

Opinion on guidelines for a Community policy on migration
(85/C 188/03)

On 18 March 1985 the Council decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 198 of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, on guidelines for a Community policy on migration.

The Section for Social Questions, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 23 May 1985, in the light of the report by Mr Dassis.

At its 227th plenary session (meeting of 29 May 1985) the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion by 65 votes to 10, with 29 abstentions (vote recorded):

1. General comments

1.1. The Committee supports the aims of the communication and welcomes the ideas contained in the initial explanatory chapter on the creation of a Community policy.

However, the Committee regrets that the proposals made in the draft Council resolution deal only partially and imprecisely (if at all) with the measures which the explanatory memorandum deems necessary.

The Committee also regrets that the Commission communication does not propose any action to combat xenophobia, racism and discrimination.

Furthermore, the Committee feels that in the present circumstances a resolution is not enough, and that more binding measures should be taken.

1.2. The Committee refers back to its recent ESC own-initiative opinion (1) which remains fully valid. The general and specific comments contained in that opinion form the basis of the present opinion.

1.3. The scale of migration to the Member States (whether from other Member States or from third countries), together with the recession and mass unemployment, are fuelling campaigns which seek to blame migrant workers for the problems which these economic and social difficulties bring, causing xenophobia and racism in the various Member States.

In reality, however, immigration has come to be an internal matter for the host country, and a part of local society. The problems of immigrant children (second generation) both bear this out and illustrate the urgent need for a major drive to integrate them in society and in the workforce.

Often, the living, schooling and working conditions of immigrants, be they citizens of the Member States or of third countries, are hardly conducive to the stabilization of immigration in the country of residence, nor in keeping with the principles of the EEC Treaties. The Council and the Commission must thus draw up a plan of action as soon as possible, geared to current needs and to the role of immigration in the host countries. For third countries, such a plan could be guided by Annexes IX and X to Lomé Convention (Joint declaration on ACP migrant workers and ACP students in the Community and joint declaration on workers who are nationals of one of the Contracting Parties and are legally resident in the territory of a Member State or an ACP State).

2. Specific comments

2.1. Migration policies

There is an urgent need for concerted action on migration policies, more especially as regards third countries. The two sides of industry should be involved in this. Provision for this was made in the EEC's 1974 action programme, and again in the Council resolution of 9 February 1976, but as yet no further action has been taken.

Concrete cooperation and collaboration between the Member States and the Commission is needed regarding national legislation on the position of immigrants. This must at least dissuade the Member States from adopting immigration provisions which run counter to the Treaty of Rome, more especially as regards the principles of freedom of movement and freedom of establishment.

2.2. Political rights

Special priority should be given to the political and civic rights of immigrants.

(1) Opinion on migrant workers, 25 October 1984, OJ No C 343, 24. 12. 1984.

The Committee reiterates the view expressed in the own-initiative opinion, and regrets that the draft Council resolution gives insufficient weight to this point.

In particular:

- Naturalization procedures must be simplified and adapted to allow immigrants to become naturalized in specified conditions. It should be easier for young second generation immigrants to obtain naturalization. It should not, however, be mandatory.
- Immigrants who are lawfully established must be guaranteed right of residence after an agreed period of time.
- The question of the right to vote and hold office must be tackled. A first step would be to allow EEC migrants to participate in some appropriate way in local politics. All EEC nationals should be allowed to vote in their country of residence in the European Parliament elections.

2.3. *Employment and vocational training*

Draconian measures are needed at Community level to combat illegal employment and illicit traffic in labour; these should include the unblocking of the 1976 draft Directive on this at the Council. Stiff penalties must be meted against job traffickers and employers who use this type of labour.

The national procedures for granting refugee status should be speeded up, to make it easier for refugees to enter the labour market.

Appropriate vocational training and retraining programmes must be implemented, along with Community-level recognition of Member States' qualifications and certificates.

The Committee has said before that Community policy on free movement can only be effective if it is accompanied by a vigorous employment policy and, with the help of the Social Fund, by the provision of training and placement for workers.

Done at Brussels, 29 May 1985.

2.4. *Social security*

The Committee stresses the need to:

- take the necessary step at Community level to bring the social security systems closer together,
- pattern social security conventions with third countries on a Community model,
- guarantee immigrants the same social security benefits as nationals.

2.5. *Education*

The following measures are urgently needed:

- Member States' regular school curricula to reflect the Community Directive on the teaching of native language and culture, and the extension of this Directive to the children of workers from third countries;
- introduction of a dual system for teaching second generation children their mother tongue;
 1. integration of the teaching of the mother tongue into the normal school curriculum;
 2. organization of optional special courses in the mother tongue of immigrants, outside the normal curriculum;
- guaranteed right to teaching for all young people without discrimination.

2.6. *Housing conditions*

A European housing fund, in which migrant workers also participate, should be set up to help organize the proposed urban renovation work. The Committee has given its views on this subject in its own-initiative opinion (1).

2.7. *Opportunities for reintegration*

Any policy for the return and reintegration of immigrants must be based on the principle of free choice. No pressure of any kind must be put on them. Moreover, such a policy cannot succeed if it fails to take account of the specific measures detailed in the ESC own-initiative opinion.

*The Chairman
of the Economic and Social Committee
Gerd MUHR*

(1) OJ No C 343, op. cit., point 3.2.3.