



Mobile Identities: Migration and Integration in Transnational Communitiesⁱ

National Policy Recommendations (Germany) November 2015

CJD Hamburg + Eutin







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With the financial support of Directorate B-Immigration and Asylum-Directorate-General Home Affairs, European Commission, European Fund for the Integration of Third-country Nationals 2007-2013

The views expressed in this publication are solely that of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.







1. Introduction

Temporary and circular migration programmes have been attractive to developed countries in Europe as a solution to much debated political as well as economic issues of migration.ⁱⁱ In Germany, temporary migration programmes have been particularly popular in times of strong economic development, when the needs of the labour market could not be met with the given number and qualification of the national workforce. From the mid-1950s to the early 1970s, Germany introduced its so-called "guest worker programme". The country concluded bilateral contracts with Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia and Yugoslavia regulating the temporary migration of workers. About 14 million people from these countries came to Germany and 11 million "guest workers" left Germany again after having worked there for some time.ⁱⁱⁱ Even though the majority of the "guest workers" did not stay in Germany and were, thus, temporary migrants, temporariness did not apply to all participants of the programme. After the 1973 ban on recruiting "guest workers", some stayed in Germany, raising the percentage of foreigners in the country to about 4%.^{iv} Later, many of these "guest workers" brought their partners and children to Germany. Thus, Germany's temporary "guest worker" migration programme led to a growing number of migrants living permanently in the host country and made Germany a de facto "country of immigration" – which was only officially recognised decades later.

Currently, there are hardly any specific temporary or circular migration programmes involving bilateral agreements and migrants from third countries, i.e. from outside the EU. Germany used to have an extensive programme for seasonal workers from countries like Poland, Bulgaria or Romania. After the eastward enlargement of the EU and granting of full freedom of movement for people from these countries, the bilateral seasonal workers programmes were closed.^v

In general, almost all possible ways of migrating from third countries to Germany are temporary.^{vi} Moreover, potential migrants are required to have certain skills, i.e. either a professional training in a specific shortage occupation or a university degree. Thus, migration from third countries to Germany usually involves (highly) skilled workers.

The only bilateral agreements for a recruitment of workers from third countries are currently in the field of health and geriatric care. In Germany, these agreements have to take into account the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel. This Code seeks to "*establish and promote voluntary principles and practices for the ethical*







international recruitment of health personnel, taking into account the rights, obligations and expectations of source countries, destination countries and migrant health personnel' and to "serve as a reference for Member States in establishing or improving the legal and institutional framework required for the international recruitment of health personnel'."^{viii} This Code wants to promote recruitment of health care workers only from countries where there is a sufficient supply of qualified personnel in this field. In Germany, bilateral agreements, thus, currently exist with China and Vietnam.^{viii}

In theory, temporary and circular migration programmes are thought to provide a 'triple win': they offer much needed labour force to a host country and do not cause an integration challenge; they allow individual migrants to earn money in the short term to support their family and gain work experience; and the sending country can reduce its unemployment rate and gets migrants back with more internationally recognised skills and experience.

The "Mobile Identities" project aims at analysing current temporary and circular migration programmes in Germany and 4 other EU countries (Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom) with regard to the 'triple win' paradigm and the focus on the well-being of the temporary and circular migrants. Our key questions are: Are there programmes fostering temporary and circular migration in Germany? If so, how is temporary migration realised in practice? Does it really benefit all interest groups involved? This National Policy Recommendations report on Germany summarises the research strategy and main findings and provides recommendations for policy makers.

2. Research and Data

2.1. Research strategies

Following a desk research on existing temporary or circular migration programmes in Germany, our research team conducted 11 stakeholder interviews with 12 people from relevant organisations identified during desk research. Among them were:

- ✤ 4 people involved in 2 migration programmes of the care sector
- ✤ 3 people from migrant organisations
- 2 researchers (EU Blue Card/ employment-related migration; migration to and from Turkey)
- 2 people from foreigners' offices (1 written interview)







✤ 1 person from a project supporting migration of qualified workers to Hamburg

The interviews were either face-to-face or phone interviews, held in German, and took 45 minutes to 1 hour on average. In use was a standardised interview guideline which was modified according to different groups of interview partners. There are no direct transcripts of the interviews, but the minutes are comprehensive and filled in a template (in English).

We would have considered it to be important to also talk to government officials involved in immigration (programmes), mainly from the Federal Employment Agency, Central International Placement Service (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit, Zentrale Auslands- und Fachvermittlung – ZAV*) or the initiative "Make-it-in-Germany". However, even after several attempts scheduling interviews was not successful. We found it difficult to approach big government organisations and ministries for stakeholder interviews.

Furthermore, we conducted 18 in-depth interviews with migrants, also using an extensive interview guideline. Due to the specific situation in Germany, our target migrant groups were:

- Participants of the programmes in the geriatric care sector
- Temporary and circular qualified migrant workers from Turkey
- Temporary and circular qualified migrant workers in general

On the one hand we interviewed participants of a migration programme in the care sector, i.e. care staff from Vietnam. During the time of the empirical phase of Mobile Identities, the first group of Vietnamese care workers lived in Germany. 100 participants of the programme are staying in different parts of Germany for training and employment. Due to massive public interest in their experiences and a tight schedule for the participants (working, learning German, getting training, internal evaluation of the programme), it proved difficult to get the chance to interview them. We managed to interview the small group of the Vietnamese care workers living and working in the city of Braunschweig – thanks to the support of their school there. First we conducted two group interviews and then another 2 in-depth individual interviews so that we talked to 10 participants out of the 100.

On the other hand we interviewed qualified immigrants,

- whose residence permit is temporary (e.g. EU Blue Card, job seekers' visa, research visa, exchange of personnel),
- who are able to conduct the interview in German or English,







- who work in Germany, e.g. qualified workers, foreign graduates of German universities, researchers, internal exchange of personnel, etc.
- who ideally come from Turkey or another (African or Asian) country (Turkey: country pairing;
 Africa, GUS and Asia: are seen as having a good potential for qualified immigration^{ix})

It proved to be rather difficult to find suitable interview partners who fit to the above mentioned criteria. Immigration of (qualified) workers is only a small share of total immigration to Germany: In 2013, about 24,000 people immigrated with visa for qualified workers to Germany – out of 885,000 immigrants in total in that year.^x Access to interview partners proved to be rather difficult. Thanks to the support of our associate partner as well as through personal contacts, we interviewed 4 people from Cameroon, 3 people from Turkey, 2 people from India, 1 person from Senegal, 1 from Russia and 1 from Moldova. Using personal contacts proved to be the most successful way to reach potential interview partners; institutions or organisations (apart from the associate partner) were less helpful.

2 interview partners did not live in Germany at the time of the interview. These interviews had to be conducted via Skype. The others were done as face-to-face interviews. All interviews were summarised and relevant information was also provided in an overview table to foster the analysis.

Furthermore, we conducted a national workshop in the course of the project, discussing the issue with local and regional experts and practitioners. During the transnational workshop as well, important inputs by stakeholders and policy makers were given.

2.2. Data

The following characteristics describe our migrant interview partners:

- Gender: 56% of the interview partners were male; 44% female.
- Age: The migrants we interviewed were rather young: They were 30.7 years on average; the youngest being 23 and the oldest 51. The youngest group were the Vietnamese interview partners who are only in their early 20s. Interviewees from African countries were the oldest group in the sample (40 years on average).
- Duration of stay in Germany: The interview partners have lived 4.7 years on average in Germany – with the exception of one interviewee who is 2nd generation and a transnational migrant spending half of his time in Germany and the other half in Turkey. The length of stay ranges from only 5 months to 16 years.







- Local background: The majority of the interview partners grew up in an urban area in their countries of origin. Only 28% are from a rural area.
- Educational background: All interview partners have a university degree at least on a Bachelor level. 4 interviewees got a Master's degree; 3 interviewees hold a PhD or are currently writing their PhD-thesis. The participants of the recruitment programme in the health care sector interviewed had to start a vocational training in Germany to work here in geriatric care – though they already got a university degree in health care.
- Languages: All interview partners speak at least 2 languages. 4 people interviewed got a basic demand of German; the other interviewees speak the language good to fluently. Some of the interviewees grew up bilingually and 1 person in the sample speaks 6 languages.

3. Findings

The following chapter gives an overview of the main findings of "Mobile Identities" – based on the stakeholder and migrant interviews as well as the workshops.

3.1. Immigration Policies/ Migration to Germany

Reasons for migrating – in general and particularly to Germany – differed among the interview partners. Main reasons were a lack of professional opportunities in the countries of origin and the wish to have better career options abroad. Some of the interviewees also stated that they migrated due to family reasons, because they had role models, in order to study, to learn the language or because they wanted to gain new experiences in general. They chose Germany out of different reasons as well. For the group of Vietnamese migrants we interviewed, the main reason was that there was the possibility to migrate to Germany because of the recruitment programme. However, they also reported about recruitment programmes with Japan and that they had to decide which one to apply for. Also other interview partners had job offers in other countries and decided for Germany, because of the good image of German qualifications, companies and engineering. One said: "*All over the world people say that Germany has the best engineers. I wanted to be one of them.*" (Interview 11)







To sum up, the reasons for migrating (to Germany) were a mix of different reasons and they changed over time. They depend on the age of the interviewees and their personal and family situation as well as on the country of origin.

3.2. Labour Market

In general, our interview partners were contented with the working atmosphere and the relations to their colleagues and boss in Germany. They liked the working discipline and could earn more money than in their countries of origin – but some interviewees also said that they earn less than their German colleagues, in particular if they work here as exchanged personnel. The role of the managers and bosses was highlighted by the interviewees: Their interest in and commitment to the migrant workers was seen as crucial for the worker's individual development and satisfaction in the job. In the case of migrants working in Germany in an intra-company exchange of personnel, managers were also described as controlling the foreign workers and hindering them from getting in contact with people from outside their national group in order to prevent them to look for new employment and change the job. Experiences of discrimination and the notion of a "glass ceiling" were mainly mentioned by migrants who have lived in Germany for many years.

Participants of the recruitment programme in the geriatric care sector experienced very different working conditions than they had expected before migrating to Germany. Even though this group had comprehensive preparation, language training and information in Vietnam, they were "shocked" when they started working in Germany: The interviewees were trained nurses in Vietnam with a university degree and had a wide area of responsibilities at the hospitals they used to work (i.e. injections and infusions). In Germany, they had to start a new apprenticeship and to take over tasks that are not done by nurses in Vietnam, but by the family (i.e. basic care, feeding and cleaning the patients). The interview partners saw this as a lack of information on the working conditions in their profession in Germany.

3.3. Language, Integration and Identity

Learning and knowing the German language was considered by all interview partners to be important in order to fully participate at work and in German society. Highly qualified migrants we interviewed work in an international working environment where the working language is English. However, also this







group had the feeling that communication at work would be easier if they spoke German, because they work in a predominately German working environment. One interviewee stated: "*My company said that they are international. And they want to be international. But they are not. Some of the colleagues don't speak English.*" (Interview 09) In the recruitment programme with Vietnam, language courses up to B1 level were already offered before the participants came to Germany. This was considered to be very important, since the migrants immediately take up a job in Germany that requires good command of the language. Nevertheless, after the first round of the programme it became clear that level B1 is not sufficient – so the second round will have a B2 German language course in Vietnam as well.

When asked about their circle of friends in Germany, most interviewees said that it is mixed and includes also Germans or native German speakers respectively. They mainly met their (German) friends at work. Some interviewees also stated that they find it very difficult to get in contact with Germans and to make German friends due to a lack of opportunities meeting German people and their perceived reserved attitude.

The issue of identity and identifying with Germany came up mainly in the interviews with people who had already lived in Germany for longer. One interviewee described his feelings as "*belonging nowhere and everywhere*" (Interview 01). This feeling was shared and interviewees ranged between having no identity and having several identities. They said they would identify with Germany when the country and people are making them feel welcome and a part of German society. All interviewees stated to like their life in Germany and the two people interviewed who currently live outside Germany talked about being "home-sick" when thinking about Germany and that it was difficult to settle back in their countries of origin after living abroad for a few years.

3.4. 'Temporariness' in Temporary Migration

All migrant interview partners in the "Mobile Identities" project initially thought their migration to be of a temporary nature. They left their countries of origin to either study or work abroad and gain new knowledge and experiences. Only two interviewees who currently live in Germany had a concrete plan to leave the country (after finishing their PhD). Participants of the recruitment programme with Vietnam intervieweed all said that they plan to stay in Germany for a few years and then return to their country of origin. Some interviewees intend to move to another country to gain more work experience there. In







particular interview partners who have lived in Germany for longer had the wish to either move back when they are retired old or stay in Germany.

The main reasons for our interviewees to change their plans of being temporary migrants to a permanent stay abroad were of personal nature: They met a partner in Germany, had children or built up a strong circle of friends. Reasons to leave Germany were mainly due to legal regulations (expiring residents permits) or career options. Some interviewees experienced discrimination on the labour market or thought that top positions in Germany cannot be reached as a migrant. Some also saw better chances for their careers when being mobile or in thriving economies in their countries of origin. Also a lack of social contacts in Germany or the wish to be closer to their families abroad were stated as reasons to migrate back again.

3.5. Remittances and the Relation to the Country of Origin

Sending remittances to the family in the country of origin varied among the interview partners and depended mainly on their socio-economical background: Whereas the interview partners involved in the recruitment programme regularly send remittances to support their families, the Turkish interviewees reported that expectations in Turkey have changed. During the 'guest worker' programme, remittances were required, but now Turkey has a strong economy and a higher standard of living so people in Turkey mainly do not expect remittances from their families in Germany. Our African interview partners stressed the importance of sending remittances in order to participate in their home countries and families. Other Asian interviewees stated that remittances show respect to their family. The highly qualified migrants we interviewed often had relatively rich families and were, thus, not required to support them with money. One interview partner, who has concrete plans to return to his home country after studying and working abroad for about 10 years, said that he sends money back to his country of origin so he can safe it and use it for his future there. He also wants to use his knowledge and skills acquired though studying, working and researching in Europe to become an entrepreneur in his home country. Also other interviewees wanted to give back something to their country of origin, e.g. help building up a hospital in Africa. The attitude towards actually returning to the country of origin depended mainly on the time spent abroad and the personal ties either to the country of origin or country of migration (e.g. elderly parents vs. own children). Two interviewees excluded the possibility to return to their countries of origin at the moment, because of current political and social debates.







4. Policy Recommendations

There are degrees of success and failure in temporary migration (programmes). Temporary migration addresses much needed skills shortage, and allows employers to have workers without having to spend time and money for training. It also gives migrants an opportunity to work. However, different interest groups have different needs and expectations. They all have to be taken into account when planning and implementing temporary and circular migration programmes.

The following recommendations are lessons learnt from the "Mobile Identities" research project and mainly summaries the discussions and ideas from our stakeholder and migrant interview partners as well as from the participants of the workshops conducted in the course of the project.

1. Offering language courses and integration projects is necessary and should be strengthened and participation facilitated.

Language is seen as the key to integrating and participating in the German society by the interview partners. Germany already offers a wide range of language and integration courses. However, not all migrants are required to take up such a course, e.g. highly skilled migrants including EU Blue Card holders and their spouses. These groups can participate voluntarily in a public course or are sometimes offered language courses by their employers. Experience of our interview partners shows that highly skilled migrants mainly have English as their working language and do not always take up German language courses. However, they regret this and see it as a disadvantage in getting in contact with people in Germany and fully participating in the country. Thus, also highly skilled migrants should be motivated to take up a language course, e.g. by their employers and participation in the courses should be facilitated.

2. Counselling and information for migrants should be extended.

There already is a wide range of counselling and information services for migrants in Germany. Initiatives like "Make it in Hamburg" that counsels for migrants who want to move and work in Hamburg or look for new employment or the "Welcome Centre" in Hamburg and at universities that provide information and help migrants e.g. in the fields of housing, health care, child care and requirements of daily life, are vital guidance in particular for newly arrived migrants. Such initiatives should be enhanced







and extended. On the other hand, also more information and cooperation for companies that want to recruit workers from abroad is needed.

3. Initiatives of "welcoming" migrants should be extended.

The term "welcome culture" has been widely used in the official debate on migration and integration of migrants for years and there already are good projects in this field. However, a concern of our interview partners was that they found it difficult to get in contact with Germans/German-speaking people in particular in big cities. They wished for more projects and occasions for get-togethers.

Furthermore, the rise of right-wing movements and Islamophobia not only in Germany but throughout Europe was a concern for our interview partners and experts in the workshop: They wished for a stronger role of the EU in providing a framework for an open and welcoming society and establishing a European "welcome culture".

4. A positive image of diversity and migrants as role models and "bridge builders" should be shown.

Most of our interview partners criticised that, also compared to other European countries, hardly any migrants are visibly holding top positions in German companies, politics or media – due to a glass ceiling and discriminative actions. However, they stressed the importance of an open society and structures that allow minority groups to reach top positions in order to prove to others that such a career is possible and to reflect the increasing diversity of society. Mentoring programmes could be one way of achieving this. Moreover, a positive coverage of the topics migration and integration in media, i.e. not only reporting on it when there are problems, should be supported.

5. The acknowledgement of qualifications obtained abroad should be facilitated.

Only in 2012, the German government has passed the "Recognition Act for the procedure to assess professional qualifications". Due to federalism and different jurisdictions for different professions, Germany has a rather difficult system of acknowledging qualifications and degrees. The respective law was a first step and gives every migrant the right to have their documents checked. Information and counselling in this field should be enhanced further to make the regulations more comprehensive and facilitate the acknowledgement of qualifications obtained abroad.







6. Recruitment programmes should have a stronger focus on development policies and transferring knowledge to countries of origin.

Temporary or circular migration programmes in general as well as recruitment programmes analysed in Germany are supposed to create a "triple win"-situation, i.e. advantages for the sending country, the migrant and the receiving country. From the experiences drawn in Germany and from other project countries, it can be said that there is no balance in the "triple win" in practice: The recruitment programmes in the geriatric care sector in Germany focus on getting new skilled workers for this sector which lacks sufficient qualified personnel. Migrant interview partners in the programme are offered language courses and extensive support so they can gain new skills and experiences - still the focus of the programme is on the German labour market. Interviewed experts regretted the lack of mutual learning and transferring knowledge between the countries. They suggested implementing partnerships between care facilities and schools in both countries, exchanging personnel or establishing care facilities in the sending countries and generally more cooperation between companies and organisations in the destination country as well as the country of origin. Such advantages for sending countries should be included and/or strengthened in future recruitment programmes. Therefore, partner countries have to be chosen carefully and a strong communication with the countries of origin is necessary. Furthermore, all participants/ parties involved in the programmes have to be prepared properly.

7. More flexible rules allowing for temporary and circular migration should be implemented.

All people involved in the project agreed that in order to support temporary and circular migration, migration law should be flexible and allow for moving to other countries without losing the status and opportunity to move back to Germany. Positive examples in this regard – showing that mobility, temporariness and circularity exist in practice – are the right of free movement of people within the EU or transnational lifestyles of people with dual citizenship. Also experiences with the former "guest worker" programme proved that tightening rules and regulations decreases temporary migration, because migrants tended to stay in Germany when they knew there was no chance to move back once they left the country. A further step towards flexible regulations was the implementation of the EU Blue Card in Germany for highly qualified migrants – allowing them for instance to get a settlement permit faster than usual and also leaving Germany for more than 6 months without losing the right to move back. This is also an example of a positive impact of an EU directive on national law.







5. Conclusion

Even though the current political and societal debate in the fields of migration and integration is dominated in 2015 – not only in Germany but throughout Europe – by the influx of asylum seekers and refugees, a project like "Mobile Identities" was still a necessary and important part of gaining knowledge about migration and integration processes. "Mobile Identities" put the focus on one crucial aspect of migration – the temporariness. What makes migrants want to stay in or leave from a country of destination? Is temporariness wished for? Can it be forced upon migrants?

Germany has a relatively long history of temporary migration programmes and can, thus, learn from its past. Many of the former "guest workers" always had the perception of only living temporary in Germany in their minds – even though in reality, they had been living in the country for 40 years with their spouses and children. This temporariness of mind coupled with a wrong perception of temporariness on the part of the country of destination can cause long-term problems. Germany did not consider language courses or other integration measures necessary for participants of its "guest worker" programme or their families. Only in the 21st century, integration got on the political agenda.

Behind this background, research in "Mobile Identities" in Germany stressed two major aspects:

- 1. The importance of language and integration and
- 2. The necessity of having flexible legal regulations allowing for temporary and circular migration.

People change their life plans and ideas for the future and adapt them to their personal situation and circumstances in their countries of origin or destination. Migration can be temporary stay for gaining valuable (work) experiences or a permanent way of living in another country. All interview partners in the project stressed that legal regulations should be flexible to allow for changes in life paths. Knowledge of the German language was seen by most of the interview partners as one of the most important means of successfully living and participating in the country of destination. Thus, language courses should be offered for all migrants coming to Germany.

The "Mobile Identities" project has given a first insight in the topic of temporary and circular migration in Germany and has concentrated on (highly-) qualified migrants. Results of this research – in particular the view of interviewed (temporary or circular) migrants on their life in Germany – can be used to identify fields of action and to enhance practical integration measures and strategies.







There many more open questions on this topic that would require further research in this topic – aiming at supporting countries, regions and cities in enhancing diversity, facilitating integration, learning from others and develop. For instance would we consider necessary after this research to have a stronger focus on the country of origin when implementing recruitment programmes: Mutual exchange programmes including the exchange of knowledge as well as of people should be fostered and recruitment programmes could be linked more often with development policies. Since "Mobile Identities" research was conducted in several European countries, learning from other countries' experiences was also a valuable part of the research and should be in future.







Endnotes

^{iv} Butterwegge, C. (2005) *Von der "Gastarbeiter"-Anwerbung zum Zuwanderungsgesetz – Migrationsgeschehen und Zuwanderungspolitik in der Bundesrepublik.* bpb, Dossier Migration. Available at: http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/dossier-migration/56377/migrationspolitik-in-der-brd?p=0

^v In 2014, there was only one programme for seasonal workers still in use – a programme and bilateral agreements with Croatia, which was then an EU member state as well. According to a short telephone call with a representative of the Federal Employment Agency, Central International Placement Service (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, Zentrale Auslandsund Fachvermittlung – ZAV) – the respective agency in charge of all bilateral migration programmes – there are no plans for further agreements with other countries for seasonal workers programmes. After closing the existing programmes, workers from Poland, Romania and other east European countries continued their jobs in agriculture in Germany now under the right of free movement within the EU.

^{VI} §19 of the German Residence Act permits issuing a settlement permit immediately for "top talents" from third countries. The migrant has to be highly qualified, to have a job offer in Germany and to assure a livelihood. Furthermore, Germany has to have a special economic or social interest in the specific migrant (e.g. scientific researchers in outstanding positions). See also: Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration (SVR) GmbH (2015) *Zuwanderung zum Zweck der Erwerbstätigkeit – Wichtige Regelungen im Überblick*. Available at: <u>http://www.svr-</u> migration.de/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Zuwanderung-zum-Zweck-der-Erwerbst%C3%A4tigkeit-kurz-undb%C3%BCndig.pdf

^{vii} See: World Health Organisation (2014) *The WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel*. Available at: <u>http://www.who.int/hrh/migration/code/code_en.pdf?ua=1</u>

viii See expert interview 02: According to the interview partner, a planned cooperation with India in the helath care sector was not possible, due to the WHO Code of Practice.

^k See: Kreienbrink, Axel (2014): *Fachkräftemigration aus Asien nach Deutschland und Europa – Migration of skilled labour from Asia to Germany and Europe.* Beiträge zu Migration und Integration, Band 5, Nürnberg: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF).

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^x See: Mayer, Matthias M. (2015): *Fachkräftezuwanderung aus Nicht-EU-Staaten nach Deutschland 2013: Aufenthaltstitel zur Erwerbstätigkeit und weitere Kanäle*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung.



ⁱ Mobile Identities: Migration and Integration in Transnational Communities' is funded by European Commission: HOME/2012/EIFX/CA/CFP/4201.

ⁱⁱ European Commission (2011) *The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility*, Brussels: Communication from the Commission, COM (2011) 743 Final.

ⁱⁱⁱ See: Bade, K. J. (2000) *Migration und Integration in Deutschland seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg: Probleme – Erfolge – Perspektiven*. Available at: <u>http://www.forum-interkultur.net/uploads/tx_textdb/18.pdf</u>