Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1076 (1988)[1]

Role and activities of the Council of Europe Resettlement Fund for National Refugees and Over-Population

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering the Council of Europe Resettlement Fund for National Refugees and Over-Population as one of the most suitable instruments to implement the Council of Europe's social policy ;

2. Emphasising that the Fund, as a Partial Agreement, is attached to the Council of Europe and administered under its supreme authority ;

3. Recalling that, under its Statute, the principal office of the Fund is in Strasbourg ;

4. Recognising that the Fund is at the same time a full and separate legal entity and has its own decision-making and managerial bodies, in particular the Governing Body, responsible for its general policy, and the Administrative Council, which administers the Fund ;

5. Supporting Resolution 190 (1987) adopted by the Governing Body of the Fund on 8 June 1987 to invite all member states to increase the Fund's capital in July 1988 ;

6. Considering that, whilst members are represented in the Governing Body at the political level, in view of the financial nature of most of the decisions to be taken by the Administrative Council, members should be represented by financial experts ;

7. Believing that the present voting procedures in the Fund's bodies ensure equality between member states ;

8. Paying tribute to the work done by the Fund, since its creation in 1956, to contribute to the welfare of people who are disadvantaged on account of economic, social and political trends in their country or victims of natural disasters ;

9. Noting however that the activities of the Fund are not yet sufficiently known by the authorities and the public in all member states ;

10. Noting that during the last ten years, that is to say from 1978 to 1987, the Fund's ordinary loans have totalled $6 300 million, seven times the loan total—$900 million—for the first twenty odd years of the Fund's existence (1956-77) ;

11. Welcoming the growth of the Social Account which is solely financed from funds taken from the Resettlement Fund's annual profits, permitting the financing of ‘‘social loans" at an interest of 1%, for an amount of nearly $75 million, between its institution in 1970 and 1987 ;

12. Underlining the political value of these social loans which bear witness to the Fund's role as an instrument of solidarity between member states ;

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1. Assembly debate on 5 May 1988 (7th Sitting) (see Doc. 5867, report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, Rapporteur : Mr Eisma). Text adopted by the Assembly on 5 May 1988 (7th Sitting).

13. Recalling that the member states have the possibility of making voluntary contributions to the Social Account, which to date they have not yet made use of ;

14. Welcoming the fact that the Fund has gradually broadened the scope of its activities to take account of economic and social developments in European countries ;

15. Wishing to see the categories of the Fund's beneficiaries extended to include also refugees recognised by a member state, irrespective of their countries of origin ;

16. Believing that such an extension would contribute to the improvement of the geographical distribution of loans granted by the Fund ;

17. Underlining the importance for the Fund and the benefits that Austria, Ireland and the United Kingdom, which are not yet members of the Fund, could obtain by acceding to it ;

18. Recalling that its Recommendation 1058 (1987) included an appeal to consider the possibility of using the Fund to help European immigrants in Latin America ;

19. Considering that another area of action could be assistance to initiatives with regard to the voluntary repatriation of non-European refugees and migrants settled in Europe, provided that such projects were submitted by member states ;

20. Having in mind the activities of other international financial institutions, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Investment Bank, the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund, and, consequently, the need for the Resettlement Fund to avoid duplicating the work of other institutions ;

21. Welcoming the granting to Yugoslavia in 1986 of the status of associate member of the Fund, and noting with satisfaction recent contacts between the Fund and Finland,

22. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

a. give wider publicity to the activities of the Fund in the member countries, in order to further improve the geographical distribution of the projects submitted for approval to the Administrative Council of the Fund and emphasise the Fund's role with regard to refugees ;

b. invite the Governing Body of the Fund :

1. to take the necessary steps, without amending the Articles of Agreement of the Fund, to adapt its title to its present activities with a view to facilitating a better knowledge of its role in the member countries ;

2. to consider the extension of the categories of the Fund's beneficiaries to include refugees, recognised as such by a member state, irrespective of their country of origin ;

3. to examine the possibility of using the Fund to help European migrants residing outside Europe, as well as migrants settled in Europe, but wishing to return to their countries of origin ;

4. to improve co-ordination with other financial institutions active in the field of development and social policies ;

c. invite the governments of member states of the Fund :

1. to participate in the increase in the Fund's capital in accordance with Resolution 190 (1987) of the Governing Body ;

2. to submit projects aimed at assisting refugees, recognised as such by a member state, irrespective of their countries of origin ;

3. to use the possibility they have to make voluntary contributions to the Fund's Social Account ;

4. to encourage the accession to the Fund of new members, including non-member states which already participate in some Council of Europe activities, such as Finland ;

d. taking into account the possible extension of the Fund's activities, invite the Governments of Austria, Ireland and the United Kingdom to join it.