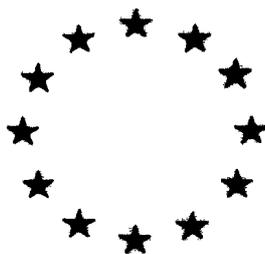


COUNCIL
OF EUROPE



CONSEIL
DE L'EUROPE

MMG-1 Records

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN MINISTERS
RESPONSIBLE FOR MIGRATION AFFAIRS

Strasbourg, 6-8 May 1980

EUROPEAN MIGRATION IN THE 1980s
TRENDS AND POLICIES

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

STRASBOURG

1981

The European Ministers responsible for migration affairs met in Strasbourg, at the invitation of the Swedish Government, from 6-8 May 1980. The subject of discussion was "European migration in the 1980s: trends and policies".

The conference was attended by Ministers from the member states of the Council of Europe or their representatives and by observers from Finland and the Holy See. Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Resettlement Fund and the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe also attended.

The International Labour Office (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Council and the Commission of the European Communities, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) sent observers to the conference.

Secretariat services were provided by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. The conference provided the occasion of an exchange of views on the two following themes:

- Theme 1: Integration of migrant workers and their families in receiving countries,
- Theme 2: Co-operation between countries of origin and receiving countries.

The conference thanked the experts of the French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish and Swiss delegations who had prepared the two reports on the themes which had been transmitted to them by the ad hoc Committee of Senior Officials, as well as MM Lebon and Falchi for their study. It also thanked the representatives of ILO, OECD, the Commission of the European Communities and ICEM for the information documents which they had prepared on the activities of respective organisations.

The conference took note of these reports; at the end of its deliberations it arrived at the following conclusions:

1. Despite many similar features the problems facing European countries in regard to migration and its effects in the 1980s present unmistakable specific aspects; they thus provide common challenges. New trends have emerged in migration patterns, particularly since the energy crisis in the middle of the 1970s and the ensuing economic recession. These trends, which are likely to subsist in the 1980s, require a review and an adaptation of policies that are still largely geared to solve problems characteristic of the earlier situation. They call for national policies of a comprehensive nature as well as for new forms of bilateral and multilateral co-operation between the countries concerned, taking into account demographic developments.
2. As a result of the large migration movements of the past decades, about 10 million foreign workers and their dependants live in Council of Europe member states. International migration for employment came to a virtual standstill following the introduction of restrictive measures in immigration countries, conversely, return flows temporarily increased in certain countries. The majority of immigrants did, however, remain and their number is replenished each year by births in the receiving countries, family reunion, and other immigration mainly on humanitarian grounds. Moreover, seasonal and frontier emigration continues, entailing specific problems. This pattern has not been uniform throughout Europe; thus, in the countries

of the EEC, restrictive measures do not apply to Community workers whose problems are resolved within the framework of free movement of labour. A similar situation exists in the Nordic countries. Extra-Community immigration to the United Kingdom during these decades has mainly comprised citizens of Commonwealth countries who intended, and were admitted for, permanent settlement from the outset.

3. Nonetheless, the outstanding new feature is that substantial numbers of foreigners and their families live semi-permanently for very long periods in receiving countries and many settle on a permanent basis. The consequence of this is that a second generation of immigrants is now reaching the age of majority or working age. This situation poses complex problems, the solution of which necessitates measures of a long-term character with regard to the harmonious integration of both the first and second generation of immigrants into the host societies, as well as increased co-operation between the latter and the countries of origin.

4. Migration has entailed "considerable human and social cost for migrant workers and their families. This fact as well as the important contribution that the foreign workers make to the economic development of the receiving countries has increased legitimate expectations for equality of treatment, security and social as well as cultural advancement on their side. States and local authorities have, a special responsibility in this matter.

5. At the same time, the de facto stoppage of new immigration of labour in a depressed general economic situation aggravates the condition of the labour market and the difficulty of finding jobs in emigration countries. Their ability to provide jobs for returning migrants, many of whom have lived for long periods in a foreign country, has thereby diminished. The close interdependence of the economies of Europe calls for a concerted effort, in a spirit of European solidarity, to resolve these problems. Appropriate measures should be taken in this context to promote economic development in emigration countries and regions.

6. Against this general background, and with a view to seeking to progress towards equality of opportunity, the removal of specific disadvantages experienced by immigrants, and to promote harmonious relations between these and the host societies the CONFERENCE agreed that special attention should be given at national as well as international level - including the intergovernmental work programme of the Council of Europe - to the following key problems:

i. All countries should endeavour to create the necessary conditions to ensure that, within the framework of the existing provisions, decisions to leave the country of origin and settle permanently in the receiving country, or on the contrary, to return to the country of origin, are, as far as possible, freely taken by those concerned.

In response to the needs of the migrants, governments should increase their efforts to bring about the integration of migrant workers and their families in the society of the receiving country, notably by introducing measures in the fields of information, housing, training and social and vocational advancement and by awakening public opinion to the problem of such integration. In this context it is also important that their legal status be such as to give them a reasonable prospect of stable residence in the receiving country and working conditions equal to those of nationals. Lastly, it is important that, within the framework of the existing laws, migrants should be able to enjoy the fundamental freedoms of expression, assembly and association.

Practical solutions should be found to remove obstacles to family reunion for migrant workers in the spirit of Article 12 of the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers. In drawing up and applying regulations on family reunion or access to the labour market, the receiving countries should try to take into account their possible repercussions on the irregular work phenomenon.

Moreover, expulsion procedures by administrative means should make provision for the person concerned to have an effective right of appeal to a judicial or administrative authority.

Furthermore, the effective participation of migrants in community decision-making should be facilitated.

ii. Acquisition of the citizenship of the receiving country should not be hindered by measures which are too restrictive, this is all the more true for young people of the second generation, educated and trained in the receiving country, for whom account should be taken of the value this may have in their integration.

iii. Particularly important in the long-term perspective are the measures taken on behalf of second generation migrants, who account for a significant proportion of the foreign population of the receiving countries. These migrants often have problems of social and cultural identity and experience serious difficulties regarding schooling and vocational training. Measures should be taken in particular to ensure equality of treatment with young nationals in the matter of pre-school and school education, apprenticeship, vocational training and pre-training. These measures should be supplemented by others aimed at permitting access to the labour market by second generation migrants. The above-mentioned set of measures must therefore have three objects: to offer these young people the real possibility of integration into the society of the receiving country; to give them adequate instruction in the language and culture of their parents with a view, in particular, to preserving their cultural identity and, lastly, if need be, to facilitate their return to their country of origin or their departure for a new immigration country.

iv. Co-operation for the maintenance of the cultural links of migrants with their country of origin would appear necessary so that they can, if they wish, preserve their original cultural identity, irrespective of whether their migration is of a temporary or a permanent nature. The teaching of the migrant workers' mother tongue and their cultural heritage, including history, civic education, arts, religion, etc, is important from this point of view. Existing cultural exchanges should be adapted so as to take better into account these facts as well as the need to recognise the cultural heritage of the countries of origin as a factor making for the enrichment of the receiving countries. To this end, the associations which work in favour of migrants often have an important role to play as interpreters of their interests. Co-operation in the cultural and educational fields is also of the utmost importance for the successful teaching of the mother tongue to immigrant children.

v. Extensive co-operation is needed in particular with regard to social and professional reintegration of voluntarily returning migrants in their countries of origin, and promotion of new employment opportunities. The return of migrants to their countries of origin, combined with the deterioration of the world economic situation, has called for new forms of economic co-operation between receiving countries and countries of origin. In the perspective of a reinforced solidarity between European countries, a number of practical arrangements have

been introduced in the countries concerned in order to improve the lot of returning migrants and stimulate employment creation in sending regions and countries: financial grants provided by the receiving country to the migrant opting for return, development assistance for the benefit of emigration regions, a better use of the migrant's savings and foreign investments and credits. Other measures have been provided to improve reintegration facilities in the fields of housing, reintegration of the children in the school system, information etc. The scope and effectiveness of current experiments and measures - which should be tested on a larger scale - could be extended and rendered more effective by closer consultation and co-operation between the governments concerned.

vi. The implementation of the measures advocated in the previous paragraphs would require the strengthening of bilateral co-operation between the sending countries and the receiving countries, which in appropriate cases might have recourse to joint committees or any other procedure. These committees or procedures could also provide the means of contact when a state is contemplating important changes in its migration policy.

vii. Multilateral co-operation is an indispensable means of harmonising governments' policies and promoting concerted action. Together with ILO, OECD, EEC and ICEM, organisations which are also very much involved, the Council of Europe has an important part to play, both in serving as a forum for intra-European consultations at the highest political level and in preparing programmes in the legal, social, cultural and educational fields in particular. Three issues are of outstanding importance in this respect: the future of the second generation, including the education of migrant children; cultural co-operation in the context of migration, and the political rights of foreigners and other problems related to citizenship and naturalisation. One of the major tasks of this organisation should be to collect information systematically and evaluate the measures taken in member countries for the social, cultural and educational advancement of migrants and their families. Such a system would make it easier to devise concerted action. In this context the Ministers underlined the necessity of continuing and developing co-ordination of activities between international organisations.

Moreover, there is already within the structure of the Council of Europe an institution, namely the Resettlement Fund, which, in the matter of financing, contributes to the creation of jobs in pending regions and countries. The functions of the Fund in this respect could be given greater emphasis and developed.

Having been informed of action taken as a result of the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers, the Ministers expressed the wish that the states which had not yet signed or ratified it would actively pursue their efforts to adhere to it.

The Ministers recognised that it would be opportune for the appropriate bodies of the Council of Europe to study in greater depth the subjects examined at the conference, having recourse if appropriate to independent experts and taking account of the work of other international organisations.

The Ministers thanked the Swedish Government for taking the initiative of convening the conference. They expressed satisfaction at the fact that, by means of a broad exchange of views, it had contributed to the improved mutual understanding of the problems of migration. Furthermore, they welcomed with interest the Italian Government's offer to convene a second conference and expressed the wish that the competent organs of the Council of Europe would make the necessary arrangements for the holding of the conference as soon as the time was ripe.