

## **Report from Copenhagen**

Compared to some European countries, immigration in Denmark is quite a new phenomenon. Indeed, this country has to face immigration (out of Scandinavian countries) for less than 20 years. So, now the integration of the new Danes, as the migrants are called, is a national preoccupation. Not only the government through the municipalities, but also associations and private companies work on the issue of integration. Some of the main targets for integration are first language courses and also the contacts with natives.

Language courses are quite developed in Denmark. Being able to speak Danish is the first step for integration. We have to underline that Danish is a very difficult language for foreign people and it is important to follow courses, as learning this language without lesson seems to be quite impossible. The access to language courses is easy. Very often, the courses are possible in the company itself or through associations which provide Danish courses.

What seems also well developed in Denmark is the family mentoring. Family mentoring allows to migrant family to have contact with Danish family. Thanks to this kind of exchange, the migrant family learns to understand the Danish culture, its habits and its customs. The migrant family can also exchange about its own culture. This mutual exchange is a way to create a link which will allow a better acceptance of differences on both sides. It is certainly because of this kind of event that the immigration can be easier. And also, the possibility for Danish family to know a migrant throughout his history, his culture, his family and his tastes is a way to ease a lot the acceptance of "the other, who is different".

Through the different contacts that we had, we felt a strong will to make easier the integration of the new Danes; even to facilitate the access to jobs with responsibilities. Denmark is quite responding to the issue of migrant's integration. It is aware that integration is a necessity nowadays to avoid later the problems which may occur in the other European countries such as France or Germany which have to deal with immigration for more than 50 years. Indeed those countries which had not a clear policy of integration at the beginning of the immigration after the second world war, have to face nowadays a lot of difficulties, such as a deep feeling of lack of identity with the second or third migrant generation. Such a lack involves violence, a feeling of no belonging, and a strong reject of the welcoming country.

Denmark has the wisdom to take advantage of the experiences of the other European countries to try to avoid their lacks, and mistakes. Immigration is a world reality which cannot be avoid, and Denmark has the will to make this reality a success. The sooner the new Danes will be integrated the better. This the new challenge of Denmark.

## **New Dane!**

When I heard that expression I was surprised. Since there are new Danes, I asked myself if existed or could exist "new French" with all the meanings that this implies. "New Danish" automatically entails the notion of former Danish. How to perceive the new identity given to migrants who move Denmark?

At first glance, the term "new Dane" implies that we make the difference between two categories of citizens. May we conclude that there are first choice Danish then the second zone Danish? We cannot draw that conclusion so quickly. It seems that it deserves at least a little reflection.

While in this description we may feel that these people are not fully members of the Danish community, it is no less true that there is an attempt to integrate (may be some might say assimilate) migrants to the Danish community. Because, even if they are called "new", they may also claim the Danish identity. From a French perspective, migrants or their descendants are not actually "new

French". Political correctness is that we talk about French but in the French minds, if it is not immediately followed by "*issu de l'immigration*", the belonging to the national community is not fully recognized by the population.

We can say that behind the question "Are you French?" certain hypocrisy is hidden. Indeed, the immigrants respond invariably that they have French nationality (if it is the case of course). "I'm French" implies a sense of national community and the adherence to its fundamental values. While the response "I have the French nationality" implies that the person has French passport. It is more a legal expression than an individual feeling.

I find that this definition of "new citizens" allows mutual recognition. That is, the migrant is recognized as coming from elsewhere, with a past, and a rupture is induced. On the other hand, the Danish (even if Denmark has benefited from migration of many Scandinavian countries) find their identity and culture also recognized. This difficulty, although it allows recognition of differences, creates at least two national identities. The challenge is to continue to evolve so that both identities can coexist. Denmark explores its own solutions that will enable the nation to invent a new Danish identity.

### **En français**

Voici une expression qui m'a interpellé dès le moment où elle a été prononcée. Puisqu'il existe des nouveaux Danois, je me suis demandée s'il existait ou s'il pourrait exister des « nouveaux Français » avec tout ce que cette acception implique. Cette expression que l'on pourrait littéralement traduire par « nouveau Danois », induirait automatiquement la notion d'ancien Danois. Comment percevoir cette identité nouvelle attribuée aux migrants qui s'installent au Danemark ?

A première vue, l'expression « new Dan » implique que l'on fait la différence entre deux catégories de citoyens. Pour autant peut-on en conclure qu'il y aurait des Danois de premier choix puis des Danois de seconde zone. Cette conclusion si elle était tirée maintenant me paraîtrait hâtive. Il me semble qu'elle mérite au moins que l'on creuse un tant soit peu la réflexion. S'il est vrai que dans cette désignation on retrouve l'idée que ces personnes ne sont pas totalement membres de la communauté danoise, il n'est pas moins vrai qu'il y a une tentative d'associer (peut-être certains diront d'assimiler) les migrants à la communauté danoise. Car, même s'ils sont qualifiés de « nouveaux », ils peuvent également revendiquer l'identité danoise, qui leur est attribuée même si nuancée par l'adjectif nouveau. Du point de vue hexagonal, les migrants ou leurs descendants ne constituent pas effectivement des « nouveaux Français ». Le politiquement correct veut que l'on parle de Français mais dans les esprits, s'il n'est pas immédiatement rajouté « issus de l'immigration », l'appartenance à la communauté nationale n'est pas entièrement reconnue par la population.

On peut dire qu'il y a derrière la question « Êtes-vous Français ? » une certaine hypocrisie. En effet, la personne issue de l'immigration répond invariablement qu'elle a la nationalité française. « Je suis Français » implique un sentiment d'appartenance à une communauté nationale et l'adhésion à ses valeurs fondamentales. Alors que la réponse « j'ai la nationalité française » implique que la personne a des papiers français, qu'elle est Française sur le papier, légalement.

Pour ma part, je trouve que cette idée de « nouveaux citoyens » permet une reconnaissance de part et d'autres. C'est à dire, le migrant est reconnu comme venant d'ailleurs, avec un passé, et une rupture est induite. D'un autre côté, les Danois (même si le Danemark a bénéficié de nombreuses migrations des pays scandinaves) trouvent leur identité culturelle également reconnue. Cette difficulté, même si elle permet la reconnaissance des différences, n'en crée pas moins deux identités nationales. Maintenant l'enjeu est de faire avancer et évoluer les deux identités pour qu'elles coexistent. Là, le Danemark explore des solutions qui lui seront propres et qui permettront à la nation danoise d'inventer une nouvelle identité.