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Migrants: a benefit or a burden for our society?

Motion for a resolution

tabled by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

There is probably no clear answer to this question, but it is necessary to have an understanding of how migrants may benefit our society, whether this be their contribution to their host country or their country of origin. At the same time it is necessary to see, if and how they may be or become a burden to that same society.

We know that migrants bring expertise and knowledge. We also know many do jobs that nationals cannot or do not want to undertake. We also know that much of Europe's economic growth has been put down to migrants' contributions, keeping a steady work force in a period of falling birth rates. Migrants also make an important contribution to their countries of origin through remittances, well in excess of development aid. We also know that migrants contributed to what Vaclav Havel called the "wonderful colour and mystery of life" referring to the way that "people differ from each other in their customs, their way of life, their faith, the colour of their skin and their way of dress".

We also know that there are fears that migrants can be a burden and it is important to address fears in this respect. Typically these fears include that migrants take the jobs of nationals, they use up resources such as social security benefits, schooling, health care, housing, etc. Added to this is the cost of integration and fears that migrants contribute to crime or terrorism.

An in-depth examination into benefits and burdens of migrants will contribute to a more informed dialogue and also lead to steps to help ensure that migrants remain a benefit rather than a burden, both for their countries of origin and their host countries.

