

Budapest Process Working Group on the Silk Routes Region

9th Working Group Meeting on Integration and Reintegration

Date: 18 -19 October 2016

Location: Belgrade, Serbia

The purpose of this background note is to contextualise the discussions at the 9th Budapest Process Silk Routes Region Working Group Meeting on integration and reintegration by providing a short background and food for thought on these topics including some main issues to be raised and discussed.

Please note that this is not a research paper.

DRAFT Background Note

Introduction

Tasked by the *Istanbul Ministerial Declaration on a Silk Routes Partnership for Migration* in April 2013¹, the Silk Routes Region Working Group serves as a forum to **exchange information, experience, best practices and know-how** on managing migration flows along the Silk Routes. It addresses the six priority areas² of the declaration, and seeks for a joint approach and mutual understanding among the countries of origin, transit and destination.

The 9th Silk Routes Region Working Group meeting will focus on the second (and final) priority area of the declaration, namely to **'support the integration of migrants and counteract phenomena of discrimination, racism and xenophobia'**. In addition, the meeting will deal with the nexus between integration and the **reintegration** of returning migrants. It will look into long-term approaches in migration management and specifically address challenges, good practices but also negative effects/outcomes of non-application of integration and reintegration policies. The meeting will deal with particular areas relevant for the Budapest Process participating countries and will take stock of related developments in the Silk Routes countries. Finally, it will look at synergies and priority areas that could be jointly addressed.

Background

There is no commonly accepted definition of integration and each "integration policy" develops its own understanding and definition. According to a renowned German researcher (Esser, 2000) social integration stands for the inclusion of new individual actors in a system, for the creation of mutual relationships among actors and for their attitudes to the social system as a whole. Social

¹ Celebrating its 20th anniversary, the Budapest Process witnessed an important landmark with the adoption of the declaration at the 5th Ministerial Conference in Istanbul: <https://www.budapestprocess.org/silk-routes-partnership/istanbul-ministerial-declaration>.

² The six priority areas for cooperation of the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration are: migration and mobility, integration, migration and development, irregular migration, trafficking in persons and international protection.



ICMPD

International Centre for
Migration Policy Development

integration refers to the conscious and motivated interaction and cooperation of individual actors and groups.

Effective migration management also requires the implementation of sustainable return and readmission policies that place emphasis on improving post-arrival support and reintegration assistance of returning migrants. In other words, *“reintegration is an essential part of return migration, as it empowers and protects returnees by providing them with the necessary tools and assistance for their reinsertion into the society of their country of origin, while generally contributing to the sustainability of return”*³.

Overall, integration and reintegration are not only a precondition for human development of migrants, but also a societal necessity: it is commonly acknowledged that the costs for non-integration and non-reintegration are much higher than the implementation of required policies. Host countries need to be able to ensure proper integration of those persons entitled to remain (also helping to avoid secondary movements). Countries of return need to be able to reintegrate their nationals following return.

When talking about integration, the focus is both on people who have migrated for labour purposes, family reunification or similar, as well as on refugees. At the last Silk Routes Region Working Group meeting in May 2016 in Tehran, discussions evolved around long-term integration, voluntary return and resettlement. The upcoming meeting intends to take up the discussions from the previous meeting and deepen, in particular, the dialogue on integration and reintegration of migrants among Budapest Process participating countries. The objective of the meeting will be to outline the state of play in the Budapest Process and to identify priorities for further dialogue and cooperation, in particular related to cooperation with the Silk Routes countries. Topics such as strengthening integration processes, supporting migrants and receiving communities in active social, cultural, political and economic participation and promoting equal treatment and inclusion of migrants in receiving communities will be part of the discussions.

Objectives and Trends in Integration and Reintegration Policies

Integration Policies

The process of inclusion of immigrants into the society of the receiving country is an issue which has been debated since migration became an international phenomenon. In the US and most of Europe, the key word dominating the debate in the first half of the 20th century was “assimilation” in the sense of a full adaptation to the mainstream culture. Since the late 1960s and 1970s, the notion of “assimilation” was succinctly replaced by the term “integration” in academic and political debates. Following the famous definition of the then British Minister of Home Affairs Roy Jenkins in 1966, who understood integration “not as a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance”, integration was framed as the alternative to “guest worker policies” that focused on the “rotation principle” which characterised the immigration policy of many European states until the 1980s and 1990s. However, during the 1990s, States had started to realise that, contrary to the initial concept, immigration to their territories was not of a temporary nature, and a large share of labour immigrants had decided to settle in their host countries permanently.

Integration helps to ensure and maintain cohesion in the society and a peaceful social coexistence of different groups. Overall, the costs of non-integration are considered higher than investment in integration. While in the arrival phase targeted measures are necessary, mainstream approaches are required for the settlement of migrants in host societies. In practice

³ IOM, Reintegration. Effective approaches (2015) available at (downloaded on 30.09.2016): <https://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/What-We-Do/docs/Reintegration-Position-Paper-final.pdf>

this means that societies have to make their mainstream institutions fit to “migration” and accommodate the needs of migrants into the work of their central institutions, such as schools, health care, vocational training, sports, etc. A duplication of institutions would lead to social exclusion and foster the development of “parallel societies”.

Main objective and dimensions of integration policies

The main objective of integration policies is to make sure that migrants acquire the necessary means to participate in the economic, cultural and social life of the receiving societies, benefit from equal access to rights and opportunities and are subject to the same duties as the domestic population.⁴ Integration policies are usually formulated along the following three dimensions:

1. Structural integration: participation in the economic life, and access to the education and health systems of receiving countries on equal footing.
2. Social and cultural integration: participation in social life and orientation on commonly shared values.
3. Political integration: participation in the political decision-making process.

In order to succeed, integration shall be in general understood as a mutual and reciprocal process, requiring the involvement of both the migrants and the resident population. Furthermore, integration is linked to a broad number of policy areas, including labour market policies, policies on education, health, or housing. Specifically targeted measures in the area of integration usually comprise: language tuition, targeted job training, introduction to the setting of the main institutions – e.g. the labour market, the school system, healthcare or the housing market, the legal framework, including the rights of migrants, women and children, and the unwritten rules prevalent in the host societies, or specific programmes addressing the needs of particular groups such as female migrants or young immigrants.

In practice, successful integration policies have to be tailor-made according to the different needs characterising different stages in a migration trajectory and different outlooks for settlement and return. During the arrival phase, mainly targeted measures – language tuition, job training, and basic information on the main host society institutions and the legal framework, including the rights and duties of migrants, are most important. Longer settled migrants might still need specific counselling regarding specific aspects of their legal status, family reunification or other migration-related aspects, but their access to and equal participation in the main societal institutions – e.g. labour market, schools and the health care become more important. These aspects are best taken care of within existing institutional structures, which have are able to cater for migrants’ needs. These changes often will have to entail a thorough analysis of established institutional practices with regard to unintended exclusionary effects, and the service quality delivered to migrant groups.

Further to the different needs associated with different phases of the migration trajectory, the different legal status of migrants will demand targeted offers. For asylum seekers, a fast, fair and transparent status determination process will be of utmost importance, whereas family members (re)united with their spouses and parents will mainly need access to language tuition and counselling with regard to access to schools or the labour market. In cases of mass influx, temporary shelter and protection schemes will have high priority, whereas the governance of

⁴ The right to political participation is considered a core element of integration – otherwise democratic legitimacy is lost. However, the right to full political participation is only granted after acquisition of citizenship and full participation rights are usually restricted to citizens. An exception is Australia where full active voting rights are granted after three years of legal residence. In this context, several countries have developed a stepwise approach: local voting rights are given after a certain time of residence and full voting rights after naturalisation.

regular migration will try to prevent settlement in temporary housing. These different needs have to be reflected in an overarching integration policy, which should be based on a whole of government approach, as integration always entails both targeted measures and mainstreaming into existing institutions.

Main trends of integration policies

Although integration challenges differ between countries, they also show some similarities such as certain trends in responding to these challenges:

1. **Early or earliest possible intervention** (focusing on language acquisition): immigrants should be acquainted with the language and culture of the host country immediately after their arrival.

Examples: compulsory “kindergarten year” to promote early childhood language acquisition; establishment of day-care facilities with a focus on “language and integration”; specific integration measures for young children between the age of 2.5 and 5 years; language courses for migrants and their family members in countries of origin and individualised language training courses for migrants immediately after arrival.

2. **Labour market focus of integration measures** (broadening and supplementing the language focus): personal and state-led integration measures will only have an effect, if integration into the labour market is ensured and language courses are linked to labour market requirements.

Examples: formal assessment of the professional qualifications a year after the integration agreement had been signed; employers are provided with the possibility to obtain special funds when investing in targeted and labour market oriented language training of their employees; or facilitation of the formal recognition of foreign qualifications and certificates.

3. **Diversification of integration measures** (responding to the fact that migrants form a diverse population): integration policies with “tailor-made” interventions to the benefit of clearly defined target groups and their respective integration needs.

Examples: specific measures for young immigrants/children, female immigrants, or according to educational level and professional qualification.

4. **Customisation of integration measures** (recognising that common challenges come along with individual challenges): provision of individual support in the framework of general integration programmes.

Examples: “case-by-case counselling” and development of an individual integration plan; “integration guides”, i.e. specifically trained representatives from immigration or integration authorities, accompanying migrants at certain stages of the integration process; or specific mentoring programmes involving special staff or well-integrated representatives from immigrant communities assisting their newly arrived nationals.

5. **Incentives and sanctions** (strengthening a sense of self-responsibility): integration agreements or contracts with the option to withdraw a residence permit in case of non-compliance vs. incentives to integration measures, which reward successful integration efforts of immigrants.

Examples: “fast-track procedures” or “preferential treatment” for resident permits or access to citizenship for immigrants who can prove to the authorities that they had particular success in their integration efforts; or provision of financial incentives such as a

performance-oriented bonus to migrants who have successfully completed their language course within 12 months duration.

- 6. Integration Indicators** (measuring integration): use of a small number of “key indicators” (e.g. employment rate, income or educational level) vs. use of more than 100 indicators.

Good practice: overall, it is very difficult to precisely measure the state of integration in a country. Nevertheless, indicators proved to be very useful when it comes to identifying certain problem areas or immigrant groups who find it particular difficult do successfully participate in the economic, social and cultural life of their host countries. Involvement of immigrants in related surveys and monitoring is seen as a key aspect.

- 7. International cooperation** (allowing for transfer and exchange of knowledge): challenges and opportunities linked to integration show a number of similarities for all migrant receiving States and societies. Mutual exchange between state authorities not only benefit their own capacities, but also allow to transfer the established knowledge on successful and less successful integration measures for specific target groups or immigrants from certain countries of origin.

Example: discussion frameworks such as the Budapest Process.

Reintegration Policies

Although reintegration is often connected to return policies, it has in fact many similarities with integration and is closely linked to it. Similar to integration, reintegration policies shall be understood as a mutual and reciprocal process. Successful reintegration requires the engagement of return migrants as much as the involvement of both sending and receiving countries. It should also take into consideration the resident population in the communities of return.

At the country level, it is important to maintain a close and pragmatic cooperation between all countries concerned, i.e. among sending countries with a shared interest in functioning return to a particular country as well as between sending and receiving countries. In this regard, provision of post-arrival assistance to forced returnees is an often debated subject. While some countries include forced returnees in their support programmes, others categorically refuse to consider them for reintegration following return. However, experience has shown that the mere availability of assistance for forced returnees may lead to improved cooperation between sending and receiving countries.

At the community level it is important to avoid positive discrimination, i.e. reintegration policies should ideally apply an inclusive approach by taking into consideration also the needs of the receiving community in the country of return. On the individual level, reintegration – similar to the integration concepts focusing on diversification and customisation – need to take into account that every returnee faces individual challenges and some returnees might need specific support, because they belong to particular groups.

Main objective and dimensions of reintegration policies

The objective of reintegration policies is to facilitate the renewed participation of re-migrants in the economic, social and cultural life of their home countries after they have returned there; the sustainability of returns; and the maintenance or even improvement of the economic situation and social cohesion in home communities or countries.

Reintegration policies can include a broad range of support measures ranging from basic cash support to sophisticated, individualised and tailor-made return packages whose preparations may

already start in the country of residence prior to return and whose implementation runs for months or even years after return.

Main trends of reintegration policies

Three main trends can be identified in the more recent development of reintegration in the framework of Voluntary Return programmes. First, these programmes provide increasing levels of **financial support for returnees**. Second, they pursue **“tailor-made” approaches** aimed at taking into account the situation in countries/regions of origin as well as the individual needs of prospective returnees. Third, they link reintegration to **enhanced political dialogue and development cooperation**.

1. Financial support

Experts stress that successful reintegration has to be in line with the initial motives and financial considerations of return migrants. An individual migration project entails substantial financial investment, and the question of how much migrants can regain in case of return is a crucial factor for both their individual engagement and the sustainability of reintegration.

2. Tailor-made approach

However, financial considerations are not the only factor influencing reintegration. States have learned that for migrants who have been abroad for some time, the successful participation and re-entering the economic and social structures of their “old” home country is a challenging task. The acknowledgement of these basic facts led to the development of more comprehensive and “tailor-made” approaches in reintegration assistance, namely for migrants from those countries of origin where experience suggested that the simple providing of cash turned out to be insufficient.

The “tailoring” of reintegration programmes refers to a thorough analysis of the situation in the country/region of origin of prospective returnees as well as of the individual needs and motives of prospective returnees. The analysis of these factors and the objectives developed on their basis feed into the concrete design and funding structure of specific reintegration programmes. Thus, size, target group and types of services may vary between programmes according to the respective initial situation assessment.

3. Link to migration and development

A rather new trend is to link reintegration more tangibly to measures in the field of migration and development. Although this approach has been long discussed – and followed by some countries – the European Union introduced corresponding instruments like the “Trust Fund for Africa” only recently. The approach is based on the conviction that policies on return and reintegration have to go beyond measures working for the benefit of individual returnees alone and have to accompany individual assistance with structural projects working for the benefit of the country of origin as a whole and for persons who have not migrated but have stayed in their home country or community.

Typical structural aid measures in countries of origin (or transit) include capacity building for migration authorities, investment in infrastructure of refugee camps in countries of origin or neighbouring countries, community projects and measures for socio-economic development in the source regions of returnees. Structural aid measures entail substantial investment. Nevertheless, they are considered to be very effective in the long run, both with regard to decreasing irregular immigration flows and to better effecting return.

Integration and Reintegration in the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration

With the adoption of the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration in 2013, Budapest Process participating states reaffirmed **integration** as a **key pillar of the Budapest Process**. In the Declaration the Budapest Process participating states '[note] that migration is a part of life and a continuing reality for all countries, that developments in each country are linked with those in other parts of the world and that cooperation and partnership is the most efficient way to develop successful migration policies'. Furthermore, they '[emphasise] the negative impact of the phenomena of discrimination, racism and xenophobia on societies and individuals, [and are] dedicated to combat anti-migrant sentiments and promote awareness of the positive impacts of migration and mobility'.

In the field of integration, the ministers of the Budapest Process participating states adopted the following set of priority areas for dialogue and cooperation, which are today more relevant than ever:

- a) Strengthening **integration processes** for migrants and refugees,
- b) Working for the successful integration of migrants and refugees and their active participation in receiving communities through the provision of adequate **integration tools and measures**,
- c) Supporting receiving communities in welcoming migrants and refugees as well as taking action to encourage their **active participation in the social and cultural life** of the receiving communities,
- d) Promoting host governments' **cooperation with civil society and diaspora communities** in both **monitoring and countering incidents of discrimination, racism and xenophobia**.

The Istanbul Ministerial Declaration refers to **reintegration of returning migrants** in the third priority area 'migration and development' as well as the fourth priority area 'irregular migration' as follows:

- III g) Fostering sustainable reintegration, inter alia through **policies benefitting receiving communities**,
- IV j) Prioritising **voluntary return** and promoting programmes giving **tailor-made assistance** for effective reintegration in the receiving communities and exploring measures to better **monitor the return process**.

9th Working Group Meeting on Integration and Reintegration

The meeting will gather senior experts from Budapest Process participating countries and organisations to discuss the following **questions** and **challenges** related to integration and reintegration:

- Integration vs. reintegration and their similarities
- Measurement of (re)integration or non-(re)integration and development of related indicators
- Role of 'mainstream institutions/structures': ability to adapt their work to changing compositions of migrant populations and to address specific needs (e.g. social inclusion; housing and schooling; economic and labour market inclusion; pre-departure measures; ad hoc reception; protracted refugee situations, etc.)

- Migrant diaspora: involvement in the development of (re)integration measures; integration vs. transnational life of migrants
- Acceptance for publicly funded (re)integration measures and acknowledgement of (re)integration efforts by migrants
- Good practices in integration and reintegration policies
- International cooperation in (re)integration

As a result, the meeting shall highlight **priorities for further dialogue and cooperation** in the field of integration and reintegration. Overall, participants are encouraged to consider:

- How can priority areas be put into concrete actions and activities?
- How can concrete operational cooperation be strengthened among Budapest Process participating countries?
- Is there a need to agree on common Budapest Process standards in the fields of integration of migrants and reintegration of returning migrants?