

International Conference, 2 - 4 October 2008, Vienna

**CONTRIBUTIONS OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES TO DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT
IN EUROPE – POSSIBILITIES OF CIVIC PARTICIPATION**

Presentation

The Asylum Coordination Austria (*asylkoordination österreich*) is organising a three-day international conference in Vienna on the topic of „*Migrants' and refugees' contributions to democratic development in Europe – Possibilities of civic participation*“. The aim of the conference is to highlight ways of improving participation of migrants, and shall promote exchange and cooperation among political and civil society actors, mainly among migrant and refugee community organisations and concerned NGOs.

The conference is realised in cooperation with our research partners (Centre for Social Innovation, Vienna, Charles University Prague) and with European and Austrian migrant and refugee advocacy organisations (ECRE – European Council on Refugees and Exiles, ERAD European Refugee Advocacy Organisation, the Africa Centre Chiala` Afriqas). The EU-programme „Europe for Citizens, Active Civil Society in Europe“ is supporting the event.

The opening session of the conference is dedicated to the presentation and discussion of the results of a recently accomplished study carried out by the conference organisers:

The comparative study “Civic Participation and Representation of refugees and asylum seekers in the EU”, based on case studies in Austria, France, the Czech Republic and at EU level, gives an insight into the opportunities of refugee self-organisations and advocacy NGOs in the field of asylum- and refugee policies in the three countries and on the EU policy level.

The conference provides an active debate among participants on possibilities and potentials of civic participation of migrants and refugees via presentations, panel discussions and workshops. Representatives of migrant and refugee community organisations will participate as key-speakers and chairs of workshops. Moreover, various kinds of experiences and innovative projects from other EU member states and on the level of the European Union will be presented by researchers and activists.

A panel will focus on examples of good practices of civic participation of migrants and refugees in different local and national contexts. A second panel deals with actual strategies of interest representation of migrants and refugees at EU level, mainly in the context of the European Refugee Advocacy Organisation (ERAD). A third theme to be discussed concerns the involvement of migrant and refugee community organisations in concepts, strategies and practices of development cooperation.

Provisional conference programme

Place: 1020 Vienna, Renner Institut, Khlesplatz 12

Date: 2nd to 4th October 2008

Opening Session, Thursday, October 2nd 2008

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| 17:30 – 18:00 | Registration |
| 18:00 – 19:00 | Presentation of the European comparative study “Civic Participation and Representation of refugees and asylum seekers in the EU” |
| 19:00 – 19:30 | Comments of representatives of migrant and refugee community organisations concerning the study |
| 19:30 – 20:00 | Pause |
| 20:00 – 21:30 | Panel discussion |

Friday, October 3rd 2008

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| 09:30 – 10:30 | Presentation 1: “Best-practice“- examples of civic participation of migrants and refugees – Models at the local level |
| 10:30 – 11:30 | Presentation 2: Building transnational networks and refugee’s representation in the EU: The European Refugee Advocacy Organisation ERAD |
| 11:30 – 12:30 | Presentation 3: The role of migrant initiatives in development cooperation. |
| 12:30 – 14:00 | Pause - Lunch |
| 14:00 – 16:00 | Workshop 1: Examples and models of migrants’ and refugees’ participation. |
| 14:00 – 16:00 | Workshop 2: Building transnational networks and EU refugee representation. The example of ERAD. |
| 14:00 – 16:00 | Workshop 3: Participation of migrants in development cooperation. |
| 16:00 – 16:30 | Pause |
| 16:30 – 17:15 | Presentation of interim results from the workshops |
| 17:15 – 18:00 | Discussion |

Saturday, October 4th 2008

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| 10:00 – 12:00 | Continuation of the workshops 2 & 3 |
| 12:00 – 12:30 | Presentation of results and conclusion from the workshops |
| 12:30 – 13:30 | Discussion: perspectives for the future |

For further information please contact:

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In co-operation with:

Centre for social innovation (ZSI), www.zsi.at
Charles University Prague, www.fhs.cuni.cz
Africa Centre Chiala' Afriqas,
<http://www.chiala.at/>
ECRE – European Council of Refugees and
Exiles, <http://www.ecre.org/>
ERAD – European Refugee Advocacy
Organisation, <http://www.erad-network.org/>

Supported by the EU-programme: „Europe for Citizens, Action 2: Active Civil Society in Europe“, http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.htm