

### **Abstract: Migration and integration in rural areas of Saarland, Germany, against the backdrop of demographic change**

In Saarland, cities and communities have to meet a major challenge caused by the demographic change and the increasing migration movements connected with it, as well as by the integration of the migrants. The increasing internationalisation influences the dynamics of the two components – the decrease in population and the increasing aging. Thus, the proportion of migrants in Saarland amounts up to 7.6% in late 2010 (cf. Statistisches Amt Saarland 2011a/b).

Due to an early-onset shrinkage, Saarland occupies a special position among the West German federal states with regard to demographic aspects. Whereas the population figures of the old federal states have been increasing by 5.6% since 1991, the figures of Saarland have been decreasing by 1.9%. Demographically spoken, Saarland could rather be seen as an “East German” state, because it is – apart from the new state – the only West German state, which has experienced a decrease in population during the period of 1990 to 2004 (cf. Von Hohnhorst 2007: 69-70). There are different reasons for this special development of Saarland. Apart from the geographical situation, located in a peripheral position, economic difficulties in changing from a coal and steel industry to a service economy play a major role. Apart from the long-term decrease in population, the continuous aging and increasing internationalisation of the population add to a drastic demographic and social change (cf. Akademie für Raumforschung und Landesplanung 2006: 1). The increasing internationalisation, which comes along with an ethnic-cultural differentiation of the population due to an increase of the allochthonous population, is often caused by non-demographic factors such as economic development or quality of life (cf. Köppen 2008: 276, Siedhoff 2008: 7).

The location of Saarland within the Greater Region SaarLorLux, as well as its history of coal and steel industry have generated specific forms of migration in this state, for example transborder migration or classic movements of migrant workers. For example, more and more Luxembourgers move to the district of Merzig-Wadern, which is located closely to the border, so that the number of Luxembourgers in this district has risen from 605 (in 2005) to 1 297 people (in 2007) within two years (Statistisches Amt Saarland n.d.).

The research project “Leben in der Fremde – Demographischer Wandel von Migranten im ländlichen Saarland” (“Living in a foreign land – Demographic change of migrants in rural Saarland”) connects the demographic change with migration research and the rural space. According to the OECD definition, Saarland is an urban space because the population density as a NUTS 2 region amounts up to 396 inhabitants per square kilometre (2010) (cf. Statistisches Amt Saarland 2011a). However, there are rural areas within Saarland, which – partly due to the proximity to France and Luxembourg - have a particularly high proportion of foreign nationals. The community of Perl, for example, had a proportion of foreign nationals of 26.0 per cent in 2009 (cf. Bertelsmann Stiftung n.d.).

First of all, the aim of the project is to compare socio-demographic basic data between people of German nationality and people of foreign nationality, as well as to analyse the state of integration of people of foreign nationality in single survey communities. Thus, the survey is supposed to analyse on the one hand, if the demographic behaviour of migrants in rural areas shows specificities or differences compared to that of the local population. On the other hand, it is supposed to examine the attitude of the German population towards people of foreign nationality (acceptance or rejection) because this represents an important approach to integration for people of foreign nationality in the rural space as well.

The talk will present the research project and its results.

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