Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**Resolution 1049 (1994)**[1]

# Situation of the German ethnic minority in the former Soviet Union

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls its Recommendations 972 (1983) and 1040 (1986) on the situation of the German ethnic minority in the Soviet Union, Recommendation 1106 (1989) on the reception and settlement in the Federal Republic of Germany of refugees and resettlers of German origin coming from countries in central and eastern Europe and Resolution 996 (1993) and Recommendation 1207 (1993) on population movements between the states of the former Soviet Union.

2. The Assembly notes that the situation of the German ethnic minority in the former Soviet Union, which has already been affected by many historic upheavals in the past, has again undergone profound changes following the break-up of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the communist regime.

3. The German minorities now live in several successor states of the Soviet Union and are experiencing different political, economic and social developments.

4. Along with other minorities, they are often confronted with nationalist pressures and particularly difficult living conditions, especially in the former Soviet republics of central Asia. An increasing number of persons belonging to the German minority are therefore choosing repatriation, which has been made easier by the ending of the cold war.

5. Nevertheless, other ethnic Germans prefer to remain in their current places of residence or to settle in other regions of the former Soviet Union. The personal decision of each individual must be respected here.

6. The Assembly welcomes the financial and political effort made by Germany with a view to reintegrating repatriates from the countries of the former Soviet Union, as well as its commitment to improving the economic, social and cultural situation of the ethnic Germans who prefer to remain in the former Soviet Union.

7. The Assembly also welcomes the political will shown by certain former Soviet republics, notably Russia, to resolve the problems of the German minorities living on their territory.

8. In this connection, the Assembly underlines the importance of the decision taken at the summit of heads of state and government of the Council of Europe member states (Vienna, 8-9 October 1993) to draw up a framework convention for the protection of national minorities, also open for signature by non-member states.

9. The Assembly therefore calls on the governments of the states which were previously republics of the Soviet Union:

9.1. to take all legislative and administrative measures needed to ensure the protection of the German minority on their territory, in particular:

*a.* to guarantee full equality of rights in law and practice to all persons belonging to that minority;

1. SeeDoc. 7172, report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, rapporteur: Mr Schreiner; and Doc. 7192, opinion of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, rapporteur: Mr Schwimmer Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 10 November 1994.

*b.* to study, in conjunction with the bodies representing the German minority, all forms of co-operation aimed at resolving the problems facing it in a harmonious manner;

*c.* to allow the minority to keep, to practise and to develop its culture, customs and religion;

*d.* to guarantee the right to use the German language in both private and public life, in accordance with the provisions of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, and to promote teaching of the language;

*e.* to apply the principles of the European Charter for Local Self-Government of the Council of Europe;

9.2. to guarantee ethnic Germans the freedom to choose where they wish to live and to undertake to facilitate their return to their traditional homes, particularly in the Volga region;

9.3. to conclude bilateral agreements with Germany on the status of the German ethnic minority on their territory and the terms of German assistance to the persons belonging to the minority;

9.4. to outlaw and repress any demonstrations of intolerance or extreme nationalism;

9.5. .to create governmental bodies to deal with the problems facing those national minorities which do not live within territories enjoying autonomy.

10. In addition, the Assembly invites the member states concerned to submit to the Social Development Fund and to co-finance concrete projects aimed at resolving the resettlement problems of persons belonging to the German ethnic minority in the former Soviet Union.