

## Do Obligatory Civic Integration Courses for Immigrants in Western Europe further Integration?

In recent years, there has been a growing chorus of calls for more coherent and efficient immigrant integration policies. One reflection of these calls was the Council of the European Union's 2004 recommendation for "common basic principles" of immigrant integration, which emphasise enhanced labor market integration through better knowledge of the host-society language as well as respect for the "basic values of the EU", to be gained through increased knowledge of the history and institutions of the host society. Since the late 1990s, one policy in this spirit has been adopted in a variety of European states, including the Netherlands, Austria, Denmark, France, Germany and the United Kingdom: obligatory civic integration courses and tests for newcomers. These courses, which last between 12 and 24 months and target especially unskilled immigrants from developing and threshold countries, focus primarily on language acquisition, with a secondary focus on instilling knowledge of the history, institutions, culture and everyday life of the receiving society.

Formally, these policies are driven by two main concerns: economic costs and social cohesion. On the cost side, the concern is to get immigrants into the paid work force, thus lowering unemployment rates that are, at a minimum, twice as high for immigrants as for native citizens (see table), and reducing costs to the state in the form of welfare expenses.

On the cohesion side, civic integration seeks to inculcate the values and principles of liberal democracy, and to familiarise migrants with the history and culture of the receiving society. The cohesion theme, which gives "civic" integration its

name, has gained in importance amidst growing concerns in many countries that Muslim minorities are failing to integrate into their host societies or identify sufficiently with these societies' values. This became a high-priority issue with the post-2001 wave of terrorist activities and unrest associated with Muslim communities in the United Kingdom, Spain, France, Denmark and Germany.

The following brief gives an overview of the evolution of civic integration policies in the Netherlands, France and Germany, and contrasts them with similar, yet less coercive, policies recently put in place in the United Kingdom. On the European continent, the common features of the policies include: (1) a move from voluntary to mandatory courses, and toward greater penalties for non-compliance; (2) a new relationship between integration and immigration policy, in which integration policy becomes a means of restricting the entry of certain types of immigrants; and (3) a focus on immigrants from developing and threshold, as opposed to developed, countries, which is made obvious by the exemption of immigrants from places like North America, Australia, New Zealand and Japan from these policies, and which reflects the assumption that the former are less likely to integrate successfully than the latter. The brief concludes with a discussion of how effective obligatory civic integration courses are in achieving their stated goals, suggesting that their real value may lie in fulfilling another aim: placating native majority populations who are becoming increasingly wary of new immigration.

### The Netherlands

Civic integration programmes in their current form originated in the Netherlands, in response to the shortcomings of the previous multicultural "minorities policy"<sup>1</sup> in integrating immigrants into key societal sectors, most notably the labor market. Also due to a preponderance of unskilled family and asylum migration, unemployment and welfare dependency were very high among immigrants in the Netherlands in the 1990s: immigrant unemployment was four times higher than the native Dutch rate, and close to half of all recipients of public

**Table 1: Absolute and relative unemployment levels among citizens and non-EU foreigners in the Netherlands, France, Germany and the United Kingdom in 2005**

	Unemployment level of citizens	Unemployment level of non-EU foreigners	Relative unemployment level of non-EU foreigners
Netherlands	4.5%	18.7%	4.2
France	8.8%	25.1%	2.9
Germany	10.5%	23.7%	2.3
United Kingdom	4.3%	9.3%	2.2

Source: Münz (2007)

assistance were non-Western immigrants<sup>2</sup> (which makes for an overrepresentation of about 500%, considering that 10% of the total population is made up of non-Western immigrants).

This is the socio-demographic context for the move from multiculturalism to a civic integration policy in the late 1990s. But an equally important factor was political. In 1994, the Christian Democratic Party (CDA) was voted out of government, for the first time in a century. The CDA had been the traditional supporter of the “pillarization” (*verzuiling*) system of integrating societal groups. Under this system, Catholics, Calvinists, liberals, socialists and – later – immigrants had their own “pillar”, which encompassed many public structures (e.g. unions, media, and education) and which structured each group’s involvement in political decision-making processes. The new governing party, Labour, traditionally less beholden to the pillarization system, immediately pushed for the furthering of migrants’ participation in mainstream institutions (which later came to be referred to as “shared citizenship”) and “autonomy”, to be achieved through Dutch language acquisition and labor-market integration. Cornerstone of the new approach was the 1998 Newcomer Integration Law (*Wet Inburgering Nieuwkomers*, henceforth referred to as WIN). WIN obliged non-Western newcomers to participate in a twelve-month integration course, which consisted of 600 hours of Dutch language instruction, civic education, and preparation for the labor market.

When WIN was introduced in 1998 it was compulsory, but it was also heralded as an opportunity for migrants. There were financial penalties attached to non-compliance, but they were minor and hardly ever enforced by the responsible municipalities. Overall, this was a state-funded service with incontrovertibly positive intentions: to get migrants into work, to help them learn Dutch, and to make them functioning members of Dutch society.

However, the rightist turn in the political climate after the killing of populist politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002 pushed the coercive dimension of civic integration to the fore. This happened under a renewed CDA government (in office since 2002), which ended the eight-year Labour Party interregnum, and which exchanged its previous advocacy of pluralist *verzuiling* for a more nationalist stance. A May 2003 cabinet agreement promptly announced a restrictive revision of the civic integration law, one that would ensure that newcomers “be aware of Dutch values and keep to the country’s norms.”

The revised civic integration law, which came into force after much debate and conflict in 2006, has a number of restrictive features. Paradoxically, the Dutch state has simultaneously withdrawn from, and increased its presence in, the integration process. In terms of state withdrawal, the philosophy of “autonomy” and “self-sufficiency” (*zelfredzaamheid*) underlying civic integration is now extended to its actual provision, in that migrants are required to pay for the integration courses in full. In addition, the provision of integration courses has been contracted out to private organisations, and state involvement in the whole process reduced to the holding of standardised tests at the very end.

However, in a counterpoint to the privatisation of integration, state involvement has, in other respects, increased sig-

nificantly. Not just newcomers but settled immigrants (so-called *oudkomers*) are now required to pass an integration test. This amounts to an enormous logistical operation on the part of the state, in order to identify, mobilise, and police the country’s entire migrant population.

A crucial development has been the linking of the previously separate domains of migration control and immigrant integration, by tying the granting of permanent residency permits to the successful passing of an integration test. This has resulted in an entirely new view of immigrant integration. The prevailing view used to be that a secure legal status enhances integration; now a lack of integration is taken as grounds for the refusal of admission and residence. Accordingly, the entire integration domain is potentially subordinated to the exigencies of migration control.

The most powerful expression of this new linking of integration and immigration policies is the new policy of “integration from abroad.” Applicants for family reunification are now required to take an integration test at a Dutch embassy abroad, as a prerequisite for being granted a temporary residence permit. As no state-sponsored Dutch education programs exist abroad, one must surmise that integration from abroad is really a tool of preventing “unwanted” immigration, because family migrants tend to be less skilled than other migrants and thus not seen as valuable additions to the Dutch economy and society. Tellingly, the number of family migrants has declined sharply in the year after the new scheme was introduced.

The negative focus on family immigrants has to be seen against the backdrop of certain marriage practices by Muslims, who constitute the overwhelming majority of family migrants in the Netherlands and elsewhere in Western Europe. Over 50% of second-generation immigrants of Turkish and Moroccan ethnicity in the Netherlands continue to look for marriage partners in their country of origin. Marriage migration thus reinforces and perpetuates across the generations the self-segregation that characterises the Muslim community at large. The rise of civic integration, in the Netherlands and elsewhere, is intrinsically connected to this sociodemographic context.

## France

If, in the Netherlands, civic integration was a clear departure from its previous “ethnic minorities’ policy”, civic integration in France<sup>3</sup> is more of a continuation of its old assimilationist approach. The earliest incarnation of French civic integration were the “introduction platforms” (*plates-formes d'accueil*), voluntary half-day instruction to certain categories of newcomers (originally only family migrants), which were introduced by the socialist Jospin government in 1998.

In July 2003, the Gaullist Raffarin government launched a more ambitious program called “contracts for reception and integration” (*Contrats d'accueil et de l'intégration*, CAI). It consists of one day of civics instruction, followed (when deemed necessary) by a maximum of 500 hours of French language instruction. Interestingly, only about one-third of newcomers are targeted for enrollment in a French language course. This is because the majority of French newcomers are Francophone, which is an asset that distinguishes the French

from the Dutch or German civic integration challenges, where language acquisition is a much more pressing concern.

Compared to the Dutch case, the move in France from voluntary to compulsory courses and toward more punitive sanctions occurred more gradually. In the first year of CAI's existence, about 90% of eligible newcomers signed an integration contract, but only 65% of those who were prescribed a French language course followed up on this. This provided the impetus for making CAI obligatory. The first step in this direction was the Loi Sarkozy of November 2003 restricted access to legal permanent residence and made the receipt of a ten-year residence card dependent on *l'intégration républicaine*, defined in the law as "knowledge of French language and of the principles that constitute the French Republic." Most importantly, family migrants (spouses and minor children), who had previously had direct access to a ten-year residence card (or at least the same residence status as the sponsor), now received only a renewable temporary card for one year, and only after two years could they apply for the ten-year card, subject to the *intégration républicaine* proviso.

While the first Loi Sarkozy did not specify how *intégration républicaine* was to be formally determined, the next logical step was to determine such integration in terms of the integration contract (CAI), and to make CAI itself obligatory for a ten-year residence card. This promptly occurred in the second immigration law passed under Sarkozy's second term as interior minister, in spring 2006. The comprehensive "law of immigration and integration", whose stated purpose is to "fashion the face of France for the next 30 years", epitomises the general logic of Europe's current transformation of immigration and integration policy. In Sarkozy's terms, the new law is to bring about a fundamental change from "unwanted" (*subie*) to "chosen" (*choisie*) immigration. This implies an opening for highly-skilled migrants, and a parallel closing for presumably lower-skilled family and asylum migrants—the closing being a major purpose of "civic integration", not only in France.

## Germany

Germany first practiced something akin to civic integration toward its ethnic *Aussiedler*, immigrants from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, who, due to their German ancestry, are considered as "returnees" under German law. Since the 1990s, Germany has offered language courses to would-be ethnic migrants in their countries of origin, which are to prepare them for a "status test" that has to be passed before being entitled to immigrate to Germany. *Aussiedler* policy has always provided for a range of measures – including language instruction – to facilitate the integration of *Aussiedler* after their arrival, which were not open to other immigrant groups such as the guest workers.

The new *Integrationskurse*, which were introduced in the Immigration Act of 2004 (*Zuwanderungsgesetz*)<sup>4</sup> and whose focus is on language acquisition, extend to non-EU, non-ethnic migrants a program that had been in place already for ethnic Germans. The true novelty of the *Integrationskurse* is that ethnic and non-ethnic migrants are now enrolled in the same program of 600 hours of German language instruction and 30 hours of

civics instruction.

However, there is reluctance in Germany, rooted in the country's racist past, to follow the obligatory and coercive tilt of the Dutch and French models. Since the idea of *Integrationskurse* was first introduced in the so-called Süßmuth Commission of 2001 (which prepared the grounds for the 2004 Immigration Act), the "right" to participate was stressed, though it was never in doubt that attendance of an integration course was also to be obligatory. The Süßmuth Commission phrased it thus: "(T)he courses should be obligatory; however, penalties in the case of non-attendance ...cannot be implemented and are not practicable." How can there be an obligation without penalties? The same logic is visible in the few clauses of the 2004 Immigration Act that deal with the "promotion of integration" and lay out the design of the integration courses. Section 44 creates an "entitlement" to participate for non-EU newcomers. Section 44a, in turn, creates an "obligation" to participate for those who are "entitled" according to the preceding clause but who "cannot lead a simple oral conversation in the German language" (this obligation extends to settled migrants who are dependent on welfare). According to this construct, certain newcomers are "entitled" and "obliged" at the same time to enroll in an integration course.

If there was debate surrounding the new policy, it focused on the question of sanctions (positive or negative?) and who is to pay (the migrant or the state, and if the latter, the federal government, the states (*Länder*), or the municipalities?). The dividing line on both questions was the usual one, with the conservative camp (CDU/CSU) pushing for a hard line of negative sanctions (mostly the reduction of social benefits) and user fees, and the majority in the then-ruling SPD and the Greens, in line with the recommendations of the Süßmuth Commission, opting for positive incentives (such as reducing the minimum residence time for naturalisation) and wanting the federal state and the *Länder* to pay. In the end, a compromise was reached on both questions. With respect to sanctions, an element of positive sanction remains, in that, in case of successful participation in an integration course, the residence requirement for naturalisation is lowered from eight to seven years. There is a larger catalogue of negative sanctions. With respect to financial penalties, there is a modest cutting of social benefits in the case of non-attendance. With respect to the denial of residence permits, an elastic formula was inserted in the 2004 Immigration Law (Section 8.3) which states that non-compliance "can" lead to non-renewal of a temporary or denial of a permanent residence permit, provided that these permits are discretionary. This is a "can" with significant strings attached (particularly that existing family and other social ties in the Federal Republic have to be considered), so that it is not likely to have much impact.

However, the German policy is rapidly moving in a more coercive direction. In May 2006, after intense debates on so-called "honor killings" in the Turkish immigrant milieu and ethnic violence in a Berlin public school, the German federal interior minister and the interior ministers of the *Länder* agreed on making the attendance of civic integration courses and the passing of standardised language tests a prerequisite for naturalisation. It appears logical to apply to citizenship what is already required for ordinary residence, and this German inno-

vation is likely to spread to other “civic integration” countries too. However, the application of civic integration requirements to citizenship acquisition reverses a previous trend toward liberalisation across continental Europe, which was incidentally crowned by Germany’s great citizenship reform of 1999. Moreover, an “integration from abroad” clause for family migrants has recently been introduced, as part of the 2007 reform of the Immigration Act. Again, this followed developments in Ausiedler policy, which since 2005 requires that non-ethnic-German family members of ethnic German applicants acquire basic knowledge of German in order to be included in the application. With this latest reform, family migrants in general (except those from developed countries like the United States or Australia) are now required to prove basic knowledge of German language at the point of entry. This has been criticised heavily by representatives of Germany’s large (mainly Muslim) Turkish immigrant community, who feel that they are the main targets of the reform.

## The United Kingdom

The British adoption of civic integration is an interesting contrast case to the continental European pattern, in at least two respects. First, whereas the continental European integration policies outlined above emerged as a component of (increasingly restrictive) immigration policies and were only later carried over into citizenship policy, in Britain the sequence was reversed. First introduced in terms of a “citizenship test” in 2005, civic integration became a requirement for being granted

permanent residence only after that, in 2007. Second, if the continental European approach is characterised by increasing coerciveness, the British approach has remained rather gentle and service-oriented, with a marked reluctance to subordinate the integration to the immigration control agenda. The Crick Commission (2003), which prepared the new civics courses and tests in the context of a reformed citizenship policy, expressed this clearly: “(T)he object is not to diminish, and indeed cannot diminish, numbers of people already settled and employed.”

The mellower features of British-style civic integration are conditioned by two factors. First, it shows the imprint of a Labor government unhampered by the need to react to a populist fringe party or movement, like the ones backed by Pim Fortyn in the Netherlands or Jean-Marie Le Pen in France. Second, it rests on the fundament of a revamped, Canadian-style immigration policy, which operates on the basis of a points system that selects preferentially the skilled and highly-skilled. The government’s 2005 Five Year Strategy for Asylum and Immigration bluntly states that low-skilled immigration “will (be) phase(d) out over time”, particularly as ample supply in this category is now available “from the new EU countries” (and thus cannot be prevented due to free movement rights). In a nutshell, any low-skilled immigration from outside the EU that may still occur is not to be for permanent settlement, and thus it will not need to be taken into consideration in the context of integration policy or nationality law. As a result, there seems to be no impetus in the UK to use integration policy as a means of controlling the entry of low-skilled, economically “undesirable” migrants. In fact, the entire current British integration discourse does not

**Table 2: Overview of new civic integration requirements in the Netherlands, France, Germany and the United Kingdom**

Country	New civic integration requirements		
	Pre-immigration	Post-immigration	Naturalisation
Netherlands	“Integration from abroad” (test requiring rudimentary knowledge of Dutch language and society) for family migrants	No formal course requirement; civic integration test; advanced basic (A2) <sup>5</sup> level Dutch and knowledge of Dutch society required to pass	Citizenship test since 2003 (language part same level as civic integration test)
France	Currently none (“integration from abroad” in planning)	<i>Contrat d’accueil et de l’intégration</i> (200–500 hours of French plus 6 hours of civic orientation); basic French (A1 level) <sup>6</sup> required to pass	No changes
Germany	“Integration from abroad” (test requiring basic German language skills) for family migrants	600 hours of German plus 30 hours of civic orientation; intermediate German (B1) <sup>7</sup> required to pass	Same as for post-immigration (adopted in 2006)
United Kingdom	None	Same as for naturalisation (since April 2007)	“Life in the UK” citizenship test; “sufficient” knowledge of English, Scottish-Gaelic or Welsh plus civics knowledge required to pass

Source: Author’s summary

apply to low-skilled immigrants at all. And with respect to highly-skilled immigrants, who have other destination countries than Britain to choose from, a less control-minded, more “soliciting” logic applies. The voluntaristic, liberal tone in British-style civic integration cannot be detached from the more exclusive profile of the immigrants to be processed by it.

However, much as in the rest of Europe, the starting-point of new thinking in Britain was an apparent failure of immigrant integration, which became evident during the race riots in Northern England in 2001, which prominently involved Muslim youth. The Cattle Commission, which was set up by the government to investigate the causes of the riots, castigated especially local-level official multiculturalism policies and self-segregation of minorities as part of the problem, recommending instead a policy that would “reinforce feelings of citizenship and shared elements of nationhood.” Its, to date, most visible expression are more demanding and ceremonial naturalisation procedures, as laid out in the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act of 2002. The 2002 act introduced formal and standardised naturalisation tests to ensure that applicants showed “a sufficient knowledge” of one of the official languages (English, but also Welsh or Scottish Gaelic) and about “life in the United Kingdom”. In addition, living up to then Interior Minister Blunkett’s pronouncement that “(b)ecoming a British citizen is a significant life event”, the 2002 act introduced a citizenship oath and pledge to be given at American-style, public citizenship ceremonies.

The Crick Commission, which prepared the format of the naturalisation tests, stated as rationale for the new approach that “citizenship is more esteemed and valued if it is earned, not given”. However, whereas the new Dutch (and most other continental European states’) philosophy has been that citizenship should be the end-point of successful integration, the British philosophy has remained faithful to the liberal diction of the past: “(B)ecoming naturalized should not be seen as the end of a process but rather as a good beginning.” And whereas the Dutch government has embraced the nationalist phrasing that one “cannot study to be Dutch”, thus refusing to provide information and learning materials and courses to Dutch citizenship applicants, the British government is of the opposite opinion and offers preparation courses free of charge, along with a free brochure entitled “Life in the United Kingdom” to prepare applicants for the civics part of the naturalisation test. Moreover, while applicants for citizenship in the Netherlands can try only three times, there is no such limit for citizenship applicants in the United Kingdom.

With respect to the contents of the civics requirement, the Crick Commission established six broad categories in “descending order of difficulty and relevance”, with “British national institutions” and “Britain as a multicultural society” being the two most important categories. While in terms of content this is not so different from continental European civic integration, the difference between both approaches becomes apparent when considering the language components. Whereas the continental European approach was to make the language tests ever more demanding for applicants, in the opposite British approach, “the test is not to be unduly onerous”, as a member of the House of Lords put it. Concretely, this meant not imposing one (impossibly high) language standard on all appli-

cants, but devising a flexible system that respected the individual learning trajectory of each applicant. Accordingly, fulfilling the language requirement for naturalisation does not mean to reach an objective minimum standard that is the same for all, but to have improved one’s English skills by one step on an official “English as Second Language” (ESOL) scale after having taken an ESOL course. This takes “future citizens” as “life-long learners”, who “will be likely to continue to develop their language skills, and a whole range of other employment, recreational, educational and social skills, long after they have gained citizenship.”<sup>8</sup>

## Conclusions

How successful are the new civic integration policies in achieving their goals? The answer is: no one really knows. A first, and most obvious, reason for this is the newness of the programmes. In addition, however, it is not so clear what the “goals” of the policy really are.

Of course, the stated goal is to further immigrant integration. Here one may question whether it is sufficient to look at measures of successful course completion, which are central in the various evaluation studies that already exist (particularly in the Netherlands and Germany). This is a questionable way of measuring success, because the ultimate declared purpose of the courses is the reduction of immigrant unemployment and welfare dependency, and this hinges on a multitude of other factors, apart from state policy. Note that in Germany (together with Britain) immigrant unemployment has for years been among the lowest in Western Europe, despite the absence of any integration policy before 2004. This suggests that structural factors unrelated to integration policy are ultimately more relevant for socio-economic integration—such as the German system of “dual education” (vocational training in private firms combined with formal education in state-run vocational schools), or the famously flexible labour markets in Britain. In general, it is misleading to assume that something as multi-dimensional and complex as immigrant integration could ever be the result of a single “policy”, and one as small-budget and paltry as “civic integration” at that.

But perhaps immigrant integration is not the thrust of the new policy. There are other, more implicit goals as well, which one can read from the larger debates surrounding the policies. One such goal is to reduce “undesirable” family migration, which is clear from the Dutch, French and German cases, and which has more to do with migration control than with immigrant integration. In this respect, one can say with certainty that the Dutch policy of “integration from abroad” has been very successful, as it led immediately to a sharp reduction in applicants for family unification.

A second implicit goal of the new policy is to appease the native populations of the destination countries, who may feel ill at ease with increased legal immigration. It is conspicuous that the new policies were introduced just as the economic and demographic case for new legal immigration had become overwhelming and calls for increased legal immigration more frequent. From this angle, the true addressees of civic integration may not be the immigrants but the natives, who are to be assured that the state

is sternly requiring newcomers to adjust and thus protecting the status quo. In this sense, obligatory civic integration courses are a prime example of “symbolic politics”, whose mere existence matters more than the declared goals pursued by it.

Finally, what does civic integration augur for the pending Europeanisation of immigrant integration policy? As one would expect, its main impact so far has been restrictive. Article 15.3 of the EU Long-Term Residents Directive,<sup>9</sup> passed in November 2003, allows member states to apply their “integration measures” to non-EU citizens who have already gone through the process of obtaining a long-term residence permit in another EU state, yet only with respect to “attend(ing) language courses.” This means that long-term residents who are non-EU citizens can be subjected to cumulative integration requirements which do not apply to EU citizens. This constitutes a significant barrier to free movement for Europe’s non-EU-immigrant populations, even though the declared purpose of the Directive had been to remove such barriers. If anything, European immigrant integration will continue to be driven by member state interests, and any further harmonisation in this domain will first have to pass this critical test.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> For further discussion of Dutch multiculturalism, see Michalowski, I. (2005): “What is the Dutch Integration Model, and Has it Failed?” focus Migration Policy Brief No. 1. [http://www.focus-migration.de/What\\_Is\\_The\\_Dutch\\_In.1196.0.html?&L=1](http://www.focus-migration.de/What_Is_The_Dutch_In.1196.0.html?&L=1)
- <sup>2</sup> Dutch statistics differentiate between Western and non-Western immigrants. Western immigrants come from Europe (excluding Turkey), North America, Oceania, Indonesia and Japan. Non-Western immigrants come from Turkey, Africa, Latin American and the rest of Asia. A further distinction is made between first and second-generation immigrants. First-generation immigrants are persons who were born outside the Netherlands and who have at least one parent who was also born outside the Netherlands. Second-generation immigrants are persons who were born in the Netherlands and who have at least one parent who was born abroad.
- <sup>3</sup> For further information on immigration and integration issues in France, see Engler, M. (2007): “France” focus Migration Country Profile No. 2. <http://www.focus-migration.de/France.1231.0.html?&L=1>
- <sup>4</sup> For further information on immigration and integration issues in Germany, see Özcan, V. and Grimbacher, S. (2007): “Germany” focus Migration Country Profile No. 1. <http://www.focus-migration.de/Germany.1509.0.html?&L=1>
- <sup>5</sup> The language proficiency levels referred to are those set out in the Council of Europe’s document “Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching, Assessment.” The system was designed to facilitate comparisons between different systems of qualifications. There are three broad levels (A, B and C), each of which is subdivided into sublevels one and two. Persons at level A are considered “Basic Users”, level B “Independent Users” and level C “Proficient Users.” Someone who has demonstrated proficiency at the A2 level is described thus: “Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.” See the Council of Europe’s website: [http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/main\\_pages/levels.html](http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/main_pages/levels.html)
- <sup>6</sup> A person with Level A1 proficiency is defined in the Council of Europe’s European Framework thus: “Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.”
- <sup>7</sup> A person with Level B1 proficiency is defined in the Council of Europe’s European Framework thus: “Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in word, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.”
- <sup>8</sup> See Crick Commission (2003).
- <sup>9</sup> For more information on this document, see the website of the European Commission, Justice and Home Affairs: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/fsj/immigration/residents/fsj\\_immigration\\_residents\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/fsj/immigration/residents/fsj_immigration_residents_en.htm)

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## Internet sources

- Civic Integration in the Netherlands: [www.netherlandsembassydhaka.org/civic\\_integration.html](http://www.netherlandsembassydhaka.org/civic_integration.html)
- Civic Integration in France (in French only): [www.social.gouv.fr](http://www.social.gouv.fr)
- Civic Integration in Germany: [www.integration-in-deutschland.de](http://www.integration-in-deutschland.de)
- Civic Integration in the United Kingdom: [www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk](http://www.lifeintheuktest.gov.uk)
- The EU's Common Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/fsj/immigration/integration/fsj\\_immigration\\_integration\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/fsj/immigration/integration/fsj_immigration_integration_en.htm)

### ABOUT FOCUS MIGRATION

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