

TEIN4citizens – Engaging civil society in cross-border regions for the future of Europe

Old and New Minorities – The Relevance of Identities for Border Regions in Today’s European Union

1. Who are our Old & New Minorities?

The cross-border forum held in both Klagenfurt (AT) and Ljubljana (SL) on the topic of *Old and New Minorities – The Relevance of Identities for Border Regions in today’s Europe* identified that the experiences and issues facing both traditional minority groups and new minorities originating from recent migration waves have certain parallels. While the definition of ‘minority’ is itself, at least from a legal perspective, complex and not unproblematic, agreement as to an understanding of the concepts of old and new minorities was reached for the purposes of the forum. ‘Old minorities’ were recognized as those historical, traditional or autochthonous ethnic communities who have become minorities through a redrawing of territorial borders or a shift of their territories from one state to another. ‘New minorities’ were regarded as those communities of individuals or families who have left their original home countries to migrate to other countries, often for political, humanitarian or economic reasons.

The majority of countries in the EU have experienced or are experiencing a significant increase in the number of migrants residing on their territories. As such, there are increasing numbers of people with distinct cultures, languages or religions taking up residence in different countries: for different reasons and with different levels of permanence. Some decision-makers recognize the meaningful contribution that these communities make to society, to the labor force and value their positive impact on the demographic structure of certain regions, but others do not. In many cases, the existence of large immigrant and refugee communities is seen to bring with it a number of challenges.

One of the first questions posed for discussion, was whether it is meaningful and useful to talk about the integration of both old and new minorities in the same context. However, irrespective of their belonging to old or new minorities, there was a general sense of agreement that despite clear differences, both minorities do share some basic commonalities around needs for preservation and development of their identities, languages and cultures; integration into majority societies; and effective participation in public life. There was significant discussion of the fact despite being part of the European Union, the positions of states vis à vis old and new minority groups are extremely diversified

2. What is the relevance of Old & New Minorities at Europe’s borders?

Issues deliberated in relation to old minority groups, such as the Slovene-speaking minority in Carinthia, or the Italian speaking minorities in Slovenia have traditionally been linked to minority rights issues (around language, schooling, etc.). Irrespective of the classification as old or new, there are some basic claims that relate to both groups, but this does not automatically insinuate that all minority groups have the same rights or legitimacy in relation to claims. The question of which legal instruments traditionally applied to old minorities and which could today also be meaningful in relation to the integration of new minorities, is one which remains relatively untouched. Discussions around

such instruments clearly necessitate analysis of what both the differences and similarities are in terms of the specific needs and claims of old and new minorities. This also involves looking at which rights need to be guaranteed for both groups. This task is one that may prove significant in future research in Europe, as the systems currently in place to protect minorities were never intended to incorporate the specificities of recent migrants, who now form new 'minority' groups.

The presence of large immigrant and refugee communities poses a number of issues and challenges in relation to integration, cultural differences, the protection of both individual and group rights and the overall pursuit of social cohesion and unity across the EU, but especially in the border regions between different territories. At the same time, there is general recognition that new migrants can make a valuable contribution to the labour market and can go some way towards counteracting the effects of an ageing population; positively influencing demographic developments. Both aspects were discussed at some length throughout the forum. There was a sense of agreement that looking carefully at the complementarities between 'old' and 'new' minorities might well be an important new task for the European Union. It is also necessary, as it provides a useful mechanism whereby different representations of diversity can be effectively managed. Sound policies and new models that incorporate new migrants and contribute towards their effective integration are necessary in order to manage this increased diversity of peoples and their identities.

Over the course of discussions within this forum, it became clear that trying to reconcile the claims and needs of 'old' minorities and 'new' minority groupings stemming from migration is of utmost importance in the context of reconciling and maintaining European unity in diversity, and in the pursuit of a tolerant and diverse Europe, one valuing the integration of both citizens and non-citizens.

3. Voices from the Forum

Mag. Marika Grüber, senior researcher at Carinthia University of Applied Sciences and Mag. Nadine Hell from Carinthian Government Office of the National Office for Refugees and Integration discussed the challenges, opportunities and limits of current integration policies in Carinthia. In 2014 and 2015, Carinthia developed an integration plan for minorities, including a public and participative process with civil society. Carinthia University of Applied Sciences was the scientific research partner supporting this process. The project focussed on the development of an action plan, and setting-up of eight working groups dealing mostly with health systems issues and labour market issues. Altogether, there were more than 2000 persons involved in the entire process.

The main results of the Carinthian Integration Plan are the following: an online platform that allows local integration activities (i.e. integration on tour), providing German integration classes, psychological supervision for asylum seekers, dental health workshop, an integration award and project funding for refugees. Currently, the Carinthian Government Office of the National Office Refugee and Integration is dealing with challenges like changing immigration law, not enough budget

form the Carinthia government, increasing far-right policies, the issue of the women and labour market, religious dogmas and gender equality issues.

The Minister for Education, Science, and Sports of the Republic of Slovenia, Jernej Pikalo, PhD gave a thoughtful presentation as part of the forum on how Slovenia is dealing with integration policies, what key challenges and opportunities are faced by integration policies in Slovenia. The minister stressed the important role of human rights in connection also with EU membership and Slovenian law, identifying these as playing a crucial role in how integration policies are integrated in Slovenia. The minister explained that in the past Slovenia mostly dealt with the Italian, Roma, and Hungarian ethnic minorities, however, the environment has changed in the past two decades. It is now crucial for Slovenia and the European Union to identify new minorities such as refugee minorities, minorities based on age groups, and minorities identified in terms of technology and digitalization. Again, here a more holistic view of diversity of individuals was considered.

In this context 'new' minorities were clearly defined as going beyond territorial, national and ethnic

“Who are we talking about when we speak of ‘new’ minorities in our globalized world?”

borders and are described in terms more closely related to global civil society. Thus, the main question for local representatives of civil society organizations, academics, citizens and representatives from government, public bodies and also for the EU law and European institutions is: Who are

the minorities in this new globalized society? Minister Pikalo suggested that Slovenia, similar to many other EU countries, is still learning how to deal with these new minorities and at the same time tackle the question of 'old' minorities

Over the past decade, the European Union has experienced one of the biggest migration crises since World War II and thus it was crucial that the forum on new minorities also address the migration crisis. Primož Pevcin, PhD from the Faculty of Public Administration, University of Ljubljana presented the issue of governance in the context of the EU, discussing the migration crisis, the Western Balkan migration route and Slovenia, as a small state on the outer Schengen zone border. The aim of this presentation was to show how multi-level governance in the context of the Western Balkans migration route, which was particularly highly frequented for one year in the period from 2015 to 2016, was unsuccessful during the crisis, with the mostly top-down direction of decision-making, and particularly the subnational level being poorly involved into the process. More specifically, on the national level, there was an extreme burden to human and other resources of governmental apparatus, extending border controls, introducing technical barriers to direct influx and layering and decoupling new legislation with a purpose to prevent national security. The subnational level was excluded from policymaking and there was a lack of dialogue and confrontation with the national level. This left a limited possibility for the involvement of the national and subnational levels in decision-making processes in strategical issues. Evaluating multi-level governance during the migration crisis indicated that unsuccessful multi-level governance opened new dilemmas for EU members: the first is the role

of state size and institutional capacities, the second is related to national interest versus EU rules and the third to passive EU institutions during the crisis.

4. Is there such a thing as an EU identity? What does being a citizen of the EU mean?

It was discussed that the EU symbolizes: peace project, cultural diversity, open borders, equal opportunities, travel in EU, work opportunities, study abroad opportunities, good healthcare system, guarantee of the same rights, Schengen and certain policies unified (to a certain degree). It was also emphasized that the EU represents values like cooperation, peace, unity and security. Participants of the forum noted that they feel as if they are part of the EU and that they see that certain institutions try to promote the idea of an EU identity. However, it became clear that first and foremost national identity is of important, mainly because of a rich history among countries and their strong national legacies. A discussion took place over whether or not EU identity depends on who they are interacting e.g. with friends, peers or foreigners and it was agreed that usually EU identity becomes more prominent when individuals travel abroad to the USA, Asia or Australia.

5. What are the associations with EU borders?

“We are privileged living within the EU, we have easy access to many countries.”

Participants explained that they associate EU borders with easy access to EU countries and travel opportunities in the EU. Participants in the forum stated that they feel of sense of privilege because they live within Schengen borders. It is interesting, that while being asked to discuss EU borders, participants also raised the question of the defence of borders as something that is a national responsibility, this question was discussed within the context of borders and refugee movements.

6. Ideas and propositions for a future Europe

A discussion was held on visions for the future of Europe regarding the questions of old or new minorities and the specific relevance of identities at border regions of the EU. Participants explained that at the local levels they would wish more flexibility in general, especially more administrative flexibility and stressed the need for cross-border education. At the European level, they wish faster decision-making on bigger problems like the migration crisis in EU and unity of laws and standards. Participants felt that the future EU needs a common language and they all agreed that English could be the EU common language. Thus, EU representatives need to provide opportunities for all EU citizens to learn English. A further recommendation was that at the local level local representatives should promote an EU identity more strongly and clearly outline the value of international experiences. Local representatives should: provide systematic learning opportunities for students in relation to the EU and its workings; work towards a more effective integration of all European countries; consider the centralization of decision-making in cross-national crises; make better use of resources; and promote a common EU language.

“A future EU needs a common language, which should be English”.

Appendix: Forum Program – Klagenfurt-Ljubljana; October 3 and 4, 2019

PROGRAM

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3RD

08:30–09:00	Forum Opening Welcome words from FH-Prof. ⁱⁿ MMag. ^a Dr. ⁱⁿ Kathrin Stainer-Hämmerle and FH-Prof. ⁱⁿ Dr. ⁱⁿ Eithne Knappitsch		
09:00–12:30	PART I: OLD MINORITIES From Past to Present: A historic and legal overview of the 1919 State Treaty of Saint Germain and its Implications today Speakers: Helmut Konrad and Martha Stocker Panel Discussion: STATE TREATY OF ST. GERMAIN South Tirol – Carinthia – Role of the Treaty in the Past and Relevance Today Presenter: Jürgen Pirker (Ass. Professor at the Institute for Public Law and Politics, Uni Graz) and Günter Rautz (Head of the Institute for Minority) Panel Members: Dr. Arno Kompatscher (Governor of South Tirol) and Dr. Peter Kaiser (Governor of Carinthia)	Hermagoras 10. Oktoberstraße 27, 9020 Klagenfurt	 with Eng/Slo Translation if needed
13:00–14:00	Connecting Old and New Minorities in Carinthia: A Personal Journey Talk by Direktor Msgr. Dr. Josef Marketz, Director of the Caritas Carinthia	Sandwirtgasse 2, 9020 Klagenfurt	
14:15	Bus transfer to Ljubljana, Slovenia		
16:00–17:30	PART II: NEW MINORITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome words: Prof. Dr. Janez Stare (Dean of the Faculty of Public Administration) and Assist. Prof. Dr. Iztok Rakar (researcher at the Faculty of Public Administration) Keynote I: Integration Policies in Slovenia: Challenges, Opportunities and Limits Dr. Jernej Pikalo (Professor of Political Science. Minister for Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Slovenia.) Keynote II: Governing of Migrations (the case of Slovenia 2015) Primož Pevcin, Ph.D. (University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Public Administration) Keynote III: Integration Policies in Carinthia: Challenges, Opportunities and Limits Mag.^a (FH) Marika Gruber (Carinthia University of Applied Sciences, School of Management) / Mag.^a Nadine Hell (Carinthian Government - Office of the National Office Refugee and Integration) 	University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Public Administration, Gosarjeva ul. 5, Ljubljana	

PROGRAM

17:30	Coffee/Tea Break & Snacks	University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Public Administration, Gosarjeva ul. 5, Ljubljana	
17:45–18:30	Small Mixed-Group Discussion: Policies, Borders and Minority Identities		
18:30–19:15	Presentation of Key Points and Round-up		
19:30	Dinner		
21:00–22:00	Return Buses to Klagenfurt		

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4TH (OPTIONAL PROGRAM)

09:30–11:00	TEIN Group Discussion: - Reports from the previous day (School groups' discussion) - Group reflection of the previous day's input - TEIN Project reflection and forecast	Hermagoras 10. Oktoberstraße 27, 9020 Klagenfurt	
14:00–19:00	Academic Conference 1919 – Staatsvertrag von St. Germain ... 2019 Wie kann das Recht die soziale Situation der Minderheit beeinflussen? (Opening Dr. Karl HREN; Presenter: Dr. Heinrich Neisser and Dr. Günther Rautz)		
19:00–21:00	Panel Discussion: 1919 – 2019: 100 Jahre Volksgruppenschutz: Vom Papier zur Umsetzung Presenter: FH-Prof. ⁱⁿ MMag. ^a Dr. ⁱⁿ Kathrin Stainer-Hämmerle		

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5TH (OPTIONAL PROGRAM)

09:00–13:00	Cross-border Walk Carinthia - Slovenia From the Luschaalm to Sv. Ana Ending at the traditional Restaurant „Riepl“ Meeting Point: Restaurant Riepl Lead: Dr. Karl HREN und Dr. Günther Rautz Accompanied by Franc-Jozef Smrtnik, Major from Bad Eisenkappel/Železna Kapla; Fr. Lesjak, županja v Črni na Koroškem	Restaurant Riepl	
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For more information:

<http://www.transfrontier.eu/tein4citizens/>

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