



Recommendation 1007 (1985)¹

Return of migrant workers to their country of origin

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Referring to Committee of Ministers Recommendation No. R (80) 14, concerning the vocational reintegration of migrant workers who return to their countries of origin and noting that the initiatives advocated in the recommendation, based on experiments in a number of countries, have in some countries been applied in part and in others not at all, and that where they have been applied the results have fallen short of expectations ;
2. Emphasising the moral debt owed to migrant workers by the receiving countries and the countries of origin alike, the former because their economic expansion before 1973 was helped by the presence of an additional and usually cheap labour force, the latter because transfers of foreign currency assisted their development ;
3. Declaring that, for this and other reasons, workers and their families have the right to choose freely whether to continue residing in the receiving country or return to their country of origin ;
4. Noting that :
 - i. most migrant workers have been resident in a receiving country for a number of years and, like their children who were born there, do not wish to return to their country of origin ;
 - ii. many of the minority who wish to leave the host country are prompted to do so by difficulties due not only to unemployment, but also to xenophobia and racism ;
 - iii. reintegration is likely to be made more difficult for them by the fact that their links with the country of origin have become tenuous with the passing of time ;
 - iv. in the case of those with families, a return will be the first time that most of the children have experienced migration, with all the difficulties of adjustment it entails ;
 - v. the countries of origin are also affected, many of them acutely, by the economic crisis, so that migrant workers planning to return are in fact finding it more and more difficult to do so ;
5. Stressing consequently that policies to promote return should prompt the governments of receiving countries not to neglect but to strengthen their integration policies ;
6. Considering that, in order to provide conditions in which a free choice can be made, both policies should afford guarantees for the future of workers and their families ;
7. Convinced that, where there are no bilateral agreements, host countries which offer migrant workers financial incentives to return create a danger :
 - i. for those concerned, as they might take a decision without first looking into the scope for employment in the country of origin and the implications as regards vocational skills ;

1. Assembly debate on 25 April 1985 (7th Sitting) (see [Doc. 5379](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 April 1985 (7th Sitting).



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- ii. for the countries of origin, as their economic system and facilities for receiving workers and their families would not be able to cope with a large influx of homecomers which might exacerbate socio-economic difficulties and so lead to further clandestine emigration ;
8. Aware of the fact that in receiving countries both husbands and wives have paid employment, and that they might wish to continue to work when they return to their home countries ;
9. Deploring the fact that present legislation in some member states still makes it possible for migrant workers who are handicapped or occupationally disabled or suffer from occupational diseases, and whose only means of support is welfare assistance, to be expelled while satisfactory medical, hospital and rehabilitation facilities may not always be available in their countries of origin ;
10. Deploring the difficult position of many elderly migrant workers whose years spent in their country of origin or in the receiving countries do not always count as qualifying years for social benefits ;
11. Bearing in mind the proposals of the 2nd Conference of European Ministers responsible for Migration Questions (Rome, 25-27 October 1983), relating to the return of migrant workers to their countries of origin,
12. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers invite the governments :
 - a. of host countries :
 - i. not to regard action taken to facilitate return to the country of origin as a reason for discontinuing or not stepping up their efforts in the matter of integration ;
 - ii. to afford migrant workers and their families not least the children the opportunity to maintain their links with their countries of origin by providing for the teaching of their native language and encouraging them in their own cultural activities ;
 - iii. not to consider offering incentives to return, such as cash payments, where these disregard the real interests of the workers, or where they may have adverse effects on the economy of the countries of origin and thus aggravate regional imbalances in Europe by increasing clandestine migration ;
 - iv. to acknowledge the inalienable character of the rights accruing to migrant workers in the receiving countries ;
 - v. to grant migrant workers and their families, especially the younger members, who have returned to their countries of origin, the right to come back during a transitional period under bilateral or multilateral agreements or concerted policies to control and monitor migration flows ;
 - vi. to provide the elderly, and migrant workers who have suffered accidents or become handicapped while resident in the host country, with :
 1. conditions in which their health and subsistence needs can be met, if they wish to remain ;
 2. material assistance to facilitate reintegration in their countries of origin, if they wish to return ;
 - b. of the countries of origin :
 - i. to consider means and take appropriate measures to help young migrants or migrant families to become reintegrated on their return and to participate in local life in a way that will enable them to make use of the educational, occupational, cultural, linguistic and social experience they have acquired abroad ;
 - ii. to ensure that homecoming migrant workers are granted local social security rights, and that rights acquired in a receiving country are taken into account ;
 - iii. to provide disabled migrants with reception and social integration facilities appropriate to their occupational and family circumstances ;
 - iv. to guarantee equal rights for men and women, by legislation if necessary ;

- c. of the host countries and the countries of origin alike :
- i. to review the basis of bilateral co-operation, giving priority to regional development in the country of origin, which should :
 1. comprise individual or group projects to which migrant workers could contribute through a credit system set up in and by the receiving country and through their own savings invested in their country of origin ; and
 2. offer opportunities for young people of migrant origin living in the receiving country who could take part in the aforementioned projects as technical co-operation assistants ;
 - ii. to ensure that individual projects are financed by agreement with the workers wishing to return and collective projects by a concerted effort involving management and labour, on the understanding that there must always be adequate training provision ;
 - iii. to ensure that management and labour in the receiving country and in the country of origin are involved in framing and implementing any bilateral and multilateral agreements relating to the return of migrant workers and their family members ;
 - iv. to ratify the 1972 European Convention on Social Security if they have not yet done so, and to conclude the social security agreements necessary to its implementation so as to safeguard the maintenance of acquired rights and of rights in course of acquisition by migrant workers in the field of social security, and payment of benefits abroad ;
 - v. to set up, as a means of informing and consulting migrant workers, centres for supplying information about vocational opportunities in the countries of origin, such centres to be located both in countries of origin and in receiving countries, with a link between them and the companies and institutions directly concerned with labour demand and supply ;
 - vi. to include clauses in bilateral agreements guaranteeing capital invested by firms in the aforementioned projects ;
 - vii. to increase the resources which the Council of Europe Resettlement Fund devotes to employment-generating projects in the disadvantaged areas of the countries of origin ;
 - viii. to support the work of voluntary organisations at all levels specifically concerned with migrant workers, notably as regards the problem of return ;
 - ix. to afford the organisations and institutions which help to finance projects the right and the opportunity to evaluate the results achieved in the countries of origin.