Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 922 (1989)[1]

Return of Chilean exiles

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Recalling that, since the coup d'état which overthrew the constitutional regime in September 1973, it has on several occasions considered the situation in Chile and the plight of Chilean exiles in Europe ;

2. Recalling that, in its Recommendation 1058 (1987) on migratory flows concerning Latin America, it called for active co-operation between the governments of the Council of Europe's member states and the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM) to facilitate the return and resettlement of Latin American refugees established in Europe but wishing to return to their own countries ;

3. Noting that developments in Chile since October 1988 have given the approximately 60 000 Chileans resident in Council of Europe member states renewed hope of returning to Chile ;

4. Welcoming the establishment of ‘‘European Co-ordination of Chilean Exiles" for the purpose of collecting and circulating information on the right to return, and also approaching national authorities and international organisations with a view to facilitating the return and resettlement of Chilean exiles ;

5. Noting that many of the Chilean exiles who have returned to Chile have encountered serious integration problems in respect of employment and housing as a result of the changes which have taken place in their country over the last fifteen years ;

6. Considering that, to ensure their successful return, exiles and their families must be given help, not only towards the cost of return and resettlement, but also towards their integration in Chilean society through vocational retraining measures ;

7. Noting with satisfaction that Spain has introduced special programmes to facilitate the return and resettlement of Chilean exiles residing in that country, and that Austria, Italy and Switzerland have done likewise with the help of the ICM ;

8. Observing that the voluntary repatriation programme operated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) allows exiled Chileans to benefit from free transport from the host country to Chile ;

9. Welcoming the initiative taken by the ICM and European Co-ordination of Chilean Exiles in drawing up a general outline programme to facilitate the return and reintegration in Chile of Chilean exiles resident in Europe ;

10. Noting that this programme, costing an estimated 15 million dollars and scheduled for implementation by the ICM over a two-year period, would permit the repatriation of 3 000 Chileans ;

11. Considering, in view of the limited number of Chileans who will be covered by the ICM's programme, that the latter must be regarded as a minimum, to be supplemented by other governmental projects prepared with the help of the UNHCR and various non-governmental organisations ;

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1. Assembly debate on 21 September 1989 (10th Sitting) (see Doc. 6111, report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, Rapporteur : Mr Cucò). Text adopted by the Assembly on 21 September 1989 (10th Sitting).

12. Emphasising that the success of the action taken to facilitate the return of Chilean exiles resident in Europe depends on the commitment of European governments ;

13. Recalling that some of the problems encountered by returning exiles are due to the Chilean authorities' failure to respect their international commitments concerning such matters as the recognition of diplomas obtained at European universities ;

14. Reiterating its support for the commitment of the democratic forces in Chile to political change which, respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, will allow Chile to revive its democratic institutions and tradition of pluralism,

15. Urges the European Community to respond favourably to the ICM's request for funds to cover its outline programme for the return and reintegration of Chileans ;

16. Strongly calls on the governments of the Council of Europe member states in which Chilean exiles are resident :

16.1. to help to finance the ICM's programme ;

16.2. to prepare, in co-operation with the UNHCR and non-governmental organisations, other projects to facilitate the return of exiles ;

16.3. to consider the possibility of using the Council of Europe's Social Development Fund to finance even a part of these projects ;

16.4. to insist that the Chilean Government scrupulously respect the bilateral agreements signed on the recognition of diplomas ;

17. Asks its members to approach the authorities in their countries for the purpose of ensuring that the resounding declarations made in favour of Chilean exiles in the late 1970s find expression in practical acts of North-South solidarity ;

18. Urgently appeals to the governments of the Council of Europe member states to provide the non-governmental organisations working in the field for the reintegration of exiles with material and financial aid, thus demonstrating their commitment to the restoration of parliamentary democracy in Chile.