

CARNEGIE COUNCIL *for Ethics in International Affairs*

Politics of Migration in Germany: Joel Rosenthal Interviews Cem Ozdemir and Michael Goering

Cem Ozdemir, Michael Goering, Joel H. Rosenthal

Transcript

This event was sponsored by the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs and by the American Friends of Bucerius.

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Introduction

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Hi, I'm Joel Rosenthal, president of the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs.

NINA SMIDT: And I'm Nina Smidt, president of the American Friends of Bucerius.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Thanks for tuning in to this series on global migration.

Human mobility and migration policy are critical global issues that deserve greater attention. As refugee populations rise in response to unrest in the Middle East, the definition of identity and belonging is expanding to include a greater diversity. Political institutions struggle to create and implement policies that balance humanitarianism, economic competition for high-skilled workers, and concerns for national security.

NINA SMIDT: Too often, discussions of migration devolve into partisanship and fear. Together, the Carnegie Council and the American Friends of Bucerius are undertaking a rational examination of the thorny challenges attached to migration. Through a series of taped interviews and public discussions, we are partnering to promote public discussion with issue experts and politicians.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: We hope these programs help you gain a greater understanding of the underlying causes of global migration. You will also walk away with a comparative view of strategies different sectors and states have used to address global migration.

NINA SMIDT: Please let us know if you have any questions or comments. You can visit us online at buceriususa.org or at carnegiecouncil.org

Remarks

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Welcome to the Carnegie Council. I am Joel Rosenthal, president of the Carnegie Council, and I'm sitting here with Cem Özdemir, co-chair of the [Green Party of Germany](#). Cem, thank you for joining us.

CEM ÖZDEMİR: It's a pleasure.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Also joining us is Michael Göring, CEO of the Hamburg-based [ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius Foundation](#).

Michael, welcome.

MICHAEL GÖRING: Thank you.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Over the next half hour we'll discuss issues of migration in Germany and talk about why Bucerius has decided to fund programs to examine these issues.

Cem, I'd like to start with you. First, I'd like to congratulate you. I understand the Green Party has done well in recent local elections under your leadership.

CEM ÖZDEMİR: That's true.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: I wonder if you could tell our audience a little bit about what the Green Party leadership means under your direction, and some of your goals and ideas for its future.

CEM ÖZDEMİR: We did very well in the last state and local election. There was a revolutionary moment for us in my home state, Baden-Württemberg, where for the first time we were the second party, so we were ahead of the Social Democrats.

We are building a coalition together with the Social Democrats. That means that we will have the state prime minister. That has never happened before in our history. We always used to be the little partner in a coalition government. But this time, although the difference is very little, we are ahead of the Social Democrats, so we will have the state prime minister.

2013 is the next general election. My job is to prepare for the general election because our goal is to bring the Greens back into power on the national level. Therefore, we still have a lot to do.

We benefited, which is sad to say, from the sad events in [Fukushima](#). But even before that, the Greens started to increase their votes. Now our job is to make sure that this is a permanent growth.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: I know that you've been talking about something like a [Green New Deal](#). What would be some of the principles in terms of the platform of a Green New Deal for Germany?

CEM ÖZDEMİR: The Green New Deal is an idea that was invented during the financial crisis in order to make sure that our economies don't collapse. So it was a program that was going back to the [New Deal](#) of the United States. The difference was that we wanted to use it to modernize our economy towards greening the economy.

But, of course, most of the money now is spent, so we cannot talk about the same size of programs anymore if we don't want to risk the budget. So what we have to do now is bring together one side of our climate goals, which is our carbon emission goals, and make sure that our economy is still booming, creating jobs, and guaranteeing jobs.

We now have a window of opportunity after Fukushima because, for the first time in German history,

practically all of the major parties in Germany agree that nuclear power in Germany should have no future.

We are discussing how long it will take until we close down the last nuclear power plant in Germany. We come closer every day. It would mean that we can be much faster than we ever predicted in achieving 100 percent renewables in Germany. That involves a lot of other areas as well, such as agricultural and traffic policy.

So in a way, to sum up, I could say that the ideas that we had and developed decades ago have now arrived in the center of the German debate. When I used to talk about this debate some decades ago, we were very marginalized.

Today, even Chancellor [Angela Merkel](#) is racing with us who to see who is greener.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Maybe you both could help me to make the link between environmental issues and environmental sustainability—this is what we think of when we think of the Green Party—and the issue of migration and immigration. Are there some core principles that link the two together in some way, or are they just separate issues?

CEM ÖZDEMİR: In a way, yes. The party was founded around the idea of sustainability, but it always was also a party of human rights, civil liberties, equal rights between men and women, and the fight against racism. That was always part of the Green tradition from the beginning.

In the beginning of the 1990s when we had lots of asylum seekers, the Green Party was against changing our constitution to make it tougher for asylum seekers to come to Germany. Even today, that is at the center of our policy. It's no coincidence that we were the first party with people of non-German origin entering parliaments or now being in the party leadership.

In a way, I could say that we have helped other parties to get used to that idea, because today we have the first members of government, members in the executive branch, of non-German origin, in other parties, with Christian Democrats and Social Democrats. Again, I believe that we started to, in a way, normalize Germany on that issue. We helped the other parties to understand that this change is not the end of Germany.

MICHAEL GÖRING: In the ZEIT Foundation there is no link between the Green Party and the topic of migration or integration. We see it as a big challenge for Germany.

Germany for many years had not realized that it had become a country of immigration. We, for many years thought of the concept of *Gastarbeiter*, the guest worker, who would come and would work in Germany for five or ten years and then would return back home to Greece, Spain, or Turkey. But that was from the very beginning the wrong concept. It never turned out that way.

Of the many people who came to Germany from these countries, most of them stayed, and it took up until 2006 before they first realized that Germany is a country of immigrants, which is in a way stupid, because the whole history of Europe is a history of constant migration. There has been a constant migration from other parts of Europe to Central Europe, from Central Europe to the borderlines of Europe. So you really wonder how that happened.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Is there an idea or an image of integration in Germany? Here we have the

melting pot. Most Americans understand that intuitively in some way. It's a matter of some discussion what it actually means, but it's sort of agreed upon as a goal or as an aspiration. But what about integration in Germany? Is it just an idea that's up for grabs, of what it actually means?

MICHAEL GÖRING: I don't think it is the idea of melting pot versus multiculturalism or affirmative action. We have to see that many of the people who came to Germany, all in all about 5 to 6 million, that they bring so much into our country, so many new ideas, so much brains, and it is really a pity that we didn't use their talent from the very beginning.

Cem Özdemir is an example of something very special in his generation, that he came to be a member of the German Parliament. Cem was the first immigrant member of parliament in Germany. Isn't that correct?

CEM ÖZDEMİR: At the national level, yes.

MICHAEL GÖRING: Just imagine that the first million people from Greece, Spain, Portugal—the millionth guest worker arrived in 1964. There has been a very long tradition of people immigrating into Germany, and it took so long before we realized the many talents that had come to Germany.

What we try to do now in the Foundation is to put on a couple of programs for integrating the people who have come from different parts of Europe and also from different parts of the world, and to really see that each member of this immigrant population can display all the talents that they have.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Cem, could you say a little bit about the policy, what it has been, what has worked, what hasn't worked, and what some of your ideas are?

CEM ÖZDEMİR: I would love to come back to your question regarding integration, because it is a difficult question to answer. I have a definition, but I'm not sure whether it's shared by everybody. My definition would be a republican definition: Everybody who is born in Germany, who grows up in Germany, and everybody, if we take those who came to Germany, who shows an effort to learn the language, which obviously is necessary to have dialogue with each other—also to use your rights you need the language; everybody who sticks to the constitution and shows an effort to adapt to the labor market and support his children as best as possible during school, to my definition belongs to our country and has every right to become a citizen.

But I doubt whether that is shared by everybody. And that's exactly our problem in Germany, that we do not have something like a national consensus about what we expect people who come to Germany to do in order to become full citizens. That explains the difficulties and the challenging situation that we are having, because a lot of people with non-German backgrounds always ask, "What do I have to do in order to really belong to the society?"

I don't want to be too personal, but in my own case, I am not only a citizen, I am a member of Parliament, so I serve my country. Still, journalists and intellectuals sometimes ask me whether I have a German passport. People didn't know that you need to have a German passport in order to be a member of the parliament. That was even before we made the [PISA](#) [Programme for International Student Assessment] study about the educational level in Germany.

I remember journalists saying "the Turk with a German passport." What is a Turk with a German passport? As far as I know in our constitution, you are either a citizen or you are not a citizen. There

is no third category.

Let's be fair. Germany has moved ahead. You said 2006 was the turning moment. I would even go beyond that. I think 2000 was a very important point where we changed things. That was when we were in power and we established birthrights in Germany. This was the first time in German history that we were going beyond the blood tradition and making sure that children that are born in our country are not foreigners anymore.

When the government changed and Mr. [Schäuble](#), who was a Christian Democrat, became minister of interior, he did something. And probably because he was a Christian Democrat coming from the center right, he could do things that our administration was scared to touch. He made a conference and invited people from Muslim umbrella organizations to discuss how to integrate Muslims into mainstream German society. That shows that slowly but surely that Germany is moving towards some kind of national consensus, at least on the level of the political parties; that the debate is not about whether we live together, the debate is about how we live together. The earlier we start to define the conditions, the better it is for everybody.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Cem, you mentioned the PISA study. Michael, would you say a little bit more about that?

MICHAEL GÖRING: The PISA study means that there has been a quality assessment of what our kids in school learn and what they don't learn. Germany was not at the very top of that list. It was in the middle and in some parts even much further down on the list. Finland was the country in Europe that got most of the high results, and we didn't.

Since then, we really are trying very hard in Germany to see what we can do about the many children from immigrant backgrounds. As a public-benefit foundation, we established a new program to make more students with immigrant backgrounds aware of the fact that they should become teachers.

We put on a special program to promote these students when they are in their last two classes at high school and to help them go to college, and then even to university, in order to become teachers at schools, high schools, and universities. In some of the big cities in Germany you have classes with 50-60 percent of the kids coming from immigrant families, but only 2 or 3 percent of their teachers have a multicultural or immigrant background. We should really work very hard on changing this.

It will work in both directions, because for a German family, to see that the teacher comes from Turkey, Russia or Greece, that also makes a difference.

It would help many of the younger students to see that the teacher made it, as Cem made it, in society. They will be encouraged to put more effort into their own upbringing and their own career in order to also make it.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: I suppose, this is another way to get at the issue of social mobility as well?

MICHAEL GÖRING: Yes. And we need some models for that.

CEM ÖZDEMİR: Upward mobility is the crucial point. I could not agree more.

MICHAEL GÖRING: Right.

CEM ÖZDEMİR: I believe the key to success is education policy, because the moment you manage that—independent from whether your parents are rich or poor, whether your parents are born in Germany, Anatolia, or elsewhere in the world—all children should have an equal chance in school. That is the point when we will have a society where we can talk about equal chances. But unfortunately, we still have to go a long way to reach that point.

MICHAEL GÖRING: Exactly.

CEM ÖZDEMİR: But the debate has started, and foundations such as yours are doing really important work.

Also, I have to say inside the political area, the debate has moved ahead finally. The study was a shock for Germany because we always perceived ourselves as the one country whose universities were way ahead of the rest of the world, and then we had to realize that that's not the case.

One mistake we did at the beginning was that we thought the bad results had to do with the high number of people of color, so if you would exclude them, that we would be perfect. But then we had to realize that that's not the case, because German working-class children are not doing well in the German school system either. So this is clear proof that we are not talking about a race problem.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: It's not race; it's class.

CEM ÖZDEMİR: We're talking about a class problem, exactly.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: We are living in a particular moment right now, and I couldn't help but observe last fall that there were three speeches given by European leaders all with a similar theme, which could be summarized as "multiculturalism has failed"—Chancellor Merkel, President [Sarkozy](#), and Prime Minister [Cameron](#)—all had some variation of this theme. Then also, there has been much discussion in Germany of this book by [Thilo Sarrazin](#).

How would you respond to that? Do you feel like you're pushing against this moment where there's this concern, or do you think you have something that can help to answer these questions?

CEM ÖZDEMİR: Two remarks to this.

First, I believe in all those cases with the politicians that you quoted have to do with domestic problems. So it's a response to domestic debates. In a way, these politicians try to make sure that the right wing of the political spectrum doesn't get lost, because we have a problem throughout Europe where we get populist movements getting stronger and stronger, entering the parliaments, and in some cases even entering government. So that is the first explanation.

The second explanation is in the definition of multiculturalism or a multicultural society. I don't want to go to [Charles Taylor](#) and that debate. But just for a second, Angela Merkel and others use "multiculturalism" as a word to describe parallel societies. If that is what is meant by multiculturalism, I have nothing to do with it.

To me "multicultural society" is just a description of the society in which we can be objective about

things.

Multiculturalism means that people can get married, but also people who don't want to marry can live together. There was a time when that was not normal in Germany. Just look at the 1950s.

Multiculturalism means that people who are gay or lesbian are equal citizens. That wasn't the case some decades ago. Multiculturalism also means that people of different origins live together in one society.

Multiculturalism is the reality. Integration is the goal. If we define it this way, there is not a lot to dispute. But, unfortunately, it's a lost battle because the right has managed to hijack the word "multiculturalism" and has managed to give it a different definition.

So whenever you use that word in Germany, and in most of the other European countries, people have images of failed integration cases, children that drop out from schools, parallel societies, and even forced marriage and honor killings.

Maybe we should go ahead and, instead of losing time with disputing what is the reality of multiculturalism, let's talk about integration. That's what I try to do in the German context.

MICHAEL GÖRING: There is a danger of parallel societies in Germany. But I don't think that these parallel societies work along ethnic lines. It's really more along class lines. I hope that the demographic factor will help us to get away from these parallel societies, as we really need everybody now in Germany to have a good place to work and to help our economy go on. The demographic factor in Germany is one that will make it very difficult in about five or ten years, if we do not find more people entering the country.

I don't think that Germany is prepared enough to be attractive to people from other parts of Europe or of the world to come to work, go to school, college, or university in Germany. I really think we have to do a complete reversal, to become as attractive as possible, so that many people from the outside will help Germany, to help this part of Europe to get on on the same kind of level that it is used to.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: What are some of the elements of that positive agenda? You already mentioned education.

MICHAEL GÖRING: Yes. Education is the key to it. Right now we have had many attempts, especially by German foundations but also through politics, to integrate those who want to be integrated, those who go to high school. It's more difficult to find access to those 16-to-25-year-olds who have dropped out, who have not found a job yet, and who find it more and more difficult to get a decent place to live.

As a foundation, just as with your foundation, we have to concern ourselves with everybody, including those who have given up on themselves, and try to get them back into society. I see certain reasons why that may happen. One is the demographic factor that gives everybody a valuable place in the working force.

CEM ÖZDEMİR: We need some kind of national consensus in Germany. This also involves people of non-German origin, that they themselves also have to accept that they now belong to another society and that that's their society, that they are not living in a diaspora situation.

That involves, in particular, the generation of my parents. For them it's not easy, because nobody prepared them. Neither their home countries nor the receiving countries ever spent a moment in explaining to them what is happening with their lives.

Let's not forget that we are talking about people coming from agricultural societies. For them to go even from a rural area in the east of Turkey to Istanbul is like jumping from one century to another. We brought these people into highly complex societies just to use their labor, but nobody thought that maybe these people should be prepared, they should be trained with the language, with the society, and so on.

Then, what we also have to see is that Germany is not a very experienced society when it comes to diversity. So maybe I should say this also to myself, be a little bit more relaxed, because we are talking about an extremely complicated process. To expect that this process is 100 percent successful in one generation is not very realistic.

It will take some time and it will take a lot of effort. And the process is never over because as soon as you have somebody new coming over, you have to start from the beginning. I would advise my own society to learn from countries that are more experienced with diversity, and one of these countries is the country in which we are currently [i.e. the United States].

MICHAEL GÖRING: But it is amazing, if you look at history, that Germany behaves the way it behaves. In the 18th century, we had the Huguenots who came into Germany. At the end of the 19th century, beginning of the 20th century, millions of people from Poland came to work in the Ruhr area, and they were integrated within two generations at least. I don't know whether it is all—

CEM ÖZDEMİR: Sorry for interrupting, but we know in the Huguenots' case it took around one century, and they were privileged people because they had the same religion, most of them were officially invited, the Prussians supported them as much as they could. And there it took one century.

I don't know what the situation will look like in 30 or 50 years from now, but part of the difference is the examples you've given—and I think they are very good examples—are examples of assimilation. Because what is left from the Huguenots? Just the family name, nothing else, and some names of villages.

MICHAEL GÖRING: They have been assimilated.

CEM ÖZDEMİR: And the same with Poles. The family name is the only thing that remains, nothing else. Nobody speaks Polish anymore. Most of them have no links to Poland anymore.

In the Turkish case and in some of the other cases, because of media, telecommunication, and the opportunities to travel, it might be different. I am careful because I don't know how it will look. But it might be different. There might be more of a hyphenated identity in the future, where people become German citizens, and in Europe become good Europeans, but at the same time have a link to Turkey. That link might stay over generations. Again, I don't know, but that's my guess.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Would this be a positive development, in the sense—

CEM ÖZDEMİR: It's just reality. I haven't said whether it's good or bad. I just as a politician have to

look at realities, and this is how it is.

I come from that community, so I believe that I know the community. If you ask the community to get assimilated, probably the majority won't follow.

By the way, assimilation is a right, everybody has the right to assimilate. It is also a right that you are protected from your own community if they tell you you are not allowed to assimilate.

Sometimes that even involves the prime minister of the sending country, in the case of Mr. [Erdogan](#) from Turkey, who talks about assimilation as a crime against humanity. I believe he has no right to say that. If Turkish citizens in Germany want to be assimilated, it's their perfect right and I have to protect it.

But if we ask them to get assimilated, that won't happen. The path will probably be integration. One word for the feeling they have is "hyphenated identity." It's some kind of mixture of the culture; sometimes it's even folkloristic, the culture how they believe it was, because the culture in Turkey also has changed, the things they find in the country in which they live. If we force them, you have to choose one or the other, it might not happen.

MICHAEL GÖRING: Would you consider yourself as having a hyphenated identity? How does that work? Is it a split identity?

CEM ÖZDEMİR: There is no single hyphenated identity. It's completely individual. In my case, I take off my shoes when I enter my home. I don't think that the constitution forbids me that. The constitution as far as I know doesn't say anything about shoes at home.

MICHAEL GÖRING: That's not a hyphenated identity.

CEM ÖZDEMİR: Well, my wife is Argentinian and she thinks that shoes belong to clothing and she thinks it's completely absurd. We can deal with it. I have maybe different traditions with cooking and with eating. But I am still a good citizen. I speak Turkish with my parents. I have a different language. Officially, I'm a Muslim. But I'm still a citizen of Germany. That's what I mean by hyphenated identity.

The question is: If you go to the street in Germany and ask elderly people—and I say elderly people because they are the ones who really have to deal with a huge challenge. Nobody explained to them what's going on. Their world has completely changed, it looks completely different. I can understand that they have so many questions and there is nobody who answers their questions.

If you ask them, "Do you believe that a mosque and Muslims belong to your neighborhood and belong to your country?" probably a lot of them would say "No." I can understand why they say no, because nobody helped them to understand that part of globalization is that the people you used to see on TV are now your neighbors.

We still have a long way to go there and a lot to explain. I don't want to be one-sided. This also involves the people who came. As I said before, they also have to understand that they have some responsibilities regarding the country in which they live today.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Don't you think, though, that the reality of modern life in a globalized world is that we all have multiple identities? We certainly have national identities.

CEM ÖZDEMİR: Certainly, yes.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: But we also have religious identities, we have professional identities, we have identities of solidarity around issues that we care about. [Amartya Sen](#) and other people have written about this, and the idea of how malleable identity really is, and that identities can shift very simply, and sometimes tragically. He uses the example of in Rwanda, Rwandans became Tutsis and Hutus. There is a certain danger in this, but there is also a certain opportunity in thinking along these lines.

CEM ÖZDEMİR: You are right. I could not agree more. But let's not forget this is part of the reality: there are also those who speak one language, who never left their home, who never left their village, and who don't want to change. They have every right to live like that. For them it's a threat. For them all these changes are much too quick and they have difficulties which follow.

As a politician, I have the luxury to be the leader of a party which is elected by people who believe in living together with different cultures and see that as some kind of richness. But I know from my colleagues from other parties, they have those voters who ask questions: "Why are these people here? Why do they change our lives? Why don't they assimilate?"

So whether you like it or not, it's a political factor and you cannot ignore it.

MICHAEL GORING: But maybe it helps if you realize yourself that each individual has a number of identities and that you contain within yourself multiculturalism, especially in your family, these globalized families now.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Right.

MICHAEL GORING: So I'm sometimes optimistic that we can develop something new. Maybe it's the hyphenated society, the hyphenated individual that you thought of.

CEM ÖZDEMİR: Well, what certainly helps is when you confuse those who have questions marks or sometimes stereotypes. In my case, when I speak [Swabian](#), it helps a lot, because even extremely conservative people who have very big difficulties when I say that I am a German citizen, that I belong to Germany, the moment I open my mouth and I speak German with the accent of the region where I grew up and I speak to somebody who comes from the same region, there is something that unites us: we speak the same dialect. At that moment some of the stereotypes can melt.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Here in the United States, though, there is one place where the hyphenated identity actually makes perfect sense and people seem to accept it, and that is in the area of freedom of religion. It's accepted that one would be American and also whatever one's religious persuasion would be. Is that more of a difficulty in Germany than it might be here in the United States, this idea of a plurality of religions and yet being authentically German, which is a Christian nation in some way?

CEM ÖZDEMİR: Certainly yes, that's a crucial difference. Although the irony is that Germany is less religious than the United States. We see some churches getting less packed than they used to be. On the other side, people see mosques getting more and more packed. People see that as a threat.

Even those who do not practice religion and don't go to church, discover all of a sudden that they

have a Christian heritage. When making a decision on where you send your children, they send their children to Christian schools to make sure that the number of people of color or from certain classes is lower. So we see that it plays more and more of a role.

I would say that the role of religion is exaggerated. We live in a time where practically every problem is explained with religion or with Islam. Let me give you an example. I am a kindergarten teacher and a social worker. When we had a meeting with the parents, somebody of German origin didn't come to the meeting. Let's say a mother didn't come to the meeting. It was clear it was because of the social problems she has. That was the explanation. When the Turkish mother didn't come, it was a religious problem, it was because she was a Muslim.

So we got used completely to explaining every problem on the planet with Islam and with religion. I believe that is not a good direction.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Do you see prospects for Germany becoming a genuinely more open society? By "open" I mean more accepting, more social mobility, and maybe, to embarrass you just a little bit, I know that your political career has been compared to that of President [Obama](#)—

CEM ÖZDEMİR: I never did that.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: —that is, sort of the embodiment of this experience, of a global and cosmopolitan background being viable.

CEM ÖZDEMİR: Well, I'm optimistic because, as I said before, there are a lot of people inside even the Christian Democratic Party, like Mr. [Schäuble](#), who understood that it is in the very interest of our nation that we have to talk about the conditions under which we live together and that there is no alternative. Independent from whether people like it or not, we have to talk about it and we have to discuss these questions, including the difficult ones.

The second reason why I am optimistic is that we are forming new alliances with the business community. The business community is very outspoken. They cannot afford to have racism in their companies. For them it is very clear for the reasons that you already pointed out. The demographic challenge of Germany forces us to get more open and to make sure that children of people who came decades ago from other countries are more successful in our schools. It's a viable alternative.

So independent almost from what we politicians do, realities force us.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: It will be seen as in your interests to move in this direction.

CEM ÖZDEMİR: Yes, absolutely.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Last question: Do you think that young people, just sort of intuitively, understand this issue better? In this country they do, in terms of openness, acceptance, and a pluralistic approach to life.

MICHAEL GORING: Yes, I think they do. The bad thing is that in Germany a book like that one that you mentioned by Sarrazin, these examples always get onto the TV news.

But my oldest daughter is a schoolteacher at a very normal Hamburg school. I talk to her about these

problems, and she has always strengthened my optimistic view that she hardly faces any problem with kids from different backgrounds or migrant backgrounds, and if there are problems, then they are social problems rather than ethnic problems.

So I try to remain optimistic, and I have every reason to do so.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Great. On that note, we'll conclude. It's always good to conclude on a note of optimism.

Cem, thank you very much for coming and sharing your ideas and good luck with your political career.

CEM ÖZDEMİR: It was a pleasure. Thank you.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Michael, thank you.

MICHAEL GORING: A great pleasure, Joel.

JOEL ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

Audio

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