



# MIGRATION CONFERENCE BRUSSELS

2007



## CHANGES IN PATTERNS OF MIGRATION

AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
HELD AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN BRUSSELS,  
20<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2007

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION  
AND STARTING DOCUMENT

*the*  
**ALLIANCE**  
EQUAL II



## MIGRATION MATTERS!

The current discussion about the big topic of migration takes place on many levels. Of utmost importance is the fact that the European Union is moving into a position to adopt common strategies and policies in regard to this issue, and time is running fast. Decision-making processes on national and regional level are increasingly geared towards a common European approach and the discussion shifts in response to shifting migration patterns. Issues like “controlled migration” or “circular migration”, questions of successful integration as well as re-integration of those migrants without proper legal status are increasingly interconnected. Asylum, economic migration, temporary or permanent migration, sources of migration, push- and pull-factors – all issues intermingle and make it more and more difficult to single out one phenomenon on the expense of all the others.

The community initiative EQUAL has since the beginning of project activities in 2001 put the issues of asylum and migration on the priority list. Since then, a great number of development partnerships (DPs), i.e. networks of projects working together on the basis of a common action programme, have dealt with various issues in this field. The second round of EQUAL, with its impetus on mainstreaming the results of the work done, poses a special challenge, as the end of the community initiative coincides with important efforts in the political field to shape the future of EU migration policy in all of its aspects and facets.

To be able to fulfil both the task of effective dissemination and mainstreaming of its results as well as the desire to be part and parcel of this decision-making process in the political arena, the four DPs united in the transnational network “The Alliance” have decided to culminate their common efforts in a mainstreaming-conference, taking place on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2007 in the European Parliament. Early efforts in identifying potential partners and hosts have already proven to be successful: A number of EP-members have expressed their willingness to host the conference and to enable “The Alliance” to communicate its experiences and lessons learned in the wider field of migration. The positive response has convinced the organizing DPs: Migration matters – irrespective of political convictions and ideologies and irrespective of the different approaches and situations in the various member-states. In organizing this conference and facilitating a high-level exchange, the “Alliance” wants to make sure that migration matters even more in the future.

## WHO WILL TAKE PART? WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

The organizers of the conference are aiming at a wide-ranged audience. The possible scope of attendants should go from workers and practitioners from the projects itself, to both national and international experts in the area of integration, re-integration, development and migration, leading to policy-makers and politicians from regional, national and European level. With inputs from experts and researchers, the conference wants to facilitate a mutual exchange between all participants, based on four major pillars:

- The development of migration patterns and their current changes with a focus on the situation within the European Union
- The relationship between these changing patterns and the responses and experiences put into practice by EQUAL projects
- An outlook into future migration patterns and the current state of discussion within scientific research
- The insights, visions and responses of politicians and policy-makers, especially in the shaping of a common EU policy on migration

The organizers of the conference want to be specific in their messages, but also want to make room for the whole range of the topic as much as possible. This includes – especially in regard to the question of asylum-policy as part of migration-policy – the dual perspective of integration and re-integration. The current EU-policies on a national level include both aspects, from restriction to acceptance, even leading to legalisation of migrants without legal status. This wide range has to put in perspective towards a common EU policy to be formulated.

## WHY THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT?

Within the decision-making process of the European Union, the Parliament has increased in influence and status during the last decades. Long passed are the times where the EP could easily be brushed aside as a mere “talking-shop”. Co-decision procedures between the EP and the European Council are no longer exceptional, they are common practice in many important fields, including the budget. The European Parliament has an increased awareness not only of its role as a co-decider, but also as a conduit of legitimacy towards the population of the Union.

At least three parliamentary committees are directly or indirectly involved in migration matters: the Committee of Foreign Affairs, the Committee of Development and Cooperation and the Committee of Civil Liberties and Home Affairs. In addition at least three DGs within the Commission have to be addressed: the DG Development, the DG Social Affairs – responsible for EQUAL – and the DG Justice.

Making the parliament the venue and attracting as many EU-parliamentarians as co-hosts and participants as possible not only involves an increasingly important stakeholder in European politics, it also attaches the discussion on the single democratically legitimized body within the European Union and therefore closest to the interests and desires of the population they represent. Locating the conference in Brussels with easy access to the European Commission and the EU-presidency also makes mainstreaming meaningful, accessible and practical. Choosing the European Parliament as venue and basis has been a logical choice. The responses so far show that it obviously has been the right choice as well.

## WHO WILL SPEAK?

Representing the complex issues both of the current discussion in the wide area of migration as well as summarizing experiences from plentiful EQUAL-projects is not an easy task. The organizers are currently in the process of identifying possible speakers who will be able to present a summary of professional conclusions and suggestions derived from the praxis of the EQUAL projects as well as keeping the current academic and political debate in mind. Speakers might come from the area of research, the academia, universities and institutes, or from within the European Parliament, the EU-administration or from the national and regional level. In any case, responses and commentaries from the political level, especially from attending MEPs, will be expected.

## WHAT IS EQUAL?

EQUAL as a Community Initiative, financed through the European Social Fund (ESF), is part of the EU's strategy to fight discrimination and inequality on the European labour market. It sponsors development partnerships with a wide range of activities and programmes, including those specifically targeted at migrants as well as asylum-seekers. Budgets are co-financed by member-states through various means and in a range of 30 to 50 % of all costs. The EQUAL initiative started in 2001 – with some countries gearing into action a little bit later – and will last until the end of 2007, the funding is divided into two “rounds” of 3 and 2 ½ years respectively.

You will find more detailed information about EQUAL on the EU-website:  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/equal/index\\_en.cfm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equal/index_en.cfm)

## WHO IS “THE ALLIANCE”?

Within EQUAL, transnational cooperation is a MUST. Within the “Alliance”, four Development Partnerships have come together to facilitate exchange, common learning experience, the development of products and, finally, effective mainstreaming. The four DPs are SEPA from Germany, WIN and TOP of the Netherlands and WIP of the Czech Republic. These four DPs cover a wide range of issues and activities, they include many of the facets and issues mentioned above: Asylum and regular migration, integration and re-integration, all embedded in local, regional, national and last but not least European politics.

If you want to learn more about the specifics of “The Alliance”, you'll find all relevant information on our website:  
[www.equal-the-alliance.net](http://www.equal-the-alliance.net)

Some of the partners made their experiences in transnational mainstreaming already at the end of the first round of EQUAL. The result has been an international conference held in Maastricht in September 2004. The relevant results and the content are still available online:  
[www.european-conference-maastricht.net](http://www.european-conference-maastricht.net)

## WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

The next steps in organizing the conference in 2007 include content-oriented as well as organisational and financial issues.

- Finding additional funds to cover all the necessary costs of such a high-level effort, as the budgetary allocations available within the organizing development-partnerships will most probably not be sufficient (within the year 2006)
- Finding additional partners for the marketing of the conference with the aim of being able to attract a distinguished and well-informed audience which is able and willing to participate (within the year 2006 and well into 2007)
- Identifying development-partnerships within EQUAL who are willing to contribute with presentations of their own results and who would like to attend the conference (within 2006)
- Specifying the exact mission and content of the conference itself based on the reflection of the experiences within EQUAL, leading to a choice of speakers (beginning of 2007)
- Solidifying and continuation of contacts with all important stakeholders within the European Parliament (continuously)
- Attracting additional participants from relevant institutions and organisations closely connected to EU-migration-policy (continuously)

Pre-invitations should be sent out by the end of 2006, the final invitations should be delivered by May 2007, by which all organisational arrangements should be finally in place as well. The web-site for the conference is under construction:

[www.migration-conference-brussels.net](http://www.migration-conference-brussels.net)