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Integration tests for migrants: a step forward or back?

Motion for a recommendation

several Assembly members

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

The introduction of linguistic, knowledge of society and citizenship tests have become a bone of contention in many member states of the Council of Europe.

They have been introduced across Europe, including in Denmark, France, Germany, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands and other countries.

Sometimes these tests are required before a person can enter a country, other times residency may be dependent on them. Tests may be a pre-requisite for citizenship or for family reunion.

Some states have been accused of making the tests difficult, complicated and expensive in order to dissuade persons from seeking to enter the state. Some tests are said to be invalid, unfair and counter to integration. They are even accused of being discriminatory as certain nationalities are highlighted while others are excluded from the tests.

On the other side there are persons who consider that the tests are essential for integration, and that the process of integration should start already before a person enters the host country. They believe that it is better to be up front in terms of what is expected of migrants, and that tests are necessary to ensure that the relevant values and languages are understood in order to favour integration. The tests are not seen as a potential sanction but as an incentive.

The Parliamentary Assembly needs to examine good and bad practice in testing across Europe, examining the advantages and the pitfalls of what is being done, any human rights implications, and the responsibilities of member states. In the light of this examination the Assembly needs to make recommendations to member states and to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the appropriateness of these tests, their advantages and disadvantages, taking fully into account the Council of Europe's already existing expertise in this area.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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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
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group