Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1373 (1998)[1]

Freedom of movement of and the issue of visas to the members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly recalls that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its member states.

2. It is clear that the free movement of Europeans and their unhindered access to all Council of Europe member states is one of the conditions for reaching this aim of European unity.

3. One of the conditions for obtaining access to another member state is, in particular, that the traveller must be in possession of a valid national passport or identity card.

4. In addition, there is no Council of Europe member state which has entirely abolished visa requirements for nationals from all other Council of Europe member states.

5. However, the obtention of visas may be complicated, cumbersome and expensive and it is certain that it considerably hinders the free movement of persons.

6. Although the Assembly is aware of the fact that it will not be possible to abolish at once all visa requirements in Europe, it is convinced that this should be the objective in the near future.

7. Council of Europe member states should therefore be encouraged to facilitate the obtention of visas for nationals of other member states whenever they can, reduce the number of nationalities for which visas are required, reduce expenses whenever possible, or even issue visas free of charge.

8. The obtention of visas should, in particular, be facilitated for those who are called upon to travel in member states on official duty for the Council of Europe.

9. The Assembly welcomes the fact that it has been decided to introduce a service card for Council of Europe staff members which will facilitate their travel and identification abroad.

10. As far as members of the Assembly are concerned, therçe is already a Council of Europe card which is issued by the Organisation.

11. The Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers negotiate an informal agreement between member states which would grant the right to any member of the Assembly holding such a Council of Europe card on an official journey to obtain a visa free of charge, rapidly, on the spot, for the duration of his or her official duties. If necessary, such a card should also enable its holder to obtain a multiple-entry visa. The holder of the Council of Europe card should also be in possession of his or her national passport, possibly together with proof that he or she is on an official journey.

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1. See Doc. 8097, report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, rapporteur: Lord Kirkhill. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 26 May 1998.