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Lifelong learning : a key issue for Migration, Migrants and professionals working with them – the TIPS project

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“A thriving Europe needs active citizens, living together in integrated societies”². Immigrants are more and more numerous in Europe. Integration has become a key issue for most of our European countries. South-eastern Europe is specific in this context for its complexity and extent of refugees and migration movements. The Balkan states are considered to be mostly sending countries of migrants. They gather several distinct categories of states according to economic development, recent migration history and formal relationship with the EU.

As focussed by the European Commission, “Two processes are critical to improving immigrants’ outcomes: the elimination of inequalities, and the acquisition of competences. These challenges are at the heart of integration policies in Europe”³. Each member state and the EU as a whole has then to develop skills and professional competences related to immigrants needs focusing on issues as acceptance, both behavioural, historical and cultural, social integration, diversity management.

A main concern of the European Union has been to exchange experience on migration politics and practices, to bring different interests, views and perspectives. Migration is to be considered in a macro-level perspective (policy-making processes : legislation, institutionalization of migration policy, strategies of inclusion of immigrants, security concerns, human rights issues) but also in a micro-level perspective (to raise and answer questions about migrants’ everyday life).

Intercultural mediators play a key role in this perspective to support and help migrants as their main tasks are : to promote integration of foreign citizens ; to facilitate communication and mutual understanding between immigrants and hosting countries ; to provide consultancy professional service to people, families and associations of immigrants ; to orientate migrants

¹ www.iriv.net

² Niessen (Jan), Schibel (Yongmi), MPG, Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners, European Commission, Directorate General for Justice, Freedom and Security, Second edition, May 2007

³ Ibidem



towards main targeted facilities and services. This is the main purpose of the TIPS project, initiated and led by For.com (University Guglielmo Marconi, Italy)⁴ in five countries Austria, France, Italy, Greece and Poland.

After a presentation of the general framework of migration in the European Union, we will focus on two main issues: how far can lifelong learning be an opportunity for migration, migrants and professionals working for them? How could cultural mediation play a major role to enhance integration of migrants in European societies?

1. Immigration and migration in the European perspective

The definition of migration proposed in the *Oxford Concise dictionary of Politics*⁵ is the following: “*the permanent movement of individuals or groups from one place to another. Migration is of course a basic fact of human history*”. Politics of migration can be explosive as migrants are pushed by war or starvation. Migrants usually leave their country for political reasons (asylum seekers) or economic ones (job seekers). They often provoke the hostility of the native population who accuse them of taking their jobs or undermining their culture.

Democratic societies have found various ways of trying to resolve these tensions. Some of them have severe restrictions on immigration. The member states of the European Union have faced common hostility to immigration for their strategic position. They have enormous potential migrants close to their external frontiers: Southern and Eastern Europe, North Africa, Middle East. Member States don't have the same conception of citizenship. In this context, a common European strategy could be a way to solve the tense issues faced in the politics of migration.

1.1 From a national to a European competence (Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997)⁶

With the coming into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam, Community competence was firmly established in the areas of immigration and asylum. From being a matter for inter-governmental co-ordination under the “third pillar” arrangements, responsibility for developing policy was moved to the “first pillar” with a programme of action adopted by the Council in order to establish progressively an area of freedom, security and justice (Articles 61-63).

In October 1999, the elements of a common EU asylum and immigration policy were agreed by the European Council in the Tampere Conclusions which, together with the Action Plan approved by the Council in Vienna in 1998, formed the basis of a work programme for the Commission and the Member States.

⁴ <http://www.forcom.it/tipsproject>

⁵ Lain McLean, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996.,

⁶ Commission of the European Communities, **Communication on a Community Immigration Policy**, COM(2000) 757 final, Brussels, 22.11.2000

The European Council stressed the need for rapid decisions on « *the conditions for admission and residence of third country nationals based on a shared assessment of the economic and demographic developments within the Union as well as the situation in the countries of origin* » but didn't give any indication on the implementation of such a policy.

There are strongly divergent views in the Member States on the admission and integration of third country nationals. It concerns not only the conditions for the admission and residence of third country nationals for employment and other reasons, but also standards and procedures for the issue of long-term visas and residence permits, the definition of a set of uniform rights for third country nationals and the criteria and conditions under which third country nationals might be allowed to settle and work in any Member State together with the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The underlying principle of an EU immigration policy has been that persons admitted should enjoy broadly the same rights and responsibilities as EU nationals but that these may be incremental and related to the length of stay provided for in their entry conditions. The measures under article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam to counteract racism and xenophobia have been vigorously pursued and action to integrate migrants into our societies has been seen as the essential corollary of the admission policy. At the same time the fight against illegal immigration has been intensified with priority to combating trafficking and smuggling. Finally the policy has been developed and implemented in partnership with countries of origin and transit.

The importance of the fair treatment of third country nationals means to ensure that migrants benefit from comparable living and working conditions to those of nationals. Failure to provide the resources necessary to ensure the successful integration of such migrants and their families will in the longer term exacerbate social problems which may lead to exclusion and related problems such as delinquency and criminality.

While many legally resident migrants have integrated successfully and make an important contribution to the economic and social development of their host countries, social exclusion affects migrants disproportionately and they are often the victims of racism and xenophobia. A legal framework has been proposed by the Commission to fight discrimination and xenophobia. However, it is also essential to create a welcoming society and to recognise that integration is a two-way process involving adaptation on the part of both the immigrant and of the host society.

The European Union is a pluralistic society enriched by a variety of cultural and social traditions, which will in the future become even more diverse. It means a respect for cultural and social differences (Diversity principle) but also for the fundamental shared principles and values such as respect for human rights and human dignity, appreciation of the value of pluralism and the recognition that membership of society is based on a series of rights but brings with it a number of responsibilities for all of its members be they nationals or migrants (Active Citizenship principle).

The Charter of Fundamental Rights should provide a reference for the development of the concept of civic citizenship in a particular Member State (comprising a common set of core rights and obligations) for third country nationals. Successful integration policies need to start as soon as possible after admission and rely heavily on partnership between the migrants and the host

society. In order to promote integration, settlement packages has been developed for all new migrants tailored to their individual needs (including language training, information on political and social structures, accessing services etc with special attention to the needs of migrant women and children). It is recognised, however, that integration is a long-term process and special attention needs to be paid to second generation migrants.

While integration is primarily the role of Member States, governments share this responsibility with civil society notably at the local level where integration measures has been implemented. The key to success is the establishment of micro-level actions based on partnerships between all the many actors who need to be involved: regional and local authorities, political leaders (especially those of the larger towns where many migrants settle), providers of education, healthcare, social welfare, the police, the media, the social partners, non-governmental organisations and migrants themselves and their associations.

1.2 The European policy in the field of Migration and Integration (2007-2013)⁷.

The third Annual report on Migration and Integration published in September 2007, gives the new framework for the European policy in the field of Migration and Integration

In January 2006, the third-country nationals residing in the EU were about 18.5 million, i.e. 3.8% of the total population of almost 493 million. Immigration is still the main element in the European Union demographic growth and positive net migration is recorded in most Member States. Net migration, ranging between 0.5 and 1 million per year for most of the 1990s, has increased to levels ranging between 1.5 and 2 million since 2002.

The typology of entry differs widely between Member States. While family reunification is important in some countries, like Austria, France or Sweden, other Member States, like Ireland, Spain, Portugal and UK, had a high percentage of work-related immigration.

Important regularisations took place in Spain while France, Germany and The Netherlands opted for limited regularisations for specific groups of immigrants. In Spain and Italy, the process of regulation has come to an end in the past two years.

The most numerous groups of third-country nationals in the EU come from Turkey (2.3 million), Morocco (1.7 million), Albania (0.8 million) and Algeria (0.6 million). However, the number of foreign-born citizens in some Member States, like France, Sweden, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom, is higher than the number of third-country nationals as many immigrants acquired the citizenship of the host country.

Integration of third-country nationals is a process of mutual accommodation by both the host societies and the immigrants and an essential factor in realising the full benefits of immigration. The link between legal migration policies and integration strategies needs to be continually reinforced. Consolidating the legal framework on the conditions for entry and stay of third-country nationals is essential for the development of a coherent EU approach to integration.

⁷ Commission of the European Union, **Third Annual Report on Migration and Integration**, Brussels, 11.9.2007, COM(2007) 512 final.

Legislative instruments are already in place concerning family reunification, long-term residents and qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as persons in need of international protection. They recognise rights such as, depending on the legislative instrument, access to employment and to education/training and equality of treatment.

EU legislation on anti-discrimination supports this legal framework. In the Policy Plan on Legal Migration, Commission has announced proposals for a general framework directive defining the basic rights of immigrant workers in the EU and for a directive on the conditions of entry and residence of highly skilled immigrants. Beneficiaries of international protection also require tailored integration measures owing to their particular situation.

Different instruments have been proposed so far by the European Union to support Member States' integration policies ; some of them are specific others are more transversal.

Since 2003, the Commission has been co-financing trans-national integration projects that promote cooperation between Member States, regional/local authorities and other stakeholders under the INTI Programme. In this framework, a European project called *Involve* has been initiated by the European Centre for Volunteering (ECV, Brussels) in 7 countries: Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Spain, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom. It was meant to stress the positive impact of involvement of their country nationals in volunteering as a means of better integration⁸.

In the framework programme Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows 2007-2013, the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals aims to create a new form of solidarity to promote Member States' efforts in enabling immigrants to fulfil conditions of residence and to facilitate their integration. The European Refugee Fund, under the same programme, supports tailored integration measures for people falling within its scope including refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection whose stay in the EU is of a lasting and stable nature.

At last but not least, the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Community initiative EQUAL **have** offered a pool of innovative good practices to prevent and fight labour market discrimination of immigrants. Increasing immigrants' participation in employment and thereby strengthening their social integration is a specific priority of the new ESF (2007-2013). Moreover, the new PROGRESS programme (2007-2013), will also support the implementation of the anti-discrimination and gender equality principles.

Under the Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion (2002-2006), the European Commission had also financed transnational exchange actions including migrants. The Mem-Vol project⁹ initiated by Inbas Sozialforschung (Germany) in 2003 gathered 6 countries : Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, United Kingdom. It was a first approach to study whether volunteering might be a means of integration - societal, cultural and on the labour market - and of empowerment and development of the civil society. Therefore promoting and

⁸ European Volunteer Centre, « Involve », Final report, Brussels, 2006 ; <http://www.involve-europe.eu>

⁹ www.mem-volunteering.net.

facilitating volunteering and self-help of migrants and ethnic minorities should be an important objective to combat social exclusion and poverty.

Regional policy instruments also address issues of migration and integration, especially in urban areas. The URBAN II Community initiative had a strong focus on social inclusion in disadvantaged urban areas, the URBACT II programme (2007-2013) for the exchange of experience on urban development issues takes into account specific diversity.

2. The Life Long Learning approach in Migration issues

Closely linked to immigration and integration policies, the European policy is meant to enhance Diversity and promote Equal opportunities for all. They have been key issues in the two last European Years, meant to highlight major issues.

The 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All¹⁰ has led the way to a bolder strategy to fight against discrimination in the European Union. It has aimed to: make people more aware of their rights to enjoy equal treatment and a life free of discrimination – irrespective of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation ; promote equal opportunities for all and launch a major debate on the benefits of diversity both for European societies and individuals. Migrants are key targets in this context.

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID) 2008¹¹ recognises that Europe's great cultural diversity represents a unique advantage. It is encouraging all those living in Europe to explore the benefits of Europe's cultural heritage and opportunities to learn from different cultural traditions. The enlargement of the European Union, deregulation of employment laws and globalisation have increased the multicultural character of many countries, adding to the number of languages, religions, ethnic and cultural backgrounds found on the continent. Intercultural dialogue has an increasingly important role to play in fostering European identity and citizenship.

In this context, a Leonardo da Vinci project, was successful in 2007 under the last Life Long Learning (LLL) programme (2007-2013). It is called "T.I.P.S for intercultural dialogue - T-learning to Improve Professional Skills for intercultural dialogue". It was initiated by For.com (University Guglielmo Marconi, Rome, Italy) and gathers Austria (Auxilium, Graz), Greece (Hellenic Open University, Patras), France (Iriv, Paris) and Poland (Tischner European University, Krakow)¹². The partnership includes countries with different migration backgrounds: former countries of emigration become immigration countries (Italy, Greece...), traditional immigration countries (Austria, France), and still emigration country (Poland).

As migration is one of the main issues' policies Member States have to face, a common approach to questions that migration flows arise is necessary in order to assure cohesion, economic and

¹⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/eyeq/index.cfm

¹¹ The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008) was established by [Decision N° 1983/2006/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council. (18 December 2006) on the statement that Europe is becoming more culturally diverse. ; http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/406.0.html?&redirect_url=my-startpage-eyid.html

¹² <http://www.forcom.it/tipsproject>

social development. Each member state and the European Union as a whole has to develop skills and professional competences related to migrants' needs focusing on issues as acceptance, both behavioural, historical and cultural, social integration, diversity management. Many professional figures have developed around these priorities; the intercultural mediator is a key actor in this perspective. The main objective of the TIPS project is to realize a vocational training course using t-learning methodology for cultural mediators and any staff working with migrants in order to improve skills and competences needed to work and improve integration of migrants.

2.1 Intercultural mediation

Mediation has first and foremost a legal meaning. According to the French Dictionary of Law

« Mediation is a technical process for the solution of problems in order for people in conflicts to find a solution, through a formal or informal negotiation, without a lawsuit, through a person called the mediator »¹³.

“We can define mediation as a process of building, repairing social link and managing day to day conflicts, in which a third person, impartial, independent, without any authority but the one freely accepted by partners (institutions and migrants) tries through exchanges between persons and institutions to support either by improving either by establishing relation or solving a conflict”¹⁴

Mediation is

*« an action accomplished by a third person, between people or groups who freely agree to participate and who will have the final decision, with a view either to create new relationships or to prevent/solve a conflict relation between them ».*¹⁵

This third person at the heart of the mediation is a key element – no mediation would be possible without this third person. Moreover qualities essential for mediation (impartiality, independence and absence of official power) are often missing. In the practice, the mediator is rarely an external person (« impartial third person ») as it is often appointed by an institution.

Mediation is first dedicated to create a social link, then to solve conflicts. Its four main functions are: “creating, rehabilitating, repairing and solving social link to help solve a conflict”. Intercultural mediation, in the TIPS project perspective, is defined by the Italian social cooperative Onlus, in the framework of its project HELP¹⁶ as follows :

« a profession whose main objective is to facilitate the relations between natives and foreign people, in order to promote knowledge and reciprocal understanding , to enhance positive relations between people with different backgrounds ».

¹³ GUILLAUME-HOFNUNG Michèle, *La Médiation*, Collection Que sais-je ?, Edition Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 2005, 127 pages.

¹⁴ Charte de la Médiation sociale, DIV, Paris, 2004.

¹⁵ SIX Jean-François *Le temps des médiateurs*, Edition Seuil, Paris, 1990, 288 pages.

¹⁶ Handicap Educazione Lavoro Partecipazione (site Internet : <http://www.immiweb.org/>).

The main characteristics required for intercultural mediators are skills and competences in communication, empathy, active listening and knowledge either in the native country or the host country (culture, laws, traditions...).

Intercultural mediation has become a professional activity which requires the following abilities : comprehension (especially inter personal effective communication) ; relational abilities ; emotional balance ; planning abilities ; being able to face and to solve conflicts ; being able to promote self-esteem ; language literacy ; cultural and historical background.

2.2 Accompanying migrants in their integration

Intercultural mediators play a key role to accompany migrants' everyday life as their main duties are to promote integration of foreign citizens ; to facilitate communication and mutual understanding between immigrants and hosting countries ; to provide a consultancy professional service to people, families and associations of immigrants ; to orientate immigrants towards main targeted facilities and services.

Intercultural mediators facilitate and enhance the integration of migrants in the host societies. They play a role of go-between between the institutions and the migrants. Training, to develop and acquire relevant skills and competences, should be a main issue in the immigration and integration policy.

The acquisition of competences is a key point of the Lifelong Learning process. In a recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council, it is stated that

“{...} key competences in the shape of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to each context are fundamental for each individual in a knowledge-based society. They provide added value for the labour market, social cohesion and active citizenship by offering flexibility and adaptability, satisfaction and motivation {...}”¹⁷.

Because they should be acquired by everyone, the recommendation proposes a reference tool for the Member States to ensure that these key competences are fully integrated into their strategies and infrastructures, ass the acquisition of key competences

“{...} fits in with the principles of equality and access for all. This reference framework also applies in particular to disadvantaged groups whose educational potential requires support. Examples of such groups include people with low basic skills, early school leavers, the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities or migrants, etc. {...}” .

The main purpose of the TIPS project is precisely to value and develop specific skills and competences required or to be acquired by cultural mediators in order to facilitate the integration of migrants in their everyday life. Intercultural mediators are precious resources both for minority ethnic communities and for society as a whole. They are “culturally sensitive and

¹⁷ Recommendation published in the Official Journal L 394 of 30.12.2006

competent services providers” more than just information or linguistic support providers. That is why competences and skills they have to master are so wide and need to be adapted to very specific case to case situations. Intercultural mediators are working in public or private services. One field of work includes first contact services: offices for foreigners, sanitary services, police departments, tribunals, prisons but also association and cooperatives promoting socio-cultural developing integration projects. Their role is also very important in sanitary structures (hospitals, first assistance bureau) where new emergent branches of medical services are becoming aware of migrants’ specific needs.

2.3 Intercultural mediation as a channel between two worlds

Intercultural mediation is a process aiming at enhancing social integration, living together, meeting and gathering people with different backgrounds. Migrants bring with them new customs, new values and traditions that must be respected. Intercultural mediators are revealing, explaining and valuing new ways of thinking and multicultural approaches. They should allow foreign citizens (migrants) to become real actors and to find solutions to solve the difficulties they are facing. The more independent and autonomous they are, the better they can solve their own problems. Autonomy is a key issue for migrants. Intercultural mediation is not a substitute but a support for migrants to reach this autonomy.

It exists, in France, a general framework for social mediation¹⁸ stating the main principles for the professionals working in this field. They are relevant for intercultural mediators :

- ❖ Neutrality and impartiality : the main goal is to respect both parties (institutions and migrants);
- ❖ Negotiation and dialogue: intercultural mediation is not an authority relation even though the respect of the national law and common rules of collective life are important ;
- ❖ Free will and participation of inhabitants: at any time, any party may leave the mediation ; free agreement is the main principle ; mediators should explain also the limits of his/her action and asking regularly if his/her action are accepted and agreed upon ;
- ❖ Good will of institutions: enhancing citizenship and underlining the poor running of institutions, social and cultural mediation encourages the modernisation of institutions, to enhance a better proximity with inhabitants and a better public service answering people’s needs ;
- ❖ Protection and defence of rights: mediation shouldn’t replace services provided and rights defended by institutions. It is improving social relations without avoiding anyone to defend his/her rights ;
- ❖ Respect of fundamental human rights: all the rights proclaimed in the European convention for human rights and any reference text such as the Fundamental Social rights ; mediation should respect public liberties and rules protecting private life.

¹⁸ Charte de la Médiation sociale, DIV, octobre 2004

Intercultural mediation has known a real development in the past twenty years. Migration has become more and more complex (various geographic and cultural origins of the migrants). The question of social coeducation (“mixité”) is a key issue. Intercultural mediation remains an institutions’ demand rather than a migrants’ demand. This is raising the question of recognition. Mediation may have raised some suspicion among migrants who might see mediators as representatives of institutions. Intercultural mediators have a decisive action in the field of prevention “public safety” and defence of rights. They can better answer the new needs and social demands expressed by migrants.

2.4 The added value of the TIPS project to the migration issue

The TIPS project is an innovative project in two ways: first, it is addressing a brand new profession, intercultural mediation ; secondly, it is proposing a new learning method, t-learning integrating TV, Internet and mobile .

2.4.1 Intercultural mediation : a brand new profession

The European strategy in the field of migration and asylum has focused on two approaches: the security approach (short term strategy focussed on struggle against illegal immigration) and the integration approach (long term strategy, enhancing all the chances for migrants to benefit by the same and equal chances in the host societies).

The profession of intercultural mediation plays an emblematic role in this context. Its main mission is to solve or propose alternative solutions to conflicts rising between the national institutions and the migrants. The approach is a very practical and basic one: accompanying migrants in their everyday process of integration. It is both a short term and long term. On one hand, intercultural mediators may be faced to illegal migrants or migrants in a transitory position (waiting for the agreement to stay) or to new legal migrants who deserve to know the national background of the host society. On the other hand, they are working in the long term with migrants to make them become autonomous, independent and free towards institutions to avoid any future conflict through a mutual understanding.

In a macro-level perspective, national states and the European Union have settled legal framework to master migration flows. On a meso-level, institutions, most of the times public authorities but also habilitated associations have to apply these legislations. On a micro-level, individuals are faced to very practical problems in their everyday life. Intercultural mediators are the common channel between all these levels: they must know the national background in the field of migration and asylum ; they are appointed by institutions (public authorities or more often associations) ; they work directly with migrants to answer their demands and needs.

Intercultural mediation gives a human dimension to migration as they are human beings with a specific background. They have often foreign roots, have experienced the process of integration. They have overcome the main difficulties and have transformed their personal experience in a specific skill.

The Copenhagen process, in the lifelong learning perspective, is meant to value informal and non formal learning. The profession of cultural mediation is typically a new kind of job that has been developed on the basis of this informal and non formal learning, on personal and professional experience. Training is quite important in this context. The first main function of training is to identify the specific skills and competences required to work with migrants. The second main function is to share one's experience with other cultural mediators. The third function is to value and develop other skills and competences, such as the European perspective or the knowledge of other field of intervention of cultural mediation (health, justice, defence of rights...).

2.4.2 the method : t-learning

The training of intercultural mediators is ordinarily handled through specific courses (generally supported by ESF funding) organized by agencies authorized by national or regional authorities, on the basis of specific professional skills and qualification the would-be mediator must possess. Sometimes they are organized by Universities. They can be accessed upon possession of specific qualifications: a good knowledge of the national language, a middle-to-high cultural level and, obviously, being part of a group or nationality represented in the country.

Classical learning methods are used : face to face training, groups of trainees with a trainer giving content, methodological approach ...Cultural mediator could find difficulties in realizing the "communication bridge" with the migrants needed in a specific situation, due to the language of the migrant, to personal behaviour or negative experiences which have made immigrant less self confident.

Intercultural mediators are stimulated by their public (the migrants). Their training requires targeted and customized answers to very specific, sometime individual, problems. Continuous and updated training and information support should be assured to these professionals whenever are needed. Information Communication Technologies could provide these services and support. In particular, t-learning methodology, which balances the use of TV and mobile devices, can allow continuous training and in depth case studies.

Moreover, migration is a moving reality. Cultural mediators must answer as quickly as possible the growing demands of migrants in various fields such as education, legal information, health, justice, specific rights, leisure, employment opportunities... The best way to answer is to share other professionals' experience, to have an easy access to the legal information and to the most updated data in the field. In the training programme proposed in the TIPS project, cultural mediators will be able to join a virtual educative platform with key elements to be downloaded easily.

Mobility is the main characteristic of migration. Intercultural mediators must also be very mobile and flexible. The use of mobile phone (m-learning) proposed in the TIPS approach is most appropriate. If Internet is not so accessible, the mobile device is a technology commonly used by anyone.

Intercultural mediation is also based on negotiation, oral communication, television (TV – learning) is better understandable. By watching concrete situations, intercultural mediators can better react to the reality. They will also be able to enrich the different case studies proposed.

Last but not least, migration needs a networking approach as migrants are themselves members of many networks (families, religious or ethnic communities, sometimes professional network). Another issue proposed by the TIPS project is to create a new network between intercultural mediators coming from five different countries (Italy, Greece, France, Austria and Poland)...

Conclusion

Migration has long been a key issue in most European countries faced to huge migratory flows, due to history (former colonial empires in United Kingdom, The Netherlands or France) and geography (close frontiers with emigrating countries such as South Eastern Europe and the Balkan countries).

Since the Treaty of Amsterdam, in 1997, migration has become a European competence, integrating the “first pillar”. But the politics of migration still remain a controversial issue among many Members States.

The negative image of a closed and defensive Europe, the “besieged fortress” syndrome¹⁹ should be forgiven as most of the European countries have given up the “zero immigration” option proclaimed in the seventies. Migration is a chance for Europe as European societies are ageing and will need a growing workforce to face tomorrow’s challenges in the competition with India or China or any other emerging country. On a macro-level, migration is an economical issue that requires a political framework. For the ten past years, the European Union has built a strong basis in this perspective to regulate migratory flows and to speak the same common language towards third country nationals.

For the ten years to come, new perspectives should be open, a second step, a more qualitative one, in the migration issue. It should be more human, based on individuals, the micro-level should be put forward. Aside the traditional Action Plan dedicated to trans-national integration projects (such as the INTI programme or the Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows programme), another European programme might bring an innovative approach: the Life Long learning (LLL) perspective.

It is focused on skills and competences, on personal and professional experience, on non formal and informal learning, on continuous vocational training. It is valuing human being, human capital. It is enhancing the bottom up strategy rather than the top down one. Migrants and host societies need a practical approach, focussed on concrete problems, to make integration be a vivid reality.

The last two enlargements of 2004 and 2007 opened new areas and new perspectives for the old Europe, coming from South and East. It is no more the “Old World” as the Americans used to call us but a “New World” with new frontiers. Let’s build together a new European dream for the

¹⁹ “syndrome de la forteresse assiégée”

XXIth Century: a strong and confident Europe, open to migrants, proud of its roots and diversity, ready to face a changing world, with flying colours...

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