

# We Hear From

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Readers are invited to express their views not only on matters published in this medium but also on their independent thoughts published in other science-related topics. Do not allow your ideas to die away. What appears to be naive or bizarre to you may ignite others' thought process and become useful.

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Renate Fricke

## Refugees in Germany

For the time being, thousands of refugees stream into Germany every day. This year we expect more than one million people, which means an extreme growth as compared to the years ahead.

They come mainly from the area east end south of the Mediteranian Sea and from the Balkan. They seek peace instead of war in their country, freedom instead of being politically pursued in their country, or a job to feed their family instead of living in extreme poverty in a state with no welfare system.

The refugees risk everything: they spend all their wealth, sell their house, leave their familiy. They pay the illegal people for travel, enter a little boat, that is not fit for the Mediteranian Sea and risk their lifes, finally reaching an European Country. Because of the very large number of people they find a terrible situation: they might be housed in tents instead of houses, sometimes they end up in prison. They might get food, they are not used to, they might get no permission to travel further north, they might end up in front of a big wall, defended by military. They know about these risks and still come in hope of a good future and a chance to bring their family later on.

Their aim is Germany or Sweden. These countries have the fame of being a paradise. And there is a big frustration, that this is not true.

As every day thousands reach our border, we can give these people peace, we can give them food, clothing, health treatment and some pocket money – which is much, but in many cases we have no adequate housing and they have to stay in tents. And by no means they immediately can get a job.

It takes three to five month, until the administration has decided whether, according to German law, they are allowed to stay and plead for asylum. Seventy percent – in Sweden fifty percent – are not allowed and sent back in their countries. That is troublesome for both sides. The refugees struggle to stay, and still the police has to send them back....

What is the basis of this decision? The German law says, that politically traced people may apply for asylum. This simple sentence is based on the terrible treatment of jews in Germany in the time of 1933 to 1945. But today this law seems to suggest, that Germany can be the shelter for all betrayed people in the world. That cannot function.

We are a liberal, open country. We want to help people, that are in a severe situations. Besides, our birthrate is very low, thus we welcome foreign people to come to our country. And presently our economy seeks for qualified young people to keep our living standard at the actual high level. Thus we appreciate people from other countries since many years and look

forward to welcome them in the future. But the actual stream of refugees overruns us totally. We are almost not able to handle the problem.

Europe for the time being is in a difficult situation. We do have a common currency, the Euro, but we do not have a common economic policy. Thus different countries develop differently. And the actual quarrel is, whether each country is responsible for itself or whether we have to help each other – the open question concerning Greece. In addition now the handling of the immense stream of refugees divides the members of the European Union. Some countries deny to take refugees. They argue, that the more open the EU presents itself, the more refugees will come – which is true. On the other hand, the law to help politically persecuted people also is European law. And the EU was created to pull down borders – and not to build new ones against the refugees.

This discussion supports the uprising of rightwing political parties and violence against refugee-homes, a true threat to the existence of the EU.

Taking into account this situation the German government actually works twofold: it improves the situation of the refugees, but it enforces the backgoing of those, who are not allowed to stay. Furthermore Germany increases the financial support of the UN, in order to improve the situation in the refugee-camps close to their home-states and enforces the diplomatic discussion especially to stop the civil war in Syria.

What does all of this have to do with our daily life in Germany? Unfortunately it helps the rightwing political parties, as I wrote, which is a threat. On the other hand we are definitely proud about an overwhelming upspring of volunteers to help the refugees. People spend clothing and food, invite foreigners, offer special help for kids, organise language-lessons, play football with the newcomers and so on.

We are used to our culture, the refugees to theirs, and often this does not match. That produces frustrations on both sides. It starts for instance with the welcome ceremony. We shake

hands, other cultures do not - and the German hostess is annoyed and considers the guest to be unfriendly. German kids learn to swim in school, muslim girls are not allowed to attend. We accept female bosses or teachers, the Arabs don't, we expect people to be punctual and reliant, other cultures handle this more relaxed. Most difficult: the foreigners sometimes are not interested in integration. They tend to build a ghetto with a parallel-society and life according to their culture. But for instance forced marriages or female circumcision are forbidden in Germany.

And another problem is, how to avoid in the crowded refugee-housings, that migrants keep on fighting with their former enemies, that left their home-country just as they themselves and are now their neighbours in the tent? Police has constantly to be present in the refugee-housings and still can't stop all violence among the foreigners.

It is a long way for the refugees and us, not only to know enough about the person you are talking to, but to be tolerant and accept the different behavior – as long as it does not break German law.

In consequence we are now installing a huge information-programme for all: for the refugees to learn what is expected in Germany, for the labourforce and the volunteers that work with the refugees, to know what surprising behavior might show up in different situations. We have to learn to listen to each other before judging, we have to learn to openly discuss differences and explain each version of behaving.

In the 1960s Germany asked workers from other countries to come and help to build up the German economy. They did come, and only with their support the economic growth was possible. Now most of them are very well integrated and make Germany more open and culturally mixed. But the actual stream of refugees inspires the discussion, that there are still problems to be solved concerning the foreigners living here and those that do come every day.

It will take a long time. We hope, we can manage this process without violence and

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without totally changing the German society or the European Union. If we are successful, Germany will be more colourful and more international in the future and might be a good

example of different cultures living successfully and peacefully together.

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## Nuclear Wastes Disposal: From Ukraine to France

In all countries advocating the peaceful use of atomic energy, the safe disposal of radioactive wastes so caused is perceived as a national duty. The technical convention in Essen, Germany on final storage tunneling of nuclear wastes showed in the beginning of March 2015 that the concept gained maturity and the search for disposal location has started.

### In Ukraine

In Ukraine the nuclear power plant management spent good amount of money for several years for the disposal of nuclear wastes but because of political situation of the land the money so earmarked earlier in the budget is estranged from the budget. It is regretted by Mykola Proskura of State agent for the administration of Tschernobyl zone. Because of the casualty of block 4 of the nuclear power plant of Tschernobyl in 1986, there is a radiological specialty, 90% of all highly radioactive wastes exist in the prohibited area of Tschernobyl. The weak radioactive wastes also contain a big quantity of long-lived nuclide which actually belong to the deep layer of elements.

Western institutions as also the International Atomic Energy Organization (IAEO) support the country with its fixing of the final storage criteria and with its selection of location. For the geological end depot crystalline formation (granite) and hospitable rock are investigated.

Depending on host rock either a final depot tunnel or the transport in a deep borehole in 2000 meter to 4000 meter depth from the earth's surface is thought of.

It is meaningful to reach a final depot in Chernobyl restricted zone as here. There lies an acceptable geological formation. Moreover there is hardly any population; any existing infrastructure and transport ways are scanty.

### In Germany

In Germany the search for location of a final depot of high radioactive wastes has already begun. Michael Sailer of Öko-Institute reported in Essen an up-to-date work. As per Sailer it is an important question of business concerns of final storage site (depot). This must be fine and isolated from surveillance. Such is his proposal to a business concern, led by a private industry which should be a 100% private property. In between business concerns and public body as owner a federal authority should stand as a regulator. After the political consensus for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, regulation for the search and choice of the final disposal of heat generating radioactive wastes was agreed upon in the year 2013 in Germany. The Federal State Commission should translate it into action. The assignment of the commission is to evaluate the choice of location, regulations, to debate on social policy as also scientific, technological

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