



Resolution 971 (1991)¹

Europe and the state of world population

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The world population is increasing faster than ever ; the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) believes the world population, now 5,3 thousand million, could at least double during the next century.
2. Population growth continues to be out of balance ; 95% of the global population growth over the next thirty-five years will take place in the developing countries which are the least equipped to cope with this growth.
3. One of the main reasons for the population explosion in the developing world is that half of all women, who play a central role in controlling the increasing birth-rates, do not have access to family planning methods.
4. Yet, declining fertility rates imply a more global approach than just providing family planning ; education of women and enhancing their social and economic standing have proved essential in controlling birth-rates.
5. In some Central and East European countries the fact that few women use modern methods of contraception is the main cause of the high number of abortions.
6. Population growth, insufficient food production, shortage of arable land, difficulty in earning a livelihood and the lack of housing with adequate services in the developing countries will lead to increased migration towards developed countries.
7. Uncontrolled population growth will also have dramatic ecological consequences such as degradation of the land, deforestation and global warming, leading to a rapidly deteriorating quality of the environment.
8. Ageing populations and declining birth-rates in the industrialised countries will lead to a shortage in the supply of labour and consequently to greater immigration pressures.
9. It is therefore necessary to devise new immigration policies which are not only based on economic considerations but pay greater attention to social and cultural aspects, with a view to facilitating the harmonious integration of immigrants in the host countries.
10. The Assembly therefore calls on Council of Europe member states :
 - 10.1. to strengthen co-operation in the sphere of population and migration activities in the framework of the Council of Europe ;
 - 10.2. to provide more substantial financial support to family planning programmes drawn up by the governments of developing countries to slow down undue population growth ;
 - 10.3. to assist developing countries in the design and implementation of population programmes integrated into development programmes ;
 - 10.4. to help the governments of developing countries to improve the role and status of women in all spheres of life, in particular through education, family planning, health services and access to work ;

1. Assembly debate on 23 September 1991 (15th Sitting) (see [Doc. 6439](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, Rapporteur : Mrs Persson). Text adopted by the Assembly on 23 September 1991 (15th Sitting).



- 10.5. to increase their financial contributions to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) ;
 - 10.6. to support all non-governmental, professional and other voluntary organisations striving for the goals of the UNFPA ;
 - 10.7. to make full use of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity in promoting awareness of the interlinked global problems of social and economic development, environmental deterioration and population growth.
11. The Assembly invites Central and East European countries to ask the UNFPA for help in designing and implementing demographic programmes corresponding to their needs, notably in the field of family planning.