

Andreas Kämpf thanked Paul Sergier and introduced Bent Blindbaek, vice president of ENCC, who gave the next presentation.

Bent Blindbaek:

DENMARK AFTER THE QUARRELS OVER THE CARTOONS

During the last 20 years, **Bent Blindbaek** has undertaken three journeys to Turkey and he noticed the radical changes that had occurred there. He explained that rural towns had become cities with huge buildings. That was made possible mainly through the remittances the Turkish workers in Western European countries had sent back. That was one reason why the Turkish government never wanted them to become fully integrated in those countries (otherwise they would not have kept sending money to their families in Turkey). On the other hand Turkish workers were invited to work in Western Europe but they were expected to go back to their countries after a while. This is the historical background of the problem that developed over the past years. In 2005 some Danish editors printed cartoons of Mohammed to improve the selling of a children's book by provoking their readers. At first there were no reactions but soon some migrants that were already frustrated for other reasons used this incidence to start a huge conflict.

There are some problems in Denmark, Bent Blindbaek explained, that should be taken into account: There is only a really small interest among Danish people and Danish politicians in the participation of immigrants in cultural activities. There is not even any cultural policy. There are some volunteer initiatives or amateur art involving immigrants but in Denmark art policies are mainly aimed to rich people, for instance opera, ballet or theatre. Art and cultural work could be an instrument of integration and understanding among different people but at the moment it is not. In Blindbaek's opinion socio-cultural work can provide a platform for different people to come together, to learn and to help each other. Unfortunately migrants are even more afraid and isolated after this conflict over the cartoons. The few social projects that were tried out in Denmark repeatedly failed because of the low interest of the migrants. In his opinion, cultural centres should be places of encounter where people can speak about values. The cultural centres should act at a local level and stay open-minded and respectful for every culture. A good example for integration work is illustrated by the cultural centre of HUSET. The participation of migrants there is the highest in Denmark because there are no special projects for migrants. Immigrants there are seen as »normal people« that can participate. The basic approach of the centre, trying to avoid a paternalistic approach in their work with immigrants, is not »You have a problem, how can I help you?« but »What can we do together?, What would you like to do at my centre?«.

It has proven to be very effective. Bent Blindbaek used two slogans to exemplify this idea to end his presentation: the Birmingham city slogan, »Many cultures, one city«, and the slogan of Barcelona »Citizens – Users and Producers of culture«.