



Recommendation 1650 (2004)¹

Links between Europeans living abroad and their countries of origin

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Several million Europeans live legally outside their countries of origin, both in Europe and outside the continent, and regular migration flows are constantly on the rise. For some countries, in particular in central and eastern Europe, the question of links with their expatriates is a relatively new problem.
2. Migration policies in most Council of Europe member states which consider themselves host countries are based mainly on issues concerning immigration and integration, ignoring the emigration dimension.
3. Relations between countries of origin and their expatriates in Council of Europe member states vary from strong and institutionalised to loose and informal. There is no harmonisation in this respect at the pan-European level.
4. The Parliamentary Assembly believes that it is in the interest of states to ensure that their expatriate nationals continue to actively exercise their rights linked to nationality and contribute in a variety of ways to the political, economic, social and cultural development of their countries of origin.
5. At the same time expatriates have an important role to play as intermediaries between their countries of origin and host countries, and for their respective cultures, promoting co-operation and exchange in different fields, based on respect for other peoples and cultures.
6. Multiculturalism and cultural and religious diversity are now a reality and must be reflected in coherent and co-ordinated migration policies involving both host countries and countries of origin. Expatriation is the outcome of increasing globalisation and should be viewed as a positive expression of modernity and dynamism; it is of real economic benefit for both host countries and the countries of origin.
7. It is essential for all parties concerned that the right balance between the process of integration in the host country and the links with the country of origin is defined and maintained.
8. The Assembly regrets that little follow-up has been given to the main principles included in [Recommendation 1410 \(1999\)](#) on the links between Europeans living abroad and their countries of origin. It stresses their importance and refers to other relevant texts touching upon different aspects of this vast subject: [Recommendation 1500 \(2001\)](#) on the participation of immigrants and foreign residents in political life in Council of Europe member states; [Recommendation 1587 \(2002\)](#) on the residence, legal status and freedom of movement of migrant workers in Europe: lessons from the case of Portugal; and [Recommendation 1492 \(2001\)](#) on the rights of national minorities.
9. For these reasons, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
 - 9.1. invite member states:
 - a. to review their emigration policies and solutions in the field of relations with their expatriates with a view to improving and strengthening them;

1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 2 March 2004 (see [Doc. 10072](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, rapporteur: Ms Bu?ic).



- b. to establish institutional links with expatriate communities if this has not already been done, in order to enable them to defend their rights, express their opinions and influence any decisions which might concern them;
 - c. to take account of their expatriates' interest in policy making, in particular concerning questions of nationality; political rights, including voting rights; economic rights, including taxation and pension rights; social rights, including social schemes; and cultural rights;
 - d. to encourage and support the activities of expatriate associations and NGOs;
 - e. to promote and support all forms of co-operation with their expatriate communities;
- 9.2. promote an exchange of views and co-operation between Council of Europe member states as regards political, legal, economic, social and cultural measures aimed at strengthening the links between European expatriates and their countries of origin;
- 9.3. review the existing models of relations between expatriates and their countries of origin, with a view to making proposals for the introduction of legally-binding measures at the European level;
- 9.4. consider the elaboration and implementation of specific programmes and projects aimed at encouraging qualified expatriates from particular countries to return to their country of origin;
- 9.5. initiate the establishment, under the auspices of the Council of Europe, of a council of Europeans abroad, a body representing European expatriates at the pan-European level;
- 9.6. initiate the elaboration and establishment of a pan-European, harmonised system for collecting statistics on the nationals of Council of Europe member states living in other Council of Europe member states;
- 9.7. clarify different administrative concepts, classifications and definitions concerning expatriates with a view to harmonising them at European level;
- 9.8. involve associations and NGOs in activities concerning expatriates.