

Recommendation 1552 (2002)¹

Vocational training of young asylum seekers in host countries

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Vocational education and training provide a unique opportunity for young asylum seekers to become acquainted with the labour market of the host country, readapt the skills that they acquired in the course of studies or professional experience, and develop new competences that they may use in the host country or in their country of origin.
2. Given the length of time it may take to process an asylum application, in some cases amounting to years, the Assembly is convinced that young asylum seekers should be given the opportunity to use this period to devote themselves to fundamental activities such as training and the improvement of their skills.
3. Furthermore, the provision of vocational education and training would enable young asylum seekers to enter the labour market as soon as they have the legal right to do so, which would facilitate their integration into society and allow them to support themselves and their families without relying on social benefits.
4. The Assembly therefore believes that more attention should be given to the issue of vocational education and training for the specific group of young asylum seekers in Council of Europe member states. It welcomes the initiatives taken by the European Union to promote vocational education and training for asylum seekers in the European Union member states and encourages it to continue this process.
5. Bearing in mind the structural labour shortage in some economic sectors of Council of Europe member states, the Assembly believes that it is possible to devise vocational training programmes which would contribute to meeting the needs of national labour markets without provoking distortions.
6. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
call on member states to:
 - a. *establish, or promote the establishment of, vocational education and training programmes for young asylum seekers, whether they are applying for asylum in their own right or as dependants, which are accessible free of charge, on a voluntary basis and available from admission to the asylum procedure;*
 - b. *co-operate with local authorities and the voluntary sector, including associations of refugees and asylum seekers, for the elaboration, organisation, delivery and publicising of vocational training programmes, including language training and vocational guidance;*
 - c. *strengthen co-operation with the private sector with a view to complementing classes with internships or traineeships aimed at providing young asylum seekers with practical experience and familiarising them with the work environment of the host country;*
 - d. *privilege the organisation of vocational training programmes for professions that are in demand in the labour market of the host country and/or in the countries of origin of the asylum seekers;*
 - e. *encourage the increasing use of new information and communication technologies (NICT) throughout vocational training and emphasise the training of asylum seekers in the field of NICT itself;*

1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 26 March 2002 (see [Doc. 9380](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, rapporteur: Mrs Zwerver).



- f. consider the particular needs of young asylum seekers, especially women, with accompanying dependent families, and give preference to them in access to vocational courses;*
- g. refrain from withdrawing or preventing access to vocational training programmes for those who are exercising suspensive rights of appeal against the refusal of their asylum application or who have been permitted to stay in the host country on grounds other than that of asylum;*

invite other international organisations, such as the European Union, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Labour Organisation to strengthen co-operation and information sharing and to undertake specific programmes in this field;

include in its work programme a survey on national practices and laws on mutual recognition of diplomas and education certificates, and study how it affects asylum seekers and refugees.