Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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25 January 2017

Family reunification in the Council of Europe member States

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Ms Sahiba GAFAROVA and other members of the Assembly

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

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Respect for family life is a fundamental human right granted by Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Migration –both voluntary and forced – is among the main causes of separation of families.

For the past 30 years, family reunification has constituted one of the main channels of legal migration to Europe. However, following the increasing numbers of incoming refugees and migrants, a number of Council of Europe member States have introduced more restrictive conditions for family reunification.

The recent refugee and migration crisis has shed light on shortcomings of the existing legal solutions and their implementation with regard to family tracing and family reunification. Indeed, the question of separation of families has acquired a new dimension in the context of massive arrivals of asylum seekers and migrants, often separated from their families on their way to Europe. As a result, the members of the same family may be registered and granted status in different countries. Under the Dublin regulation, request for family reunification requires a long procedure and is bureaucratically very cumbersome. The situation is often dramatic when it comes to unaccompanied minors who seek reunification with their family members and are faced with a range of practical, legal and administrative obstacles.

Besides humanitarian aspects, family reunification helps to create socio-cultural stability and facilitates the integration of migrants and social cohesion.

The Parliamentary Assembly should conduct an overview of the existing legal solutions with regard to family reunification, in particular concerning recently arrived asylum seekers with a view to their harmonisation. It should also recommend the establishment of a centralised register for tracing families.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EC: European Conservatives Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left