Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1329 (1997)[1]

Follow-up to the Mediterranean Conference of Population, Migration and Development (Palma de Mallorca, 15-17 October 1996)

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Although the numbers of migrants arriving on the northern shores of the Mediterranean have abated since the peak year, 1992, as a result of the restrictions imposed by most European states, the pressure on Europe's southern frontiers is unlikely to subside. This pressure is increasingly exerted through illegal channels, often with tragic results.

2. Migration pressures stem in large part from the widening gap in material welfare between the countries south and north of the Mediterranean. The gap must therefore be reduced by contributing more to the long-term economic development of the countries on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean and beyond.

3. Reducing the welfare gap also means slowing population growth in the countries along the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean. According to the predictions, while in 1995 there was a population gap of some 44 million between the countries bordering on the northern Mediterranean and those on its southern and eastern rims, the difference will have increased to 205 million by the year 2025.

4. However, economic and demographic imbalances are not the only factors behind migration pressures. Among other reasons why migrants and refugees leave their countries are political instability, social disparities, religious conflict, the degradation of the environment, deteriorating health care and human rights abuses.

5. The Assembly welcomes the Euro-Mediterranean partnership project initiated by the Barcelona Declaration of November 1995, and expresses the hope that a charter for peace and stability between the European Union and its Mediterranean partners, designed to establish mechanisms for permanent dialogue, conflict prevention and crisis management and to bring about a climate of trust, can be adopted as soon as possible.

6. The Assembly recalls its Recommendations 1148 (1991), 1249 (1994), and 1306 (1996) and stresses the importance, for the sake of the stability and well-being of Europe as a whole, of developing a comprehensive Council of Europe strategy for the Mediterranean basin.

7. The Assembly welcomes the holding of the Mediterranean Conference on Population, Migration and Development in Palma de Mallorca from 15 to 17 October 1996 and urges the Committee of Ministers to take full account of the conference proposals in planning the Council of Europe's future work in this area.

8. In particular, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

8.1. support the process of institutional concertation between Europe and non-member states in the Mediterranean basin, notably inviting the latter to take part as observers in the work of the Council of Europe;

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1. See Doc. 7815, report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, rapporteur: Mrs Guirado. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 28 May 1997.

8.2. contribute to the Barcelona process in the Council of Europe's fields of competence;

8.3. support the creation of an observatory to furnish comparative statistical data on demographic and socio-economic trends and migration flows in the Mediterranean region;

8.4. facilitate the strengthening of links between the many partners concerned at local, national and international levels;

8.5. promote cultural exchanges between Europe and non-member states in the Mediterranean basin, notably through the creation of cultural experience and training centres for young people, with a view to improving mutual understanding and combating racism and xenophobia;

8.6. invite the member states :

a. to redouble their efforts to promote the social, economic and technical development of the countries on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean, in particular with a view to creating employment;

b. to support reforms in the countries south and east of the Mediterranean in the areas of education, training, health, the condition of women, the environment and human rights;

c. to encourage the creation of direct links between the local and regional authorities on both sides of the Mediterranean with a view to the discussion of common problems.