

## CASE STUDY SWITZERLAND

Denis KNOBEL,

Ambassador of Switzerland to the Republic of Croatia

If we are looking at the overall picture, we can realize that Switzerland seems to have a problem of perceptions. Switzerland is widely seen as a closed country behind the Alps. It has the last frontier in Europe (customs controls at arrival at Swiss borders). Switzerland is not in the EU. It is often perceived as rich, egoistic and with xenophobic feelings against foreigners / immigration. The facts however show a totally different picture. It is difficult to find another country in the world which is more open towards its neighbors than Switzerland. It is also difficult to find a country which is more tolerant towards its minorities inside the country (the famous “Swiss model of cohabitation” of multiple languages and cultures). The same is true concerning foreigners, and it shows in immigration figures.

- 1,7 million foreigners are residing legally in Switzerland; foreigners make more than 22% of the population Switzerland is host to millions of tourists every year.

There are thousands of scientists / students (probably also from the Pilar Institute?).

- CH is a host country of international organizations and has a long tradition of receiving refugees (from D in 1848/1914; from Hungary in 1956; from CZ in 1968 ... and from HR in 1991).

- Our economy is totally internationalized and extremely interconnected; our companies need foreign labors.

- Also geographically: CH in the heart of Europe and has adopted the EU-regime of free movement of people as well as the Schengen regime.

So the question is: Why these wrong perceptions? It is mostly our own fault!

- In November 2009 Switzerland adopted a referendum banning minarets (and joined the club of anti-Islamic countries).

- November 28<sup>th</sup> 2010: Another embarrassing initiative was accepted by the Swiss population on the automatic expulsion of criminal foreigners.

- Other examples: Last Monday SVP launched a new popular initiative asking for the quantitative limitation of emigration in CH. The same party wants to revoke our participation to EU-Schengen-agreement.

On that same day, the National Commission on Migration published new statistics and asked for a political debate based on facts... (eine "sachliche Ausländerdebatte").

We find the same dichotomy in the actual political discussions on migration issues in Switzerland: A huge difference between reality and perception. Migration has now become the top political issue in CH. It leads to more heated debates than jobs, nuclear energy or environment.

As this is an electoral year in CH, the discussions are more and more emotional. The issues of migration/foreigners are politically instrumentalised by populist parties which are playing with the fears of the population. It is easy to take profit out of these wrong perceptions.

But what is also sure that these fears are legitimate and an important part of the population feels insecure. We have to admit that the emigration is growing rapidly (today 1.7 million foreigners of 7.4 million population!) and that it has a dramatic impact on several levels in CH. On the social welfare system; on schools where there are classes with 80-90% foreigners kids not speaking well German... and it has also an impact on criminality, on drugs and human trafficking, on prisons etc.

### Some trends...

Historically CH is not only an immigration but also emigration country. At the beginning of 20th century, huge waves of Swiss went abroad mostly to the US and South America. The population inflows started to rise especially during the booming economic years of 60ies. Until the 70ies there were years when the emigration from CH was higher than immigration towards CH. The figures changed later with a huge rise of immigrants; while the emigration remains constant.

The statistics are specially impressive starting from 1990ies with nearly exponential growth rates in some years. But mostly the immigrants are not coming from Africa or Asia but the vast majority is coming from old EU-members and our neighboring countries (D / F).

Today Switzerland has nearly 100 000 new arrivals per year.

These population inflows are helping to curb the demographic movements in CH: thanks to the foreigners the demographic growth became positive again.

CH population growth rates: in 1900 + 9.3; in 2003 only 1.1% and today it is 1.9% again.

... and some policies

Fact is that most of 1,7 million foreigners in CH don't need any measures or assistance. They are just legally coming to CH, settling down, studying or working.

Others need specific integration measures for foreigners inside CH. The Swiss Confederation spends 50 million CHF per year on national level, mostly for language courses, assistance, consulting, information etc... and as always in CH. The system is very complicated following federalistic structures and involving our cantons and communes.

The dominating policy issue today is how to deal with the increasing external migration flows. CH has chosen a differentiated approach.

On the one hand, with the steadily opening of our frontiers for neighbors and well educated Europeans. Thanks to Schengen and EU-integration it has become much easier for Germans or Italians to come to CH. Of course, also because our economy needs qualified workers and cheap labor.

On the other hand, the visa-policy is becoming more and more restrictive in order to avoid illegal immigration. While Croats don't need a visa anymore for travelling to Switzerland, for non-Europeans it is becoming more and more difficult to get visa.

There are also clear trends for more severe policies towards refugees and working migrants. Here we apply the EU Dublin rules. But the overall trend is to close borders for illegal migrants (see the pictures of Lampedusa island which are causing a heated debates in whole Europe). One measure discussed in CH is to get faster procedures for dealing with asylum requests.

The whole public and political attention is directed towards these illegal migrants. But in fact lots of immigrants are actually family members joining their parents who already live in CH (32% of all immigrants); around 50% of new immigrants are workers; in the latest statistics recognized refugees make up only 0.8% — so here again we see the problem of perception!

Shaping the future migration policies is a difficult task. One discussed question is: What would be a good emigrant? Personally, I don't know what to think about such concepts — but it could be an input for your further discussions.

The actual policies go towards a greater control in order to avoid abuses... and also in order to maintain our absorption capacity for real refugees who are

in need. As the situation in Libya is showing, it's not always easy to live up with our Swiss tradition of solidarity.

## Croatian emigration in Switzerland

Some figures:

2010 — 33 772 Croats living in CH (-1170);

2008 — 36 000.

But during the war 1991—1995 we had around 80 000 or even more. These statistics are counting only “real” Croats: the 2nd or 3rd generations are not in the figures.

Still today we have a huge Croatian diaspora in CH (but it is nothing compared to Albanians/Kosovars living in CH). The causes of this important presence are historical. During Yugoslav times lots of workers used to come to CH, often as temporary “Saisonniers” staying some months and then turning back to Yugoslavia.

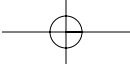
In recent times the trends are going down slowly and steadily. This is a positive sign for the integration of the Croat population in CH — but it is also a good sign for the Croatian economy: people seem to find their way home and what they need in Croatia. And these returnees are extremely positive for Croatia, as they bring back not only know-how and money (investments) but also certain habits — a certain way of life (law & order).

Last but not least it is also positive for our Embassy in Zagreb. Lots of the turning back Croats have also the Swiss nationality. Our Swiss community here is significantly rising thanks to these Croats coming home...

Generally speaking, Croats have a good reputation in Switzerland. The times of the so-called “Yugos” are over. The Croatian diaspora is mostly well integrated. For this, we have a simple criteria: who speaks fluently our dialects of Swiss German, is fully integrated. Croats are very appreciated as good workers as well as peaceful and well educated people in Switzerland. After 2nd generation — once they speak Swiss German — it is nearly impossible to find out if they are Croats or Swiss.

If you want to know more about it, I can recommend a book *Kroaten in der Schweiz* (it's dated in 1982!) The author, Zvonimir Cicic, was writing of ethnic “Croats” during Yugoslav times). The book is full of interesting and amusing anecdotes.

Cardinal Ivan Stojkovic (Ragusa 1442) was a mediator between churches of East and West; he came to Basel as a humanist; BS became a centre of European humanism thanks to migration (Erasmus von Rotterdam) Card. Stojkovic



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granted his books collection to the library of BS. There were also Protestant reformators like Matija Vlačić Ilirik (1520—1575). Count Draskovic in the 1800ies wrote a book *Freimütige Gedanken aus der Schweiz*. In more recent times, famous artist Ivan Meštrović was a refugee in CH.

## Conclusions

Because of these dichotomies between reality and perceptions, it is important that also researchers discuss the emigration issues. This conference is a concrete contribution to get a better and scientific ground for further debates. I would like to thank the Pilar Institute for having organized this important conference and for contributing to a more factual and scientific discussion and allowing a less emotional and politicized debate on emigration in Europe.

