

Resolution 2310 (2019)¹

Labour migration from eastern Europe and its impact on socio-demographic processes in these countries

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Labour migration from eastern European countries to the European Union and other European countries is a complex phenomenon, with both positive and negative consequences for the countries of origin. The positive effects include the reduction of unemployment and of the resulting social tension; the steady influx of remittances which, on an individual level, raise the living standards of families back home and, on the national level, improve the balance of trade of the countries of origin; possible investments in joint enterprises; and promotion of the culture of these countries abroad.
2. There are also negative consequences that cannot be ignored. Some countries experience a brain drain, a fall in population, or a lack of contributions to the social funds, which may become problematic in the long run. The countries of origin may face serious social problems within families and local communities. The situation of children left behind by parents who have emigrated in order to work is particularly worrying.
3. The Parliamentary Assembly calls for concerted action by both sending and receiving countries to alleviate the negative impacts of labour migration on the countries of origin, while doing everything needed to preserve the positive aspects.
4. The Assembly invites national parliaments to regularly monitor progress in the implementation of the European Social Charter (revised) (ETS No. 163), giving specific priority in this context to all provisions of Article 19 of the revised Charter; it invites those countries that have not done so to ratify the revised Charter.
5. As regards sending countries, the Assembly:
 - 5.1. invites national parliaments to regularly assess the situation in the member States with regard to labour migration and to mitigate the negative effects of this migration, including through job creation in sectors where labour migrants are employed abroad, by fighting bad management practices and corruption, by introducing legislative reforms encouraging the return of skilled workers and by preventing human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, especially women;
 - 5.2. calls upon the authorities in the sending countries to take urgent action to support the vulnerable populations, especially families affected by the departure of a primary caregiver, in particular the mother, to prevent family crisis, weakening parent–children relationships and risks of indefinite separation that may cause the alienation of children from their parents and have long-term negative psychosocial consequences;
 - 5.3. calls for the improvement of social care and support systems in order to address and prevent the abandonment and neglect of children left behind by parents working abroad, which is detrimental to their development. Specific measures are also needed during these children’s transition into adulthood. Systems such as “SOS families” should be supported, allowing children to stay in the system until they can be reunited with their parents. All measures taken must be in the best interest of the child;

1. *Assembly debate* on 4 October 2019 (35th Sitting) (see [Doc. 14956](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, rapporteur: Mr Ionuț-Marian Stroe). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 4 October 2019 (35th Sitting).



- 5.4. asks that measures be taken to ensure that children left behind because of parents' employment abroad do not drop out of school or risk finding themselves in a lower level of education as a result of this. Specific psychological support and counselling should be provided in this context, as necessary;
- 5.5. encourages public authorities to set up support systems for potential labour migrants, providing clear information on opportunities and risks associated with labour migration, including through public awareness campaigns. Channels of communication, including in rural areas, should be set up to inform labour migrants about new opportunities in their home countries;
- 5.6. proposes that governments adopt policies to facilitate labour migrants' return to and resettlement in their countries of origin, which recognise and validate their vocational experience acquired abroad;
- 5.7. encourages member States to consider other specific action and good practices, such as: local focal points for migration to act as a link between diasporas and their communities of origin; databases that map the impact of migration and help to identify investment opportunities; consultation of migrants on local priorities, and integration of their suggestions into development plans; and the establishment of "hometown associations" that bring together local governments, local populations, internal migrants and the diaspora to collaborate on local development initiatives and, in the process, strengthen transparency and build trust between the diaspora and the local governments.
6. Given that most countries of origin are not members of the European Union, the Assembly invites the European Union institutions to bear in mind both the positive and the negative consequences of labour migration when devising their labour mobility policies. It invites the European Union institutions to include specific measures in their co-operation programmes and action plans addressed to non-European Union Council of Europe member States from which European Union labour migrants originate.
7. As regards receiving countries, the Assembly calls for:
 - 7.1. every effort to be made to put a stop to unofficial labour migration, which can, in the worst cases, lead to forms of modern slavery and trafficking, as identified by the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA);
 - 7.2. public authorities to make greater efforts towards the integration of labour migrants so as to enhance the positive impact of labour migration and promote diversity and living together, endeavouring to ensure that such processes become self-evident and naturally embedded in the everyday functioning of European societies;
 - 7.3. the social integration of labour migrants to be improved through specific measures addressed to them, available in the languages of the countries of origin, and communicated through various channels, including through diaspora organisations and social media;
 - 7.4. improvements in the frameworks for recognition of qualifications of third-country nationals and related procedures to facilitate professional insertion;
 - 7.5. provision for extending national retirement pension systems to cover temporary migrant workers and guarantees for the preservation of the labour rights they acquire.
8. The Assembly calls upon European Union member States to:
 - 8.1. develop European Union-wide job-matching databases compatible with labour migration channels and schemes;
 - 8.2. increase opportunities for intra-European Union mobility by lowering barriers, such as income requirements, for seasonal workers, students who have graduated, and other legally present third-country nationals;
 - 8.3. harmonise administrative procedures and the transferability of labour and residence rights, allowing for a certain degree of standardisation regarding test procedures and application forms for labour migrants, for example.
9. Receiving countries should also allow refugees to access more favourable labour migration schemes. The Assembly calls for a greater application of the Council of Europe initiatives towards the recognition of qualifications of refugees, and, namely, of the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees.
10. Finally, the Assembly, recalling its [Resolution 2175 \(2017\)](#) and [Recommendation 2109 \(2017\)](#) on migration as an opportunity for European development, invites national parliaments to review progress in implementing the recommendations put forward therein. It reiterates its invitation to enhance co-operation between the Council of Europe, the International Organization for Migration, the International Labour

Organization, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the European Union, with a view to promoting a positive image of migrants in Europe by developing joint activities in the fields of human, economic and social development.