EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Culture and Education

2006/2251(INI)

22.3.2007

OPINION

of the Committee on Culture and Education

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

on a Policy Plan on Legal Migration
(2006/2251(INI))

Draftswoman: Maria Badia I Cutchet

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Culture and Education 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 immigrants' children must be able to enjoy the same educational conditions as the rest of the students in the education system in their host countries, and that a good way of promoting integration would be to have a balanced representation of immigrants at school, by trying to mix them with national students so as to avoid ghettoisation;

B. whereas, moreover, to make up for adult immigrants' very poor command of the written and spoken language of the host country, it is essential to introduce a concrete policy for their integration;

1. points out that the approach to migration must be coherent in all its aspects, including social, educational and cultural ones, and developed in cooperation with countries of origin;

2. asks Member States to develop policies aimed at facilitating access to and the integration of immigrants and their descendants in the educational system, giving priority to first generation immigrants, in order that second and third generation immigrants can enjoy equal opportunities; and asks the Commission to make use of the possibilities created in EU programmes, especially in 'Europe for Citizens', 'Youth in Action' and 'Culture 2007-2013';

3. recommends that Member States consider establishing, under Community programmes set up for that purpose, such as the Lifelong Learning Programme, specific sub-programmes to help immigrants become integrated in the host country both by studying its history and by learning to write and speak its language;

4. insists on the need to promote the involvement of developing countries in the Bologna and Copenhagen processes, in order to facilitate the recognition of the academic and professional qualifications acquired in those countries and to gradually improve their education systems, thereby making them more attractive for local students;

5. highlights the importance of improving the mobility, quality and efficiency of the EU's education and training systems, and of guaranteeing access to such systems for students from third countries;

6. suggests that Member States support equal opportunities at work and fight lack of security and the informal economy; points out that prior information about immigrants' skills, provided in a transparent and comparable manner, would facilitate their integration in the labour market;

7. welcomes the fact that the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality has expressed an opinion on the Commission's proposal, and emphasises the importance of mainstreaming gender into migration policies; points out, in particular, the importance of ensuring that immigrants entering the EU are aware of the values and existing laws and social conventions on gender equality, so as to avoid situations of discrimination in the host countries' societies which result from a lack cultural awareness;

8. recommends that Member States promote awareness and information campaigns in the

countries of origin and the host countries, highlighting the problems related to illegal immigration and the sanctions that are imposed on employers of illegal immigrants;

9. agrees to promote ethical recruitment in order to prevent the brain-drain, which especially affects specific sectors, such as health care, in several African regions;

10. recommends that Member States provide incentives and support to immigrants who are willing to return to their countries of origin, in order to encourage work and training mobility and in order that their respective home countries may benefit from the improved skills of immigrants; disagrees, however, with policies aimed at forced returns, except in cases following express orders by immigration authorities or court decisions;

11. calls for the skills areas clearly at risk from such a brain drain to be formally identified;

12. urges the Commission to offer basic information programmes about the EU in the countries of origin to promote knowledge about and respect for immigrants' rights and duties;

13. considers that the use of new information and communication technologies and a portal website with practical information could contribute to modernising the system of access, exchange and coordination of useful information for potential migrants; the portal website EURES on labour mobility offers experience of good practices in this field;

14. emphasises that learning the host country's language is a tool to facilitate integration; noting that the Member States' integration policies should be based on the principle that integration is a two-way process, which requires a reciprocal commitment on the part of the host society and the immigrant community, and stresses the importance of learning foreign languages as well as the immigrants' mother tongue as a way to conserve their culture;

15. stresses the need to consider ensuring, during the period of 'integration' in the host country, that in addition to studying the country's history and language, immigrant children are gradually helped to adapt to the curriculum of the class which they will be expected to join on completing their catch-up courses, to facilitate their integration in mainstream schooling;

16. recommends that Member States make, under the "Europe for Citizens" programme, targeted and effective reception arrangements to provide adult literacy courses for immigrants , as it will not be possible to make a success of integration without such measures;

17. agrees with the need to regulate and monitor the status of paid immigrant trainees to guarantee compliance with the Member States' laws against all forms of abuse; welcomes the possibilities provided for immigrants by the Leonardo Programme;

18. suggests that Member States facilitate the entry and residence of seasonal workers, taking into consideration the temporary nature of this category of immigrants, according to the requirements of the respective economic sectors; considers that the lack of freedom, and the fear experienced by illegal seasonal workers of not being able to re-enter the host country legally, would thereby be prevented;

19. stresses the importance and responsibility of the local, national and international media, not only in informing the host society but also in transmitting information to potential emigrants in their home countries, given the considerable impact of an image that

reflects the reality of the migration phenomenon;

20. reiterates that the celebration of 2008 as the year of intercultural dialogue must contribute to improving the integration of immigrants in the host societies and neighbourhoods, and to mutual understanding, thereby reducing outbreaks of mistrust, racism and xenophobia; urges the Commission to promote the work of civil society organisations in favour of inter-cultural co-existence and mutual respect, and of education at the service of peace and non-violence*;*

21. encourages Member States to take full advantage of the corresponding funds and the new Community financial instruments, so as to activate this policy plan on legal migration;

22. stresses the importance, at international level, of the principle of free movement of persons and ideas as a fundamental value of European culture; urges the Commission and the Member States to take practical measures to safeguard this heritage so as to raise the awareness among the European public and economic players of the added value of legal immigration;

23. calls on the Commission to introduce co-development measures to encourage migrants to contribute to the development of their home countries.

PROCEDURE

Title	Policy Plan on Legal Migration
Procedure number	2006/2251(INI)
Committee responsible	LIBE
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	CULT 26.10.2006
Enhanced cooperation – date announced in plenary	
Drafts(wo)man Date appointed	Maria Badia i Cutchet 14.11.2006
Previous drafts(wo)man	
Discussed in committee	27.2.2007 22.3.2007 0.0.0000
Date adopted	22.3.2007
Result of final vote	+: 27 –: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Maria Badia I Cutchet, Ivo Belet, Giovanni Berlinguer, Marie-Hélène Descamps, Jolanta Dičkutė, Věra Flasarová, Milan Gaľa, Vasco Graça Moura, Lissy Gröner, Luis Herrero-Tejedor, Ruth Hieronymi, Bernat Joan i Marí, Sándor Kónya-Hamar, Manolis Mavrommatis, Marianne Mikko, Viorica-Pompilia-Georgeta Moisuc, Ljudmila Novak, Zdzisław Zbigniew Podkański, Christa Prets, Pál Schmitt, Gheorghe Vergil Şerbu, Nikolaos Sifunakis, Thomas Wise, Tomáš Zatloukal
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Giusto Catania, Mario Mauro, Nina Škottová
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	
Comments (available in one language only)	...