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GUIDELINES FOR A COMMUNITY POLICY ON MIGRATION (1)

The Commission has approved a Communication to the Council concerning the guidelines for a Community Policy on Migration. The purpose of this Communication is:

- (i) to update the Commission's existing policy on migrant workers and their families (2) and
- (ii) to relaunch at the level of the Council and the Parliament a discussion on how best to make progress in this area, especially in view of the fact that the current economic and social situation is vastly different from that which prevailed in 1974 (when the original Commission programme was initiated).

The changed economic and social situation which faces the Community today is characterized by high unemployment affecting all disadvantaged groups, including migrants, and uncertainty as to the future possibilities of job creation. These circumstances have tended to lead to an increase in discrimination, racism and xenophobia, aimed at sectors of the migrant population.

This changed situation has also led Member States to adopt policies which have attempted to react to the immediate pressures. Efforts have been made to stabilize and integrate the migrant population within the Member States, but a tendency has also developed to limit further immigration from Third Countries and there have even been attempts at certain measures of voluntary return to the countries of origin. The Commission has often stated that it is unfortunate that these policies could not have been coordinated between the Member States, and that a common position has not been developed. In this present Communication, the Commission describes the situation of the some 12 million migrant population within the existing Community, outlines the various sectors to which attention should be given, and points to the need for consultation between the Member States and the Commission on migration policies vis-à-vis Third Countries.

The new Communication suggests three broad areas in which progress can be made :

- Community law and related action as regards migrants who are citizens of Member States;
- consultation between Member States and the Commission on national policies, particularly as regards Third Country migrants;
- information for the population of host countries and for migrants.

(1) COM (85) 48

(2) Supplement 3/76 to the Bulletin of the EC

- to improve certain aspects of the provisions for free movement of workers, to adapt and strengthen social security provisions and to pursue and intensify the supervision of the application of Community law;
- to make Community texts more readily available and comprehensible to the user and to the officials dealing with their application;
- to examine specific provisions to see how they may be adopted to deal with the problem of such specific categories as frontier-workers and workers in the cultural sector, including refugees who are entitled to the benefits of Community regulations on social security.

The Commission also insists, once again, on the need for progress towards the granting of political rights to migrants who are citizens of Member States (1).

These areas which touch on Community law also relate to the work on "Citizen's Europe", to which the Communication refers.

The Commission notes that the Member States have, on a number of occasions, commented on the need for consultation and cooperation between the Member States and with the Commission in the field of migration policies with regard to Third Countries. However, experience shows that the results have been insufficient and fail to respond to the ever-growing needs for the integration of our migrant population. It is for this reason that the Commission in its Communication, announces its intention to provide an appropriate framework for such a process of information and consultation.

Finally, a major part of the Communication deals with the need to integrate the migrant population and to ensure that the unfortunate growth of racial tensions is stopped.

In this context, the area of information is seen as vital to the successful insertion of the immigrant population in the society of the receiving country. This information ought, in the first instance, to be addressed to the people of the receiving country and the immigrant countries but it should also, however, have in mind the officials in contact with them.

The Commission puts great emphasis on the need for social and educational integration measures, especially for the second generation of migrants. Considerable work has already been done in this area, particularly within the framework of the Community Directive concerning the education of migrant children (2). The Commission notes generally, however, that whilst many of these needs have been recognised by the Member States, progress towards the adoption of the measures necessary to overcome the problems has been slow. This is more particularly so in the case of Third Country migrants which constitute the major part of the migrant population in the Community.

The Communication is intended to re-open, therefore, the debate on migration policy and the Commission hopes that all the interested parties (Council, Parliament and migrant groups) will contribute in a positive fashion to the search for a solution to the many problems which the Community faces in this area.

(1) Bulletin of the European Communities 7/75: Supplement on "Towards European Citizenship"

(2) Directive EEC/486/77 - OJ No. L 199/32 of 6.8.1977