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REPORT

on the consequences of globalisation for women immigrants from the
Mediterranean countries
(2000/2251(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities

Rapporteur: María Antonia Avilés Perea

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PROCEDURAL PAGE

At the sitting of 30 November 2000 the President of Parliament announced that the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities had been authorised to draw up an own-initiative report, pursuant to Rule 163 of the Rules of Procedure on the consequences of globalisation for women immigrants from the Mediterranean countries.

The Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities had appointed María Antonia Avilés Perea rapporteur at its meeting of 22 November 2000.

It considered the draft report at its meetings of 15 January 2001 and 12 February 2001.

At the last meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution by 16 votes to 6, with 4 abstentions.

The following were present for the vote: Maj Britt Theorin, chairperson; Marianne Eriksson, Anne E.M. Van Lancker, vice-chairpersons; María Antonia Avilés Perea, rapporteur; Geneviève Fraisse, Fiorella Ghilardotti, Koldo Gorostiaga Atxalandabaso, Anna Karamanou, Christa Klaß, Astrid Lulling, Thomas Mann, Elena Ornella Paciotti, Marieke Sanders-ten Holte, Miet Smet, Patsy Sørensen, Margie Sudre, Joke Swiebel, Helena Torres Marques, Elena Valenciano Martínez-Orozco, Danielle Auroi (for Heidi Anneli Hautala), Kathalijne Maria Buitenweg (for Jillian Evans), Ilda Figueiredo (for Armonia Bordes), María Izquierdo Rojo (for Christa Prets), Pasqualina Napoletano (for María Rodríguez Ramos), Olle Schmidt (for Lone Dybkjær), Mary Honeyball (for Eryl Margaret McNally pursuant to Rule 153(2)) and Angelika Niebler (for Sabine Zissener pursuant to Rule 153(2)).

The report was tabled on 13 February 2001.

The deadline for tabling of amendments will be indicated in the draft agenda for the relevant part-session.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

European Parliament resolution on the consequences of globalisation for women immigrants from the Mediterranean countries (00/2251(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Euro-Mediterranean Forum for women Members of Parliament to be held in Malta on 2-3 March 2001, which is part of the Barcelona process launched by the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of 24/25 November 1995 in Barcelona,
- having regard to the general subject of this meeting, namely globalisation and its effects on women and the three sub-topics to be dealt with, globalisation and economic power, globalisation, migration and citizenship and globalisation and access to information and culture,
- whereas the representatives of the European Parliament have been asked to submit a report on globalisation and its effects on female migration and citizenship,
- having regard to Article 141 of the Treaty establishing the European Community on the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation,
- having regard to Article 13 of the EC Treaty authorising the Council, acting unanimously, after consulting the European Parliament, to take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation,
- having regard to Council Regulation 2836/98¹ of 22 December 1998 on integrating of gender issues in development cooperation,
- having regard to the Euro-Mediterranean association agreements between the European countries and the Mediterranean partner countries,
- having regard to the European Parliament recommendation² to the Council of 11 March 1999 on the European Union's Mediterranean policy,
- having regard the Common Strategy of the European Council of 19 June 2000 on the Mediterranean region³,
- having regard to the conclusions of the Tampere European Council of 15 and 16 October 1999 and the Lisbon European Council of 23 and 24 March 2000,
- having regard to Article 63(3)(a) of the EC Treaty concerning the adoption of immigration policy measures by the Council,

¹ OJ L 354, 30.12.1998, pp. 5-9.

² OJ C 175, 21.6.1999, p. 286.

³ OJ L 183, 22.7.2000, pp. 5-11.

- having regard to its resolution of 10 February 1999¹ on the proposal for a Council Act establishing a Convention on rules for the admission of third-country nationals to the Member States,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 22 November 2000 on a Community immigration (CO(2000)757),
 - having regard to the communication from the Commission: 'Towards a common asylum procedure and a uniform status, valid throughout the Union, for persons granted asylum' (COM(2000)755),
 - having regard to the amended proposal for a Council directive on the right of family reunification (COM(2000)624),
 - having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the proposal for a Council Directive on the right of family reunification²,
 - having regard to the European Parliament's resolution of 6 September 2000³ on the proposal for a Council Directive on the right of family reunification,
 - having regard to the joint proclamation by the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union at the European Council in Nice on 8 December 2000,
 - having regard to Rule 163 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities (A5-0058/2001),
- A. whereas Articles 2 and 3.2 of the EC Treaty provide the necessary legal base for action by the Community in the field of equal opportunities,
- B. having regard to the new phenomenon of globalisation and its influence on the European labour market,
- Ba. whereas global economic development and trade liberalisation policies have different effects on men and women and whereas the impact of such policies on women depends on the position they occupy in the local, regional and national economy,
- C. having regard to the importance of new migratory flows in an increasingly flexible labour market and the fact that many of the women immigrants may prove a bonus for the EU labour market owing to their training, knowledge and skills,

¹ OJ C 150, 28.05.1999, pp. 99-155.

² OJ C 204, 18.7.2000, pp. 40-44.

³ not yet published in OJ.

- D. whereas migratory flows should be seen as positive because the need for immigrant labour will increase gradually as the European Union has an ageing population,
- E. having regard to the particular form such phenomena take when they apply to women immigrants, especially those from the south emigrating from Mediterranean partner countries to the European Community,
- Ea. whereas the Barcelona Declaration on the Euro-Mediterranean partnership adopted in November 1995 by the 15 countries of the European Union and 12 Mediterranean partner countries determined that the three goals of development, democracy and security are indissolubly linked and laid the foundations for developing a Euro-Mediterranean citizenship,
- Eb. whereas in this connection establishing a Euro-Mediterranean social area is vital to ensure that the economic area to be created in the region as a whole is not merely a free-trade area with growing income and gender inequalities,
- Ec. whereas there are still considerable inequalities between men and women in the region with regard to access to economic and technological resources, information, property, savings and credit, education and advanced training, health care and socio-cultural resources,
- F. whereas all necessary measures should be taken as soon as possible to facilitate the integration of women immigrants,
- G. whereas female immigration will increase and should not be seen as a negative development but should be welcomed and regulated in order to guarantee social security and assistance for integration into society,
- H. whereas the measures to be adopted should safeguard the legal situation of immigrant women in the labour market and in the host society, while at the same time respecting the freedom to recruit, free competition and the flexibility of the internal market,
- Ha. whereas the strict immigration and visa policy of the European Union results in increased trafficking in persons and women in particular,
- I. having regard to the special commercial and cultural relations between the European Community and the countries of the Mediterranean region under the Barcelona process, as well as the many Euro-Mediterranean association agreements,
- 1. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to embark on awareness campaigns explaining that immigration does not restrict the employment opportunities of European citizens, since it represents a response to the needs of the European labour market, and to strengthen the various forms of support given to women immigrants, in particular to protect their rights as workers and in the fields of information, health, housing, education and vocational training;

2. Urges the Commission to gather all the data and information necessary for compiling statistics, broken down by gender, to enable an assessment of migratory flows to be carried out, taking into account the predominant sectors of economic activity, the type of labour relations and the wages paid; also calls on the Council and the Commission to consider setting up an observatory of migratory flows in the Mediterranean which would be useful in formulating a common policy on the question;
- 2a. Calls on the Commission to use available data and studies to undertake a gender analysis of globalisation, taking into account the economic, social and cultural role of women and to identify the economic models that will reduce poverty and encourage the economic independence of women, with a view to promoting gender equality;
- 2b. Calls on the Commission and Member States to draw up gender-differentiated indicators in each economic sector, as part of the European employment strategy, and to set quality objectives and deadlines for positive measures to combat the discrimination and segregation affecting women in the labour market;
3. Stresses that a specific analysis of market sectors where foreign labour, both male and female, is mainly used would provide a more genuine picture of labour supply and make it possible to meet the real needs of the EU labour market, while making labour supply and procedures more flexible;
4. Calls on the Member States to work more closely with the two sides of industry in order to improve the situation of immigrant workers;
5. Calls on the Commission to include gender mainstreaming in all EU negotiations, agreements and programmes involving the applicant countries and in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, and also in the framework of cooperation with the ACP countries;
6. Calls for a proposal to be submitted on the future action plan in connection with the Council regulation on integrating of gender issues in development cooperation¹ and for the specific budget heading to be strengthened so as to support projects of this kind in the Mediterranean regions and the ACP countries;
- 6a. Calls on the Commission to give priority to decentralised cooperation with the social partners, associations, civil society and NGOs with regard to social questions and to effectively promote equal opportunities;
7. Calls for gender issues to be included in the Common Strategy of the European Council of 19 June 2000 on the Mediterranean region, and in particular the chapter on ‘democracy, human rights and the rule of law’, in order to help gradually raise awareness of equal opportunities in these countries and encourage them to adopt and introduce programmes for the advancement of women;

¹ See footnote 1, p. 5 above.

8. Calls on the Member States to legalise and accord an appropriate legal status to service sector jobs, which are widely filled by immigrant women; stresses *also* the need to carry out awareness campaigns to enhance the status of jobs of this kind;
9. Calls on the Member States to undertake information campaigns in the countries of origin so that immigrants are fully and clearly aware of the working conditions in the states to which they may emigrate, as well as the legal needs and requirements they may have to fulfil; where the required legal conditions are not fulfilled, Member States and the candidate countries must respect the human dignity and the human rights of the 'illegal' immigrants within the framework of their legislation;
10. Stresses the need to set up informal support and information networks for immigrants, especially women, who may frequently be vulnerable to abusive practices by employers and do not dare to demand their rights in what is for them an unfamiliar country;
- 10a. Stresses the need to take direct action to stop the trade in women in the European Member States and to inform the women, who may frequently be vulnerable to abusive practices by employers, about their rights;
11. Stresses the link between unwarranted barriers to immigration and trafficking in human beings, particularly women; with this in view, calls on the Member States, the Commission and the Council to apply the recommendations contained in the European Parliament's resolution of 19 May 2000 on trafficking in women¹ and calls on the Member States to improve and amend their national laws on work permits and regularisation of immigrants and to conclude multilateral agreements with the Mediterranean partner countries to fix quotas for migratory flows towards Europe;
- 11a. Calls on the Council to facilitate legal immigration by reviewing the current visa regimes and simplifying visa application procedures;
12. Stresses the need to set up offices in the countries of origin of immigrant populations under the supervision of public bodies, so that these offices can negotiate labour contracts and residence permits in the countries of the European Union;
- 12a. Calls on Member States to recognise qualifications and degrees, especially where more highly educated women are concerned, to create a faster integration into the labour market;
13. Calls on the Member States to set up information offices on domestic service, under the supervision of a public body, to prevent this sector becoming a source of complaints about irregular situations and ensure that agreements between employers and workers genuinely meet the minimum requirements of a proper contract in line with the European social model;

¹ Not yet published in OJ.

- 13a. Calls on the Member States to assist emigrant women who are war victims and have psychological problems to grant them psychological counselling to help them integrate;
- 14. Calls on the Commission to place greater emphasis on investment in training women in the new tools of the Information Society, as part of the programmes between the European Community and the Mediterranean countries provided for under the Euro-Mediterranean association agreements and under MEDA;

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- 15. Calls also on the Member States, in accordance with the employment guidelines for 2001, to promote the education of the children of female immigrants, particularly their daughters, in successful job sectors such as the Information Society;
- 15a. Points out that the concepts of citizenship and rights go hand-in-hand and stresses that, because of the multicultural and multiethnic character of the Euro-Mediterranean region, efforts must be made to promote the right to diversity as regards gender, culture, ethnic origin, language and religion, while respecting the inalienable basic rights of the individual;
- 15b. Stresses that, with a view to creating a Euro-Mediterranean citizenship, it is essential to safeguard and enhance the role of women, since equal rights and equal opportunities are a benchmark for democratic progress and the rule of law in all societies;
- 15c. Urges the Commission and the Member States to give priority to gender policies in implementing the strategy for the Mediterranean region and under the MEDA programme in order to achieve a substantial degree of equality between men and women through economic, social and cultural measures and thereby pursue the right to full citizenship;
- 15d. Points out that by proclaiming rights relating to equality such as the right to integrity of the person, the right to education, the right to work and the right to reconcile family and professional life, the Charter of Fundamental Rights represents an important benchmark for immigration and the concept of citizenship and is linked to the process of creating a Euro-Mediterranean citizenship begun by the Barcelona Process;
- 15e. Urges the representatives of the women's parliamentary assembly to focus on the social, cultural and human dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, seeking to involve civil society and promote the interregional (South-South) dimension of trade and dialogue;
- 16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the women Members of Parliament of the Euro-Mediterranean Forum, to the Council and Commission and to the governments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

The term globalisation does not always go hand in hand with the concepts of wealth and prosperity. In some cases it may be a source of inequalities or increased social poverty. Because the role that women can play in society is crucial to the efficiency and productivity of the economy, gender related obstacles must be given key importance when formulating the Union's commercial policy.

Reducing trade barriers may at first sight seem to be an area without gender implications. Nevertheless, when border duties are abolished or reduced this will very likely entail a deficit in revenue, which will be offset by means of ever increasing national taxes or cuts in public spending. If social benefits are reduced, the burden falls on the home and, ultimately, on women, since they are mainly responsible for its upkeep.

The dimension of gender may be positively or negatively affected by the liberalisation of the world economy: in the developed countries women enjoy increasing access to the labour market, while in the developing countries, although the situation has improved, conditions are less favourable for women than for men. Women are over-represented in jobs where conditions are difficult and wages low and under-represented in decision-making positions and management posts. This is one of the reasons why women benefit less than men from the liberalisation of the most competitive technological sectors.

The process of structural change of the world economy also affects the political, economic, social and family context in which women live. Poverty also seriously jeopardises the progress of women, and economic and commercial policies must therefore be based on indicators of integration in the globalised economy which take into account the impact on women of wage levels.

Commercial policy is to a large extent formulated not only by men but also on the assumption that women of today will continue to fulfil this role. If women have to work harder to look after the home, this will hinder not only the development of their education and skills, but also their involvement in any other more productive activity. This results in economic inefficiency and high human costs. It is therefore necessary for gender perspectives to be included in the formulation, implementation and study of trade policies and programmes.

II. GLOBALISATION AND IMMIGRATION

2.1. Women and immigration

Leaving aside the effects of globalisation on women in general, the present report will focus more specifically on the situation of women who emigrate to the European Community as a result of globalisation.

During the last ten years the profile of persons emigrating from third countries to the European Community has changed considerably. Migrant workers in Europe during the 1950s and 1960s were invariably men who moved to Germany, Belgium, France and Switzerland either from the countries in the south of the existing European Community (Italy, Spain, Portugal), or from countries in the Mediterranean region such as Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia or Algeria. The women came later under arrangements for the reunification of the family and as a rule did not have work permits. In many countries there was a legal provision stipulating that women emigrating in this way were not entitled to a work permit, although in practice they later ended up working in the black economy. In recent times there has been an increase in the number of single young women with a higher level of professional training, or even women who are heads of household and whose families later join them. Young women from the Mediterranean region see emigration to the countries of northern Europe as an opportunity for a future with greater freedom, a better quality of life, better career prospects and greater independence.

On the basis of their country of origin it is possible to distinguish five groups of immigrant women in the Union: those from Central and South America, those from the countries of Eastern Europe, those from the Maghreb and Mashreq countries, those from sub-Saharan Africa and finally, those from Asia. Obviously, each Member State has ties of one sort or another with each of these regions, but it should not be forgotten that nowadays, thanks to the free movement of persons, there is a greater flow of non-Community workers within the European Community's internal market itself. In addition, the stance taken by the various national legislators has changed according to the needs of their markets. In general, it has been difficult to accept that these workers are not temporary, but, as developments have shown, workers who ended up settling in the Union, giving rise to a second and third generation of children of immigrant parents.

2.2. Immigrant women and employment in the Union

The employment sectors in which many, if not most, immigrant women in the European Community are employed are domestic service, cleaning and the services sector in general. These are all sectors where the black economy plays a prominent role. The lack of regulation of such employment in many Member States gives rise to economic exploitation, particularly if the situation of the persons concerned is illegal. Hence the importance of ensuring that this employment is properly regulated and well paid, so as to prevent any exploitation.

As is mentioned above, in many cases not only will the jobs not be temporary, but the immigrant workers will not return to their country, something which works to the advantage of many employment agencies, enabling them to exploit these workers who, in general, have few financial resources. The most widespread abuses generally involve fictitious job offers, withholding of information or providing misleading information on the nature of the work and the employment conditions. In some cases, workers are even asked to pay an advance and are given fake visas, and also find that, once they have reached their country of destination, the companies for which they were supposed to be working do not exist. It is therefore urgent to take steps to secure the integration of these workers in the various Member States.

Many European countries such as Germany, France, Switzerland and Belgium have a long tradition of integrating into cultural and working life the daughters of first and second generation immigrants whose parents came from non-member Mediterranean countries. This

experience could undoubtedly be of great benefit to other Community countries where immigration is still a more recent phenomenon.

There are also highly qualified women immigrants doing jobs that do not correspond to their training. This occurs frequently with women from the countries of Eastern Europe, but is also beginning to occur among women from the Maghreb and Mashreq countries.

2.3. The need for controlled immigration and the benefits it will bring

The employment of foreign workers in many cases also benefits European women, since it enables them to reconcile their working and home lives. Better and more extensive regulation is needed for domestic service, which in most European Union countries is carried out by women and increasingly by immigrant women, owing to the fact that European women have become more highly qualified and the numbers working outside the home have increased. Accordingly, one of the major obstacles encountered by European working women in reconciling their home and work life could be partly overcome by using foreign labour to perform these tasks.

At this juncture it should be said that it would be very useful to carry out awareness campaigns to enhance the status of domestic work. It must be remembered that immigrant women are performing jobs in the privacy of the home and the private lives of European women. This should prompt us to accord greater value to the work they perform, which is of crucial importance to our society, including care of children and the elderly, cleaning, cooking, etc. Otherwise, we will be encouraging the emergence of a threat to the Union in the form of discrimination against women who perform domestic work, something which is invariably worse when those concerned are immigrant women, since they face discrimination on three fronts, being discriminated against in their work, as women and also as foreigners.

Because the work they perform is so important, it should be well paid and free from exploitation. It would be paradoxical if women in the Community, who are campaigning for equal opportunities legislation in the Union, were themselves to be guilty of discrimination against other women, either because they are less well qualified or because they are foreigners. We cannot and must not allow immigrant women to become second-class citizens.

Other jobs in which immigrant women are frequently employed are those in the service sector, particularly the hotel trade, where increasing numbers of workers from the southern Mediterranean countries are employed.

2.4 The need to pay closer attention to the employment situation of immigrant women

Like women from the Community, immigrant women must enjoy proper working conditions that enable them to look after their children and thus reconcile work and family life. This is not an easy problem to resolve but it must be tackled otherwise it could have major repercussions as regards public security. Similarly, failure to resolve this problem would create unease and negative feelings about immigration in many of the Member States. It would be contradictory if, while European women employ foreign labour to look after their children when they are working, these same women immigrants leave their children alone, particularly if the hours of work demanded by employers go beyond what has been laid down and the jobs are in some cases poorly paid.

While it is well known that women in the Community as a whole continue to experience gender-related problems in achieving equality with men in the labour markets, this discrimination is even more acute in the case of immigrant women.

2.5 Immigrant women and prostitution

Another serious problem faced by immigrant women is enforced prostitution. It is well known that the general problems of violence against women described in the DAPHNE report are particularly severe in the case of immigrant women. Accordingly, both the Member States and the European Union must focus their efforts on combating trade in human beings and the sexual exploitation of women and children. Since immigrant women are more vulnerable in these areas because of their situation, special attention should be paid to their plight under the Community's STOP programme (Sexual Treatment of People). Greater vigilance is also required on the part of police in order to break up networks for illegal trafficking in prostitutes existing in the Union.

III. GLOBALISATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The Barcelona Declaration on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership adopted in 1995 by 15 Member States and by the 12 Mediterranean partner countries determined that three goals of development, democracy, and security and indissolubly linked.

The Barcelona Declaration makes provision for the inclusion in the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements between the European Union and the partner countries of clauses governing the development of the rule of law and individual and social rights. This is not a case of interference by the Community in the internal affairs of the partner countries, but the outcome of negotiations between the parties concerned seeking to establish a common core of rights considered fundamental.

IV. SAFEGUARDING IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS IN THE COMMUNITY

With regard to the rights of third-country immigrants, there was a change of attitude on the part of the European Community between the year 1994 and the European Council in Tampere of 15 and 16 October 1999. This involved taking legislative measures not to protect ourselves from immigrants or to combat immigration, but to protect immigrants themselves, including the weakest and most subject to discrimination, namely women and children.

In 1997, in its report on the Convention on rules for the admission of third-country nationals to the Member States¹ the Commission stated that, for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the European Union, the Member States regard immigration policy and in particular the conditions of residence by third-country nationals on the territory of the Member States, including family reunification and access to employment, as a matter of common interest falling within the scope of cooperation as laid down in Title IV of the EU Treaty. In Chapter VIII of its report on third-country nationals who are long-term residents in the Union, it defined the rights of third- country immigrants in the Member State of residence:

¹ OJ C 337, 7.11.1997, p. 9.

'1. In the Member State in which they are long-term residents and without prejudice to Community law, third-country nationals recognised as long-term residents shall:

- (a) have access to the entire territory of that Member State;
- (b) be authorised to exercise all activities referred to in Chapters III, IV and V;
- (c) be authorised to reside for all the purposes referred to in Chapters VI and VII;
- (d) be afforded increased protection against expulsion, subject to the requirements of law and order and of internal security;
- (e) enjoy the same treatment as citizens of the Union with regard to:
 - (i) access to employment or self-employment;
 - (ii) vocational training;
 - (iii) trade union rights;
 - (iv) the right of association;
 - (v) access to housing, whether in the private, public or para-Statal sector;
 - (vi) social welfare;
 - (vii) schooling.'

With regard to the question of 'admission for the purposes of family reunification', the report introduced very positive measures in favour of equal rights for women reunited with their families. Two provisions would henceforth benefit such women. The first referred to the possibility of retaining a residence permit in the event of widowhood, separation or divorce. The second recognised the possibility that a person reunited with their family could take up employment after a period of six months. Although the provision was worded neutrally and the family reunification could involve the husband or the wife, in practice in those years most family reunifications involved the woman being reunited with her husband, although this situation has changed in recent years among immigrants from Latin America.

Nevertheless, we must continue fighting for the establishment of an area of freedom, security and justice, that will also apply to third-country immigrant women, where the protection of their human rights and fundamental freedoms is respected and guaranteed. With this in view, the Treaty of Amsterdam included a commitment to full freedom of movement of persons and incorporated in the Treaty establishing the European Community a new Title IV bringing within the Community sphere a previously intergovernmental policy on the external frontiers, controls, asylum, immigration and measures to prevent and combat crime. These measures are intended to guarantee the free movement of persons and the absence of border controls both for Union citizens and third-country nationals, together with common rules on asylum, refugees and displaced persons and immigration policy and the right of residence for third-country nationals. New Title IV of the EC Treaty thus stipulates that, during a transitional period of five years¹ following the entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam, the Council shall act unanimously on a proposal from the Commission or on the initiative of a Member State and after consulting the European Parliament. After this five-year period, the Council

¹ The last paragraph of Article 63(4) of the EC Treaty stipulates that 'measures to be adopted pursuant to points 2(b), 3(a) and 4 shall not be subject to the five-year period referred to above'.

shall act on proposals from the Commission, which will enjoy sole right of initiative from that time onwards. The provisions to be adopted include measures defining the rights and conditions under which nationals of third countries who are legally resident in a Member State may reside in other Member States.

It is thanks to this partial communitisation of matters previously governed by the third pillar or the CFSP, and the desire of the Member States to make progress in this area, that we are now on the point of adopting a directive on family reunification in which a change of attitude towards immigrants and their rights can be found¹.

Referring to Article 63(3) and (4) of the EC Treaty, the initial proposal for a Council directive submitted by the Commission on 1 December 1999² was very explicit, pointing out in the explanatory memorandum that: 'The identification of guiding principles to serve as a basis for a common immigration policy is an important task and the Commission's intention is to give it its fullest attention. The Commission considers that the zero immigration mentioned in past Community discussion of immigration was never realistic and never really justified. The policy has never been fully implemented as such, and there are a number of reasons for that: not just that, in the short and medium term, immigration facilities such as family reunification could not and should not be interrupted but also that there were branches of industry that were short of manpower. Moreover, the Member States wished to remain open to the outside world, and in particular to maintain their privileged relationships with certain non-member countries. In the longer term, there are demographic factors such as the ageing of the population, with all that this entails in terms of welfare protection and the funding of pension schemes.'

The proposal went on to say that: 'It is true that the current employment market situation does not give the Community the grounds for operating an entry and residence policy of the very open kind that prevailed in the 1950s and 1960s. But the unemployment rate is not the only factor underlying immigration policy: specific sectors of business activity may well be short of skilled and qualified staff. More generally, a common immigration policy at European level will need to be flexible so that it can reflect the manifold dimensions of migratory flows, be they economic, social, cultural or historical, relating both to host countries and to countries of origin.'

Recital 4 of the amended proposal³ reiterated that: 'The European Council, at its special meeting in Tampere on 15 and 16 October 1999, acknowledged the need for harmonisation of national legislation on the conditions for admission and residence of third-country nationals, to be based on a common evaluation both of economic and demographic trends within the Union and of the situation in countries of origin. The European Council accordingly asked the Council rapidly to adopt decisions on the basis of Commission proposals. Those decisions were to take account not only of the absorption capacity of each Member State but also their historical and cultural links with countries of origin.'. Recital 6 goes still further and recognises that: 'The European Council, at its special meeting in Tampere, stated that the European Union should ensure fair treatment of third-country nationals residing lawfully on the territory of the Member States and that a more vigorous integration policy should aim at granting them rights and obligations comparable to those of citizens of the European Union.'

¹ Recital 1 recognises the importance of safeguarding the rights of third-country nationals.

² COM(1999) 638 final.

³ COM(2000) 624 final of 10 October 2000.

V. CONCLUSION

Despite the efforts accomplished, much remains to be done. Action is needed on two fronts. First, immigrant women from the Mediterranean must be given protection when they have been integrated into the European Community as working women and, second, existing Community development cooperation programmes should be used, placing special emphasis on the vocational training of women in new information society skills. Proposals for the integration of Mediterranean women should also take into account the enlargement of the Community to include the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as Cyprus, Malta and Turkey.

Finally, with regard to the first area of action, the protection of immigrant women already integrated into the European Community, rapid measures are needed in fields such as access to employment, career development, salaries, reconciling work and family life, etc., since the political objective of boosting employment for Community citizens should never be at odds with efforts to find employment for other workers who are also necessary for the development of European businesses.