



Wednesday 18 June 2008 Opening Conference

How do new migration and reception policies interact ? What role does communication play ?

5pm/6.30pm : Migration and reception policies

Expert Speaker :

Catherine de WENDEN, Population scientist, Head of Research at the CNRS, lecturer at CNAM, Doctor of Political Sciences, Consultant for OCDE, the European Council and the European Commission. Specialist in international migrations.

Participating Expert :

Lisbeth LENNARTSSON, Mayor of Borgholm, Sweden.

Michel ETIEN, Mayor of Châtel-Montagne.

Frédérique HEURGUIER, Vice President of the Basse Normandie Regional Council

Jacques BOURDREUX, Commissioner for the development and protection of the Massif Central.

Chairman :

Thomas HERVE, Chronicler on France 2 on the programmes "Scienceon tourne" and "Télé Matin".

According to **Catherine de Wendon**, immigration is a question that evolves with the socio cultural and historical context. Since 1990 the fear of violence has escalated because of the rise in Islam and terrorism. Increased amalgamations have caused a rift between the West and the Orient, thus jeopardising migration movements. The policy of closing frontiers has proved to be an expensive and inefficient operation because immigrants continue to filter through.

In 2000, the United Nations issued a report about migration. It stated the need to recognise the contradiction between the closure of frontiers and the economic difficulties linked to the lack of workers, in particular highly qualified workers. The European green book was issued in 2005 ; it denounced the state of urgency and the need to attract young and dynamic people in order to compensate for the ageing European population and the consequential effects on the economy. The European Commission estimates at 20 million the number of immigrants needed in Europe over the next twenty years in order to make up for the demographic crisis.

However if a half open policy is envisaged the result remains unsatisfactory, as the following proposed measures show :

■ The policy of quotas means that potential new arrivals must satisfy certain conditions, depending on the needs of the country's workforce. This "selective" immigration revolves around the possession of a "point licence" (qualifications, diplomas, language proficiency, integration potential).



■ To respond to economic demands, to improve reception conditions for the highly qualified and to entice them to come and work in the European Union, there exists the alternative of the European Blue Card ; equivalent to the American Green card. This card would only be available to a certain few. It would not be available for "3D" workers, meaning those with difficult, dirty and dangerous jobs as is the case for the majority of immigrants.

■ The job market in Europe is open to a limited number, 1.5 million out of 5 million foreigners have work. The creation of bilateral agreements with neighbouring countries would help to respond to the decreasing population in rural areas by attracting workers to sectors that have been neglected (building, tourism...) however these measures can also help to maintain the precarious situation for illegal immigrants and encourage the appearance of a No man's land spread along the frontiers.

■ The open border policy is incomplete : it does not give access to those wishing to join their families, thus reinforcing the isolation of immigrants. It is also geographically limited as it does not encourage immigrants from east Europe.

To conclude Catherine de Wendon detailed the conditions necessary for a successful integration policy : "Access to nationality, democracy, and the harmonisation of rights between residents and non residents must be improved. The motor behind integration is the universal adoption of the notion of coexistence".

In the face of such realities, how to go about creating an appealing communication strategy that will attract foreign inhabitants ? From Sweden to France, four representatives from local authorities in France and abroad discussed the methods they used to attract newcomers.

Sweden can be a source of inspiration for other European countries because of its reception policies for foreign inhabitants. In Sweden nearly one person out of four is of foreign origin, covering a vast range of nationalities. For example 1 foreigner out of 10 comes from Iraq. Lisbeth Lennartsson, Mayor of Borgholm puts this success down to the general mobilisation of the inhabitants : "residents and non residents share the same desire to live peacefully together". The migration policies have also contributed to the success as they respect the immigrant's culture which they can maintain, thus favouring a progressive integration.

Jacques Bourdeux believes that the promotion of the regions strong points is the key to an effective welcome. Inhabitants want full infrastructures : jobs, services and transport but also access to new technologies (broadband, telephone) which have become a priority. Communication strategies cover three elements : an internal revaluation of the Massif Central's image, signing up new businesses as well as a specific communication strategy aimed at foreign tourists.

According to Frédérique Heugier the launch of the programme Re-invent the countryside meant that the region Basse Normandie could counter its negative migration statistics. The programme began in 2004 and it proposed ways to develop the territory, the promotion of the surrounding environment as natural heritage, and supporting territories in the aim of grading them as "terres d'accueil". These challenging measures helped to deploy the project : the follow up and support for project leaders led to an improved image of the countryside and the reinforcement of social links.

Lastly, Michel Etien, Mayor of Châtel-Montagne opted for a communication strategy on national level, the results are beyond his expectations. To attract foreigners, the township decided to create a village dedicated to art. Thanks to the support of Martine Moléon, who originally created the cable Chanel "Demain !", the project obtained much media attention. The difficult part for Michel Etien was to maintain this success : "At that time there were only six children enrolled at the village school, it was on the point of closing. Today there is a class of 30 children".