



## Recommendation 1688 (2004)<sup>1</sup>

# Diaspora cultures

### Parliamentary Assembly

1. Diaspora cultures exist as a result of the dispersion of communities throughout the world; this dispersion is often forced or has historical reasons. Diaspora communities represent and maintain a culture different from those of the countries within which they are located, often retaining strong ties with their country and culture of origin (real or perceived) and with other communities of the same origin in order to preserve that culture. This is an essentially cultural phenomenon and is not necessarily linked to migration.
2. Some diaspora cultures, which have clear origins and are the result of enforced dispersions, are well documented, for example the Armenian, Greek, Irish, Italian and the Jewish diasporas and, more recently, the Balkan diasporas. However, the majority of countries throughout the world, and therefore most Council of Europe member states, in fact recognise their own diaspora culture. In addition, whilst some diaspora cultures are relatively unknown, the majority of member states are “host” to a great number of different diaspora cultures.
3. The Parliamentary Assembly appreciates that diaspora cultures constitute valuable networks for intellectual, cultural and educational exchange throughout Europe and the rest of the world. They are a key factor in the promotion of cultural diversity, intercultural understanding and tolerance.
4. The Assembly is convinced that diaspora communities can benefit both countries of origin and countries of settlement. It therefore welcomes a change in emphasis of migration policy away from assimilation to a balance between integration and maintaining links with the countries of origin. It believes that the institutions of the Council of Europe and of member states have a role to play in improving relationships between the diaspora cultures and governments of both countries of origin and countries of settlement.
5. The Assembly also underlines the need for all diaspora communities, in return, to abide by the law of their country of settlement, recognise the language and education of the country of settlement and respect its culture.
6. While much attention has been paid to the situation of migrant communities and their relations with their host country, relatively little consideration has been given to relations between these communities and those between each community and its country of origin. The Assembly recalls in this context its earlier Recommendations 1410 (1998) and 1650 (2004) on the links between Europeans living abroad and their countries of origin. A more dynamic policy is, however, necessary to promote the cultures of diaspora communities.
7. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers call on governments and the appropriate authorities of member states to:
  - 7.1. recognise the existence of diaspora cultures as an integral part of modern European culture and civilisation and diaspora communities as an integral part both of the society of their country of origin and of their country of settlement;

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1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 23 November 2004 (see [Doc. 10342](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, rapporteur: Ms Petrova-Mitevaska).



- 7.2. seek to improve the cultural relations between diaspora communities, their state of origin and their state of settlement, through the examination of the representation of diaspora cultures in culture and society and through the examination of governmental policies towards diaspora cultures;
  - 7.3. engage in active dialogue with diaspora communities in order to understand and accommodate their specific cultural, linguistic and educational needs;
  - 7.4. facilitate relationships between the diaspora communities within and between countries of settlement, in order to increase cultural exchange and awareness between such individual communities (for example via satellite broadcasting, printed material, museum exhibitions or cultural exchange programmes);
  - 7.5. utilise opportunities for additional exchange, for example the use of diplomatic structures (embassies, consulates), local government and public sector infrastructures and effective use of the private sector;
  - 7.6. promote greater awareness of diaspora cultures in modern European society, through education, media and culture, targeting all individuals within member states, and covering all aspects of diaspora cultures, including developments following recent terrorist and nationalistic events.
8. The Assembly further recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
- 8.1. recognise the role of the Council of Europe in fostering the relationships between the various cultural components of the diaspora network: the diaspora cultures, the diaspora communities, the countries of origin (real or perceived) and the countries of settlement;
  - 8.2. examine the Council of Europe's role as a potential cultural "intermediary" within such a network and with a view to identifying means of encouraging interaction in the cultural field between countries of origin, host countries and diaspora communities;
  - 8.3. endeavour to ensure that all diasporas within the scope of the Council of Europe enjoy the same conditions of freedom and tolerance and are treated in accordance with such conventions as the European Convention on Human Rights, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;
  - 8.4. promote the role of governmental and non-governmental organisations in the protection and study of diaspora cultures;
  - 8.5. explore new technological avenues for assisting and developing further the cultural links between diaspora communities with regard to the protection and promotion of diaspora cultures.