Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 11890
04 May 2009

A European policy for European citizens resident outside their country of origin

Motion for a recommendation
tabled by Mr Daniel DUCARME and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Taking into consideration the "1st Meeting of Europeans Resident Outside their Country of Origin", which was held in Paris on 30 September 2008 under the French Presidency of the European Union, at the initiative of the European Union Commission for the Assembly of French Citizens Overseas and the "Paris Declaration for a Genuine European Policy on European Citizens Resident Outside their Country of Origin" adopted by the European and Maghreb delegations that would represent their expatriates following this meeting;

Considering that all European citizens resident outside the European Union are the bearers of a specifically European message in defence of Europe's values (human rights and the rights of the citizen, the rights of women and children, protection of the environment, and the fight against world famine) in accordance with the foundations and aims pursued by the Council of Europe;

Having regard to the Council of Europe's Assembly motion for a resolution dated 31 January 2008 on European expatriates and their relations with their country of origin (doc 11520);

Having regard to the WEU's December 2008 report on the common security and defence strategy for Europe, which requires an early warning system to be put in place for the protection of European citizens in their own countries and abroad, and to enable prompt humanitarian intervention (doc A/2028);

Having regard to the European Union Treaties establishing freedom of movement as one of the fundamental freedoms in Europe, European Directive 2004/38/EC on the freedom of movement and residence of citizens within Europe, the European Commission's 2007 White Paper, "Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013", the European action plan for employment mobility 2007-2010, the December 2008 report by the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, "Implementation of the European security strategy – Providing security in a changing world" (17104/08);

Considering the growing number of Europeans settling outside their country of origin, both inside and outside the European Union;

Considering that European policies should apply to all expatriated European citizens, whether in the European Union or in non-EU countries;

Considering that Europeans resident outside their country of origin contribute to improved economic, social, cultural and knowledge exchanges in Europe and elsewhere in the world;

Considering that 78% of Europeans would like to see the creation of a European Civilian Protection Force (cf Eurobarometer), and bearing in mind the forthcoming foreign policy reforms as planned in the Lisbon Treaty and by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy;

Considering the notorious difficulties that European expatriates resident in a European country other than their own have experienced in gaining access to health care, civil and family rights and social welfare, despite the recent progress made by the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSSCO) in Brussels on 16 and 17 December 2008;

Having regard to the motion for a resolution on the same subject tabled to the European Parliament by Elisabeth Morin and others;

The Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and the governments of member states:

– contribute to the development of a specific policy for Europeans resident outside their country of origin to ensure that it includes a dimension relating to the countries bordering the European Union, particularly those countries which are members both of the Council of Europe and the Union for the Mediterranean, so that specific agreements concerning all expatriates and bi-nationals can be concluded;

– ensure that the Council of Europe and its member states are involved in:

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i. harmonising European social security systems so that all European citizens, whatever their country of residence, have equal cover, and so that those Europeans who have worked in a European country other than their country of origin automatically retain their supplementary retirement benefits in accordance with national regulations;

ii. evaluating the conditions under which European expatriates have access to justice as part of a specific policy as laid out in the “Civil Justice” programme 2007-2013 dedicated to European expatriates;

iii. establishing a “European contact”, under the European Programme to Simplify Administrative Procedures, whose role – which should be given a defined legal status – would be to provide a “personalised European administrative service” in national, regional and/or local administrative institutions. The tasks of this European contact should be updated through a “Public Service Erasmus scheme”, on an experimental basis in countries bordering the EU;

iv. creating an internet portal “expateurope.eu”. This interactive “hub” service, providing a channel of contact, and administrative and emergency assistance, should be such as to offer an appropriate response to the concerns of European expatriates, in association with the “SOLVIT” system and national networks;

v. organising a European diplomatic and consular network offering EU citizens security and the ability to contact European and EU member-state authorities easily from anywhere in the world;

vi. implementing an internal and external foreign protection force for European expatriates in the event of natural disasters or of civil or military conflict;

– provide EU members states with a democratic system of representation for their expatriates;

– allow nationals of EU member states to take on other nationalities without necessarily losing their nationality of origin;

– uphold the right of European expatriates resident in EU member states to vote at local, regional, national and European elections, and the right of European expatriates living outside the EU to vote in elections in their country of origin;

– decide on the wording of a “White Paper for a European Policy for European Citizens Resident Outside their Country of Origin” to set out the five-yearly objectives of a European Policy for European Citizens Resident Outside their Country of Origin, which will, among other things, take stock of the situation and, on that basis, make financial means available for implementing this European policy in conjunction with EU policy;

– ensure that Europeans resident outside their country of origin are granted genuine political recognition by:

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i. making this issue part of the remit of the European Commission, whereby one of its members is responsible for the policy on European citizens resident outside their country of origin, and for managing and updating a one-stop portal – expateurope – accessible to all Europeans;

ii. creating a European office for Europeans resident outside their country of origin, which will ensure that the European policy for those Europeans resident outside their country of origin is followed up and monitored;

iii. creating an ad hoc parliamentary committee in the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of Euromed and of the UM;

iv. reserving seats for duly mandated representatives of expatriates in the EU's Social and Economic Committee;

v. creating a Council of Europe Consultative Council of European Expatriates, made up of the national representatives of Europeans resident outside their country of origin;

vi. organising an annual "Meeting of Europeans on the Move", as part of the official programme of the Presidency-in-office of the European Union, in addition to creating a permanent monitoring committee within the European institutions.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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BÉTEILLE Laurent, France, EPP/CD
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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group