Introduction

Put forty academics in a room and you can be reassured that the meeting ends in cacophony. It is common knowledge that managing academics is perhaps one of the most difficult tasks out there. Imagine how complex it would be to manage an academic network with forty research institutes, from different disciplines, different countries, different methodological backgrounds, and representing more than 800 individual scholars from all over Europe.

Yet, this is precisely what Maurice Crul as coordinator and Rainer Bauböck as chair of the Board of Directors have managed to achieve with the IMISCOE Research Network. The energy and vision put into the network by Maurice and Rainer have made IMISCOE to what it is now. They have managed to innovate the network and prepare it for the future, in a context where migration studies has developed and expanded rapidly as a research field. Furthermore, and this is characteristic for both Maurice and Rainer, they have kept the focus of the network on its academic excellence, but also with clear reference to the immense social and political challenges that migration involves in contemporary societies.

Maurice has been involved in the IMISCOE research network almost since its very beginning. Amongst others with the TIES project and a publication series attached to this project, he has helped shape the research agenda on which IMISCOE is now focused. Since 2014 Maurice has been coordinator of the IMISCOE Research Network, and has helped to innovate the network in a way that reflects the requirements of present-day academia. Personally, a contribution from Maurice that I value and will miss the most, is his clarity of vision on what the purpose of IMISCOE should be in the first place: a platform for high-quality research and capacity building. Maurice is leaving some lasting legacies for the network, such as transformed book series, a rapidly expanded network, a very active PhD Network and of course a Solidarity Fund for scholars from Turkey.

Rainer has been chair of the IMISCOE Board of Directors since 2014. An amazing quality of Rainer has been to not only keep together a rapidly expanding board of directors, but also to get all the noses in the same direction. In spite of the fact that the BD hardly fits in one room anymore, and especially not around one round table, Rainer as BD chair has managed to maintain a direct involvement for all BD members in the network’s activities. The BD still operates on a strongly personal basis where everyone knows each other and can communicate very directly, rather than as a more impersonal ‘general assembly’.

I also think we have to value how Maurice and Rainer have managed to overcome a ‘tragedy of commons’ that has become increasingly pertinent in contemporary academia. In spite of the importance of networks like IMISCOE to all of us as migration scholars, we also have to cope with an academic environment that seems to promote individualization. It is this achievement of Maurice and Rainer as persons that we as IMISCOE should value and honor. The network is deeply indebted to them!

This book is to make sure that all the effort that Maurice and Rainer have put into the network, will not be forgotten. It provides a photographic overview of various activities in the network since 2014, with a special focus of course on Maurice’s and Rainer’s role in these activities. We hope you enjoy the book and will cherish all these moments just as we will do!

On behalf of the IMISCOE Editorial Board and Network Office

Peter Scholten