Resolution 3 (1951)[1]

Measures of Assistance to Refugees

Parliamentary Assembly

Noting with satisfaction the decision of the Committee of Ministers to call a meeting of experts of Member Governments which should try to find a solution of the problem of refugees and over-population,

Being of the opinion that the evident economic and political dangers inherent in the problems of refugees and over-population require immediate and concrete action in order to overcome as far as possible this consequence of the second world war and the division of Europe,

The Assembly :

Declares that it is anxious that the committee of experts and the Secretariat-General when considering this question should give particular attention to the following measures :

1. Upon the basis of answers to questionnaires regarding the present refugees situation it is to be established what should be regarded as the common European task. Consideration should be given both to the effort that reasonably can be asked of the recipient country itself and to what can be expected from other countries, members of the Council of Europe.

2. It might be expected that a thorough study will show that the refugees problem, as far as Western Germany is concerned, and problems of over-population in other countries, cannot be solved without certain steps being taken for emigration. To start with, it should then be examined to what extent a partial solution can be found in connection with the United Nations programme for the development of under-developed countries and the United States programme along the same lines, the so-called "Point 4" of President Truman.

3. Attention should further be paid to the fact that certain more developed overseas countries in many cases receive immigrants only of the productive age-groups, often mainly technicians, skilled workers and agricultural workers.

Since professional training under all circumstances is the key to employment, it is a most important task to investigate the possibilities of inaugurating, under common European direction, large-scale professional training among refugees and all unemployed persons.

4. Many of the trained workers can be expected to seek employment outside Europe. Since it can be of no advantage to Europe, however, — economically or demographically — to export skilled workers to any larger extent, it should be seriously considered whether European countries which have no refugee or overpopulation problems but rather a lack of manpower in various fields could not agree to open their boundaries for a certain quota of immigrant workers whose training they would have facilitated in accordance with point 3. above.

5. It seems, however, probable that only a small part of the refugees and over-population problems can be solved by means of quota immigration to countries without a refugees problem of their own.

Since it can be supposed, however, that the professional training activity will in itself create new possibilities of employment for refugees and for all unemployed persons in the areas where they already are, a system of training in arts and crafts organized under common European direction should be made part of the normal

1. This Resolution was adopted by the Assembly at its Fifteenth Sitting, 14th May 1951.(See Doc. 43, Report of the Special Committee on Refugees.)

economy of the various refugees and overpopulated areas and be combined with measures aimed at the utilization of so far unused productive capacity in Central Europe, with special attention to the typical bottleneck industries and the lack of balance between different sectors of industry.

6. Since, however, at the present time it seems possible to reach only a partial solution in this manner it should be seriously considered, in the absence of a more definite solution of the problem as a whole, whether a considerable number of refugees and unemployed persons could not be employed in European public works. Special attention should, of course, be given to securing projects of common interest to several countries : primarily might be considered projects in the field of European communications.

7. The problem of financing the common European effort to solve the questions of refugees and over-population should be given careful consideration. This effort will probably to a large extent have to be made in the form of joint contributions in order to create investment possibilities. Investigation should bear, for instance, on the question to what extent an activity of the kind outlined above could be financed by means of international credits or by an internationally guaranteed loan.

8. From the social point of view it should be ascertained to what extent contributions towards a solution of the refugees housing problems might be considered a common European task. This question should be studied with due consideration for the varying possibilities of providing employment.