

To the Editor of "The New York Review of Books"

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Sir,

I couldn't agree more with Timothy Garton Ash's reasoning in his "Freedom and Diversity..." (NYRB, Nov. 22, 2012). However, I would emphasize the criterion of social stability. Every society has a certain capacity to absorb successfully new arrivals, and immigrants have also a limited capacity to adapt. We must consider the numbers of immigrants (in any given span of time) relative to the receiving country's population, and the cultural differences involved. A disproportionate influx of a large number of immigrants, if they are very culturally different, may destabilize the situation. Even under the most favorable circumstances, social integration takes very long. The diversity and spontaneity of immigration processes makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the immigrants to self-organize as an entity, and voice their expectations *vis à vis* the receiving society. It is chiefly the latter (i.e. its political representation) that is responsible for working out a proper strategy for social integration to provide for the implementation of the 'freedom and diversity' principle for all, while preserving social stability.

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