism and racial discrimination. People who still had not found their place in German society, she noted, were less open for a tolerant coexistence with people with a migrational background. The opportunity to forge contacts with foreign-born people in one's personal environment was often low in as sparsely populated a state as Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Diversity, the speaker said, could not be experienced as daily reality in many regions. The tight focus on media reporting – which she viewed as not always responsible – did not contribute to the improvement of political dialogue. So, there were indeed state-specific and eastern German points of view. The panel of eastern German commissioners on integration was therefore a vital tool. Ms Kaselitz noted that the panel regularly met to discuss specific topics.

The success of integration was of immense importance for the future of society and the country. The speaker addressed the young participants of the forum, calling on them to commit to unified and solidary action of the countries represented at this event and all European nations. Responsibility had to transcend borders.

Meeting Part I: Vocational/occupational integration of migrants, 27 May 2019

Schwerin, State Parliament, Plenary Hall, 28 May 2019

Chaired by Hans Wallmark, Chairman of the WG

This part of the event featured a series of expert presentations on the subject vocational/occupational integration of migrants as well as a presentation on the involvement of young people in the work of the Council of the Baltic Sea States:

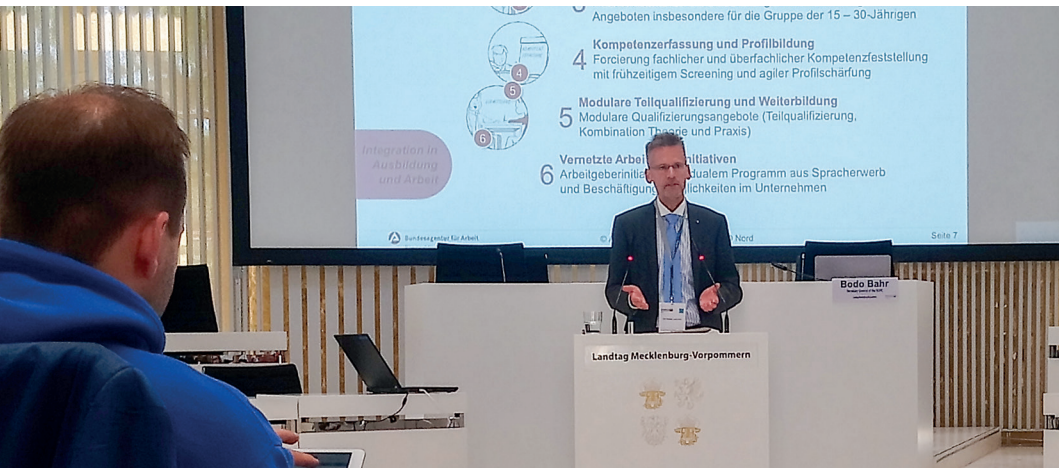
Presentation by Mr Thomas Letixerant, Managing Operational Director of the Regional Directorate North of the Federal Employment Agency

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Thomas Letixerant began by clarifying his task as taking a particular look at the labour market and vocational training situation of refugees in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. He said that in April 2019, unemployment in general in the state had been as low as never before since reunification. For the first time in an April, the state had less than 60,000 unemployed persons, a reduction from the previous year by 9 per cent. Unemployment among migrants had also dropped significantly on a year-by-year basis, by 8.2 per cent. Among refugees, the number of unemployed individuals had gone down by 390.

At the same time, the number of employed persons had risen in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, to a record level. The same could be said for the demand for workers. Enterprises in the state had a labour demand that was equally higher than ever before. Developments in the labour market for refugees, he stressed, had to be seen in light of the overall very positive situation on the labour market. So, it was a good framework for the situation affecting refugees.

The number of unemployed refugees had varied in the past year, currently at 3,040. At the end of the preceding year though, it had been as high as 3,610 individuals. In other words, Mr Letixerant said, there had been a continuous decline of the number of unemployed people. At the same time, though, the number of refugees moving from unemployment into the first labour market were increasing steadily month by month. This was happening in larger numbers than had been the case in the preceding two years.



He noted that this was a very nice situation, although it was of interest which sectors could absorb refugees – i.e. where refugees could find occupation. To some degree, this was similar to the overall picture of insurable employment in the state. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern was a tourist destination. Accordingly, the hospitality sector offered most opportunities. As such, the highest number of jobs taken up by refugees were in this sector, with more than a quarter of refugees working in hospitality – much like a good share of the overall working population.

Looking more closely at the sociodemographic characteristics, Mr Letixerant explained what the refugees had to offer. Trying to reduce it to the most simple, he attempted to describe the ‘typical’ refugee – although he immediately cautioned that this could only be done in a statistical approach. Such a refugee was male, rather young and had not completed full vocational training – going by German standards. This in turn posed a huge challenge. While there had never been so high a demand for labour as at the moment, the problem was that companies required skilled workers. Very few job postings were made for unskilled labour. So, this was the reverse proportion in demand as the refugees were offering. Very little formal training was available, yet the enterprises needed people with such formal training. This, he said, was one of the reasons for the mismatch in the German labour market. This meant that the – considerable – task was to raise the vocational level of the refugees, allowing them to take on skilled labour positions.

Looking at the market for vocational training of refugees – by German standards -, there had been 458 refugees looking for a training position in the preceding year. In a little more than a third of the cases, the agency managed to place the refugees through the

German dual training system. He conceded that this was not a perfect situation and stressed that the agency was continuing to work with these people who had yet to find a training position. There were quite different measures to prepare people for vocational training; these were intended to allow the individuals still looking to actually find placement in the upcoming year. This was the clear goal for the agency since the most important precondition for entering the German labour market was completed vocational training. The risk of unemployment was more than five times higher for people without such completed training.

After presenting these figures, Mr Letixerant moved on to describe some of the experience that the employment agency had gathered regarding the success factors for integration into the labour or vocational training market. He underlined that he was only considering this aspect since it was an important part of the overall, further-ranging integration into society.

From the agency's point of view, it was vital to inform the refugees early on about the value of jobs and vocational training in Germany. In the countries of origin, there was little knowledge about the specifics of the German labour market or non-existent. The particularities of the so-called dual vocational training had to be explained during the consultations at the agency. Acquiring the German language continued to be a significant obstacle to integration in work and training. Offers were required which would allow the individuals to put what they had learned in the morning into practice in the afternoon, or a similar arrangement. What mattered was that the lessons could immediately be applied. In working life, the company itself was the best environment where the recently acquired knowledge could be reinforced.

More than 70 per cent of refugees, though, already had had working experience in their countries of origin. By saying that they had not completed their vocational training, this was only correct when applying the German standard. Nonetheless, the refugees had already worked; some of them might have certificates proving specific skills. Yet most of the time, they did not have the certificates available as they had remained in the home country. So, it was up to the employment agency to bring such skills to the forefront. These competencies had to be made usable, but the agency equally had to determine what was necessary to provide a goal-driven further qualification measure for these people. What was needed were qualification offers which ideally supplemented the training-on-the-job, up to providing formal qualifications which could be implemented after starting in a job.

Among the tools available to the employment agencies, there was a wide variety of measures. Mr Letixerant mentioned traineeships but also the option of the worker being granted a leave of absence from his post to complete a training course, with the agency offering compensation for the loss of wages. It also offered courses of their own, with 100 % of the costs being covered. This wide-ranging positioning applied not only to vocational training but also to job positions.

Furthermore, he noted an offer called 'My Skills' with which skills acquired through vocational training could be made visible. The offer consisted of a PC-based test. Mr Letixerant added that he had taken the test himself, finding out that he might not be ideally suited for a hospitality position because of his personal skill set. He stressed that the test was targeted at thirty possible vocations, showcasing the experience that the new arrivals had brought with them. On that basis, good opportunities for vocational training could be determined.

The speaker said that this situation could only be solved by realizing that no-one could do it all on their own. The offers from the employment agency had to be bundled in networks with other measures. In the area of undirected migration, a wide variety of actors were interconnected into a network, with the job navigators at the hub of this web. The navigators could, if not coordinate, then support this network and the exchange of information.

Mr Letixerant summarised the obstacles and success factors: language – the environment to apply the language -, offers for qualification – at a low skill level and widely available, even in a state like Mecklenburg-Vorpommern that might be large in size but was sparsely populated. In fact, the state generally could only provide such offers in the population centres. In addition, particular offers were needed for female refugees. So far, the integration of female refugees had proven to be the most difficult among all groups of refugees, as Mr Letixerant admitted. There were many diverse reasons for this. He highlighted that they knew that if the women in the families were not reached by these offers, then there was a high risk that sustained integration measures would fail. The agency had come to realize this over the past decades and now had to deal with in a different, better manner.

**Presentation by Ms Stefanie Scharrenbach, Head of
Department on Regional Economic Policy and International
Affairs at the Schwerin Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

Ms **Stefanie Scharrenbach** began by providing a brief introduction to the system of chambers of commerce and industry in Germany. In Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, there were three chambers of commerce and industry, representing some 85,000 companies. It was their duty to advise and inform on all relevant matters, offering professional education and their platform to share experiences. In Germany, all companies were members of a chamber of commerce and industry, with the exception of freelance professionals or such businesses with their own chambers, e.g. craftsmen, culture workers and others.

The umbrella organisation was the Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (IHK) in Berlin and Brussels. In addition, there was also a network with chambers abroad, with offices in more than 80 countries.

Considering the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern regions, with the Baltic Sea in the north and the harbour in Wismar, the region was dominated by a strong wood industry cluster and of course an important focus on international trade. The sectors of foodstuff, life sciences and renewable energies were strong, as were logistics and tourism. In addition, the state had a rich historical heritage.

German chambers of commerce had different business divisions as well as public functions, mostly in vocational training. Ms Scharrenbach herself was responsible for regional economic policy and international affairs. The former meant that the chambers were campaigning for positive economic conditions and environments, trying to strengthen the location's competitiveness and providing basic information about regional economic policy. To that end, they were putting together reports, statistics, analyses of the economic situation and development.

International affairs meant everything associated with the internationalisation of economy, all kinds of questions concerning custom tariffs, international contracts, shipping and the like. Furthermore, the chambers were supporting companies with export and import activities. They also provided business partners and furnished enterprises with information about foreign markets.

Ms Scharrenbach moved on to a recent analysis of the risks of economic development. The chambers were regularly asking their member companies what the highest risk for their economic



development was. The most recent analysis was from the present month, May 2019. The risk most often stated by the firms was the lack of skilled labour. Such workers were needed at all levels of qualification. The background of this situation was the high unemployment rates in 1999 of 18.2 per cent, shrinking in 2009 to 13.5 per cent and in 2019 to 7.1 per cent. The speaker noted that this might sound like a high rate of unemployment, also in comparison with other federal states. But this situation was existential for the companies. One had to keep in mind that in the 1990s, young, educated people had left the region, while in the 2000s, there had been low birth rates. This had led to a demographic change and the current situation of both a skills shortage and an aged population beyond the labour market. This challenge would become more and more intense as the chambers could project how many more people would leave the labour market in the coming years.

Moreover, there were structural problems in the state: small companies, few headquarters, low R&D rates in the enterprises. Therefore, the economy definitely needed people from other countries in order to be competitive in these times of internationalisation and digitalisation. As mentioned by other speakers, language was very important. Work was the best form of integration possible in any region. She added that the chambers of commerce and industry were of course very much in favour of migration and integration.

As such, the chambers worried quite a lot about migration and integration in the region. The companies were more than willing to give jobs to refugees, but that was difficult, she added, because the younger men needed to earn money. They understood that an apprenticeship or vocational training was very important in this region and country, but they were saying that they did not know how long they would be staying in Germany. What was offered to these

people was focused on staying for the long term. This, Ms Scharrenbach pointed out, was not attractive for people who would stay for some years before returning to their home countries. To her, this was one of the reasons for the comparatively low rate in vocational training.

The chambers did not just look at the refugees coming into the region but at all new arrivals and in addition were trying to attract immigrants. For one thing, there was single European labour market, allowing the freedom of movement of workers. Ms Scharrenbach noted that this was not fully completed across the EU yet. Moreover, there was not yet any sufficient framework for legal migration into the German labour market. She referred back to Mr Letixerant's mention of the Immigration Act for Skilled Labour currently being discussed in the German Bundestag.

At the chambers of commerce, they were currently facing three major challenges: First of all, they were trying to navigate the companies through the current regulations so they would get the employees they needed. In addition, they were trying to improve the regulations wherever possible. The second challenge was lobbying for a more liberal legal framework for migration. She stressed the importance of the third major challenge: facilitating integration in the region. Ms Scharrenbach conceded that the companies were not well prepared for migrants working at these firms.

Regarding the challenge of explaining and improving the liberal legal framework for migration, she reiterated the incomplete nature of the single European labour market. Sometimes, it was difficult to acquire a job in Germany: While such positions were on offer, an applicant's skill certificate first had to be accepted – for which the chambers of commerce and industry, among other offices, were responsible. There was the option of attracting migrants from third-party countries with a Blue Card EU, but this was not attractive for every company because the aforementioned Blue Card EU only applied in Germany if a holder had a German university degree or a recognized degree from a foreign university as well as a high annual gross salary. Only in some occupations, a lower salary threshold was permitted. But in general, considering Mecklenburg-Vorpommern with its smaller companies and a strong tourism sector, this was not a tool that was very useful for local enterprises.

Then, a third tool was the 'EU Posting of Workers Directive', which allowed employees to be posted in a region temporarily rather than permanently. This aimed to ensure a level playing field and avoid 'social dumping', but the directive came with a great degree of bureaucracy. She mentioned the complicated and cumbersome A1

portable document which was important regarding the 'social dumping' aspect but better solutions could and should be found to control receiving the same pay in the same workspace.

She referred back to the recognition or acceptance of foreign skill certificates and the challenge of lobbying for a more liberal legal framework. A new Immigration Act would be the first Immigration Act ever in Germany, adding that a great deal of pressure was needed to push such a law through in the country.

The third major challenge to be tackled by the chambers of commerce and industry was facilitating integration in their region. The speaker said that this was one of her favourite work areas as it allowed her to meet people from different cultures, to work with children and tell them how important intercultural exchange and diversity were. Ms Scharrenbach herself had been active in refugee relief in 2015 and 2016. She thought it highly interesting to see a company open itself to migrants, recognizing that diversity was an added value helping them with their competitiveness. It was this end that the chambers of commerce were working on, providing information to enterprises, offering consulting, implementing intercultural workshops. Here, she stressed that companies were not yet sufficiently prepared and that such workshops were needed to impress upon companies the need for intercultural diversity. The chambers were also offering language courses, especially for the tourism sector. The speaker noted that even in an area of heavy tourism such as Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, most people only spoke German, so the native inhabitants also required language courses. In addition, the chambers organised all kinds of events for networking, highlighting best practices, job fairs, for refugees, migrants and others.

One institution she focused on next were the welcome centres. She said that there were different tools for exchanging best practices. What was needed more were people who worked full-time in the integration business, accompanying employees to the chambers of commerce. Ms Scharrenbach noted that most of her colleagues only spoke German, which was also the case in various administrative offices. Therefore, a companion and translator was welcome and helpful. That person could also help with housing, childcare and different tasks needed when arriving in a new region and starting a job there.

In conclusion, Ms Scharrenbach referred to the chamber of commerce's diversity charter. She pointed out that the Working Group would convene at the Chamber of Commerce the following day which was also Diversity Day. This had been instituted to highlight the importance of diversity.

Presentation by Mr Shady Al-Khouri, Regional Coordinator for Labour Market Integration at the Ministry for Economics, Employment and Health

<https://we.tl/t-OSijzobNOx>

Mr **Shadi Al-Khouri** started by saying that he was a member of the project ‘Labour Market Integration of Migrants’, situated at the Ministry of Economy. In May 2017, the ministry had put down the financing for an agreement with the Regional Direction North of the Federal Employment Agency and the regional job centre Vorpommern-Rügen. The goal was to speed up and optimise the integration of people with a migrational background. He referred back to Mr Letixerant mentioning that there were 22 job navigators in the state. These were part of the aforementioned agreement and were financed by the respective fund.

Job navigators were special employment agents located at the job centres. They were the first contact partners for unemployed people with a migrational background in Germany and who were registered there. Mr Al-Khouri pointed out that there was a great number of contact partners and employment agents at the job centres dealing with the topic of work and vocational training. The particular nature of the job navigators was that these provided very close and intensive care. Their primary task was the integration into the first labour market or the first vocational training market. To that end, they disposed of various support tools or can access such tools from other offices in this field. The job navigators were distributed across the entire state, covering each region.

The Ministry of Economy had three regional directors, among those Mr Al-Khouri himself, a state coordinator and a project officer who was also a scientific advisor. The tasks of the regional directors encompassed first of all being the contact person of regional and supra-regional players to the state government, such as companies, chambers, networks, associations and educational institutions. Furthermore, they served as mediators between the employers, institutions and the state government. Any problems arising at lower levels were communicated to the government so as to find solutions. The directors were also tasked with picking up on the employers’ demands and finding ways of meeting those. Finally, they supported various measures by the active players, including the authorities and associations.

Summarizing these tasks, Mr Al-Khouri saw them as facilitators of communication. In order to acquire information, means of communication had to be established. As such, they learn from the



actors about existing problems, which aspects needed improvement and what was required. At the same time, the directors had need of communication channels to direct their offers to those requiring them. To that end, they had created flyers, providing general information about the project as well as respective contact information. These had been distributed across nearly the entire state Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

The primary means of communication with persons with a migrational background, the speaker pointed out, was generally through social media. Accordingly, a Facebook page had been created for the project. This provided a great deal of information, such as offers, job fairs or events. The page also offered a back channel for migrants to ask questions or give feedback on the offers; if problems occurred, the operators sought to resolve these. Regarding the events, the project had decided that video clips would serve as the best way to invite people to these events. Respective invitational clips were being created for each of the project's events and posted to the Facebook page.

Another channel was the project's own website, also filled with information and contact data. The website was part of the Ministry of Economy's web offer. Among the information offered were a number of presentations and more videos.

On 11 November 2018, the project had organised a state conference of experts, entitled 'From Refugee to Specialist'. The event had been attended by more than 200 participants, among them 60 companies and a large number of educational institutions. High-ranking experts had held informative speeches about, among other

topics, the labour market, the social situation as well as the potential Immigration Act and the situation of refugees in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. At this specialist conference, employers had had the opportunity to directly converse with the operatives dealing with integration, asking about funding for support measures and discussing possible solutions for their employees with a migrational background. Those employers who had yet to hire migrants could also inquire about the possible obstacles and how to overcome these. At the conference, some 10 people with a migrational background had been presented as ideally integrated into the first labour market. In their respective presentations, they had described their own paths to success.

One of the communication channels the project had developed was an annual meeting to exchange experience; that had so far been implemented twice, in the spring of 2018 and 2019, respectively. Job and welcome navigators met at these events to talk about integration measures, to learn from each other and to develop new ways of further improving integration. Mr Al-Khoury judged that the integration was already going very smoothly.

He further clarified the tasks of the navigators. Unlike the job navigators, the purpose of the welcome navigators was to bring people into vocational training and to integrate. As such, the latter had less options at their disposal than the former, but they were situated with various institutions, among them the chambers in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

Apart from gathering information from a wide variety of sources, including employers or educational institutions, the project had equal need to acquire information from the other side, i.e. the people with migrational background. To that end, the project had developed a series of events entitled 'Talk the Job' which primarily invited migrants to discuss vocational training and jobs, allowing them to pose their questions to experts, describe their problems, and the project members either tried to resolve the issues on the spot or arranged for individual meetings at job centres or other institutions. These events had been well attended, and on some occasions, very difficult questions had been raised about how to get jobs and what issues the people with migrational background had experienced in practice.

From these events, the project had derived several findings. Primary among these was that migrants had very little information, most of all about vocational training in Germany. Mr Al-Khoury regretted that people with migrational background did not value vocational training very highly in general. People were wondering, he said,

why they had to work at some place for another two years only to receive a certificate. After all, in many cases, the respective people had already been doing that job for e.g. 10 years, perhaps as a painter, without having undergone vocational training. This was a huge problem.

In that respect, Mr Al-Khouri mentioned the situation in Syria, as representative of many migrants from Arab countries. In Syria, care-giving occupations were university-trained jobs. The same applied to laboratory assistants, for instance. In Germany, on the other hand, these were positions with vocational training. In other words, these were highly qualified jobs for which people went to university in other countries.

For that reason, the project had put together six video clips that provided information on the labour market, the vocational training contract, gross and net salary, how to act in cases of sickness or on holiday. The topic of recognizing foreign qualifications had also been a vital topic in this series; for this video, the guest speaker had been from the project 'Integration through Qualification'. Finally, the indispensable topic dealt with had been professional education in Germany; here, the project directors had spoken about vocational training in Germany as well as the Vocation Information Centres (Berufsinformationszentren, BIZ) of the federal employment agency in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. These videos were being produced in both German and Arabic, with a length of 10 minutes at the most and were available on the website of the Ministry of Economy. Mr Al-Khouri further mentioned that these videos could be used for consultation sessions and provided assistance in that process. More videos were currently planned and would be released in the future.

In March 2019, the project had conducted an event together with the Health and Care Office in Neubrandenburg. This event had been an information event for care-giving jobs since there was a significant need for labour in this area. Part of this event had been 'speed-dating'. Three healthcare institutions from the city of Neubrandenburg and ca. 15 people with migrational background as well as other interested parties had been invited. There had been several informational speeches, with the employers introducing themselves, followed by individual conversations with the migrants. Mr Al-Khouri believed that seven or eight of the participants had handed in their job applications right at the event.

Moreover, Mr Al-Khouri explained, the project was also present at job and training fairs, providing support for people with migrational background who asked them for help arising from conversations

with employers. In addition, there was another project financed by the Ministry of Economy, 'Löwenpitch': It organised events where employers were presented and afterwards rated by the attendees. Most of the time, the events were attended by people looking for vocational training or jobs, and they could decide which employer they preferred. This was followed by conversations between both partners. Mr Al-Khouri's own project and the job centres had cooperated in guiding migrants to these events.

In January 2019, four language courses had been started in the business park Gallin/Valluhn, to the south of Schwerin. There, six enterprises with some 70 employees with migrational background had collaborated to assist said employees to make up their language deficiencies so that they could fully execute their work functions. Mr Al-Khouri clarified that these were not ordinary language courses as offered by many other institutions; instead, these were conducted in parallel to the jobs and at the work site. Thus, travel and having to find the time were obviated. The language courses were financed both by the companies and by the Ministry of Economy.

Moving to the last part of his presentation, the speaker explained what options for support the state government offered for companies in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. First of all, he mentioned the advisory services on further education, GSA, a subsidiary company dealing with the development and structure of the labour market. Its primary task was to advise employers on how to further develop their employees, how to sign them up for further education; another area of advice was consulting on qualification measures. Furthermore, GSA offered assistance in applying for financial support funds.

One of these financing options was offered by the education cheques which were financed, *inter alia*, from ESF funds. They were available to employees who had applied for further education with their employer. An example of this would be the language courses previously mentioned; the course represented further education. Here, two aspects had to be distinguished: On the one hand, there were further education measures at the end of which no certificate of achievement was awarded but only a certificate of attendance. Some language courses were only targeted at providing job-related information rather than achieving a certificate like B1 or B2. These were financed at 50 per cent from the Ministry of Economy while the other 50 per cent were contributed by the enterprise. Funding for such measures was capped at a maximum of 500 euros.

Apart from these options, there were the large support measures concerning further education courses ending in a certificate of

achievement, such as the aforementioned B2 level. A B2 level certificate was recognized everywhere, Mr Al-Khouri underlined. The funding cap here was set at 3,000 euros, again financed at 50 per cent from the ministry and 50 per cent from the company in question.

The speaker went on to speak about projects promoting integration, among them 'Slalom+'. This project was much like dual vocational training, consisting of language courses financed by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, BAMF) while at the same time – as soon as the participants were able to communicate at a basic level, i.e. understand work instructions –, they were immediately brought into traineeships or jobs. This was conducted in parallel. Since 1 September 2015, 'Slalom+' had been initiated. By the end of 2018, 2,266 individuals had made use of the project. Of those, 960 had a migration background and 617 had been refugees.

Mr Al-Khouri moved on to the so-called 'IntegrationsFachDienste Migration' ('Integration Special Services Migration', IFDM) which were split into three parts, for the east, north and west of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. These special services were also supported by the Ministry of Economy and were tasked to advise refugees, determine skill levels. They were cooperating with the job centres and the project 'Integration through Qualification', which also served to recognize and accept foreign vocational certificates, as well as various companies and institutions.

Finally, the speaker spoke about the 'Health and Care Office' (HCO) project he had mentioned previously. The HCO project had been launched in 2015, primarily responsible for acquiring and retaining skilled labour in the caregiving and medical areas, such as hospitals, rehab or care facilities, doctor's office and the like. As such, it served as the first contact point for people who had worked, for instance, as doctors in other countries. These were advised and guided through the employment agency via job navigators. The consulting offices of the project were located in Greifswald, Neubrandenburg and Schwerin. By March 2019, some 249 people had been consulted as part of the project.

He concluded by pointing out that a great deal of work was being done to master the task of integration and achieving the current numbers. Of course, their goal was still to improve, he added.

Presentation by Ms Kaarina Williams, CBSS Secretariat, responsible for young people

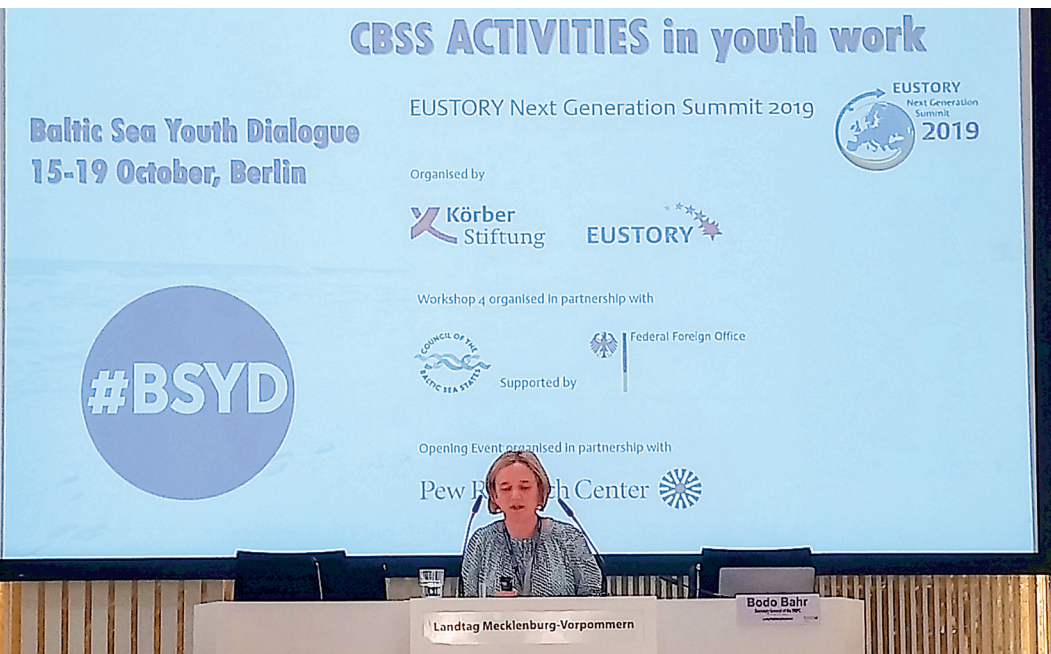
<https://we.tl/t-A9rGsoCGpn>

Ms **Kaarina Williams** began by noting that she had only started working for the secretariat in Stockholm in January of that year, as a senior adviser for the regional identity portfolio, the CBSS' long-term priority. Nonetheless, she could look back on a long history of Baltic Sea cooperation as she had worked for many years in Schleswig-Holstein in the state's department for European Affairs on Baltic Sea issues. In both capacities, she noted, she had also been following the work of the BSPC.

Furthermore, she pointed out that she would not be talking about migration but rather provide a short overview of the CBSS' activities in the youth area. The speaker began by briefly outlining the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) as an organisation of 11 governments around the Baltic Sea, with three long-term priorities: regional identity, safety and security as well as a sustainable and prosperous region. Currently, the organisation's chair was held by Latvia and would soon be handed over to Denmark at the start of July.

Zeroing in on the priority Ms Williams was working on, she explained about the respective focus points: culture, young people's affairs and higher education. The work was about gathering and connecting actors as well as launching and supporting projects. Here, their goal was to foster a sense of belonging and to highlight the cultural identity and diversity in the Baltic Sea region, thus strengthening the social cohesion.

She next expanded on the focus point of young people's affairs. On that occasion, she addressed the young attendees of the Youth Forum, encouraging them to take a look at the event she was presenting – the Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue – and to take part in it. The call for participation would open in June of that year via the CBSS website. Ms Williams explained that this was an annual event to which some 20 – 25 young people between the ages of 18 and 25 were invited to talk about the region's common history and different aspects of the regional identities. The next instalment of the event would be held in Berlin, on 15 – 19 October. The main topic would concern the thirty years since the fall of the Berlin Wall and how the Baltic Sea region had experienced this time period. Other topics would also be discussed, and respective details would soon be released on the website. The speaker further pointed out that the event was being organised in cooperation with the Körber Foundation in Hamburg – an organisation long experienced in youth work



that also facilitated history contests. She described the October event as a ‘big summit’ of which the CBSS workshop would only be a small part, but she stressed that the participants would also be able to take part in the other events, listening to the interesting speakers that had been invited.

Meeting Part III: Vocational training and school - integration of migrants

Schwerin, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 28 May 2019

Chaired and moderated by Carola Veit, President of the State Parliament of Hamburg and Vice-Chair of the WG

Opening address by Mr Siegbert Eisenach, Chief Executive Officer, Schwerin Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Mr **Siegbert Eisenach** opened by declaring that the countries in the Baltic Sea region were very important trade partners and markets for the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern companies. There already were bilateral relations and strong contacts between companies and countries in the federal state. Furthermore, the Chamber of Commerce supported the development of this well connected and innovative economy in the Baltic Sea region. Therefore, meetings like this were very important.

In recent years, the topics of migration and integration had been of particular importance and both were gaining more and more value for the economy. The scarcity of skilled workers was becoming increasingly obvious in various industry sectors. Improving integration conditions for immigrants in this important sector was vital for facing this problem, and the best way to find solutions was through international cooperation. Mr Eisenach could not imagine a better day to talk about this issue than this since the Chamber of Commerce was celebrating the 17th German Diversity Day, dedicated to more diversity at the workplace. The German Collaboration Charter of Diversity had been signed at this Schwerin Chamber of Commerce, underlining diversity as an opportunity to create economic benefits. However, the Schwerin Chamber of Commerce and Industry had joined forces to improve the conditions for economic growth and developing in different fields.

In short, Mr Eisenach mentioned an example from Schwerin, the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link, which would replace the ferry service between Rødby and Puttgarden. This was one of their aims for good infrastructure between Germany and Scandinavia, and the speaker pointed out that this was one of the most important infrastructure projects in the whole of Europe. The chamber was supporting this

project to integrate the people and connecting businesses. This cross-border project was one of the most important of its kind in the northern part of Europe and would form a framework for economic growth and coordination in this area.

In that context, and as the chair of the FBCC, the Fehmarn Belt Business Council, since 2015, it was the main goal for the people and companies to come together, growing the entire economic area. This FBCC was a trinational consortium, representing 400,000 companies and entrepreneurs in the northern part of Germany, Sweden and Denmark. The Schwerin Chamber of Commerce was the substantial voice of the business and the natural contact platform for the governments, for politicians and administrations in this cross-border issue between the axis of Hamburg, Schwerin, Lübeck and the southern part of Scandinavia, the greater Copenhagen area with Skorny and Malmö on the northern part.

This early involvement of business, he stressed, was essential to make the Fehmarn Fixed Link crossing a success from the very first day. He had to underline that the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link was one of the main tools to build the Baltic Via across the Baltic Sea.



Last but not least, Mr Eisenach mentioned the Chamber's annual match-making forum, the Baltic Business Forum. In 2017, the topic had been Denmark and Sweden while the 2018 event concerned the Baltic Sea. In 2019, the focus would be on Poland. It would be held from 17 – 18 November 2019. The goal was to build an industrial bridge between Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Szczecin and Stettin on the other side.

He concluded by saying that he hoped for interesting presentations and fruitful discussions to work towards establishing a strong network in the future.

Presentation by Mr Peter Todt, Deputy General Manager and Head of Department, Training, Schwerin Chamber of Commerce and Industry

<https://we.tl/t-JSARRjdMau>

Mr Todt began by referring to Mr Eisenach's introduction to the main tasks of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, representing some 25,000 companies and other members. The speaker went on to say that his own responsibility lay in vocational training for commerce and industry. Said training was organised as a dual system through a relationship between companies and vocational training schools.

He said the chamber had much to offer. On the one hand, qualified employees and young professionals for the companies, and on the other hand, a future for the state's school-leavers. The organisation and support of the training was the most important task for the chamber, as Mr Todt viewed it. Involved were 1,200 training companies in this chamber's region, the western part of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, i.e. companies looking to train young people in 145 professions. In Germany in total, some 350 vocations were being taught. Per year, about 1,500 new vocational contracts were concluded in the chamber's system. Overall, some 4,500 contracts were active each year.

The chamber was trying to prepare companies for vocational training. Their task at this time, before the start of the training itself, was to look after and supervise training materials while during the vocational training, the chamber was supporting both the trainees and the companies, organising interim and final examinations. After the exams, the development for the young employees must not be

finished. The chamber was offering future training and re-training opportunities as necessary. Mr Todt commented that he liked the system, valuing the relationships as much as the qualifications.

The companies were responsible for the practical training and skills while the vocational training schools provided theoretical knowledge. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry was charged with examinations, supplying the contracts and supervising training firms and trainees. One third of the training, Mr Todt explained, took place in the schools, teaching the theoretical basis for the other two thirds of the time spent at the respective enterprise, learning the skills and abilities. In the region, there were five vocational training schools. After two or three years of training, examinations were held, the graduates of which were skilled workers.

Regarding the integration and support of young people with migrational backgrounds, he admitted that this process was sometimes difficult. The chamber tried to present and explain the system. But while German school-leavers had had several years to understand the system, the foreign young people have half to a full year to comprehend it. As much as Mr Todt appreciated the system, it was not for everyone to understand. Some wondered why they needed three years to get the same wages as full professionals. The chamber explained the process, assisted with it and organised some preparatory courses for the main vocational training. Finally, they also provided help with the details of the training contract.

For some years, the chamber had dealt with foreign trainees in their region, facing typical problems such as the educational background, the command of the German language – specifically whether the trainee understood the subjects in the vocational school and could answer the exam questions -, the culture in the training company as well as that of the trainee and the educational culture at school. Mr Todt noted that he had been in Barcelona the previous week to find Spanish people to start training in the summer of 2019. He was hoping to gather 25 Spaniards for this task.

The chamber had some experience with integration, going to back to the so-called ‘Spätaussiedler’ from 1990 to 2000 – people of German nationality who had been living in regions that had become part of other countries after World War II. In addition, there were the children of business partners of the region’s companies in the chamber’s system. From 2012 to 2018, an international programme called ‘MobiPro’ had been in place. Since 2017, the refugees had also gone into the system. At its peak, there had been 26 nationalities and more than 244 trainees under contract.



Mr Todt went on to describe the current situation. Seven countries or regions were represented, mostly young men were among the refugees (72 per cent male). With regard to vocational training, age was an interesting question. 24 per cent were between 15 and 25 years old. Also of concern were other issues such as who could sign a contract, who would stay in the country for the time of the training and who would stay for work after the examination.

The main problem was the critical school certificates. Specifically, he mentioned whether enough papers were handed in, whether these could be understood and whether they were dealing with the same levels of education in the foreign and German systems. There had been a lot of young people without documents, and some documents were lacking qualifications. This, the speaker went on, was not only the problem of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry but also of the companies interested in signing the contracts. The vocational training was sometimes hard even for Germans, especially in the theoretical part. For the refugees, the German language was an added complication.

Here, he referred back to the MobiPro project. There, they had started with language levels A1 and A2, but that had not proved sufficient. Instead, B1 or B2 were necessary to follow the vocational

training school in some subjects. At this point, a great number of foreign young people were enrolled in vocational training. Mr Todt also stressed that the local companies were open to hiring foreigners as well as refugees. Some networks between companies and vocational training schools were in place. Furthermore, only the day before, two intercultural training courses had been held at the chamber to help solve problems.

At this point, there were 145 foreign trainees under contract. He believed vocational training could be successful for all and a path to integration. They needed skilled labour for their companies, and to Mr Todt, that was a good basic motivation and also a basis to create a future of their own.

Presentation by Ms Petra Voss, principal, vocational training school Schwerin-Technik

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Ms **Petra Voss** began by introducing herself as 57 years of age, having worked as a teacher since 1984. She taught mathematics, physics at a vocational school. In 2010, she had completed her Master of Arts in school management. Since 2013, she had been the principal of the Berufliche Schule Technik (vocational school technology). The school itself had been in existence since 1971 and currently had 1,700 students from 37 countries, including Syria, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Eritrea, Egypt, Ecuador, Croatia, Morocco, Armenia and Russia. The teaching staff consisted of 74 teachers and 3 school social workers.

The school was separated into four different departments: a specialised upper secondary school, a part-time vocational school, professional preparation and a technical college. In the vocational school, various professions were taught, among them metal engineering, motor vehicle technology, electrical engineering or computer science.

A new building was being constructed for the school at a cost 31 million euros, most of it financed by the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Ms Voss added that this was the largest construction project in Schwerin and was planned to be completed in 2021.

She went on to speak about the education at the school. Most migrants were students at her school for two years for professional preparation. In the first year, the only school subject was German,

with 25 lessons a week. The course was completed with an examination called the Deutsches Sprachdiplom (German Language Diploma). In the second year, school subjects were the basics, such as mathematics, German, sports, social studies as well as practical and theoretical training. After the two years, the migrants graduated and could move on to start an apprenticeship.

The greatest challenge for vocational schools was language skills, Ms Voss went on, especially the writing and the technical language were difficult for the students. For that reason, the students also received two hours of German lessons each week on top. In some situations, the school needed the help of translators, for example when there were problems or discussions with parents or companies about the learning results.

She said that refugees, in their experience, had a different temperament from Germans. The former were very quickly hurt in their honour or wrongly accused. At that point, they would prove impulsive and talk very loudly. Often, the refugees had problems with punctuality, respect for women, observing social limits. All of these aspects served as further challenges for the teaching staff.

Principal Voss next spoke about school projects, such as 'Our Schwerin – I live here'. Students had gone to the top of the television tower, to get a new perspective on the city. Another project had been in 2016 when students took part in a sports contest where German and migrant students had competed against each other. In 2017, a joint project had been organised with the specialised upper secondary school and a professional preparation class. Together, they exercised sports and ate traditional food, to reduce prejudice. In another project, there had been a trip to Rostock, Warnemünde and the Baltic Sea.

Other projects at the school were the welcome days where the students with migrational backgrounds were welcomed to the school and could introduce themselves as well as their homeland. All the students could get to know each other. Further projects included a theatre workshop, a visit to a farm and bakery – where the enterprises presented their work to the students, trying to gain employees and apprentices -, a tour to Hamburg and an education fair. Newspaper articles had documented the many activities.

The school social worker provided additional support. A few days earlier, they had visited the exhibition 'Which Country Do We Want To Be?' in Schwerin. The students spoke about the freedom of expression, freedom and security, individual development and equal opportunities. The social workers supported the schools when they

changed schools, assisting with letters to companies that would replace the predecessors. Furthermore, the social workers offered help with problems with other students, teachers or the authorities. They also informed the students about offers for leisure time. Many students were coming to Germany without their parents. They were watching the news to catch some information about their families back home. In such cases, the school social workers also provided assistance, listening to their stories and being there for them.

Ms Voss finally spoke about collaboration and cooperation. Her vocational school was collaborating with child protective services and the youth welfare offices, in case problems arose in school. Another cooperation was with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry as well as with the Chamber of Crafts. The school offered information about the dual vocational training system; through the cooperation, they sought to find traineeships and training companies. Finally, the school was working together with the National Centre for Political Education, as part of which the latter had provided an offer of political education for young refugees in vocational schools in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. The individual modules covered diverse subjects, such as fundamental human rights, politics, women's issues, education. All of those left plenty of rooms for discussion with the students, not least about their everyday experience. The project was run by a Syrian and a German employee of the country's headquarters for political education. The peer-to-peer approach was particularly important. The Syrian employee shared the experience of being a refugee with the young people, yet at the same time used his competency as a cultural mediator. The lessons were predominantly held in German.



Presentation by Ms Brigitta Bollesen-Brüning, Niels-Stensen-Schule Schwerin, secondary school

Ms **Brigitta Bollesen-Brüning** said her institution was a private catholic school in Schwerin, with students ranging from first grade through secondary school. They could reach the school certificate of 'Mittlere Reife'. The school had been founded in 1735. Like many of its kind, it had been closed during the Nazi period and reopened during the GDR's existence. In 2004, the initiative of a local parish along with interested parents made it possible to reopen this school, first as a primary school and from 2006 also as a secondary school. In 2015, with the refugee crisis reaching its peak, a large number of new people had come to Schwerin from Syria and Afghanistan, especially young men searching for something to occupy themselves with.

The school tried to support and help them. Some children who had come with their families had been enrolled in the school as well as a number of unaccompanied minors. The school had decided to meet these challenges and at the same time express their Christian attitude. First, they had to find teachers able to teach German as a foreign language; Ms Brüning noted there was a respective certificate. They had started with 6 students, ending up with 10 at the completion of the term. The following year, about 18 – 20 young migrants were added, and in the present, 25 – 28 students with migrational backgrounds were studying at her school.

Their experience included both success and failure. Some students could not and would not integrate into school life. Ms Brüning understood their problem, explaining that they had been between 13 and 16 years of age, had lived in their own countries up till then and had gained both positive and negative experiences during their journey to Germany. As such, they had been adults in children's bodies. That had made it difficult and sometimes impossible for them to understand why they were not allowed to act as they usually did in class, to leave the school premises at any time or to smoke whenever they wanted to.

Students were integrated into the school class system sometimes by their age, sometimes according to their intellectual skills and sometimes their language skills. This distribution system had not always been successful. Of the 40 – 45 people who had joined the school, some 25 had attended classes regularly for two years. In the preceding year, one young man had passed the final exam of higher education, the German 'Abitur', after having studied at Ms Brüning's school for three years. Several others were trying to follow suit, but the exams had not been completed yet.

Presentation by Mr Asem Alsayjare, State Centre for Political Education

Mr **Asem Alsayjare** began by saying that he had come from Syria, also as a refugee, at the end of 2015. Since then, he had finished his studies and begun working at the Federal Centre for Political Education. He said that this speech would focus on the joint project with secondary schools that had already been mentioned earlier. In cooperation with the schools, Federal Centre for Political Education had developed a seminar on political education for refugees at vocational technical schools. These classes were open to migrants and refugees in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Courses had been held in German, with English and Arabic translation provided as needed. The seminar had consisted of six modules: What's Politics?, Democracy and Basic Rights, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Regional and Cultural Studies, School Education and Profession, Participation and Engagement in Society, Men and Women in Society. On top of that, additional time had been granted for participants to discuss their everyday experience and to answer any questions of theirs. The project had been conducted by a two-member team of a Syrian and a German colleague from the Federal Centre for Political Education. Here, the Syrian colleague could share the experience of being a refugee while serving as a culture and language intermediary.

Because all of the students had been new to Germany and had not been fluent in the language, the project had worked with many pictures and simple concepts. In many classes, informal discussions had been held. In addition, several offers for language learning had been provided as extracurricular activities. Mr Alsayjare noted that the students had been visibly relaxed when talking about their own personal interests.

Three years of experience in various classrooms allowed several observations to be made, which he split into four sectors. The first of these concerned student characteristics. Many students had had unrealistic expectations of life in Germany. Many of them had come to the country as unaccompanied minors, with the hope that their families would be able to follow them. Students had different backgrounds influenced by their diverse countries of origin as well as their culture and milieu in their former societies. Whether the new arrivals had come by plane or on foot had proved a distinctive effect: Those who had fled on foot had experienced more intensive fear compared to those who had flown in. Another factor was the school situation: Some refugees, such as many Syrians, had been to school from the start, while others had only had subsidiary protection status. It had still been unclear whether they would be permitted to stay in Germany. Furthermore, there had been a difference between

those who had come with their families and those who had arrived unaccompanied. The latter had had to shoulder considerably more responsibilities than the former.

The second sector of concern dealt with integration issues. With several classes consisting only of migrants and refugees, it had been difficult for these youths to establish contact with Germans. This had been particularly noticeable on the schoolyards where the two groups had remained separate even after two years of schooling. School teachers had organised a number of projects to facilitate contact with German students; these had worked very well in some locations. Initiatives to bring German and migrant students together in school or during extracurricular activities would facilitate integration and help eliminate preconceptions and prejudice. This could be accomplished through sports projects, field trips and cultural offerings. Introducing students to the possibilities for participation in the community was recommended since many students sought community engagement but were unsure where and how exactly to go about it.

Mr Alsajjare moved on to the third sector: vocational or educational programmes on student concerns. Some students had wanted to get a job as quickly as possible, without completing their vocational education, because they simply wanted or needed to send money to their parents at home. Students with unclear perspectives to remain should have their cases decided as soon as possible, the speaker called for. Otherwise, their options remained limited. Some students who had already turned 18 had been uncertain what would become of them as they had not been permitted to stay at the vocational school. Mr Alsajjare said that students should be placed in internships so that they would at least have some idea of the work environment in German companies.

The final sector was about vocational or educational programme characteristics and recommendations. After some students had started their vocational education, they had not had any problems with the practical application but instead with the language and theory. Extending the period of language study at the vocational school was desirable. In that regard, he noted that some teachers had recommended developing students to the B2 language level at school. Many teaching staff believed that two years were insufficient for academic and technical preparation and advocated for a three-year term. Additionally, the speaker called for more teachers with a migrational background of their own. One could consider the possibility of employing assistant teachers with a refugee or migrational background as language and cultural intermediaries. For that purpose, one might hire not only teachers from an Arabic-speaking

background. Such teaching staff would serve as positive role models, as had also been demonstrated through the project in question.

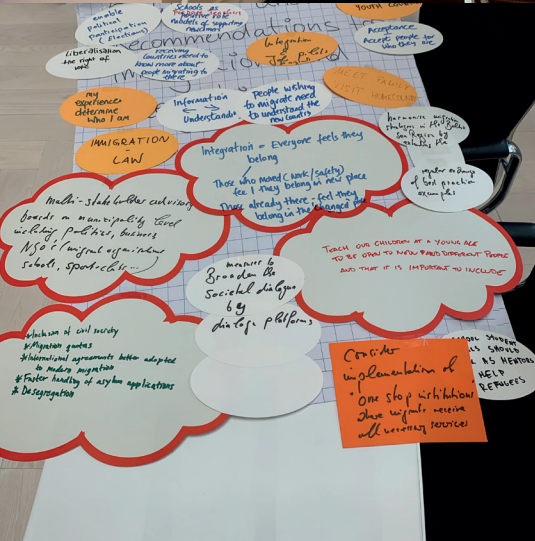
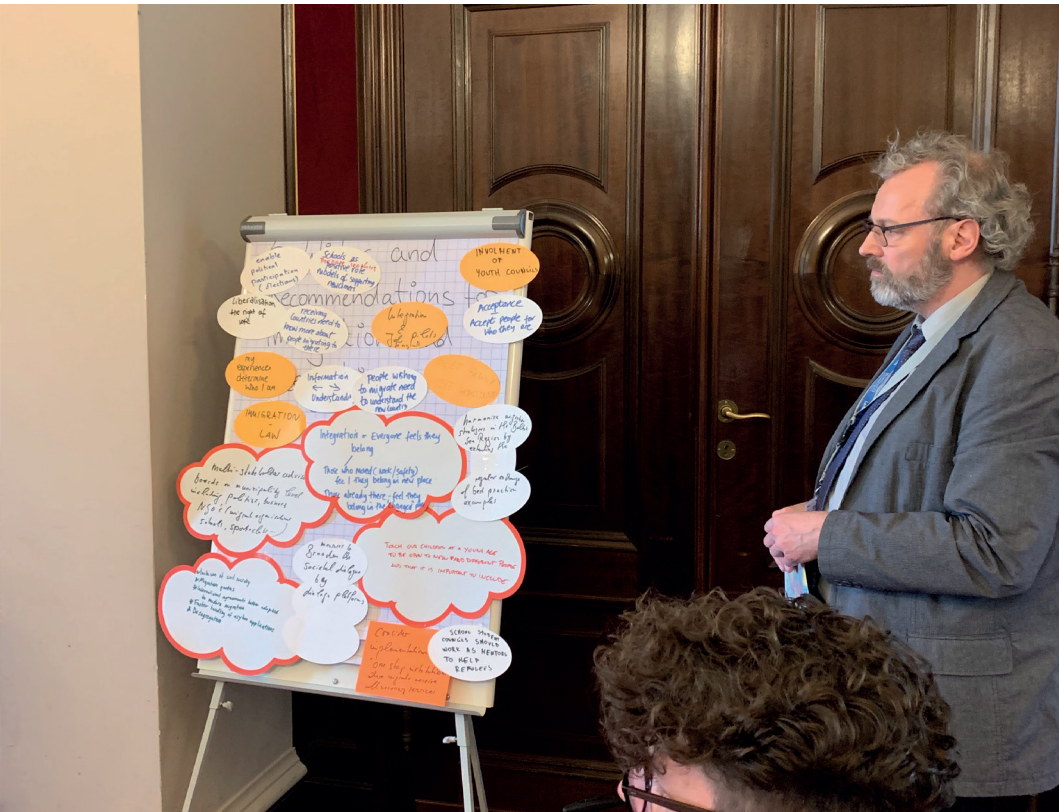
The presentations were followed by a panel discussion moderated by Carola Veit and attended by members of parliament, young participants and experts, which deepened and discussed the contributions made by experts.

Afterwards, several alternating intensive discussion rounds and a lively exchange of views took place between the young participants, the members of parliament and experts on the entire subject area within the framework of a so-called World Cafe format.

Finally, the participants of the Youth Forum elected Rama Akid from Germany and Sāra Zdanovska, Latvian Youth Parliament as those representatives who will present the results of the Youth Forum during the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference in Oslo.







6. 2nd Intergovernmental Survey

The BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration has launched a second survey. The Statements and Answers of Åland, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, German Bundestag, Hamburg, Latvia, Lithuania, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Norway, Poland and Russia can be found are published on the BSPC Website under the following link:

https://www.bspc.net/bspc_anhang_statementsbsp27/

The previous survey of the year 2018 had been published under the following link:

<https://www.bspc.net/answers-of-the-governments-bspc-wg/>

The Standing Committee and the working group have commissioned a political science analysis by the Institute for Migration in Finland. The Policy Assessment and Recommendations by Matti Välimäki, Migration Institute of Finland⁴ are attached in Annex 1.

7. Statements of the governments in the Baltic Sea Region

The working group's recommendations for action, which were incorporated into last year's 27th resolution, were forwarded to the governments of the member parliaments for their comments as part of the overall Mariehamn resolution. The governments of Åland, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hamburg, Latvia, Lithuania, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Norway, Poland and Russia have sent the following statements and answers to the recommendations in the 27th BSPC resolution regarding the issue of Migration and Integration

1. Åland

Migration and Integration

In recent years, approximately 1000 people per year have migrated to Åland and as a result, almost half of the population aged 30 – 39 is born abroad. Even if some emigration occurs, net immigration has been positive. Today in Åland there is about 65 different native languages and almost 100 different nationalities.

A successful integration leads to the immigrants being happy and wanting to stay on Åland Islands and hopefully access the labor market. The trade and industry in Åland have had some difficulties to find employees and therefore wish for a faster integration.

To some extent the integration is made difficult because the legislative competence is divided between Finland and Åland. The applicable law depends on the person's passport status. People seeking humanitarian protection are subject to Finnish integration legislation. Other persons are subject to Åland's integration legislation. Because Åland does not have jurisdiction in the case of residence permits, the *Finnish Migration Agency* will come to Åland a few days every six weeks to receive and prepare residence permit applications.

A visit to the *Migration Agency* is perceived as complicated. One has to make a written booking in advance. To facilitate the procedure, the Government of Åland buys services via the city of Mariehamn through the information office *Kompassen (Compass)*. *Kompassen* is not only supporting immigrants to do their booking to the *Migration Agency*. The office also serves immigrants with general information

about the local society and, if needed, refers immigrants to other authorities.

An important part of the integration is of course to understand the language and having general knowledge about the society. Therefore, as a labour market policy action, education in the Swedish language (*Swedish for Immigrants, SFI*) is offered to persons outside the labour market who are registered at the *Employment Office (AMS)*. For employees, with the employer's permission, there is an opportunity to study Swedish part-time, partly at working hours and partly in leisure time.

The *SFI* course also provides social information about, for example, rights and obligations in the labour market, how health care is organized in Åland etc. The course also includes an introduction to *the Åland development and sustainability agenda*. The government has also arranged general conversations with quota refugees in Arabic to raise and discuss differences in, for example, gender equality and family roles between Syria and the Nordic countries.

As a new member of the society, it takes some time to develop new relationships and participate in new networks. As many jobs are added through networks, it is particularly important to develop a workable system for guidance and validation of knowledge and competence. Therefore, the government has a validation service at the Ålands *Gymnasium (Ålands Upper Secondary School)*. This year the government has also decided to finance a three-year activity with career guidance for adults. The activity starts in August 2019 with the name *VISA vägen (SHOW the way)*. Migrants are assumed to be a large part of the target group for validation and guidance activities.

The government of Åland also supports various integration efforts in order to create changes in attitudes and develop methods that reduce alienation. As an example, lectures and workshops have been arranged all around Åland in attitudes, identity and equal value to educate teachers, students and parents. It has also been arranged lectures about people fleeing, cultural clashes, misunderstandings, prejudices and exclusion to the third sector and to civil servants.

Associations can seek additional funding from the government for special integration initiatives. For example, integration has been arranged through football, integration through work or integration through open preschool.

Refugees

Åland has received 73 quota refugees since 2015. In the beginning only the city of Mariehamn received quota refugees, but later on eight municipalities have also received refugees. Four of sixteen municipalities received a total of 26 persons in the autumn of 2018.

The decision to receive or not receive refugees is taken by the municipal council. A contract is then signed between the municipality of Åland, which intends to receive refugees and the *Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (NTM-centralen) in Finland*. Each municipality has its own integration program in order to support a good integration into Åland society.

With the aim of continuously improving the reception of refugees (before, during and after the reception), the government of Åland maintains a continuous dialogue with receiving municipalities, ÅHS (Åland Health Care), AMS (Ålands Employment Office), *Medis* (course organizer for language and integration training) and the third sector. Those organizations form a coordination group for which the government is the convener. The coordination group decided to apply for the launch of the EU project *“En säker hamn” (a secure port, mustering for strength for the municipalities, authorities and the third sector to develop cooperation in the reception of refugees and integration in Åland)*. The project was accepted and started in March 2018 with support from the AMIF Fund (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund). The government of Åland is the responsible authority for the project and twelve other organizations are involved. Because of this project, the support from and the cooperation between these organizations has been given an opportunity to be more effective. The projects activities focuses on quota refugees but the activities and measures will also benefit other immigrants in Åland.

Examples of activities within the project:

- Health care procedures are reviewed. Among other things, staff are trained in
 - intercultural communication
 - how different residence permits provide different rights within healthcare
 - how to use different support such as images, language apps, interpreters, etc.
- An interactive website www.integration.ax has been developed with a FAQ page containing questions, answers and links sorted under different themes. Through this channel (which is now available in more than 20 languages) you also can promote integrational events.

A flow chart for the health review of refugees has been developed including cost allocation and compensation.

2. Estonia

Strengthen cooperation in the field of migration and integration

Successful labour market inclusion of third country nationals is one of the major challenges today in Europe and in countries bordering the Baltic Sea. Therefore, in 2018 in partnership with the Nordic Council of ministers Estonian office, UNHCR, the Johannes Mihkelson Centre and the Estonian Ministry of Interior labour market inclusion initiative was launched to foster the development of a more coherent strategy to ensure successful labour inclusion of third country nationals.

Every year a conference is organised by the Nordic Council of Ministers Estonian office, in cooperation with EMN Estonian Contact Point in Tallinn University, Ministry of Interior and University of Tartu. Conference aims to be a platform where best practices and latest research in the field of migration in the Nordic and Baltic countries are shared.

Increase the offer of migration-specific advisory services and language training

In 2017 migration advisors service was launched. Advisors main purpose is to support foreigners settling in Estonia and to be a partner to employers, entrepreneurs, educational institutions and to others who invite foreigners to Estonia.

Consider migration and security perspectives in relevant other political agendas

Estonian immigration policy has historically aimed at facilitating settlement of those foreigners in Estonia, whose residence here is consistent with the public interest and preventing the entry of foreigners into Estonia who may be a threat to public order or national security. The facilitation of the migration of people who contribute to the development of the Estonian state and society, and development of legal and administration solutions to support such migration is one of the main objectives in the field of migration. In 2017 wide-range immigration working group was established. The aim of this working group is to continue developing systematic solutions mainly related to the labour migration.

Seek holistic and multi-facetted solutions to the challenges

Estonia has contributed on the EU level to different measures in the field of migration. For example, Estonia has participated in the EU relocation and resettlement activities stemming from the 2015 migration crises and have admitted 206 persons in the need of international protection (141 from Greece, 6 from Italy and 59 from Turkey). Furthermore, we are participating in different formats of cooperation and dialogue on migration with third countries, for example process of implementation of Joint Valletta Action Plan.

Government of Estonia has also made a decision in December 2017 to admit up to 40 persons from Turkey during both the years of 2018 and 2019. Estonia will continue to plan and develop different measures and continue to contribute to agreed measures on the EU level in the field of migration.

We have yearly contributed to the Frontex missions – approximately 200 police and border officials a year. During the 2018 a total of 218 were provided. We have also contributed to the EU naval operations EU-NAVFOR Med/op Sophia. Currently with 3 officials of Defence Force. Contributions to the Frontex missions

have also involved technical help and transportation means. As an example: during one month of 2018 one airplane was provided for Spain, until the march 2019 one patrol ship is operating in Greece, there were 52 cameras sent to Bulgaria and Greece. During the year 2019 there are 3 persons planned to provide for as EASO experts.

Estonia is a long-time supporter of UNHCR activities. Respecting the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) principles, Estonia makes its unearmarked voluntary contributions to the UNHCR every year. Estonia has allocated 100 000 EUR in support of UNHCR programs in the year 2019. Apart of this contribution, Estonia continues to support various UNHCR operations throughout the year. As mentioned, Estonia has been contributing to the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey (4,3 million EUR) as well as to the EU Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF for Africa) from the beginning (1,6 million EUR), mostly to Northern Africa. We are planning to continue this practice. In addition to that, we have contributed to the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (the ‘Madad Fund’).

3. Finland

In general terms it can be mentioned that the recommendations regarding migration issues are taken into account via different mobility partnerships.

Recommendation # 24; it can be stated that the Ministry of the Interior's theme paper (SM:n teemapaperi) outlines a comprehensive approach on migration management and the inclusion of all policy sectors.

Recommendation # 20; it can be stated that bilateral and multilateral migration dialogues are continuously ongoing in many areas and especially within EU context. Furthermore, Finland has a regularly agreed dialogue on migration with Russia.

In addition, during 2018–2019 Ministry of the Interior has implemented ChemSAR-project with Interreg funding with the aim to develop Operational Plans and Procedures for Maritime Search and Rescue in Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) Incidents.

As for the rest (integration-related), the recommendations fall mainly under the sector of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.

4. German Bundestag

The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference calls on the governments in the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS and the European Union, regarding migration and integration (18-24), to:

18. 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;

The German Government supports active civil society and governmental exchange in the Baltic Sea area in the field of migration. Cultural and historical heterogeneity particularly underscores the need for forums and bodies such as the CBSS and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Migration and its causes in the Baltic Sea area were examined as early as the first ministerial conference of the CBSS in 1992. Since then, the German Government has supported exchanges on migration between expert bodies and close cooperation at state level. Along with the exchange among young people in the Baltic Sea area, this plays a key role in raising awareness.

From 4 to 6 September 2018, analysts from the police forces and coastal and border protection authorities of all countries bordering the Baltic Sea met in Stockholm to share information and discuss risks and trends in the area of irregular migration and cross-border crime as part of the Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation (BSRBCC) forum. An additional regional forum in this area was held from 30 to 31 May 2017 in close coordination between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and the Icelandic Presidency of the CBSS under the title “Soft Security and Migration in the Baltic Sea Region”. Within this framework, participants discussed the experiences of the states bordering the Baltic Sea with the migration movements of 2015-16 and talked about measures for better governance. In the area of migration and trafficking in human beings in the Baltic Sea area, the specialised conference “Following the traces between migration and human trafficking – from exploitation to integration” was held in November 2018 within the scope of the CBSS-funded project Trafficking along Migration Routes (TRAM): Identification and Integration of Victims of Trafficking among Vulnerable Groups and Unaccompanied Children.

The German Government is continuing its work in the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings under the current

Latvian Presidency. It is represented here by the following ministries: the BMAS, the BMFSFJ and the BMI.

19. initiate a Baltic Sea-wide data basis on integration conditions and measures to improve the public discussion on a factual basis;

At European level, the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) is currently being revised to make it efficient, resilient and solidarity-based. Uniform standards throughout the EU and the alignment of reception conditions and asylum benefits are key issues here. This system would involve all of the EU Member States in the Baltic Sea area. The German Government will continue to advocate for such a system at EU level.

20. intensify the dialogue on migration and integration between the countries bordering the Baltic Sea;

The German Government supports effective management of migration in the EU. This can only be achieved through enhanced cooperation, including in the Baltic Sea area. Security begins at the borders. The German Government's aim is thus to improve the protection of external borders. The German Government wants reliable and comprehensive cooperation and communication between the EU and the countries of origin and transit for irregular migration. In this context, the German Government calls for consistent compliance with the Dublin III Regulation.

Intensive exchange in the Baltic Sea area could also be fostered regarding integration measures such as integration courses and occupation-related language courses, which have been expanded into an integrated language programme and are conducted by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). Expert bodies are a key element for duplicating successful models here.

21. increase the offer of migration-specific advisory services and language training in order to intensify integration efforts;

It is the stated aim of the German Government to improve the language skills and qualifications of refugees to enable their successful participation in the labour market and integration into society. A variety of measures, programmes and regulatory instruments exist

to this end. In September 2018, 77,000 refugees participated in Federal Employment Agency measures. Almost half of these beneficiaries took part in activation and vocational integration measures, especially measures such as “Prospects for Refugees” (PerF) and “Competence assessment, early activation and language acquisition” (KompAS), both of which are specifically tailored to the target group of refugees.

With the establishment of occupation-related language courses, a regulatory instrument for job-related German language training has been created for the first time. The Ordinance regulating job-related German language courses (legal basis: § 45a Residence Act) entered into force on 1 July 2016 and replaced the temporary ESF-BAMF job-related language training programme by the end of 2017. The occupation-related language courses are the federal offering for occupation-related language qualifications from Level B1 to Level C2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (GER). They build upon the integration courses offered by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (BMI) as a foundation for language acquisition (Level A1 to Level B1 GER); together with them, they comprise the integrated language programme.

The “Integration through Qualification” (IQ) support programme has been working for years on the goal of improving labour market opportunities for immigrant communities. In January 2015, the programme was expanded to include the guideline “ESF training and qualification within the context of the Recognition Act”, which encompasses not only training and qualification but also advisory and guidance services on recognition and qualification. Intercultural training course offerings for key actors in the labour market (especially employment agencies and job centres) and, since the beginning of 2019, the

development of regional support offerings regarding the immigration of skilled workers are additional focal areas for this nationwide programme.

22. 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;

In view of the integrating role of sports, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)

provides EUR 5.4 million in annual support to the German Sports Youth (DSJ) on the basis of a framework agreement. The DSJ is the youth organisation of the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB). Approximately 90,000 sports clubs are organised into approximately 80 member organisations, with almost 10 million children and young people as members. Because of this, the DSJ is active in almost every area of activity in youth and social policy. Low-threshold offerings to harness the integration power of sport are a focal point of its activities. The Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community supports the DOSB through the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, and is providing EUR 11.4 million in funding to the “Integration through Sport” programme.

23. consider migration and security perspectives in relevant other political agendas such as trade, labour rights and environmental preservation;

The BMAS has strengthened the area of labour rights from the angle of migration. In 2017, the “Integration through Qualification” (IQ) support programme was expanded to include advisory structures on the issue of fair integration of refugees. The aim is to make information about working conditions, labour rights and advisory structures for refugees in Germany available. Between November 2017 and June 2018, an information centre were established in every federal state, and in the second half of 2018 advisory services on these issues began throughout Germany.

24. seek holistic and multi-facetted solutions to the challenges posed by current 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;

The German Government supports the European Union’s values-based trade policy (see the European Commission’s Trade for All strategy). Agreements with developing countries are structured asymmetrically and accompanied by trade assistance to foster employment, growth and prosperity in partner countries. In addition, trade policy plays a part in maximising synergies between different policy areas in order to create incentives for third countries to cooperate on migration and refugee issues.

5. Hamburg

With regard to paragraphs 18 to 21, and 23 to 25 of the Resolution

Hamburg supports the approach to improve the intercultural sensitivity of relations, establishment of a common data analysis tool on integration conditions, the suggestion to expand dialogue in this area and developing joint solutions.

Hamburg plans to develop an integration monitoring system by building on the integration concept “Wir in Hamburg! – Teilhabe, Interkulturelle Öffnung und Zusammenhalt” (We in Hamburg! – participation, intercultural openness and cohesion), with more than 140 indicators for measuring the success of integration. Additionally Hamburg is participating in the expansion of the existing supra-regional monitoring system operated by the federation and the federal states.

Language training and migration-specific advisory services are among the central aspects of integration policy in Hamburg. Although the federation is responsible in principle for these areas, Hamburg uses its own resources to close gaps where target groups are not reached by what the federation offers. In addition, Hamburg advocates at the federal level the improvement and expansion of existing provisions.

With regard to paragraph 22 of the Resolution

“Forum Flüchtlingshilfe” (Hamburg’s forum for support for refugees) supports all volunteers working to help refugees by providing funding, information, information events, forums for dialogue, training and a major annual event. Migrant organisation are supported, for example by provision of exhibition stands at the “Aktivoli” volunteers fair.

In 2016 the “Active City” Masterplan was launched in Hamburg. It aims to encourage people in the city to lead more active daily lives but also to implement special projects to promote recreational and competitive sport. “Active City” will implement 26 of the projects planned in the context of Hamburg’s bid to stage the 2024 Olympic Games that offer the greatest benefit to the population and the city.

In 2017 and 2018 Hamburg funded HSB (Hamburg sports federation), the voluntary federation of sports clubs and associations in Hamburg, with €400,000 annually from Hamburg Parliament's Integration Fund. These grants are hypothecated to projects in the area of integration.

The German Olympic Sports Federation (DOSB) initiated the "Integration durch Sport" (Integration through Sport) project, funded jointly by the federation and DOSB, which assists the sports federations in the federal states with focusing more on integrating people from migrant backgrounds. For years the HSB has been making a big contribution to integration through this project and the "Willkommen im Sport" (welcome to sport) programme. The HSB supports its member associations financially with offering and running special measures that appeal both to refugees and to Hamburg residents from migrant backgrounds. Examples of HSB projects in the area of integration include a workshop to develop the involvement of migrants at all levels of a sports association, the Integration Cup 2017 involving sportsmen and women from Germany as well as from migrant backgrounds, and an integrative chess competition.

6. Latvia

Answers prepared by the Ministry of Interior

- 16) 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;

- 17) initiate a Baltic Sea-wide data basis on integration conditions and measures to improve the public discussion on a factual basis;

- 18) intensify the dialogue on migration and integration between the countries bordering the Baltic Sea;

On 13 February 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers endorsed the Conceptual Report on Immigration Policy, which provides proposals to improve the situation in the field of migration, including family consolidation, labour migration, student admissions, voluntary work and the development of administrative procedures. Work on the development of a new Immigration Law is currently taking place in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers decision.

At the same time, in parallel to this, the Ministry of the Interior has currently developed amendments to a number of legal acts proposing to determine individual benefits for employers who are members of the Extended Cooperation Programme with regard to the employment of foreigners.

Answer prepared by the Ministry of Labour

- 19) increase the offer of migration-specific advisory services and language training in order to intensify integration efforts;

Since January 2016, the SEA has implemented a project "The labour market integration of refugees and persons, who have been granted alternative status in Latvia" aiming at promoting sustainable integration of refugees and persons with alternative status (subsidiary protection) into the labour market and their inclusion into society.

For asylum seekers, introductory courses "Work opportunities in Latvia; individual consultations to asylum seekers on job opportunities in Latvia and information materials, including an e-leaflet "First Steps to Employment"", are available. Refugees and persons with alternative status have similar access to services of the SEA, including individual consultations and profiling with a view to assessing skills, like other residents of Latvia. 20 refugees and persons with alternative status have participated in the Latvian language courses without intermediate language in 2018. In the second part of 2018, the SEA has launched a new measure for employed refugees and persons with alternative status – language mentor services focusing on facilitating adaptation at workplace and development of professional vocabulary. In 2018, 7 persons have been offered the services of language mentor, 5 of them have completed training.

From January 2016 until the end of 2018, the SEA has registered 156 refugees and persons with alternative status (39 such persons were registered at the SEA in 2018). 53 persons have found a job with the SEA's assistance, 40 of them were employed at the end of 2018 (mainly in professions where Latvian language use is limited, e.g. in a supermarket, a storehouse, a non-governmental organisation, a medical institution, etc.). The SEA has developed cooperation with 116 employers willing to hire refugees or persons with alternative status.

Answers prepared by the Ministry of Interior

- 20) 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;

- 21) consider migration and security perspectives in relevant other political agendas such as trade, labour rights and environmental preservation;

- 22) seek holistic and multi-faceted solutions to the challenges posed by current 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;

On 13 February 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers endorsed the Conceptual Report on Immigration Policy, which provides proposals to improve the situation in the field of migration, including family consolidation, labour migration, student admissions, voluntary work and the development of administrative procedures. Work on the development of a new Immigration Law is currently taking place in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers decision.

At the same time, in parallel to this, the Ministry of the Interior has currently developed amendments to a number of legal acts proposing to determine individual benefits for employers who are members of the Extended Cooperation Programme with regard to the employment of foreigners.

7. Lithuania

No answers regarding Migration & Integration

8. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Para	Conference Resolution	Statement of the Government Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
18	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;	<i>During the development of the integration concept for the implementation of number 344 of the coalition agreement, consultations are held in various committees (including the “Landesintegrationsbeirat” and its thematic working groups on social integration, day care, school, transition from school to work, occupational integration and health), which include questions on migration as well as methods for (intercultural) sensitization of society⁵. Corresponding considerations are to be reflected in the integration concept of the state government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.</i>
19	initiate a Baltic Sea-wide data basis on integration conditions and measures to improve the public discussion on a factual basis;	<i>The aim of a more fact-based public discussion on the conditions of integration matches the activities in the context of the ongoing further development of the integration monitoring of the states, in which the Ministry of Social Affairs, Integration and Equal Opportunity of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern participates.</i>
20	intensify the dialogue on migration and integration between the countries bordering the Baltic Sea;	<i>The state government is open to dialogue and participates in appropriate opportunities.</i>

⁵ Paragraph 344 of the coalition agreement 2016-2021 for the 7th parliamentary term of the Landtag Mecklenburg-Vorpommern: “The coalition partners will continue the integration concept of the state in cooperation with all those involved.”

21	increase the offer of migration-specific advisory services and language training in order to intensify integration efforts;	<p><i>The state has further expanded its offer of migration-specific advisory services as part of its promotion of migration counseling. In the dual budget 2018/2019 700,000 euros per year are available for this area. With regard to language teaching, the country does not sponsor its own courses, but assumes responsibility for complementary services (travel costs, language mediation pools). For this purpose, 242,000 euros per year are available in the aforementioned double budget.</i></p> <p><i>Within the framework of the ministerial conferences, the state also advocates that the professional language support benefits all immigrants with at least subordinate access to the job market.</i></p> <p><i>The state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Federal Employment Agency and the job centers are jointly pursuing the goal of optimizing and accelerating the occupational integration process of migrants and of achieving sustainability. Measures taken to achieve this aim include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• The Health and Care Office (HCO) project initiated and funded by the country. It is aimed at immigrants who have already completed medical studies, medical or nursing education in their country of origin with the goal of gaining adequate and sustainable employment, primarily in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. The HCO supports doctors, pharmacists, nurses and other health professionals in fulfilling the necessary conditions for their professional recognition. For this purpose, additional qualification requirements are identified, suitable educational measures are initiated and individual career paths and perspectives are planned with those seeking advice. In this context, offers of language and vocational qualification are developed and implemented.</i>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The three nationally supported migration integration services (IFDM) advise, accompany and support, in close coordination with the job centers, adult migrants with access to the labor market individually on questions of vocational integration. This ranges from an individual competence assessment, to advice on the next integration steps (language support, measures for sponsors, integration projects, internships) up to induction coaching. At the same time, the IFDM works closely with employment services / job centers, employers, other counseling centers such as the IQ Network, NAF-plus, the Migration Social Counseling Service, the education / integration course organizers and other stakeholders. As a result of increased immigration, the three IFDMs were realigned and increased in number as of July 1, 2016 in order to meet the increased demand at around thirty locations across the state.</i> • <i>In particular, the SLALOM+ projects at various locations throughout the country, for example in Rostock, Güstrow, Bad Doberan and Stralsund, are implementing the idea of dual integration. The integration into German culture with the focus on language (BAMF integration course) is combined with the integration into the German labor market (SLALOM+). Participants with an escape background will learn the basis for their existence on the German job market with a language course. Once the necessary basic language level has been attained, these participants will be offered parallel, tailor-made offers for integration into the German labor market in SLALOM+.</i>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Accompanying the implementation of the professional recognition laws of the federal and state governments through counseling and support for recognition seekers is a central task of the nationwide funding program Integration through Qualification (IQ). The aim of the program is the sustainable improvement of labor market integration of adult immigrants, inter alia through the coordination of regional support services and the strengthening of the intercultural competence of labor market integration actors. The program is funded by the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (BMAS) with funds from the European Social Fund (ESF).</i>
22	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;	<p><i>Since 1990 the sports organization of the state, the "Landessportbund Mecklenburg-Vorpommern", supports the bringing together of people in our state as part of the Federal Integration through Sport program and with the support of the state government, in particular the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The unsalaried and full-time employees create encounters and bring movement into the integration process. They operate integration through sport with a variety of measures.</i></p> <p><i>Special club offers for people with a migration background are just as effective as mobile sports offers or the exercise of sports offers from the countries of origin in order to promote intercultural opening.</i></p> <p><i>The Integration through Sport program initiates the opening up of sports clubs and associations for migrants, asylum seekers and socially disadvantaged people, and helps to win them over as new club members.</i></p> <p><i>The Landessportbund Mecklenburg-Vorpommern provides sports associations and associations with funds from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees as well as the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture Mecklenburg-Vorpommern for the implementation of integrative measures. In particular, fees for instructors, hall rents, travel expenses, small sports equipment, language mediators, program costs and expenses of volunteers in sports are subsidized.</i></p>

23	consider migration and security perspectives in relevant other political agendas such as trade, labour rights and environmental preservation;	<p><i>The main objective of the labor market and employment policy of the state government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is the non-discriminatory, equal participation in the working lives of as many native and immigrant people in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, regardless of their age, gender, religion, nationality and ethnic origin.</i></p> <p><i>The aim is to exploit and use the qualificational potential of all potential employees and self-employed persons and to reduce barriers to integration in order to increase the employment rate in a sustainable manner and at the same time counteract a shortage of skilled workers and apprentices in the state.</i></p> <p><i>The state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Federal Employment Agency and the job centers are jointly pursuing the goal of optimizing and accelerating the professional integration process of migrants and of achieving sustainability.</i></p>
24	seek holistic and multi-faceted solutions to the challenges posed by current 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;	<p><i>As part of the integration ministers' conference and / or of federal and state meetings on the topic of integration, refugee and migration policy issues are discussed.</i></p> <p><i>The European Commission has already put forward legislative proposals to strengthen the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and proposed measures in the areas of legal immigration and integration, which the country welcomes. The following improvements are planned in the area of the Common European Asylum System:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Establishment of a viable, fair system for determining the Member State responsible for examining applications for asylum;</i> <i>• making greater convergence in the EU asylum system and reducing asylum hopping: The Commission will propose further harmonization of asylum procedures to eliminate more equal treatment and incentives across the EU to seek asylum, especially in a few Member States;</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>preventing secondary movements within the EU;</i>• <i>new mandate for the EU Asylum Agency;</i>• <i>strengthening the Eurodac system for better storage and transfer of fingerprints.</i> <i>The European Commission will also tackle several legal immigration and integration policies, including:</i>• <i>A structured resettlement system: The Commission will present a proposal for the design of the EU resettlement policy. It provides for a horizontal mechanism with common EU rules on reception and distribution, the status of resettled persons, financial support and measures to curb secondary movements.</i>• <i>A reform of the „EU Blue Card“ Directive: The role of the Directive in an EU-wide immigration policy could be consolidated through common rules, including more flexible eligibility requirements, improved licensing procedures and more rights for highly qualified third-country nationals.</i>• <i>The Commission will present an EU action plan for integration.</i> <p><i>Migration pressure remains a central concern of European citizens despite the crisis that has been overcome. Adequate migration management will continue to be a challenge for many years and requires a comprehensive response.</i></p>
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9. Poland

strengthening cooperation in the field of migration and integration, taking into account all Baltic countries to better meet similar tasks

The Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy of the Republic of Poland does not cooperate in the field of integration only with the countries of the Baltic Sea Region, since there is no specific working group or platform dedicated to this issues. Therefore the cooperation is carried out with countries of the European Union in frame of the existing structures.

The dialog on integration between European countries has been intensified recently under European Integration Network. While data basis on integration measures and conditions has been developed in 2009 as European Website on Integration. The offer of migration-specific advisory services and language training in order to intensify integration efforts has increased, since implementation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Found (AMIF) in Poland. From mid-2018 all voivodships have been carrying out on their territory integration projects. The projects include among others: Polish language courses, providing counselling and assistance in matters like legalization of stay, legal rights and obligations, health, psychological and social care, childcare and family reunification, providing adaptation courses for foreigners regarding Polish values and rights, providing support for schools in the field of working with foreign children, as well as activities supporting independence and self-sufficiency of foreigners.

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 integration role of sports will be enlarged in the nearest future. New open call for proposals under AMIF has been published on the governmental websites. It is addresses to all potentially interested stakeholders on the local level, including civil society organizations. It is expected that new projects will start to be implemented at the turn of 2019 and 2020.

10. *Russia*

INFORMATION

regarding the Migrants in Russian Federation (March 2019)

1. According to the Federal State Statistics Service **28 292** internally displaced persons arrived in the territory of the Russian Federation in 2015, **25 359** in 2016, **19 327** in 2017, and **13 795** in 2018. Most of the internally displaced persons come from **Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, and Uzbekistan.**

In 2015 there were 237 780 people who received temporary asylum. The vast majority of them came from the territory of **Ukraine** – 234 360 people, **Syria** – 1924 people., **Afghanistan** – 693 people, **Georgia** – 457 persons, **Uzbekistan** – 91 people.

In 2016 temporary shelter received 313707 person, the majority were Ukrainians – 311134 people, Syrian – 1302, from Afghanistan – 572, from Georgia – 292, from Uzbekistan – 79 persons.

In 2017 228 392 people received temporary asylum. The leading countries remained, from Ukraine 226044 people, from Syria – 1317 people from Afghanistan – 417 people, from Uzbekistan – 82 people.

In 2015 790 people received refugee status, in 2016 – 770 , in 2017 - 598 persons.

The amount of the daily allowance to citizens of internally displaced persons and refugees is 800 rubles: 250 rubles per day for food; 550 rubles per day for accommodation. (The money is transferred from the state budget to a special settlement account, where they go to pay for food, housing. The needy don't get cash.)

2. Federal Law (February 19, 1993 N 4528-I Art. 6 point 3) provides lump-sum payment addressed in the amount of not less than 100 rubles per person. Those in special need receive 150 rubles for each family member.

3. Citizens recognized as refugees have the right to receive a monetary allowance, the amount of which is set for each region separately. (In Moscow 2000 rubles per month).

The Russian Federation is a multinational country, on the territory of which representatives of **193 nationalities** live (according to the all-Russian population census of 2010). At the same time, the state of interethnic relations in the country is significantly influenced by migration processes.

The emergence of closed ethnic enclaves on the territory of the Russian Federation creates conditions in which its informal jurisdiction operates, generally accepted norms of behavior and Russian laws are ignored. In fact, these areas fall out of a single cultural and the legal framework of the state.

According to information of constituent entities of the Russian Federation, bodies of state power and bodies of local self-government, activities in the above area are carried out in the following areas:

- implementation of state and municipal programs in the field of harmonization of interethnic and interreligious relations;
- organization of monitoring in the field of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional relations on the territory of municipalities;
- holding various events with the participation of representatives of national associations and national cultural autonomies (seminars, round tables, festivals of national cultures, national holidays, etc.);
- working with media for coverage of issues related to these problems.

Among the best practices and priorities on topical issues of implementation of the state national policy and prevention of interethnic and interfaith conflict situations held in 2018 by the interested territorial bodies of Federal bodies of state power, Executive bodies of state power of the subjects of the Russian Federation and local authorities, the following can be highlighted.

In the Moscow region “The United migration center of the Moscow region” created, in the course of activities which the user is working on building an effective system of interagency cooperation and interaction of authorities with institutes of civil society.

The effective work of the segment of the state information monitoring system in the sphere of interethnic and inter-confessional relations and early warning of conflict situations was organized in St. Petersburg, which allowed to provide access to it employees of Executive authorities, in due time to reveal and promptly respond to the emergence of conflict and pre-conflict situations.

In the Leningrad region for arriving migrants developed an application “MigrantLenObl”, which is available for download in the Google play service, as well as on the Internet resource migrantlenobl.ru.

In the Chukotka Autonomous District youth associations, including those of a sporting nature, are in the sphere of preventive attention.

Working meetings are held with their leaders and coaching staff on preventing the involvement of young people and migrants in inter-ethnic, social, political and religious conflicts.

It is worth noting a balanced approach to solving the problems of ethnic enclaves in the Chelyabinsk region, where the work of the authorities together with the police in the Chelyabinsk region, identified priorities and directions for preventive work, built a system of response measures at various levels.

Almost all regions of the Russian Federation are working on the social and cultural adaptation and integration of migrants. In particular:

1. Assistance to migrants in mastering the Russian language. In the regions set up centers for testing the knowledge of Russian language, history and fundamentals of legislation of the Russian Federation, preparation for exams, school for studying of the Russian language and culture for children of migrants. Such centres exist in almost all regions.

2. Cooperation with leaders of national communities and religions of the regions, their participation in the work of Advisory bodies (public councils) of the territorial bodies of Federal Executive authorities, heads of administrations of municipal areas and urban districts: Arkhangelsk, Belgorod, Kaluga, Kemerovo, Moscow, Murmansk, Nizhny Novgorod, Novgorod, Omsk, Ryazan, Tula region, Republic Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, Komi Republic; Kamchatka Krai, Krasnodar.

3. For the implementation of projects and activities for ethno-cultural development, international cooperation and strengthening the unity of the Russian nation for non-profit organizations in the budgets of the following subjects of the Russian Federation provides subsidies (grants for the implementation of socio-cultural projects and programs): the Republic of Buryatia, Mordovia, Tatarstan, Udmurt; edge: Altai, Kamchatka, Stavropol; region: Kostroma, Moscow, Penza, Pskov, Rostov, Ulyanovsk; Khanty-Mansi Autonomous district.

4. In order to achieve the goals of social and cultural adaptation and integration of migrants, information materials for migrants (memos for foreign citizens arriving in the region): the Republic of Adygea, Komi; Altai, Khabarovsk; Kaluga, Kemerovo, Leningrad, Omsk, Smolensk, Ulyanovsk; St. Petersburg, Sevastopol have been prepared and distributed in printed form or published in journals with the involvement of local experts in the field of migration legislation, employers, representatives of the media, socially oriented NGOs, Diaspora leaders.

5. Activities are carried out to prepare foreign citizens for the exam in the Russian language for employment and for citizenship of the Russian Federation. Classes are held on the basis of language centers at educational institutions (Republic of Adygea, Komi, Sakha (Yakutia); Ivanovo, Kaluga, Kemerovo, Kostroma, Murmansk, Novgorod, Omsk, Orenburg, Tula, Yaroslavl; Krasnoyarsk, Perm region).

6. In the following regions the Centers of testing on knowledge of Russian language, history and bases of the legislation of the Russian Federation (examinations in Russian, history of Russia, bases of the Russian legislation) carry out the activity: republics of Adygea, Altai, Bashkortostan, Buryatia; areas Amur, Vladimir, Ivanovo, Kemerovo, Tyumen, Ulyanovsk; Krasnoyarsk Krai.

7. The Governor of the region (region) (head of the Republic) has a permanent Advisory body – the Coordinating Council on interethnic relations. Various aspects of migration policy and prevention of ethnic tension are periodically discussed. Coordination councils operate in the following regions: Belgorod, Ivanovo, Orel, Yaroslavl, Penza, Smolensk; Republic of Mordovia; Stavropol territory.

Thus, the **issues of combating the social exclusion of migrants, spatial segregation and the formation of ethnic enclaves** are considered by public authorities and local governments of municipalities of the Russian Federation in the general complex of issues of social and cultural adaptation and the integration of migrants arriving in the region.

Information and reference materials of the Ministry of Internal of Russian Federation (March 2019)

Since the accession of the Russian Federation to the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees at the end of 1992, a system of granting asylum to foreign citizens and stateless persons based on generally recognized norms of international law has been gradually established.

The main normative legal act regulating the legal status of foreign citizens and stateless persons (hereinafter — foreign citizens) seeking or receiving asylum in the territory of the Russian Federation is the Federal Law (February 19, 1993 № 4528 I) “On refugees” (hereinafter — the Federal law). It sets out the basic Convention principles for the protection of asylum-seekers, such as the confidentiality of information on asylum-seekers and the principle of “non-refoulement”.

The current legislation of the Russian Federation does not contain grounds for refusal of admission to the procedure of refugee recognition and temporary asylum.

Depending on the location of the person intending to seek asylum in the territory of the Russian Federation, the State bodies providing access to the refugee recognition procedure are:

- diplomatic missions or consular offices of the Russian Federation if the foreign citizen has not yet arrived on the territory of the Russian Federation;
- border body of the Federal security service at the checkpoint across the State border of the Russian Federation when crossing the State border of the Russian Federation by a foreign citizen in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation and international treaties of the Russian Federation;
- border body or territorial body of Federal enforcement authority in sphere of internal affairs in case of forced illegal crossing of the State border of the Russian Federation at the checkpoint or outside the checkpoint through the State border of the Russian Federation;
- territorial authority of Federal Executive authority in the field of internal Affairs (further - territorial authority of the Ministry of Internal of Russia) in case of stay on the legal basis in the territory of the Russian Federation.

In the event of a finding of foreign citizens, asylum-seekers, in the areas of additional restrictions (transit zones of airports, the Federal

penitentiary service, CSH, etc.), unit for migration, the territorial bodies of the MIA of Russia will ensure that the necessary measures to ensure access to the asylum procedure for such foreign citizens. Taking into account the difficulties of keeping foreign citizens in special temporary detention facilities, measures are being taken to reduce the period of consideration of applications for refugee recognition and applications for temporary asylum.

During the consideration of applications for refugee recognition or applications for temporary asylum, the reasons, circumstances, information and information provided by a foreign citizen when applying for asylum are comprehensively considered and studied, the socio-economic and political situation in the country of citizenship (former place of residence) of the foreign citizen who applied for asylum is analyzed.

The above-mentioned Federal law regulates economic, social and legal guarantees for the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of refugees.

In accordance with article 5 of the Federal law, the refugee status of a person under eighteen years of age and arrived on the territory of the Russian Federation without their parents or guardians, or the determination of its other legal provisions in the territory of the Russian Federation is carried out taking into account the interests of such person in accordance with normative legal acts of the Russian Federation after receiving information about the parents or guardians of the child.

Persons recognized as refugees or who have received temporary asylum, and the members of his family who have arrived with him have the right to social protection, including social security, on an equal basis with citizens of the Russian Federation, receiving assistance in the device of children of such persons in the state or municipal preschool educational organizations and educational organizations, professional educational organizations and educational organizations of higher education on an equal basis with citizens of the Russian Federation.

Four temporary accommodation centres for foreign citizens and stateless persons who have arrived in search of asylum or have already been recognized as refugees are currently operating on a permanent basis on the territory of the Russian Federation. In such centers, social and domestic arrangement of persons of this category, providing them with food and medical care at the expense of the state is organized.

The government of the Russian Federation, approved the State program of the Russian Federation “Realization of state national policy” (December 29, 2016 No. 1532) (hereinafter - state program), responsible executor of which is determined by the Federal Agency for the Affairs of Nationalities. In the part concerning the Ministry of internal of Russia, the State program provides for two activities: “Reception and maintenance of refugees and persons applying for recognition as refugees” and “Reception and maintenance of internally displaced persons” of the subprogram “Socio-cultural adaptation and integration of migrants in the Russian Federation”.

In 2018, 15.9 million rubles were spent on the implementation of these measures, in 2017 - 21.4 million rubles.

The guarantee of “non-refoulement” is one of the fundamental principles for the protection of foreign nationals seeking asylum, recognized as refugees or granted temporary asylum. Article 10 of the Federal law guarantees that a person applying for recognition as a refugee or recognized as a refugee or who has lost refugee status or has been deprived of refugee status cannot be returned against his will to the territory of the state of his citizenship, while maintaining in that state well-founded fears of becoming a victim of persecution on the basis of race, religion, citizenship, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion and the inability to enjoy the protection of his or her nationality or unwillingness to enjoy such protection because of such fears; or, without having a certain nationality and being outside the country of his or her former habitual residence as a result of such events, a person cannot or does not wish to return to it because of such fears.

For reference: In 2015, 152 489 persons applied for asylum in the territory of the Russian Federation, in 2016 — 26 409, in 2017 — 14 087.

The Russian Federation has accumulated considerable experience in the mass influx of refugees into its territory.

The first flow was caused by the consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the aggravation of the socio-political situation in a number of new post-Soviet States-the former Soviet republics (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Tajikistan, Moldova), the aggravation of interethnic relations in the new States.

In 2008, as a result of the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict, residents of South Ossetia and the interior of Georgia came to the territory of the Russian Federation in search of asylum for several days.

In early 2014, due to the large-scale use of military force in Do-

netsk and Lugansk regions, as well as the deterioration of the political and economic situation in Ukraine, the forced migration of Ukrainian citizens to the Russian Federation increased sharply, and since March 1, 2014, as a result of subsequent events in Ukraine, Ukrainian citizens began to arrive in the Russian Federation in search of asylum.

For reference: application for recognition as a refugee or a statement on temporary asylum in the territory of the Russian Federation in 2014 turned 271 020 citizens of Ukraine, in 2015, -149 962, in 2016 - 088 22, 2017 - 9 547.

Just for asylum have addressed more than 450 thousand citizens of Ukraine (455 566), of which 422 896 recognized as refugees or granted temporary asylum.

With the coordinated actions of Federal Executive authorities and authorities of subjects of the Russian Federation the mechanisms allowing were developed and approved by the Government of Russia:

- to carry out the distribution and transportation of Ukrainian refugees;
- to compensate to subjects expenses on social and household arrangement in points of temporary placement, vaccination and medical care;
- provide targeted financial assistance to certain categories of Ukrainian citizens living with Russian citizens;
- provide this category of persons with various long-term residence status in Russia as soon as possible.

Totally, about 18 billion rubles were allocated for the complex of measures for the reception of refugees from Ukraine in 2014 - 2016, of which about 70 percent was directed to the financial support of 576 temporary accommodation points (12.2 billion rubles).

For reference: Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation (22 July 2014 No. 693) "On the provision of other inter-budget transfers from the Federal budget to the budgets of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation for the provision of targeted financial assistance to citizens of Ukraine with refugee status or who have received temporary asylum in the territory of the Russian Federation and living in residential premises of citizens of the Russian Federation in 2014 and 2015".

Ukranian citizens in 2014-2016 were provided with free primary health care and specialized, including high-tech, medical care, preventive vaccinations.

For reference: Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation of 31 October 2014 No. 1134 "About rendering in 2014 - 2016 of medical care in the territory of the Russian Federation to citizens of Ukraine and the stateless persons who constantly lived in the territory of Ukraine, forcibly left the territory of Ukraine and arrived to the territory of the Russian Federation in an emergency mass order, and compensation at the expense of means of the Federal budget of the expenses connected with rendering to them in 2014 - 2016 of medical care, and also expenses on carrying out to the specified persons of the preventive vaccinations included in the calendar of preventive vaccinations on epidemic indications".

Citizens of Ukraine were assisted in ensuring the passage and transportation of Luggage to the place of stay in Russia, including free meals on the way. More than 66 thousand Ukrainian citizens (66 058 people) were transported and equipped. Basically, transportation was carried out from the Republic of Crimea, Sevastopol, Rostov and Belgorod regions.

For reference: Within the framework of the implementation of the decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of July 22, 2014 № 691 "On approval of the distribution of citizens of Ukraine and stateless persons by subjects of the Russian Federation, permanently living on the territory of Ukraine and arrived on the territory of the Russian Federation in an emergency mass order".

Significant preferences were created for the citizens of Ukraine in determining their legal position in the territory of the Russian Federation. Thus, the decision to grant temporary asylum to citizens of Ukraine during the period of emergency mass arrival was taken within a period not exceeding 3 working days from the date of application (In accordance with the decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of July 22, 2014 № 690 "On granting temporary asylum to citizens of Ukraine on the territory of the Russian Federation in a simplified manner").

In 2018, people from 75 countries applied for asylum in the Russian Federation.

As a result, the territorial bodies of the Ministry of Internal of Russia at the regional level adopted and considered applications for refugee recognition and applications for temporary asylum in the territory of the Russian Federation, received from 7.9 thousand foreign citizens and stateless persons.

As of January 1, 2019, 572 refugees and 76.8 thousand persons who received temporary asylum were registered in the territorial bodies of the Ministry of internal Affairs of Russia.

More than half of the registered refugees are from Afghanistan, 24.5 per cent from Ukraine, 5.4 per cent from Georgia, 3.5 per cent from Moldova and 3.3 per cent from Uzbekistan. The vast majority of foreign citizens with temporary asylum in the Russian Federation are citizens of Ukraine -97.6 %, Syria -1.1 %, Afghanistan — 0.6 %.

In 2018 the President of the Russian Federation approved the new Concept of the state migration policy of the Russian Federation (hereinafter — the Concept). This document is a strategic vector of activity of the Russian authorities in the field of migration. The concept is designed to create comfortable conditions for resettlement to Russia for permanent residence of our compatriots from abroad, as well as clearer rules for entry, obtaining the right of residence, work and acquisition of Russian citizenship for foreigners. The concept will enhance Russia's migration attractiveness and strengthen national mechanisms for regulating migration flows.

The concept regarding the implementation of one of its main directions in the field of assistance to foreign citizens seeking protection on the territory of the Russian Federation (paragraph 27), involves maintaining high standards and further development of mechanisms to assist foreign citizens seeking protection on the territory of the Russian Federation, in accordance with international legal obligations of Russia and taking into account the interests of Russian citizens.

The main office for migration, Department of internal Affairs of Russia carried out the development of the draft Federal law "On asylum in the Russian Federation", and also related to his adoption of draft Federal laws. The bill sets out the basic Convention principles for the protection of asylum-seekers. The proposed criteria are based on the international obligations of the Russian Federation relating to the Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Also take into account international experience and the experience obtained during the reception of citizens of Ukraine arriving in the emergency mass procedure.

In accordance with the decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of December 16, 2017 № 1569 "On amendments to the paragraph of the Regulations on the Federal Agency for nationalities" powers to carry out functions on the development and implementation of state national policy, state policy in the field of social and cultural adaptation and integration of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation, as well as regulatory and legal regulation and provision of public services in the field of state national policy, social and cultural adaptation and integration of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation are entrusted to the FADN of Russia.

8. Political Recommendations

Based on the deliberations of the working group, as well as the input from experts and young participants the following recommendations have been incorporated in the draft resolution of the 28th BSPP in Oslo 25-27 August 2019:

The participants, elected representatives from the Baltic Sea Region States*, assembling in Oslo, Norway, 25-27 August 2019,

call on the governments in the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS and the EU,

Regarding Cooperation in the Region, to

1. strengthen trust among all Member States of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) through further concrete efforts and measures;
2. intensify the early involvement of the next generation in policy and decision-making processes via concrete measures of the governments to reinforce the foundations of trust and security in the Baltic Sea Region as an element of foreign policy;
3. continue cooperation within the framework of the Northern Dimension, cross-border cooperation programmes between EU member states and Russia as well as Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme, and actively engage in developing new generations of these programmes for the future.
4. develop possible synergies and optimisation potentials between the different formats and institutions by reviewing the existing cooperation formats within the framework of the current CBSS reform process and to consider the consolidation of different formats;
5. establish fruitful professional cooperation on the basis of international law - such as has existed very successfully for decades through institutions such as HELCOM in the field of environmental policy - in a comparable way in other policy areas as well;

6. further strengthen measures to combat terrorism and violent extremism in line with human rights obligations and the rule of law – recognising that the effective fight against terrorism and violent extremism is an important pillar for the preservation of democracy and that parliaments have a key role to play in this context as well as in the awareness of all the measures taken to combat terrorism at the international level.

Further political recommendations are planned to be discussed in the next working group meetings and presented with the final report during the 28th annual conference 2020 in Vilnius.

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Annex 1

Baltic Sea Region Governments' Immigration and Integration Policy

Policy Assessment and Recommendations

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Turku, 23 May 2019

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1. Introduction

The Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference's (BSPC) Working Group on Migration and Integration conducted two surveys—one in 2018 and one in 2019—amongst the BSPC member governments (14 governments from the Baltic Sea Region responded to the surveys). The main goal of the surveys was to map the immigration and immigrant integration policies and procedures in the region, learn from the best practices and develop proposals to improve cooperation in planning migration and immigrant integration policies.

In the spring of 2019, the BSPC general secretariat commissioned the Migration Institute of Finland in Turku and researcher Matti Välimäki to assess and analyse the responses submitted by the respective governmental bodies of the Baltic Sea Region states. The present review provides a summarising assessment of different policy areas and suggests some future considerations for the Working Group on Migration and Integration and for the BSPC member governments.

2. Data and policy analysis

The following data were used for this analysis:

- *Primary material:* The BSPC member governments' responses to the survey conducted in the autumn of 2018 by the BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration⁷. There were 15 questions in the survey. 10 BSPC member countries and 4 regions provided responses for this survey. The document containing the responses of all the member governments has a length of 186 pages.
- The themes of the survey included policies and regulations concerning asylum, dual citizenship, work permits, advisory services for immigrants, courses provided by the governments, benefits provided for migrants, family reunification, evictions, unaccompanied minor asylum applicants, monthly costs per different categories of migrants, accommodation, and involvement of volunteers. For full list of questions, see Appendix I.

⁷ The BSPC member governments' responses to the 2018 survey can be found on the BSPC web page: <http://www.bspc.net/answers-of-the-governments-bspc-wg/> (accessed 19 April 2019).

- *Secondary material:* The BSPC member governments' responses to the additional survey conducted in the spring of 2019 by the BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration⁸. There were 9 questions in the survey. 10 BSPC member countries and 3 regions provided responses for this survey. The document containing the responses of all the member governments has a length of 81 pages.
- The themes of the 2019 survey included policies and regulations concerning numbers of asylum applicants, voluntary returns, evictions, and forced returns. In addition, monthly cost per month of different categories of migrants were inquired, as well as the practices of the governments of combating occurrences of social control in the migrant population, measures to prevent formation of segregated migrant communities, best practices that have proved beneficial for successful integration, and best practices of programs on language and culture education. For full list of questions, see Appendix II.

This analysis includes the following:

- A quantitative overview of the BSPC member governments' responses to the 2018 and 2019 surveys
- A qualitative analysis regarding the BSPC member governments' responses on the following:
 - (1) Immigration policies, i.e. entry policies
 - (2) Immigrant policies, i.e. policies concerning the rights and responsibilities of immigrants
- An overall assessment highlighting suggestions for the future

3. Quantitative overview of the responses

The 2018 and 2019 surveys represent a substantial overview of the current practices of entry and immigrant policies in the BSPC member states and regions. The focal points of the surveys are (1) the reception of asylum seekers and (2) immigrant integration measures. For context, in 2015 and 2016, Europe saw an increase in the number of asylum applications, making asylum seekers a crucial

⁸ The BSPC member governments' responses to the 2019 survey can be found on the BSPC web page: http://www.bspc.net/bspc_anhang_statementsbspc27/ (accessed 19 April 2019).

concern for the BSPC member governments. In addition, the stated purpose of the Working Group on Migration and Integration emphasises finding the best practices in immigrant integration.⁹

The responses indicate how the inflow and outflow of migrants vary considerably amongst the BSPC member states; the scope and goals of the legislation concerning immigration and integration in each country varied as well. Some governments provided rather detailed responses to the questions, whereas others were more concise. Regional governments often referred to the practices of their respective national legislations and policy practices, which is why the present assessment also highlights the country practices more than the regional governments' viewpoints. However, in future surveys and assessments, the intra-state differences are worth considering, e.g. in terms of integration policy practices.

This analysis does not focus on comparing the financial support immigrants receive or costs of immigration and immigrant policies. Even though these issues were dealt with in the questionnaires, the analysis of the answers would require a separate review to put the differences between practices of the countries into perspective. This would include, e.g. taking into consideration the standard of living and the cost of living in each BSPC member state. The responses should also be more commensurable than those received by these surveys. For instance, some of the responses to cost-related questions were relatively succinct, especially in the 2018 survey.

4. *Qualitative analysis*

The basis for the following assessment is the thematic and analytical separation between immigration and immigrant policies. The difference between these two policy realms is elegantly put by Geddes and Scholten: 'immigration policies concern themselves with conditions regulating territorial access by non-nationals and access to key social institutions such as the labour market and welfare state'. Immigrant policies, on the other hand, 'mark an attempt to re-organise and re-imagine the organisational and conceptual boundaries of a given community and create capacity to include or exclude newcomers'.¹⁰ To put it bluntly, immigration policies concern themselves with regulating the entry of non-nationals into a nation-state's territorial space and jurisdiction, whereas immigrant policies

⁹ See the *Appendices* for lists of the questions for both surveys.

¹⁰ Geddes & Scholten 2016, 11, 14.

address the rights and responsibilities of non-nationals. Immigrant integration measures are part of immigrant policies.

The two policy domains are also somewhat parallel because, e.g. family reunification regulations concern both the rights of immigrants in a host society *and* the possibilities for entry of potential immigrants in origin countries. The immigration policy arrangements in prospective host countries can also have an impact on immigrants' decisions of where to go. However, migrants' motives for moving from one country to another often cannot be distilled into a single factor, such as lack of working opportunities. On the contrary, individual migratory decisions often contain complex decision-making patterns, and grasping those motives combines the consideration of multiple individual and structural factors.¹¹

4.1. Populations and legislations

The BSPC member countries differ greatly in terms of the aspects influencing their policies and, in particular, their immigration and integration decision-making. The differences can already be seen in the population sizes which range from 144.5 million inhabitants in Russia and 82.8 million in Germany to 1.9 million in Latvia and 1.3 million in Estonia. Notable similarities also exist, however, regarding age structures and fertility rates. In all the member states, populations are ageing and fertility rates have been decreasing in past decades. Population growth and population projections are relatively moderate in most of the countries, and growth has even been negative in some countries in recent years. Population projections for 2050 (medium variant) compiled by Population Pyramid indicate population decreases of millions of people in Germany, Poland and Russia. Norway and Sweden, on the other hand, are likely to experience notable increases in population¹² (see Table I).

¹¹ See, e.g. de Haas 2011.

¹² Population Pyramid 2019.

TABLE I. Population, immigration, emigration, net migration and asylum applications in the BSPC member states.¹³

	Denmark	Estonia	Finland	Germany	Latvia	Lithuania	Norway	Poland	Russia	Sweden
Population (millions, 2018)	5.8	1.3	5.5	82.8	1.9	2.8	5.3	38.0	144.5*	10.1
Population growth (annual %, 2017)	0.7	0.0	0.3	0.4	-1.0	-1.4	0.9	0.0	0.1	1.5
Population projection for 2050 (millions, medium variant)	6.3	1.1	5.8	74.5	1.6	2.4	6.7	33.1	128.6	11.9
International migrant stock (%; 2017)	11.5	14.7	6.2	14.8	13.2	4.3	15.1	1.7	8.1	17.6
Emigrants (thousands, 2017)	262	199	295	4,200	374	597	197	4,700	10,600	348
Net migration - 2016	33,287	1,029	17,098	499,944	-12,229	-30,171	26,076	1,505	261,900	117,693
- 2017	24,631	5,258	14,824	416,080	-7,808	-27,557	21,349	1,436	211,900	98,869
- 2018	18,684	N/A	16,283	355,425	N/A	N/A	44,363	-14,799	203,577	50,792
Asylum applications										
- 2015	21,316	226	32,478	476,649	328	291	31,150	12,325	N/A	162,877
- 2016	6,266	84	5,646	745,545	350	425	3,460	12,319	N/A	28,939
- 2017	3,500	108	5,046	222,683	395	599	3,560	5,078	N/A	25,666
- 2018	3,120	90	2,945	184,180	175	385	2,530	4,110	N/A	18,045

* In 2017.

13 Data compiled by research assistants Elina Jokinen and Ellen Nieminen. Sources: Eurostat, Migration data portal, national statistical offices, Population pyramid, Statista, survey conducted in the spring of 2019 by the BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

The largest age group of foreigners in all the countries that differentiated their population with migration background according to age were those of working age, especially those between 25 and 40 years old. This may be regarded as possibly desirable because this group is potentially capable of making a living through labour market participation and thus integrate more successfully into the society of a country of residence. On the other hand, in countries where the number of immigrants of working age is high, an increase in the number of immigrants of retirement age is also expected if immigration occurs in a permanent manner instead of a temporary or circular fashion. In addition to the ageing populations in all BSPC countries, the ageing immigrant population puts even more pressure on decision-making regarding how to secure services and opportunities for older age cohorts. For instance, the needs of non-native language speakers should be considered in elderly care services.

All respondents did not, however, provide the same level of detail in their responses, and some respondents provided no data on their populations.¹⁴ Moreover, it would have been useful to define what was meant by the phrase ‘population with migration background’ in the question on population statistics in the 2018 survey because it can mean more than one thing: people who hold a foreign nationality, those born abroad or whose parents are born abroad, or those who speak as their mother tongue a language other than the official language of the country of residence.

In some countries, such as the Baltic States, Germany, Poland and Russia, emigration has been relatively high in the 2010s (see Table I), which may cause social concerns, such as the loss of skilled workers (the so-called brain drain phenomenon) or a decline in the dependency ratio. Apart from the European Union (EU) member states’ involvement in the Schengen free-movement area and bilateral visa agreements between different BSPC member states, emigration decisions are commonly derived, on one hand, from the employment and study opportunities available or from relationships between origin and destination country residents, and, on the other hand, from the deterioration of livelihoods in origin countries, and the accumulated social or other forms of capital in origin countries.

In addition to the differences in the number of emigrants, the number of immigrants and their regions of origin also vary considerably from one BSPC country to another. For instance, in the 2018 survey, the responses of the Baltic countries, Poland, Finland and

14 For instance, Estonia, Germany, Norway and Russia had deficiencies in the responses they provided on their populations.

Russia, report populations 'with migration background' being less than 5 per cent of the total population, whereas in Norway, Sweden, Germany and Denmark, the figures are between 10 and 25 per cent. These figures may, however, also be influenced by different ways of compiling statistics of the population 'with migration background'.

The state of immigration legislation in the BSPC member countries differs as well. All have some kind of legislation regarding immigration and immigrant issues, as is common practice in highly developed countries. The regulatory framework ranged from Aliens Acts and immigration laws to administrative decrees. Some BSPC members have a separate law on asylum seekers (e.g. Germany, Latvia and Poland) or immigrant integration (e.g. Finland and Germany), while others have integrated the sections on asylum seekers and integration into their Aliens Acts or decrees. In the EU member states belonging to the BSPC, citizens of other EU member states and the four (non-EU) European Free Trade Association (EFTA) member states belonging to the Schengen Area¹⁵ (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) residing in other member states are subject to different provisions than the non-EU/Schengen nationals. Moreover, since the late 1990s, the EU's Common European Asylum System (CEAS) has increasingly influenced national immigration and immigrant regulations, especially in the area of asylum policies and family reunification.¹⁶ The EU's European Commission has also agreed on recommendations for immigrant integration. However, there are differences in the immigrant integration legislation and procedures which will be discussed in Section 4.3. Labour migration policies, on the other hand, are still largely within the national decision-making power.

15 The 26 Schengen countries are: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

16 On the CEAS, see Geddes & Scholten 2016.

4.2. Immigration policies

4.2.1. Acceptance requirements for international protection beneficiaries

The United Nations (UN) Refugee Convention of 1951 and its 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees are the most important bases for assessing an asylum applicant's eligibility for international protection in the BSPC countries' legislation.¹⁷ The UN Convention defines the refugee status, which is widely accepted as part of international law, and many BSPC member states mention this definition in their responses. The core ideas of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol are the (1) non-refoulement principle and (2) the definition of refugees. The non-refoulement principle asserts that people should not be returned to a country where they face threats to life or personal freedom. The UN Refugee Convention definition of refugees states the following:

*[O]wing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.*¹⁸

This definition thus emphasises the fear of persecution while leaving out, e.g. the persons seeking international protection on grounds of losing their livelihoods and those unwilling to return due to conflicts, wars or environmental disasters taking place in their country of origin.

In the EU member states, the international protection provision derives strongly from the EU Qualification Directive¹⁹ which encompasses the protection status for (1) refugees on the grounds defined in the UN Convention on Refugees and for (2) people who are eligible for international subsidiary protection. The international subsidiary protection can contain eligibility for international protection on humanitarian grounds due to, for instance, inhuman conditions, threat of violence or threat of the death penalty that may occur if people return to their country of origin. For example, Sweden recognises the death penalty, torture, internal armed conflict and environmental disasters as reasons for asylum.

¹⁷ United Nations 1951, 1967.

¹⁸ United Nations 1951.

¹⁹ European Union 2011/95/EU.

Residence permits provided in the BSPC countries on grounds of subsidiary protection are often temporary, whereas residence permits based on the UN Convention status are often permanent or long term. In the BSPC countries which are also part of the EU, the EU's CEAS operates similarly regarding the minimum standards in asylum reception processes and the services and facilities provided during the assessment of asylum applications.²⁰ The Council of Europe's European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms²¹ also contains elements which protect international protection seekers, e.g. from being returned to inhuman conditions. All the BSPC governments have signed this Convention document.

The BSPC governments may find it useful to discuss whether the practices concerning the definitions of subsidiary protection can be standardised within the BSPC region. Another issue worth considering in the broader international cooperation framework is the possibility of a coordinated joint action of the BSPC governments when discussing possible future reassessments of international protection statuses in bilateral and multilateral negotiations and meetings.

4.2.2. Work permit procedures

Some need exists for foreign workers in all the BSPC member states' labour markets, and the need is often particularly crucial in sectors such as the construction and health care services. According to EU legislation, EU citizens have the right to freedom of movement and have unlimited access to the labour markets of other member countries. The EU and EFTA country citizens do not need a visa or a specific residence permit for entry or employment in an EU/EFTA member country. However, a valid passport or identity card is necessary for registration, which is obligatory in some EU countries after residing for a certain period (usually from 3 to 6 months) in the country.

In all the EU member countries, non-EU/EEA residents immigrating on the basis of working are obliged to apply for a work permit before entering an EU/EEA member country. In some countries, they also need to separately apply for a residence permit. Work permits usually are issued on a temporary basis. In general, labour migrants from outside the EU/EEA area are expected to meet certain

²⁰ See, e.g. *European Commission* 2019.

²¹ *Council of Europe* 1950.

criteria, varying according to the BSPC state, to obtain a residence permit. The most common criteria are the following:

1. There should not be workers with similar qualifications and availability for recruitment in the national and EU/EEA area (availability assessment is conducted by public authorities).
2. Salary and working conditions should be equivalent to the national standards (assessment is conducted by public authorities).
3. Employment needs to enable the workers to support themselves during their stay in the host country (assessment is conducted by public authorities).

Asylum seekers and people who have been granted residence permits on the basis of international protection and family reunification have the right to work in several countries, either without a waiting period or after a certain period of time (often a few months).

In summary, most BSPC member states tend to favour and protect their own citizens from extensive labour market competition and, in some cases, their labour markets from the deterioration of national working life standards. The EU/EEA member states also give priority position to other EU/EEA citizens regarding work permit procedures. Of the non-EU/EEA citizens, highly qualified people and international students are often given the benefit of a fast-track procedure in pursuit of increasing the flexibility and competitiveness of labour markets.

4.2.3. Family reunification

The right to family life refers to the right of all individuals to have their established family life respected and to have and maintain family relationships. This right is recognised in many international human rights instruments, is adopted in one form or another in many highly developed nations' legislations, and is also provided for in the EU directive on family reunification.²² The survey responses on family reunification concentrated for the most part on the rights and position of asylum seekers and refugees. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that family reunification regulations also concern other migrants. Furthermore, if family reunification regulations and procedures also apply, e.g. to labour migrants and international students,

²² European Union 2003/86/EC.

their viewpoints should be considered as well when formulating or assessing these policies.

Every BSPC country grants family reunification to a certain degree. However, the laws of each BSPC state contain limitations, conditions and differences in definitions of family, which vary, amongst other things, as to the kind of relationship or the type of residence permit. A clear disproportion exists between the rights of the citizens of the Schengen Area and the so-called third-country nationals. For example, even with bilateral visa agreements in force, often the rights of third-country nationals to family reunification is limited in many ways, such as requiring documentation of adequate legal income of the sponsor to support family members (e.g. in Estonia, Finland and Norway), documentation of health insurance (e.g. in Germany and Latvia) or the ability to speak the basics of the national language (in Germany). Residence permits on grounds of family ties for third-country nationals are often granted on a temporary basis, which may have a negative impact on the likelihood of integration into the host society.

The beneficiaries of international protection are often provided with the possibility to reunite their families. An unaccompanied minor asylum seeker who is granted international protection usually has the right to reunite with parents arriving from a foreign country. There are also exceptions to this general rule, however. For instance, since July 2016, a temporary act (in force until July 2019) in Sweden limits the rights of family reunifications for those who are eligible for subsidiary protection. The same kind of restrictions were adopted in Germany in 2016.

In some states, a period of residence has been defined after which the asylum seeker or refugee has the right to apply for family reunification (e.g. in Latvia, the deadline is 2 years). In most countries, family reunification is provided to the members of the so-called nuclear family, i.e. spouses and (minor) children. The migration of non-residents on the basis of family ties is possible only in exceptional cases, e.g. in the case of other relatives or common-law spouses. BSPC governments would find it worthwhile to discuss whether the current family reunification regulations provide in effect sufficient circumstances for the right to family life to be fulfilled for migrants living in their jurisdictions.

4.2.4. Removals and returns

If the conditions of the residence permit in a country are (no longer) fulfilled, the authorities may order a removal or return of foreigners to their country of origin or former residence. A responsible authority depends on the type of removal or return in question. This may be, e.g. a deportation following a negative asylum decision, removal of a person residing without a residence permit or expulsion of a non-national who has committed a crime. Finland's survey response on evictions also mentions the category 'refusal of entry'. In the BSPC countries and regions, the authority that handles removals and returns is usually the central office responsible for immigration or border control operating under the authority of a ministry or a special agency responsible for, e.g. residence permits for foreign labour. Schleswig-Holstein's response states that, in this region, the 'County Immigration Office' (*Kreisausländerbehörde*) is responsible for deciding to pursue an eviction.

For removals and returns, foreigners also presumably have some kind of opportunity to appeal the decisions of the authorities. However, only Denmark and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern's responses mention this possibility. Moreover, deportations and returns can be either voluntary or enforced by nature. In voluntary returns, the persons are usually given a set period of time by which they must leave the country. Enforced cases, in turn, involve one or more escorts, usually police officers.

A problem with regard to the responses on 'eviction activities' is related to the term 'eviction' used in both the 2018 and 2019 surveys. The comparability of the figures given by the respondents on evictions is questionable because there may be difference in the way the respondents understand the word 'eviction'. Does the term refer to removals or returns, and is the term understood as expulsion? This problem with the interpretation of the word was also raised in several responses to the 2018 question. Furthermore, in the 2018 survey, about half of the respondents did not provide an answer to question 11, which asked about the number of evictions. However, the BSPC 2019 questionnaire clarified this theme, and the topic was detailed by asking for the number of voluntary and forced returns in addition to the number of evictions. (See Table II.)

TABLE II. Evictions, voluntary returns and forced returns in the BSPC member states and regions, 2015–2017.²³

	Denmark	Estonia	Finland	Germany	Latvia	Lithuania	Norway	Poland	Russia	Sweden	Hamburg	M-V	S-H	Åland
Evictions														
- 2015	N/A	136	281*	20,888	N/A	N/A	5,155	13,669	N/A	N/A	120	2	570	N/A
- 2016	N/A	110	430*	25,375	N/A	N/A	4,726	20,046	N/A	N/A	186	5	840	N/A
- 2017	N/A	125	905*	23,966	N/A	N/A	3,289	24,943	N/A	N/A	256	12	338	N/A
Voluntary returns														
- 2015	164	459	470	37,320	1,225	44	1,167	11,604	N/A	13,261	1 273	544	N/A	N/A
- 2016	176	397	1,831	54,006	1,027	69	1,459	17,558	N/A	16,414	2 257	771	N/A	N/A
- 2017	96	527	1,380	29,522	876	154	568	21,247	N/A	9,047	603	566	N/A	N/A
Forced returns														
- 2015	482**	157	558	N/A	392	108	7,887	873	N/A	3,414	664***	1200	N/A	N/A
- 2016	315**	153	1,521	N/A	343	30	8,077	687	N/A	3,728	805***	846	N/A	N/A
- 2017	490**	165	377	N/A	187	12	5,434	813	N/A	4,165	608***	497	N/A	N/A

M-V = Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, SH = Schleswig-Holstein

* The provided number of 'deportations'. ** The sum of the provided number of 'accompanied returns' and 'ensured returns'. *** The sum of the provided number of forced returns 'ins Herkunftsland' and 'in Drittstaaten'.

The number of returns and removals varies considerably between the BSPC member states and regions. For example, from 2015 to 2017, the evictions were fewer than 200 per year in Estonia and between 120 and 286 in Hamburg; however, the annual figure during this same period was between 20,000 and 26,000 in Germany and between 13,000 and 25,000 in Poland.²⁴ The most significant explanatory factors are presumably the differences between the countries in the number of asylum applications and overall immigration because countries with a higher number of asylum applications and immigration usually also have a higher number of removals and returns.

For voluntary and forced returns, the trend was largely similar, although the figures provided by many countries and regions on voluntary and forced returns were remarkably low in many instances. In Poland, however, the number of voluntary returns was significant (11,000–22,000 per year in 2015–2017), notwithstanding that the number of asylum seekers in the country was considerably lower than, e.g. in Germany or Sweden, where the number of voluntary returns was also high (in 2015–2017, Germany had 29,000–55,000, and Sweden had 9,000–17,000 per year). The relatively high number of forced returns in Norway (5,000–8,100 per year in 2015–2017) was noteworthy as well as the relatively low number of forced returns in Sweden (3,400–4,200 per year in 2015–2017), despite the relatively high numbers of asylum seekers and immigrants in the country (see Table II). Nonetheless, further investigation into national and regional practices and legislation is necessary to assess the different factors influencing these figures.

4.3. Immigrant policies

4.3.1. Dual citizenship

Regarding dual citizenship regulations, the countries vary in the level of restrictiveness and detail. Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Poland, Russia and Sweden allow dual citizenship at least to some extent. Most of these countries define the requirements for acquiring dual citizenship in different levels of detail. Latvia, e.g. allows dual citizenship only for certain nationalities: citizens of the EU, EEA or NATO member states, or Australia, Brazil and New Zealand. Denmark and Sweden stated they had no special conditions for acquiring dual citizenship.

²⁴ Figures according to the responses to the 2018 survey.

In some member states, different regulations also allow exceptions to the general rule of not allowing dual citizenship. For instance, in Lithuania and Estonia, one might acquire citizenship if the person applying for citizenship holds refugee status or is a beneficiary of international protection granted by these states or any other EU member state. Germany indicated that ‘multiple citizenships should be avoided’. However, Germany does allow dual citizenship if its quite demanding conditions are met by the applicants. In addition, Norway allows multiple citizenships only in exceptional cases, but the country is potentially preparing a regulation allowing dual citizenship in the future. In summary, it seems that BSPC member states are systematically following the general trend of most developed countries in recent decades to gradually decrease the restrictions regarding dual citizenship, although examples to the contrary remain.²⁵

4.3.2. *Unaccompanied minor asylum applicants*

In recent decades, many comparative studies and surveys have been published on unaccompanied minor asylum applicants. These studies are worth consulting by BSPC governments.²⁶ In 2015, there were close to 100,000 unaccompanied minor asylum applicants registered in the EU countries but in 2017 the number had decreased to close to 30,000 applicants. Of the BSPC members, Germany and Sweden have been among the receivers of the highest numbers of minors applying for asylum. In the EU member states, the unaccompanied minors mostly consist of young boys of 16 and 17 years of age. Only small proportion of the total is under 14 years of age. The percentage of unaccompanied minor girls has in recent years often been between 10 to 15 percent of the total number of unaccompanied minors. In 2017, the main countries of origin of the unaccompanied minor applicants in the EU were Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea and Somalia.²⁷

All BSPC countries and regions have special procedures for reception of unaccompanied minors and means of supporting their integration.²⁸ The legislative framework in the member states and regions is mainly based on the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the UN Refugee Convention and the EU *acquis*. Reception and care during the minor asylum applicant’s status determination varies but

25 Blatter, Erdmann & Schwanke 2009; Vink & Bauböck 2013.

26 See, e.g. Kobli & Mitchell 2007; Björklund 2015; European Migration Network 2018.

27 European Migration Network 2018.

28 Russia did not provide response to the 2018 survey’s questions on unaccompanied minor asylum applicants.

there are significant similarities in the systems of the EU member states due to the EU's CEAS and Union's *acquis* framework. In most countries, unaccompanied minors are assigned a representative or guardian whose task is to ensure that the child's best interests are considered during the asylum process. A guardian may be a voluntary citizen (e.g. in Denmark and Finland) or a state or municipal employee (e.g. in Estonia, Germany and Latvia). Volunteer guardians are paid at least in some countries by the government for their duties. Lithuania's system differs slightly from the others, since according to its response, the public Refugee Reception Centre acts as guardian for unaccompanied minors.

In all member states and regions, unaccompanied minor asylum seekers are accommodated in their own accommodation units with intensive support. Services provided in these facilities for people under the age of 18 are generally more extensive than for adult asylum seekers. In some form or another the following services seem to be available in all countries and regions which provided their response to the questions on minor asylum applicants²⁹: temporary accommodation, intensive care and guidance services, different kinds of education (e.g. language, culture orientation and school preparatory courses), social security and health care. However, for example, the integration and language courses and services may differ considerably in different regions, municipalities and cities of a given country. As the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern response highlights, at least in the case of Germany, 'support measures in the school sector and professional sector are organized by the individual federal states'. Several of the respondents (e.g. Norway, Sweden and Poland) state that the aim is to provide as convergent services as possible to minors of their own country. However, based on the responses to the surveys, it is impossible to compare in detail the differences in the coverage of the services in the different BSPC countries or regions. It could be considered among the BSPC member states and regions if there is possibility to come up with minimum standards of reception facilities and above mentioned services for minor asylum seekers.

All the BSPC countries and regions that have answered the questions on minor asylum applicants, have some kind of legislation that allows age assessment of minors. Usually the authorities may request a medical age assessment when it is not possible to define with certainty whether the person is over or under 18 years of age. This procedure is used especially in the cases where an unaccompanied minor is not able to present valid ID document. The medical age assessment is voluntary, but in many countries a person who

29 Russia did not provide response to the 2018 survey's questions on unaccompanied minor asylum applicants.

refuses to take part in the assessment is considered automatically an adult. The medical assessment usually consists of dental x-ray and/or wrist x-ray. The results of medical assessments are in many countries reported to be used with caution, and they are often only one of the factors the authorities consider in the overall age assessment. Also it is mentioned in several responses that if there is a reasonable doubt about the asylum applicant's age, the applicant will be considered a minor.

When an unaccompanied minor asylum applicant reaches the age of 18 or is declared by the authorities to be an adult, he or she usually moves immediately to adult reception facilities and reception centers. In some states (e.g. Finland and Sweden) there is a special transition period during which a person who is between 16 and 17 years of age is intensively trained for independence and taking responsibility for one's own life. This practice could also be considered in those BSPC countries and regions where it is not yet in use. Also the differences between the practices and legislations concerning detaining and deportation of unaccompanied minors in the BSPC member states and regions should be compared in order to possibly find common good practices that secure the basic and human rights of the children.

4.3.3. Services provided for immigrants

Provision of advisory services and training courses is crucial for the establishment of a reception process for asylum seekers which takes into consideration the basic and legal rights of the persons arriving and provides sustainable and flexible integration trajectories for all immigrants. In all the BSPC states and regions, advisory and legal assistance to foreigners, asylum seekers and refugees were differentiated by the status of the beneficiary. These services exist to a certain extent in each state and region. In some countries, asylum seekers have access to legal assistance at various stages of the asylum application process, especially at the appeal stage. However, in some other countries, such as Germany, publicly paid legal aid is not available or is quite limited.

Some of the respondents in the 2018 survey only raised legal or other kinds of advisory services for asylum seekers and refugees and did not talk about advisory services designed for other immigrants. However, information is likely provided for other groups of immigrants as well—at least as an online service. Nonetheless, most of the respondents referred to certain kinds of general immigrant information services, usually provided by branches of one or more ministries, such as

the Citizen Service at the Danish Immigration Service in Denmark or the Finnish Immigration Service in Finland.

All BSPC countries and regions offer some kind of language courses and civic education for immigrants. Vocational training, however, was mentioned less often by the respondents. The responses focused on integration services for asylum seekers and refugees, which were usually free of charge. In more than half of the states, asylum seekers have a duty to participate in this public integration training. If an asylum applicant does not take part in these courses, a reduction in the applicant's social benefits is prescribed in several states. In Poland, participation was exclusively voluntary. Other immigrants than asylum seekers, both third-country nationals and EU citizens, are also provided with education on language, employment and social and cultural aspects of the host society. For third-country nationals, those taking the training must pay for it, but participation is voluntary. The integration procedures in Norway and Sweden differ from other states; i.e. all foreign nationals between 16 and 55 years of age who hold a permanent residence permit (Norway) and all 'people who recently received a residence permit' (Sweden) have *both* the right *and* obligation to participate in integration training. The primary objectives of the BSPC countries' integration policy measures for immigrants appear to be learning the host country's language and gaining employment in the short- to medium term.

One best practice example to be considered in other BSPC states is the system in Lithuania where there are three foreigner integration centres in the country's three largest cities.³⁰ These centres aim to provide 'one-desk' services for foreigners and to facilitate a wide range of services at one office to speed up integration into society and the labour market. More information on best practices for immigrant integration was collected in the 2019 survey of the Working Group on Migration and Integration.³¹ Information on the most successful integration practices can also be found, e.g. in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Nordic Welfare Centre reports on integration policies and indicators, and the open access edited volumes published in the International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in Europe (IMISCOE) Research Series.³² Unfortunately, it is not possible to address the best practice examples in detail in the context of this assessment.

30 The centres are in Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda.

31 The responses for the 2019 survey are available at http://www.bspc.net/bspc_anhang_statementsbsp27/ (accessed 10 May 2019). See the responses to questions 8 and 9.

32 The OECD reports on immigrant integration are available at <http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/integrationpoliciesandindicators.htm> (accessed 10 May 2019). See also MIPEX 2019; Nordic Welfare Centre 2019; Scholten, Entzinger, Penninx & Verbeek 2015; Garcés-Masareñas & Penninx 2016a.

Certain issues might still need to be further clarified in future assessments and surveys with regard to advisory, legal assistance and integration services in the BSPC member states and regions. The answers did not, e.g. tell much about the educational background of the authorities providing information and legal advice or what their operational principles are. It would also be useful to know how national trade unions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or local employers are involved in providing advice and integration services for immigrants. However, most governments mentioned that voluntary civil society members who organise different activities or services for immigrants are supported by public funds. The amounts allocated differed considerably amongst countries. Most of these services provided by organisations and volunteers were related to asylum seekers or support for integration.

4.3.4. Accommodation

Responses to accommodation for immigrants focused on services and challenges related to asylum seekers. Every country provides accommodation of some form to the asylum seekers whose applications for asylum are being assessed. Responses from many countries highlighted the impact that the type of residence permit asylum seekers hold had on housing opportunities and the services available. Usually, in BSPC countries, asylum seekers waiting for a decision can first be housed in state-financed reception facilities organised by municipalities, state immigration services or NGOs. The services offered at these reception centres vary from country to country but may include food provision, language courses, training on social and cultural integration, social and health care services or distribution of social support.

In some countries, such as Germany, asylum seekers are usually obliged to live in a reception centre for a certain period of time (from 6 weeks to 6 months in Germany) before being allocated a place for regional accommodation, usually organised in collective accommodation facilities. In some cases, such as in Finland, in addition to the reception centre, asylum seekers are allowed to live in private accommodation (e.g. with a relative or a friend) during the asylum process. These situations are assessed on a case-by-case basis by the employees of the reception centres to ensure, inter alia, that the housing conditions are decent. If a foreigner is detained, most countries have a special kind of detention centre for accommodating these people where services, the movement of residents and more are restricted.

Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, on the other hand, usually have separate reception centres or units in many of BSPC countries. These facilities often provide broader services and support, e.g. in education, social integration and organising the lives of minor asylum seekers in their new country of residence. It might be reasonable to examine, in collaboration with the BSPC states, whether there are still countries where unaccompanied minors live together with adult asylum seekers and whether these practices should be modified.

If people are granted asylum or an alternative international protection status, they can usually live in a reception centre for a certain period of time. These people are then normally expected to move to their own homes. In some countries, such as Finland and Sweden, the reception centre's employees and municipal authorities actively support persons who have been granted residence permits in the practicalities of finding and moving into a private accommodation (e.g. a new apartment). Especially for those minor asylum seekers who have been granted a residence permit, support for moving to their own home is well planned.

BSPC states and regions would find it worthwhile to discuss defining common minimum standards for accommodation and services provided by the reception facilities for asylum seekers. The possible differences in the level of accommodation and services provided *within* countries, e.g. due to the service provider in question, should also be considered critically to achieve equality between asylum seekers living in different centres. These kinds of standards have already been discussed and formulated amongst EU member states.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Similarities and differences of contextual frameworks impact the BSPC member governments' abilities, means and goals in immigration and immigrant policy. Different historical legacies, such as the Cold War era minority and immigrant policies can also influence the approaches and regulations adopted by the states. In addition to history, different present-day realities in both predominantly migrant sending or migrant receiving countries and members and non-members of the EU have an effect, e.g. on the immigrant integration, asylum and family reunification policies and administrative practices. In the Baltic countries in particular, the scale of

emigration has been substantial to the extent that it poses a threat to the reproduction of populations and the sustainable economic and social development of these countries.³³

The Working Group on Migration and Integration determines as its objective ‘to elaborate political positions and recommendations pertaining to migration and integration’.³⁴ To support this endeavour, the assessment concludes by providing the following reflections and suggestions based on the findings.

Reflections and suggestions

On asylum policy

1. EU asylum policy makes a significant contribution to the asylum reception systems and legislation of the EU member states. It would be **worth considering whether the BSPC member states that are not members of the EU would be able to adopt some of the common practices of the EU member states**. For instance, there may be differences between the non-EU and EU countries in the process leading to deportation, in processing asylum applications, or in reception facilities provided for minor asylum applicants. To what extent **can these practices potentially be harmonised**, taking into account both national and human/fundamental rights’ considerations?
2. Could BSPC members consider establishing **a common origin country data collection services or database or at least enhance collaboration amongst the BSPC governments in this field**? This would help achieve a fair and equal practice of processing asylum applications in different BSPC countries, increase coordination and mutual understanding amongst the BSPC countries and decrease possible overlap in collecting origin country information.

On migration and labour markets

1. Solutions concerning foreign labour and international mobility of the workforce are primarily based on national considerations. Are more opportunities available for **multinational**

³³ See, e.g. Engbersen & Jansen 2013; Kirch 2013.

³⁴ Working Group on Migration and Integration 2018, 7.

cooperation and coordination to balance undesirable developments such as labour shortages and labour oversupply?

2. The best practices of **supporting the societal and cultural integration and employment of certain groups of immigrants** (e.g. how international students, housewives or younger and older immigrants are acknowledged when formulating integration, education or employment legislation and policy) should be discussed amongst the BSPC governments. Nevertheless, securing the well-being of all members in a given society is arguably the desired state of a resilient society.

On immigrant integration

1. The **multifaceted character of immigrant integration needs to be acknowledged**, and this understanding should be put into practice on the level of legislation and policies. Integration occurs at the same time on different levels (labour market, language, social relationships, cultural accommodation etc.). **How to measure the different aspects of integration and their overall capacity-building relevance should be considered.**
2. Immigrant integration is more than just national and regional governments' (administrative) actions. Governments and public administrations can obviously act as enablers of successful integration. However, **other actors, such as NGOs and largely informal social networks of immigrants or ethnic communities in host and origin countries can be crucial for social and labour market integration.** How the public policies can facilitate the desirable working conditions of the NGOs and informal networks should be considered.
3. From the point of view of integration and population policy planning, it might be useful to ask (1) **how and if the three-way integration**,³⁵ i.e. (a) the integration of immigrants to the practices of the host society, (b) the adaptation of the host society to the diversification of the citizens' backgrounds and practices of the members of a society and (c) the role the countries of origin play **is acknowledged in the BSPC states**; and (2) **how and if good relations within the population and diverse society's ability to function are promoted by public action.**

35 On the three-way integration process concept, see, e.g. Garcés-Masareñas & Penninx 2016b.

On data collection

1. To provide all respondents with **comparable and sufficiently detailed responses to the questions asked**, the following steps are recommended: (1) The questions should be as precise as possible regarding the necessary information and the level of accuracy required. (2) Responses should be reviewed, and incomplete answers should result in queries for more information.
2. More comprehensive **understanding and data on local level trends** in the BSPC region are needed. For instance, immigrant integration and economic and labour market impact of migration occur to a significant degree on the local level. Nevertheless, the national and subnational assessments—such as the BSPC 2018 and 2019 surveys—are also important for understanding the broader policy and societal frameworks.
3. The **surveys** conducted by the BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration in 2018 and 2019 **should be considered to be repeated every 3 to 5 years** to enhance understanding on the developments of policy convergence and differentiation between the BSPC countries and regions' legislations and policies over time.
4. For example, **OECD, Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), the Nordic Welfare Centre and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have compiled surveys and lists of best practices** of various aspects of immigration and immigrant policies. The **information and lessons learned gathered by these organizations could be combined in the future with the data collected by the BSPC members.**³⁶ This would also help avoiding duplication of data collection and possibly enhance cooperation with these organizations in the field of immigration.

³⁶ See References, for some of these publications. See also the responses to the 2019 survey, for some of the best practices mentioned by the BSPC governments.

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Appendices

APPENDIX I. Questions of the 2018 BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration survey.

1. Name of national / regional parliament
2. If available, please, provide information regarding the population structure of your country / region total, female, with migration background, living in urban areas
 - 2a. If available, please, provide detailed information regarding the population structure in your region / country Insert percentage, 18-25, 26-40, 41-50, 51-65, 66+
 - 2b. If available please give a prognosis for you country's population in 20 years concerning demographic development?
3. What are the significant rules for immigration? E. g. does an immigration law exist?
4. What are the requirements for the acceptance of asylum?
5. Does your country allow dual citizenship?
6. What are the conditions to obtain a work permit?
7. Do advisory services for foreigners (or migrants, asylum seekers, refugees) exist?
8. Are courses provided by the government, such as language courses or courses e.g. for civic education or vocational training?
 - 8a. Who is allowed to participate in courses?
 - 8b. Are the courses free of charge?
 - 8c. Are there obligatory courses?
9. What kind of benefits exist for migrants / asylum seekers?
 - 9a. What are the conditions for the benefit payments?
 - 9b. How do the benefits relate to the average national income?
10. Are there possibilities for family-reunification?
11. Could you inform us about the number of evictions activities?
 - 11a. Who decides to pursue an eviction?

12. How does your country deal with unaccompanied minors? (a guardian or representative, the right to accommodation in a dedicated home or in a foster, family child-specific social, economic and educational rights)
 - 12a. Do you have special programs for family unification / resettlement / return?
 - 12b. Is there a continued support upon turning 18 (reaching legal age)?
 - 12c. Are there procedures to identify ostensible minors?
 - 12d. Are there special regional programs for unaccompanied minors (school, youth welfare); best practice examples?
 - 12e. Please provide examples for regional programs or best practice examples?
13. Please state – if possible – the average monthly costs (per migrant, per asylum seeker, per undocumented person, per minor)
14. Please indicate how your country / region organises accommodation (for migrants, for asylum seekers, for refugees, for minors)
15.
 - 15a. How is the involvement of volunteers organized?
 - 15b. How is the financial support of volunteers organized?

APPENDIX II. Questions of the 2019 BSPC Working Group on Migration and Integration survey.

1. How many asylum seekers asked for a permission to stay in 2015 / 2016 / 2017?
2. How many voluntary returns have been documented in 2015 / 2016 / 2017?
3. How many evictions have been issued in 2015 / 2016 / 2017?
4. How many forced returns have been documented in 2015 / 2016 / 2017?
5. Please State – if possible – the average monthly costs for:

A) Asylum seekers /

B) Refugees / subsidiary residence permits

Adults living alone

1. a) in reception centers with food
2. b) in reception centers without food
3. c) Living outside reception centers

Unaccompanied minors

- a) under 16 years
- b) + 16 years

Children with families

- a) in reception centers with food
- b) in reception centers without food
- c) Living outside reception centers

Spouses / partners / roommates

1. a) in reception centers with food
2. b) in reception centers without food

3. c) Living outside reception centers

- 1) Additional costs for transportation
- 2) Additional costs for clothing
- 3) Additional costs for education (books etc.)
- 4) Health care
- 5) Rent
- 6) One-time payments

C) Social benefits that are granted as a basic payment

6. Are there any measures taken by the government to combat occurrences of social control in the migrant population? Please provide best practice examples.
7. Are there any measures taken by the government to prevent formation of segregated migrant communities? Please provide best practice examples
8. Is there any program, training or advisory service that over time has proved particularly beneficial for successful long-term integration of migrants into the labor market? Please elaborate.
9. Is there any training programs on language and culture that has been conducted in collaboration with civil society organizations/initiatives that over time has proved to be particularly successful? Please elaborate.

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