



Federal Ministry  
of the Interior



Ministry of the Interior and  
Kingdom Relations

Commissioner Malmström  
European Commission  
B-1049 Brussels  
BELGIUM

Dear Ms Malmström,

On September 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 2012, the Netherlands and Germany hosted a conference entitled “Free movement and participation of EU citizens – making it work for all”. The conference was attended by experts from more than twenty Member States, the European Commission, civil society, academics and employers. It marked the successful start of a new European dialogue about how to enhance free movement in light of the importance of the participation of migrating EU citizens in receiving Member States.

The conference included many fruitful discussions covering areas including:

- how to create a proper welcoming culture in receiving Member States for mobile EU citizens and how to ensure social inclusion at a local level;
- language promotion programs for EU migrants;
- cooperation between authorities, EU citizens and employers;
- reinforcing cooperation between sending and receiving countries, and
- research questions for the future.

Please find below a summary of the conference and, for your further information, the conference papers prepared by the Migration Policy Institute in the annex.

Discussions during the conference led to the main, jointly shared conclusion that it is of crucial importance that EU migrants effectively participate in their host country. Only in this way can the full potential of freedom of movement for both individual citizens, as well as receiving and sending societies, be unleashed, can freedom of movement effectively contribute to economic growth, and can continued support in both sending and receiving countries for freedom of movement be ensured.

Next, the conference concluded that Member States do not generally distinguish between third country nationals and EU citizens in their integration and/or participation policies. Moreover, a widely shared view indicated that there is a significant need for continuing efforts to understand the economic, social and cultural impact of EU migration on both sending and receiving countries

and their societies at both a local and national level. This is because many EU Member States find themselves seriously confronted with the social impact of free movement. Finally, it was concluded that it is of utmost importance to ensure that EU citizens are properly prepared before migrating, properly welcomed after having migrated, and are given access to information and services.

In view of these conclusions, there was wide support among the participating representatives of Member States for continuing the European dialogue on the issue of the participation of migrating EU citizens. This will serve to achieve insight into the factors that are key to making freedom of movement more profitable for all concerned and provide good practices in fields such as information provision and language acquisition. In this respect we very much welcome the fact that Austria has expressed its commitment to provide a follow-up to this conference.

We would like to thank you for the active participation of your services in this conference and we would very much welcome the continued involvement of the different relevant Directorates of the European Commission in this dialogue as well as the support for initiatives that contribute to improving the participation of EU citizens. We believe that the conference has provided a wide range of recommendations that could be taken into account in this regard. We therefore request that the European Commission takes the importance of the participation of EU citizens into account in its 2013 European Citizen report, which should, in our view, focus on both the rights and responsibilities of migrating EU citizens and also pay attention to the challenges that governments – both nationally and locally, and both sending and receiving, are faced with in facilitating freedom of movement.

Yours sincerely,

  
G.B.M. Leers

Minister for Immigration, Integration and Asylum, the Netherlands

Hans-Peter Friedrich

Federal Minister of the Interior, Germany

  


*Copy to Integration and Social Affairs Ministers of EU MS, Vice-President Reding and Commissioner Andor*