



## Recommendation 1156 (1991)<sup>1</sup>

# Recent activities of the Social Development Fund of the Council of Europe

### Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Council of Europe's Social Development Fund, set up in 1956, is the operational instrument which gives practical expression to the spirit of solidarity between member states
2. Twenty Council of Europe member states together with the Holy See are parties to the partial agreement creating the Fund. Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Ireland and the United Kingdom are not yet members
3. Since its creation and in accordance with its statutory objectives, the Fund has allocated almost 8 000 million ecus in loans (3 700 million over the last four years), to provide aid for refugees, migrants and deprived regions or regions afflicted by natural disasters
4. In addition to ordinary loans, the Fund's Social Account, supplied exclusively from sums taken from the Fund's profits, grants low-interest loans at a preferential rate of 1% per annum. 76 million ecus have been allocated in this way since the creation of the Social Account in 1970.
5. While adhering to its priority objectives, the Fund has progressively extended its fields of activity to finance projects entailing the creation of jobs, the construction of housing and infrastructures, the improvement of public health and education services and the protection of the environment
6. The need to pursue and develop action in the member states and to acquire the wherewithal to cope with the accession of countries from Central and Eastern Europe fully justifies the decision by the Governing Body of the Fund to increase the capital once more, a step which the Assembly fully supports.
7. The Assembly nevertheless considers that this increase in resources should be accompanied by more effective and independent supervision of the execution of projects, based not only on information provided by the beneficiaries, but also on visits carried out on the spot by representatives of the Fund.
8. The Assembly should be associated with the procedure for monitoring projects; thanks to its knowledge of the Fund's activities, the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography could play a role in this respect and, on the occasion of its meetings in member countries, visit such projects
9. Despite its new name, now used in addition to its official title of Council of Europe Resettlement Fund for National Refugees and Over-Population in Europe, the Fund is still not sufficiently well known, especially in deprived regions of member states, which are the very ones which have the greatest interest in acquiring the loans it offers.
10. The attention which the Fund will be paying to countries of Central and Eastern Europe should not obscure the fact that a very large number of migrants and refugees in Council of Europe member countries originally came from developing countries. The governments of member states should make use of the Fund to improve the living conditions of these persons. In this way, the activities of the Fund could acquire a North-South dimension

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1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 28 June 1991. See Doc. 6459, report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, Rapporteur: Mr Eisma.



11. Accordingly, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
- i. draw the attention of new member states and of states considering accession to the Council of Europe to the opportunities offered by the Fund for stimulating their development;
  - ii. provide fuller information on the activities of the Fund in member states, in order to enable a greater number of local and regional officials to become familiar with the loan application procedures
  - iii. invite the governments of the member states of the Fund:
    - a. to participate in the fourth increase in the Fund's capital in accordance with Resolution 222 (1990) of the Governing Body;
    - b. to submit projects for improving the living conditions of non-European migrants and refugees;
    - c. to supply the Social Account of the Fund with voluntary contributions;
  - iv. invite the Governing Body of the Fund:
    - a. to consider ways in which to monitor independently the execution of projects on the basis of information collected directly at source;
    - b. to associate Representatives of the Assembly with this procedure
    - c. to examine, in conjunction with representatives of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, the ways and means of putting these two proposals into effect;
    - d. to give wider publicity to the activities of the Fund in the member countries.
12. The Assembly urges the Governments of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Ireland and the United Kingdom to join the Fund, thereby demonstrating their solidarity towards the other member states which are already members.