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Migrants and refugees: a continuing challenge for the Council of Europe

Committee Opinion¹

Committee on Culture, Science and Education
Rapporteur: Mr Kent OLSSON, Sweden

A. Conclusions of the committee

1. The Committee on Culture, Science and Education congratulates the rapporteur of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, Mrs Doris Fiala (Switzerland, ALDE) on her excellent report and fully supports the proposed draft recommendation.
2. The Committee wishes to propose a few amendments in order to add aspects to the draft recommendation in the areas of culture, education and youth, all of which are very important for migrants and refugees as well as for their host countries.

B. Proposed amendments to the draft recommendation

Amendment A (to the draft recommendation)

In paragraph 6, after the words “promote cultural diversity and raise the standards of integration of migrants and refugees in European societies”, insert the following words: “including through enhanced access to education and culture in their host countries”

Amendment B (to the draft recommendation)

At the end of paragraph 7, add the following sentence: “Practical action should be pursued in order to support also social competencies as well as gender equality, for instance through sport.”

Amendment C (to the draft recommendation)

At the end of paragraph 11.2.3, add the following words: “including guidelines on the right to take part in cultural life and the right to education”

Amendment D (to the draft recommendation)

After paragraph 11.2.3, insert the following sub-paragraph: “encouraging the widest possible application of Article VII of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (ETS No. 165) and drawing up guidelines on the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation under Article VII of this convention;”

1. See [Doc. 12201](#), tabled by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population.



Amendment E (to the draft recommendation)

After paragraph 11.6.3, insert the following sub-paragraph: “providing additional resources to youth work activities of the Council of Europe with young refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons, identified as a priority in the Final Declaration of the 8th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth (Kyiv, 10-11 October 2008) and in Resolution (2008) 23 of the Committee of Ministers;”

C. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Kent Olsson, rapporteur

1. Amendments A and C

Explanatory note:

The reason for these two proposals is the same: it is a major challenge for member states to avoid the emergence of parallel societies of people with a migratory background. The latter is typically caused by social and cultural exclusion. This can best be counteracted by fully implementing for all migrants and refugees the right to education under Article 2 of the first Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights and the right to participate in cultural life under Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. Amendment B

Explanatory note:

Besides education and culture, sport may help people learn teamwork skills and social competencies, both of which are essential for social integration. In this respect, it is particularly important to ensure that women are not excluded.

3. Amendment D

Explanatory note:

Students with a migratory or refugee background are often faced with practical and legal problems in having their prior education recognised. Higher education is, however, a key element in individual as well as social success. Member states should ensure that young migrants and refugees are not excluded from higher education on formal grounds beyond their control. Article VII of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (ETS No. 165) provides the adequate international legal basis for such recognition.

4. Amendment E

Explanatory note:

The Council of Europe's youth sector is particularly well suited to support and directly work with young migrants and refugees who are a specifically vulnerable group. It is important for member states to prevent young migrants and refugees from social and cultural exclusion. Otherwise, they are likely to reject the society and culture of their host country. The Council of Europe as well as member states individually should strengthen and support this work.

Reporting committee: Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population

Committee for opinion: Committee on Culture, Science and Education

Reference to committee: [Doc.11085](#), Reference 3298 of 22 January 2007

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Secretariat of the committee: Mr Fasino, Mr Dossow, Mrs Denu