Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**Resolution 2124 (2016)**[1]

# Educational and cultural networks of migrant and diaspora communities

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly considers that communities living abroad ought to be seen as vital bridges between Europe's cultures and as an asset for the countries of residence and of origin. However, the integration of diaspora communities and migrants represents a major challenge for European societies today.

2. Problems of marginalisation and exclusion are increasing across Europe. Weak identification both with the country of residence and of origin can create a sense of alienation, particularly among second and third generations of young people searching for identity and belonging. Many feel they are not perceived as equal citizens and can fall prey to fundamentalism, extremism and racism. Such anxieties can further deepen the divide between communities along linguistic, cultural or religious lines.

3. The Assembly believes that the role of educational and cultural networks of communities living abroad is crucial to building cohesive societies by strengthening pluralism and democracy in European societies. These networks play a key role in providing support, solidarity and mutual assistance; they provide a link to the culture of origin and an openness to multiple cultural affiliations; they nurture multilingualism; and they provide cultural and educational support to children and young people of the second and third generation. Furthermore, they can play an important role as mediators between diaspora communities and public authorities.

4. The Assembly nevertheless considers that their role is not sufficiently understood and recognised, and that associations and networks are not sufficiently mobilised, particularly in the context of developing national and local strategies that aim to improve social cohesion and the spirit of "living together". Moreover, there is very little research at national and European level to assess the cultural and social impact of diaspora communities on local societies.

5. The Assembly therefore recommends that the governments and parliaments of the member and observer States of the Council of Europe, as well as the States whose parliaments enjoy observer or partner for democracy status with the Assembly:

5.1. when they are the countries of residence of diaspora communities:

5.1.1. involve diaspora associations in the framing and implementation of policies concerning different aspects of the integration process, including educational, cultural and social integration;

5.1.2. consider setting up national platforms to allow the different ministries and specialised institutions to work transversally, and to facilitate the drafting and implementation of national integration strategies through a permanent dialogue with organisations that reflect the interests and opinions of different diaspora communities in the country of residence; encourage the establishment of similar platforms at local level;

1. *Assembly debate* on 23 June 2016 (25th Sitting) (see Doc. 14069, report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Mr Pierre-Yves Le Borgn'; and Doc. 14084, opinion of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, rapporteur: Mr Thierry Mariani). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 23 June 2016 (25th Sitting).

5.1.3. provide adequate financial support programmes for diaspora associations to help them to professionalise their activities, develop and consolidate their networks and conduct joint initiatives, including on social media platforms, as already recommended in Assembly Resolution 2043 (2015) on democratic participation for migrant diasporas;

5.1.4. encourage the media to convey the positive role of educational and cultural networks of communities living abroad;

5.2. when they are the countries of origin of diaspora communities:

5.2.1. develop stronger partnerships between the relevant public bodies – in particular schools and universities, embassies and cultural and linguistic centres – and diaspora organisations, seeking to encourage their action through knowledge sharing and concrete support (provision of teachers, educational materials and adequate premises) for language tuition and its recognition within the formal education system;

5.2.2. if it is not already the case, consider establishing a high-level office (possibly at government level) responsible for diaspora issues and/or the election of representatives of diaspora communities to national and, where appropriate, regional parliaments;

5.3. in co-operation with the Council of Europe and the European Union, seek partnerships to:

5.3.1. set up a European parliamentary network on diaspora policies;

5.3.2. support the establishment by the diaspora communities of a European platform to collect data and assess the cultural and social impact of diaspora communities on European societies, to promote the exchange of best practices and to develop joint projects.

6. The Assembly, welcoming the Council of Europe Action Plan on Building Inclusive Societies (2016-2019), calls on the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to include therein concrete initiatives in the sphere of culture and education which involve diaspora communities.