Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1306 (1996)[1]

Migration from the developing countries to the European industrialised countries

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly welcomes the conclusions of the 6th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Migration Affairs, which constitute an important step towards a comprehensive European migration policy. It notes with satisfaction that, in accordance with the Assembly's Recommendation 1278 (1995), the ministers recommended that the Council of Europe should serve as a permanent forum for co-operation between the member states and other international organisations in regard to policies on migration and refugees.

2. Immigrants make a significant contribution to the social, economic and political development of industrialised countries. However, if immigration is higher than the capacity of the labour market to absorb new entrants, as observed over recent decades, this may have negative consequences for the social, economic and political stability of industrialised countries.

3. Migration has various effects on the emigration countries. At first it may result in the social, economic and political weakening of local communities through depopulation. However, through migrants' remittances and investments, it can contribute to the improvement of social and economic infrastructure and to local, regional and national development.

4. The Parliamentary Assembly is aware that the high level of unemployment in all European countries does not allow for immigration with a view to permanent settlement. However, the member states should generally be encouraged to facilitate short-term migration. The aim should be to ensure that these movements take place within legal channels and are not misused as a means to permanent settlement.

5. Recalling its Recommendation 1211 (1993) on clandestine migration: traffickers and employers of clandestine migrants, the Parliamentary Assembly is concerned by the problems arising from the continued presence of clandestine migrants, who are particularly vulnerable to exclusion, exploitation and human rights' abuses.

6. The best way to reduce high migration pressure is to intensify efforts aiming at eliminating the reasons for migration by means of policies designed, where necessary, to consolidate human rights and democracy and to give significant impetus to economic development.

7. The Assembly, therefore, recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

7.1. follow up the recommendations of the European Ministers responsible for Migration Affairs adopted at their 6th Conference in Warsaw, with a view to promoting coherent migration policies among the member states;

7.2. intensify the monitoring of long-term developments in migration movements with a view to identifying feasible policy options;

1. Assembly debate on 27 September 1996 (32nd Sitting) (see Doc. 7628, report by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, rapporteur: Mr Junghanns). Text adopted by the Assembly on 27 September 1996 (32nd Sitting).

7.3. encourage the strengthening of bilateral and multilateral programmes for development in the countries of origin and study ways to make this aid as effective as possible;

7.4. strengthen relations with non-governmental organisations concerned with human rights in areas of intensive emigration, and promote the networking of their activities;

7.5. study measures to prevent and reduce irregular migration;

7.6. study the problems arising from the continued presence of clandestine migrants in the member states;

7.7. invite the member states:

a. to provide increased economic resources for migration-related development projects, such as programmes to encourage return, assistance in the locality of origin, population programmes, and infrastructural aid;

b. to provide assistance for activities organised by migrants themselves, such as improvement of local medical and social care in the countries of origin, with a view to encouraging returns;

c. to improve the living conditions of the poorest migrants;

d. to sign and ratify, if they have not already done so, the European and international conventions designed to improve the status of immigrants, notably the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level and the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers;

e. to sign and ratify, if they have not already done so, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;

f. to follow up energetically, at national level, the Council of Europe's Plan of Action on combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance;

g. to consider the conclusion of bilateral agreements with the aim of admitting short-term migrants to a limited extent and under well-defined conditions as a means of reducing irregular migration;

h. to take appropriate measures to moderate migration flows;

i. to continue efforts to conclude readmission agreements with the countries of origin in which human rights are respected in accordance with Council of Europe standards.