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International financing of the rehabilitation of refugees and surplus population

Report[1]
Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population
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1. 1952 - 4th Session - Second part

A. Draft Recommendation

The Assembly,

Conscious of the gravity of the problem of refugees and surplus population,

Considering that a solution can be found by integrating these persons in the national or in the European economy,

Considering that such integration is bound up with the general development of the European economy.

Considering also that this development is not taking place at such a rate as to permit the automatic assimilation of the large numbers of refugees and surplus elements in the population within a reasonable time,

Considering that this integration must be effected with the greatest possible speed in order to reduce the risk of political, economic and social disturbances arising out of the existence of refugees and of a surplus population,

Believing therefore that it is necessary to take special steps directly affecting certain groups of surplus population, in order to complete the overall programme of economic development,

Considering that the fresh influx of refugees into those Member States bordering on the " Iron Curtain " increases the difficulties of the countries concerned and is likely to give rise to further destitution in Europe,

Recommends that the Committee of Ministers should :

a. invite Member States and the competent international organisations to grant priority, as far as is possible, to any investment project likely to encourage the integration of refugees and of the surplus population;

b. contemplate the establishment as soon as possible, within the framework of the Council of Europe, of a special fund designed to finance specific limited projets for the integration of refugees and surplus population and to assist the most needy of the refugees and unemployed. These projects shall be prepared by the Committee on Population and Refugees, in close co-operation with qualified experts and international organisations concerned with the question and shall later be submitted to the Committee of Ministers, through the Special Liaison Committee.

B. Draft Order of the Assembly

The Assembly,

Being of the opinion that special steps should be taken for the purpose of integrating refugees and surplus population into the European economy,

Considering that specific limited projects for such integration should be prepared by the Committee on Population and Refugees and submitted to the Committee of Ministers in the near future,

1. Instructs the Committee on Population and Refugees to prepare specific limited projects of integration and assistance, in close co-operation with the competent international organisations and qualified experts, and to keep the Assembly informed of its work;

2. Instructs the Secretary-General to supply the Committee with all the information required for the execution of its task and for this purpose to establish contact with the competent international organisations, qualified experts and Governments concerned.

C. Explanatory Memorandum

1.

1. Since first giving its attention to the the problem of refugees and surplus population, the Consultative Assembly has continually sought to find a permanent solution to the problem. Such a solution can in fact only be found in the complete absorption of surplus elements of population into the European community.

2. In the course of its work, the Committee has taken the view that the integration of the surplus population goes hand in hand with economic expansion. Consideration of the influence of this expansion on the situation of surplus population during these last few years has led the Committee to conclude that the general development of the European economy is not progressing with such speed as to ensure that the great number of refugees and surplus elements in the population will automatically be absorbed within a reasonable space of time. The individual human beings concerned, however, cannot, in most cases, wait until the various economic and financial measures have led to an improvement in the general economic situation. As rapidly as possible they must be assimilated in order to lessen the danger of political, economic and social instability arising from their enforced idleness.

3. The Committee therefore thought it necessary, as a complement to the overall plans for economic development and in order to hasten the process of absorption, to suggest that special measures be taken affecting specific categories of the surplus population. It accordingly asked the Secretariat-General to study the international financing of the rehabilitation of refugees and surplus population.

4. The resulting Report makes clear the following points :

a. Although the refugees and the surplus population have benefited during the last few years from general economic developments, introduced by a relatively high level of capital investment, the effects were felt only indirectly, since their integration into the general economy usually figured in the investment policies only as a subsidiary aspect of the problem of economic recovery. In order to afford them direct assistance, it would now be advi? sable to obtain from Member States and competent international organisations an understanding that in drawing up their general investment plans they will grant priority to any project for the establishment of refugees and surplus population.

b. The foundation of a European Bank to finance the plans for absorbing refugees and surplus elements of population does not appear to be the best means of obtaining the necessary financial assistance, in view of the unavoidable delay before the Bank could begin its operation. Another consideration is that the prospects for an appeal either to private savings or to government aid in order to obtain the capital required to found this Bank are not promising at the present time. This being so, no immediate answer can be found to the question, which is moreover under consideration by several other Committees of the Assembly.

c. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development has, among existing international financial institutions, several times expressed its interest in plans for European integration, and has stated that concrete financial proposals for this purpose would be favourably received. In order to request a loan of capital from the Bank, the proposals submitted must, however, be definite and concrete, and must, moreover, fulfil the conditions laid down by the Bank, namely that any project which it may finance must be capable of realisation without the necessity of further loans at a later date.

d. The creation of a special fund intended to encourage, by short-term loans, the realisation of limited plans for assimilation would considerably hasten the process of absorbing refugees and surplus population. This fund could for instance, be used to finance individual ventures on the part of the beneficiaries, thus encouraging their enterprise and initiative. The fund could also finance assistance schemes for the most necessitous among the refugees and unemployed.

5. In studying this Report, the Committee took a particular interest in measures that may rapidly be put into effect. It therefore decided to incorporate in the following draft Recommendations the two measures which, in the opinion of the Committee, are required in view of the urgent need of assistance to refugees and surplus population :

a. Governments and competent international organisations should grant priority to any plan for capital investment likely to foster the integration into the economic system of refugees and surplus elements of population.

b. A special fund should be set up within the framework of the Council of Europe to finance concrete and limited plans for the integration of refugees and surplus population and for assistance to the refugees and unemployed persons who are in the most urgent need.

6. In order to estimate the required amount of this fund, it would be necessary to draw up forthwith the concrete and limited plans for integration and assistance which it would be called upon to finance. The Committee submits to the Assembly a draft Order for this purpose, instructing the Committee, in close consultation with the competent international organisations and with qualified experts, to complete these plans and to keep the Assembly informed of its work. The same draft Order also instructs the Secretary-General to provide the Committee with all the facilities required for the accomplishment of this task.

7. The Committee consequently submits to the Assembly the following draft Recommendation and draft Order which it has unanimously adopted :