



Spain 2008

Peer Review: Support Fund for the reception and integration of immigrants and their educational support

Minutes



On behalf of the
European Commission
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities



Peer Review: Support Fund for the reception and integration of immigrants and their educational support San Lorenzo de El Escorial, 20-21 October 2008

The Peer Review was hosted by the Ministry of Labour and Immigration, Spain.

Day 1

Welcome address

Welcoming the participants, **Irene García Suárez** (Ministry of Labour and Immigration, Spain) pointed out that immigration has raised different issues in various regions of Europe, and there are notable differences between the North and the South in this respect. At the European level, she said, the Commission's DG Justice, Freedom and Security is preparing action on this question, together with DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. She was sure the Peer Review would provide a good opportunity to share experiences and draw some conclusions about the Spanish programme. It is important for the Spanish hosts to know how others, from outside the country, assess what they are doing. They wanted a critical review, and to come up jointly with new ideas. The Hispano-African Centre in Madrid, which the participants would be visiting during the afternoon, is an example of the work that is being done for the integration of immigrants in Spain. It is working both with the local population and with Spain's newly arriving immigrants. She hoped that the Peer Review's work would be both fruitful and interesting.

Isabelle Maquet-Engsted (European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities) recalled that a new EU framework on integration has been developed since 1999, together with Member States, to support policy coordination and knowledge sharing. In that context, Member States agreed back in 2004 on common basic principles and drew up other policy coordination tools, including the European Integration Fund. All Member States had agreed on the Common Basic Principles, which include employment as a key aspect of integration; help for immigrants in learning the host country language; education for immigrants, and especially for their descendants; and non-discriminatory access for immigrants to institutions, goods and services. An important principle is the mainstreaming of migration issues at all appropriate levels of government and public services. This Peer Review was contributing to the mainstreaming of immigration issues into social policy. In June 2008, the Commission issued a Communication which again strengthened this principle of mainstreaming. The recently adopted European Migration Platform has also reinforced that. So the approach to integration goes beyond issues of the acquisition of nationality and citizenship. It involves promoting integration into society, knowledge and skills, and labour market integration. In short, the social inclusion of migrants – with, of course, the idea that migrants themselves should also contribute to social cohesion. This emphasis on social inclusion has led to a very broad definition of migrants in some Member States. Sometimes, it is taken to include ethnic minorities, as well as second-generation new citizens. So she thought it would be interesting to discuss the issue of target populations during this Peer Review. Tools developed in the EU context for the integration of migrants include legal measures, such as anti-discrimination laws and laws to coordinate access to social security. Peer Reviews, she emphasised, are a key tool of the policy coordination process on social inclusion. She was particularly keen to hear about the Spanish and other experiences of coordination across different levels of governance, as well as evaluation and monitoring. As she is the

Secretary of the Indicators Sub-Group, she has worked a lot in the field of monitoring, and she hoped to hear how evaluation works in a concrete national context.

Monika Natter (ÖSB Consulting) explained that this meeting was part of a very broad programme – Peer Review in Social Protection and Social Inclusion and Assessment in Social Inclusion. Assessment by independent experts is the second strand of this programme, alongside the Peer Reviews. More information about the programme can be found on the programme's website: <http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.net> .

The Social Inclusion Plan

Juan Carlos Mato (Director-General for Social Policy, Ministry of Education, Social Policy and Sports, Spain) said the Spanish government would appreciate the feedback received from peer countries and the European Commission on this policy. The origins of the present Peer Review, he recalled, went back to Spain's National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2006-2008. The Spanish Support Fund has been selected as a good practice, so it is an essential instrument within the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) on social inclusion. The OMC originates in the European employment strategy. The sustainability of public spending is essential to economic and monetary union. This implies the need to take into account policies which, under the subsidiarity principle, are strictly national. It was to solve this problem that the OMC was created. So this mechanism entails all Member States' deciding on common goals and agreeing on common indicators. Under the Lisbon Strategy, the OMC now covers social inclusion and social protection. From 2005-2006 on, it also extends to healthcare and long-term care. The Lisbon Strategy also establishes economic growth, quality of employment and social cohesion as goals for Europe, within the framework of sustainable development. So we have two methods underway – the Community method, which is structured through all the Community procedures, regulations, directives etc, all the Community law; and the OMC for policies affected by the subsidiarity principle.

For example, for the cycle 2006-2008, in the 2005 spring Council meeting, the goals were agreed upon for social inclusion, as also for pensions, healthcare and long-term care. A review was done of the initial indicators and a typology of indicators was established – context indicators and specific indicators for social inclusion, pensions and long-term healthcare. And the Member States have to submit, in accordance with Commission guidelines reviewed and approved in the Social Protection Committee, a national report on strategies. The European Commission then drafts a joint report on social protection and social inclusion – a report which is becoming shorter and has a more political content. This document is a comparative analysis of the situation in Europe, based on the different national plans. And it includes recommendations for every country – what is called the factsheet for each country. Also, there is a statistical report. All of this is negotiated between each Member State and the Commission. The document is discussed in the Social Protection Committee, which is associated more and more with the Employment Committee and the Economic Policy Committee. Finally, the final version goes to the following year's Spring Council meeting for adoption.

This is the more political dimension of the OMC. All of this is a public procedure. It can be followed on the website. But the other dimension is mutual learning, of which the present Peer Review was a classic example. Members of the Social Protection Committee and other representatives of the public administration take part in the mutual learning process. They

examine and give feedback on what are considered the best policies and practices in each country. At the end of October, a working seminar between the government and representatives of the European Commission would conduct a review.

Three European Peer Reviews had been held in Spain in the last three years - on inclusion through access to housing; on social and labour inclusion through an anti-discrimination operational programme financed by the European Social Fund; and the present one. The Social Protection Committee had reviewed the cooperation mechanisms available and had seen that they could be improved. Mutual learning is a very important tool for every country, but it needs to be improved. One of the mechanisms used in the Social Protection Committee is monographic reports, which have helped to increase analytical rigour and will lay the basis for broader studies. The joint report that will be drawn up by the Commission and examined by the Social Protection Committee will for the first time include analysis of the three aspects - social cohesion, employment and social protection - as well as some studies of the progress made under the programme. This will lay an analytical basis for the European policy. One of the deficits pinpointed by the 2005 review of the Lisbon Strategy was a lack of precise analysis in the social area. Social protection is a production factor, but not only a production factor. It has other goals: equity, solidarity and so on. The PROGRESS programme will tackle some of the analytical deficits that were found. Various other Spanish projects financed by the European Social Fund also constitute elements for exchange, so as to arrive at a better analytical basis for our public policies in the social sphere.

The social inclusion plans were born of the Lisbon Strategy and were based on the guidelines from the Commission and approved by the Council. And they were called the European Strategy for Social Inclusion. Although this label has progressively disappeared, it does, he felt, constitute the basic guidelines for social inclusion, reviewed and revised in 2005. In the initial stage of the Lisbon Strategy, two strategies can be seen in the social field – the pension strategy and the social inclusion strategy. Every Member State has presented each of these strategies separately. With the revision of the Lisbon Strategy, there has been a simplification and integration process for the national reports. And a new cycle of reports was agreed from 2006 on. They are called Social Protection National Reports and Social Inclusion National Reports. They are based on three pillars: social inclusion; pensions; and, more recently, health and long-term care. The 2006 Spring Council approved common social inclusion objectives: social cohesion; equality between men and women; equal opportunities for all through social protection systems; mutual integration between the Lisbon goals of growth, jobs and better social cohesion and sustained development of the EU; good governance, transparency and the involvement of the interested parties in the supervision and execution of policies; social inclusion, pensions and long-term care. Good coordination of social inclusion policies, and the involvement of all levels of government and stakeholders, including people in a situation of poverty, was one of the aims set, so that social inclusion is mainstreamed into all policy areas.

So there is a continuum of goals in these two cycles – 2006-2008 and 2008-2010. In this framework, the national plans for social inclusion were drawn up, taking into account also the recommendations to each Member State concerning the previous cycle. In Spain's case, those recommendations include a renewed effort on the active inclusion of vulnerable groups, such as immigrants, youth and women; reduction of permanent inequalities in terms of access; and the promotion of housing through a public policy for long-term rentals. Under these points, reference is made to active inclusion of the immigrant population. The joint report for 2008 also emphasises the need to promote the inclusion of immigrants and their descendants, as well as ethnic minorities. So this key message in the Joint Social Protection Report for 2008 gives some political

orientations on which to base Spain's policies for the integration of immigrants: non-discrimination and social inclusion as two basic principles of public policy. In Spain, this was the approach followed in the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2006-2008, and continuing in the current plan which will be approved by the Cabinet for 2008-2010. The main element is the Integration and Citizenship Plan.

Introduction to the Spanish immigration policy

Immigration in Spain has grown explosively over the past decade, **Irene García Suárez** explained. The number of non-EU foreigners now living in Spain is six times greater than it was ten years ago. There is a large percentage of Latin American immigrants, as well as those from Northern and sub-Saharan Africa. A substantial number of immigrants come from Eastern Europe. Rumania, Bulgaria, Ukraine are the main source countries. There is also a significant number of Indians and Pakistanis. Almost half of the immigrants are women, who are employed mainly in support for the elderly, cleaning and so on. As a result of the sudden increase in immigration, Spain has had to design and implement a whole range of new laws, standards and programmes. This has required very significant funding.

Spain's immigration policy rests on four pillars:

- **Control of irregular immigration**, implemented mainly by the Ministries of Home Affairs and Foreign Affairs through bilateral agreements with the source countries to prevent people trafficking.
- **Management of migratory flows** – mostly through mechanisms available in Spain to monitor unmet demand for labour, and the establishment of annual quotas on the basis of social dialogue between employers, unions and government agencies. There are preferential agreements with some countries in Latin America, Eastern Europe and North Africa, especially for seasonal agricultural work.
- **Cooperation with countries of origin** so as to develop opportunities in the source countries that will prevent illegal immigration. Projects are also being established to help immigrants to become engines of development for their source countries. The sending of remittances to the source countries is being made easier and less expensive.
- **Immigrant integration** has been a significant challenge since 2004, in terms of the structure and instruments used by the institutions that manage immigration in Spain. Responsibility for immigration and emigration was transferred from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, where a new Secretariat of State was established to deal with immigration and emigration. It is divided into three directorates-general: for Spanish emigration abroad, for immigration management and for the integration of immigrants. There has been a significant increase in the funding available, and the institutional changes have led to a new emphasis on labour market aspects, rather than border controls alone. Mainstreaming of immigration issues is a priority goal. Some responsibilities for the educational integration of immigrants have been transferred to the Ministry of Education.

From 2004 onwards, initiatives at different levels were designed. To coordinate them, a Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration 2006-2010 was drawn up. This involved extensive

consultation with all stakeholders during 2005. Given Spain's highly devolved governance structures, the 17 Autonomous Communities (regions) have a significant role to play in the management of immigrant integration policies. So they were strongly involved in the consultation, together with local government, relevant support NGOs, immigrant organisations, academic experts, unions and employers' organisations.

The word "immigration" does not appear in the title of the Strategic Plan. This is because the basic EU principles approved under the Dutch Presidency in 2004 emphasise a two-directional approach to immigration issues, i.e. working with the local population as well as the immigrant communities. Hence the focus on citizenship, cohesion and integration. The Strategic Plan is a framework for cooperation between different stakeholders and actors, and between government and civil society, and aims to mobilise resources from all of them. Development of joint initiatives is a further aim. These include the Support Fund for the reception and integration of immigrants, which is the most important fund established by the Directorate-General to promote integration policies. It was launched in 2005 with €120m. Currently, it has €200m. In 2005, this budget was thought to be a lot of money, but now the feeling is that it is not enough. However, it does represent a significant increase in funding for the integration of immigrants. A third important objective of the Plan is the establishment of partnerships, mostly with NGOs and civil society, which play a significant role in social policy implementation in Spain.

In the years since implementation of the **Strategic Plan** began, significant progress has been made. It establishes three main **principles**:

- **equality** - equal rights and responsibilities for the immigrant and local populations; non-discrimination in access to goods and services and in social inclusion;
- **interculturality** – a meeting of cultures and identities, based on respect for diversity within the values of the European social model, rather than on multiculturalism;
- **citizenship** – active participation by immigrants in the economic, social and cultural life of the country; political participation too, although there is an ongoing debate about this.

The **general objectives of the Strategic Plan** are to:

- Ensure the full exercise of immigrants' civil, social, economic, cultural and political **rights**; **Accommodate public policy**, particularly in education, employment, social services, health and housing, to the new needs generated by the immigrant population (qualitative as well as quantitative adjustment – for instance, staff training on interculturality);
- Ensure the immigrant population's **access to public services** (including education for all immigrant children, and full access to Spain's universal healthcare for all immigrants, legal or not);
- Establish a **reception system** for newly arrived immigrants, as well as those in particularly vulnerable situations, until they can access general public services;
- Foster **knowledge** among immigrant men and women of the basic values of the European Union, the rights and obligations of persons living in Spain, the official languages in the country's different territories, and the community norms in Spanish society;
- **Combat discrimination, racism and xenophobia**, in all areas of life, both in the public and private spheres;
- Introduce the **gender perspective** both in the drafting of immigrant integration policies and in their application (notably regarding gender violence and the trafficking of women),
- Foster **co-development** policies and experiences in immigrants' home countries;
- Promote the **comprehension of migration** by Spanish society as a whole, improve **intercultural harmony** while valuing diversity and fostering the tolerance and respect,

- and support the maintenance and knowledge of immigrants' cultures of origin;
- **Stimulate public policies fostering immigrant integration and cooperation** both at the different levels of government and in civil society.

As large-scale immigration is a recent phenomenon in Spain, the shaping of public policy on the issue involves learning by doing. Significant funding has been made available for cooperation with regional and local government and NGOs.

Spain is now half way through the current Strategic Plan, so integration indicators are being developed in order to monitor and assess the progress made. The European Integration Fund has set the development of such indicators as a priority for EU countries. Spain is working with Germany and France on indicator design.

Immigration should always be a subject of political dialogue and consensus, she insisted. Political groups must not use immigration as an electoral weapon. Dialogue with the different levels of government and social dialogue are important in this respect. Mechanisms have been designed for such dialogue, including a Higher Council on Immigration Policy, an Interministerial Committee on Foreign Residents and a Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants, which advises the whole of the Spanish government.

Introduction to the Support Fund for the reception and integration of immigrants and their educational support

Joaquina Larraz Mompó (Ministry of Labour and Immigration, Spain) recalled that the Support Fund was first established in the general state budget for 2005 – two years before the Cabinet approved the Strategic Plan. So the Fund had to be adapted to the Plan. The Fund is constantly adjusted to new demands and requirements. For example in 2007, when there were substantial illegal arrivals of unaccompanied minors in the Canary Islands, a plan was drawn up to transfer these minors to the Spanish mainland and part of that programme was financed by the Fund. This provided support to the regions that had to receive this very large number minors.

The Support Fund is precisely what the name says. It is intended to complement and strengthen other public funds and actions. So it reinforces what is already being done by the Autonomous Communities, through their immigration plans. The central administration wants more coordinated, complementary action. This is one of the most important goals of the Fund, and a cooperation framework has been established to achieve it. It lays down axes of action. In the first year, there were ten of these, rising to twelve from 2006, as the Strategic Plan was being drafted, the number of axes rose to twelve. They are reception, education, employment, housing, social services, health, childhood and youth, equal treatment, women, participation, awareness-raising and co-development. 40-45% of the funding is earmarked for measures in the field of education.

There are established objective criteria for the regional distribution of the funds. The main criterion is the number of non-EU residents registered in each region. Account is also taken of the number of non-EU workers enrolled in social security schemes, including each Autonomous Community's special schemes for the agricultural sector. An across-the-board allocation is also included, so that each autonomous community receives at least some central funding for its integration work. "Special situations" are another funding criterion, covering regions with a Mediterranean coastline as well as Madrid and the Canary Islands. The criteria are applied annually and the decisions are submitted to the Higher Council on Immigration Policy, on which

every Autonomous Community and the local organisations are represented, and are then adopted by the Council of Ministers. 40% of the funding allocated to the autonomous regions is to be spent on action through local institutions, such as municipalities. Local institutions are often the first point of contact with newly arrived immigrants, but local authorities also tend to have the fewest resources available for integration work.

The instrument for the funding is a cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Labour and the Autonomous Communities, which first draw up an action plan based on the twelve axes. In addition, the framework for cooperation establishes a series of measures for each axis. Based on its needs, each region chooses which of these actions it will pursue, and includes them in its action plan. This plan states the goals of each action, the management tools, who will take part, and the funding. The actions are co-financed, with the autonomous communities contributing 30% from their own funds. As the competences of the autonomous regions vary (for instance, regarding education), the level of co-financing can also be higher.

The action plan also has to include indicators for each action. At the end of the year, the autonomous communities are required to submit a report on implementation, but there are some problems with this. There is very little feedback on the indicators – possibly because the information requirements have not been sufficiently standardised. There have been many advances in terms of cooperation and information, but the big challenge ahead is the quality and quantity of information, as well as making it more comparable. She hoped the findings of this Peer Review would help to improve these aspects.

Some of the Autonomous Communities have set up permanent teams and structures devoted to integration policies for immigrants. This has noticeably improved the technical aspects of cooperation. The evaluation conducted in 2007 of the Fund's operations in 2006 focused on the cooperation framework. So it concentrated on the model chosen, rather than on the autonomous communities' action plans. Each region evaluates its own action plan, but some have developed more of an evaluation culture than others.

The policy debate at international and EU level and an assessment of the Support Fund for the reception and integration of immigrants

Concepción Carrasco Carpio (Thematic Expert, University of Alcalá, Spain) said the measures taken by European countries in the field of immigration vary enormously. A number of factors are involved here. One is the migratory experience. Spain, Greece, Portugal and Italy have less experience both of immigration and of integration policies. The numbers of non-EU immigrants, ethnic minorities and second-generation and third-generation descendants of migrants are also very different from one European country to another. She suggested that policies need to vary according to the aims of the migration. Economic migration, asylum seekers and refugees, family reunification, education and return emigration are not the same things. The problems are different, so the solutions must be different. For instance, reception policies tend to be targeted on new migrants, but these policies need to be different in the cases of EU citizens, non-EU citizens, and illegal immigrants.

The rules for obtaining citizenship also differ greatly across Europe. For example, in the Czech Republic and Latvia, migrants who are already long-term residents must wait a further five years before becoming eligible to obtain citizenship. For most migrants, this means waiting at least ten years in total. In Germany, the waiting time is eight years. In Denmark, migrants issued with a

permanent residence permit may as a general rule be listed in a naturalisation bill after nine consecutive years of residence. In Spain, in some special cases, two years' residence can be enough to obtain citizenship. The wealth of the receiving country is another determining factor, as are the different integration models and integration priorities adopted by each country. It is difficult for the EU countries to all adopt the same measures, because they are too different. Common measures may be possible in future, but we would need to define them in a flexible way, and in relation to the objectives.

Domestically, countries develop their objectives at different levels – national, regional and local. This creates challenges for coordination and implementation. National policy must provide a clear, efficient context for intervention at other levels. Vice versa, interventions at regional and local levels must serve to produce more pragmatic national initiatives. The measures adopted at the national level are concerned with the legislative framework, the development of integration plans, anti-discrimination initiatives, and whether to permit immigrant participation in legislative elections. But at the regional and local levels, the context is more complex. For example, regional action for new immigrants will tend to focus on integration courses, whereas for the second and third generations, the emphasis will be on education and training. Also, it is common for regions to adopt their own integration plans. The local level, meanwhile, tends to adopt measures tailored to specific localities or groups – for instance, Roma or women.

So how can we coordinate these interventions? She hoped the Peer Review would help to answer this question. The EU has made efforts to coordinate measures and policies. In 2004, for example, the Council adopted the Basic Common Principles. In September 2005, the Commission presented the Common Integration Programme. A useful tool for the exchange of information and good practices is the EU integration manuals for politicians and professionals. The Integrative Cities or European Integration Forum, common legislative instruments, integration and social inclusion plans, and financial instruments are among other European efforts.

Can the Spanish Fund be regarded as a **good practice**? She believed that it has made a number of important contributions through:

- The establishment of a **cooperation model** between administrations (state, general and local);
- **Inter-institutional cooperation**;
- **Improved planning** of integration activities;
- Unification and increase of **financial resources**;
- The generation of systems for **disseminating good practices**.

On the transferability of the policy, she pointed out, while the regional plans do have to be approved by the national government, the system is flexible. It depends on social cohesion at all levels and, of course, on the participation of migrants themselves.

How can the impact of the policy be measured? At the European level, we should look for the lowest common denominator – for example, the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) developed under the leadership of the British Council and the Migration Policy Group. The MIPEX is divided into different areas – family reunification, labour market, anti-discrimination, long-term residence etc. At the implementation level, a key need is to unify the evaluation tools by means of basic principles such as a two-way approach involving both the receiving society and the migrants themselves. It is also essential to be aware of the social realities on the ground in each country. How far are statistics useful in this regard? For example, Spain's immigration observatory is a useful asset when setting out to improve the effectiveness of the policy, as the

observatory gives good insights into social and economic reality. Indicators must also be used – indicators of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, usefulness, transferability, durability and so on.

She suggested some **key questions for discussion** on:

- **Governance.** How can we improve coordination? How can we avoid duplicating activities?
- **Efficiency and effectiveness.** Could excessive bureaucracy be a problem? Could the way information is transferred between the different levels of activity be improved? And the quality of statistics? How can we encourage the beneficiaries to participate?
- **Strategies.** Does integration require long-term strategies or not? What are the differences between short-term and long-term strategies?
- **Investment.** How can the assignment of resources be improved?
- **Evaluation.** How can we reinforce evaluation? How can we change the usual negative perspective of evaluation?

General discussion

Peter Verhaeghe (Caritas Europa) asked who should be the beneficiaries of social inclusion and integration strategies. He felt the whole population should be included in this, as the ultimate goal is to create a socially cohesive society. However, the composition of the target population would still vary from one country to another. Some countries have a much higher proportion of Third Country nationals (i.e. non-EU nationals) in their population than others. On the other hand, some have long-established ethnic minorities, others not. From the Latvian country paper for the Peer Review, he had noted that Latvia prefers to use the term “ethnic minorities” rather than “migrants”. That is a very good principle, which has also been adopted by the Flemish Community in Belgium. It has a Centre for Ethnic Minorities – and not “for Migrants”. This is important for public perceptions. Expressions like “Third Country nationals” or the nonsensical term “second generation immigrants” tend to create barriers. It is not enough to tell migrants that they have to integrate into our societies. A receiving society should be a welcoming society. This is achieved through legislative measures but also through equal opportunities, by countering discrimination.

Gregorio Rodríguez Cabrero (Network Expert, University of Alcalá, Spain) felt that the most relevant question, at least in Spain, is: How can we improve coordination? The degree of regional and local public spending autonomy in Spain poses a real problem in this regard, he said. So confidence needs to be created between the different levels of government if immigration policies are to be implemented improved. **Amina Saydali** (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Netherlands) said the same discussion is taking place in the Netherlands, but not in a regional context. The coordination issues are between the national government and the 400 or so local authorities. There is a national framework for integration, and efforts are being made to seek the cooperation of all the local authorities. Most immigrants, or ethnic minorities as they are called in the Netherlands, live in the big cities, so integration policy is focused mainly on about 50 urban local authorities. In her field, the integration of ethnic minority women, deals are made between national government and each local authority concerned. That takes up a lot of time, so she was very interested in ideas for improving the way things work. Two issues of coordination need to be discussed – coordination between the different levels of government, but also coordination between the various ministries. Integration policy cuts across the remits of most ministries.

Volker Schmitt (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany) said that while the EU countries share the common aim of a cohesive society, the paths they are taking to get there are

totally different. These differences are sometimes obscured by language. Member States may use the same expressions, as the terminology of immigration and integration tends to be derived from English, but the meaning assigned to them often varies from one country to another. So he was not optimistic about the chances of achieving transferable policies in this field. For instance, Germany does not have a Support Fund similar to the Spanish one. Instead, it relies strongly on the European Social Fund, plus funding secured by mainstreaming immigration issues into other areas such as labour market policies. Indeed, it would be constitutionally difficult for Germany to create a nationwide Support Fund, as this would interfere with the rights of the Länder (federal states). In the long history of immigration policy in Germany, the most constant feature has been the lack of any coordination at all. Even German NGOs active in this field have tended not to coordinate their activities from one town to the next. An effort was made to put together a database on German regional and local services involved in social inclusion. After four years' work, the database has just been completed, but nobody is likely to consult it because it is just too complicated. **Joaquina Larraz Mompó** said that, in the first year after the Spanish Fund was established, it was realised that coordination was lacking at every level. But efforts to tackle this met with success. In the following years, these difficulties decreased. The regions have now created new departments or directorates for immigration where they had nothing before. Some of them have linked their immigration structures to their development cooperation structures. So the Fund has served to build awareness of the need to create the right structures at the regional and local levels. But relations between regional and local government still pose a challenge. Local authorities tell the national government that the 40% of the funding that the regions are supposed to pass on to them always reaches them late and not in full. In some cases, there is a lack of transparency about contracts and tendering procedures. However, in recent years, more of the regional governments have taken to issuing calls for projects before awarding funding. The regional governments complain that the local authorities do not have action plans or are not able to explain clearly enough what projects they intend to undertake. Since the local authorities derive their project funding from different levels, there is sometimes duplication – also in relation to the efforts already being undertaken by the NGOs. But local authorities are increasingly willing to draw up local integration plans. The Fund has helped to create the right structures, and has responded to local authority requests for training.

Klavs Odgaard Christensen (Ministry of Social Welfare, Denmark) said Danish governance structures are more similar to those of the Netherlands than those in Spain. There is no Support Fund. National government sets the framework for integration policy, but the 98 Danish municipalities are more or less in charge of putting it into effect. So implementation tends to vary. There are particular focuses on some parts of the big cities, and on women and youth. He found the idea of the Support Fund very interesting. However, due to the political structure, Denmark would probably opt to do things differently, even though some of the challenges are the same.

Juan Antonio Segura (CEPAIM, Spain) felt that Europe has been more successful in harmonising its discourse on border controls and the management of immigration flows than on integration. We have to become more aware of the importance of integration, because the peaceful coexistence of citizens is at stake. Difficulties in coordinating integration policies in the EU and within each country are one of the biggest challenges we face. Better coordination is needed between all levels of governance as well as the NGOs, which are a crucial actor. Coordination between different policies is also very much on the table. How do we coordinate social inclusion policies with labour integration policies? And how do we coordinate inclusion and integration policies with development cooperation policies? In Spain, information first needs to be gathered on all the players in integration work. Then, local cooperation networks need to be structured. It is at the local level that integration will succeed or fail. Annual budgets are not the

best way of financing integration work, which takes time. Pluriannual funding plans are needed, so that investments can be made in long-term integration processes. At all levels, administrative structures need to change in order to foster third sector involvement. NGOs are wondering why community initiatives have been eliminated from EU policy.

Rainer Fuchs (German Embassy, Madrid) said Germany has one of the longest experiences of migration in the EU. For a too long time, the feeling in Germany was that no integration policy was needed, as all the immigrants would go back to their countries of origin. But in 1973, when the oil crisis hit world economies and Germany suddenly suffered from unemployment and needed less foreign labour, the immigrants stayed. In spite of the ban of recruitment of foreign workers, the number of migrants exceeded significantly, most of all because of family reunification and asylum-seekers. But it still took another ten years before integration efforts slowly started. The consequences of a lack of integration can be studied today in many northern European countries; in Germany the fourth generation of migrants is often less integrated than the first generation. Spain, he felt, has learnt lessons well. When immigration suddenly rose five years ago, the initial feeling in Spain was, too, that no particular integration efforts were needed. So it was a major step when the government of Spain subsequently drew up an integration plan and earmarked substantial funding for it. He wondered about its implementation, as most people in the regions have not yet realised that integration is necessary and that most of the migrants will stay in bring in their families, in spite of the current decline of the Spanish economy. His impression was that the first step should be to have as many integration projects as possible. It should be reflected to think over the current co-financing system of the integration programme as many communities are not able to bring up their 30% share. Spain could look at projects in other EU-countries and copy the best ones. After that, the second step would be to coordinate these activities. Another connected problem is that NGOs in Spain are not strong enough. They and their social services urgently need to be strengthened to respond to the needs of the rapidly changing Spanish society. Integration projects run by them could help a lot to develop their power. Also, the NGOs, on a European level, should help one another and exchange their views on integration activities.

Amina Saydali agreed that the local level is key to successful integration. In the Netherlands, it has been noticed that short-term projects do not succeed, because once the funding ends, nothing more happens. Structured long-term financing is needed, embedded in local authorities' policy. If action remains at the project level, you have to start all over again after three years.

Isabelle Maquet-Engsted said the country papers had given her the impression that we are far from having a common understanding of the fundamental aims of integration policies. She had noticed a similar phenomenon within the European Commission. Some parts of the Commission think of integration as being very much linked to the migration issue. Some think that integration measures should be linked to the rights and duties of migrants, including residency rights. Other parts of the Commission see integration more as a tool for promoting social cohesion and social inclusion. Similarly, different understandings of the aims of integration are apparent across countries but also within countries, across different departments. This is reflected in the efforts to coordinate. How can countries build a common understanding of the aims of integration? Is such a common understanding necessary, in fact? **Volker Schmitt** agreed that these are crucial questions. Germany had never seen itself as an immigration country, but as a host country for guest workers. So it had been a long struggle to create awareness that they were not guests – for example, that Germany was responsible for children in its school system. Germany is still far from achieving a common understanding on this. This may explain why Germany does not have a national integration plan, although discussions are under way on this with all the stakeholders.

Aija Lulle (University of Latvia) said local society is crucial to the understanding of integration. We should avoid “us and them” thinking about migrants. Laws and regulations on migration stem mainly from society, from which they go up to the government before coming back to society. So efforts have to be directed towards society as a whole, and not only to migrants. **Chrysanthi Protogerou** (Legal consultant, Greece) reported that Greece is just starting to think about the coordination of integration work. Immigration is a recent phenomenon, and NGOs are much less involved in work on this than they are in Spain. After 2005-6, a framework started to emerge in Greece for thinking about integration. This is after some efforts to make immigrants’ presence legal, as their first entries had been irregular. A coordinated integration framework is really still at the discussion stage in Greece. So the Peer Review discussions are very useful, but Greece itself does not yet have any concrete experience to contribute on the subject of coordination.

Laura Davi (ISMU Foundation - Initiatives and Studies on Multi-Ethnicity, Italy) said that the Italian state is now being reorganised on a federal basis, and this could have consequences on all aspects of policy, including the coordination of integration work. There are big regional differences, and every locality has its own problems, but coordination is important. **Monika Natter** asked if there is a common understanding in Italy about immigration. **Silvia Achille** (Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policy, Italy) replied that over the past year, welfare policies in Italy have been affected by the current institutional changes. The role of central government in integration policy has been gradually decreasing as well. Also in Italy there’s a lack of coordination on integration policies between Regions, also due to economic spread among Northern and Southern Italy. Since social inclusion and integration have been regionalised the central government’s role in immigration policy is now mainly confined to what might be termed national security issues – border control, entry quotas and combating illegal immigration. A three-year plan for integration is currently being prepared at the national level by the new Government in office, but its contents are not yet known. It will be available at the end of 2008. **Laura Davi** said there isn’t a real common understanding in Italy about immigration, but different ways of interpreting it. The present trend is to make immigrants to have access to the same forms of public intervention as the general population.

Susana Gende (Spanish Red Cross) felt there is no common understanding about immigration in Spain. Different political parties, administrations and organisations have differing views. She was particularly worried about people who think that Spain does not need immigrants. That attitude can be found even within some major political institutions. It regards immigrants not as people who are trying to improve their own lives and those of their families, not as people who are contributing to the development of their countries, not as guest workers, but as people who have not been invited – “they have come here and now they have to leave”, especially at times of crisis. At the local level, Spain’s integration strategy is practically unknown. People do not understand the regulatory principles behind it. Local administrations may be aware that funding is available, but unless the concept is strengthened, people will not know what it is all for. She agreed that pluriannual planning is needed. Work with people, with families, will not be possible without sustainable resources. She also agreed on the need for strong involvement of NGOs. They are often at the sharp end. For instance, the Red Cross rescues boat people and is working with structural funds to try to provide them with a job. CEPAIM is doing similar work. So NGOs know what the needs are. They must play a leading role in integration, because they can provide a component that an administration cannot offer – voluntary work by citizens who physically accompany the processes. They take people by the hand. **Juan Antonio Segura** completely agreed with the previous speaker. In fact, NGOs in Spain are an extremely dynamic sector and they coordinate within the Spanish network against poverty. The Red Cross, Caritas, CEPAIM and the national coordinator for social NGOs are all in that network. NGOs take part in integration

activities, in coordination with national, regional and local government. So in fact, NGOs help to promote coordination of action by the three levels of government. Immigrants' organisations also play an extremely important role. They need to be supported, reinforced and empowered, in terms of both social and political participation. At EU-level specialised meetings such as this one, but also if you talk to people in the street, some think that "integration" means either cultural assimilation or cultural segregation, rather than the interculturality supported by the Spanish plan. The challenge is to move from the concept to the reality. In some overcrowded neighbourhoods, immigrants still live in a state of exclusion, struggling to access very limited resources. If immigration policy is not to be restricted to border control and labour supply, we need a broader definition of integration. That is why Spanish NGOs would prefer to speak of "managing cultural diversity" rather than "managing immigration". We will then start building our neighbourhoods together. Now that there is an economic crisis, a belief is gaining ground that if immigrants were to leave the country, the crisis could be solved, which is a big mistake. We have to tackle these problems together, on the basis of citizenship.

Peter Verhaeghe recognised that networks of NGOs face the same challenges of horizontal and vertical coordination as government. However, the coordination debate should not be primarily about who takes the lead, in the sense of who can force the others to follow a certain strategy. There should be a common, agreed commitment. So consultation is necessary, also in order to create ownership. Nor should the framework be so rigid that it kills off initiative. The Spanish Plan is a good attempt to provide a suitably flexible framework. He asked how the forthcoming European Integration Forum would interact with EU strategies on employment and social inclusion. **Isabelle Maquet-Engsted** replied that the European Integration Forum is part of the many initiatives launched by DG Justice, Freedom and Security in the context of the European integration framework. So it goes together with the common basic principles and the different initiatives led by DG Justice. Her DG had been invited to participate in setting up the Forum, and she had presented the OMC on social inclusion as an important place for the involvement of NGOs and civil society in general in the policy process. De facto, there will be some coordination, because the membership of this Forum coincides quite well with the actors within the OMC. She supported the idea that action precedes coordination. Actors involved in doing things eventually get round to talking to each other. Perhaps the role of the EU level is to provide the opportunity for these actors to talk together and coordinate. One of the backbones of the integration programme is mainstreaming. In fact, the integration of migrants was an EU priority before the integration initiative. Back in 2002, the Council asked Member States to highlight the specific situation of migrants within the context of social inclusion. It is hoped that 2010 will be a focus year on the integration of migrants and ethnic minorities. She thought that coordination will take place through the actors involved in the different processes.

Aurelio Martínez Benito (Ministry of Labour and Immigration, Spain) pointed out that, since 2007, the Support Fund has had a budget line for innovative projects, aimed directly at local authorities. The projects presented by local authorities to central government are now being assessed. Only a small amount is involved, €6m, but the projects show that local authorities are indeed interested. They are presenting projects that they had never come up with before. On the other hand, this has meant a small conflict with the regional governments, who are supposed to be the ones who transfer these funds directly. But national government has been trying to get a more direct line of communication with local government. So far it seems to be working, because the number of requests received has grown enormously.

Richard Koříněk (People in Need, Czech Republic) said that, at the official level, there is an understanding in the Czech Republic about what integration policies and immigration policies are.

But this has not yet permeated the thinking of the country as a whole. Most migrant workers in the Czech Republic are Ukrainians, who commute back and forth at least once a month. So it does not really see itself as a host country, and little thought has been given to integration up to now. The Czech government does have an integration strategy but, apart from a few mentions of good practices in municipalities and counties, it does not take any account of local government action. This Peer Review had enabled him to foresee some of the pitfalls that his country may face within a few years, as it is only just beginning to coordinate and implement integration and immigration strategies. He very much recognised the need for coordination at the local level. His own experience of social work with vulnerable families had shown that years of effort can suddenly be brought to nothing by an insensitive municipal decision, such as selling off social housing. Coordination could also improve the quality of the public debate about ethnic minorities and migrants, by helping to educate municipal politicians and officials.

Joaquina Larraz Mompó said that, in 2007, 1% of the €200m in the Fund was earmarked for the development of regional activities focused on supporting local action and promoting training, exchange of experiences and good practices. That 1% had been used to set up a website called Integra Local. The site has a public area, but also a section accessible only by local authorities, which contains all kinds of information about integration, including good practice examples. Also, a conference was organised to which all local authorities were invited. Its objective was to provide support and training and disseminate good practice. The same budget allocation has not been made in 2008, but some European Integration Fund resources will be used for introductory programmes, training, exchanges and the promotion of assessment.

NGO statements

Peter Verhaeghe said **Caritas Europa** had asked its member organisations to comment on the Spanish Support Fund and compare it with the situation in their own countries, focusing on the coordination and coherence of integration policies. Caritas Europa defines integration as “a long-term, multi-faceted process aimed at establishing a relationship based on equality, mutuality and shared responsibility among all members of society”. This is partly reflected in the first Common Basic Principle, which says that it is a two-way process. But in fact, it is a multiple two-way process because it is not just a case of *the* migrants and *the* receiving society. There are different realities. He agreed with the statement in the Dutch country paper that it is all about chemistry between citizens. For Caritas Europa, the following principles are basic prerequisites for integration: respect for fundamental rights; equality, including gender equality; equal participation, in a society that is welcoming towards migrants, ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups. All three elements are mentioned in the Spanish National Strategy Report as the general principles underlying Spain's integration policy for migrants. So this is a very solid basis for a strategy. It is of relevance for all authorities and NGOs in EU countries, as is the Spanish emphasis on intercultural exchange. These points should be emphasised in national action plans. As well as the merits of vertical and horizontal coordination, he stressed a point made in the Latvian country paper – the need to maintain contact with the country's own diaspora. How do we coordinate policies on maintaining links to the country of origin with policies on promoting integration in the receiving country? For instance Caritas Europa's affiliate in Austria, another country with a federal structure, believes that a framework agreement between the federal and regional levels could be beneficial for the coherence of integration policies at different levels. But EU countries without a federal structure could also benefit from using elements of the Spanish Fund structure, in terms of coordination.

Transferability of the Spanish policy is feasible, Caritas Europa concludes. To guarantee the efficiency and effectiveness of the Fund, and of similar structures in other countries, the range of projects eligible for funding should be defined during the planning process, in close consultation with the authorities and civil society – including immigrants and their organisations. The main obstacle in some Member States could be the current lack of coordination, but also of the political will to invest in integration policy. Integration programmes will be more successful if all sectors of society are involved. As mentioned in the Latvian paper, programmes are needed to increase intercultural competence within specific professions, such as the police and teaching.

A multiplicity of factors influences the integration process: the migrant's socio-economic situation, residence status and length of stay; access to resources and structures; institutional and political structures; the number of migrants; the distance between the country of origin and the country of destination; family networks; inter-ethnic relations; the causes and course of migration; subjective attitudes and expectations etc. All of these need to be taken into consideration when defining indicators. Many academic institutions have developed indicators of integration. Germany uses a set of 100 indicators for the integration of immigrants. So a lot of expertise is available.

Indicators should include:

- **Legal integration.** Efforts to dismantle legal obstacles to integration and replace them with access to equal rights.
- **Socio-economic integration,** including access to employment and vocational training. Flexibility must be guaranteed, notably as regards recognition of foreign degrees, certificates and diplomas. This is still a problem, even for legally recognised refugees.
- **Socio-cultural integration.** Knowledge of the language, or one of the languages, of the country of residence is an important tool for integration. All members of society, including migrants' organisations, must be involved in the integration process.

Juan Antonio Segura, CEPAIM, Spain, member of the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), pointed out that Spanish NGOs also play a direct part in the management of the operational programme to fight discrimination. The involvement of third sector organisations in defining social inclusion policies, as well as plans on integration and citizenship, is an important transferable element of the Spanish policy. Good governance entails NGO involvement in the strengthening and evaluation of these measures. EAPN sees immigration not as a circumstantial phenomenon, as is believed in some parts of the EU, but as a positive, structural, global phenomenon. So countries of origin, of transit and of destination must all be involved in the planning. EAPN favours intercultural integration rather than cultural segregation and discrimination. Integration must be based on the principles of citizenship and equality. Citizens must be given a positive message about immigration. It is not a problem, but a resource and an opportunity. Networking is important. Both the social organisations and the public administrations need to do more to achieve this. In particular, more coordination is needed among the ministries involved. Social inclusion is the greatest investment that the EU can make. Integration has to be conducted on a territorial basis, not a sectoral one. Strategies must foster social participation, coexistence, citizenship, awareness and intercultural mediation. Integration must also include the right to political participation, notably in elections. We must tackle the causes, and not just the consequences, of social exclusion. Social inclusion policies should take account of the processes to integrate immigrants. He called on the Spanish government to reserve 1% of the Fund for innovative, experimental projects to be developed by NGOs in cooperation with local authorities. It must also be ensured that the Fund has sufficient resources to implement all aspects of the Plan. Immigration policies must be coordinated with development cooperation policies. This will give substance to the new concept of co-development. Immigrants can and must become a vector of development in their countries of origin.

Maruxa de la Rocha, Spanish Red Cross, briefly described the work performed recently by the Red Cross in this field, including emergency reception along the coasts and at airports, and subsequent efforts to ensure full integration through employment. Services provided by the Red Cross and other NGOs include voluntary returns, family reunification, searches for missing persons, and the relay of messages in emergencies.

Site visit, followed by a discussion

Among the activities benefiting from the Fund is a network of centres which provide education, training, leisure, job search and other facilities for immigrants, while promoting cultural and social exchanges with the Spanish population. The Peer Review participants visited one of these – the Hispano-African Centre in Madrid. They then discussed their impressions.

Amina Saydali said that similar centres exist in the Netherlands, but it would probably not be acceptable in her country to have centres segregated on the basis of the immigrants' region of origin. The Spanish structure was interesting, and no doubt useful for some people who might not be able to turn elsewhere for help, but she doubted that it could be transferred to the Netherlands as Dutch policy insists on broad integration, so facilities must be open to everybody. **Femmy Witte** (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands) found the Spanish centre perfect as a safe place for initial reception, but she agreed that it would not be possible in the Netherlands. **Isabelle Maquet-Engsted** pointed out that the Hispano-African Centre is open to non-Africans, too. She saw it as a very good example of the integrated provision of services and of intercultural dialogue. She admired the Centre's flexibility and pragmatism. As well as more sophisticated services, it had not forgotten to provide a place where people can wash their clothes if they do not have other possibilities to do so. It was not an intimidating place, and it promoted African culture. Its broad mixture of services made it a good point of entry.

Georgia Antonopolou (Ministry of Employment and Social Protection, Greece) said Athens has one such centre. It is not fully state-funded, although the volunteers who run it do receive some state support. Like the Spanish centre, the Greek one provides language lessons, guidance, information, IT courses, and meeting facilities. But it is the only one in Greece. **Susana Gende** asked if all the immigrants attending the Greek centre are in a regular administrative situation. **Chrysanthi Protegerou** replied that it is open to both documented and undocumented migrants. But it has problems with its funding, which comes from various sources and is not reliable.

Volker Schmitt had been impressed by the pride that all the Centre's staff took in its work. Germany has such centres, but they are organised by local authorities, not the State. And, as in the Netherlands, they are never segregated by region of origin. Some NGOs do run houses on such as basis, but it would be impossible for the State to do so. He noted that illegal immigrants receive good support in Spain. They get free healthcare and the health system will not pass on their names to the authorities. It is forbidden to do so, which is not the case in Germany. **Chrysanthi Protegerou** said Greece has many illegal migrants who are treated in hospital. They are not reported to the authorities. The only problem that may arise is if the treatment becomes too long-term and expensive – for instance, in the case of AIDS. Then, the doctors may need documents that illegal immigrants do not have. **Volker Schmitt** said illegal immigrants in Germany do face a hard choice. If they seek treatment, they face the probability of expulsion. **Aija Lulle** said the same situation pertains in Latvia.

Questions were raised if the Centre is tightly supervised by the Foundation (Fundeso, a financing

source). And is the funding adequate? **Romeo Gbaguidi** (Director, Hispano-African Centre) replied that funding comes from a variety of sources, but the State funding is very important as it guarantees the sustainability of the project. For example, before immigrants go for a job interview, the social services first send them to the Centre, so that they have certificates showing that they have received language and vocational training. That role means that the Centre is entitled to certain types of funding, which enable it to employ seven full-time staffers, alongside the volunteers. The Foundation gives the Centre its full support. The State funding also makes it easier to raise additional funds from private sources, as it reassures donors that the project is solidly based and well-managed. **Amina Saydali** asked for how long the core State funding is available. **Romeo Gbaguidi** replied that Fundeso funding has been received since 1995, but on an annual basis. The State funding has been accorded for four years.

Joaquina Larraz Mompó noted that the Centre is located in an upper middle class area. Would the relationship with the neighbours have been different if it had been set up in a less prosperous neighbourhood? **Romeo Gbaguidi** said the Centre had worked very hard to win the neighbours' confidence. It had put flyers under the windscreen wipers of cars in the neighbourhood, inviting people to come round and see what it is doing. In some other areas, there are ghettos of African workers, and local people there would perhaps have been more hostile, as they might have feared that the Centre would attract even more Africans into the neighbourhood. But that is not the issue. The issue is real integration. The strategy had been to first invite local people to cultural events where they were mixing mainly with other white people, and met only a few blacks. After that, they had no problems about dropping in and mixing with Africans. White people from the neighbourhood call into the Centre, eat meals there, and some even wear African clothes.

Volker Schmitt asked why the Foundation is supported on a long-term basis by the Community of Madrid. **Romeo Gbaguidi** explained that the Foundation is an NGO, and the Community of Madrid supports its activities as such. It was also suggested that the Community of Madrid favours to privatise services.

While admiring the Centre's welcoming attitude to all comers, **Jonas Barlyng** (Ministry for Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs, Denmark) asked what would happen if extremists began attending it in growing numbers – without necessarily committing any acts of violence, but posing a threat to its declared aim of integration. **Romeo Gbaguidi** replied that the Centre had managed such a situation in April 2007. A local group of the Black Panthers had asked it for meeting space. Individually, they were pleasant people, but as a group they were fanatical. He agreed to provide them with a room, but at the first meeting, one of them made a very aggressive speech. So he told them to leave, and that was the end of the matter. They can still come to the Centre as individuals, but he no longer lets them meet there as a group. He is empowered to take such decisions, and if there were still any problems, he could go directly to the State. **Jonas Barlyng** asked what criteria are applied when making such decisions. **Romeo Gbaguidi** said the Centre is a public one, and as such it has a set of rules. If people breach them, they are first suspended. Then, if they persist, they are out.

Susana Gende said that, in some European countries, the Red Cross can be prosecuted if they help illegal immigrants. Countries in the South tend not to take that attitude, because they have many undocumented immigrants. Regarding the location of the Centre, she felt that if it had been situated in a socially precarious area of the city, it might not have gained acceptance. **Maruxa de la Rocha** agreed that competition for limited services in the more deprived suburbs fuels prejudices. The Centre's cultural approach to neighbourliness is better suited to the area where it is located. "Yes and no" was **Romeo Gbaguidi's** response. Some Africans tell him that the

Centre is difficult to get to, and that it would get more community support if it was in a working-class suburb with a large immigrant population. But on the other hand, he feels that the Centre has stronger resources than do immigrant associations based in high-immigration districts.

Laura Davi suggested that the good atmosphere in the Centre is partly due to the fact that, in Spain, undocumented migrants can achieve regularisation after just three years. **Romeo Gbaguidi** said that the migrants using the Centre, and volunteering to help there, are in a whole variety of situations. Some have just arrived in Spain and are being assisted by the Red Cross. Others have lived in Spain for twenty years or more, and come round to give the new arrivals the benefit of their experience. There are also African academics who give talks on a whole range of topics to do with living in Spain.

Day 2

The participants split into two working groups to discuss transferability aspects of the policy under review, as well as differences and common challenges. They then reported back to the plenary.

Feedback from working groups and general discussion

Issues discussed in the working groups included:

- National government policies on immigration tend to aim either at **assimilation** or at **multiculturalism**. But there may be a middle way. The majority of migrants wish to integrate into the receiving society to a certain extent, but without losing their own identity. So “compulsory integration” may prove counterproductive. The receiving society must become a welcoming society.
- **Coordination** between different levels of government raises particular issues in countries where integration is a devolved responsibility. The Spanish experience of a regional approach could be of value to other countries in that position.
- There is a widely felt need for improvements in **evaluation** of integration policies and the development of appropriate indicators.
- In the context of **family reunification**, the mothers of immigrant families are crucial to their integration into the receiving society. So some countries place a particular focus on language training for mothers of immigrant families. Others take the view that their educational system should be equipped to cater for children who have not fully learnt the receiving country’s language during their preschool years.
- **Services** should be available to all citizens within a society. Migrants’ access to services should be part of that universal entitlement. However, this does not exclude the possibility of specific service provision for migrants where needed. This issue will be affected by the structure of service provision in a particular country. Do NGOs play a role in service provision? Are services provided by the State on its own, or in cooperation with the private sector? What, if any, is the solidarity role of the extended family? What is the role of volunteers?
- The **sustainability** of programmes and projects is a key factor for successful integration. However, NGOs, as well as local authorities, face the problem of the **continued financing** of useful projects.
- There is a fear of creating parallel societies within a main society. **“Unity within diversity”** should be the slogan here. Society is composed of many different interest groups (for example, the parents of school pupils). But being a member of society does not entail being a member of every group within that society.

Despite often quite differing political contexts, all peer countries found interesting elements in the Spanish approach, they regarded worth transferring.

- The **Dutch** approach is to provide different options for migrants – very specific, tailored programmes to give them the linguistic and cultural prerequisites for integration into Dutch society. As regards the transferability, the humanity of the Spanish approach was emphasised. This was something that everybody could take home as a lesson. Women are an important target for Dutch integration efforts, as they help their families and their community to integrate better into the host society. The Dutch tailored approach began in 2006, so it is a little too early to evaluate it. She hoped for more input on this in future seminars.
- **Greece** involves different actors in the formulation and implementation of integration programmes, which is a very important point. The Greek Government will soon be introducing a new coordinated Plan of Action, called “ESTIA”, which is being discussed at the moment. The basic principle of the said plan is the coordination among all competent government institutions and the third sector, in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness of integration programmes implemented. What Greece can learn from the Spanish experience is the allocation of State funds and the need for sustainable, reliable funding of integration projects and the coordination model that the Spanish Fund is implementing, given the fact that the Greek governance structure is centralised, accumulating most competences at the central government level. Nevertheless, the Greek government is willing to work towards the efficient integration of migrants and finds the relevant efforts of other EU countries extremely useful.
- In **Denmark**, the approach to immigrants is rather similar to that in the Netherlands. Again the humanity of the Spanish approach was considered as an element that should be transferred. A continuing challenge is how to evaluate the effectiveness of integration efforts and avoid the pitfalls.
- In the **Czech Republic**, migration does not attract much public attention or public discourse. Ethnic groups are a hotter topic. As regards the integration of migrants, the main issue is the sustainability of the Czech approach. It was emphasised that integration is a matter of working with the whole of society, and not migrants alone.
- **Germany**, with its long experience both of migration and of the official denial of migration, envisages a broad approach to integration. The challenge for Germany is not so much to handle new migration as to correct the mistakes of previous years. So programmes need to be tailored to second and even third generations. Germany saw the Spanish integration plan and the funding arrangements as a possibly transferable element, although the co-funding by communities should not lead to paralysing the implementation of the plan. However, the problem is not so much the money as using it effectively with the help of NGOs and evaluating what has been achieved.
- **Italy** also rated the Spanish experience highly, and saw similarities with its own situation. After the Italian Constitutional Court declaring the constitutional illegitimacy of the Fund for the social inclusion of migrants, (50.000.000 Euro) because of the violation of the principle of the separation of the competences among the central government and the Regions, the approach that might be used nowadays in Italy, at government level, should foresee dedicated allocations, directed to the resolution of some critical situations throughout Italian territory and usually persisting in the main cities, such as social alienation of some minorities, as in the case of Roma.

- **Latvia** is just starting its integration programmes for newcomers, but such programmes already exist for ethnic minorities dating back to the Soviet era. Latvian migrants returning from abroad also have specific integration needs. Latvia wants to establish an integration centre, and thinks that good practices from the Spanish experience of this would be transferable. However, this will require adequate funding and the political will.

Relevance and key learning elements for peer countries

Concepción Carrasco Carpio drew together the key points raised:

- **Coordination** is of particular importance. This entails creating institutional confidence, fully involving local networks, achieving a common understanding among all stakeholders about immigration and integration, and providing the people who work at local level with information about the policies.
- **Effectiveness** requires partnership and networking with NGOs. A strong political consensus could be a factor in the success of the policies. The participation of immigrants themselves is key for the efficiency of the policies. Countries must make efforts on intercultural skills, for example for teachers, police and other professions working with migrants. Volunteer involvement in integration work should be encouraged. Stable structures and funds are needed, rather than temporary ones.
- **Transferability** is conditioned by the different situations in the various peer countries.

Closing remarks

Isabelle Maquet-Engsted said she had learnt a lot during this Peer Review. Coordination of action across policy areas, departments and different levels of government had emerged as an important issue. Despite the different state structures in the different countries, there is a common feature – action is taking place on the ground, and this has to be connected with the broader decisions being taken at the national level. So we can all learn from the experience of Spain, but also from that of the other peer countries. Coordination with the different actors, including the NGOs, is obviously also very important. But there had been general agreement that coordination must be flexible enough to permit initiative on the ground. Action should come first and coordination should follow, rather than the other way round. Creating a common understanding of the goals of immigration and integration policy was another major point to have emerged from the discussions. She could understand that this is not so straightforward. The challenge is to involve all stakeholders in reaching that consensus. On the issue of assimilation versus multiculturalism, she suggested that what is needed is a model that involves both sides – the people who come to the country but also the host society itself. Integration is a long-term process and unless a common understanding is reached about their long-term aims, immigration policies may not be sustainable either across successive governments or as regards funding. NGO action in particular needs more sustainable funding, through State support.

She would have wished to learn more about evaluation during this Peer Review. However, she was aware that it is not easy to evaluate the outcomes of policies. However, the knowledge base and the facts and figures about the challenges and the effect of policies are key to the success of the policies themselves, which can then be tailored accordingly, but also to the capacity to learn from each other and to work on perceptions of migration in the host country. Communicating the real facts about migration is a fundamental issue.

Assumptions are often made that are not backed by evidence. So a fact-based approach is needed. Just looking at the most dramatic events happening in a society is not the way to measure integration. We have to measure the number of mixed marriages, the success stories, the skill level of the second generation. We tend to dwell too much on the failures rather than the successes. We also have very few facts about the burden that migration is often said to place on the welfare state. The figures on this appear to be contradictory. For instance, immigration into Spain seems to have had a positive impact on the financing of social security, because more people are paying contributions. But then we hear that, understandably, migration can put pressure on the availability of services at the local level. We need evidence-based policy-making.

She had appreciated the site visit, which had been a good example of integrated service provision. The only doubts that one might have about such a project concern its longer-term sustainability and its strong reliance on the goodwill of the people who lead it. The Spanish Support Fund shows how structures can be created which will enable such projects to continue to live and progress.

Joaquina Larraz Mompó said that when Spain had been asked to present the Fund as a good practice, this had been a surprise which turned into an opportunity. She and her colleagues had been pleased to exchange experiences and comments with other countries. The fact that the peer countries had different governmental structures had actually been positive. It had made it possible to examine the subject from different angles. However, she agreed with Isabelle Maquet-Engsted that some topics would have merited more discussion – such as evaluation. An evaluation of the Fund's cooperation framework has just been made, and work has now begun on an evaluation of the Strategic Plan. Some quantitative data are available, but Spain is not yet ready to move to the impact evaluation phase. So it would have been interesting to hear about other countries' experiences with this. She had noted the comments about the need for pluriannual funding. However, the Fund, like other subsidies, currently still operates on an annual basis. Pluriannual funding is something that might be considered in future, but there are some regulatory limitations. She emphasised that the Fund is designed as a support. The Autonomous Communities have their own plans and funds for integration. The central government Fund is intended to support those who were already working in this field and to build awareness among those, mainly the smaller regions, that have not faced such pressure from immigration yet but which do need to start taking some action. The Fund can help them to determine their needs, and they can then build teams and institutions within their own structures, and provide their own funding. So the Autonomous Communities and local authorities should start budgeting for these kinds of action to promote integration. It is therefore important to maintain the support from central government. There are great challenges ahead. Immigration is here to stay. We must keep working at integration, and we can all learn from each other.