



Round table in Sofia



Magali Ciais in charge of the Migration department

Policies and good practices in France

The example of a public integration contract and the Migrapass process

Good morning every one, today I have the honour to represent Autremonde, which is a French association in Paris.

First of all I would like to thank all the Cermes team for this beautiful event and all of you for your interest in the Migrapass project.

Introduction

I'd like to speak to you today about some specificities of French integration policy and focus on the complementarity that exists between associations and public agencies: especially, in their different ways of caring for migrants and more specifically in their way of handling migrant's professional assessment.

That why I choose to present the professional assessment provide by a public office and also the Migrapass process who include a professional assessment.

Presentation of Autremonde

First of all I'll present you Autremonde very quickly.

Autremonde is an association which was created in 1994 by a group of young people who wanted to be involved in humanitarian projects.

Our fundamental value is solidarity, and our main objective is to maintain and create a social link with people who face integration difficulties.

Presently, we have 250 volunteers, 7 employees and 3 operational departments :

- Migrations, Precariousness and Cultural department

We are funded 66% by public stakeholders (the state and the region), 7% by private foundations and 27% by our own funds (such as discount sales of luxury brands).

Now I'll continue by highlighting one specificity of French integration policy : the integration contract provide by a Public office.

The french integration contract

In France the public service of migrants integration is provided by the OFII (French Office of Immigration and Integration). One of the office missions is to provide reception and integration service for the new legal comers who have to sign an integration contract, this contract is called reception and integration contract (CAI), and signing this contract is a obligation for the migrants since January 2007. This contract is a big issue for the migrants because if they do not respect it, their stay permit can be refused.

This contract, include some obligation for the migrants. Some of those obligations are called “learning sessions”, the migrants have to follow civic learning sessions during one day, information sessions about “life in France”, French workshops and a professional opportunity assessment. Even if this contract is thought as an integration process, it puts a strong pressure on the individuals, and we can say that, as contracting parties a state and a person are not equal.

Now let focus on a part of this contract, the “professional opportunity assessment” provide by OFFI.

The 2011 report of OFFI says that access to employment is a priority of the French government. For the persons in age to work the law about immigration and integration makes the professional opportunity assessment a obligation.

This procedure is in adequacy with the recommendations of the Europe council report on “economic migration, social cohesion and development”.

In fact this report recommends to the host countries to use programs to permit the recognition of the migrants qualifications, experiences and training. More particularly the council recommend to promote learning programs and process, in order to permit a better adaptation of the migrants.

So we can say that we have a good economical and integration policy here with the professional opportunity assessment provide by this public office.

But as public service has to treat and receive everyone the same way, it presents some limits : it is really short, only 3 hours to resume a professional path and it's also a little reductive, it takes into account only the professional skills and it's also a legal pressure who can hinder the personal motivations.

To conclude about this practice, I would like to quote Gilles Verbunt who said, *“To adapt one self to another way of living, one has to feel recognised in one’s differences and similarities. Institutions are rather impersonal and put legal pressure”*.

While public services impose a up down movement, associations impulse a lateral movement based on confidence link, adaptability to the cultural diversity, mutual recognition, and individual care.

That's why I would like now to focus on distinguishing feature of French integration policy which is interesting :

In order to complete his own integration process, wich is obligatory and unpersonal, the State has delegated to associations the mission and subsidy to support migrants.

The associations strategies are really different than state one's, and it's the case in Autremonde.

In association we can mix both approaches, of course the migrants have to make a effort to understand is new environment but we can make it in an adapt form, in a comprehensive and holistic way. We can understand that a state need rational procedures but a person, a group of migrants needs a comprehensive approach to take into account their subjectivity, to make sense.

2. Migrapass approach

In this French context where the state share with association the question of social and professional integration and can not make a personal support, Migrapass process has an efficient role to play.

In Outremer we have proposed the Migrapass process to migrants with a quite low literacy level. And migrapass has offered to them different advantages which are precious for their integration process.

According to me, first of all, it's the **relationship** between the mentors and the mentees who make the difference.

In the associations this relationship is based on equality between two adults and the Migrapass process proposes a refocusing on the persons and in the same time the dialogue with the mentor and the group enable the migrants to de-focus and to be able to communicate his individual experiences and competences. That's why in the Migrapass process, the guide for the mentors is so important.

Secondly, in France, where linguistic integration is very important, we choose to propose this process in French, and it takes time, between 12 and 13 hours for each person, but it helps the migrant to communicate his skills, in the host country language in order to prepare a interview for example.

Let's quote Lahoucine one of ours mentees « *before I didn't know that I have done so many thing, however I done them*”

The third point is that Migrapass enforce selfconfidence by expressing specific skills, although in France we usually do not take into account experiences acquired before migration process, working on that gives a strong positive effect on self confidence, this self estime rain down on every subsequent training session and, when it's necessary, helps the migrants to reappropriate is life path. “*It's interesting to express one's skills to have confidence*” said M. during the evaluation.

The fourth is the singularity of Migrapass : the valorisation of the migratory experience and especially the intercultural skill.

From a national point of view we can say that Migrapass see the migration situation in a positive way and establish a sort of positive discrimination which is an unusual approach in France.

And the last point, integration of migrants is a big political, cultural and social challenge for the European community but is also an economical topic : in France where migration is usually considered as interior policy topics, we can say that a successful social and professional integration has a positive impact on economy, therefore Migrapass can participate to this positive impact. As an illustration in France Migrants brings more incomes to the state than the cost of their welfare payment.

And today morning, Autremonde with a group of 11 unions and associations are having a meeting with Manuel Valls minister of interior affairs and a representative of the labour department to defend migrants rights and talk about integration in an economic approach.

In conclusion we can say that Migrapass is the meeting between a comprehensive way to integrate migrants, an efficient economical approach and an institutional recognition with the support of the European agency.