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Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

2006/2056(INI)

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OPINION

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

on strategies and means for the Integration of third-country nationals in the European Union
(2006/2056(INI))

Draftsman: Dimitrios Papadimoulis

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The Commission's Communication (COM(2005)0389) is meant to provide guidance for EU and Member States' integration policies. The opinion focuses primarily on the integration of third-country nationals in the labour market, underlining the two way process of integration and the related social aspects. It follows the structure of the Communication, thus separating the guidelines into two levels: national and European.

On the national level, the main preoccupation of the draftsman is the attribution of economic and social rights to all migrants, irrespectively of their legal status, while improving the employability of migrant women. Enhancing the adaptability of the host society to increasing social and labour diversity is another major preoccupation.

Integration is a two way process in which both immigrants and the host society have certain rights and obligations. It implies bringing immigrants' rights and duties, as well as access to goods, services and means of civic participation, progressively in line with those of the rest of the population, under conditions of equal opportunities and treatment. Employment is crucial to the integration of immigrants. The Lisbon strategy's and the European Employment Strategy's objectives to create more and better jobs must therefore include immigrants. The social partners and public authorities must work together to prevent discrimination against immigrants in the area of salaries and working conditions.

On the EU level, the role of the EU in monitoring and assisting Member States to cope with the integration of migrants is pivotal. The EU-25 population is set to shrink from 303m to 297m by 2020 and then to 280 by 2030, almost doubling the old age dependency ration. Since economic growth is the result of growth in employment and productivity, this fall in total employment could have negative effects on economic growth. Consequently, integration and full use of imported skills is of primordial interest to the EU.

The exchange of best practices and increased coordination in a higher level is essential, since different groups of migrants require different policies for integration, including not only newly-arrived migrants but also long term resident and second and third generation migrants and this must be taken into account in policy-making. It is also very important to ensure that an EU migration policy delivers a secure legal status and a guaranteed set of rights to assist the integration of those who are admitted, to promote their integration into all aspects of society, over and above integration in the labour market.

Your draftsman welcomes the Commission's proposal on the ESF (2007-2013) aiming to support specific action to strengthen the social integration of migrants and increase their participation in employment, including guidance and language training and validation of competences acquired abroad, as well as promotion of diversity in the workplace and the combat against discrimination.

He also welcomes the proposed financial instrument to complement ESF, in the framework of "managing migration flows" designed to contribute to the national efforts to develop and implement integration policies enabling migrants of different cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds to settle and actively participate in all aspects of European societies, in accordance with the Common Basic Principles.

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:

1. Calls on the Member States to:

a. avoid social dumping by adopting clear rules on the status of migrant workers as legal residents by organising information campaigns on national labour law and social rights and obligations for migrants, and by promoting the regulation of the above status for all migrant workers;

b. to create information points for third-country nationals to provide information on social services to which they are entitled in the host county, such as lifelong learning, housing, healthcare, child-care facilities, education and introductory programs;

c. adopt measures to eliminate discrimination in the workplace, such as diversity management, fair recruitment, in accordance with the internal legislation of the Member States, job-retention and promotion based on merit and irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, sexual expression, sexual identity, or age; urges the involvement of the social partners in the design and effective implementation of such measures, paying particular attention to the employment and integration of migrant women whose rate of unemployment is often higher; take measures to integrate migrant children and family members into educational and welfare programmes;

d. strengthen the ability of the host society to adapt to increasing diversity in the workplace by measures to promote information and awareness within the host population, of the need to avoid racism, xenophobia and social exclusion, thus emphasizing that integration is a two-way process which aims to enhance social cohesion, enhance consultation with the social partners and the institutions responsible for the implementation of policies at regional and local level, especially neighbourhood organisations;

e. boost consular resources in non-EU countries to provide information on entering the EU for work, study or research purposes; introduce work and residence permits under conditions regulated by internal legislation within the framework of national competence; ensure that these permits are held by the migrants themselves and not their employers in order to reduce danger of exploitation;

f. encourage the integration of newcomers on the employment market, for instance by developing sandwich courses;

g. examine, under the 7th Research Programme, the possibility of drawing up studies concerning the return of migrants and use of the skills acquired in the EU for the benefit of their countries of origin;

h. inform migrants about the possibility of being represented by trade unions and encourage trade unions to include migrants;

i. guarantee access to education and vocational training and minors' rights to education, including funding and study grants;

j. ratify the UN's Convention (1990) on the protection of all migrant workers and members of their families; develop clear policies regarding the right to work of the partners of migrant workers; considers it vital that provisions should be made to prevent forced migration, particularly with regard to the prevention, monitoring and reduction of human trafficking;

k. cooperate fully with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants in the performance of his tasks and duties, furnish all information requested and react promptly to his appeals;

l. include the shared history of migrants and their (new) homelands and the origins of migration in the curricula of education establishments;

m. set up integration programmes tailored to meet the needs of newcomers and/or earlier arrivals;

n. encourage the binding recognition of qualifications, formal or otherwise, whether obtained in the countries of origin of third-country nationals or in the EU;

o. create instruments to prevent the underachievement and the early school leaving of children of workers from third-countries, particularly by providing additional language courses; recognise that children of migrants studying in a different language and trying to adapt to new customs may encounter more difficulties in the learning process than their schoolmates, which may, in the future, lead to their difficult adaptation to and integration into society;

p. combat exploitation of minors and facilitate the reintegration of exploited minors into society; develop efficient structures and instruments to help minors overcome traumas and social and cultural handicaps through dialogue with social services;

q. stimulate interactions between immigrants and their host society by promoting shared forums, intercultural and religious dialogue, seminars, exhibitions and cultural and sport activities in the multicultural environment; create structures to allow third country nationals to integrate in the host society in order to avoid the social exclusion of the newly arrived and those already settled but finding it difficult to integrate;

2. Calls on the European Commission to:

a. ensure funding through the Structural Funds, PROGRESS and Community initiatives such as EQUAL and URBAN, as well as through the proposed European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals as part of the framework programme ‘Solidarity and management of migration flows'; ensure that the best practice and relevant knowledge gained from these programmes is disseminated and included in relevant policy development;

b. promote the exchange of information and best practice on recruitment and admission policies; engage in ongoing dialogue with all those concerned, including civil society;

support the introduction of networks of migrant organisations to facilitate the exchange of best practice;

c. financially support research activities designed to analyse the effects of regularisations of the status of migrants carried out in Member States and draw on the experience of the various Member States in developing a long-term European migration policy;

d. create platforms to enable cooperation and dialogue between authorities at local, regional and national level, social partners and organisations representing migrants - such sharing of experience between those stakeholders is necessary to better respond to the needs of different target groups;

e. prepare statistical forecasts to enable appropriate predictions regarding EU labour needs and invite the Council of ministers to indicate those matters relating to migration and employment that should be governed by common rules, with a view to the further development of a common European migration policy;

f. develop a system which evaluates and recognises qualifications gained in third countries to assist in appropriate recruitment;

g. initiate evaluations of integration of third country nationals process and increase ability to adapt national strategies of the Member States to new social, cultural and economic circumstances, depending on the findings of evaluation;

h. monitor the implementation of Directives 2003/109/EC, 2000/43/EC, 2000/78/EC, and Regulation (EC) No 859/2003; ensure that EU legislation meets ILO standards;

i. support initiatives by Member States to increase public awareness, improve information concerning measures to combat human trafficking as well as racism and xenophobia at the workplace and provide information concerning the effects of migration on employment and productivity; also calls on the Commission to include migrants in programmes for the promotion of European Citizenship;

j. use the 2007-2013 seventh RDTD framework programme to attract third-country researchers by creating conditions to enable them to carry on their research and their occupation in, and for the benefit of, the EU;

k. launch a campaign to integrate third-country nationals, capitalising on the experience of European Year of Workers' Mobility and adapting the spirit of that project to the specific characteristics of immigrants.

PROCEDURE

Title	Strategies and means for the Integration of third-country nationals in the European Union
Procedure number	2006/2056(INI)
Committee responsible	LIBE
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	EMPL 16.3.2006
Draftsman Date appointed	Dimitrios Papadimoulis 14.9.2005
Discussed in committee	21.2.2006 20.3.2006
Date adopted	21.3.2006
Result of final vote	+: 22 –: 20 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Jan Andersson, Roselyne Bachelot-Narquin, Iles Braghetto, Philip Bushill-Matthews, Milan Cabrnoch, Alejandro Cercas, Ole Christensen, Derek Roland Clark, Proinsias De Rossa, Richard Falbr, Ilda Figueiredo, Joel Hasse Ferreira, Roger Helmer, Stephen Hughes, Ona Juknevičienė, Jan Jerzy Kułakowski, Jean Lambert, Raymond Langendries, Bernard Lehideux, Elizabeth Lynne, Thomas Mann, Mario Mantovani, Ana Mato Adrover, Maria Matsouka, Ria Oomen-Ruijten, Csaba Őry, Siiri Oviir, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Jacek Protasiewicz, Kathy Sinnott, Jean Spautz, Anne Van Lancker, Gabriele Zimmer
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Edit Bauer, Mihael Brejc, Françoise Castex, Dimitrios Papadimoulis, Leopold Józef Rutowicz, Agnes Schierhuber, Elisabeth Schroedter, Georgios Toussas, Anja Weisgerber, Tadeusz Zwiefka
Comments (available in one language only)	