



Recommendation 121 (1957)¹

Resettlement of refugees and surplus agricultural workers

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having examined the reports of the Committees on Agriculture, on Population and Refugees and on Economic Questions, concerning the resettlement of surplus and and refugee agricultural workers and the economic development of Southern Europe ;
2. Noting that agriculture is one of the mainstays of the general economy of most European countries and that country dwellers represent a third of the total population of the member countries of the Council and, in some countries, more ;
3. Considering that an attempt should be made to orientate agricultural production in the light of the following factors :
 - a. technical factors : geological and climatic influences and the dangers of erosion ;
 - b. economic factors :
 - national requirements and the most profitable markets ;*
 - the need to raise the standard of living of farmers, who are heavy consumers of industrial goods, and thereby further the interests of the workers, industry and trade, with a view to the achievement of full employment ;*
 - the importance of encouraging individual ownership and improving the lot of the smallholder ;*
 - the advantages to be gained from improving agricultural productivity by reducing costs, thus preparing the way for an increase in the quantity of marketable foodstuffs, with a reduction of retail prices, and so for greater consumption of such foodstuffs ;*
 - the value of improving the presentation, storing, packaging and marketing of agricultural produce while narrowing the gap between prices paid to the producer and those paid by the consumer ;*
4. Considering that the European countries should closely unite to give support and assistance to those countries most immediately affected by the problem of refugees and surplus agricultural workers,
5. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers, in liaison with the Ministers of Agriculture, give the countries in question every technical, political and financial encouragement.

Technical Assistance

In the course of the surveys carried out by the Assembly committees concerned, it was found that in some European countries agriculture is labouring under the handicap of out of date equipment. There is also a lack of technical consultants whose advice might lead to better husbandry and higher yields.

1. (see [Doc. 566](#), draft Recommendation submitted by the Committee on Population and Refugees and Explanatory Memorandum by M. Charpentier). This Recommendation was adopted by the Assembly at its 35th Sitting, on 10th January, 1957



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In the Mediterranean countries particularly, more extensive irrigation would make it possible to grow more fodder crops, the absence of which prevents the breeding of first class stock, and also increases the risk of soil erosion.

The building of silos, the establishment of co operatives, and the more liberal application of chemical fertilisers, the use of which is frequently restricted by their high cost, would make it possible to turn land over to the new and more profitable crops.

Ways should be sought of making available to smallholders modern mechanical equipment suited to local soil and climatic conditions.

Teams of qualified experts could, at the request of individual countries, work out large scale plans to improve rural conditions with a view to remedying under employment, and making possible plans for industrialisation, in the over populated countries.

Political Assistance

The arrival of refugees in countries with a very high birth rate and little or no industry has led to over population.

This state of affairs is causing these countries to break up existing properties, often to such an extent that the resulting holdings can scarcely be made to pay their way.

This practice results in a lack of marketable foodstuffs, as also to the increased growth of a rural proletariat which may at some future date become a disturbing element in the social structure of these countries.

The Assembly therefore urges the Governments :

- a. to seek markets for specialised products the cultivation of which would require considerable numbers of workers and thus reduce under employment ;
- b. with regard to countries which dispose of uncultivated or waste land in or outside Europe, to allow general immigration, as a regular policy, even if this must be on a reduced scale ;
- c. with regard to countries which are short of manpower, to make extensive use of the manpower of countries which suffer from permanent under employment and, to this end, to simplify the administrative procedure whose complexity is frequently a barrier to intra European migration.

Financial Assistance

Whatever the method adopted, whether the surplus population is to be absorbed locally or by a European or non European country, no substantial results can be achieved unless financial assistance is given to the States concerned, with a view either to facilitating the settlement of migrants or to industrialising the under developed areas. This concept, already set forth in [Recommendation 35](#) of 1952, reappears in the Special Representative's report. International financing on a considerable scale, in the form of a redeemable loan, is the only way of ensuring effective long term action.

Work of the Special Representative

The Assembly, which has more than once recorded its approval of the Special Representative's conclusions, welcomes the establishment of the European Fund for the financing of all economically sound schemes likely to reduce either by local resettlement or by intra or extra European emigration the demographic pressure from which the countries in question are suffering.

The Assembly trusts that no time will be lost in carrying out its proposals and those of the Special Representative and hopes that the first loans granted by the Fund will go towards solving this problem.