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New Migrations and the Challenges of Integration in Europe, Australia and New Zealand

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New Migrations

Europe and Australasia are traditional receiving regions of migration and refugees. Along with the USA, Canada and Israel, Australia and New Zealand make up the very small group of countries that are regarded as traditional settlement countries and migration is perceived as one of the country's most important foundations in Australia.

The drivers for this constant "classic" migration or - often temporary - labor migration are economic motives, whereas on the other hand absolute poverty, political persecution, conflicts and regional crises lead to emergency migration. For some years now, the number of people who migrate voluntarily or to escape hardship has been on the rise making the world face a new and global phenomenon. According to UNHCR, 1 in every 122 humans is now either a refugee, internally displaced, or seeking asylum – if this were a country it would be the world's 24th largest by population¹.

In this movement Europe is in the front line. In 2015, 1.255.600 first time asylum seekers applied for international protection in the Member States of the European Union² and many believe the current streams of refugees represent the most serious challenge the European Union has had to overcome to date.

The number of refugees arriving in Australia and New Zealand - they are two out of 33 countries taking part in the UNHCR resettlement programme - is many times lower. Australia's Humanitarian Programme intake is 13.750 annually and the Australian Government announced last September that it will make an extra 12.000 humanitarian places available in response to the

¹ Source: UNHCR Statistical Yearbook 2014

² Source: EUROSTAT

conflicts in Syria and Iraq. New Zealand has an annual quota of 750 refugees and announced a special emergency intake of 600 Syrian refugees over two years.

Integration of Refugees and Challenges

To integrate these refugees, the European Union, the Australian government and the government of New Zealand have developed various approaches. In order to deal with the immediate crisis and also to set out longer term steps, the EU is implementing the "European Agenda on Migration 2015", focusing on four main areas: Managing the inflows of migrants and refugees, protecting the Schengen area and ensuring strong borders, addressing the root causes of migration and working with the EU's international partners. A discussion paper to reform the Common European Asylum System (Dublin rules) that aims at a further harmonization of asylum procedures and standards has been presented by the European Commission in April 2016.

In Australia, the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) programme provides early practical support to humanitarian entrants on arrival and throughout their initial settlement period, generally over the first six to twelve months. It offers assistance with finding suitable accommodation, assistance to register with health services, banks, schools and an Adult Migrant English Program provider and orientation and guidance to life in Australia, including health, education, employment, Australian laws and culture. Refugees also get immediate access to school education or subsidized tertiary education. Resettled refugees are eligible to apply for citizenship after 4 years.

Research of the Australian Population and Migration Research Centre on economic, social and civic contributions of refugees shows that they have a younger age profile, make a net life-long economic contribution, often in areas of labor-shortage and that they are more likely to establish small businesses than any other population group in Australia.

Being selected offshore, New Zealand refugees are given permanent residence on arrival and spend their first six weeks at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre near Auckland. They receive basic English language skills, a physical and mental health check to assess needs, assistance with housing and information on New Zealand, including law and customs, shopping and cooking. Each refugee or family is also assigned a social worker and volunteer support worker/s to help them during their first twelve months in New Zealand.

This investment in the initial stages after arrival does not extend to the long-term support required to address the significant issues faced by many refugees. Being separated from family members, learning English, breaking

into the employment market, and finding affordable housing remain key concerns of refugees in both countries. Difficulties also arise in the health care sector. Since a lot of countries of origin don't have functioning health care systems, a large part of refugees needs to catch up basic health care such as vaccinations. Furthermore the need of psychological assistance is higher than in the average population and special care for young mothers is required because they don't have relatives or friends supporting them. In New Zealand, also a sense of isolation from the rest of the world can emerge.

Long-term strategies for migrant integration

Regarding non-emergency migration, Australia saw a growth of 110% in permanent migrants since 2001 with the main source countries being India and China, followed by the UK and the Philippines. For 2016 there will be 190.000 permanent migration places available.

Until the 1970's, Australia had a policy of assimilation which promoted the absorption of migrants' cultures and languages into the dominant English-speaking culture. Since then multiculturalism is being promoted. New South Wales was the first Australian state to establish a government body for ethnic affairs, today called Multicultural NSW. The agency's purpose is to build and maintain a cohesive and harmonious multicultural society. In addition to offering several services and advising the government on the cultural diversity dimensions of policies, Multicultural NSW is the central agency for coordinating policy and service responses for migrants and humanitarian entrants. Today, the State of New South Wales is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse states in the world, yet with one of the most cohesive multicultural societies.

New Zealand is a traditional and also growing destination country, with the foreign-born accounting for almost one fourth of the population. When examining immigration, the country's bicultural nature is fundamental. New Zealand has a larger Asian population on a per capita basis than Australia and the Maori are likely to be outnumbered within two decades. Thus the diversity is beginning to undermine the investments New Zealand took in biculturalism. Since 1975, New Zealand is the only country in the world that allows people to vote after only one year of residence in the country. This right to political participation makes migrants and refugees in New Zealand full and equal members of society and benefits the emotional integration.

The European Union registered 3.4 million immigrants³ with an estimated 1.4 million citizens of non-member countries, eg. Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, Morocco (2013). Three main models of integration policies were predominant

³ Source: EUROSTAT

in the past: Multiculturalism (Netherlands, UK), Republicanism (France) and the 'Guest-worker'-model (Germany). These grand models caused segregation rather than integration. Research has shown that the keys to successful integration are education and job qualifications. Thus a transition from a period in which integration policy was dominated by big theories/philosophies to a rather technocratic approach can be observed nowadays with European countries increasingly investing in more effective general and targeted programmes that focus on language skills, job qualifications, and knowledge about the basic political structure and institutions of the new host country.

Conclusions

Even though the situations in Australia, New Zealand and Europe vary greatly, some overall conclusions regarding the integration of refugees and migrants in the respective societies can be drawn: Successful integration of migrants should be part of a clear and articulate migration policy. They are two sides of the same coin. Furthermore the development of a migration policy should involve refugees and migrants in order to tackle their needs accordingly. Key parts that help to meet the challenges arising in the integration processes are education, the organization of the labor market, support in learning the hosts' language, housing, child care, health services, and settlement services. Continuing a bi-regional dialogue among researchers, government officials and representatives from the civil society and exchanging best practices can bring about new approaches and thus facilitate these processes.