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Engaging European diasporas: the need for governmental and intergovernmental responses

Reply to Recommendation[1]: Recommendation 1890 (2009)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has given close attention to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1890 (2009) on "Engaging European diasporas: the need for governmental and intergovernmental responses". It has communicated the recommendation, together with Resolution 1696 (2009), to the governments of member states for due consideration, to the European Committee on Migration (CDMG),as well as to the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ).

2. The Committee of Ministers is aware that migrant diasporas offer the potential for strengthening governmental and intergovernmental actions aimed at the integration of migrants, social cohesion and development. It concurs that migrant diasporas also have an important role to play in the relations between receiving and origin countries. It recalls that at their 8th Conference (Kiev, 4-5 September 2008), the European Ministers responsible for migration affairs agreed to work together in strengthening the role of migrant diasporas as development actors in international relations (cf. Final Declaration, paragraph 30).

3. The Committee of Ministers has noted with interest the various suggestions of the Assembly for activities in this field. Whilst acknowledging the importance of the issues addressed, it would recall that, in the light of the current priorities and reforms of the Organisation, a general review of the Council of Europe's activities in the field of migration is currently under way, including an evaluation, in the framework of the internal audit of the Organisation, of the Ordinary Budget Programme on Migration. The aim is to better streamline work in this area to achieve better co-ordination and retain activities with high impact. At this juncture, the Assembly will understand that the Committee of Ministers cannot, at present, consider follow-up to the specific proposals outlined in the recommendation.

4. It would however signal that, in recent years, the CDMG has addressed the role of diasporas of migrant communities in their relations with their countries of origin by undertaking studies and developing technical policy advice to member states. In this respect, the Committee of Ministers would, in particular, draw attention to the supplement to the Migration Management Strategy[2] on challenges for countries of origin which includes a chapter on migration and development in which detailed technical policy advice is set out.

5. The Committee of Ministers would also draw attention to its Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)10 on co-development and migrants working for development in their countries of origin. This text provides detailed technical advice to governments on how to support migrants who wish to invest in development projects in their countries of origin. It covers issues such as partnership building, mobility of migrants working on development projects, project support and assistance, training and financing.

6. Other relevant studies prepared under the responsibility of the CDMG include a critical review of source literature on migrant sponsored development initiatives[3] and the role of migrant diasporas in development in both origin and receiving countries.[4] Current projects of the CDMG also address the role of migrant diasporas

1. adopted at the 1094th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (29 September 2010)
2. Adopted by CDMG in May 2000 and endorsed at the 7th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Migration Affairs, Helsinki, 2002.

in supporting development in their countries of origin. For example, one such project on empowering migrants and strengthening social cohesion includes a technical assistance element (yet to be commenced) on providing training to policy makers in South-East Europe and Eastern Europe on how to develop links between diasporas and countries of origin.

7. The Committee of Ministers would also inform the Assembly that a priority of the Organisation in 2011 will be to review the relevance of all Council of Europe conventions. The result of the review will provide a basis for decisions on follow-up, including measures to increase the visibility and the number of States Parties to relevant conventions. The Committee of Ministers may then encourage those member states that have not yet done so to consider ratifying the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers (ETS No. 93), the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local level (ETS No. 144) and the European Convention on Nationality (ETS No. 166). Finally, with regard to the question of nationality, the Committee of Ministers would also draw attention to Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)13 on the nationality of children.

3. "The Euro-Mediterranean migration system and the effects in countries of origin of transfer of funds", 2008.
4. "Economic migration, social cohesion and development: towards an integrated approach", 2009.