



# Success Stories



Researchers' Success Stories / October 2010

## Understanding the politicization of migration

In some countries, migration is a hot topic on the political agenda, in others it is not. Why is that? The FP7-project SOM is looking for answers to this question, coordinated by Gianni D'Amato, director of Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies.

Gianni D'Amato has conducted a lot of research into migration and citizenship, which, among others, resulted in a book on right-wing populism and migration in Switzerland. "I realized what an important phenomenon political mobilization is in Switzerland. And I wondered what the situation in Europe is like", says Gianni D'Amato.



A FP7-project was an opportunity to find out. ones to manage it." For the Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies (SFM), which is part of the University of Neuchâtel, the project is also an opportunity to gain experience in managing such a large project. It is also a question of prestige, an opportunity to position the SFM in political sociology research – not least in relation to similar European university institutes.

**"We were the ones who had the idea for the project, so we also wanted to be the ones to manage it."**

A FP7-project was an opportunity to find out.

### Why being a coordinator?

Gianni D'Amato sees several advantages of being the coordinator of a FP7-project. For one, "we were the ones who had the idea for the project, so we also wanted to be the

But then, apart from such objective reasons, there is also a subjective one: "To be hon-

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

SOM (Support and opposition to migration) aims to determine why and when potential conflicts over migration become politicized. The project focuses on four types of actors: the state, political parties, movements, and the media. In seven countries (Austria, Belgium, Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain, and Switzerland), researchers assess the demographics of migration, the legal and policy situation, the political opportunity structure (opportunities for migrants to participate in the political process), and the claims-making of these contentious groups deriving from a media screening. Based on these data, SOM will test hypotheses why migration is politicized in some countries and not in others.

est", says Gianni D'Amato laughing, "the benefit for me personally is that I can satisfy my curiosity about how research is managed in DG Research".

### Sharing knowledge

Collaborating with universities in other countries is inevitable for a project like SOM. "You need access to data in these countries, you need context knowledge, you need to know the political system, and you need to be known in a country for a successful knowledge transfer from research to politics and society in general", says Gianni D'Amato.

SOM is not a one-university-show, and being a coordinator is not a one-man-show: "I have a lot of support, particularly from my colleague and post-doc researcher Didier Ruedin", says Gianni D'Amato. And "in the preparation phase of the project, particularly when we had to plan the budget, Euresearch was very helpful as well – and still is in administrative questions."

### FACTS AND FIGURES

<b>Project Name:</b>	SOM – Support and opposition to migration. A cross national comparison of the politicization of migration
<b>Research Area:</b>	SSH-2007-5.1-01
<b>Coordinator:</b>	Prof. Gianni D'Amato
<b>Coordinating Institution:</b>	University of Neuchâtel
<b>Number of Partners:</b>	7
<b>Start Date - End Date</b>	2009/10/01 - 2012/09/30
<b>Duration</b>	36 months
<b>Project Cost / Funding:</b>	1.97 million Euro / 1.50 million Euro
<b>Contract type:</b>	FP7 - Small or medium-scale focused research project
<b>FP7 Reference Number:</b>	225522

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