



Recommendation 564 (1969)¹

Acquisition by refugees of the nationality of their country of residence

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Recalling the great interest of the Council of Europe in the solution of the problems of European refugees of whom there are still over 620,000 in Council of Europe member states ;
2. Recalling the action taken by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in promoting the launching of a material assistance programme for European refugees in its Resolution (54) 15, and in giving its further support to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Resolution (62) 40 with a view to bringing the material assistance problems of "old" European refugees to a successful conclusion ;
3. Noting with appreciation that through the combined efforts of governments of the member states of the Council of Europe, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and voluntary agencies, the overwhelming majority of European refugees in the member states of the Council of Europe have now reached a satisfactory economic and social position in their country of residence and are by and large self-supporting ;
4. Considering that they will nevertheless remain refugees, with all the handicaps that this entails, until such time as they return to their country of origin or they acquire the nationality of their country of residence ;
5. Further considering that, having been so closely associated with the measures of assistance put into effect for these refugees throughout the first two decades of its existence, the Council of Europe could appropriately support the High Commissioner for Refugees in bringing the problems of European refugees in member states to a satisfactory conclusion by helping them, to the largest extent possible, to cease to be refugees if they wish to acquire the nationality of their country of residence ;
6. Considering that the problem of the children of refugees is particularly serious in view of the risk that these children who frequently have never lived in their country of origin might remain refugees ;
7. Noting that nearly all member states of the Council of Europe have already ratified the 1951 Convention of the United Nations relating to the status of refugees under Article 34 of which they undertake as far as possible to facilitate the assimilation and naturalisation of refugees, while, at the same time, making every effort to expedite naturalisation proceedings and to reduce, as far as possible, the charges and costs of such proceedings ;
8. Noting that the foregoing considerations likewise apply *mutatis mutandis*, to certain stateless persons who are not refugees,

1. Assembly debate on 30 September 1969 (9th Sitting) (see [Doc. 2620](#), report of the Committee on Population and Refugees). Text adopted by the Assembly on 30 September 1969 (9th Sitting).



9. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers, with a view to avoiding any perpetuation of the problems of European refugees, invite member governments :

9.1. to facilitate naturalisation :

- a. by a liberal interpretation of the legal requirements in respect of assimilation of refugees, taking particularly into account their total period of residence in the host country and the fact that most of them have adopted the way of life of the community which has welcomed them ;
- b. by making every effort to remove, or at least reduce, legal obstacles to naturalisation, such as the minimum period of residence when it exceeds five years, the cost of naturalisation fees when it exceeds the financial possibilities of the majority of refugees, the length of time elapsing between the receipt of applications for naturalisation and their consideration, and the requirement that refugees should prove loss of their former nationality ;

9.2. to accede to the United Nations Convention of 1961 on the reduction of statelessness and to treat de facto stateless refugees as though they were stateless de jure, in accordance with the resolution passed by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries which adopted the afore-mentioned convention ;

9.3. to adopt provisions in national legislation with a view to enabling refugee children, born in a country to which their parents came as refugees, to obtain the nationality of that country at birth and refugee youths to obtain the nationality of their country of residence at their request at the latest upon their coming of age ;

9.4. to grant refugees married to a national of the country of residence special facilities for acquiring the nationality of their spouse.