

Recommendation 1206 (1993)¹

Integration of migrants and community relations

Parliamentary Assembly

1. From the 1950s to the early 1970s, both the recruitment of migrant workers to meet the manpower needs of the rapidly growing economies of western Europe and the process of decolonisation led to a significant increase in immigration in many European countries.
2. Faced with the economic slow-down following the first oil crisis in 1973 and growing tensions between immigrants and the host population, the majority of these countries then began to impose restrictions on further immigration and even to encourage departures.
3. However, the vast majority of migrants stayed on, with second and third generations emerging. Not only that, but the flow of immigration began to rise again during the 1980s on account of family reunion, for example, and later with the liberalisation of central and eastern Europe. Moreover, the pressure is likely to continue unabated as long as world economic imbalances, differences in human rights conditions and demographic growth differentials persist.
4. The net result is that there are now large communities of migrants living in most Council of Europe member states whose ethnic origins and cultural background are different from those of the host society. Members of these communities often find themselves in a marginal situation, lacking the means to integrate effectively on account of economic disadvantage, lack of qualifications, insecurity of residence, unfamiliarity with the host culture or deliberate or unconscious discrimination.
5. Society as a whole must adapt to the new situation and overcome the obstacles to the integration of migrants, whose continued marginality is a source of social tension and conflict.
6. The final report of the Council of Europe's community relations project, carried out between 1987 and 1991 under the auspices of the European Committee on Migration (CDMG), provides a thorough analysis of the obstacles to integration and a wealth of recommendations on how to overcome them. The report deserves to be widely debated at local, regional and national levels, including by parliamentary committees, and governments should be urged to formulate and implement policies which reflect the report's recommendations across a wide range of sectors.
7. Such policies should aim to ensure an adequate legal framework as a prerequisite for good community relations, stressing security of residence. The legal status of migrants must be clearly defined, consideration given to their participation in the political system, and antidiscrimination legislation publicised, strengthened and enforced. Codes of practice should be worked out and applied by professional bodies.
8. Poor employment prospects for migrants are bound to be a major cause of alienation. Policies should include a review of job training, combating illegal employment, promoting job creation at low skill levels and ensuring equality of opportunity. Targets should be set for recruitment. Trade unions can also encourage more open attitudes and practices.
9. Positive action should be taken in the context of education policies to eliminate the causes of underachievement. This might include extending pre-school provision, strengthening guidance and counselling and school-parent links, and organising acculturation classes for parents. Members of immigrant

1. Assembly debate on 4 February 1993 (28th Sitting) (see [Doc. 6741](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, Rapporteur : Mr Worms). Text adopted by the Assembly on 4 February 1993 (28th Sitting).



communities should be encouraged to become teachers. Adult education should be strengthened as a means to compensate for lack of qualifications. Teacher training and curricula should emphasise the need for all young people to take a positive, tolerant view of cultural diversity, and to reject racist or xenophobic attitudes and prejudices.

10. Housing is also a critical area where intervention is required to improve community relations. Not only must governments ensure an adequate supply of low-cost housing, but procedures for its allocation must operate fairly. Urban planning and renewal policies can and should promote an integrated balance between different social categories and ethnic and cultural groups.

11. Misunderstanding and tension are often characteristic of migrants' relations with the public services and authorities, from the immigration and health services to the police. Particular sensitivity is called for in those who deal with immigrants, members of ethnic groups and foreigners so as to avoid any kind of discriminatory or prejudiced treatment. Training and recruitment of public service personnel should take account of cultural and ethnic diversity.

12. Adequate measures are needed to combat ethnic and racial violence or harassment directed at immigrants. They should include prevention through education, dissuasion through the law, intervention against perpetrators and support for victims. Particular attention should be paid to the presentation of incidents in the media, which should avoid stereotyping.

13. Because of their close involvement in the day-to-day life of the community, local authorities and other local agencies and associations have a key role to play in promoting good community relations. They should develop explicit strategies and release the necessary resources.

14. Community relations policies must strike a delicate balance between, on the one hand, protecting and promoting the expression of cultural diversity, including religious belief and values relating to the family, while at the same time insisting that all observe the rule of law and respect for fundamental human rights that form the backbone of European society.

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

15.1. urge member governments to promote active debate at local, regional and national levels on the recommendations contained in the final report of the community relations project, as reflected in paragraphs 7 to 13 above ;

15.2. give high priority to the Council of Europe's ongoing work on community relations, especially to the new project on "The integration of immigrants : towards equal opportunities", ensuring that it is provided with adequate resources ;

15.3. instruct the European Committee on Migration (CDMG), where appropriate in consultation with other Steering Committees, to include in its future work :

- a. the monitoring of action taken in the member states to follow up the recommendations in the final report of the community relations project, to be reviewed at a European conference in two or three years' time ;
- b. detailed examinations on a country-by-country basis of national situations and policies with regard to community relations ;
- c. the study of ways to maintain the relationship between migrants and their countries of origin, for example through appropriate policies on dual nationality or citizenship ;
- d. the examination of the cultural and social integration problems specific to migrant workers with temporary residence, engaged on long- or short-term contracts ;
- e. the analysis of the possible negative reactions by the host population against the participation of foreigners in public life at local level ;
- f. the exploration of some of the fundamental philosophical, legal and practical issues raised by the coexistence of a wide variety of cultural and ethnic groups in the community ;

15.4. consider the inclusion in the intergovernmental work programme of a multidisciplinary project specifically designed to address the problem of racial violence and xenophobia ;

15.5. urge member governments to set up, where they have not yet done so, appropriate bodies to co-ordinate and promote policies on integration and community relations ;

- 15.6. give its support to the rapid establishment of a European centre for the exchange of information and experience on community relations ;
- 15.7. urge those member governments that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the various European and international conventions designed to improve the status of immigrants, in particular the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level and the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers ;
- 15.8. consider extending the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights to cover discrimination on any ground.