

Recommendation 1370 (1998)¹

Activities of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 1994-1997

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Unrestrained migration and its political, economic and social consequences have become one of the major challenges at the end of this century. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) aims to provide assistance to states and individuals in order to ensure the proper functioning of migration processes throughout the world, according to the principle that migration is a positive force for social and economic development.
2. By upholding the human dignity and protecting the well-being of migrants, the IOM contributes, in its own field of responsibility and in its own way, to promoting the humanitarian values that also underlie the work of the Council of Europe.
3. The IOM was able to respond to the upheavals in Europe following the collapse of the communist bloc and adapt to new priorities. In particular, the Assembly acknowledges the IOM's work in the region of the former Yugoslavia where, inter alia, it makes a very significant contribution to repatriation of refugees and displaced persons, especially from countries outside the former Yugoslavia.
4. Likewise, the IOM's return programmes provide a dignified solution for the thousands of migrants stranded in central and eastern Europe, who can neither remain in those countries nor return by their own means.
5. As well as its humanitarian action in providing direct assistance to migrants, the IOM helps the states concerned to introduce policies and develop institutional frameworks to manage migratory flows within their territories. Such assistance is particularly important in the states of the former Soviet Union, which are currently facing increases in migration of all types, from economic migration to migration resulting from armed conflicts and human rights violations.
6. In view of the changes in Europe and the rest of the world, the IOM has redefined its aims so that they are better suited to current needs, and has set strategic objectives to help it become the foremost world-wide organisation for migration by the year 2000. A management review was undertaken to enable the IOM to increase its capacity for action without requiring an increase in the budget. The Parliamentary Assembly expresses its support for that review process.
7. The Assembly considers that, following the enlargement of the Council of Europe and diversification of the activities of both the IOM and the Council of Europe, there is a growing need for closer co-operation between the two organisations. Human and minority rights violations, which are the Council of Europe's main concern, are one of the primary causes of involuntary migration.
8. Closer co-operation should be developed both at the level of the member states, as many as possible of which should join the IOM, and in institutional relations between the IOM and the Council of Europe.

1. Assembly debate on 23 April 1998 (14th Sitting) (see [Doc. 8053](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, rapporteur: Mrs Aguiar). Text adopted by the Assembly on 23 April 1998 (14th Sitting).



9. The Assembly consequently recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
 - 9.1. draw the attention of the relevant Council of Europe bodies to the scope for practical co-operation with the IOM in implementing their activity programmes and explore the possibility of concluding a formal co-operation agreement with the IOM;
 - 9.2. instruct the organs of the Council of Europe Social Development Fund to study possibilities of co-financing joint projects with the IOM;
 - 9.3. invite the member states of the Council of Europe:
 - a. to join the IOM if they are not yet members;
 - b. to draw on the IOM's experience when organising return operations so as to ensure that they take place under optimum conditions and are conducted in a manner in keeping with human rights and human dignity
 - c. to draw on the IOM's experience when developing migration policy and setting up institutions to deal with migration, so as to ensure better co-ordination in this area at both the European and international levels;
 - d. to give the IOM political and financial support and, in particular, to contribute generously to the organisation's operational budget in order to allow for financing of its programmes.