



## Press release

Engelberg, 19 October 2018

### **Economic and social aspects of migration**

**"It is a myth to believe that it is useful to separate the economic benefits of migration from the other aspects. Because behind every person who wants to migrate there is a human being who is unfortunately often forgotten in the public debate."**

With this appeal, the eleven young scientists concluded the "Engelberg Dialogues 2018" in the baroque hall of Engelberg Monastery. For four days, everything in the monastery village of Engelberg revolved around the topic of migration. Around 100 personalities from business, science, politics and society discussed their positive and negative aspects on politics, business and society.

#### **Objectification of the discussion**

In his presentation, former diplomat and current ETH professor Michael Ambühl called for a departure from previous arguments: "We must accept that migrants from the EU come to Switzerland. We benefit greatly from this in the health sector and in research. However, the agreement on the free movement of persons does not only have advantages for Switzerland. Rather, we should develop a new safeguard clause with concrete parameters that allow immigration to be regulated without going beyond the scope of the agreement with the EU. In his presentation, Michael Ambühl presented a corresponding formula: "With objective figures such as the average immigration per country compared to all EU countries, the number of foreign workers from the EU and third countries and the unemployment rate, we can create a mechanism that shifts the migration debate to an objective level. The system could apply to all EU countries.

#### **Enrichment and commitment**

"From an entrepreneurial point of view, highly qualified foreign employees are indispensable. This is the only way for Switzerland to maintain its leading position in the international environment. The exchange with foreign colleagues is also a great enrichment" explained Dr. Giovanna Davatz, Arctic Radiation Detectors Ltd from Zurich. Anyone who wants to survive in global competition must be able to hire the best talents. In the forum she presented the findings of her workshop: "Among other things, we discussed how the integration of migrant workers could be improved. One approach is integration into civil defence or the fire brigade. Voting and voting rights are also important for migrants who have lived here for five years. A change of name was also discussed. Instead of migrants, a positive term "Global Shakers and global



Shapers" could be used, which underlines the active role of these migrant workers. But also companies and universities are obliged to do more for the integration of their foreign employees. She concluded her presentation with an appeal: "We must consider migration as something that is commonplace. Let's take the first step and greet new neighbors in our environment personally. This is integration in action".

### **Solid migration policy called for**

In his presentation on the economic effects of migration within Europe, Prof. Dr. George Sheldon emphasized three important points: "The consideration of net migration does not do justice to the situation. The mass immigration initiative was based on the statement that more and more people are migrating. Objectively, however, the number decreased in 2002 (introduction of the euro) and at the same time more immigrants stayed longer in Switzerland, which gave the wrong impression of a steadily increasing immigration. Secondly, when assessing the impact of immigration on the labor market, we need to distinguish between exogenous and endogenous migration. Exogenous migration refers to workers who come to Switzerland on their own to look for work. Endogenous migrants, on the other hand, are specifically recruited for specialized tasks in the Swiss economy. And thirdly, politicians should focus more on the causes and effects of return migration when developing a sound migration policy. Because migrants with a higher education often move from country to country more often than migrants with a lower education who often settle in Switzerland forever".

### **Economy versus Society**

The advantages and disadvantages of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons within the EU were highlighted by the renowned migration researcher Prof. Christian Dustmann, University College London, in his presentation using various examples: "The liberalisation of migration policy brings potentially enormous advantages. However, there are winners and losers. Migration policy is dominated less by economic arguments than by subjective aspects, including scaremongering. As a result, right-wing parties have occupied the issue for themselves and have thus been able to gain massive voter share. The discussion about the economic advantages of migration is a tight-rope walk in every country".

### **Stop emigration**

Using three practical examples, the congress participants gained an insight into the migration situation in Montenegro and Sweden. The physicist and former CERN employee in Switzerland and now Montenegrin Minister of Science Dr. Sanja Damjanović presented the idea for an international institute in the



Western Balkans region. Sustainable technologies are to be developed there thanks to the international CERN network and based on an integrated view of economic, cultural and social aspects. It would also help to improve the economic situation, create attractive jobs, especially for young people, and reverse the brain drain from the Western Balkans region. An interesting insight into the until recently liberal Swedish migration policy and how the right wing policy recently brought it to a halt was offered by the former Swedish Minister Prof. Dr. Ewa Björling.

**Young scientists awarded**

Eleven young academics from Belgium, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Norway and Switzerland spent three days at the Autumn Academy working on various migration issues. Questions such as the emigration of highly qualified workers from poor countries to industrial nations, the free movement of persons versus regulations or the effects of family reunification on the situation of migrants in the labor market were at the center of attention. The three best works received an award. At the end of the conference, the domestic and foreign participants enjoyed a ride on the Titlis with a candlelight dinner in the middle of the Alpine world at sunset. The convivial occasion offered the last opportunity to cultivate the network of contacts and build up new friendships.



<Image captions> On the occasion of Academia Engelberg's "Engelberg Dialogues 2018", former diplomat and

ETH professor Michael Ambühl called for an objectification of the discussion on the free movement of persons thanks to measurable parameters that would apply to all EU countries.

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<Image captions> Dr. Giovanna Davatz, Arktis Radiation Detectors Ltd from Zurich, used the "Engelberg Dialogues

2018" of Academia Engelberg to demonstrate, using the example of her company, that her economic success in global competition also depends on highly qualified foreign employees.

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<Image captions> On the occasion of the "Engelberg Dialogue 2018" of Academia Engelberg, Prof. Dr. George Sheldon, University of Basel, called for an abandonment of net migration as the most important criterion in the immigration debate.

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<Image captions> Prof. Christian Dustmann, University College London, spoke at the "Engelberg Dialogues 2018" of the Academia Engelberg about the advantages and disadvantages of the free movement of persons agreement within the EU.

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<Image captions> At the "Engelberg Dialogue 2018" of Academia Engelberg, Montenegrin Minister of Science Dr. Sanja Damjanović presented her idea of how attractive jobs could be created in the Balkan region and how a return of highly qualified people could be realised.

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<Image captions> The former Swedish minister Ewa Björling explained the Swedish migration policy in the context of the "Engelberg Dialogues 2018" of the Academia Engelberg and pointed out the reasons which led to a departure from the previous policy.

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<Image captions> Eleven young scientists from Belgium, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Norway and Switzerland worked under the direction of Vera Eichenauer, ETH Zurich (left), in the Autumn Academy of the "Engelberg Dialogues 2018" on various migration issues.

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