



Newsletter 4

Migration and the Labour Market

*Migrapass international round table
Sofia, Bulgaria, October 1st 2012*



Migrapass is a project financed by the European Commission's Leonardo Da Vinci programme (project n° 2010-1-FR1-LEO05-14483), developed with 6 partners in 5 European countries.



En France :



En Autriche :



En Bulgarie :



En Espagne :



Au Royaume-Uni :

autremonde



OIKODROM



Centre for European
Refugees, Migration and
Ethnic Studies



Roehampton
University
London

Conference objective: This round table conference was organised by the Centre for European Refugees, Migration and Ethnic Studies (Cermes) of the New Bulgarian University to present Migrapass and immigration policies in each partner country. The project team described how Migrapass fits into each national context in general, while representatives of the Bulgarian government and non-governmental organisations gave conference participants a detailed overview of immigration and migrant integration policies in Bulgaria.

Conference agenda - Welcome addresses

- **Ass Prof Anna Kratseva**, director of Cermes
- **H.E. Mr. Philippe Autie**, Ambassador of the Republic of France in Bulgaria
- **Zornitsa Rusinova**, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy
- **Tsvetan Tsvetanov**, Deputy Prime Minister, Interior Minister, Chairman of the National Council on Migration Policy

Migrapass project presentation by **Bénédicte Halba**, *iriv*

First Plenary Session: European Policies, approaches, models and good practices in the sphere of migration and integration

- **Michal Garapich** and **Jamil Iqbal**, Roehampton University - *Policies and good practices in Great Britain*
- **Monica Ibanez**, University of Burgos- *Policies and good practices in Spain*
- **Magali Ciaï**s, Autremonde, Paris- *Policies and good practices in France*
- **Heidi Dumreicher**, Oikodrom, Vienna- *Policies and good practices in Austria*

Second Plenary Session: Development tendencies in labour migration and integration in Bulgaria

Vladimir Kalchev, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Direction “European issues and international cooperation”
Bulgarian policy on labour migration and integration of immigrants in the context of European policy

Snezhana Yoveva, counsellor at the political cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Simeon Diankov
Highly qualified migration

Gabriela Kilfanova, Representative of the National Council on Migration Policy
New tendencies in the migration policy of Bulgaria

Tzvetan Petrov, Director of the Integration Centre, State Agency for Refugees
Policies and good practices for the integration of refugees into the Bulgarian labour market

Preslava Lilova, Red Cross
From the Migrapass portfolio to Business Incubator – innovative integration practices

Zvezda Vankova, Legal program, Open Society Institute
Migrant integration policies assessment in the EU and Bulgaria MIPEX comparative analysis

Discussion with representatives of migrant communities:
Dr. Dogmush and Hairi Hamdan of the Palestinian community;
Dr. Salem of the Afghan community in Bulgaria.

Summary of the welcome address by **H.E. Mr. Philippe Autie**, Ambassador of the Republic of France in Bulgaria:



The integration of migrants is a challenge which requires innovative tools and structures. Migrapass is important because it valorises migrants and improves their self confidence. The incorporation of 5 EU countries into the project, one of which is very recent, greatly enhances the final results. Its collaborative approach is like a “miniature civil society” which associates public actors as well.

Summary of the welcome address by **Zornitsa Rusinova**, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy:

Migrapass is very important to the Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, because it gave it the opportunity to make use of the expertise of other European countries. Labour integration is very important to Bulgaria in these times of unemployment and economic uncertainty. Problems in labour integration are also caused by social welfare issues, which are a major obstacle to free migration. Contributions from other countries help improve Bulgaria’s policies in all of these areas.

Summary of the welcome statement by **Tsvetan Tsvetanov**, Deputy Prime Minister, Interior Minister, Chairman of the National Council on Migration Policy (statement delivered by Gabriela Kilfanova on behalf of Mr. Tsvetanov):

There is a high practical desire for synergy in the National Council on Migration Policy. This round table is important because it will improve the interaction of all actors, thus leading to a better implementation of the national strategy. It also gives impulses for further improvement of the Council's policies on immigration and integration.

Migrapass project presentation by **Bénédicte Halba**, *iriv*:

Migrapass is a tool (portfolio) and a method (collaborative training) that helps migrants identify their competences and present themselves on the labour market. Migrapass uses an innovative, holistic approach that incorporates professional experience, social experience, and personal experience. Migratory experience is valorised and expressed in professional terms, thus helping migrants overcome discrimination on the labour market. It also enhances diversity on the national labour markets by opening new perspectives to migrants.



First Plenary Session: European Policies, approaches, models and good practices in the sphere of migration and integration

Summary of the presentations of Michal Garapich and Jamil Iqbal, Roehampton University - *Policies and good practices in Great Britain*:

The UK has pursued a largely pragmatic tradition of integration. Since the 1980s, policies of multiculturalism were pursued, which are now shifting towards social cohesion (building a community of communities). As a result, integration policies have been delegated to the local level and civil society.

Important issues like labour market discrimination are delegated to local actors, where projects like Migrapass have great importance and visibility. The UK's qualification-based tiered system for immigration also increases the necessity for Migrapass in the UK, especially for migrants in the semi-skilled immigrant category.

Summary of the presentation by Monica Ibanez, University of Burgos - *Policies and good practices in Spain*:

Spanish immigration policy is quite young, and originally focused on police control, especially since Spain is an external border of the EU. There has been a shift in focus recently towards better integration of migrants.

Most migrants in Spain are low-skilled workers, which have been hardest hit by unemployment. Migrapass fits into this context by improving the position of migrants in the economy by increasing the variety of jobs open to them. It also provides critical information about competences that diversify a migrant's job search and increase their success.

Summary of the presentation by Magali Ciaï, Autremonde
Policies and good practices in France:

Since 2007, immigrants coming to France must pass through a centralized government agency (the French Office of Immigration and Integration - OFII), which requires them to sign a “reception and integration contract.” This contract sets out several obligations for migrants, such as a professional opportunity assessment.

Public institutions are by necessity impersonal and don’t have much time to devote to each case. Therefore, the state has delegated integration to non-governmental actors. Migrapass operates at this level, and can be seen as a more comprehensive, more effective counterpart to the OFII’s 3 hour professional opportunity assessment.

Summary of the presentation by Heidi Dumreicher,
Oikodrom - Policies and good practices in Austria:

Austria has a “twin track” history of migration. After a period of emigration, Austria pursued an open door policy for Eastern European refugees during the 1960s. Today, there is a growing right wing anti-immigrant movement, but at the same time, civil society organisations are energetically calling for tolerance and the improvement of migrants’ daily lives.

Civil society actors shoulder the brunt of migrant integration efforts in Austria. Oikodrom, an urban sustainability organisation, is a part of this civil society, and Migrapass is an element within it. Migrapass is very much in line with civil society’s calls for change by shifting migrants’ thinking away from one of deficiency and inferiority, towards one of strength and competence.

Second Plenary Session: Development tendencies in labour migration and integration in Bulgaria



Summary of the presentation by Vladimir Kalchev,
Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Direction “European issues and international cooperation” - *Bulgarian policy on labour migration and integration of immigrants in the context of European policy:*

Immigration policy has a much shorter history in Bulgaria as compared to Western Europe. However, Bulgaria is catching up quickly. The National Strategy for Immigration, Integration and Asylum is currently the basis from which various objectives are being pursued. One of the priorities of the strategy is to facilitate the free movement of people in Europe - both for Bulgarians abroad and migrants in Bulgaria. With regard to migrant integration, several initiatives are underway. Integration centres have been opened in Bulgaria, and more are planned. Other projects have also been started with the aim of preparing local communities to accept migrants.

Summary of the presentation by Snezhana Yoveva, political cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Simeon Diankov- *Highly qualified migration:*

Highly skilled workers are needed by European businesses for R&D as well as local development. There are several proposed EU instruments that would be beneficial in this regard, such as the EU “blue card” initiative, but member states are slow to implement them. Bilateral agreements under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) are currently the main form of agreement for the facilitation of highly-qualified worker migration.

Summary of the presentation by Gabriela Kilfanova, Representative of the National Council on Migration Policy - *New tendencies in the migration policy of Bulgaria:*

In response to a national evaluation of Bulgaria’s immigration system last year, a coordination unit was created last year: the National Council for Migration Policy. The main functions of the council are to organise and implement Bulgaria’s national strategy on immigration, as well as to coordinate the activities of state and non-state actors dealing with migrants. The council’s secretariat is also responsible for providing expert opinions and ensuring cooperation with academia.

Summary of the presentation by Tzvetan Petrov, Director of the Integration Centre, State Agency for Refugees - *Policies and good practices for the integration of refugees into the Bulgarian labour market:*

The integration of refugees and asylum seekers is part of Bulgaria’s national strategy on immigration and has been implemented by the State Agency for Refugees. Some of the measures currently underway are language courses for asylum

seekers, vocational training, and a programme that helps those unable to prove their educational background by providing them with certificates issued by the Ministry of Education. Job fairs for refugees are another initiative, the first of which took place recently. Only a few employers attended the event, but it was a positive first step that will be continued.

Summary of the Presentation by Preslava Lilova, Red Cross *From the Migrapass portfolio to Business Incubator:*

Migrapass is in line with the 2020 strategy of the Red Cross, which prioritises creating opportunities for qualification and re-qualification of vulnerable groups, including migrants. Due to its promotion of competencies like entrepreneurship, Migrapass is also in line with the Red Cross’ Business Incubator project, which helps socially marginalised people create their own business. Migrapass allows participants of the Business Incubator project to identify competences they can include in their business plans.

Summary of the presentation by Zvezda Vankova, Legal program, Open Society Institute - *Migrant integration policies in the EU and Bulgaria MIPEX comparative analysis:*

The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a tool for the comparison and analysis of integration policies in developed countries, which creates a ranking according to outcomes for migrants in seven public policy areas. Overall, Bulgaria ranks 26th out of all countries evaluated, with very mixed results. Bulgaria achieved some of the lowest scores on labour market mobility, access to citizenship and access to social services. However, it achieved some of the best results in the areas of anti-discrimination measures, and has made major improvements in family reunion policy and long term residency due to transposition of the EU *acquis*.

Discussion with representatives of migrant communities:



Dr. Dogmush of the Palestinian community in Bulgaria stressed the need to implement (well) all of the initiatives proposed by the government and non-state actors. Dr. Salem of the Afghan community stated that leaders of migrant communities should be included into all integration initiatives to ensure proper “trickle down” to migrants. Hairi Hamdan of the Palestinian community said that in order to find solutions, one must understand both migrants and the host society, which doesn’t need to prioritise the challenges of immigration.

Concluding statement by Anna Krasteva, CERMES, NBU

There is no single European model for integration. There are more centralised models like in France and more decentralised ones like in the UK. However, there is a common general trend towards a transfer of responsibilities from governments to civil society. Migrapass fits into this trend nicely, and occupies the space it deserves by placing the migrant at the centre of integration. Migrants can and should play a major role in this process.



Migration and the Labour Market *Minutes for the Migrapass international round table* *Sofia, Bulgaria, October 1st 2012*

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Guest speakers:

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Monica Ibanez, University of Burgos, Spain

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