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Work of the Special Liaison Committee on Refugees and Over-population

Communication

1.

1. The Special Liaison Committee, consisting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of France, the German Federal Republic and Italy, representing the Committee of Ministers, and MM. de la Vallée Poussin, Bottomley, Mandalinei and Mercouris (including one Substitute), representing the Consultative Assembly, has met twice, namely on 14th and 15th December, 1953, at Paris, and on 5th February, 1954, at Strasbourg, since the Committee on Population and Refugees last reported to the Assembly[1] on the work of the Committee. In the course of the meetings it examined and adopted several texts which it has since transmitted to the Committee of Ministers and which are set out below for the information of the Assembly.

2. The texts in question are the following :

Th e Report on the measures to be taken by the Council of Europe to solve the problem of refugees and over-population, defining the scope of the policy of the Council of Europe in this sphere ;

A Memorandum on firture relations between the Special Liaison Committee and the Special Representative of the Council of Europe for national refugees and over-population ;

Recommendation No. 10 of the Special Liaison Committee concerning the temporary housing scheme in the German Federal Republic for refugees from the Eastern Zone ;

Recommendation No. 11 of the Special Liaison Committee on the information work to be carried out in order to rouse public, opinion 011 the problem of refugees and over-population together with Recommendation No. 12 on the information work to be undertaken on the problem of soealed " hard core " refugees.

1.1. Measures to be taken by the Council of Europe to solve the problem rof refugees and over-population

1.1.1. A. Introduction

3. Having decided to appoint a " European personality" to deal with the problem of refugees ahd over-population, the Committee of Ministers, in its Resolution (53) 22, adopted on 6th May,-1953, requested the Governments concerned to " furnish the Council of Europe and Member Governments with full information on the problem and to suggest practical measures of assistance which might be taken to deal with it ". In accordance with this decision, the Governments of Greece and of the German Federal Republic submitted memorandato the Secretariat-General. The Netherlands Government also submitted a Memorandum giving its views on the status of the Special Representative.

1. See 5th Session, 1953: Doc. 180.

4. At their meeting of 7th to 9th December, 1953, the Ministers' Deputies decided to transmit these memoranda to the Special Liaison Committee for its opinion. The Committee examined them on 14th and 15th December, 1953, and on 5th February, 1954, and at these meetings the Members of the Committee supplemented the information given in the memoranda by oral statements. The Committee extended its study of the question to other European States concerned with the problem namely Turkey, the Netherlands, Austria and the Free Territory of Trieste, on the ground that the population problem in Europe had to be viewed as a whole.

1.1.2. B. Measures to solve the problem

5. 3. An analysis of the Memoranda and close stody of the European population problem in general leads to the conclusion that the solution is to be found in the assimilation of surplus population in three ways : assimilation in the countries of residence themselves, in other European countries and in countries outside Europe. The policy followed by the Council of Europe since 1951, .when the Committee of Experts on Refugees and Over-population laid down the broad lines of a common policy [2], is therefore still valid today. The situations vary in the various Member States affected ; some are more intersted in absorbing their surplus population within their own territory, others seek relief mainly through intra-Euro-pean migration, while yet others lay the main stress on emigration. It remains true, however, that the surplus population of Europe can be put to good use by stimulating the process of assimilation along all these lines. As the Italian Government states in ite Memorandum, the inherent liability so far represented by surplus elements of population may, in a spirit of reciprocity, become an active force of benefit to all mankind.

6. 4. The Member States suggested that the Council of Europe should carry out a series of measures of different kinds to promote assimilation in each of these three ways. The Special Liaison Committee has felt it would be useful to divide those measures, the adoption and implementation of which it recommends to the Committee of Ministers, into two categories.

those which call for approach to other international organisations with a view to action by them ;

those requiring direct action by the appropriate organs of the Council of Europe.

1.1.2.1. (a) Measures which call for approach to other international organisations with a view to action by them.

5. These may be classified according to the type of assimilation to which they apply :

(i) Assimilation in the cmmtry of residence

6. In countries capable of absorbing the surplus population, the process of assimilation is slowed up, if not completely halted, by lack of capital. Thus the Government of the German Federal Republic states in its proposals on the programme of work of the Council of Europe : " The problem of refugees and over-population is beyond the capacities of individual Governments and can only be solved by concerted action on the part of all Member States of the Council of Europe ". The German Government therefore emphasises, in its Memorandum on the refugee problem, the need for all countries to obtain foreign capital which could take the form of credits to finance specific schemes for thejconstruction of temporary or permanent dwellings, for the creation of new employment, and for) land-development.

7. The Italian Government refers to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development as a possible source of capital and proposes suitable amendments to the regulations of the Bank, which at present " make practically no provision for the financing of settlement schemes." By settlement schemes, the Italian Government understands measures taken within a country as well aš those taken in other countries. The observation cited above applies equally, therefore, to measures taken to promote other methods of assimilation (paras. 12 and 16).

8. So far as the United Nations is concerned, the Italian Government expresses the hope that " the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) should give strong encouragement to this international programme of action f or improving world social conditions, in which Italy, has also taken part, basing its proposals on the prospect of achieving complete freedom of movement for persons, capital and consumer goods. " In partionlar, the Italian Government goes on to say : " two new bodies should be constituted, as already suggested by the Council — an International Finance Corporation and a United Nations Development Fund — with a view to providing both private and public capital for backward countries. "

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2. See refugees and surplus elements of population, published by the Secretariat-General of the Council of Europe.

7. 9. The need for foreign capital to assist the assimilation of surplus population µı the country of residence is also felt by Turkey and Austria.

(ii) Assimilation in other European countries

10. So far as action by other organisations iн concerned, the stress is laid on O.E.E.C. The Italian Government advocates " achieving the freer circulation of workers, which the Council of Ministers resolved upon in 1952, without further delay and by overcoming the resistance of the Governments and of the trade unions ". In this matter an initial step has been taken, as advocated by the Italian Government, in the adoption of a code of minimum rules, which iз intended as a guide to Member Governments in employing foreign workers.

11. Reference is also made to the possibility of action by the Coal and Steel Community. The Italian Government says that the Luxembourg authorities should seek to put into practice the mobility of labour advocated in the Treaty by giving as broad and concrete an interpretation as possible to Article 69 which stipulates for such mobility.

12. What was said above (paragraphs 6, 7 and 8) on the need for international capital to finance the process of assimilation in the country of residence, and on the steps which could be taken to induce international credit organisations to act in this matter, also applies to assimilation in other European countries, which is likewise not feasible without the help of uiter-national capital.

(iii) Assimilation in overseas countries

13. The Member States, particularly Italy and Greece, insist strongly on the need to increase the rate of emigration, overseas. They put forward a series of proposals for inciting organisations which specialise in emigration questions to action in this matter.

14. The Italian Government advocates further expansion of the work of the already very active I.p.E.M., which might,become " the centre of co-ordination and stimulus of an internaţional policy for the more équitable distribution of the populations of countries overseas. "

15. N.A.T.O. seems to the Italian Government the organisation " best suited by aim and nature for encouraging the adoption of definite high-level decisions on both the national and international plane for the achievement of greater mobility of labour and for providing, in the field of defence as such, the necessary technical solutions to the labour problem, even if these be only temporary." It is therefore necessary, in the opinion of the Italian Government, that even within N.A.T.O. " the Member Governments should formally undertake to give more financial support to emigration, to employ more of Europe's surplus manpower in Africa and other underdeveloped territories, and to coordinate, the different emigration laws more effectively. "

16. So far as U.N. and its specialised agencies are concerned, the Italian Government suggests that P.A.O. should seek to achieve a better balance between the increase in world population and its food resources. Concerning U.N. technical assistance, it is greatly in Italy's interest to increase the number of the experts it sends to under-developed countries. But it would be even more helpful if these technicians could be accompanied by groups of workers who could be of great service in assisting the economic advance of the countries concerned. Finally the technical assistance programme contained in Point IV should, in the opinion of the Italian Government, be further developed, " by seeking, in the general interest, to co-ordinate the financial resources available under the Point IV programme and practical immigration schemes, paying more heed, than hitherto, to the close interdependence of the economic development programme and the movement of labour."

1.1.2.2. (b) Measures requiring direct action by the appropriate organs of the Council of Europe

17. Such measures, too, shoxild be differentiated according to where the surplus population is to be assimilated, with the addition of a section on action for the information of public opinion.

(i) Assimilation in the country of residence

18. The major obstacle to the process of integration in the country of residence being lack of capital, the Committee on Population and Refugees of the Consultative Assembly has suggested the institution, within the Council of Europe, of a European Fund to finance specific limited projects for the assimilation of surplus population in their countries of residence and in other European countries (of. Recommendation 35 (1952). The institution of this Fund was made subject to the preparation of specific limited projects, of which one is

now being studied. As was said by the Government of the German Federal Republic (cf. paragraph 6), assimilation in the country of residence can only be carried out successfully by Governments of the Member States concerned with the aid of foreign capital.

An example of such a plan, the implementation of which depends on the help of foreign capital, is the scheme for the construction of temporary housing in the German Federal Republic for refugees from the Eastern zone, which is now being studied by the Special Liaison Committee. The German Government says that it would ' be very glad if the Council of Europe could rapidly carry out the plan for setting up provisional reception centres for refugees coming from the Soviet Zone ". " The Special Liaison Committee " continues the German Government, " should, at its next meeting, draw up a programme for financing the scheme and then submit the plan as a whole to the Committee of Ministers for their decision. "

In this connection, the Special Liaison Committee adopted, on 5th February, 1954, Recommendation No. 10.

(ii) Assimilation in other European countries "

19. Resolution (53) 19 of the Committee of Ministers instructed the Secretary-General to draw up a report on possible improvements in the organisation of migration within Europe. This work is now in progress, with the help of the European Centre for Demographic Studies. It forms part of a general attempt to attain a more even distribution of European populations and may even prove to. be the basis for such efforts. Several Member States, have expressed interest in this study. Thus the Greek Government states that it " still hopes that it may be relieved of he burden of these foreign refugees by the implementation of Resolutions (53) 19 and 20 of the Committee of Ministers ".

Elsewhere, the Greek Government states that " the organisation of effective co-operating among member countries with á view to coordinating migratory movements within the framework of Europe... is an essential condition of organising migratory movements throughout the world. Unless thiss is done we may never realise exactly what we ought to ask of immigration countries outside Europe ":

20. The Joint Sub-Committee of the Consultative Assembly on the Resettlement of Surplus and Refugee Agricultural Workers is already seeking practical means of organising greater mobility of workers in the restricted field of agriculture. This study, when completed, may prove to be of vital interest to a number of countries, such as Italy, the Netherlands, the German Federal Republic and Austria, which, through lack of space, suffer from a surplus of agricultural workers.

21. Finally, the Council of Europe has been called upon to deal with one last problem in the field of intra-European migration which is that of the vocational training of young refugees and unemployed persons, Since, under its terms of reference, the Special Liaison Committee; is required " to bear in mind the need for facilitating the vocational training" öf such persons, an in-, quiry is now being carried out, on the instructions of .this Committee, and in co-operation with O.E.E.C. and I.L.O.. as to the best means of securing vocational training facilities for young-refugees and unemployed persons who cannot obtain them in their own country. The German Government says it "would welcome the offer of apprenticeships in other member countries to help overcome the vocational difficulties among yoiuig people in countries which, like the Federal Republic, have insufficient vocational training centres to cope with the influx of young refugees and the large number of refugees who arc now reaching the adult stage " It goes on to recommend " the creation of new national or intra-European vocational training centres by the institution, if necessary, of a special fund under the auspices of the Council of Europe ".

22. The execution of any concrete plan in the field of intra-European integration once more raises the problem of international financing. The Committee on Population and Refugees accordingly adopted Recommendation 35 (1952) proposing the creation within the Council of an integration fund (cf. para. 18) to be used, particularly, for carrying out plans for intra-European integration. The Assembly considered that this should be a working capital fund which would grant redeemable loans at a nominal rate of interest representing merely a contribution to administrative expenses. In view of the length of time required to develop a new business, repayments would be made over a period of years. The monies refunded would serve for the granting of further loans. The Assembly was thus proposing a credit system rather than actual aid. If this fund could be used to finance a few experimental schemes, the experience thus acquired might make it possible to find more substantial means for the execution of new schemes

The Netherlands Government emphasises in its Memorandum on the status of the Special Representative the necessity for the latter to have adequate financial resources at his disposal as the absorption into industry of the millions of people at present unemployed calls for considerable funds. The Netherlands Government repeats that "not plans or machinery but funds are lacking'.

(iii) Assimilation in overseas countries

23. Although all direct action in this field must remain in the hands of the organisations possessing the necessary means of action in the overseas countries, such as I.C.E.M. (see paragraph 14), certaüi Member States consider that the Council of Едгope has nevertheless its own part to play. Thus the Greek Government has suggested that the Council of Europe should as soon as possible take appropriate steps " to transfer consideration of this problem from the technical to the political level". The Greek Government feels that this entails the adoption of "a joint and positive political attitude, as well as action, by the countries of Europe — essentially an emigration continent — towards immigration countries outside Europe ". In this connection, the Greek Government proposes the preparation of " surveys on the development of emigration to the Continent of Africa and goes on to say that " with regard to this task, promising work appears to have already been begun by O.E.EƟ. This, of course, links up to some extent with Recommendation 26 (1952) on the Strasbourg Plån, and more particularly with paragraph 1 (d) of that Recommendation regarding the provision of facilities in overseas countries for the settlement of nationals having economic,' scientific and technical qualifications, and for the introduction of enterprises from countries having no dependent overseas territories".

24. The Consultative Assembly, in its Recommendation 34 (1952), had already proposed that the Committee of Ministers should "consult together, within the framework of the Council of. Europe, in order to reach agreement on a common policy in the field of migration". The Special Liaison Committee took up this idea, expressing the need for formulating a common programme of Member States of the Council of Europe in the field of migration.

25. These Recommendations were directed at achieving a more even balance of the world's human, potential by relieving Europe of its surplus elements and at the same time strengthening the economies of the overseas territories — a purpose having political, economic, social and humanitarian aspects.

(iv) Publio Information

26. Any success of these integration schemes depends on the active co-operation of public opinion. This was not only unanimously expressed by the Committee of Experts on Refugees and Over-population and endorsed by the Consultative Assembly (Recommendation 13 (1951) and the Committee of Ministers, but was subsequently supported by certain international organisations, and in particular by O.E.E.C. and I.C.E.M.

27. The Italian Government made the following remark on this aspect of the future activities of the Council of Europe and, more particularly of its Special Representative : "The Special Representative should act as the month piece for acquainting world public opinion, Governments, parliaments and other international organisations with the details of this problem and the need for facing it squarely, relying on his personal prestige to bring home to them that European spirit which finds its most effective expression at Strasbourg".

28. Convinced of the extreme value of a campaign to influence public opinion, the Special Liaison Committee had already submitted to the Committee of Ministers, in November, 1952, a plan for an information campaign together with financial estimates. It later recommended that the Committee of Ministers should pay particular attention to the fate of the so-called "hard core" refugees within the framework of the iiir formation programme of the Council of Europe. At their meeting on 7th - 9th December, 1953, the Ministers' Deputies decided to reconsider this point after it had been discussed between the Special Representative and the Committee itself.

29. This discussion took place on 5th February, 1954 and resulted in the unanimous adoption of Recommendations 11 and 12 respectively on the information work to be carried out in order to rouse public opinion on the problem of refugees and over-population and on behalf of the so-called "hard core" refugees.

1.1.3. C. Conclusions

30. From the foregoing it is clear that what the Member States require of the Comicii of Europe is first, that it should broach the question with other organisations and, secondly, that it should itself adopt measures for the assimilation of refugees and surplus elements of population into the various economies and launch a publicity campaign to win the support of public opinion for this action. The Council should therefore in future concentrate its efforts on these particular points. A publicity campaign is essential if results are to be obtained in respect of the field of integration, and these two tasks are thus complementary. They constitute the two forms of direct action which, after years of study, the Council of Europe is now called upon to undertake with regard to refugees and over-population.

31. In short, the Special Liaison Committee hereby re-affirms that the Council's policy in this field should continue to be directed towards integration or assimilation on the three planes mentioned aboye.

32. The Special Committee has carefully considered the proposals submitted to it by Member States, and sees no difficulty in incorporating them into the general policy. Most of them apply equally, to the country from which they emanate an,d to the others suffering from similar over-population. In its investigations, the Council has constantly kept in mind the need for finding a policy to solve.the population problem of Europe as a whole, with a view to. formulating á programme of constructive work in order to achieve greater demographic integration in Europe.

33. The Special. Committee has classified all the measures included in this Report according to the form of integration or assimilation to which,they refer so as to bring out clearly the coherent nature of the policy formulated.

It herewith submits this Report to the Committee of Ministers with the recommendation that the latter should approve its main points and request the Special Representative to be guided-by the policy formulated therein in the execution of his mission.'

1.2. Future relations between the Special Liaison Committee and the Special Representative of the Council of Europe for national refugees and over-population

1. The problem of relations between the Special Liaison Committee and the Special Representative of the Council of Europe for national refugees and over-population in Europe was discussed at two consecutive meetings of the Special Liaison Committee held on 14th and 15th December, 1953, and again on 5th February, 1954.

The Special Liaison Committee decided to submit the results of this discussion to the Committee of Ministers in the form of a memorandum.

2. Relations between the Special Liaison Committee and the Special Representative are determined by the following facte :

the two organs have been placed on an equal footing, since they derive their powers from the same source : the Committee of Ministers ;

the duration of their respective missions is different, that of the Special Representative being limited in principle to twelve months from 1st February, 1954, whereas that of the Special Liaison Committee is unlimited. The Special Representative is able, on the other hand, to devote his whole time to the subject, whereas the Special Liaison Committee meets only two or three times a year ;

with regard to their respective terms of reference, the main task of the Special Liaison Committee is " to examine projects approved by the Assembly's Committee on Population and Refugees or advanced by the Committee of Ministers ". Its work is therefore based on reports drawn up by other organs, upon which it is called upon to pronounce an opinion. On the other hand, the Special Representative is directly responsible for " studying the problem and submitting proposals to the Committee of Ministers".

It should be observed that (apart from the question of over-population) the competence of the Special Representative is limited to national refugees whereas that of the Special Liaison Committee embraces all categories of refugees.

3. It follows that their tasks are correlated, so that close co-operation would bo of benefit to both. The Special Liaison Committee has always held the view that its appointed duties required uninterrupted attention, and this could be afforded by the Special Representative. For his part, the Special Representative regards the Special Committee as a body uniting the most competent parliamentarians, the representatives of the Governments most closely concerned and observers from the international organisations engaged upon this problem. An exchange of views would therefore be valuable for both parties.

4. Suc h consultation between the two organs has already been foreshadowed in the decision taken by the Ministers' Deputies at their meeting of 7th to 9th December, 1953, which called for discussions on previous recommendations between the Special Liaison Committee and the Special Representative. This decision sets a precedent for future relations between the two organs.

5. In short, the Special Liaison Committee considers that exchange of views with the Special Representative at its meetings provide the solid basis on which their relations are to be founded. It also considers that the Special Representative . should have access ţo all its meetings and be able at any time to request the inclusion of a question in its Agenda.

1.3. Recommendation No. 10 concerning the temporary housing scheme in the German Federal Republic for refugees from the Eastern Zone

The Special Liaison Committee,

Having examined the emergency housing scheme in the German Federal Republic for refugees from the Eastern Zone ;

Approving the detailed Report by the experts on the construction of housing accommodation ;

Considering that the concept of European solidarity demands that Member States should unite in a common effort to assist refugees ;

Having regard to the need for liquidating refugee camps and for the construction of living accommodation near the place of work,

Recommends to the Committee of Ministers

to give this plan its moral and material support ;

to invite the Special Representative of the Council of Europe to seek ways and means, in consultation with the Governments of Member States and the organisations concerned, of implementing this plan such, for example, as the floating of an international loan.

1.4. Recommendation No. 11 on the information work to be carried out in order to arouse public opinion on the problem of refugees and over-population

The Special Liaison Committee,

Having been requested by the Ministers' Deputies to re-examine Eecommendation No. 2 concerning action to be taken for arousing public opinion with regard to the problem of refugees and over-population ;

Considering that it is essential for the Council of Europe to secure the active support of public opinion ;

Having heard the views of the Special Representative of the Council of Europe for National Refugees and Over-population ;

Considering that it will devolve on the Special Representative as part of his functions, to put forward proposals regarding the aims, methods and most appropriate moment for launching the required information work ;

Considering that the funds available to the Council of Europe are not sufficient for a generalised effort designed to reach all citizens of Member States directly,

Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

should iminediateljr approve the principle of organising an information campaign appropriate both to the nature and magnitude of the problem of national refugees and over-population and to the solutions proposed by the Council of Europe on the recommendation of its Special Representative ;

should immediately decide to set aside an initial credit of 20 million francs for the conduct of this campaign ;

should instruct the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe to draw up, as soon as possible, a plan for such a campaign, in accordance with the directives of the Special Representative and taking into account :

a. the need for conducting this campaign at the organisational and;not at.the individual level ;

b. the experience gained in this field by Governments and.national institutions ;

c. the possibility of using such assistance as the other international organisations concerned with these problems are able to provide.

1.5. Recommendation No. 12 on the information work to be carried out on behalf of the so-called "hard-core" refugees

The Special Liaison Committee,

Having been requested by the Ministers' Deputies to re-examine its Recommendation No. 9 concerning the information campaign to be conducted on behalf of the so-called. " hardcore " refugees ;

Haying heard the views of the Special Representative òf the-Council of Europe for national refugees and over-population ;

Having heard the views of the observer representing the United Nations High Commissioner, for Refugees ;

Noting that the problem of these difficult cases does not fall within the province of the Special Representative ;

Emphasising the importance of reaching a rapid solution to this distressing problem and.the need to call public attention thereto,

Recommends that the Committee of Ministers invite Member Governments to give all possible support to the United Nations High Commissioner in this-matter.