



THEME 2: Intercultural Dialogue

Collection of materials

Fact based approach

Immigration

by: *Ute Ackermann Boeros*

Tf 250/1 Tasks / Questions

- 1.1 What are the differences between:
 - a. Legal immigrants
 - b. Illegal immigrants
 - c. Asylum seekers and
 - d. Foreign worker from EU or Non EU countries?
- 1.2 Study the sources.
 - a. What are the motives for people to move to other countries?
 - b. Can you make a general observation regarding the motives? Are there common tendencies?
 - c. Which motives are acceptable to you? Which are not?
- 1.3 Study the response of the Spanish, Italian and Cypriot authorities towards illegal immigrants.
 - a. How does this comply with Articles 1 and 4 of the European Human Rights Charter?
 - b. Can you explain the authorities' reactions?
- 1.4 Kofi Annan makes the point that Europe needs immigrants.
 - a. Would you agree that the point of Europe needing immigrants is a very utilitarian argument?
 - b. In which way do countries also profit by emigrants?
 - c. Some European countries want to accept only highly qualified immigrants (e.g. doctors) from developing countries. What consequences could this have for these countries?
- 1.5 Why should immigrants be integrated in their host countries?
 - a. What can be done to integrate immigrants
 - On the side of the immigrants
 - On the side of the receiving countries?
 - b. Which reasons can you find for the failure of integration?
 - c. What are possible consequences of an integration which came to nothing?
- 1.6 "European countries have historical responsibilities for immigrants coming from former colonies."
Do you agree with this statement?
- 1.7 Use the internet to evaluate the role the media play in the issue of immigration.

Tf 250/2 Sources

Source 2.1

Cypriot emigration

<http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-3490.html>

Emigration of Cypriots abroad has often been on a large enough scale to affect population growth. As a demographic phenomenon, it has been viewed as an extension of rural to urban movement. At times when a future in the towns was unpromising for those intent on escaping rural poverty, there was the additional safety value of emigration. Cypriots frequently availed themselves of this opportunity instead of living in crowded slums in their country's towns, and their relatively small numbers meant that recipient countries could easily absorb them. Although there was emigration as early as the 1930s, there is no available data before 1955.

The periods of greatest emigration were 1955-59, the 1960s, and 1974-79, times of political instability and socioeconomic insecurity when future prospects appeared bleak and unpromising. Between 1955 and 1959, the period of anticolonial struggle, 29,000 Cypriots, 5 percent of the population, left the island. In the 1960s, there were periods of economic recession and intercommunal strife, and net emigration has been estimated at about 50,000, or 8.5 percent of the island's 1970 population. Most of these emigrants were young males from rural areas and usually unemployed. Some five percent were factory workers and only 5 percent were university graduates. Britain headed the list of destinations, taking more than 75 percent of the emigrants in 1953-73; another 8 to 10 percent went to Australia, and about 5 percent to North America.

During the early 1970s, economic development, social progress, and relative political stability contributed to a slackening of emigration. At the same time, there was immigration, so that the net immigration was 3,200 in 1970-73. This trend ended with the 1974 invasion. During the 1974-79 periods, 51,500 persons left as emigrants, and another 15,000 became temporary workers abroad. The new wave of emigrants had Australia as the most common destination (35 percent), followed by North America, Greece, and Britain. Many professionals and technical workers emigrated, and for the first time more women than men left. By the early 1980s, the government had rebuilt the economy, and the 30 percent unemployment rate of 1974 was replaced by a labour shortage. As a result, only about 2,000 Cypriots emigrated during the years 1980-86, while 2,850 returned to the island.

Although emigration slowed to a trickle during the 1980s, so many Cypriots had left the island in preceding decades that in the late 1980s an estimated 300,000 Cypriots (a number equivalent to 60 percent of the population of the Republic of Cyprus) resided in seven foreign countries.

Data as of January 1991

Source 2.2

Deutsche Presse-Agentur, July 16, 2001

Foreigners account for 30 per cent of Cyprus prison population

Foreigners account for nearly 30 per cent of Cyprus' prison population, a report published in the Weekly Review newspaper said.

The report, published by the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance, "lambasted Cyprus for failing to check institutional racism and for a growing tendency towards xenophobia on the island," said the English-language weekly in its weekend edition. "The report also criticises excessive police brutality against

foreigners who enter or stay in Cyprus illegally and are detained for long periods pending deportation," it said.

AKEL MP and human rights activist Eleni Mavrou told the Weekly Review that this was the second report in which Cyprus has been criticised for the way it treats foreigners and prisoners. The first report was released in November 1999.

Referring to the report's references to sexual harassment and the maltreatment of domestic workers, Mavrou noted that the current system "works against the victims instead of supporting and protecting them".

"More often than not they are deported whenever they make serious allegations against their employers," she said, stressing that the powers of the immigration officer need to be "curtailed".

The arbitrary manner in which domestic workers, especially foreign women, are treated was also highlighted by Doros Polydorou of the local immigrants Support Action Group (KISA).

Polydorou cited the case of a woman who was brought to Cyprus as a domestic help but sent back home "because her complexion was darker than her picture had indicated".

He charged that "institutional racism exists at various levels" on the island.

The local media are also targeted for "negative reporting" on immigrants and asylum seekers, which, it says, "contributed to creating an atmosphere of hostility and rejection towards members of minority groups".

Source 2.3

(Cyprus Mail, 24 July 2005)

Asylum seekers choosing death

Three attempted suicides in just one month

By *Stefanos Evripidou*

Driven to the edge of despair, three asylum seekers have attempted to commit suicide in the space of a month. All three used horrific means to try and end their lives when the months of anxiety and uncertainty became too much to bear.

Non-government organizations have long complained that asylum seekers face systematic abuse and a wall of institutionalized racism in Cyprus. This fear was only heightened when the three attempted suicide.

Head of KISA (Action for Equality, Support and Anti-racism) Doros Polycarpou said all three attempted suicides occurred between the end of May and June.

KISA has consistently warned the powers that be that migrants in Cyprus continuously face a host of obstacles preventing them from enjoying their legally protected rights.

In the first case, an Iranian man whose personal circumstances cannot be printed had his application for asylum rejected.

According to Polycarpou, the man had very strong grounds to seek asylum and protection from his home country. "His case really was qualified for asylum. ... He got so dejected when it wasn't [accepted] that he dosed himself with petrol outside the Asylum Service. Luckily, a policeman stopped him before he lit the match."

Another man cut his veins in front of a policeman after spending months in holding cells of Block 10. “He was treated and returned to Block 10 where he remains. In his case, he spent months inside without any clue as to what his future was. The authorities are holding him on a deportation order. But the purpose of such an order is for it to be executed immediately. ... You cannot hold a man in prison for months or years on the basis of a deportation order. The Ombudswoman has said it is illegal to do this,” Polycarpou said.

Asked why delays exist, he said: “Some countries won’t accept them back. For example, the Iranians say whoever doesn’t want to return to Iran will not be accepted back.”

The third case is the most tragic. “An Iranian asylum seeker was driving a friend who wanted to apply for asylum in Limassol. He was arrested for speeding, and charged with assisting someone to apply for asylum in bad faith,” said Polycarpou. “Police did not charge the friend, but the man went to jail for two months for helping his friend. Under the ancient laws we have on Aliens, a legal migrant who is charged with an offence can be considered an undesirable migrant, and be deported immediately. So that is what they wanted to do with him.”

The authorities ignored the spirit of the law, argued Polycarpou. The law on undesirable migrants was meant to apply to serious and dangerous criminals, not someone who was driving a friend. However, since he was an asylum seeker, the authorities had to wait until his application could be examined before they could deport him. They put him in a police holding cell and told him he would stay there until the Asylum Service reached its decision.”

[...]

“They [the police] moved him to Larnaca police station when they tried to persuade him to withdraw his asylum application. They put the paper in front of him and told him to sign or wait behind bars for two years until a decision was reached. He blew his lid, reacted and the police hit him. They say he became violent so they used reasonable force to contain him.”

[...]

“He ended up at Athalsassa Psychiatric Unit. After finishing therapy, the government doctor advised the police not to send him back to the holding cell. But the police decided otherwise. On the day they went to pick him up from Athalassa, he put his arm between two bars and jerked it so violently that his arm was completely cut from his body.”

Doctors successfully re-attached the arm but he needs five operations to get any feeling back in his arm. The Asylum Service decided after the event to grant him a one-year permit on humanitarian grounds.

Source 2.4

(Sunday Mail, 28 August 2005)

Clamping down on work opportunities for asylum seekers

“I believe they are doing this to send the message that Cyprus isn’t a good place for asylum workers. To me that is inhumane.”

By *Constantine Markides*

Asylum seekers are finding it increasingly difficult to find employment in Cyprus now that the Labour Ministry has limited the employment opportunities of asylum seekers to farming positions.

A UN study showed that in 2004 asylum seekers coming to industrialized nations decreased by one-fifth. But Cyprus has proved an exception to this decline in asylum seekers as it now tops the world list for most asylum applications per capita.

Cyprus' EU accession has made the conveniently located island a particularly desirable destination for asylum seekers. Although EU accession has brought tighter security over its recognized borders, the lack of border control north of the Green Line draws large numbers of illegal immigrants.

[...]

Polycarpou [President of KISA, see above] said asylum seekers were often offered abysmal jobs, in which their 'housing' might involve sleeping in a barn with cattle. If they refuse, they lose their welfare benefits.

[...]

Twenty-eight- year old Palestinian asylum seeker Belal told the Sunday Mail yesterday that he first went to the Labour Department in February. He said that the only jobs they offer are farming jobs, and often they do not even have those to offer. Belal was offered a job on the farm and he took it. When he went the farmer told him that his salary would be £ 200 a month and that he could sleep in the barn. "He said there were cows so I could drink milk for breakfast, and there were chickens so I could have eggs for lunch."

[...]

Belal said he had a Masters degree in International Relations.

Source 2.5

(European Human Rights Charter, valid since 7th of December 2000 for all member states of the European Union)

Article 1

Human dignity

Human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected and protected.

Article 4

Prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 18

Right to asylum

The right to asylum shall be guaranteed with due respect for the rules of the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 and the Protocol of 31 January 1967 relating to the status of refugees and in accordance with the Treaty establishing the European Community.

Source 2.6

<http://www.eumap.org/sitemap>



Source 2.7*(BBC News. 29/09/2005)***EU outposts turn into fortresses**

By Dominic Bailey

BBC News

The European Union is seen as the land of opportunity by many living in desperate poverty in Africa.

On a clear day you can see Spain across the water from Morocco and many have drowned trying to cross the narrow straits in rubber dinghies, old boats or inflatable inner tubes.

But the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla – Spanish territory clinging to the Moroccan coast – offer an alternative entry point. Across the double fences lies Europe and the dream of a better life.

There are thought to be more than a million illegal immigrants in Spain.

Last year, Spanish authorities detained more than 15,674. But those who arrive without identity papers are often released as Spanish immigration laws do not allow police to expel people if they cannot prove their identity or nationality within 40 days.

Human rights groups are concerned that Spanish and Moroccan governments' efforts to control these crossings are going too far and putting immigrants' lives at risk.

Alarmed by the latest mass crossing attempt, the Spanish government is sending army reinforcements to the border police, who work in tandem with Moroccan guards on the other side.

The double fence barrier that marks the perimeter is being raised from three to six metres tall and should be completed by February 2006.

The Spanish interior ministry is also considering hi-tech solutions such as sensors and infrared to alert guards to possible immigrant invasions.

Repatriation agreements

Secretary of State for Security Antonio Camacho insists Spain is following its policy of rigorous control of illegal immigration while supporting immigrants who arrive legally.

After visiting Melilla and Ceuta this week he said both enclaves were facing “a grave human and social problem”.

A government representative in Melilla said the enclave was “saturated” with immigrants.

They are trying to abandon their misery and get to countries which supposedly have better living conditions.

Enrique Santiago

Earlier this week Melilla border police faced 1,000 people trying to cross the fences. They managed to repel most but around 300 got through.

Most then report to the police station for processing. The government spokesman said it was the authorities' task to try to identify them – either from papers or by taking fingerprints.

He said the majority do not usually ask for asylum. They are then sent to temporary holding centres (Ceti) to await expulsion or repatriation.

Transfers

Under a bilateral agreement, Spain can send back Moroccan illegal immigrants, but it lacks repatriation agreements with many other African countries.

Since April, the authorities have started a programme of transferring immigrants from the centres in Ceuta and Melilla to the Spanish mainland to relieve the pressure on living conditions.

The Ceti in Melilla has around 1,150 people, but it was built for 480.

Some are taken to Spain with the right papers, while others are transferred to internment centres before expulsion. Reports say some are released when they reach the mainland after being handed the expulsion order which the authorities cannot carry out.

Enrique Santiago, secretary general of the Spanish organisation CEAR that works with refugees, says the crossings are nothing new. Only now, he says, they are becoming more frequent and more desperate.

“The Moroccan government is working with the Spanish on immigration control and has started to use methods which fail to respect national accords in relation to human rights,” he said.

“This has led to a systematic harassment of the camps where sub-Saharan immigrants hide out on the other side of the border.”

Increased risk

Mr Santiago said this had led to a humanitarian crisis in the African encampments. Both these factors have pushed these people to try to cross the border out of desperation, he said.

News about the border fence being raised from three to six metres has prompted more people to try to cross before the work is completed.

Furthermore, Mr Santiago fears that increasing the height of the fence will not stop people trying to cross it – only add to the tragedy.

“The crossing in Ceuta last night was at a part of the border which was already six metres high,” he said. “The only thing this has done is cause two deaths caused by falling six metres. The risk increases, but it is not going to stop the crossings.”

He also echoed concerns raised by Amnesty International in a report published earlier this year that the sub-Saharan who manage to get to Ceuta-Melilla are not getting the necessary legal support before being sent back.

“They are not delinquents, they are not committing a crime,” he said.

“They are trying to abandon their misery and get to countries which supposedly have better living conditions.”

Source 2.8

By: Martin Dahms, Badische Zeitung, August 17th 2006.

The Anteroom to Paradise

One year ago, Charles Ondoua from Cameroon arrived in Spain – he has not given up the dream of a better life.

... November 2003 Charles Ondoua took the train heading north from the coastal town of Douala in southern Cameroon. He used to work as a storekeeper at the port and earned just enough money to survive. He understood that this was going nowhere. So, he studied a world map and followed with his finger the route towards Europe. He asked a friend to let his parents know where their son went only two weeks after his departure. Nobody should stop him. He had the equivalent of 100 Euros and a backpack with a few personal items.

The journey to Europe took almost two years. ... He passed through Chad and Niger and saw that there were countries where life was even harder than in Cameroon. Running out of money, he travelled from Niger to Algeria on foot. He played football with a few policemen and in return they gave him something to eat. He met a Japanese tourist who paid for a part of the journey. In the town of Tamanrasset in the South of Algeria he worked for a few weeks on a building site, just long enough to buy a bus ticket to Algiers. From there he travelled on to the Moroccan border. It took him three days to reach the border fence of Melilla, says Charles. This was in March 2004.

Then the long process of waiting began, the life in the forests around Melilla, always looking at the promising sight of the Spanish town. Once he went for month to Rabat, the Moroccan capital. From there for the first time after one and a half years he called his parents. They had believed their son was dead and had mass held for him. On 7th September 2005, while climbing over the fences of Melilla he lost his shoes. "Now, my problems have finally come to an end, I thought." And he laughs again wholeheartedly.

They treated him well in the holding centre of Melilla, says Charles. He earned some money guarding parked cars and bought red tennis shoes. They cost 48 Euros, they are his only property. One day he received his expulsion order but he knew that he did not have to worry. Somebody from the Red Cross told him that there would be work in Murcia, across the Mediterranean.

One day his name was called up and the next morning he found himself on the ferry bound for Almeria which is not far away from Murcia. During the passage he stood at the railing amongst all the other passengers. After his arrival in Almeria someone told him: "You are a free man." He had only 28 Euros, the bus ticket to Murcia cost 15 Euros ...

Somewhere in Africa Charles got Leishmaniasis infection after an insect bit him. This infection can end deadly if it is not treated. He went to the emergency of the Reina-Sofia hospital in Murcia and saw how generous the Spanish health system is. Nobody is rejected, notwithstanding where he comes from, whether he can pay or not. "In this respect the Spanish show a lot of solidarity," says Antonio Jimenez from the Reina-Sofia hospital. Charles received medication to fight the infection. But he still was not healthy. His shoulder hurt more and more.

Somehow he dislocated his shoulder as he jumped down the fence. He was very lucky that in this state he was accepted at a shelter for homeless run by a Catholic foundation. Usually, nobody stays longer than two weeks because the waiting list is too long. 85% of the guests are immigrants. Charles can stay until he is fit again.

A few steps away from the hospital, in a park called the Chinese Garden, nearly hundred Africans who did not find a place to stay camp out. They are dozing in the sun and do not want to be photographed. The people back home must not see how they are doing in Europe. Every morning around 7.30 they and others walk in a silent march to the BP filling station near the train station. They hope someone will pass by and offer some work. But times have changed. The local vegetable and fruit farmers and building constructors, who did not worry too much in the past, nowadays do not want anybody without valid documents. Since the Spanish government gave 600,000 illegally employed foreigners residence permits last year the controls have become stricter. Nobody comes this morning who would give the Africans hope for one day...

... Charles explains the basic problem. "When a European journalist reports from Africa he makes photos of starving people, not of university students." But everybody who is familiar with the African mentality knows that after the suffering new life begins. "There is a lack of information." When, on the other hand, there are programmes about Europe on African television then they show white men with beautiful women on the beach, but they will not show white men sleeping on a park bench. "We in Africa believe that life in Europe is perfect," says Charles. "I did not know that you can't work here without a work permit. I thought I would just to go someone who will offer me a job and a salary. So simple ..."

... "Everywhere life is difficult, I know that now," says Charles. Almost three years from his departure in Cameroon none of his dreams has come true. But he thinks he was right, believing that Europe was paradise. Yes, life in Europe is hard, but, unlike Cameroon, you can have a future here. He dreams of becoming a trainee as a welder on a shipyard. He is still young, just 25 years old.

One day, he is sure, he will get a permit. It was right to risk his life and go to Europe. "I am forward looking, I don't look back. All the bad things that happened to me are just stories in my head. Think of Nelson Mandela. He spent 25 years in prison and in the end he became president."

Source 2.9

(<http://www.csmonitor.com>)

Italy plays role of Europe's immigration gatekeeper

Italy wants the rest of the Continent to stiffen border patrols and asylum guidelines.

By *Sophie Arie*

ROME - When a 9-year-old Somali girl named Asma arrived on the Italian island of Lampedusa in a rickety boat full of illegal immigrants earlier this year, she was in shock. She and her parents had watched helplessly as three of her siblings died during the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean from Libya. This summer, Italy has once again been horrified as boatloads of exhausted refugees limp into its ports, having set out, mostly from the coast of Libya in North Africa, hoping to sneak into Europe. Italy, which struggles to patrol its 1,500 miles of porous coastline, is battling to dispel its image as an easy entry point onto the Continent. And it is calling on the European Union for help. After all, once immigrants penetrate Italy or Spain by sea from North Africa, the new arrivals are free to spread through 15 other European countries whose shared borders are open under the Schengen border agreement. "Effectively the Italians and the Spanish are patrolling not just their own, but Europe's, borders. So the Italians say Europe should play a bigger part in solving the problem," says Sergio Romano, a political commentator and former Italian ambassador to Russia. Italy wants Europe to draw up a common immigration policy, creating joint European border patrols, immigrant quotas, and strict asylum guidelines. But with immigration an increasingly politicized issue across Europe, individual countries are unlikely to reach rapid consensus. Last month, Italy and Germany raised the idea of opening "reception centers" inside Libya to process asylum requests and fly failed asylum seekers back to their country of origin - other African and Middle Eastern nations. European lawmakers and human rights advocates have balked at the concept, warning that it would create "concentration camps" in the desert of North Africa. Italian lawmaker Rocco Buttiglione, who will be in charge of EU policy on asylum and immigration once he is sworn in as justice commissioner next month, insists that the centers would help people find legal ways into Europe and avoid falling into the hands of criminals smuggling people. EU figures estimate around 500,000 illegal immigrants arrive in Europe each year from all over the world. The Italian Interior Ministry estimates that immigration into Europe is worth more than \$3 billion per year, the trip across the Mediterranean alone costing as much as 2,000 euros (\$2,400) per person.

Source 2.10

(Published in newspapers throughout Europe Wednesday 29 January 2004)

Why Europe needs an immigration strategy

By *Kofi A. Annan*

One of the biggest tests for the enlarged European Union, in the years and decades to come will be how it manages the challenge of immigration. If European societies rise to this challenge, immigration will enrich and strengthen them. If they fail to do so, the result may be declining living standards and social division.

There can be no doubt that European societies need immigrants. Europeans are living longer and having fewer children. Without immigration, the population of the soon-to-be twenty-five Member States of the EU will drop, from about 450 million now to under 400 million in 2050.

The EU is not alone in this. Japan, the Russian Federation and South Korea, among others, face similar possible futures – where jobs would go unfilled and services undelivered, as economies shrink and societies stagnate. Immigration alone will not solve these problems, but it is an essential part of any solution.

We can be sure that people from other continents will go on wanting to come and live in Europe. In today's unequal world, vast numbers of Asians and Africans lack the opportunities for self-improvement that most Europeans take for granted. It is not surprising that many of them see Europe as a land of opportunity, in which they long to begin a new life – just as the potential of the new world once attracted tens of millions of impoverished but enterprising Europeans.

All countries have the right to decide whether to admit voluntary migrants (as opposed to bona fide refugees, who have a right to protection under international law). But Europeans would be unwise to close their doors. That would not only harm their long-term economic and social prospects. It would also drive more and more people to try and come in through the back door – by asking for political asylum (thus overloading a system designed to protect refugees who have fled in fear of persecution), or by seeking the help of smugglers, often risking death or injury in clandestine acts of desperation on boats, trucks, trains and planes.

Illegal immigration is a real problem, and States need to cooperate in their efforts to stop it – especially in cracking down on smugglers and traffickers whose organized crime networks exploit the vulnerable and subvert the rule of law. But combating illegal immigration should be part of a much broader strategy. Countries should provide real channels for legal immigration, and seek to harness its benefits, while safeguarding the basic human rights of migrants.

Poor countries can also benefit from migration. Migrants sent at least \$88 billion to developing countries in remittances during 2002 – 54% more than the \$57 billion those countries received in development aid.

Migration is therefore an issue in which all countries have a stake – and which demands greater international cooperation. The recently established Global Commission on International Migration, co-chaired by distinguished public figures from Sweden and South Africa, can help to establish international norms and better policies to manage migration in the interest of all. I am confident that it will come up with good ideas, and I hope they will win support, from countries that “send” migrants as well as those that receive them.

Managing migration is not only a matter of opening doors and joining hands internationally. It also requires each country to do more to integrate new arrivals. Immigrants must adjust to their new societies – and societies need to adjust too. Only with an imaginative strategy for integrating immigrants can countries ensure that they enrich the host society more than they unsettle it.

While each country will approach this issue according to its own character and culture, no one should lose sight of the tremendous contribution that millions of immigrants have already made to modern European societies. Many have become leaders in government, science, academia, sports and the arts. Others are less famous but play an equally vital role. Without them, many health systems would be short-staffed, many parents would not have the home help they need to pursue careers, and many jobs that provide services and generate revenue would go unfilled. Immigrants are part of the solution, not part of the problem.

All who are committed to Europe's future, and to human dignity, should therefore take a stand against the tendency to make immigrants the scapegoats for social problems. The vast majority of immigrants are industrious, courageous, and determined. They don't want a free ride. They want a fair opportunity for themselves and their families. They are not criminals or terrorists. They are law-abiding. They don't want to live apart. They want to integrate, while retaining their identity.

In this twenty-first century, migrants need Europe. But Europe also needs migrants. A closed Europe would be a meaner, poorer, weaker, older Europe. An open Europe will be a fairer, richer, stronger, younger Europe – provided Europe manages immigration well.