

The Global Residence and Citizenship

REVIEW

3rd Quarter 2016 | The Quality of Nationality Issue

What is the Quality of Your
NATIONALITY?



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Migrants Should Become Members of a Cooperative


Prof. Dr. Margit Osterloh and Prof. Dr. Bruno S. Frey
Center for Research in Economics, Management and the Arts, Switzerland

In many countries, including Switzerland, a substantial political opposition to unlimited immigration has arisen. It is not directed against asylum seekers and persons fleeing war. Their acceptance is part of the humanitarian tradition of Switzerland and other countries. The opposition is directed against persons migrating for reasons of poverty. They expect to improve their economic situation in the future by participating in our social structures and social security systems. Their immigration must be regulated.

What can be done? We propose to exploit the idea of cooperatives in order to establish a humane form of immigration. Switzerland has a long tradition of cooperatives in alpine regions and for consumers. People wishing to become a member of a cooperative must purchase a participation certificate, and once membership is acquired, can then benefit from the cooperative's achievements. In the political sphere there are also cooperatives — indeed Switzerland positions itself as a Swiss Confederation, in German: *Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft*. Immigrants should be able to acquire a participation certificate allowing them to live and work in the country. There would be advantages for the migrants: a clear route to immigration without being dependent on human traffickers; the ability to operate as independent individuals rather than as part of a government-led immigration program; the removal of uncertainty around whether they will be accepted or rejected; and the potential to start work immediately and therefore integrate

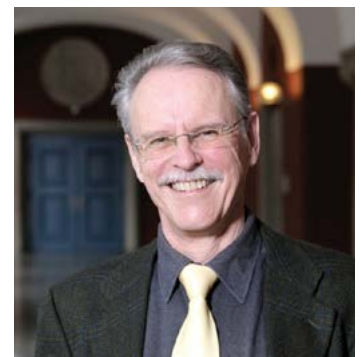
more quickly. The advantage for Switzerland, or any other country, would be that the revenue from the sale of the cooperative certificates would allow the country to more easily finance the necessary cooperative infrastructure. Moreover, there would be fewer problems with integration. The price for the immigration certificate would also allow the government to regulate the number of immigrants.

It might be argued that very few people will have the financial means to purchase the cooperative certificate to allow them to immigrate. By the same token however, only some people can afford to pay the often very high prices demanded by human traffickers to flee their country. Prospective immigrants could potentially take out a loan to buy the certificate: a credit market could emerge. Private sponsors, humanitarian organizations and firms seeking new employees could also finance the cost of the cooperative certificates. This would establish a useful direct contact and introduction for immigrants to support their integration.

For accepted asylum seekers, the price would be paid back. Immigrants who decide to leave Switzerland when the situation in their country of origin has improved would receive back at least part of the price. This could serve as capital to start an enterprise in their own country, aided by the knowledge and experience gained during their stay in Switzerland. Allowing immigrants to share in a cooperative would be profitable for all: the immigrants, their country of origin, and their country of choice. 



Margit Osterloh is a Permanent Visiting Professor at the University of Basel and Research Director at the Center for Research in Economics, Management and the Arts, Zurich. She was a full Professor for Business Administration at the University of Zurich and full Professor at Warwick Business School, University of Warwick. Osterloh was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Leuphana University, Lüneburg.



Bruno S. Frey is a Permanent Visiting Professor at the University of Basel and Research Director at the Center for Research in Economics, Management and the Arts, Zurich. He was a Professor at the Universities of Constance, Zurich, Chicago, Warwick and Friedrichshafen; he was awarded five Honorary Doctorates. Frey published 21 books and more than 600 articles in scholarly journals.