EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004 *2009*

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

PROVISIONAL
2006/2056(INI)

29.3.2006

DRAFT REPORT

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

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

Rapporteur: Stavros Lambrinidis

CONTENTS

Page

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION 3

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT 7

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

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

The European Parliament,

– having regard to the communication from the Commission on "A Common Agenda for Integration. Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union" (COM(2005)0389) ,

– having regard to Article 13 of the Treaty,

– having regard to the EC Treaty, which confers on the Community powers and responsibilities in the spheres of immigration and asylum, and to Article 63, point 3, point (a) of that Treaty,

– having regard to the Presidency conclusions of the Tampere European Council of 15 and 16 October 1999, of the Laeken European Council of 14 and 15 December 2001, of the Seville European Council of 21 and 22 June 2002 and of the Thessaloniki European Council of 19 and 20 June 2003,

– having regard to the Hague Programme, adopted by the European Council on 4 November 2004, which set the objectives to be implemented in the area of freedom, security and justice in the period 2005-2010,

– having regard to the Informal ministerial meeting in Groningen on 9 November 2004 where for the first time ministers responsible for integration policy have met,

– having regard to the Common basic principles on Integration adopted by the Council of the European Union on 19 November 2004,[1]

– having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, with particular reference to Articles 18, 20, 21 and 22 thereof,

– having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,

– having regard to the report of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Committee on Development, Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A6-0000/2006),

A. whereas the number of foreign-born nationals in the EU is estimated at 40 million, and their descendents total millions more; this growing population is extraordinarily diverse but confronted by similar problems: their labour-force participation rate is well below average and their success rates in school lag markedly behind; they face discrimination in dealing with public and private institutions; they are politically under-represented at all levels of government, including in Member State political parties and in European

[1] Document 14615/04 of 19 November 2004.

institutions,

B. whereas these over 40 million foreign-born nationals might be seen as the EU's 26th Member State (and its fifth largest), and the EU's concern and efforts to integrate this population should be equivalent to EU commitments to integrate accession countries; yet in trying to overcome this integration challenge—the failure of which could undermine the EU socially, economically, and politically—the Union has committed precious few resources,

C. whereas the European Union's commitment to integration has long been restrained by the widely circulated idea that "integration is local;" in fact, integration is global in its implications—especially when it fails,

D. whereas success of integration will fortify the Union's economy in the face of global competition; the Union will attract the workers and entrepreneurs EU economies need, as well as the scientists and students who are the bedrock of its ability to innovate; EU cities will be safer and communities stronger; xenophobic tendencies will be diminished and respect for the fundamental rights of all fortified; Europe's position in the word will be enhanced,

E. whereas local, regional, and national authorities should have the ability and funds to determine and implement precise integration measures, but Member-States and the Union as a whole must zealously develop integration strategies and monitor the effectiveness and outcomes of these integration measures, thereby ensuring the implementation of integration strategies whose outcomes advance the Union's common interests,

F. whereas integration is a "two-way process" that presupposes EU citizens' willingness to accept and integrate migrants and includes actions for influencing the behaviours of both immigrants and receiving societies on all relevant levels and for mobilizing resources on both sides in order to implement policies,

G. whereas the priorities that guide EU actions in the field should include:

- Improving the employment prospects of immigrants and reducing the employment gap with natives,

- Enhancing educational and language opportunities for immigrants and their descendents, eventually eliminating the performance gap with natives,

- Increasing political and civic education, participation and representation of immigrants in all appropriate domains of governance, civil society and policy-making,

- Fighting racism, xenophobia and discrimination against immigrants - especially in the workplace, schools, housing, public services, the mass media and politics – and increasing mutual respect and understanding of each other's similarities and differences,

H. whereas there is a clear link between the success of the integration policies and the establishment of a legal immigration policy at European level,

1. Urges the Commission to ensure the effective implementation of the existing Directives linked to integration;

2. Welcomes the Commission proposal to establish the European Fund for Integration of third-country nationals for the period 2007-2013 and considers that priority actions should be determined, on an annual basis, for the allocation of resources, focusing each year on a specific critical area, such as employment, language, housing, women and political and civic participation;

3. Welcomes the Commission's proposal to promote an annual Integration Forum;

4. Calls on the Commission to clarify, expand and coordinate responsibilities for integration across DGs, including reviving and maintaining a cross-DG working group on integration and defining the precise integration responsibilities among different DGs; further calls for action to be taken to make the new Integration Fund and the European Social Fund complementary;

5. Calls on the Commission to create a permanent contact group of religious leaders, experts, migrants, and others to advise the Commission on all policies related to integration;

6. Calls on the Commission to establish rigorous monitoring mechanisms for the evaluation of integration programs in different Member States, including through the use of independent experts, and to launch a rigorous and practical Biannual Report on Migration and Integration;

7. Asks the Commission to multiply research and analysis initiatives aimed at understanding what works in integration and to ambitiously expand effective efforts to disseminate Best Practices, in cooperation with Member States and local authorities, not only through the proposed website but by as many other reasonable means as possible;

8. Stresses the importance that the composition of the European Institutions staff and the Member States public administrations reflect that of the Union’s inhabitants;

9. Urges the Council to use the "*passerelle*" clause according to Article 67, paragraph 2, second indent of the Treaty to give Parliament co-decision powers on integration and legal migration and qualified majority voting in the Council;

10. Urges the Council to make permanent the annual meeting of integration ministers, inaugurated by the Dutch EU Presidency at Groningen in November 2004;

11. Urges the Council to reconsider the Commission proposal to apply the open method of coordination to integration policy; in this respect, calls for the involvement of the European Parliament in the whole procedure;

12. Urges the Council to establish a comprehensive and forward-looking framework directive on legal migration;

13. Encourages Member States to assign responsibility to a single cabinet minister to oversee immigrant integration policies, to ensure that policies are mainstreamed throughout agencies at all levels of government, and to consider the appointment of a High

Commissioner on Integration or an Integration Ombudsman in each country to coordinate implementation of policies, disseminate information to migrants and review migrant complaints and take action to correct problems;

14. Calls on every Member State to provide an audit of all government agencies at every level that have (or should have) responsibilities related to immigrant integration;

15. Calls on Member States to encourage the political participation of immigrants and discourage their political and social isolation by, inter alia, examining ways to grant long-term resident immigrants the right to vote in local and municipal elections;

16. Calls on Member States to establish transparent, humane, fast and reasonable procedures for the granting of long-term resident status and for the naturalization of long-term resident immigrants and their children, especially when those children are born in a Member State's territory;

17. Encourages political parties, trade unions and civil society as a whole at national level to include immigrants as full members at all levels of their respective structure;

18. Encourages Member States to strengthen anti-discrimination and anti-racism legislations and to enforce the existing ones, as well as to consider appropriate affirmative action legislation for migrants in fields such education and employment;

19. Stresses the importance of developing a comprehensive framework for European Civil Citizenship with the cooperation of the European Parliament, Council and Commission;

20. Stresses the importance of establishing annual hearings on integration with the participation of the European Parliament and national parliaments;

21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, to the Council and to Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

I. Introduction

Should the EU welcome more immigrants—and, if so, how many? These questions are rightly the focus of sustained public debate in many Member States. The most recent research shows that continued immigration, managed wisely, creates substantial economic and social benefits. Yet, for many, immigration is increasingly also a source of anxiety and insecurity.

By contrast, the question of whether we should integrate immigrants who already live and work amongst us—causing no harm and enhancing our lives—is self-evident. They must become full members of European society, ultimately attaining citizenship. Anything short of this would imply that the Union sanctions a two-tier society, a notion that offends our core values.

This Report is animated by the conviction that integration is an issue tantamount in importance to the successful enlargement of the EU or the global movement for women's rights. In the face of such a challenge, the Union's commitment has been largely neglectful. Rather than incorporating immigrants effectively into schools, workplaces, and political systems, European societies are in many respects slipping into a state of "disintegration."

Yet in trying to overcome this integration challenge—the failure of which could undermine the EU socially, economically, and politically—the Union has committed precious few resources.

Although the European Council firmly stated its commitment to immigrant integration at Tampere in 1999, and reinforced its conviction in Thessaloniki in 2003, reality has not kept pace with expectations.

If failure of integration is the father of countless problems, success will strengthen the EU in critical ways: Our common achievements in integration will fortify the Union's economy in the face of global competition; it will attract the workers and entrepreneurs our economies need, as well as the scientists and students who are the bedrock of our ability to innovate; our cities will be safer, our communities stronger. The benefits of integration range even further than GDP growth, stronger pension systems, and diminished unrest. Europe's immigrants can serve as the Union's bridge to a globalizing world—enhancing our trade prospects, thickening social networks, and confirming the Union's position as a global leader capable of overcoming cultural and religious divides.

The challenge of immigrant integration is one to which we have risen before. In fact, the European Union is arguably the most successful enterprise of immigrant integration in history. A quarter-century ago, most immigrants living in the then European Community were southern Europeans. Today, southern Europe is a thriving part of the Union, its citizens no longer perceived as immigrants—though at the time, many considered them alien and "unintegratable." Their accession to the Union strengthened the EU as a whole. Likewise, eastern Europeans are now full EU members.

But the immigrants of the past 50 years held an advantage over their counterparts today: They

hailed mostly from countries with imminent prospects for Union membership.

Perhaps it is useful to therefore think of these over 40 million foreign-born nationals as the EU's 26th Member State (and its fifth largest). We could then ask: How do our efforts to integrate this population compare to the commitments we make to integrate accession countries? Successful integration requires a serious commitment of human and financial resources. We also need to scour the Union and the world for practices that can dramatically increase our success rate with immigrant integration. And we must multiply the means for effectively disseminating such ideas.

Finally, perhaps the most important issue related to immigrant integration is the one that is least discussed: Into what kind of society do we want people to integrate? The most essential reason for integrating Europe's immigrants is that, by failing to do so, we will betray the ideals and principles on which the Union is based. Too often, our reaction to immigrants defines us as closed-minded, inward-looking, biased, and reactionary. By extension our societies adopt these characteristics as well.

There can be no integration without those who integrate and those who are integrated. This means that the integration of migrants presupposes our willingness to accept and integrate migrants. Our policies, therefore, must manage the processes of settlement by influencing the behavior of both immigrants and receiving societies, and by mobilizing resources on all sides in order to effectively implement policies.

II.The Rationale for EU Involvement in Integration

Why should the EU be involved in immigrant integration? Because the failure by a single Member State to implement successful integration policies can have adverse consequences for the Union as a whole.

- The underemployment of immigrants weakens not only individual economies, but that of the entire Union.
- High- and low-skilled workers that our economies need, if they perceive Europe as inhospitable, can be driven into the underground economy or into the arms of Europe's economic competitors.
- The absence of effective integration policies can lead to negative perceptions and stereotypes against immigrants, and consequently to defensive immigration policies;
- Fear among citizens can subvert respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities;
- In its more extreme forms, alienation could breed radicalization that can threatens the EU's collective sense of security;
- Negative stereotypes against un-integrated immigrants can undermine the Union's successful enlargement.

In the face of the above, the Union has nevertheless long been paralyzed by the widely circulated idea that "integration is local Integration initiatives are indeed implanted locally. A neighborhood's schools, unions, businesses, places of worship, and other institutions do the hard work of bringing newcomers and natives together in ways that build communities and

improve lives. But integration is global in its implications—especially when it fails.

Thus, while local, regional, and national authorities should determine the precise integration measures implemented, Member States must pursue effective integration strategies whose outcomes advance the Union's common interests. It is in monitoring these outcomes where EU institutions can and must become far more active and—particularly—effective.

III. Past and Future Action – The Rapporteur's Recommendations

Previous EU Presidencies and the European Commission have done much admirable work in advancing integration policy. However, the EU's collective efforts have been notably inadequate at the level of implementation—even in the very limited area in which the Commission has authority to act. Two examples underscore this point: The European Migration Observatory, heralded with fanfare in 2003, has never been created. And the inaugural edition of the *Annual* Report on Migration and Integration—which the European Council tasked the Commission with producing every year—came out on time in June 2004[1] but, as of April 2006, the second edition has yet to appear.

In 2006 and beyond, the European Commission and other European institutions will have an exceptional series of opportunities to influence immigrant integration. These must be seized and leveraged for optimal effect.

However, before embarking on new ventures that drain the Union's attention and resources, it is critical to ensure the effective implementation of existing Directives that affect immigrant integration. It is incumbent upon the Commission to far more rigorously monitor both the transposition of integration-related Directives, as well as the effectiveness of administrative practices that implement the relevant legislation in the day-to-day lives of immigrants.

Perhaps the most significant among new initiatives is the newly conceived European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals. This Report suggests that the Commission should follow six principles for allocating the new EU Integration Fund:

a. A single annual focal point should define disbursements; annual target investment areas should include reducing the employment gap between natives and immigrants; improving immigrant performance in education; advancing the education and employment prospects of women; language and introductory programs; and enhancing political participation of immigrants;
b. the fund should favour initiatives with the greatest potential to be broadly applied throughout the Union;
c. the Commission should dedicate a reasonable and defined percentage of the Fund's resources each year to underwrite evaluations by independent experts of the effectiveness of the programs financed by the Commission;
d. once these experts have identified promising programs, immediate priority should be given to disseminating and adapting these programs for use in other Member States, by their cities and local authorities.
e. Member States' initiatives to coordinate their integration efforts and exchange best practices should be supported,

[1] COM(2004)0508.

f. Programs that target newcomers should be the primary funding targets; however, programs that target 2nd and 3rd generation immigrant descendents should also receive funding.

Also crucial is the Commission's intent, as outlined in its just-released "Policy Plan on Legal Migration," to draft a general framework directive on legal migration, as well as directives to enhance the Union's ability to attract high-skilled immigrants, seasonal workers, and trainees. This plan is a major step in recognizing that immigration and integration go hand in hand—and that one cannot succeed without the other. The plan must be fleshed out far more clearly, and must recognize that the integration needs of various categories of immigrants vary widely.

Meanwhile, the Commission has also indicated that it intends to create a prototype website to disseminate best practices on integration. While such a website is important, the Commission's efforts to identify, analyze, and promote best practices must go far beyond this—and must do so urgently in all critical fields (such as language training, housing, education, media, intercultural dialogue, etc.).

It is also vital to reform how the Commission and Member State authorities manage immigrant integration. Thus, the Report calls on the Commission to clarify, expand and coordinate responsibilities for integration across DGs, including reviving the cross-DG working group on integration and defining the precise integration responsibilities of different DGs. It further calls for action to be taken to make the new Integration Fund and the European Social Fund complementary.

As to Member States, the Report encourages them to assign responsibility to a single cabinet minister to oversee immigrant integration policies and ensure policy coherence across all levels of government and stakeholders. It also urges them to consider appointing a High Commissioner on Integration or an Integration Ombudsman to monitor policy implementation, disseminate information, and act on migrant complaints.

No serious integration policy can be developed absent the active participation of migrants themselves. To this end, the Report urges the Commission to create a permanent contact group of religious leaders, experts, and, above all, migrants, to advise the Commission on all policies related to integration.

Last but not least, it is clear that the ultimate expedient for integration is a clear path to citizenship. While citizenship rights fall within the sovereign domain of Member States, the concept of "civic citizenship" championed by the Commission—a robust package of rights and responsibilities that could serve as a precursor to citizenship—must be developed. The Report calls on Member States to encourage the political participation of immigrants and discourage their political and social isolation by, *inter alia*, examining ways to grant long-term resident immigrants the right to vote in local and municipal elections; to establish transparent, humane, fast and reasonable procedures for the granting long-term resident status and for the naturalization of long-term resident immigrants and their children; and to encourage political parties, trade unions, and civic society as a whole at national level to include immigrants as full members at all levels of their respective structures.