

D.T1.5.3 - PP7 Research Paper Abstract on Integration Preconditions

The study presents possible deliberations on social integration in the rural environment of EU states. It focuses on the issue of barriers and prerequisites that limit or allow for the successful integration of third-country nationals in European target countries and primarily in their rural areas.

The social integration of migrants is a complex and multi-layered process, in which a number of factors work together. The study presents the concept of social integration as an interpretational / analytical tool. It differentiates between the group level and individual level of integration as varying dimensions of the process. The analysis deals primarily with the individual level. It uses Hartmut Esser's method of four dimensions of social integration: "placement", "culturation", "interaction", and "identification". The process of integration takes place in these dimensions on micro (interactions between individuals), mezzo (ties between an individual and institutions) and macro levels (refers more to the state and international level). It is necessary to create conditions for successful integration and identify and remove its barriers. Therefore, the study deals with topics such as language, available social and health care, infrastructure, the culture and values of migrants, the absence of social ties, and the growth of social inequalities in the country of origin as a consequence of migration.

Naturally, migration for the source and target countries has both positive and negative impacts. The strong economic growth of developed European countries implies an abundance of jobs, and migrants are thus an asset for European countries as part of the workforce. The study states that an interlinked transnational space is being created, in which very complex transactions are taking place. These transactions not only encompass the economic dimension, but also primarily the social dimension. The exchange of values and ideas helps to remove mistrust among individual groups in mutual interaction, namely if these values and ideas are beneficial to multiple actors. The cohabitation of migrants and the local population

is nothing more than the result of the mutual attitude of immigrants and the majority towards one another.

The study also differentiates between the term integration and the term adaptation, which refers only to the ability of an immigrant to survive in the context of the host state, however, does not entail fully-fledged inclusion into the various structures of the target country's social environment. In addition to adaptation, there are moments in which partial integration of migrants into the majority society takes place. This integration lies in integration into the job market. All other practices take place outside the host society and outside the platform of the state. In extreme cases, absolute social exclusion takes place. In some cases, integration of an immigrant into society does not take place at all, as the environment into which he/she is adapting does not require greater knowledge or involvement on the part of the migrant into the structures of the target country. However, the study states that cultural bridges and the linguistic closeness of the immigration and emigration country is not the defining motive of migration and integration in the present globalized world.

From the analysis on systematic, mezzo and individual levels, the study observes a number of barriers and prerequisites for the successful integration of foreign nationals and suggests the following recommendations.

Firstly, finance resources for social prevention services should be increased and capacities of social workers in towns and municipalities heightened as there is often lack of the personnel capacity and strategy for the integration policy and process. The study suggests designing an employee to communicate with foreign nationals. Furthermore, the work of monitoring the situation, prevention and field work should be targeted in locations where foreign nationals are present, for instance at boarding houses where foreign nationals live. In addition, this work could be connected to the distribution of materials created by local governments. These materials should contain basic overview of possibilities of communication between foreign nationals and the local government, for example links to social and assistance services.

Secondly, the administrative burden should be removed. Third-world nationals often use mediating services in the area of employment, but also in housing and services. Mediation makes it possible to overcome the barriers relatively effectively – not, however, in favor of integration, but in favor of the migrant’s adaptation to the environment and the favor of the mediators’ business. The awareness among foreign nationals of their obligations and rights should be heightened, for example with fliers in various languages at public offices or doctor’ offices. As agencies play a crucial role in employing foreign nationals, which creates problems, such as debt, housing loss, or low wages, for these individuals, there should be an emphasis on direct employment. Mediators and employments agencies should be curbed and employers should take responsibility for their employees, and to the protect foreign nationals’ rights the entities that employ them should be thoroughly inspected. With the help of specialists, towns should recommend measures in the field of housing predicaments and crack down on the marketeering of illegal boarding houses.

Thirdly, the possibility of doctors willing to care for foreign nationals should be expand. Negotiation with health insurance providers and regional councils in the field of healthcare should take place. There is often lack of institutional infrastructure for foreign nationals, and namely for labor migrants in unqualified positions.

Lastly, a discussion on the issue of foreign nationals should be open with emphasis on integration activities. The social exclusion of foreign nationals and other groups should end through multicultural cooperation. The marginalized should be integrated into everyday activities of villages and towns, for instance spring cleaning, leisure activities, volunteer fire department events, athletic events, school events etc.

In conclusion, there is a great number of factors not mentioned in the study due to the extent and nature of the study. These factors namely include the field of human trafficking, asylum seeker integration, discrimination and racism. However, the authors of the study believe that the study will help push the boundaries of thought on integration in a better and mainly practical direction.