Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 2034 (2014)[1]
Final version

Integration tests: helping or hindering integration?

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its Resolution 1973 (2014) on integration tests: helping or hindering integration?

2. The Assembly notes that knowledge of a receiving society's language(s) facilitates the successful integration of migrants. This is the foundation on which integration tests were introduced by a small number of member States and why they have been embraced by a growing number of them. These tests are now applied not only for citizenship, but also for residence and even as a pre-entry requirement, notably for family reunion purposes.

3. Statistics and evaluation studies show that language and integration tests have led to a decrease in the number of applicants for family reunification, permanent residence permits and naturalisation. These tests can also have a discriminatory impact, depending on the gender, age, educational background and nationality of the people concerned. This raises serious questions as to whether tests which are connected to the granting of residence rights are the right instrument for promoting the integration of migrants. Therefore, serious reconsideration of the policy of merely testing and demanding a certain level of knowledge, rather than promoting language skills and integration, is needed.

4. Not only has the use of tests increased significantly, but the standards required have reached higher levels, often using the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) as a benchmark.

5. The Assembly notes that the CEFR offers reference levels which are widely used for evaluating language competences and represents one of the many successes of the Council of Europe. It recognises, however, that this instrument was never developed as a mechanism for establishing whether or not a certain language level was indicative of a degree of integration. It is only a measure of linguistic ability.

6. The Assembly also notes the important activities carried out by the Language Policy Unit of the Council of Europe (Education Department, DG II), and in particular its work on the linguistic integration of adult migrants (LIAM).

7. In this context, the Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers to:

7.1. undertake, though its Language Policy Unit, further work in respect of the CEFR, in order to identify appropriate ways of drawing on its content in the integration process. In this respect, the committee may consider it appropriate to produce guidelines on how the CEFR can be used and the limitations to its use for purposes of integration evaluation, or examine an alternative tool, based on the CEFR, which might be more appropriate for these purposes than language proficiency levels;

7.2. put forward alternatives to integration/language tests as a means of promoting and measuring integration and improving the prospects for integration of migrants and would-be migrants;

7.3. promote further the work of the Council of Europe on the linguistic integration of adult migrants.

---

1. *Assembly debate* on 29 January 2014 (6th Sitting) (see Doc. 13361, report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, rapporteur: Ms Tineke Strik). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 29 January 2014 (6th Sitting).