Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 2006 (2014)[1]
Final version

Integration of migrants in Europe: the need for a proactive, long-term and global policy

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its Resolution 1972 (2014) on ensuring that migrants are a benefit for European host societies, and recalls that many European countries need legal immigration, in particular due to the ageing of the population and declining birth rates. Moreover, migrants are a source of cultural enrichment for host societies.

2. However, in order to fully benefit from all the opportunities provided by legal immigrants, host countries must ensure their successful integration into society.

3. The Assembly considers the integration of legal immigrants as a two-way process of inclusion in the institutions and relationships of the host society, involving rights and responsibilities on both sides. The main areas of integration include the labour market and social services, education and political participation.

4. Regrettably, it has to be acknowledged that the overall levels of integration remain unsatisfactory and the situation of legal immigrants, and, even more worryingly, of their offspring, raises justified concern in many Council of Europe member States.

5. As a rule, unemployment rates are higher for immigrants and their offspring than for nationals. Similarly, both groups are more frequently employed on a temporary basis, which results in insecurity and limited access to social benefits. The incompatibility of their occupational qualifications and skills with the labour market, often due to the non-recognition between States of some qualifications and diplomas, results in a waste of human resources. The low employment rate in the public sector, as compared to nationals, is another clear indication of insufficient integration, in particular for the offspring of immigrants. Such economic and social disadvantages often lead to isolation and the gradual expansion of "ghettos" for migrants.

6. While the percentage of immigrants and their offspring in higher education is comparable to nationals in most Council of Europe member States, the former are heavily overrepresented among those who achieve the lowest level of education. They also encounter problems linked to insufficient language skills.

7. The political participation of immigrants and their offspring remains much lower than average citizen participation in the majority of European countries. Discrimination on the basis of ethnicity and religion remains a grave concern and provides a breeding ground for hate crimes and violence.

8. Moreover, the economic recession in European countries – with the overall rise of unemployment and the growth of xenophobic and neo-racist manifestations – has seen an upsurge of tension in this respect.

9. The Assembly emphasises, in particular, the vulnerability of elderly migrants remaining in the host countries and, more specifically, that of elderly migrant women, who are at risk of severe poverty.

10. Relying on quantitative and qualitative indicators, the Assembly concludes that in many Council of Europe member States the existing policies relevant to various areas of the integration of migrants are insufficient and should be strengthened with a view to more effectively promoting their integration.

---

1. *Assembly debate* on 25 June 2014 (24th Sitting) (see Doc. 13530, report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, rapporteur: Ms Marietta Karamanli). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 25 June 2014 (24th Sitting).

11. In this context, the Assembly welcomes the initiatives taken in some countries to create common facilities enabling migrants and nationals to meet and discuss issues of common interest and concern.

12. The Assembly therefore recommends that member States:

12.1. review their current integration policies with a view to exploring solutions for better integration of migrants;

12.2. increase co-operation between governments, local authorities and non-governmental organisations to promote social cohesion and diversity;

12.3. return to comprehensive policies which ensure a better redistribution of wealth towards those with few (economic, cultural and political) resources, including all migrant populations, both recent and less recent. The positive effects of all such policies would be to the advantage of those experiencing the most difficulties without having a stigmatising effect on them and without producing a feeling of exclusion;

12.4. in particular, with regard to the labour market:

12.4.1. facilitate access to vocational training for legal migrants and their children;

12.4.2. facilitate recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired outside the host country;

12.4.3. introduce effective measures aimed at combating discrimination in the labour market;

12.5. concerning education:

12.5.1. foster proficiency in the language of the host country;

12.5.2. promote educational practices placing an emphasis on social mix;

12.5.3. train teachers and school staff in intercultural practices;

12.5.4. avoid the practice of grouping and classifying pupils according to their origin;

12.6. concerning democratic participation:

12.6.1. facilitate access to the nationality of the host country and grant long-term residence permits;

12.6.2. encourage migrants to exercise their freedom of expression and association, particularly in political parties, trade unions or civil society organisations;

12.6.3. ensure that migrants have a say in the democratic process by granting them, in particular, the right to vote at local level;

12.6.4. reconsider, if it is not already the case, the introduction of the right to dual nationality;

12.6.5. facilitate the preservation of ties between migrants and their countries of origin;

12.7. concerning non-discrimination:

12.7.1. take measures to counter attempts to make scapegoats of migrants in the economic and social context and initiate, where appropriate, a calm debate on immigration and its benefits for both the migrants concerned and their host country;

12.7.2. encourage intercultural and interfaith dialogue;

12.8. concerning support to families:

12.8.1. use family reunification more effectively as an instrument of integration;

12.8.2. take specific measures to assist elderly migrants, especially women, with access to social protection and health services.