



## The Search *for* Solutions

Policy Learning in Britain and Germany

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# Immigration and the Labour Market: Demand, Recruitment and Integration 2 June 2004

*British Embassy, Wilhelmstraße 70-71, 10117 Berlin*

### **Introduction: 09.30-09.40**

Jeremy Cresswell, Deputy Head of Mission, British Embassy, Berlin

### **Session 1 (09.40 – 11.00): The need for new labour migration**

Chair: Dr Simon Green

Introductory Remarks: Prof. Andrew Geddes and Prof. Dr. Michael Bommes

- Does the worsening demographic situation in the UK and Germany make replacement labour migration inevitable?
- Indeed, should this issue even be considered at national level, given severe problems of depopulation in areas such as Scotland and the new *Länder*?
- To what extent is new labour migration necessary to address specific shortages, both in high-skilled (e.g. IT and health care) and lower-skilled sectors (e.g. hotels, agriculture)?
- Providing spare capacity in the labour market is available (e.g. unemployment, low participation rates among women and the above-55s), can any new labour migration actually be justified?
- How practical / economically viable are solutions such as family policies, retraining and improving participation rates for meeting such labour market shortages?

11.00 – 11.30: Coffee Break

### **Session 2 (11.30 – 13.00): Mechanisms for managing labour migration**

Chair: Dr. Martin Ruhs

Introductory Remarks: Dr. Christina Boswell, Jonathan Portes and Dr. Christian Dustmann

- Throughout the past decades, the UK and Germany have both assumed that a supply of migrant labour, both high-skilled and low-skilled, is readily available for both countries to

manage according to their needs. Can this assumption still be taken for granted, or is there really a global competition for skills?

- If labour migration is readily available, how do we select it?
- If labour migration is not readily available, how do we encourage it?
- What are likely to be the best sources of labour migration? Should the UK and Germany look towards the new members of the EU, or countries with historical / linguistic links (e.g. Commonwealth countries)?
- How should the relationship between asylum seekers and the labour market be structured? Is this form of migration suitable for filling gaps in the labour supply, or does it only encourage abuse of the asylum system for economic purposes?
- By contrast, how can recognised refugees, many of whom are highly skilled, be better integrated into the labour market?
- How do we balance the political interest of prohibiting illegal labour migration with the business interest in access to a supply of cheap and available labour?
- Should the UK and Germany be seeking solutions to these questions at EU-level, or is the national level the most appropriate arena?

13.00 – 14.00: Lunch break

### **Session 3 (14.00 – 16.00): The challenge of integration**

Chair: Dr. Simon Green

Introductory Remarks: Dr. Heaven Crawley and Dr. Karen Schönwälder

- What kind of policy mechanisms should be in place to promote the integration of future labour (and other) migrants? Formal integration courses? Anti-discrimination legislation? Liberal access to residence and work permits?
- In the case of courses, should these be limited to non-labour market active migrants (as in the Netherlands) or to all immigrants (as proposed in Germany)? What are the advantages and disadvantages of linking them to nationality (as in the UK), or making them independent of it (as proposed in Germany)?
- Are formal integration courses even appropriate for high-skilled labour migrants? Is it possible that long, expensive and compulsory integration courses can serve as a disincentive to immigration and integration?
- What is the role and responsibility of civil society (including employers) in managing and implementing integration?
- Can integration primarily be considered a national task, given the propensity of immigrants to settle in urban areas (e.g. London and Frankfurt am Main)?

16.00 – Close