



**2015/2095(INI)**

18.2.2016

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

on the situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration  
(2015/2095(INI))

Rapporteur: Elisabeth Morin-Chartier



## 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 into its motion for a resolution:

1. Acknowledges the Commission's efforts to create an ambitious migration agenda, and urges the European Council to show a high level of ambition and attention to detail, and to act in unison to come up with timely and strong responses to the migration crisis; calls on the Council to be proactive in supporting the Commission's work by means of concrete deeds and swift action and by taking practical measures designed to achieve common objectives, on the basis of the principles of solidarity and the fair distribution of responsibilities among all the Member States; regrets the blocking stand taken by some Member States towards the adoption of an effective and sustainable political solution that respects the fundamental values on which the European Union is built, including respect for the rule of law, human rights and the principles of non-discrimination, solidarity and common responsibility;
2. Notes that the current wave of refugees represents a European challenge in a global context, and as such needs to be dealt with in the European Council as well;
3. Stresses that, in particular, the social dimension of the refugee influx calls for a common European asylum policy, a debate on European quota agreements, and on-the-spot registration of particularly vulnerable refugee groups in over-burdened states neighbouring the crisis regions in question;
4. Stresses that the only feasible solution for managing the inflow of third-country nationals and stateless persons is to put in place a permanent relocation mechanism for all Member States as soon as possible; points out that, as regards the medium term, the issue being raised by the current refugee crisis is that of Europe's will to integrate refugees into its society, since they are not seeking a permanent stay; emphasises that education and employment are fundamental to the successful integration of refugees and migrants; calls on the Commission, therefore, in very close coordination with the Member States, to adopt immediate measures and to opt for a plan which is geared towards and promotes the social inclusion of refugees and their integration into an EU labour market still suffering from the impact of the economic crisis, while taking into consideration the differences between economic migrants and refugees;
5. Stresses that genuine integration is a two-way process requiring the mutual commitment of refugees and of Europe and its citizens; emphasises that it is essential to ensure an effective and agile system of recognition of refugee status and allocation to the countries of destination so that the process of social inclusion and labour market integration can start as soon as possible; urges the Commission to promote upward convergence of social protection and a standard for the swift delivery of work permits to those with recognised refugee status, across the Member States;
6. Calls on the Member States to exchange good practice as regards integrating refugees into European society and the labour market; calls on the Commission to draw on Member States' experiences and come up with a set of recommendations for the effective

completion of this process;

7. Recalls the EU's Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy (CBPs)<sup>1</sup> as the underlying approach to integration;
8. Calls on the Commission to pay particular attention to the needs of those deserving international protection and of vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied minors, women, young people, children and the elderly, and, when possible, to promote relevant actions in third countries during the pre-departure stage; calls for special consideration to be given to the often vulnerable position of women in the process of social inclusion and labour market integration; is concerned about recent findings concerning a high number of unaccompanied refugee children who are missing, and calls on the authorities to investigate their whereabouts;
9. Encourages the Commission to enhance the dialogue with business and labour on migration and skills, with a view to identifying labour market shortages in specific industry sectors, including entrepreneurship, and opening up well-managed legal migration channels and employment opportunities for refugees; takes the view that such a dialogue should be based on a balanced representation of interests with a view to the rights-based integration of migrants and refugees into the labour market;
10. Maintains that, when designing integration policies in the EU, labour market data, particularly as regards unemployment and job opportunities, and social situation data have to be taken into account in the permanent relocation mechanism for refugees in order to ensure that this process does not worsen the social and economic situation in host regions, especially those hit hardest by the economic crisis, and in those Member States that are most indebted and still in the process of fiscal consolidation, and to ensure better social inclusion and labour market integration of refugees, bearing in mind that the social and economic insecurity of these territories and their populations is a factor which is quite separate from the current refugee emergency, given the actual employment opportunities in the regions concerned;
11. Suggests that a system whereby asylum seekers could, insofar as this is possible in practice, apply for asylum in a Member State where they already have family ties, community links or better employment prospects would improve their integration prospects;
12. Stresses that a comprehensive approach to migration which encompasses the major demographic challenge currently facing Europe and its economy also needs to be developed; points out, at the same time, that the medium- and long-term integration of refugees and migrants also represents an opportunity as regards demographic development and the strengthening of Europe's skills base; calls on the Member States to compile a digital inventory of refugees' work profiles in order to coordinate the relocation of refugees with the national and regional labour market situation;
13. Points out that the Commission has indicated that European funds, including the European Social Fund (ESF), could be used to help integrate refugees; calls on the funds' managing authorities to use them as effectively as possible to help address the integration of

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<sup>1</sup> Council conclusions of 19 November 2004.

refugees in a way that is not detrimental to other goals and recipients, especially the most vulnerable groups, and to ensure that this benefits all recipients; notes that the Commission has also indicated its availability to help the managing authorities adapt their ESF operational programmes in order to integrate migrants and refugees effectively without undermining the ESF's employment goals; also draws attention to the funds available to provide training on diversity and equality management in the workplace and to support local and regional authorities with regard to integration measures;

14. Urges the Commission, in its mid-term review of the multiannual financial framework scheduled for 2016, to ensure that the EU budget – and especially the European Social Fund – has a stronger focus on the social and labour market integration of refugees with legal status; calls on the Commission to explore the use of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) in measures for the social and labour market integration of non-EU nationals; calls on the Member States to make full use of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), combined with other EU funds, to provide the necessary investment to integrate the inflow of refugees in the medium term; calls on the Commission, in its review of the multiannual financial framework, to raise the allocation for social policies in order to enhance cohesion policy so that it can cope with the labour market integration and social inclusion of refugees;
15. Calls on the Member States to provide their public employment services with sufficient resources to ensure that refugees who are eligible to work are fully integrated into the labour market; emphasises that the European Network of Public Employment Services can play an important role in integrating migrants into the European labour market;
16. Also recalls the importance of assisting SMEs to employ migrant workers where necessary;
17. Stresses that access to the labour market is fundamental to integrating refugees and maintaining their dignity; welcomes the efforts made by some Member States to reduce the length of time which elapses before refugees can enter the labour market, in the context of the transposition of Directive 2013/33/EU<sup>1</sup>;
18. Calls on the Member States to screen their education systems carefully in order to identify ways to integrate refugees' children into the education process as quickly as possible;
19. Reiterates its call on the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to set up a uniform system which is in line with existing European systems with a view to enabling and speeding up possible official recognition of diploma equivalence and formal and informal recognition of skills, in combination with the standardisation of acknowledgements and equivalences among the Member States at European level, thereby helping refugees and migrants to become fully included in society and to work at their skill level rather than below it, as is often the case;
20. Maintains that training must be available and easily accessible to refugees and migrants, and that refugees and migrants must, as a matter of urgency, receive language training and take integration courses which constitute, and are offered as, an integral part of the

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection, OJ L180, 29.6.2013, p. 96.

relocation programme as soon as displaced persons arrive in the country to which they have been relocated, in addition to the medical and psychological support services available to asylum seekers and refugees;

21. Recalls that it is important that skills acquired while working in the EU are also validated, in order to provide added value for the individual should they leave the EU to work in another country;
22. Notes that the smooth integration of refugees and migrants into host communities requires a rights-based approach and the mobilisation of all institutional and civil society forces, as the social partners can play a role in reaping the benefits of faster integration of migrants and refugees into the local labour market; calls on the Member States, therefore, to take due account of all relevant stakeholders when designing integration strategies;
23. Calls on the Member States to prepare local societies to welcome refugees and their families, through well-planned information campaigns;
24. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to promote and support initiatives by organised civil society aimed at providing assistance to migrants and refugees, for instance via the European network of contact points for migrants and UnionMigrantNet, which are just two examples of cross-border cooperation among contact points providing migrants with information and assistance for integration;
25. Points out to the Commission that undeclared work by migrants constitutes a danger to their health and safety and deprives them of their employment and social security rights; urges the Commission to prevent severe labour exploitation; notes that, under the Employers Sanctions Directive<sup>1</sup> and the Seasonal Workers Directive<sup>2</sup>, employers can be punished for exploiting migrant labour; calls on the Commission, however, to work towards a more integration-oriented system that encompasses all aspects of these problems, including with a view to providing refugees with adequate protection in order to eliminate the abuse of migrant labour;
26. Recalls that, in order to avoid a two-tier system in the workplace, it is important that migrant workers are able to access their labour rights fully, including the right of trade union membership;
27. Points out that, when they sign an asylum seeker's employment contract, both the employee and the employer run a risk insofar as the application for asylum might be rejected; considers that this may also jeopardise the Commission's aims regarding the policy of return to the home country;
28. Points out that the majority of asylum seekers whose applications have been rejected in any Member State stay in the EU without any legal status, which means that there is a growing number of illegal migrants without the right to work or access to education for

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2009/52/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 providing for minimum standards on sanctions and measures against employers of illegally staying third-country nationals, OJ L 168, 30.6.2009, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Directive 2014/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment as seasonal workers, OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 375.

their children; stresses, therefore, the need to control and monitor illegal migrants, as they are at risk of social exclusion and poverty, which makes them susceptible to all types of external influence, including radicalism;

29. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to carry out an information campaign in migrants' countries of origin in order to provide them with proper and adequate information on legal procedures for entering the EU, together with their rights and obligations in Member States, so as to ensure that those who travel have a valid legal claim;
30. Stresses that the EU should offer people wishing to come to Europe legal avenues for entering and staying in the EU and ways to change their migration status while in the EU, and should develop a genuine circular migration policy; calls for a labour immigration corridor to be set up for candidate countries for EU accession, which would give citizens of those countries facilitated access to the European labour market;
31. Calls on the Commission, when revising the 'Blue Card' Directive<sup>1</sup>, to adopt an ambitious approach in order to strengthen the importance of the EU Blue Card, which is applicable to highly qualified workers from third countries and helps to address demographic challenges in the EU by filling shortages in the EU's labour markets; stresses that highly qualified migrants could be an asset in integrating and assimilating other non-EU nationals into European societies, and stresses the necessity of a comprehensive migration assessment comprising an evaluation of courses of action aimed at combating existing shortages in European labour markets with a view to arriving at a win-win situation;
32. Recommends a massive increase in aid to those countries of the South which have taken in large numbers of refugees and migrants, and close cooperation on the ground with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and with NGOs.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive 2009/50/EC of 25 May 2009 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment, OJ L 155, 18.6.2009, p. 17.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	17.2.2016
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+ : 42 - : 9 0 : 3
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Laura Agea, Guillaume Balas, Brando Benifei, Mara Bizzotto, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Enrique Calvet Chambon, David Casa, Ole Christensen, Jane Collins, Martina Dlabajová, Lampros Fountoulis, Elena Gentile, Arne Gericke, Marian Harkin, Czesław Hoc, Danuta Jazłowiecka, Agnes Jongerius, Jan Keller, Ádám Kósa, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Kostadinka Kuneva, Jean Lambert, Jérôme Lavrilleux, Patrick Le Hyaric, Jeroen Lenaers, Verónica Lope Fontagné, Javi López, Thomas Mann, Dominique Martin, Joëlle Mélin, Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, Emilian Pavel, João Pimenta Lopes, Marek Plura, Terry Reintke, Sofia Ribeiro, Maria João Rodrigues, Claude Rolin, Anne Sander, Sven Schulze, Siôn Simon, Jutta Steinruck, Romana Tomc, Ulrike Trebesius, Marita Ulvskog, Renate Weber, Jana Žitňanská
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Amjad Bashir, Tania González Peñas, Miapetra Kumpula-Natri, António Marinho e Pinto, Tamás Meszerics, Neoklis Sylikiotis, Ivo Vajgl