

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

2008/2331(INI)

3.3.2009

OPINION

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

on a common immigration policy for Europe: principles, actions and tools
(2008/2331(INI))

Rapporteur: Jamila Madeira

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

- A. Whereas, according to Eurostat, population ageing in the EU will become a reality in the medium term, with the working age population projected to fall possibly by almost 50 million by 2060; whereas immigration could act as an important stimulus to ensure good economic performance in the EU,
- B. Whereas the growth and jobs aspects of the Lisbon Strategy may be hindered by a shortage of labour, which may prevent the goals from being achieved, and whereas unemployment is currently rising; whereas this shortage may be addressed in the short term by appropriate and structured management of economic immigration,
- C. Whereas the EU should also increase efforts to address problems of labour and skill shortages internally, by tapping into currently underemployed sectors, such as people with disabilities, educational disadvantage, or those who have been long term unemployed asylum seekers already resident,
- D. Whereas we must never forget our moral duty to keep the door open to refugees in genuine need of asylum from persecution and life-threatening situations,
 - 1. Is of the opinion that immigration's crucial role in the EU and its economic potential must be recognised and their social and economic consequences must be monitored so as to promote a set of appropriate and responsible policies as regards conditions of access to jobs, housing, education, training, lifelong learning, social security and transfer of pension rights and worker mobility within the EU;
 - 2. Considers that illegal work needs to be tackled given that it fundamentally violates the rights of migrant workers; regards it as essential to promote a European policy which encourages illegally resident immigrant workers to register with the authorities, whilst ensuring at the same time that measures taken to this effect will not lead to any targeting and summary procedures of return in violation of their rights, particularly as they are already in a position of inferiority when they arrive in Europe, even from a legal perspective; also considers it essential to combat precarious work in general, bearing in mind that this problem affects migrant workers in particular, thus worsening their already vulnerable position; calls for disjointed 'security first' attitudes to be avoided and a comprehensive policy to be adopted on immigrant work that takes account of the pressure caused by unemployment and lack of opportunities in the countries of origin, particularly among young people and women, emphasising the fact that the proper management of migratory flows can benefit the EU and third countries simultaneously;
 - 3. Draws attention to the importance of recognising the skills of immigrants, paying particular importance to the formal, non-formal and informal qualifications obtained in their country of origin; considers that this recognition will combat the wastage of skills that is being seen repeatedly among immigrants, notably women, who often end up in

jobs for which they are over-qualified;

4. Calls on the Commission to take into account, in future documents on the issue, the question of skills recognition and the incentive for lifelong training, ensuring, too, that the Member States provide immigrants with opportunities to learn the language of the host country in order to ensure their social, professional and cultural integration in the European Union and giving them an improved ability to support their children's development; calls also on the Commission to make use of the results of deliberations on the linguistic education of migrant children and the teaching in the Member State of residence of the language and culture of the country of origin and calls for the framework which will be proposed to respect the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality;
5. Reaffirms that the principle of equal opportunities, particularly in access to jobs by workers with the same qualifications, must also be applied to immigrants; underlines that qualifications must be recognised through a clear and transparent procedure so that immigrants can obtain legal jobs suited to their actual qualifications and can gain access to the civil service and the liberal professions;
6. Reaffirms that the EURES network is an appropriate tool to ensure a transparent, responsible and effective balance between supply and demand in the labour market; therefore suggests expanding the concept of the EURES network to allow contact between European employers looking for workers with certain qualifications and job-seekers from third countries; proposes that Special Centres (already set up and to be set up) or EU Representations in third countries be used as a platform to extend the EURES network and to guarantee ongoing and expanded advice concerning tools and support for self-employment or recourse to micro-credit; stresses that Europe's need for highly skilled labour should not lead to "brain drain" of third countries, with consequent damage to their emerging economies and social infrastructure;
7. Takes the view that immigrants from so-called third countries should be granted the right to mobility within the EU, so that - as legal residents in a Member State – they can take up employment as frontier workers in another Member State without being required to apply for a work permit, and that such immigrants should be granted full freedom of movement as workers following a period of five years' legal residence in a Member State;
8. Stresses the importance of coordinating the local, regional, which has particular responsibility for training, national and European levels in managing labour market needs, in accordance with the principle of Community preference; underlines that this cooperation is essential to implement effectively an immigration policy capable of filling the labour shortage experienced in certain sectors and Member States and to integrate immigrants effectively and appropriately;
9. Calls on the Member States to develop an appropriate model for effectively integrating immigrants in the EU countries, whilst ensuring respect for all their cultural, religious, ideological, racial or other differences; recalls that true social cohesion is achieved through social, linguistic, educational and family reunification support structures; proposes creating a policy of proximity advocating the use of human resources in public authorities with linguistic and cultural knowledge of third countries, and guaranteeing

that school communities include in their curricula a multicultural dimension and understanding of the various cultures present;

10. Calls on Member States to make satisfactory use of Community funding mechanisms relating to immigration policy so as to create more and better jobs for migrants;
11. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to encourage practical policies and programmes which foster and seek to bring about family reunification for immigrants as a guarantee of social stability;
12. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to continue to promote anti-discrimination policies, including those implemented by the public authorities;
13. Considers that an integral view of a common immigration policy should not ignore the Commission's efforts to develop an effective asylum policy based on the European Social Model, which will ensure simplified and harmonised access to the labour market through the proposed amendment (COM(2008)815) of Council Directive 2003/9/EC of 27 January 2003 laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers¹.
14. Believes it is important that Member States sign and comply with international Conventions relating to Human Trafficking including the UN Trafficking Protocol, the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families and ILO Conventions, in particular No 29 on forced labour, No 182 on the worst forms of child labour, and those relating to freedom of association, labour inspection and employment agencies;
15. Stresses that the common immigration policy must be developed in close cooperation with the countries of origin in order to support them and efficiently complement the European Union's efforts in development cooperation.

¹ OJ L 31, 6.2.2003, p. 18.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

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| Date adopted | 2.3.2009 |
| Result of final vote | +: 37 -: 1 0: 1 |
| Members present for the final vote | Jan Andersson, Edit Bauer, Iles Braghetto, Philip Bushill-Matthews, Milan Cabrnach, Maddalena Calia, Alejandro Cercas, Luigi Cocilovo, Jean Louis Cottigny, Jan Cremers, Richard Falbr, Joel Hasse Ferreira, Roger Helmer, Karin Jöns, Jean Lambert, Bernard Lehideux, Elizabeth Lynne, Thomas Mann, Ljudmila Novak, Siiri Oviir, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Rovana Plumb, Bilyana Ilieva Raeva, Elisabeth Schroedter, Gabriele Stauner, Ewa Tomaszewska, Anne Van Lancker, Gabriele Zimmer |
| Substitute(s) present for the final vote | Glenn Bedingfield, Herbert Bösch, Françoise Castex, Gabriela Crețu, Donata Gottardi, Anna Ibrisagic, Rumiana Jeleva, Sepp Kusstatscher, Jamila Madeira, Viktória Mohácsi, Gianluca Susta, Silvia-Adriana Țicău, Georgios Toussas |