Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 972 (1983)[1]

Situation of the German ethnic minority in the Soviet Union

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Convinced that the rights of ethnic groups and minorities guaranteed in international agreements on human rights and in the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference must be respected by all the states concerned ;

2. Noting that the German minority in the USSR, which numbers over 1.9 million according to official Soviet statistics, is entitled to these rights of ethnic groups and minorities, as well as all the other rights and liberties guaranteed by international agreements on human rights ;

3. Regretting that the rights of the German minority in the Soviet Union have been seriously violated, especially the right to freedom of religious worship, the right to education, non-discrimination, free exchange of information, freedom of speech and freedom to travel abroad ;

4. Regretting particularly that, despite its undertakings, the Soviet Government is granting very few exit visas- only just over a hundred a month ;

5. Deploring that persons who are unsuccessful in obtaining exit visas or who demonstrate in public to protest against the rejection of their emigration applications are treated in a manner which constitutes a breach of human rights, suffering economic and social discrimination, and even imprisonment in many cases ;

6. Expressing the wish that the Government of the USSR urge its officials to observe, in respect of all the Germans under its jurisdiction, the provisions regarding the protection of ethnic minorities and groups which it has itself recognised in solemn agreements ;

7. Inviting the Government of the USSR to permit all those Germans wishing to leave the country in order to join relatives in Germany to do so, in accordance with the agreements reached, and to deal promptly and without bureaucratic obstacles with these individuals' applications for exit visas ;

8. Urging the Government of the USSR to stop all discrimination against, and persecution and imprisonment of, Germans wishing to emigrate- even if they protest or demonstrate publicly against the rejection or delay in the handling of their applications,

9. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers invite the governments of member states :

a. to give the Federal German Government effective and carefully co-ordinated strategic support in its efforts to improve the situation of the German minority in the USSR with respect to human rights, and to persuade the Soviet authorities to grant more exit visas and to speed up the handling of emigration applications ;

b. to give special attention to the fate of the German ethnic minority in the USSR at future meetings of the CSCE and of the United Nations, and to try to achieve concrete agreements on its behalf.

1. Assembly debate on 29 September 1983 (14th Sitting) (see Doc. 5098Doc. 5098, report of the Committee on Relations with European Non-member Countries). Text adopted by the Assembly on 29 September 1983 (14th Sitting).