



## Recommendation 1655 (2004)<sup>1</sup>

# A European Migration Observatory/Agency

## Parliamentary Assembly

1. Since its creation, the Parliamentary Assembly has devoted considerable attention to different aspects of migration, to refugees and to asylum. Its central concerns have always been the human rights and dignity of the individual migrant, refugee or asylum seeker; the improvement of the control and management of migration flows; the reduction of irregular migration and the fight against criminal activities linked to it.
2. The Assembly has been instrumental in the work of the Council of Europe and its member states by comparing existing legislation regarding immigration, asylum and integration of migrants and refugees, as well as by encouraging the improvement and harmonisation of this legislation. It has also studied the evolution of migration flows and the demographic characteristics of immigrant populations.
3. It believes that there is an increasing need for closer co-operation among Council of Europe member states, with the European Union and with major non-European countries of origin and transit, in order to improve the management of legal migration flows into Europe, including the integration of migrants, and to reduce irregular migration and criminal activities linked to it. The Assembly therefore strongly promotes parliamentary and intergovernmental activities with this aim, and which also actively involve local and regional authorities as well as non-governmental organisations. It welcomes the decision by the Committee of Ministers to use the meetings of the European Committee on Migration (CDMG) for these geographically extensive discussions.
4. The Assembly notes with satisfaction the creation by the European Union of a network of national contact centres for the improvement of migration information, and these could be extended to non-EU members for specified purposes under the auspices of the Council of Europe.
5. It believes that the communication of more precise information to potential irregular migrants could considerably reduce this type of migration as well as the sufferings of clandestine migrants and their families. This initiative could be more effective if organised as a joint action between European receiving countries and European and non-European countries of transit and origin.
6. The Assembly also refers to the Council of Europe's 7th Conference of Ministers responsible for Migration Affairs (September 2002), where the possibility was discussed of creating a structure to improve migration management, and to the proposal made to the conference to set up a European migration observatory.
7. It also refers to the meeting between the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which took place on 25 September 2003, and notes the agreement to create a European migration observatory or agency, based on the joint efforts of the European Union and the Council of Europe, including their respective parliamentary representations, and open to participation by non-European countries. In this connection the Assembly welcomes the feasibility study carried out by the CDMG of the Council of Europe regarding the various essential parameters to be taken into account in the setting up and running of an enlarged European migration observatory or agency.

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1. Assembly debate on 26 April 2004 (9th Sitting) (see [Doc.10108](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, rapporteur: Mr Iwinski). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26 April 2004 (9th Sitting).



8. Therefore, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
  - 8.1. in close co-operation with the European Union and the International Organization for Migration, assess the feasibility study of the CDMG regarding the establishment of a migration agency, open to participation by non-member states, and paying special attention to the questions of information gathering, processing and distribution;
  - 8.2. negotiate with the European Commission to find a form of co-operation between its network of national contact centres for the improvement of migration information and similar centres that might be set up or identified in non-EU member states, under the auspices of the Council of Europe;
  - 8.3. intensify the process of political consultation among member countries, the European Union and non-European countries interested in closer co-operation on migration issues, in order to emphasise the political importance of creating a new instrument for extended European co-operation in this field;
  - 8.4. for the purpose of creating a migration observatory or agency, assess the feasibility of drawing up an enlarged agreement or an enlarged partial agreement, as set out in Statutory Resolution (93) 28 of the Committee of Ministers, for the signature of Council of Europe member states, the European Union and interested non-European states, or to adapt an existing agreement to fulfil the same missions;
  - 8.5. foresee in the governing and programming organs of such an agreement a distinct role for the Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament as well as for local and regional authorities, in particular the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, and non-governmental organisations;
  - 8.6. bring this project, as appropriate, to the attention of the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe.