

Challenges for social welfare

In Hamburg

Counselling centres for interstate migrants, woman in distress and the homeless are already in place and are currently giving assistance to our new target groups and helping them with key issues such as: clarifying whether they qualify and are entitled to basic provision grants, health insurance or family support. Although staff in the information centres is highly qualified the amount of applications is overwhelming and thus capacity limits have been reached. The mobility of these groups, as well as the time period between their migration and repatriation leaves the German information centres faced with problems that they are only partly prepared for. The condition is acute – the consultation is complex. In addition there is a lack of support because the rights pertaining to the entitlement to social security benefits are not clearly defined or in the worst case non-existent.

In the countries of origin

Likewise, helplines and information centres in Romania and Bulgaria are faced with many challenges resulting from the new forms of mobility. Apart from losing qualified workers they are faced with the negative aspects of migration: separation of families, exploitation of workers and indebtedness due to a lack of knowledge about their rights and obligations in Germany. The information centres in the countries of origin frequently do not have sufficient information and a lack of contact persons to support the people and to prepare them for migration and work placement in Germany. Developing perspectives for those returning to their home countries poses another problem for the helplines and social support centres.

Where to find us

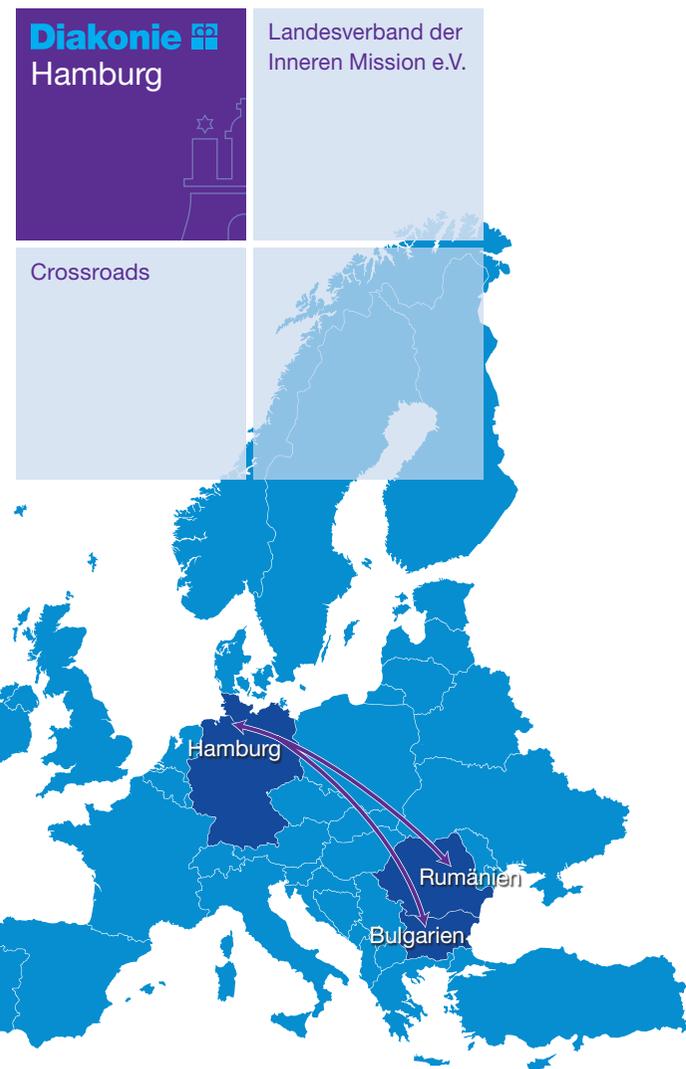
Crossroads is supported by:



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**Let Crossroads help you
organise social welfare
across borders**

Europe means mobility

What are the implications for a city like Hamburg?

The amount of people coming from eastern Europe and seeking help in Hamburg has increased significantly in the last couple of years: People are using the so called “Europe without borders” in their search for jobs, a better life and new perspectives. Many are very successful: they study, gain experience, work and live in the European Union – and this is helping Europe to unite.

There are, however, people who have been impacted negatively by this new form of mobility. This is especially true for marginalised people, who even in their home countries suffer poverty and discrimination. They make their way to EU member states hoping to find a better life, a job, fleeing poverty and to give their children a better future. Due to their limited language skills, lack of money and qualifications these men and women are, more often than not, forced to take on precarious jobs in: the harbour, the building industry, the agricultural sector or in abattoirs, in the cleaning service industry or as sex workers.

Many workers do not know their rights in Germany, often work under very difficult conditions and stand the threat of being exploited and becoming homeless.

Linking expertise

Our goals

To meet the challenges social welfare work is faced with, Crossroads wants to link the different helplines and information centres across borders to form a network. Our aim is to facilitate exchange between staff members of welfare institutions in Rumania, Bulgaria and Hamburg on a regular basis. We hope to increase understanding of and insight into working conditions in the respective countries. The transnational expert exchange strives to:

- Broaden knowledge about the social welfare systems and about the other country through local exchange.
- Establish social welfare networks that operate across borders.
- Encourage transnational co-operation between the individual institutions.
- Develop long-term, across border co-operation between the individual social workers.

Experience shows: successful social work must transcend national borders. So with Crossroads we are embarking on a new path. Crossroads aims to establish a social support network across borders, thereby, encouraging the development of further social welfare projects.

Getting to know the background

Our services:

Crossroads gives colleagues in the different welfare and social work institutions (e.g. aid for the homeless, social welfare for women in distress, assistance for interstate migrants) the opportunity to further and develop their expertise:

5-day Expert Exchange Programme with Romania/Bulgaria/Hamburg

- Getting to know the country
- Getting to know the social welfare work set-up locally
- Visiting selected institutions and observing the day-to-day work

Participants are briefed and debriefed before and after each trip, if and where necessary with the help of an interpreter. Colleagues from the other countries in turn visit Hamburg to get to know the local situation.

Crossroads supports further networking after completion of the exchange programme.