

## **Migration policy developments in Germany since the publication of the OECD comparative study on labour market integration in Germany**

In its comparative study on the labour market integration of immigrants in Germany, presented in December 2005, the OECD recommended, among other measures, a stronger incorporation of the multiple integration projects of national and sub-national governments in an overall concept, improvement of migrants' access to self-employment and promotion of the German language from kindergarten age.

How has the situation developed since then?

Over the last three years, Germany has made substantial efforts to promote the integration of persons with migration background. Under the guidance of the Federal Chancellor a **National Integration Plan** was developed which puts Germany's integration policy and hence the integration measures of federal, regional and municipal governments and those of civil society on a new – and, for the first time, a common – basis. It was elaborated in a dialogue between representatives of all government levels, major non-governmental organisations and migrants. Under this Plan, all stakeholders committed themselves to taking appropriate measures for improving integration and implementing them in their areas of responsibility. The Integration Plan defines a number of objectives agreed upon by all stakeholders and lays down more than 400 concrete measures and voluntary commitments of government and non-government actors.

Commitments of the German government under the Integration Plan include:

- designing the government's integration courses in a way that facilitates the success of course participants,
- expanding the range of courses offered,
- supporting the expansion of early childhood language assistance and care,
- promoting measures to improve success at school and reduce the numbers of early school leavers among young people with migration background,
- enhancing migrants' integration into the labour market,
- stimulating local ethnic economies,
- empowering immigrant women and girls
- promoting integration at the local level
- supporting integration through sports, culture, media and science.

In addition, the German government continues to finance a large number of general support programmes in the areas of family, education and labour market policies which benefit migrant families in particular.

### ***New measures related to the labour market integration of the children of immigrants***

A key issue is the labour market integration of persons with migration background, and in particular the occupational integration of young migrants. Apart from an array of other measures taken for this purpose, 7 500 more places in specialised training centres than originally envisaged were included in the support provided by the Federal Employment Agency under the Training Pact. As from 2008, financial support under the Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz - BAföG*) and vocational training grants or training allowances under Book III of the Social Code (*SGB III*) were expanded so that more trainees with secure residence status or a perspective of permanent stay in Germany now qualify for training assistance. Young migrants may also claim assistance and support alongside training. They can also benefit from temporary instruments such as training bonuses and support for the start into working life. For many young people with migration background company-based introductory training is a helpful bridge leading on to vocational training. Further programmes include in particular: the structural training programme JOBSTARTER; the vocational skills programme; and the programme "tailored placement of trainees in companies willing to train".

### ***New measures for adult immigrants***

Unemployed **adult migrants** who are legally entitled to stay in Germany have the same access to all *general* instruments of labour market policy as Germans (without migration background). Persons qualify for support if they draw benefits under Books II or III of the Social Code and have personal placements deficits resulting from their migration background.

As *migrant-specific* tools, job-related language courses and a counselling and information network "Integration by Qualification – IQ" were developed.

The Immigration Act that went into effect in 2005 established a minimum legal framework for government-run integration courses which benefits not only new migrants. Migrants already living in Germany are entitled to participation in an integration course (language, introduction into Germany's legal system) as capacities permit. An evaluation of the language courses has shown a need to expand the volume from 600 to 900 hours for attaining language level B1 and to organise target-group-specific courses, for instance for women or young persons. The Ordinance on integration courses was modified accordingly.

Moreover, the employment services offer **job-related language courses** in the framework of the ESF for enhancing migrants' labour market prospects; like the integration courses, these courses, too, are organised by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. With the new programming period these ESF-supported measures to teach job-related German language

skills will interlink more closely with the integration courses which provide a basic knowledge of the language.

In six regions of the country, the Federal government started the counselling and information network "Integration by Qualification – IQ" in the form of pilot projects for the labour market integration of persons with migration background, co-sponsored by the European Community Initiative EQUAL. The aim is to network as many players involved in working with migrants as possible and to improve the labour market situation of persons with migration background. In particular, it shall help to ease migrants' access to the standard labour-market instruments and develop and test new migration policy tools.

These tools will include, above all, tailored counselling services, skills evaluation procedures, targeted further training, occupation-related promotion of language skills, business start-up and maintenance counselling and concepts for intercultural personnel development.

Conclusion:

Germany has largely implemented or plans to implement OECD's recommendations.