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Dear colleagues and friends!

I am happy to have the honor to speak at the opening of this conference on *Highly Skilled Women Integration Into the Labor Market: Challenges, Opportunities and Responses*. It is a very important topic you have chosen to discuss today, and I am happy that the University's Research Platform on "Migration and Integration Research" could give support for this event that brings together researchers and practitioners from Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and United Kingdom, from Universities and international organizations and networks, and the local Viennese city administration.

Being aware that some among you may not be familiar with the architecture of the University of Vienna, I will give a very brief description of status, functioning and mission of the Research Platform "Migration and Integration Research". The University of Vienna has implemented Research Platforms, few years ago, as an institutional framework for the creation of inter- and multidisciplinary networks of researchers, coming from different academic disciplines, representing a variety of methodological approaches, being engaged in numerous scientific projects, both basic and applied research, but with at least one common interest: to exchange theoretical and methodological perspectives, to learn from one another, to develop a common understanding of what – in our case – these two key words may mean: *Migration* and *Integration*. We all agree, I assume: These are difficult words, porous, unclear and complex in meaning and use – and, this is the most important, they are also normative. The basic problem for us, as social scientists, is well known: it consists in the challenge to

formulate and to design our research in a way that dissociates us from the dominant representations and discourses, without leading to a complete separation between science and society. As social scientists we are, *per definition*, involved in the production of societally relevant knowledge that may nourish or even change public debate, and sometimes influence political decisions. *Savoir pour prévoir, afin de pouvoir*. Needless to say, that both society and social sciences fundamentally have changed since Auguste Comte's famous statement. But remembering his slogan invites to think critically over the sometimes paradox or inverse impacts of our research, for instance with regard to the categories and concepts we use and with which we may reproduce dominant self-images of today's society, concerning its form and functioning.

Some sociologists argue that migration and integration have become un-words, contaminated by populist discourse strategies that evoke xenophobic sentiments, and call for hyper-restrictive migration and integration policies. Thus, there are good reasons to give up these terms, since they have lost analytical force and value, and more and more in contradiction with the changing (and increasingly heterogeneous and complex) character of mobility processes and societal incorporation. The research platform does not defend a certain concept of migration and integration. According to its self-understanding, it serves rather as an open space for an academic and inter disciplinary debate on the analytical tools we may use in explaining and understanding the causes and effects of processes of mobility in a world which is marked not only by in- and excluding border and labor market regimes (of relevance also in the context of the European integration process), but also by deeply rooted and institutionalized forms and structures of inequalities. This general context determines also the way how migration and integration is represented and justified. Interestingly, *sub* und *under* are still the dominant prefixes, not only in public discourse, also in mainstream research.

The topic of this seminar is so important because it contributes also to a change of perspective. Discussing and analyzing the experiences and obstacles of highly skilled migrant women's integration into the labor market needs, on the one hand, an intersectional methodology. This will help to reveal the multi-facet social realities that lie behind the migrant-category, and this will also help to overcome the so called deficit-oriented approach. On the other hand, it demands a precise zooming on the dynamics and mechanisms of inequality production and discrimination.

I would very much like to thank Anelise Gomes de Araujo and Neha Chatwanifor organizing this conference. I wish you all an inspiring seminar and enriching discussions which will give motivation to stick on working on this important topic

Thank you.