

PRESS RELEASE
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Do we construct walls not only around Europe but also inside the EU?

The first part of the question is a frequently asked one related to migration within the concept of the “Fortress Europe”. But the second part rather reflects on the cooperation between Old and New Member States.

NMS involvement in the Schengen treaty means inhabitants may freely move between the member states. Though critical experts often question even this statement, there is also an uncertainty whether the flow and exchange of ideas, best practices and know-how among Old and New Member States exists at all.

A whole variety of EU or EC programs prefer cooperation between the “old states” and the newcomers. Grant applications in certain cases may only be accessed if there is interaction approved between OMS and NMS. Why not develop this kind of cooperation in the field of migration?

It is assumed that NMS have less experience in migration management because they were not target countries for their socialist past. Although after joining Schengen, immigration became a relevant topic. There is a clear historical, social, cultural and economic difference between OMS and NMS – that is often used as an explanation to many questions. But does it really serve anything to call NMS the “East” again – as we heard at some EU level NGO conferences about Official Development Aid questions and paradigm change?

The main question is whether there is such an extensive and relevant experience, know-how in the Old Member States that could be transferred, or at least tailored to local circumstances in the New Member States. And if there is, how could this learning process be more cooperative, is there anything to be shared from the side of NMS?

An excellent example for mutual cooperation between new and old member states, and of how to overcome the rebuilt walls between East and West within Europe is a project, titled: “PreQual steps - European dimensions within the intercultural qualification for migrant women entering the health and care sector”. It involves 5 European countries (old and new) within the Leonardo da Vinci vocational trainings program. The objective of the project is to support migrant women by helping their work opportunities in the healthcare sector, by matching the labor market needs with those of the migrant women and thus provide a future-oriented and innovative solution.

The PreQual Curriculum for the training of migrant women has already been developed in Austria, Germany and Italy and is now being implemented in Hungary, Czech Republic, Spain and Greece.

This European level project started in November 2007 and now partners – especially from the New Member States - are facing a great challenge: to implement the training course. It is a next step after several partnership meetings in Austria, Greece and Hungary, and the curriculum development that involved close cooperation with different social actors in each country (health care and labor market experts, migrant women, trainers, NGOs, etc.)

Why is it a challenge? Because the basis of the training course is a unique innovation by an Austrian grassroots organization **MAIZ**, that was established by Brazilian immigrant women. Rubia Salgado from **MAIZ** has developed her approach for empowering migrant women relying on Paulo Freire's theory.

The experiences of Czech, Greek, Hungarian and Spanish training programs mentored by the Austrians will be shared involving migrant women, thus the project will serve as a real melting pot just exactly how the EU imagines to operate.

For further information please contact the project partners:

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ANTIGONE - Information & Documentation Centre on Racism, Ecology, Peace and Non Violence

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