



**Association of former members of parliament of the member states of the
Council of Europe**

Colloquy of Kiev, 8 October 2010

MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION IN EUROPE

Declaration of Kiev

*Adopted unanimously by the voting members of the European association of
former members of parliament of the member states of the Council of Europe **

The European Association of Former Members of Parliament of the Member States of the Council of Europe

1. Thanks the Ukrainian Association for organising this symposium in Kiev. It has served to cement the newly forged links between the European Association and Ukraine, which has recently joined the association, and we warmly welcome this – especially so because, by happy coincidence, this symposium on Migration and Integration in Europe is taking place in the same city where, just over two years ago, the eighth Council of Europe conference of Ministers responsible for migration affairs addressed the question of 'Economic migration, social cohesion and development: towards an integrated approach';
2. Emphasises the importance of this symposium on the subject of migration, which is one of the greatest challenges faced by decision-makers in politics, society, business and the social sphere in most regions of the world, particularly the Member States of the Council of Europe, at the beginning of the 21st century;
3. Notes that the Member States of the Council of Europe are affected in very different ways by the phenomenon of migration, as regards both the number of immigrants and their regions of origin and the immigrants' status (citizenship, right of residence, work permit, etc.). Some countries take in immigrants mainly from former colonies, others deliberately set out in the past to attract workers with certain skills, while some have become transit countries for illegal migrants. Still others suffer from emigration, and some

* The German delegate did not participate in the voting

former countries of emigration have changed into immigration regions. What is common to all is that the related challenges cannot be overcome at national level alone, but require a concerted common framework of law and action based on solidarity and respect for human dignity;

4. Underlines that the Council of Europe has a unique role, competence and capacity in addressing migration. Its European Committee on Migration incorporates operational participation from all member countries and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) plays an important role, particularly through its Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population;
5. Notes that, in October 2008, just after the eighth Council of Europe conference of Ministers responsible for migration affairs, the European Commission published a communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, entitled 'Strengthening the Global Approach to Migration: Increasing Coordination, Coherence and Synergies', pointing out that, notwithstanding all the progress made, further efforts were still needed to achieve satisfactory solutions;
6. Is aware that both legal and illegal migration pose problems which give rise to concerns – justified and unjustified – in the majority population. Politicians and civil society are therefore called upon to create the legal and social framework conditions that meet the requirements of social cohesion and respect for the cultural identity of the migrants. This also facilitates mutual understanding of the diversity of cultures and civilisations, with a twofold advantage: it brings cultural enrichment for the host countries, while bringing about useful development cooperation with the regions of origin. It is the well-understood own interest of European countries to support developing countries in their efforts to enhance the political, economic, social and environmental living conditions of their populations. In this context reference should be made to the parity-oriented ACP-EU cooperation with 79 developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific Basin under the Cotonou Agreement, which is also subject to parliamentary oversight by Members of the European Parliament and the ACP-country Parliaments in the form of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly ACP/EU;
7. Regrets that tragic incidents repeatedly occur, especially off the coast of southern Europe and on the external borders of the European Union, involving illegal immigrants who risk life and limb in pursuit of a better life, causing major problems for the countries concerned. This gives rise to a need for national and supranational migration management that is coordinated Europe-wide, with the aim of achieving the greatest possible advantages for both the migrants and the host countries, seeking cooperation with the countries of origin and stemming the tide of illegal immigration. There is a special responsibility first and foremost for women

and minors, and most particularly for children and young people who come to Europe as unaccompanied refugees;

8. Considers that sending back refugees, failed asylum seekers and illegal immigrants can lead to major problems if there are no readmission agreements between admitting countries and countries of origin. When people cannot prove their identity or age, individual solutions have to be looked for, but the loss of identity papers cannot give the right for admission. A major issue is being created by failed asylum individuals roaming around Europe. Due to this, some countries are being disproportionately affected due to their geographical position and their country's size and population. This creates a particular concern to establish an effective and immediate reparatory policy. Responsibility and collective Frontex Patrols must be equally shared by one and all with respect to financial costs as well as supportive arrangements for the sharing of migration flows according to countries size and population.
9. Acknowledges, however, that determined action must be taken – likewise in a Europe-wide coordinated way – against organised crime, trafficking in human beings, including forced prostitution, and suspected terrorists, not least for the protection of the migrants themselves and in order to combat prejudice. Islamist activities do not, however, take place exclusively in a context of migration, as has been shown by criminal trials in Germany in which German youths – converts with no background of migration – have been found guilty. In certain milieus young men in particular are at risk, regardless of their nationality or ethnic origin.

MIGRATION: THE OTHER FORM OF GLOBALISATION

The European Association takes the view that:

10. Almost all parts of the world are affected by legal and/or illegal migration in the form of immigration, emigration or transit movements. These often go hand in hand with the globalisation of business and trade areas, which is encouraged by growing opportunities for mobility and modes of communication that are independent of time and geographical location. The reasons for these migratory movements are many and varied: the main ones include the flight from poverty and absence of prospects in countries of origin, violent conflicts and civil wars, persecution on grounds of politics, religion or world view, ethnicity or sexual orientation, or family reunion. To these can be added flight from natural disasters – and from environmental events (which are often anthropogenic) in the form of natural disasters and climate change;

11. The work carried out by the United Nations in the context of the Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD), which met for the third time in November 2009 in Athens, makes the extent of the problem very clear. Calls on immigration and emigration countries, trade unions and NGOs to take part in this forum, which highlights the worldwide dimension of migration issues.

MIGRATION AND SOCIAL COHESION

The European Association emphasises that:

12. While most migrants in Europe have integrated satisfactorily, some have not (yet) found their place in the mainstream society. Some may not wish to become truly integrated. Conversely, politicians and society must ensure that parallel societies do not form in without adequate access to education and employment or adequate health care, favouring social marginalisation and allowing unemployed young men in particular to become disaffected and drift into crime;
13. Access to education and vocational qualifications and an employment policy that is geared to equality of opportunity are key criteria for a successful integration policy. Experience has shown that many immigrants stay on indefinitely, even though they came with the intention of only staying for a short time and then returning with their savings to their country of origin. Ultimately they bring their families to the host country, or start a family there, and settle there, now often in the second or third generation;
14. It must be borne in mind that many migrants have few or no qualifications and are, or have been, engaged in unskilled work or labouring jobs. Their language skills are often imperfect, and they are not in a position to help their children with school work. Priority must be given to integrating migrant children into the school system from pre-school age. Children from uneducated backgrounds, whether they have a migrant background or not, should be given particular encouragement to develop their potential to reach an advanced level of education and possibly to go on to higher education. Language learning is of particular importance here. It is advantageous if children from migrant families can grow up bilingually. They should learn not only to speak their mother tongue, but also to read and write it. Cultural associations and post-school education institutions can contribute to that. Adults too can improve their life and employment opportunities through literacy programmes and targeted educational measures where learning the language of the host country is also of crucial importance.

15. It is imperative that educational emphasis is given for immigrants to be taught the local adopted countries historical, social, cultural, linguistically and legal systems for better understanding to complete integration. The interest of genuine multiculturalism and better knowledge of respective traditions, needs to be further developed so as to facilitate intellectual integration in society as a means of a broad based intercultural addition to society. Teachers must, in the interests of genuine multiculturalism, be appropriately trained to pass on better language skills and a better knowledge of their respective traditions, thereby ensuring that the intellectual potential that is so badly needed by our societies is not wasted. The aim must be to create a multicultural society, in the best sense of the term, and not to remain trapped in multi-ethnic structures that mean segregation rather than integration. For this, a broad-based, consciousness-building social and intercultural dialogue is needed.
16. National, regional and local authorities can take international and European standards and laws as the basis for an integration policy. The Council of Europe, the European Union and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) have drawn up a number of directives and recommendations for 'best practice' in this area. The EUNET Integration Network has also issued a useful comprehensive handbook on best practice, to which NGOs from the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Portugal and Malta contributed, bringing to it their knowledge of various different 'types' of migration. The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) has produced a comprehensive position paper on the integration of employees with a background of migration, which emphasises the need for a European legal basis. It rightly evokes the fact that Article 79 of the Lisbon Treaty gives the EU new possibilities for supporting the Member States in their efforts to foster integration of citizens from third countries. The EESC has set up a permanent study group on migration and integration to work together with the European Integration Forum, with the underlying assumption on the part of the EESC that demographic trends in Europe mean that more (controlled!) immigration will be essential in order to safeguard the economic and demographic balance;
17. The media, particularly the electronic media, have a significant influence on public opinion, with regard to migration as much as any other subject. They can fan the flames of prejudice, but they can also work against it. The popular press and commercial television, on occasion tend to give inflammatory accounts of isolated incidents in a way that creates the impression among some sections of the population that citizens from third countries exploit European benefit systems, are disproportionately involved in crime, etc. Responsible sections of the media should see themselves as partners in a migration policy that is directed against all forms of discrimination and that advocates integration. It would be desirable to have a code of conduct based on these principles, which would of course also include the duty to report on everything that the public is entitled to know about, including crime or serious problems. The media have a duty, in

addition, to make their own contribution to integration in terms of staffing and programming. Seeing migrants on the staff of newspapers and on the screen gives out a visible signal in terms of successful integration. Editorial and programming policies must provide for the tastes of migrants; otherwise, in the age of the internet, satellite broadcasting and digital services, they will turn only to the media of their countries of origin or those in their mother tongue, thus excluding themselves from the social dialogue of the country they live in.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT: NEW PARTNERSHIPS

The European Association points out that:

18. Participation by migrants in the economic, political and cultural life of their host countries is an absolute precondition for any integration policy aimed at conflict-free coexistence, although integration must not be misconstrued as assimilation. Cultural diversity is also advantageous to the majority cultures. Overcoming poverty and social marginalisation benefits the whole of society. In addition, there is a humanitarian duty to take care of particularly vulnerable groups. This includes the right to schooling for children who are illegally resident in a European country, and the right of illegal residents to health care. Special protection is also owed to women threatened with violence, oppression and gender-specific persecution, as well as to victims of human trafficking and forced prostitution;
19. Integration is not only a matter for politicians at all levels, but is also an important task for civil society. It must be made part of the social and intercultural dialogue. The task of examining school textbooks and history books for discriminatory, racist and xenophobic content, and removing any that is found, also falls within this context. Sport also can make a substantial contribution to integration;
20. Citizens of the European Union are entitled to take part in local and European elections. Extending this right to regional and national elections is worthy of consideration, as is the introduction of voting rights for third-country nationals who have settled permanently in Europe, where this does not currently exist. Studies should ascertain the available knowledge on migrants' electoral behaviour and the possible effect of extending, or planning to extend, voting rights. The participation in elections would strengthen the sense of responsibility vis-à-vis the society in which migrants live.
21. Most migrants are productive members of European society, who contribute to wealth creation and pay taxes and social contributions. It must not be forgotten that migrants, with their regular transfers to their countries of origin, which amount to billions of euro, make a substantial contribution to the social stabilisation of families in those countries. Integration policy also includes engaging with migrants, for example by supporting the changes needed by

local organisations working for development progress in countries of origin. In order to implement this policy, access to visas must be made easier and the sums that are transferred put to better use. Where skilled workers immigrate, a balance must be ensured, so that a brain drain from the emigration countries to the industrial host countries is avoided. For this reason particular attention must be paid to the effects of massive emigration of well trained workers with its resulting negative economic effects. According to the WHO's health report of 2006, 25% of cases of illness worldwide occur in African countries, whereas only 3% of the world's medical personnel are employed there. Return to their home countries of migrants who would like to support their country of origin with knowledge, ideas and better qualifications should therefore be facilitated and assisted.

TOWARDS A EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION POLICY

The European Association supports initiatives aimed at implementing a European asylum and immigration policy

- I. The aim of the asylum and immigration policy is to harmonise asylum procedures and to develop a balanced approach to dealing with legal and illegal migration. The Council of Europe is in favour of a comprehensive, unified, credible plan for the regulation of migratory movements in a pan-European framework. The work of the European Committee on Migration (CDMG) forms the basis for the corresponding recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. A consensual arrangement among the Member States of the Council of Europe presupposes an equitable sharing of burdens and costs on a mandatory basis;
- II. Birth deficits in Europe show that without economic immigration industrial countries are incapable of keeping their standard of living and ensuring the necessary and essential growth to maintain a dynamic economy and effective social system. The weight of the costs and benefits of immigration and integration must be borne together and shared fairly between all the countries concerned;
- III. The 8th Conference of Ministers responsible for Migration of the 47 Council of Europe's Member States in Kyiv called on the organisation to devise an integrated approach to economic migration, development and social cohesion and assist Member States in its implementation including developing mechanisms for regular exchanges of information and training on necessary reforms and inter-ministerial co-operation. In order to promote economic and social progress, governments need to review the options for legal migration, promote

employment opportunities on the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination on the labour market, and combat more effectively irregular migration, especially where employers and criminal networks profit from irregular migrant labour;

- IV. An effort is required to get the various European agreements on migration policy, and the pressing issues it raises, signed and ratified, if possible in all those Council of Europe member countries that have not already done so, in order to make progress on pan-European solutions. The same applies to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, which came into force on 1 February 2008 and has so far been ratified by 24 countries. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna, more than half the 140 000 victims of human trafficking in Europe come from the Balkans or the countries of the former Soviet Union and 80% of them are women. This form of crime is worth around USD 3 billion annually;
- V. Particular attention needs to be paid to increasing economic migration inside Europe, especially from east to west and within Eastern Europe, which is already causing growing concern about 'brain drain' effects. What is needed here is a policy of economic compensation, creating new job prospects in the poorer countries;
- VI. More solidarity is required, not only among European countries, some of which are disproportionately affected by irregular immigration and are therefore, quite justifiably, calling for support to strengthen border controls and Frontex, but also between the European countries that admit migrants and the migrants' countries of origin – for example through the conclusion of readmission agreements;
- VII. The European Union's initiatives aimed at developing 'mobility partnerships' between the EU and the third countries involved are proving very effective. Also worthy of support are the cooperation projects in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership aimed at contributing to the development of the country of emigration and hence limiting the flow of migration in the Mediterranean basin, which leads to regular tragedies;
- VIII. A lot of work is being done on improving the third European Refugee Fund, launched in 2008. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) should be able to start its work shortly. A conference of all the interested parties is planned for 2012, at which an interim appraisal of progress should be possible, and an evaluation is planned for 2014. The European Parliament Former Members' Association (FMA) as a

member of the European Association will take part in that conference, where it will submit the present declaration.