

Recommendation 956 (1982)¹

Migrant women

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering that, as a result of the large-scale migration that has taken place in recent decades, some 15 million foreign workers and their families are living in Council of Europe member states, and that this figure is rising annually because of the reunion of families and births in the host countries ;
2. Considering that the migrant workers have greatly contributed to economic expansion in the immigration countries over the last twenty years, but that many of them, despite prolonged residence, still live on the fringe of the host society ;
3. Considering that the situation of the woman migrant is often more difficult than that of the man : if married, she is often confined to her home, isolated from the local society ; initially, she very rarely speaks the language of the host country ; if she works, she is usually inserted at a lower level than what her education deserves ; she is not completely aware of her rights, and rarely participates in trade union work ; and married employed women still have to bear a double burden which is amplified in the case of migrant women workers ;
4. Noting that the number of single women and young girls who migrate to work is small and that, in most cases, women migrate for reasons of family reunion, thus making their situation and rights dependent upon the situation and rights of their husbands, which is particularly precarious and deprives them of a reasonable freedom of choice ;
5. Noting that it is not always possible or easy for migrant workers to be joined by their families either because of the host country's regulations or because of difficult family situations, and that family reunification in the host countries should be recognised as a fundamental right for all ;
6. Believing that men and women workers- whether nationals or immigrants- should receive equal treatment in their professional activities, in the field of social security, unemployment benefits and family allowances ;
7. Having regard to the principles which are the basis of the European Social Charter and the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers, and to the fundamental principles of international law and resolutions adopted by international fora, ensuring women's equal protection under the law ;
8. Considering that many migrant women work in areas not effectively covered by labour laws and agreements, such as the domestic sector and subcontracting in the clothing industry,
9. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers invite the governments of the member states :
 - 9.1. to take all possible measures in order to promote the integration of women migrants into the social and professional environment, as well as a public awareness and understanding among the population of the host country ;

1. See [Doc. 4954](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 9 November 1982.



- 9.2. to take proper measures to avoid discrimination between national women workers and migrant women workers, to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment by controlling the implementation of national legislation and regulations, and to allow migrant women to fully enjoy their rights independently of their husbands ;
- 9.3. to facilitate acquisition by migrants of the nationality of the host country, by significantly reducing the period of residence required for naturalisation, and to simplify procedures ;
- 9.4. to allow migrant workers to be joined by their spouses and dependent children and, when justified on humanitarian grounds, by dependent members of the family ;
- 9.5. to ensure that migrant women be given full access to health care facilities, and that special attention be directed to obstacles of linguistic or cultural origin counteracting the full use of health facilities, and to encourage health personnel to learn about the situation and special problems of migrant women ;
- 9.6. to ensure that unemployed wives of migrant workers and their dependent children be allowed to keep their residence permit and to enjoy proper social assistance in the case of their husband's unemployment or lack of family support ;
- 9.7. to ensure that the situation of young migrant women of the second generation be the subject of a particular protection, so as to give these women a real choice in education and in employment while respecting and guaranteeing the free expression of their ethnic and cultural heritage ;
- 9.8. to ensure that, in the case of repatriation, undocumented migrants are protected against employers who exploited them and their remuneration be assessed and demanded from their employers ;
- 9.9. to develop adequate information programmes directed both at migrant women and their families and at the population of the host country, to promote intercultural activities, and to increase their efforts in education with special attention to language courses and vocational training of adult migrants and their children including the provision of migrant children with education from the pre-school stage right up to the highest level ;
- 9.10. to ratify the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers and the European Social Charter if they have not already done so ;
- 9.11. to continue to give priority to questions relating to migrants in the framework of the Medium-Term Plan and Intergovernmental Activities Programme of the Council of Europe ;
- 9.12. to encourage continued research on the situation of migrant women at international and national levels, in co-operation with the international organisations and voluntary agencies dealing with the problems of migrants in general and migrant women in particular.