



Recommendation 1455 (2000)¹

Repatriation and integration of the Tatars of Crimea

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The entire Crimean Tatar population (some 200 000 people) were deported from their historic homeland in 1944 for alleged collaboration with the nazis during the second world war. In the wake of this forced displacement, primarily to Uzbekistan and other central Asian republics, up to 46% of them perished within two years, succumbing to malnutrition and disease. A 1967 Soviet decree cleared the Crimean Tatars of all charges but did nothing to facilitate their return, let alone compensate them for damages incurred. Until almost the very last days of the USSR the Crimean Tatars were not allowed to return to Crimea.

2. The Assembly recalls the general principles and recommendations set out in its [Recommendation 1334 \(1997\)](#) on refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and regrets the fact that most of the proposals therein are yet to be implemented.

3. Over the last ten years, some 260 000 of the estimated 400 000 to 550 000-strong Crimean Tatar community have returned to Crimea. However, the problems confronting returnees remain complex and multi-faceted. They include difficulties in securing citizenship, employment, housing, social protection, and cultural revival. Until these problems are solved, the full national identity of returnee Crimean Tatars cannot be restored. Integration requires the eradication of all vestiges of xenophobia and discrimination faced by returnees.

4. The Assembly is concerned that the integration assistance programmes run by the Ukrainian Government have had to be scaled down significantly and are underfunded as a result of the severe economic crisis in the country. It welcomes the readiness of the Government of Ukraine to facilitate reintegration, in particular the steps taken to simplify the acquisition of Ukrainian citizenship. The Assembly commends efforts by the European Union (EU) and international organisations, notably the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), to speed up and facilitate the integration process and calls on member states to give their full support to these ongoing programmes.

5. The Assembly stresses that returnee Crimean Tatars will not be able to lead a normal life until they are properly housed and the requisite infrastructure is in place. Aid in this area should be a priority, and the Council of Europe Development Bank should explore the possibility of making a contribution in this area. By the same token, the Assembly believes that Ukraine's joining the Council of Europe Development Bank would facilitate such a contribution.

6. To avoid social erosion of the returnee Crimean Tatar community, education and job creation schemes need to be launched or intensified. For these purposes international aid and assistance programmes are particularly needed. The member states and international community at large should contribute to the broader economic revival of Crimea.

1. Assembly debate on 5 April 2000 (13th Sitting) (see [Doc. 8655](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, rapporteur: Lord Ponsonby). Text adopted by the Assembly on 5 April 2000 (13th Sitting).



7. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

- 7.1. intensify dialogue with European Union institutions and international organisations active in assisting the Crimean Tatars, in particular the UNHCR and the OSCE, in order to make arrangements for increased involvement by the Council of Europe in projects that fall within its area of competence, notably legal issues relating to the integration of returnees such as citizenship, residence permits, etc., and to involve the Crimean Tatars in this discussion as far as possible;
- 7.2. invite Ukraine to join the Council of Europe Development Bank;
- 7.3. invite the Council of Europe Development Bank to explore what it can do to assist returnee Crimean Tatars, in particular in the housing and infrastructure sectors;
- 7.4. invite the European Union to increase its involvement in assistance projects targeting returnee Crimean Tatars;
- 7.5. invite the UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the OSCE to convene a second conference on refugees, displaced persons and other victims of involuntary displacement and repatriation in the Commonwealth of Independent States that would focus, inter alia, on the situation of returnee Crimean Tatars;
- 7.6. urge the member states to contribute generously, at bilateral and multilateral levels, to assistance projects targeting returnee Crimean Tatars, in particular housing and infrastructure construction schemes, education and job-creation projects, paying special attention to the most vulnerable groups;
- 7.7. invite the states concerned (notably the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) to enter into bilateral negotiations with Ukraine with a view to agreeing on a simplified procedure for the acquisition of Ukrainian citizenship, accessible to Crimean Tatars residing in those states;
- 7.8. invite the Government of Ukraine and the regional authorities of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea to study the experience of other member states of the Council of Europe concerning the representation of minorities and indigenous peoples, with a view to securing the effective representation of the Crimean Tatars in national, Crimean and local public affairs; and for this purpose to take into account the Council of Europe's 1995 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and the June 1999 Lund recommendations on the effective participation of national minorities in public life elaborated at the request of the OSCE's High Commissioner for National Minorities;
- 7.9. invite the Government of Ukraine and the regional authorities of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea to study the experience of other multi-ethnic states of the Council of Europe, with a view to restoring and securing the rights of the Crimean Tatars to education in the Crimean Tatar language, and the use of their language in all private and public affairs; and for this purpose to take into account the Council of Europe's 1992 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and its 1995 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, as well as the October 1996 Hague recommendations regarding the education rights of national minorities and the February 1998 Oslo recommendations regarding the linguistic rights of national minorities, elaborated at the request of the OSCE's High Commissioner for National Minorities.