



2015/2321(INI)

4.5.2016

OPINION

of the Committee on Culture and Education

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on refugees: social inclusion and integration into the labour market
(2015/2321(INI))

Rapporteur (*): Silvia Costa

(*) Associated committee – Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, to the international obligations found in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, bearing in mind the fundamental right of all children to have access to free primary education, irrespective of their gender, race, or ethnic or social origin,
 - having regard to its resolution of 26 November 2015 on education for children in emergency situations and protracted crises¹,
- A. whereas, among the asylum seekers and refugees arriving in the EU, one in four are children, and half are between 18 and 34 years old; whereas the number of refugee and asylum-seeking children is increasing, and whereas education and training policies are crucial for well-managed reception and integration of refugees into the labour market;
 - B. whereas these children have come from conflict areas where their school attendance has been interrupted or restricted, sometimes for long periods, or from refugee camps where only a minority of them have been able to obtain any form of education or attend local schools;
 - C. whereas, according to figures supplied by Europol in 2015, at least 10 000 unaccompanied children have disappeared after arriving in Europe;
 - D. whereas recognition of the training and qualifications of adult refugees and specific provisions for them to obtain academic qualifications and specific skills are essential for their entry into the labour market;
1. Calls on the Commission to adopt an integrated approach to the EU migration policy, and to increase the profile of culture, education and training in those operational measures undertaken as part of the European Agenda on Migration; invites the Commission to adopt a specific policy on intercultural dialogue;
 2. Calls for the EU and the Member States to tackle the current refugee crisis with a holistic strategy based on humanitarian principles and solidarity, and to foster durable solutions that give priority to the creation of safe and legal channels of entry and to the social and economic integration of refugees and asylum seekers, including through early targeted measures on education, training, culture and sport, as well as to the challenges faced by host societies in guaranteeing, in particular, children's right to education, regardless of their refugee status, as set out in Article 22 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, thus giving priority to the best interests of the child;
 3. Insists on the need for an exhaustive analysis through studies, research and statistics in

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0418.

order to assess the potential for integration of refugees currently residing in the EU into the EU labour market and in order to make the best suggestions for policy initiatives and action, with a view to ascertaining what their education strategy, specifically as regards adult learning, should be, while taking note of their current qualifications;

4. Reemphasises the importance of the swift and complete implementation of the European asylum system, which is composed of the revised Asylum Procedures Directive (2013/32/EU), the revised Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU), the revised Qualification Directive (2004/83/EC), the revised Dublin Regulation (No 604/2013) and the Eurodac Regulation (No 603/2013) into the national laws of the Member States; calls on the Member States for a speedy and comprehensive implementation; stresses that in order to enable the integration of refugees throughout Europe, the rapid implementation of the revised Reception Conditions Directive is crucial;
5. Stresses that, in the current humanitarian crisis, access to quality educational services and assistance for refugee children and young people is both a duty of European, national, regional and local institutions and a key precondition for their social inclusion, protection, long-term integration into the labour market and prevention of exploitation; underlines the need to ensure cultural and linguistic mediation while refugees and asylum seekers are developing knowledge of the host country's language and cultural and social values;
6. Stresses the crucial role of free public education, culture, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, non-formal and informal education, lifelong learning, and youth and sports policy in fostering the integration and social inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe as well as the understanding and solidarity of the host countries in combating racism, xenophobia and extremism and in contributing to building more cohesive and inclusive societies based on cultural diversity and the promotion of common European values and protection of fundamental rights in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the highest international standards that have been set in this respect;
7. Stresses the importance of promoting the establishment of positive links between the local population and refugees and asylum seekers, particularly through joint cultural or sporting activities;
8. Deeply regrets the current disappearance of cultural networks owing to the new orientation of Creative Europe;
9. Emphasises the need for effective procedures to enable a smooth transition between educational facilities available in refugee camps and the educational system of the Member State;
10. Insists on the need for Member States to facilitate the enrolment of refugee students at all educational levels, and calls for greater efforts to be made to distribute pupils and place them effectively into national school systems;
11. Calls for the EU and the Member States to establish 'education corridors' by promoting agreements with European universities and the Mediterranean Universities Union (UNIMED) to host refugee students coming from conflict areas in order to facilitate their access and to promote peer support and volunteering; welcomes the initiatives adopted in

this regard by a number of European universities and their partnerships;

12. Welcomes the European and national programmes and private initiatives launched by non-profit institutions which provide assistance to migrant academics in science and other professional areas, and advocates their development and support;
13. Calls on the Member States, in order to ensure that integration begins immediately, to guarantee solutions for practice-oriented, understandable preparatory educational information in several languages;
14. States that language courses in conjunction with an overview of the local culture, practical skills, vocational training and information on how to access services are relevant tools for promoting integration and the basis for future development and success in the host country;
15. Calls for the EU and the Member States to offer languages courses of an appropriate duration and quality, including pedagogical support, for refugee and asylum-seeking children, young people and adults, and to respond to the distinct needs and vulnerabilities of specific groups, in particular women, unaccompanied minors and adults without basic education;
16. Calls on the Member States to provide targeted support to refugee children and young people as they enter the school system, such as through intensive language courses and general induction programmes, to allow them to participate in mainstream classes as soon as possible;
17. Believes that expanding access to lifelong learning, including non-formal and informal learning and professional training, has the potential to be an effective tool for the active inclusion of refugees, thus enhancing social participation and their ultimate integration into the European labour market and society, while preventing the brain waste of highly skilled migrants, in order to safeguard their wellbeing and to reinvigorate the labour markets of host countries; calls on the Member States, in this regard, for efforts to develop initiatives to recognise the competences and qualifications of refugees by strengthening the role of the European Qualifications Framework and promoting the validation of non-formal and informal learning, and to ensure recognition and assessment through flexible, fast, transparent, simple and easily accessible procedures leading to the issuing of formal certificates;
18. Encourages the Member States to set up dedicated platforms and multilingual internet portals aimed at providing concise and easily accessible information about the recognition possibilities, existing integration programmes and lists of the institutions responsible, remembering that all EU and EEA states have a designated National Academic Recognition Information Centre, which provides a way to compare academic qualifications, encourages the Member States, in this context, to promote this service;
19. Welcomes solutions for multilingual information on opportunities as regards formal and non-formal education, vocational training, work placements and volunteering for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; calls therefore for such services to be extended; also insists on the need to boost comprehensive lifelong learning strategies that broaden access to early childhood education and care, vocational education and training and adult

learning and to create a framework that offers legal certainty for their job to volunteers and professionals who work with refugees and schemes to provide them with skills and further training;

20. Underlines the importance of guaranteeing access to education for children in emergency situations, including refugee children; welcomes the target of 4 % funding for education of the EU's overall humanitarian aid budget for 2016, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to continue to advocate at international level an increase in funding for education in emergencies within existing aid programmes in view of the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May 2016;
21. Reminds the EU and the Member States of their duty to ensure special protection for minors in line with international provisions, and in particular to guarantee their access to schools and educational facilities;
22. Recommends providing supplementary language classes in the home-country language to refugee children;
23. Stresses the urgent need to ensure that unaccompanied minors receive particular protection from exploitation at work, violence and trafficking; underlines the need for mentors and specific measures for girls in particular, who are often more vulnerable and exposed to various forms of exploitation, trafficking and sexual abuse and are more likely to be deprived of educational opportunities;
24. Stresses the need to raise the awareness among refugees and asylum seekers of their rights on the labour market;
25. Calls for the Member States to provide full and effective protection of the fundamental rights of refugees and asylum seekers, stepping up measures to combat human trafficking, enslavement and all forms of labour exploitation;
26. Stresses the importance of preventing the formation of segregated communities which limit prospects for integration into society and participation in the labour market;
27. Stresses the importance of investing in projects for the integration of refugees into the labour market through increased attention to lifelong training and apprenticeships; calls on the Member States to channel more investment towards technical, professional and business training, work experience for school pupils and dual-education schemes, making use of the Structural Funds and other resources;
28. Stresses the importance of launching educational support actions, in particular with a view to providing suitable facilities in EU hotspots and hubs, of underpinning the efforts of humanitarian organisations and NGOs that have already begun to organise educational and other activities in the camps, and of providing incentives and support for the development of formal educational structures in refugee camps, including those located in third countries;
29. Emphasises the importance of voluntary work for the integration of refugees; stresses that necessary measures should be taken to properly train those who are voluntarily engaging in the integration and education of refugees;

30. Welcomes the new calls for proposals dedicated to cultural, educational, sports and youth mobility programmes and projects aimed at intercultural dialogue, cultural and social inclusion and integration under Creative Europe and Erasmus+; stresses the need to break down obstacles and existing barriers to the application of projects aimed at the integration of refugees and to facilitate access to the programmes for all;
31. Underlines the important role of sport as an instrument for fostering social and intercultural dialogue, and calls on the European institutions and the Member States to implement programmes aimed at social integration of refugees through sport;
32. Supports the existing initiatives of sports organisations, and encourages the exchange of best practices between different entities engaged in sports activities aimed at social integration of refugees;
33. Acknowledges the scarce access to information, advice, guidance and training for refugee women; underlines the importance of proper training, by tailoring services and integration measures to specific needs, aimed at enhancing refugee women's skills and education; calls therefore for the involvement of refugee and asylum-seeking women in training programmes in order to break isolation, enhance their empowerment and independence and foster their understanding of local customs and daily life, thus restoring a sense of equality, belonging and self-esteem;
34. Asks the Member States to promote initiatives to ensure greater cooperation, policy coherence and dialogue among public authorities, appropriate NGOs, social partners, civil society organisations and refugee communities in order to enhance mutual knowledge and understanding and to evaluate further potential initiatives to ensure equal access to high-quality education, thus integrating migrants and refugees into a positive learning environment;
35. Calls for the EU and the Member States to coordinate their activities in an effective manner in order to provide appropriate reception structures that ensure decent living conditions and prevent the formation of segregated or ghetto communities, which limit integration into the society of the host Member State;
36. Asks the Member States to promote initiatives to foster cooperation among regional authorities, employment agencies and companies for a better integration of refugees into the labour market;
37. Stresses the essential role of teachers in integrating refugee and migrant children and young people into the education system, and emphasises the need for specialised teaching staff and advanced training for teachers to qualify them; calls, in this context, for the EU and the Member States to consider establishing cooperation channels for teachers so that they can share their experiences, exchange best practices and receive peer support;
38. Calls on the Member States to help migrant teachers and professors find teaching jobs to both improve their situation and put their language and teaching skills and experience to good use in the school systems;
39. Supports the idea of setting up helpdesks for teachers that offer timely support in handling various types of diversity in the classroom and promoting intercultural dialogue and

guidance when they are confronted with conflicts or students at risk of being radicalised;

40. Calls on the Member States to extend opportunities of political education, and to provide appropriate further training opportunities and educational materials so as to clarify why people flee and to combat extremism;
41. Stresses the importance of schools in providing counselling and linguistic and cultural mediation, including as regards democratic values through civic education and active citizenship programmes and playing a key role in accelerating and ensuring the social and cultural inclusion and integration of not only the students but also their families as a whole;
42. Welcomes the Council's decision to dedicate specific actions in the 2015-2018 Work Plan for Culture on the role of culture, the arts and intercultural dialogue for the integration of migrants and to take stock of existing good practices in the Member States;
43. Stresses that the use of the arts as an integration tool should be better promoted and refugees' participation in arts activities should be facilitated and enhanced;
44. Welcomes the new Expert Working Group on intercultural dialogue and integration of migrants and refugees through arts and dialogue¹ established by the Commission, which is expected to publish a handbook of good practices by the end of 2017;
45. Emphasises the importance of promoting and further developing educational apps, videos and exercises, as well as learning platforms for refugees, in order to facilitate and complement their education and training;
46. Remains aware of the need to use of unused funds and to draw on other funds such as those under the European Agenda on Migration and the Social Fund in the development of structured long-term actions and strategies; calls therefore on the Council and the Commission to take into account that reallocation of existing funds should be provided for in the revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework and to enable substantial support to Member States as regards their actions for reception and integration in the interest of ensuring a constant and consistent policy for the inclusion of refugees;
47. Asks the Member States to work on the implementation of the country-specific recommendations set out in the framework of the European Semester.

¹ <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14444-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	26.4.2016
Result of final vote	+ : 24 - : 2 0 : 1
Members present for the final vote	Isabella Adinolfi, Dominique Bilde, Andrea Bocskor, Nikolaos Chountis, Silvia Costa, Jill Evans, María Teresa Giménez Barbat, Giorgos Grammatikakis, Petra Kammerevert, Andrew Lewer, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Stefano Maullu, Luigi Morgano, Momchil Nekov, Michaela Šojdrová, Yana Toom, Helga Trüpel, Sabine Verheyen, Julie Ward, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski, Milan Zver, Krystyna Łybacka
Substitutes present for the final vote	Therese Comodini Cachia, Mary Honeyball, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Martina Michels