



Thinking Lab on Migration & Integration

Policy Brief

Over the course of the last two years, the Berlin-based think tank Das Progressive Zentrum organised, in cooperation with numerous partner organisations, the trans-European civil society project 'DIALOGUE ON EUROPE'. Within this framework, experts and practitioners from across Europe gathered in four so-called 'Thinking Labs' to deliver fresh ideas and to independently elaborate concrete policy recommendations on four European key areas: Migration & Integration, Populism, Social Cohesion, and Sustainable Growth. The overall project has been supported by the German Federal Foreign Office.

Introduction

Young Experts and Practitioners discussing Migration and Integration in Europe

Coming from different backgrounds and various countries, the contributors of our Thinking Lab are, for example, active members of refugee aid NGOs, academic researchers in the field of migration and integration and have worked for international organisations dealing with this topic, such as the UN refugee agency UNHCR. Thus, we bring together hands-on experience from several European countries, each of them dealing

with migration and integration issues, yet each with a different perspective and approach.

Disclaimer: This paper in its entirety does not reflect the individual views of all members of the Thinking Lab. Its sections are the outcome of discussions in independent clusters of the Lab.

“As migration has become an all-European concern, it is indispensable to create a genuinely European approach.”

As migration and integration have become a concern for the whole of Europe which has shaken the cohesion of the EU and its member states to the core, it is

indispensable to create a genuinely European approach. Only in this way is it possible to efficiently tackle the challenges which migration fluxes pose. Hence, our objective as a group has been to contribute to the debate with a profound problem analysis at the local, national and European levels, as well as to give concrete, effective and feasible policy recommendations in order to enhance migration and integration policy within the EU and its member states.

We are convinced that the trans-national and multi-background composition of our group, together with the non-partisan approach of young, dedicated civil society activists who are familiar with the 'real life' concerns of migrants, refugees and local populations, adds a unique and very concrete perspective to a debate on migration that is all too often abstract and played out with stereotypes.

This paper summarises the outcomes of an 18-month long deliberative process which aimed to generate out-of-the-box ideas and to shed light on stakeholders' perspectives – factors not usually embraced when debating migration. Initially, the contributors of the Thinking Lab identified **three core problem areas** and divided their work into **three thematic clusters** focused on delivering possible solutions within the following issue areas:

1. Integration policy: A successful and sustainable integration policy is key to dealing with migration issues. If implemented effectively, a fruitful integration policy not only simplifies the daily life of migrants in their new country but also helps to enhance the acceptance of migrants within the local population. The cluster dealing with this issue identified three challenges and possible solutions which focus on the involvement and ownership of migrants and refugees in all stages of policy measures, the better consideration of cultural and gender factors, and more dialogue and exchange of stakeholders at the EU level.

2. Human rights, asylum and citizenship: The respect and defence of human rights is one of the core principles of the European Union, and anchored in its treaties. The right to asylum is, in turn, a crucial element of this principle. Yet awareness about this

and the effective protection of human rights are not an everyday practice in the EU's and member states' policies. Our policy recommendations therefore call for legal, institutional as well as structural changes in order to foster EU policies which are more aware of human rights and which help Europe regain its credibility in this area on the world stage.

3. Managing migration flows to and within the EU: In the last couple of years, divergent opinions on how to tackle the 'migration crisis' have come to the fore, creating divisions between EU member states on how best to deal with the large number of migrants at its borders. This cluster proposes the concept of 'resilient borders' as a means to address migration, bringing together both humanitarian and security concerns – in other words borders that are simultaneously open and secure. To this end four concrete policy recommendations have been elaborated.

Beyond these issue clusters and recommendations, the Thinking Lab also addressed the role of **education, awareness-raising and the media** on the issues of migration and integration, as these factors contribute significantly to the way the public debate is shaped and perceived.

Cluster 1: Integration Policy

Policy Context and Problem Analysis: Migrants' specific Needs are hampered by insufficiently inclusive Policies

Since the mid-1990s, EU member states have made migrants' integration one of the most discussed political issues in the EU. Currently, there is no genuine EU policy instrument to directly address the specific conditions of refugees and of people in need of international protection. National approaches vary significantly across the EU. Additionally, most programmes are mainstreamed into existing integration efforts so that barriers to refugees' integration risk being overlooked.

“Currently, there is no genuine EU policy instrument to directly address the specific conditions of refugees.”

There is no consensus on the definition of migrant¹ integration in the context of developed countries. This claim can be supported by highlighting a recent change in the terminology used in policy, switching from speaking about the ‘rights and duties’ to the ‘obligations’ of immigrants and ‘own responsibility’. Put simply, if the goals of integration are equality, inclusion and the participation of immigrants and refugees (respectively asylum seekers) in society, then there is a risk that divergent perspectives could hamper this as governments might view integration according to their perspective, while newcomers live it in another way. This is further complicated and exacerbated when it comes to refugees and asylum seekers, as part of this group, since they have specific needs that cannot be neglected or delayed.

In that respect, **three main challenges of integration policy** can be underlined:

1. INVOLVEMENT OF ESTABLISHED MIGRANT COMMUNITIES AND NEWCOMERS

In order to give various migrant communities the opportunity to participate more effectively in daily life and society, integration policies themselves need to become more involving and thus inclusive. This means first and foremost the involvement of existing migrant communities and newcomers. To this end, immigrants and refugees, and/or asylum seekers, should be included from the outset and as equals in the planning of local integration measures.

2. CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT OF POLICY MEASURES

Effective integration policies need the continuous assessment of measures at the local level, especially since they have a significant impact on and are crucial for the daily lives of migrants. This concerns first and foremost cases of ‘institutional discrimination’ by local government which sometimes take measures that have a discriminatory effect on migrants when it comes to equal and fair access. This includes areas such as housing, healthcare and education. This problem can also arise in the fields of social welfare and, last not least, (access to) the labour market. Political measures at the local level which have a discriminatory effect on migrants and thus hamper their integration into society must be condemned by national and international authorities.

3. ADHERENCE TO (AND OWNERSHIP OF) THE FACTUAL COMPLEXITY

Very often the public debate centres on the perception of migrants – but all too often with a negative connotation and without appropriate consideration of the issue's complexity. Politically motivated measures, such as holding national ‘yes or no’ referenda on the acceptance of refugees, run the risk that myths, misconceptions and general, nebulous fears about migrants will predominate. As the issues are complex and involve numerous stakeholders, possible solutions need to be multifaceted and involve individuals and organisations from various backgrounds.

1. Here a general notion of migration is applied, embracing various kinds of people on the move: refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants.

Policy Recommendations: More Dialogue at the EU Level, more Sensitivity towards cultural and gender Issues and more Support for Inclusion Measures

Taking into account the three challenges of a more inclusive integration policy, a better assessment of policy measures and a more appropriate approach to the complexity of migration issues, three aspects are crucial to enhance the integration of migrants in Europe: **more dialogue and exchange, a more culturally and gender sensitive approach for newcomers, and increased support for economic and social inclusion.** Additionally, suggestions for possible positive actions have been assigned to different decision making levels responsible for integration policy.

1. MORE HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL DIALOGUE AND THE CREATION OF A EUROPEAN PLATFORM ON MIGRATION & INTEGRATION

Firstly, more meaningful and productive dialogue is needed at both the EU and national level. Regular high-level meetings of EU decision makers with selected experts would contribute decisively to this. At the same time, it would offer the opportunity for gathering and exchanging independent and adequate information about migration flows. In addition to this, the creation of a complementary online European platform on migration and integration issues would offer considerable added value. This platform would include links to all main media in EU member states as well as to public pages of EU members' ministries. In this way all sources of information on migration issues (including sources such as info-graphics, surveys, policy briefs and statistics) could be centrally gathered and assessed. It would also enable a better understanding and appreciation of the differences between the perception of migration issues in the member states and the populations. Overall, cooperation at the EU, national and local levels needs to be better interconnected, especially since this is very likely to become even more significant in the future – regardless of all challenges which might emerge at the practical level.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF A MORE CULTURALLY AND GENDER SENSITIVE INTEGRATION APPROACH

Secondly, integration policy needs to take better account of the fact that most migrants and refugees arriving in Europe come from different national backgrounds which very often have different values than those predominating in Europe. Raising the awareness of helpers and professionals from the host country, as well as amongst the newcomers themselves, about the importance of cultural factors is therefore a central element for successful integration. Another aspect is the promotion of a gender-sensitive approach. Very often, women in particular (and their children) have had to endure traumatising hardships during their flight from home. It is therefore more than a moral duty to guarantee the security of women travelling alone or alone with children. Ensuring a gender-sensitive approach would first of all mean elaborating tailor-made policies towards female immigrants and refugees/asylum seekers, and implementing these in a fair and appropriate way. This should be informed by a thorough needs assessment.

Additionally, the role of mass media in explaining the situation – also in the regional press in the areas where the migrants have been settled – and outlining integration pathways would be very helpful and is needed so that awareness can be built for integration measures and about cultural factors.

3. MORE SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INCLUSION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Finally, at the local level, support for economic and social inclusion needs to be strengthened, first and foremost in terms of financial means. Public funding for activities which support social inclusion and active participation, as well as for labour market integration at the local level, should be doubled. This should be augmented by a participatory process at the local level to collect feedback and ideas for new integration policies to help strengthen citizens' feeling of ownership for such measures. One possible example would be regular activities and meetings which bring together economic actors and citizens of the local community to discuss local integration measures.

Cluster 2: Human Rights in the EU and at its Borders: Asylum, Residency Rights and Citizenship

Policy Context and Problem Analysis: The EU's insufficient Implementation of legal Duties concerning Protection Seekers

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights grants the right to freedom of movement (Article 13) and the right to seek and to enjoy protection (Article 14). In 1999, the European Union specified in Tampere (Finland) that protection is not limited to citizens of the European Union as it would be in contradiction to Europe's traditions to deny such freedom to those whose circumstances lead them to justifiably seek access to its territory. At that summit, EU member states also agreed upon the harmonisation of policies on asylum and immigration.

“Migration must not be framed as a threat. Migration flows just have to be managed effectively.”

Nearly 20 years later the institutional implementation of these goals remains insufficient. Within an increasingly hostile discourse regarding migration, it is pivotal to enlarge the relevant institutional capacities in Europe; migration must not be framed as a threat. Rather, migration flows have to be managed effectively within a shared framework of action, which also focuses on the protection of migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees in the EU, at its borders and beyond.

When it comes to migration and integration, the EU is legally and institutionally fragmented. Few responsibilities rest at the European level. Common, EU-wide mechanisms and shared institutions are missing. Due to the lack of institutional problem-solving capacities at the EU level, migration policies remain a core function of nation states. National discourses therefore define how to manage influxes of people. Politicians

depend on national arenas, which enable populists to mobilise argumentative frames based on ‘identity’. A shift from the national to the European level is however necessary in order to manage a shared challenge within a shared space of free movement. Strengthened institutional capacities based on European solidarity, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Geneva Convention could effectively tackle challenges posed by migration flows and thus counter populist rhetoric.

“Only a shift from the national to the European level can help build the institutional capacity needed to manage trans-European migration challenges.”

Policy Recommendations: Harmonise Legislation, a ‘Human Rights Ombudsman’ and full Citizenship Rights to Descendants of Migrants

Only a shift from the national to the European level can help build the institutional capacity needed to manage trans-European challenges within a shared space of free movement. In order to overcome the current counter-productive national framing, the following three core recommendations within this area include legal, institutional as well as structural changes: **harmonising legislation and standards within the EU, creating an EU agency for human rights named ‘Human Rights Ombudsman’ and granting full citizenship rights to descendants of migrants to make them feel more included.**

1. HARMONISE LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS WITHIN THE EU

Catastrophic and deeply regrettable events in the Mediterranean and elsewhere remind us of the insufficient institutional capacity to ensure the human rights of asylum-seekers and refugees. Additionally, there are only minimum standards of survival threshold for all the people that cross borders. The right to apply for asylum is formally granted in differing ways throughout the countries of the EU. But different national criteria and selection processes, and selections based on

the country of origin, make things much more complicated for both the authorities in EU member states and for migrants from outside the EU. As a consequence, long bureaucratic procedures increase the vulnerability of asylum seekers. Moreover, reports show that basic rights of asylum seekers and refugees are sometimes being violated – even by official institutions. This includes, for example, the right to protection and access to efficient humanitarian assistance.

These variations and risks make it indispensable **to harmonise legislation and standards across the EU**. Establishing a pan-European, compulsory ‘bill of rights for migrants’ would be a good starting point. Further, common monitoring guidelines, an EU-wide registration system as well as a standard code of conduct (to avoid national restrictions and discrimination) would contribute to the better management of migration-related issues throughout the EU. Ultimately, common asylum procedures and an EU status for asylum-seekers must be established to guarantee the effective protection of human rights and common standards across all EU member states.

2. CREATE AN EU AGENCY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, THE ‘HUMAN RIGHTS OMBUDSMAN’

There is a remarkable gap and mismatch between rhetoric and action when it comes to human rights. Words must be transformed into actions; respect for human rights in the EU must be assured more systematically. Additional institutional capacities at the EU level should therefore be established. A new, independent EU agency concerned with the protection of and upholding of human rights – both within the EU and at its borders – should be established.

While Frontex is responsible for controlling the borders of the EU, an additional EU agency is needed that enforces and supervises migration regulations and human rights standards. It should be conceived of and shaped like a **‘Human Rights Ombudsman’** with capacity for advocacy and inspection. This agency should have the mandate to publish quarterly reports and the power to seek recourse to the European Court of Human Rights. Together with its (also to be established) national offices, it could support and monitor EU member states

in the implementation of human rights standards. Finally, it ought to work in close cooperation with civil society and refugee assistance organisations, enabling it to also act on issues and impulses from grassroots organisations. This new institutional framework would ensure effective administrative procedures for the protection of human rights in the EU and at its borders. Finally, the ‘Human Rights Ombudsman’, to be elected by the European Parliament, would advocate the harmonisation and implementation of regulations and standards.

3. REFORM CITIZENSHIP REGULATIONS IN ALL EU COUNTRIES TO MAKE DESCENDANTS OF MIGRANTS FEEL MORE INCLUDED

Thirdly, the issue of acquiring citizenship needs to be addressed more specifically. It has been a silent problem that so-called ‘second generation migrants’ are being denied the citizenship of their country of birth. As a result, these people are stripped of certain rights, such as political ones (voting), freedom of movement in the EU or access to certain career paths.

It is therefore unsurprising that some descendants of immigrants do not feel part of Europe or of the nation state they live in, as they have never (been allowed to) developed a full sense of belonging. This in turn perpetuates tendencies of self-isolation and frustration which harbour the potential seeds of social unrest. **Granting full citizenship rights to descendants of migrants would be a promising approach** to address this problem. More permissive citizenship rights would recognise all children who were born in Europe as also citizens of their countries of birth, avoiding their discrimination and marginalisation.

Cluster 3: Managing Migration Flows into the EU: The Need for 'Resilient Borders'

Policy Context and Problem Analysis: Navigating the fine line between a Values-Based and an Interest-Based approach in Migration Policy

The upsurge of mixed migration flows towards Europe and the tremendous differences in policy approaches between the EU member states is a major cause of the EU's ongoing existential crisis.² Thousands of people have died on its doorstep, while within the Union right-wing populist parties win votes with the support of anti-immigrant messages. The EU is thus under urgent internal and external pressure. Nevertheless, European leaders have so far been unable to find sustainable solutions to these challenges.

The core challenge for the EU is to address migration in a holistic manner. Faced with an unprecedented intensity of migration flows towards Europe, anti-immigrant sentiments in many member states – and a migration and border management system that has proven unable to deal with these realities – the EU has chosen to privilege security considerations over the past years. Such a one-sided approach is further complicated by the fact that policy makers are torn between different ends of the 'unsquareable circle' – reconciling values and interests in conducting EU migration policy both in their internal and external dimensions.

“Navigating the fine line between a values-based and an interest-based approach is the core challenge for EU policy-makers.”

A values-based approach with an emphasis on humanitarian causes would demand open borders, developed through a close, solidarity-based system which enables assisted travel to the European mainland. Such an approach would no doubt spark furore among right-wing populist groups in the EU and with those critical of open migration policies but whose views cannot simply be ignored. Cohesion within and between European societies, however, is a core interest of the EU. An interests-based approach would privilege domestic concerns and consequently, give rise to closed borders along the lines of 'Fortress Europe'. Neither of the two scenarios is desirable for the EU, its member states, or its citizens. Navigating the fine line between them represents the core challenge for EU policy makers. The aim of a humanitarian, sustainable, and EU-advantageous migration policy can be achieved through the implementation of 'resilient borders'. This concept is outlined below.

Policy Recommendations: The Concept of 'Resilient Borders'

The key to these challenges lies in reforming the EU border management system, and with it the related migration and asylum policies. We suggest the concept of 'resilient borders' as a catchphrase that embodies the two-fold challenge of having open (values) and secure (interests) borders at the same time. This is how such borders could look:

Resilience, first and foremost, is understood as “the ability to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions and to recoil or spring back into shape after bending, stretching, or being compressed” (Oxford Dictionary, 2018). Transferred to the concept of borders, resilience means that borders are adaptable and flexible enough to address the current challenges that mass migration poses to them. Resilient borders can be simultaneously secure and open. In order to achieve this 'resilient borders' system, we suggest to build an open and efficient system for the people who want to come to the EU through the following measures:

2. When speaking about “migrants”/“migratory pressure” etc., we include structural economic migrants as well as international protection seekers (fleeing from war or environmental disasters, etc.). Despite the necessarily different approaches and applicable legal regimes, we consider all those persons to be facing similar threats and needs. The journeys by smugglers routes do not make such a distinction – and nor should the protection of their fundamental rights.

1. INSTALL A EUROPEAN ASYLUM GOVERNANCE ON A TWO-FOLD PROCEDURE (FOR INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION-SEEKERS)

As the EU lacks a truly European asylum policy, a two-fold procedure for a European asylum system should be put into place. At a first stage, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) would be empowered to lead the examination of the requests and to determine who is entitled to receive international protection. At a second stage, the allocation of those who were granted protection status would be relocated in a member state on the basis of additionally agreed distribution criteria.

2. OPEN UP LEGAL AVENUES FOR MIGRATION (FOR ECONOMIC MIGRANTS BEYOND 'EXPATS')

Clarity in the legal status of international protection seekers is not reflected by comparable legislation on economic migrants. Because of this deficiency, the EU should craft a European legal regime for the treatment of economic migrants – not only highly skilled 'expats', but also other categories of workers, for example migrants from developing countries. Above all, the EU should broaden its legal criteria for third country admissibility into the EU.

3. REVISE THE EU BORDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

For resilient borders to also be secure, the EU must update its existing border management. It should rectify persisting uncertainties in Frontex' mandate, it should implement the already existing 'Smart Borders' initiative, and it should ensure that EU border checkpoints are equipped with a sufficient number of well-trained officers.

4. IMPROVE DIALOGUE RELATIONS – INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE EU

The success of 'resilient borders' depends on good working relations inside and outside the EU. In order to implement a comprehensive and effective border management, communication must be improved in two dimensions:

a. Inside the EU

Besides a communication of border management challenges to the public, political capital must be invested into re-establishing good working relations between migration-friendly and migration-critical member states. Clear communication is not only necessary between the political elite and the public, but also among politicians.

b. With partner countries

The European External Action Service (EEAS) should invest resources in external policies that factor in the manifold (values and interest-based) facets of international migration. This is in line with the so-called "compacts", which the EU has developed as comprehensive political frameworks with partner countries. If implemented successfully, they will also be the opportunity to finally embrace the potential of the EEAS.

"'Resilient' borders offer a pathway by which to integrate humanitarian and security concerns."

If done properly, 'resilient borders' offer a pathway by which to integrate humanitarian and security concerns as well as the internal and external dimensions of migration management. The concept thus constitutes an opportunity to craft a sustainable strategy for the future. It is an opportunity too good to be missed.



Beyond Migration Policy

The Role of Education, Awareness-Raising and the Media

Across Europe we lack competences to understand migration phenomena in a broader way.

The media and the internet play a crucial role in the modern world, strongly influencing people's understanding of the current migration challenge faced by Europe. The online space and the rise of hate speech on the internet found us, as citizens and societies, not prepared. Identifying and fighting hate speech, deconstructing myths and developing empathy are necessary tools for a long-term solution to the challenges of migration and, especially, integration – and ones which civil society has a unique role in enabling.

When it comes to the 'traditional media', it has to be acknowledged that the modern newsroom is a challenging place. Information races around the world at breakneck speed, and is the source of today's competitive edge. There is little time for checking facts, figures and images. A dedicated, separate and safe space to discuss the ethics of journalism is notable in its absence. While most journalists understand that they have a duty to tell the truth and to report on what is being said and who is saying it, they often fail to balance that responsibility against another of the widely recognised cardinal principles of journalism – to minimise harm.

“The focus on emotions and fear does not offer clarity to the issue of migration; it just reveals the elite's mistrust of the public.”

Migration should be discussed freely and openly, but instead of an open debate we are faced with a shallow, emotional treatment of the subject on all

sides in which the public is treated with contempt and suspicion. While some politicians and policy makers occasionally urge Europeans to show solidarity and sympathy, others warn us against the volatile passions of the public. In both cases, ordinary people are treated like emotional creatures to be educated or feared, rather than rational citizens to be engaged and reasoned with. People who have concerns about increased migration are depicted as heartless and irrational bigots. Simultaneously, migrants are reduced to being either helpless victims or a serious threat. This focus on emotions and fear does not offer clarity to the issue of migration; it just reveals the elite's mistrust of the public.

Too often both sides of the immigration debate – those for and those against – speak about immigration in transactional terms, arguing over what it does for and to us. What is missing is the experience of migrants themselves. While public arguments about immigration are often polarised between 'pro' and 'anti' voices, researchers show that most people are somewhere in between. Finding a principled and workable approach to immigration that can secure public consent is challenging – but it is not impossible. We need a policy plan that could go some way to repairing and rebuilding public trust in immigration, while – crucially – meeting the key public interest tests of competence, fairness, identity and democracy. A broad-based response is required, and one which works across several areas: human rights education, lived media ethics, effective legal mechanisms against hate speech, and a reframing of narratives into informed debates. These responses are needed at the European, national and very local levels.

Wrap-up:

Migration and Integration, a persisting Issue of all-European Concern which requires more common Action and a more open Public Debate

Our piece has outlined how complex the issue of migration and integration is for the EU and its member states. It is an issue intertwined with a large number of internal and external factors. When it comes to the latter, the EU has, at times more, at times less influence to shape developments in a way that is beneficial to Europe. That said, given the political and economic weight of the EU as well as its unique institutional interconnections, its potential to effectively tackle the challenges related to migration remain significant. These challenges are, first and foremost, the smooth integration of migrants and asylum seekers, sustainably eliminating the root causes of irregular migration flows, and then creating genuinely 'resilient' borders. EU member states, however, hardly seem to realise their potential to successfully manage migration issues. This is largely due to a lack of cooperation and coherence – and is very often driven by domestic, populist, anti-migrant policies and rhetoric.

Nevertheless and without a doubt, migration will continue to pose a serious challenge to the EU and its member states (especially in Southern Europe). It is, therefore, high time for the Europeans to act: as a community that is based on values which embrace human rights, openness towards people seeking protection, and on the positive potential migration can have for societies, both culturally and economically. Simultaneously, the EU will have to safeguard its economic and security interests and therefore cannot implement a policy of entirely 'open borders'. Integrating humanitarian and security concerns as well as internal and external dimensions of migration management will therefore pose the key challenge for Europe in the future.

As our Thinking Lab has elaborated, more effective measures and better coordination are needed at the EU level to appropriately manage the challenges posed by migration. First and foremost, a European asylum governance architecture is needed, and the current management systems of the EU's external borders need to be reviewed. Shifting more competences from the

national to the European level would facilitate the institutional capacity needed to manage trans-European migration challenges more efficiently and powerfully. Yet all measures to enable 'resilient' borders will be fruitless as long as the political, economic and social root causes of the migration flows towards Europe are not tackled more resolutely.

Another key finding of our Thinking Lab is that in the public debate it is essential to not frame migration as a threat per se. Politicians, opinion leaders and the media therefore bear responsibility for the way in which the public discourse on migrants, asylum seekers and refugees is being conducted. This should, ideally, take place in a differentiated, factual and expedient manner, rather than in the form of a discussion fuelled by stereotypes, myths and fear-mongering. Further, both the public debate and the implementation of policy measures mostly take part without the involvement of migrants themselves. Their inclusion is, however, key to achieving better results in terms of migration and integration policy at all levels (EU, national and local), and in various fields (politics, economy, the media, administration and the cultural sector). This holds all the more when cultural and gender factors are better taken into consideration.

Finally, a common point which connects all clusters of issues which our Thinking Lab addressed is the objective fact that the European Union does not only have a special moral, well-intentioned obligation to be a beacon in international global migration and asylum policy. It does, however, have a legal duty to adhere to policies that protect human rights, people seeking protection and tolerance towards migrants. This stems from the EU's very own treaties (which each EU member state has also ratified), and from numerous binding international conventions. If the EU – Nobel Peace Prize winner that it is – wants to maintain its status as a global champion for human rights, justice and openness, it has to start revising its integration policy, its border management system(s) and its approach towards human rights protection. To this end, the recommendations made by our group of young and trans-European practitioners and experts ought to be not only a thought-provoking impulse, but even more advocating for determined and effective political action in the fields of integration, human rights protection and resilient borders.

DIALOGUE ON EUROPE

Rebuilding Trust and redefining Europe in tough Times

Project Presentation

WHAT IS THE APPROACH OF DIALOGUE ON EUROPE?

The European Union has been affected by a multi-dimensional crisis for almost a decade. Traditional solutions put forward through international summitry have proved ineffective. Therefore, the current challenges faced by the European project can only be confronted through the involvement of a **strong and connected civil society**.

WHY, WHEN AND BY WHOM HAS IT BEEN INITIATED AND IMPLEMENTED?

With this need for a stronger involvement of the civil society in mind, the Berlin-based think tank Das Progressive Zentrum, in cooperation with the German Federal Foreign Office and many other partners, initiated **DIALOGUE ON EUROPE** in late 2015, especially in light of the EU-internal upheavals linked to the euro crisis and the austerity policy.

WHO HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE DIALOGUE ON EUROPE PROCESS?

This trans-European project has brought together young, dedicated members of various civil society backgrounds from initially 6 countries (France, Germany, Greece, Italy Portugal and Spain; later Poland and



Frank-Walter Steinmeier, then German Minister for Foreign Affairs, speaking at the DIALOGUE ON EUROPE Opening Conference in Berlin, June 2016

the UK) to analyse pressing EU-wide challenges and to elaborate concrete policy recommendations for the national and European level. In each country we worked together with one or more local partner organisations such as think tanks or foundations.

WHICH WERE THE MAIN TOPICS, HOW AND WITH WHICH OBJECTIVE WERE THEY DISCUSSED?

In the light of the most pressing current and upcoming challenges of the EU and its member states, DIALOGUE ON EUROPE had four main topics: Populism, Social Cohesion, Migration & Integration and Sustainable Growth. The goal was to use various perspectives from social society members all over Europe in order to **formulate concrete and feasible policy recommendations** which could serve as input for policy makers at the national and European levels.

WHAT WAS THE PROCESS OF DIALOGUE ON EUROPE?

DIALOGUE ON EUROPE unfolded in three phases. From December 2015 to June 2016 bilateral #EuropeanTownHall Meetings took place in five Southern European cities, mostly with the participation of the **German Minister of State for Europe, Michael Roth**. Hence, during this period civil society literally met politics. From June 2016 to October 2017 by contrast, civil society



Michael Roth, German Minister of State for Europe, discussing with participants of the #EuropeanTownHall Meeting in Lisbon, March 2016



Niels Annen, today Minister of State at the German Federal Foreign Office, replying to participants of the #EuropeanTownHall Meeting in Madrid, June 2016

representatives elaborated independently policy analyses and recommendations. 60 of the #EuropeanTownHall participants cooperated in four so-called ‘**Thinking Labs**’ (according to the four main topics) via digital collaboration means and personal meetings at four ‘**European Thinking Lab Summits**’. Since the last Summit in Rome in October 2017, the Thinking Labs have finalised their policy recommendations. These will be presented during the Closing Conference in Brussels.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT DIALOGUE ON EUROPE AND DAS PROGRESSIVE ZENTRUM?

For more information about events, interviews with renowned experts, opinion editorials, analyses, press coverage and the final policy recommendations, please visit the project website www.dialogue-on-europe.eu. If you want to know more about the activities of Das Progressive Zentrum and its international projects go to www.progressives-zentrum.org/?lang=en or follow us on **Twitter** (@DPZ_Berlin) and **Facebook**.

DIALOGUE ON EUROPE @work

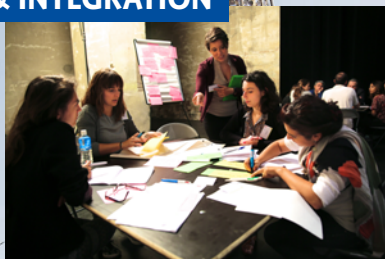
Some Impressions from
our #EuropeanTownHall
Meetings and Thinking
Lab Summits all over
Europe



POPULISM



MIGRATION & INTEGRATION



2nd European Thinking Lab Summit,
Paris (March 2017)



SUSTAINABLE GROWTH



SOCIAL COHESION



3rd European Thinking Lab Summit,
Rome (October 2017)

Members of the Thinking Lab on Migration & Integration

Ilias Antoniou	Samar Mawazini	Anabela Rodrigues	Ioanna Theodorou
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Expression of Thanks by the Thinking Lab on Migration & Integration

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ABOUT DAS PROGRESSIVE ZENTRUM

Das Progressive Zentrum, located in Berlin, is an independent and non-profit think tank. The aim of *Das Progressive Zentrum* is to foster new networks of progressive actors from different origins and work towards a general acceptance of innovative politics and aiming at economic and social progress. In this respect *Das Progressive Zentrum* gathers in its progressive debates mainly young thinkers and decisionmakers from Germany and Europe.



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