

# Orientation Courses as an Important Part of the German Integration Course System

Expert Seminar on Integration Courses for Immigrants

28 November 2013  
Prague

Jens Reimann  
Germany

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

[www.bamf.de](http://www.bamf.de)



# Topics

- The Integration Course system in Germany
- Focus on the Civic Orientation Courses as an important part of the Integration Course system and the integration policy

# The Most Important Groups of Immigrants in Germany

- „Guest workers“ and their descendants
- „Ethnic German repatriates“
- Immigrants coming in the context of family reunion
- Skilled workers (often from EU countries)
- Former asylum seekers

⇒ 20 percent of the German population has a migration background

## Situation before 01.01.2005

- Extent of immigration and needs for integration were underrated for a long time.
  - ⇒ Lack of a coherent integration policy
  - ⇒ Unstructured system of language courses

# Implementation of Integration Courses

- 01.01.2005: New Immigration Act setting nationwide standards for the German integration policy
- Unification of language courses for adult migrants, establishment of the Integration Courses

# Integration Courses: Current Structure

- Language Course: 600 lessons of 45 minutes each
  - Goal: language level B1 (CEFR)
  - Scaled test “German Test for Immigrants“ (DTZ)
- Opportunity to repeat 300 lessons and the DTZ if the main goal (B1) has not been achieved
- Orientation Course: 60 lessons
  - Test „Living in Germany“ (LID)
- ⇒ **„Zertifikat Integrationskurs“**

# Integration Courses for Special Target Groups

- Special Integration Courses for young adults, women, parents, and persons with informally acquired and often fossilized skills of German (960 lessons)
- Special Integration Courses for illiterates (960 lessons) and for fast learners with a good educational background (430 lessons)

# Quality Assurance

- Standardised criteria for teachers' qualification
- Training programs for teachers who don't meet the required qualification
- Standardised criteria for textbooks
- Course controls
- Permanent commission established to accompany the conception and implementation of Integration Courses



# Integration Courses: Facts and Figures (01.01.2005 – 30.06.2013)

- All in all, there have been 71,000 Integration Courses. Almost 50,000 of them have already finished.
- About 940,000 persons have begun an Integration Course.
- More than 580,000 persons have finished an Integration Course.
- 52.6 percent of those who have participated in the DTZ have achieved level B1.
- 36.9 percent have achieved level A2.
- 10.5 percent have remained below level A2 .



## German Residence Act, Section 43 (2)

*“(...) it is intended to acquaint foreigners with the way of life in the Federal territory to such an extent as to enable them to act independently in all aspects of daily life, without the assistance or mediation of third parties.”*

# Why Do We Need Orientation Courses?

- Besides language proficiency, it is essential to have at least a basic knowledge about how society works, because
  - participants of the Integration Courses will possibly spend their whole life in Germany.
  - concrete facts („Where’s the doctor’s office?“) are just as important as a knowledge of context („How does the health care system work?“)



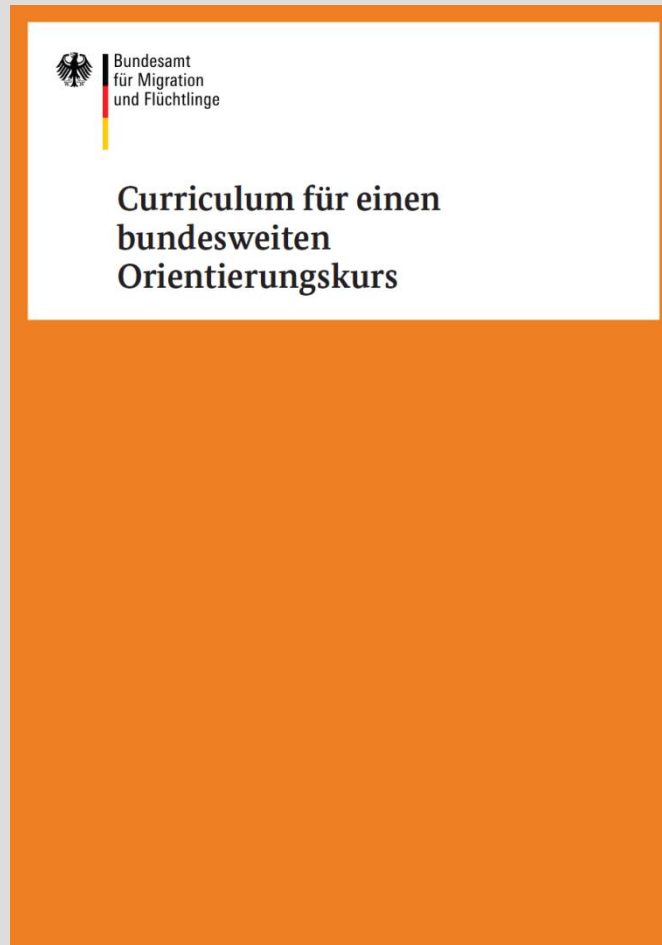
## Legal basics

- *The Integration Course comprises a basic and advanced language course of identical duration to provide an adequate knowledge of the language and an Orientation Course to impart a knowledge of the legal system, culture and history in Germany.*

(German Residence Act, 2005)

- 2007: Publishing of the first version of the Curriculum for a Nationwide Orientation Course.

# Curriculum for a Nationwide Orientation Course



Target group:

Immigrants who have completed the language course or who have sufficient German language skills without having attended the language course

# Curriculum for a Nationwide Orientation Course: Goals

In the Orientation Course, participants are to develop:

- Understanding of the German political system
- Knowledge about their rights and obligations
- Skills that help with further orientation
- Ability to participate in community life
- Intercultural competence



# Curriculum for a Nationwide Orientation Course: Contents (1)

*The Orientation Course teaches everyday knowledge as well as the fundamental features of the legal system, history and culture in Germany. Special emphasis is placed on knowing about the values of the democratic political system of the Federal Republic of Germany and the most essential principles of the German state, like equality, tolerance and freedom of religion.*

(Concept for a Nationwide Integration Course, 2013)

# Curriculum for a Nationwide Orientation Course: Contents (2)

- Introduction: (2)
- *Module I: Politics in a democracy* (22)
- Test preparation “Living in Germany” (1)
- *Module II: History and responsibility* (11)
- *Module III: People and society* (15)
- Excursion (recommended) (5)
- Conclusion (including test preparation) (4)

( ) = recommended hours



# Curriculum for a Nationwide Orientation Course: Approaches

- Learner centered approach: Taking into account knowledge and experience of the participants
- Forward-looking approach: Using examples which touch participants' real life
- Activity-orientated approach: Broad variety of work and social forms



# Curriculum for a Nationwide Orientation Course: Methodic Principles

- “Elementarisation“
- Exemplification
- References to the present
- Changing perspectives

# Textbooks for the Orientation Courses

- Concrete proposals for the organisation of lessons
- Available at publishing houses
- Approval for the use in class only after a strict examination by the Federal Office for Migration und Refugees

# Orientation Course: Teachers' qualification

- All Orientation Course teachers must have a qualification to teach in Integration Courses.
- Additional voluntary seminar of 30 hours offered by seven institutions approved by the Federal Office
- Funded with 280 euros per participant
- More than 1,000 Integration Course teachers have taken advantage of this additional seminar so far.

# Orientation Course: Requirements on the Participants

- Language Level B1, at least A2
- Basic knowledge about everyday life in Germany
- Ability to learn independently
- Willingness to take an active part in the learning process



# Orientation Course: Advantages for the Participants

- Relevant contents
- Possibility to organise an excursion

# Orientation Course Test „Living in Germany“

- Format: Multiple choice
- 15 correct answers: Orientation Course test passed
- 17 correct answers: Naturalization test passed
- 33 questions, 3 of them specifically orientated to the Federal State where participants live
- Passing rate until 06/2013: about 92 per cent

# „Living in Germany“: Example 1

Germany is a state under the rule of law. What does it mean?

- All residents and the state have to abide by the law.
- The state does not have to abide by the law.
- Only Germans have to obey the laws.
- The law courts make the laws.



## „Living in Germany“: Example 2

Why is the time in fall 1989 called “Wende“ [turning point] in the GDR? During this period of time there was a political change in the GDR...

- from a dictatorship to a democracy.
- from a liberal market economy to socialism.
- from a monarchy to a social democracy.
- from a religious state to a communist state.

## „Living in Germany“: Example 3

When does legal nighttime peace begin in Germany?

- when the sun goes down.
- when the neighbours go to bed.
- at midnight.
- at 10 p.m.

# The Orientation Course from 2005 until Today

- First extension from 30 to 45 hours (2007)
- Curriculum for a Nationwide Orientation Course (2007)
- Nationwide test for the Orientation Course (2009)
- Second extension from 45 to 60 hours, no new contents added (2011)
- Test „Living in Germany“ (2013)

## On *www.bamf.de* you will find...

- Curriculum for the Nationwide Orientation Course
- All important facts and figures about the Integration Course
- List of the institutions which offer the seminars for the teachers in the Orientation Course
- The list of all approved textbooks for the language course and for the Orientation Course as well as other recommended teaching material
- A long term study about the Integration Courses
- The possibility to practice for the test „Living in Germany“ in an interactive way



Bundesamt  
für Migration  
und Flüchtlinge

**Thank you very much for your  
attention!**

Jens Reimann

Germany

Federal Office of Migration and Refugees

**[www.bamf.de](http://www.bamf.de)**