

M1 Germany opening its gates

Berlin took the lead in efforts to resolve the European refugee crisis by declaring all Syrian asylum-seekers welcome to remain in Germany – no matter which EU country they had first entered. Germany, which expects to take a staggering 5 800,000 migrants this year [four times the number who came last year and double the number expected], became the first EU country to suspend a 1990 protocol, known as the “Dublin Protocol”, which forces refugees to seek asylum in the first European country in which they set foot. [...] “Germany will become the member state responsible for processing their claims,” a government statement said. All current expulsion orders for Syrian asylum-seekers will be revoked. [...] The decision piles further pressure on other EU countries – including Britain – which have used the 1990 protocol as the 10 legal basis for refusing to take any share of the refugees from the Middle East and Africa now pouring into Europe to escape war, oppression or famine. The decision came as Chancellor Angela Merkel and the French President, François Hollande, held talks in Berlin to try to come up with solutions to the worst 20 European refugee crisis since the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. They appealed for the creation of a new, Europe-wide asylum policy, in which all 28 EU countries would be expected to take part. Ms Merkel spoke of an “exceptional situation” which “is not going to end soon.” “This is a global 25 crisis which needs joint European efforts for a solution beyond building higher fences.” [...] The German decision to declare open house for Syrian refugees was welcomed by refugee support groups in Britain as a lesson that the Government should follow. “This announcement from Germany is very 30 significant. It’s high time the British Government made a similar statement. So far our Government has been trying its best to prevent refugees from reaching our shores; pulling up the drawbridge and forcing people to place their lives in smugglers’ hands.” [...]

From: www.independent.co.uk (24th August, 2015)

M2 Germany leading by example

Germany just did something huge for Syrian refugees — and for the future of Europe. [...] Germany’s suspension of Dublin processing for Syrians won’t be enough to solve that problem on its own. And of course Germany shouldn’t be expected to 5 solve the EU migrant crisis by itself any more than Greece or Italy should. But by voluntarily accepting more responsibility for Syrian refugees, Germany has reduced the pressure on other EU countries, and perhaps made a final solution that much easier to reach. By taking that step unilaterally, 10 Germany has distinguished itself from the „no more than the absolute bare minimum, and actually maybe not even that“

approach that countries like the UK are pursuing. It’s leading by example. What we should hope for is that Germany’s reprieve for migrants will set 15 an example, and become one of many steps in Europe toward a fairer system for refugees.

From: www.vox.com (28th August, 2015)

M3 Germany’s bright and dark side

A popular movement is taking place across Germany. Tens of thousands of people are standing up to help refugees. Reports about extreme-right attacks on refugee shelters have been heaping 5 shame upon Germany for months. Over 200 attacks have been counted in the first half of 2015 alone. In the recent Heidenau protests, more than 30 policemen were wounded. The helpers, however, embody a different Germany: solidary, 10 empathetic, happy to lend a hand. The volunteers are less visible and less loud than the agitators and arsonists. But they are efficient, and there are lots of them. These activists protect asylum seekers from attacks by racists – sometimes they 15 are even attacked themselves –, help them look for housing or jobs and provide medical treatment. German leaders responded to persistent violence led by far-right extremists against the increasing number of foreigners seeking asylum, with the 20 chancellor and the president making visits to refugee reception centers to send a message of acceptance. “There is no tolerance for those people who question the dignity of others.” “The humane and dignified treatment of every individual who comes to us is part of Germany’s national identity,” Chancellor Merkel said.

M4 Welcome to Germany!



Cartoon by Marian Kamensky (August 29th, 2015)

Aufgaben zum Thema

1. What is the “Dublin Protocol”? Explain the idea behind it and give the reason why Germany decided to suspend it. (M1)
2. What sort of change in asylum policy is badly needed to cope with the numbers of refugees arriving? (M1)
3. “What Germany did for Syrian refugees can be seen as a gift for the future of Europe.” Explain why. (M2)
4. Comment on the terms “bright side” and “dark side” with regard to the refugee situation in Germany. (M3)
5. Describe and explain the cartoon. (M4)
6. Discuss the reasons why Germany, in general, feels it must be more welcoming than other countries.

Didaktische und methodische Hinweise

Das Arbeitsblatt für den Englischunterricht und den bilingualen Politikunterricht ab Klasse 9 bündelt wesentliche Fakten zur Rolle Deutschlands angesichts der immer weiter anschwellenden Flüchtlingszahlen. Die Schülerinnen und Schüler erhalten Basisinformationen zum Dubliner Abkommen, durch dessen Außerkraftsetzung Deutschland freiwillig mehr Verantwortung übernimmt und damit sowohl den syrischen Flüchtlingen hilft als auch zur Entlastung von der Flüchtlingskrise überforderter südeuropäischer Länder wie Italien und Griechenland beiträgt. M1 und M2 zeigen auf, wie positiv der Vorbildcharakter der deutschen Initiative in den USA und Großbritannien aufgenommen wird. Gleichzeitig verdeutlichen die Texte die diesem Schritt innewohnende Hoffnung, dass andere Länder sich vom deutschen Vorgehen inspirieren lassen und ihre ablehnende Haltung zur Aufnahme von Flüchtlingen zugunsten einer faireren Verteilung der Lasten und menschlicheren Haltung aufgeben. M3 geht auf die Welle der Hilfsbereitschaft in der deutschen Bevölkerung ein und stellt ihr den „dunklen Aspekt“ der von rechter Gesinnung ausgehenden Gewalt gegenüber Asylbewerbern gegenüber. Der Cartoon M4 bringt diese Problematik abschließend auf der bildlichen Ebene auf den Punkt. Die Zeichnung bietet eine gute Überleitung zu einem weiterführenden Unterrichtsgespräch, das die deutsche Geschichte mit in den Umgang mit der Flüchtlingskrise einbezieht.

Lösungshinweise zum Arbeitsblatt

Aufgabe 1: With the refugee crisis intensifying, Germany has eased asylum rules for Syrian refugees in a move expected to relieve pressure on southern European nations as thousands more migrants pour into the bloc seeking refuge. Under the so-called Dublin rules, the first EU country that an asylum-seeker arrives in is required to process the claimant's application. In practice, this means that countries on the EU's borders like Greece or Italy are overwhelmed with applications as thousands arrive by sea on their shores. Germany stopped returning Syrian asylum-seekers to their first EU port of entry, becoming the first member state to effectively simplify the application process for those fleeing the war-torn nation.

Aufgabe 2: A new, Europe-wide asylum policy in which all 28 EU countries would be expected to take part has to be created. The refugee burden must land on more shoulders to ease its force. A fair distribution of refugees in Europe seems to be the only way to effectively cope with this exceptional situation that is not going to end soon. Instead of building higher fences and pulling up the drawbridge, thereby forcing people to place their lives in smugglers' hands, all European member states should assume responsibility for refugees within their capabilities. Each country should take its fair share.

Aufgabe 3: This is an appreciating statement for Germany's advance to take the first step in changing an absurd asylum

policy that is no longer working. Germany, with the stroke of a pen, has just given an awful lot of Syrian families the chance to rebuild their lives in Germany. In addition to being a blessing for these Syrians, the German move is also a gift to Europe. Migration has become a crisis so great for Europe that it means an even bigger challenge for the EU than the Greek debt crisis. Germany is now leading by example, showing Europe what it must do to overcome that crisis. May other member states feel inspired to join these efforts and abandon their selfish attitude of trying to keep those in need out of their countries.

Aufgabe 4: The terms “bright side” and “dark side” illustrate that on the one hand, Germany, the country of hope for so many, is giving the refugees a warm welcome and voluntarily assumes more responsibility for the new arrivals. But at the same time as we see a wave of people wanting to help, there is a rise in hate, insults and violence against asylum seekers. The nationwide wave of solidarity and helpfulness has been overshadowed by a string of violent far-right anti-refugee protests intended to spread fear and rage among the population. Politicians are zealous to brand these incidents as unworthy of the German nation and to reassure the world that there is no tolerance for xenophobia or racism in Germany.

Aufgabe 5: The drawing shows a scene in heaven with the German flag being fixed in the heavenly landscape. This scenario alludes to the fact that Germany is expected by many refugees to be such a place. An angel with outstretched arms is giving a warm welcome to a refugee family. Behind their back, however, there is an evil-minded person in Nazi-outfit, swinging his baton at them. By this means, the cartoonist illustrates the split between the bright side of Germany's attitude towards asylum-seekers (wave of solidarity and helpfulness) and the dark side, which is represented by racists' and extremists' violent actions against those who are seeking help.

Weiterführende Links

Germany as a Role Model for Asylum Policy
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/08/26/germanys-small-yet-important-change-to-the-way-it-deals-with-syrian-refugees/>

Is the Migrant Crisis Dividing Germany Again?
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/08/29/the-migrant-crisis-is-dividing-germany-all-over-again/>

Official Website of the “Refugees Welcome” Initiative
<http://www.refugees-welcome.net/>

Welcome to Germany: Locals Step In to Help Refugees in Need
<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/refugees-encounter-willing-helpers-in-germany-a-1048536.html>