

## **Briefing**

### **EIN seminar: “*Is Europe Full?*”**

**11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> of May 2017, Budapest, Hungary**

On the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of May 2017, Budapest will host the EIN seminar entitled “*Is Europe full?*”. The topics of this seminar are immigration, ethnic minorities, demography and its challenges. These three topics are one of the most controversial matters in the European Union today as they cross and touch through a variety of emotions and responses from the public.

The European Institutions have been giving high focus on migration challenges. At the end of 2016, the European Parliament, Council and Commission signed for the first time a joint declaration setting out a list of legislative proposals that should be given priority in 2017, pledging to prioritize six key areas. Migration is one of them.

Migration has always been a controversial topic. Many Member States are no strangers to this phenomenon. However, most of them are facing difficulties when handling the exponentially growing flows of migration that Europe has been experiencing in these last few years.

The overwhelming number of asylum seekers and migrants entering the EU borders have different impacts along Member States mainly because of their geographic location. It is of utmost importance that we continuously strive to find solutions on how to deal with the new comers, how to integrate them into our societies, reducing risks of social exclusion and the risks of them falling into human trafficking organizations.

### **Demography**

EU’s population faces several challenges posed by demographic changes. Most of its Member States have a rapidly ageing population, experiencing a severe decline in birth rates, thus creating a recipe for rapid population decline and pressuring EU countries’ financial balances.

What solutions should be considered to solve this problem? Some agree that subsidies and financial incentive is the solution to help and encourage more people to have children. But is this realistic? Is money all that young people need to have babies? What more can governments do to encourage young individuals to have children?

Other experts and political analysers believe that immigration is the solution for the population decline, as importing more workers and people from abroad would stimulate the economy as well as rise the birth rate.

Various individuals however are sceptical to this idea, as they believe that more immigrants would harm the economy fearing that the welfare system would be over burned. They also believe that there would be new tensions and would threaten the stability of a country's society.

### **Immigration**

Immigration is one of the most controversial topics and one which is most present in political discussions in the vast majority of the European Union's Member States. The recent wave of refugees from the Middle East and Africa due to the Syrian Civil War and the unstable dictatorships in Africa, has resulted into a crisis that Europe has not seen since the Second World War. This new wave creates a lot of doubts and questions. How will the EU and its Member States manage this large bulk of people fleeing from war and terror? Should they have the right to settle in Europe? Can EU Member States accommodate more migrants given the economic and social challenges it is already experiencing?

Not only EU's Member States have to worry about the influx of migrants coming into their countries, but also there are issues facing the immigrant population that is already established. How can Europe provide an assistance framework and a better and coherent integration policy for immigrants? What should be their place in the European Union's Member States societies? Moreover, how to encourage them to be more involved with their host countries on an economic, social and political level?

### **Ethnic Minorities**

The concept of ethnic minorities varies within the European Union. In Western Europe, ethnic minorities refer normally to the descendants of immigrants whilst in Eastern Europe, ethnic minorities tend to be those who are in a different nation due to history, where borders were constantly changed, or new countries were formed.

Ethnic minorities tend to have worse quality of life than the general population in all nations, as they face special problems of integration and segregation from society. What can governments do to integrate these individuals and make them a part of society? How can we tackle discrimination against individuals of a minority group, especially when handling institutionalised discrimination? How can ethnic minorities be more represented in a social context of a nation? What can governments do to improve ethnic minorities access to housing and jobs?