

Abstract

Asylum and integration policies are important components of a country's migration policy. Firstly because of their very nature, as they deal with international protection and integration of foreigners into society. However, as it is indicated in this thesis, the functioning of these policies may affect not only how asylum or integration processes are taking place after the foreigners cross the country's borders but it may to some extent influence who comes into the country. This can be caused by how the country is perceived and whether people will consider it a suitable "refuge" and seek asylum there. Also, governments can determine how many people will come to their territory based on various relocation mechanisms. In order to understand the impact and functioning of asylum and integration policies, it is necessary to explore their different levels: discourse, policy on paper and its real implementation. This thesis describes how these levels interact and influence each other. Studying these three policy lines is especially interesting today because the phenomenon of migration was not significant for the public in Slovakia until a few years ago, but in 2015, with the culmination of the so-called migration crisis, it became one of the most important issues in Slovakia, despite the fact that the number of people arriving to Slovakia was even lower than in the period just before this crisis. The thesis describes how Slovak experts working in the state or non-governmental sector assess the migration policy of Slovakia - in particular its asylum and integration components, the subject of the assessment being their officially declared form as well as the real implementation. They also reflect a sharp increase in interest in this topic and whether and how it affected policy making and implementation - considering that migration is perceived generally negatively in Slovakia.

On the basis of the interviews conducted, it can be concluded that the impact of the discourse was perceived as crucial mainly during the policy implementation phase. Nonetheless, some elements of policies that are not affected by the discourse have also been identified, such as the decision-making process on granting international protection. As for creation and implementation of asylum and integration policies, it may be considered particularly problematic that migration and its components do not have a single umbrella institution in Slovakia, which in many ways makes it difficult to implement policies and achieve the stated objectives.