Konrad Raiser   Berlin, June 2011

**Summary of the discussions at the Europe meeting of the Triglav Circle
at Berlin 24-26 June 2011 on "Migration and Integration"**

The meeting took place at the home of Elisabeth and Konrad Raiser and was attended, apart
from the hosts, by Jean-Michel Collette, Christian and Birgitte Balslev-Olesen, Geneviève
Jacques and (as guests) Kristine Greenaway(Geneva) and Hans Thomä(Berlin, part-time).
Presentations were made by Ulrich Raiser (Berlin) and by Geneviève Jacques.

1. Discussions started by sharing personal experiences of migration and (re-) integration.
The following common features emerged:
- All participants shared the experience of periods of international service and ex-
  patriate life in other countries and cultures. This results in a kind of "border-line"
  existence, depending less and less on firm roots in a particular place but on networks
  of belonging. All shared as well some problems with re-integration in their country of
  origin and the feeling of having become outsiders in their own country.
- The experience of multiple but temporary migration and border-crossing is shared
  today by many urban, globalized citizens, but it meets with incomprehension and
  rejection by those in the community who feel threatened in their identity by outsiders
  and seek to defend and/or reinforce borders (territorial, cultural, ethnic etc.)
- Thus, the nature and purpose of borders, their permanence or flexibility became a
  kind of red thread running through the further discussions.

2. The issue of integration/inclusion of migrants
Against the background of his experience in the Office of Integration of the government of the
city state of Berlin Ulrich Raiser presented five basic considerations regarding a policy of
inclusion:
- Migration is and has always been a *normal feature* in human societies. Most big cities
  have been formed as a consequence of movements of migration. Migration is a
  challenge (problem) but also brings opportunities of enrichment both for the migrants
  and the host communities.
- It is important to recognize the "*social energy*" that drives especially voluntary
  migration. Migrants, particularly migrant workers, search for a better life and for
  opportunities of up-ward mobility. They do not intend to live on welfare payments.
  Their motivation is often misunderstood and meets with suspicion by residents ("they
  want to take our jobs").
- Policies of inclusion require of the host countries to understand themselves as
  "immigration societies" seeking to develop a common future between residents and
  migrants. This calls for a "post-ethnic" approach which does no longer start from
  comparing different cultures but aims at *equality of rights*, especially voting rights and
  naturalization rights.
- The implementation of such policies depends on the deliberate development of
  institutional capacities and skills among service agents (teachers, police personnel,
  health workers etc) to guarantee *equal access to social services* without administrative
  barriers.
- All European societies face the challenge of ageing and the lack of skilled workers,
  especially in the service sector. With an estimated lack of 6 million workers over the
  next 20 years, Germany has an increasing *need of recruiting immigrants*.

In the discussion the following points were made:

- Mobility should be considered as a normal fact in the contemporary global context. Labour cannot be exempted nor prevented from mobility. Instead of special laws with the intention to control migration, the emphasis should be on ways to build a common future on the basis of shared rights.
- Policies of inclusion must be based on a participatory approach involving the immigrant communities through round tables etc. The process will require time and must extend beyond settling administrative issues. Examples were given from successful initiatives in Berlin (e.g. model of "Stadtteil-Mütter", i.e. qualified women from migrant communities who assist members of their community, especially women, in the process of integration).
- Recognizing the "social energy" of migrant movements must also include acknowledgement of the "brain drain" affecting the county/community of origin; remittances might be considered as a kind of compensation for the educational expenses invested in the migrants.
- Special attention must be given to "undocumented migrants". Their condition represents a "political taboo". (It estimated that in Berlin there live appr. 100.000 undocumented migrants; in Germany around 1 million.) Because they are completely unprotected, they easily become victims of exploitation on the labour market, especially in the service sector. In some countries they receive limited support from churches and trade-unions.
- Most potential host countries in Europe have to deal with populist campaigns against migrants and immigration. Present political leadership on the national and the European level is uncertain and divided over the question how to deal with the impact of this populist sentiment which often is being reinforced by the media. (For the special problems regarding the EU policies see the following section).

3. Principles and proposals for a new policy on migration

Geneviève Jacques presented to the group the main features of a policy paper adopted by the French human rights and refugee association CIMADE. The paper has been worked out with a view to making an impact on the forthcoming elections in France. The paper follows a rights-based approach, focussing in particular on the rights of mobility for everyone, the affirmation of the fundamental human rights for migrants, and the rights to equal citizenship. It deliberately takes a long term view in order to achieve a fundamental change of perspective regarding migration and to generate an alternative vision of immigration. It aims at a "policy of hospitality" which might be considered utopian by some; however, present policy is guided by the "negative utopia" of being able to close the borders.

The discussion focussed on the five main features of the new policy:

- International migration will continue and increase in the future. Policies must be based on an affirmation of the *freedom to move and to settle*. This calls for re-consideration of the right of sovereign states to control access to their territory and to protect borders. Globalization has already undermined the "sovereignty rights" of governments regarding the movements of trade of goods and services as well as of capital. In the EU national borders have been virtually abolished with regard to the movement of people as well. How can border be made permeable for migratory movements without destabilizing further the system of nation states? (s. the final section for continuation of discussion on this issue)
- It is of paramount importance to guarantee the *protection of asylum seekers* in the spirit of the Geneva Convention of 1951. While it is recognized that the Geneva Convention may not meet contemporary conditions which cause people to seek

asylum as refugees (at least in its dominant interpretation), much of present political action is openly violating the spirit and letter of the Convention. Rather than trying to reformulate or up-date the Convention (with unpredictable outcomes), it is important to defend what we already have as binding rules and norms. Perhaps an additional convention should be worked out to respond to the growing crisis of internally displaced people (IDPs).

- New initiatives are needed to develop a *policy and practise of hospitality.* This calls for reversing the present trend of legislation trying to severely limiting the access of refugees and migrants both nationally and on the level of the EU. In particular, the bilateral agreements with neighbouring states in North Africa and other states bordering on the EU to prevent the movement of refugees and migrants must be challenged. (For the special problems regarding the situation in North Africa see the following section). Developing a policy of hospitality is urgently needed to meet the increasing pressures of migration, not least of people who will become uprooted as a consequence of climate change.

- A new policy must clearly *prohibit forced expulsion* of refugees and migrants. The case of the Rom community was briefly discussed. Since they are citizens of a member state of the EU, they constitute a special concern. Generally, persons who have succeeded to integrate in the host country must be protected against being "repatriated" involuntarily.

- The overall aim of a new policy must be to create conditions that allow residents and migrants/refugees to *live together as equal citizens* sharing in responsibility for building the community. This calls for decisions to grant voting rights, at least at the communal level, and to facilitate naturalization, including the possibility of double citizenship. The case of some countries of origin, e.g. Algeria; that do not allow a change of citizenship for migrants, has to be given special consideration.

4. <u>The challenge of the developments in North Africa</u>
Geneviève Jacques shared information based on her recent missions to refugee camps on the borders of Libya with both Tunisia and Egypt. While in Tunisia and Egypt largely non-violent popular revolutions have taken place, Libya is caught in a civil war. With a population of about 6 million citizens, Libya had "hosted" some 1.5 to 2 million migrant workers and refugees who are severely affected by the war. Since 17 February 2011 approx. 1, 1 million people have fled to country; out of these 1, 08 have crossed either into Egypt (360.000) or Tunisia (580.000) or via the southern borders into Tschad. Only about 20.000 have crossed the Mediterranean to reach either Lampedusa (18.000) or Malta (1500). It is estimated that up to 2000 people have lost their lives in the attempt to cross the Mediterranean. The fear of an exodus of "biblical proportions" towards Europe as projected by Italian political leaders is clearly unfounded.

Among those who have fled the country one has to distinguish four categories: (1) Tunisian or Egyptian migrant workers who have returned home; (2) Libyans with the means to leave the country in turmoil at least temporarily; (3) migrant workers and refugees from "third national countries" in Africa and Asia, most of whom have been repatriated by their governments or through IOM ; (4) "people of concern", i.e. refugees who cannot return to their countries of origin, e.g. Sudanese from Darfur, Somalis, Eritreans, Oromos from Ethiopia, Iraqis, refugees from Ivory Coast etc. They are stranded at the Tunisian or Egyptian border in provisional camps under the protection of UNHCR and other sponsors, like the United Arab Emirates. None of the well known European and American humanitarian organizations has been offering assistance to these refugees; only Arab humanitarian organizations are present. The total number of refugees at these borders is below 4000, but so far few if any governments are

prepared to receive them for resettlement. The conditions in the camps are unacceptable and urgent action is required. Inter-ethnic conflicts at the Tunisian border have twice led to tents or the whole camp being burned down. At the Egyptian border refugees are not allowed to move beyond the customs compound and no facilities have been made available. It is reported that 200 refugees who eventually will be resettled in the USA are to be transferred temporarily to Timsoara in Romania for extensive security clearance taking up to 6 months before being brought to the USA.

It is a scandal that the EU and its member states have not shown any readiness to respond to this dramatic humanitarian crisis and instead continue to reinforce their practise of policing the borders and preventing any entry by refugees or migrants. NATO ships and helicopters are operating in the Mediterranean off the Libyan coast but decline any assistance to refugee boats.

5. Towards a new understanding of borders
In the concluding session the discussion returned to the question of borders and their role in protecting collective identities. In order to respond to the challenge of migration and the movements of refugees in the spirit of "hospitality" it would be necessary to develop a *post-national understanding of neighbours*. Most refugee movements take place in the global South and many societies, particularly in Africa, receive refugees from neighbouring states on the basis of a "pre-national" spirit of neighbourliness and solidarity. The modern nation state has enlarged the safe space beyond the traditional closed communities and enlarged the scope of collective identity. However, it has tended to become an exclusive space treating the foreigner and stranger as a potential threat.

The increasing interdependence of states which has been strengthened by the process of globalization has begun to change the character of borders. Transnational corporations and the virtual world of electronic communication have created a *new reality of cross-border flows*. However, participation and access to this new reality is a privilege for the rich (s. the "digital divide"). This post-national and trans-border reality is projected in idealized fashion by the media which increases the sense of being excluded for those who are too poor to be able to participate. In addition, it creates the counter reaction of different forms of fundamentalism which try to establish and defend exclusive identities by enforcing borders between friend and enemy.

Borders or boundaries define the safe space which is necessary for sustainable life of individuals and communities. All humans need to be able to withdraw and to be with themselves. Communities need a sense of security by defining the boundary between inside and outside. Eliminating all boundaries would make sustainable life of communities impossible. However, instead of being exclusive, boundaries can function as communicating links, as interfaces mediating between inside and outside, like the human skin. And in fact, any individual and all communities are dependent on relationships of mutuality and of trust extending beyond their boundaries. Reference was made to the ritual exchange of gifts between traditional communities which are meant to strengthen the sense of reciprocity and mutuality. These values need to be reactivated and translated into rules of hospitality based on the mutual recognition of human dignity and the equality of rights.

People who share the border-line existence and have enjoyed the privilege of crossing borders have again and again been able to contribute to widening the sense of identity of their own community and overcome the fear of the unknown beyond the border. They can facilitate new relationships beyond the boundary of the familiar, build confidence in people who are

different, and thus shape new values and ultimately new public policies. We see this as a chance for the Triglav circle.

This means that we will have to address the obvious gap which exists between the results of careful research about migration and the simplified image projected in the wider public which often influences the actions of politicians. Behind this image is the fear of economic insecurity, a sense of general vulnerability, the concern about gender roles etc; this contributes to shaping policies aimed at tightening borders for defensive purposes. Overcoming this resistance requires patient work of building trust and openness across and beyond the fences, demonstrating that it is possible to rely on the "other", and showing that mutuality will be a survival question in view of the crises that are ahead of us.

Recognizing the difficulty of the task, the discussion closed on an uplifting note. It was pointed out that over this past decade there have been fewer violent conflicts and also fewer fragile states. This is not so much the consequence of actions by the international community, but was facilitated mainly by local communities. And even the Northern countries that have been the focus of critical observations, have been inviting more and more people from outside. And they will continue to do so in order to stabilize their ageing population. And finally it should be recognized that many of the most vulnerable communities in the global South have been able to survive because of the remittances received from their migrant members overseas. New policies will probably not be designed from above but will be the consequence of cumulative changes initiated from below.