Recommendation 1154 (1991)[1]

North African migrants in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. North African migrants no longer enter host countries on a purely temporary basis ; in the great majority of cases they settle permanently.

2. Despite the increasingly strict policies introduced by European countries to halt immigration from North Africa, a small but unavoidable flow of new arrivals continues, and will continue in the coming years, as a result of different demographic circumstances and levels of development on either side of the Mediterranean.

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4. The integration of North African migrants is therefore both an urgent political necessity and a complex problem which is particularly difficult to resolve and which will require determined action over many years.

5. These difficulties are further accentuated by the reluctance of European political parties and public authorities to acknowledge the facts and initiate a public debate on the integration of North African migrants.

6. Integration policies must avoid two pitfalls : outright assimilation, which arouses feelings of frustration and humiliation, and the separate treatment of migrants' problems, which leads to the establishment of ghettos.

7. North African migrants who wish to settle and become integrated must recognise that the host country is a secular society whose democratic principles of equal rights and duties and respect for individual freedom and human dignity have been enshrined in laws which apply to all who live within its boundaries.

8. Young North Africans, who represent an extremely important group within the North African community in Europe, enter an education system which is very often inappropriate to their needs

9. Educational achievement is essential for the integration of young North Africans, particularly girls for whom it represents a way of emancipating themselves from oppressive family control and of asserting their dignity on an equal footing with men.

10. The question of Islam in host countries must be seen in terms of tolerance, a tolerance which must be practised not only by the host society but also by those who wish to become integrated into it.

11. The Assembly is particularly concerned about the increase in racism directed against North Africans, which is no longer afraid to manifest itself openly. It considers that the risk to Europe of a loss of identity lies not in the integration of North African migrants but in indifference, complacency and compromise in the face of the rise and general acceptance of racism.

12. The Assembly therefore renews the appeal which it made in Recommendation 1125 (1990) on the new immigration countries for the Council of Europe to initiate a genuine European plan to combat racism and xenophobia.

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1. Assembly debate on 26 April 1991 (8th Sitting) (see Doc. 6266, report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, Rapporteur : Mr Worms). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26 April 1991 (8th Sitting).

13. The success of policies to integrate North Africans living in Europe depends above all on improving the economic situation in their countries of origin, which necessitates a co-operative development effort on both sides of the Mediterranean, and which means that appropriate measures must be taken to facilitate the return to their countries of origin of the skilled workers and managers needed to ensure the development of these countries.

14. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

14.1. promote, within the Council of Europe, a wide-ranging dialogue between the political authorities of host countries and countries of origin and representatives of North African migrants, with a view to identifying the broad outlines of an integration policy ;

14.2. invite the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity to initiate action designed to promote the joint development of both shores of the Mediterranean ;

14.3. step up the vocational training of North African managers and skilled workers who are needed for the development of North Africa, and adopt measures to facilitate their return to their country of origin ;

14.4. strengthen co-operation between the member states to combat effectively illegal immigration and employment ;

14.5. invite host countries to take more account of the Council of Europe's work in the field of community relations and intercultural education in their policies for integrating North African migrants.