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23 January 2006

## Integration of immigrant women in Europe

Opinion<sup>1</sup>  
Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population  
Rapporteur: Mrs Terezija Stoisits, Austria, Socialist Group

### I. Conclusions of the Committee

1. The Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population welcomes the report from the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men on the integration of immigrant women in Europe.
2. The Committee is pleased to note that many of its principle concerns are reflected in this report and draft resolution and draft recommendation, including the invisibility of immigrant women, notwithstanding that they represent almost half the immigrant population.
3. The Committee is also pleased to note the focus of the report on certain human rights concerns for migrant women, including in relation to their status *vis à vis* their spouses and also the situation of migrant women who find themselves in an irregular situation and subject to exploitation.

### II. Proposed amendments to the Draft Resolution

4. While emphasising its support for the draft resolution tabled by the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population proposes the following amendments:

#### Amendment 1

At the end of paragraph 7.1., before 7.1.1. add the words “, *inter alia*”

Explanation:

There are many other fundamental rights of migrant women that need to be protected as well, therefore the list given should be qualified by the words “*inter alia*”.

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<sup>1</sup> See Doc **10758** tabled by the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

### **Amendment 2**

Add as a new paragraph 7.1.5. as follows: “ensuring the protection of immigrant women in an irregular situation from all forms of exploitation, including trafficking;”

Explanation:

The situation of immigrant women in an irregular situation needs particular attention and therefore reference should be made to this.

### **Amendment 3**

Add as a new paragraph after the end of 7.1. (i.e. a new 7.2.) as follows: “take fully into account gender specific forms of persecution when examining women’s claims for asylum;”.

Explanation:

Women asylum seekers often flee their country of origin as a result of gender specific persecution (female genital mutilation, rape, etc.). This should be taken into account when deciding on a woman’s claim for asylum.

### **Amendment 4**

Add as a new paragraph after 7.2. as follows: “pay special attention to single women dispersed to areas outside the main hub of traditional refugee settlements, since they face a greater number of problems and issues including isolation and insecurity;”

Explanation:

Single women may face greater problems than men in integrating when they are dispersed outside the main hub of traditional refugee settlements. They may feel greater insecurity and may also be more vulnerable without a community network to call on.

### **Amendment 5**

Add as a new paragraph after 7.9. as follows:

“encourage the media to cater for the needs of immigrant women and not to stereotype them as victims of restrictive religious or cultural traditions;”

Explanation:

The media need to be encouraged to produce programmes catering for the needs of immigrant women. All too often there are no such programmes and the only mention of immigrant women is when there are reports of restrictive religious or cultural traditions, such as forced marriages, female circumcision, etc.

## **III. Proposed amendments to the Draft Recommendation**

5. While emphasising its support for the draft recommendation tabled by the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population proposes the following amendments:

### **Amendment 1**

In paragraph 5.3.1. after “integration of immigrant women” add the words  
“; based on accurate disaggregated data and scientific studies”

Explanation:

In order for the relevant inter-governmental committees to carry out their work, this must be based on up-to-date disaggregated data and scientific studies.

### **Amendment 2**

In paragraph 5.3.3. after the words “polygamy, repudiation,” add the words “forced marriages,”.

Explanation:

Divorce without mutual consent is mentioned as one of the practices which should be prohibited. Therefore forced marriages should also be mentioned as a prohibited practice.

## **IV. Explanatory memorandum by Mrs Terezija Stoists**

### **1. Introduction**

1. The assumption that migration is primarily a male dominated phenomena is incorrect. According to current statistics, almost half of the nearly 200 million migrants<sup>2</sup> worldwide are women. It can be furthermore noted that women are increasingly becoming a majority in migration from a number of European countries<sup>3</sup>.

2. While the figures speak for themselves, society's response to this increasing feminisation of migration has been slow in adapting to this changing pattern of migration. Policy and practice both at a national level (covering countries of origin, transit and destination) and international level does not sufficiently take into account the specific patterns of female migration.

3. Women migrate for different reasons to men. The reasons may be economic, they be linked to family reunion, they may be due to gender specific persecution or gender specific violence, or they may be to acquire independence and autonomy. Women use different routes, they may migrate in very different numbers to men depending on their country of origin and their country of destination may also differ from those of men. The outcome of their migration may also differ significantly from that of men.

4. Migrant women are furthermore not a homogenous group. They come from different countries and different regions, their reasons for migration differ, their background, education and experiences differ, their levels of integration differ, some are first generation migrants others may be second or third generation migrants, they may be widowed, divorced or separated, etc.

5. Women are now migrating increasingly as heads of family as opposed to as part of family reunion<sup>4</sup>. More women migrate who are divorced and who have higher education qualifications

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<sup>2</sup> Report of the Global Commission on International Migration, October 2005, page 1.

<sup>3</sup> For example in the UK 2001 Census, 59% of Spanish-born migrants were women. See Gendered Migrations. Towards gender sensitive policies in the United Kingdom, Eleonor Kofman, Parvati Raghuram and Matt Merefield, Institute for Public Policy Research, May 2005, page 7

<sup>4</sup> The example of Moroccan women migrating to Spain can be given in this respect (Hearing of Mrs Beillouin, AS/EGA (2005) PV3 addendum 1, Minutes of the hearing on the integration of

and more privileged backgrounds. That said the majority of migrant women have few qualifications and little prospect for social mobility.

6. Policy and practice has not yet been sufficiently sensitised to this feminisation of migration and this has a crucial importance for the integration of migrant women in Europe.

7. While the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has in the past focused on issues of integration of migrants in general<sup>5</sup> and integration of migrant women in particular<sup>6</sup>, greater work is needed to explore the issues fundamental to the integration of migrant women in Europe. The work carried out by the Council of Europe Joint Specialist Group on Migration, Cultural Diversity and Equality of Women and Men, remains as relevant today as when the final report of its activities was published in 1996<sup>7</sup>.

## **2. Integration – a two way process**

8. The recently published Handbook on Integration by the European Commission highlights in its preface that “Integration is a continuous, two-way process which is based on mutual rights and corresponding obligations both of immigrants and of the host society”<sup>8</sup>.

9. The role of the host society to give support in the integration process is particularly important in relation to migrant women. This is because migrant women may face a double challenge. The first challenge is in relation to her own family, which may insist on a certain tradition and culture being followed, and then the second challenge is to integrate into the host society.

## **3. The positive contribution of migrant women to integration**

10. It is particularly important to focus on the positive contribution that migrant women can make in the integration process. Their contributions in the economic, social and cultural sphere need to be highlighted. They are agents of cohesion and tolerance and could play a positive role in helping to tackle some of the underlying causes of urban violence and unrest as for example witnessed in France and other European countries in November 2005.

11. It should be noted in this respect that women play a particularly important role in the integration of children as they are the primary care providers.

## **4. Family related migration**

12. It is clear that the most feminised type of migration remains family migration. This contrasts with two of the other most important types of migration, namely labour migration and

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migrant women held on 1 March 2005 by the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population).

<sup>5</sup> See in particular, Recommendation 1206 (1993) on the integration of migrants and community relations, Recommendation 1500 (2001) on the participation of immigrants and foreign residents in political life in the Council of Europe member states, Recommendation 1596 (2003) on the situation of young migrants in Europe, Recommendation 1625 (2003) on policies for the integration of immigrants in Council of Europe member states and Resolution 1437 (2005) on migration and integration: a challenge and an opportunity for Europe

<sup>6</sup> See in particular, Recommendation 1261 (1995) on the situation of immigrant women in Europe

<sup>7</sup> Joint Specialist Group on Migration, Cultural Diversity and Equality of Women and Men. Final Report of Activities, EG/MG (96) 2 rev

<sup>8</sup> Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners, European Commission, November 2004, page 5.

asylum. In the United Kingdom, for example, in 2002, 48 per cent of family granted settlements were wives, while 29 per cent were husbands<sup>9</sup>.

13. European states are however becoming increasingly restrictive in their rules on family related migration. This has a particular impact upon women who are increasingly finding it difficult or impossible to fulfil the legal requirements for migration for family or other purposes. As there are more women than men entering Europe in this way, they are adversely affected by these measures. Furthermore as the legal avenues for entering through family migration are being restricted, women are increasingly having to turn to irregular forms of migration, thus facing greater risk of exploitation and trafficking.

## **5. The need for gender specific statistics**

14. A starting point for any analysis of the integration of migrant women needs to be the availability of gender disaggregated data broken down, *inter alia*, by age, origin, sector of work, situation of regularity, etc. It is a general problem that women migrants are largely invisible in statistics and unless good statistical data is available it is impossible to devise and implement policy to tackle the issue of the integration of migrant women effectively. Particular problems in this respect exist in relation to irregular female migrants, who because of their status are likely to remain largely invisible.

## **6. What are the indicators of integration that can be used?**

15. There are no accepted standard indicators that can be used to analyse the integration of migrant women. That said, it is useful to examine at least one set of indicators that have been established in the past which provide a framework on which the analysis of the integration of migrant women can be made.

16. In this respect the Indicators of Integration published by the Home Office in the United Kingdom<sup>10</sup> provide a useful framework by which the main issues relating to integration of migrant women can be examined.

17. These indicators can be grouped in four categories. The first of these categories represent critical areas of daily existence, namely employment, housing, education and health.

18. The second is what can be referred to as the social connections which need to exist for integration to take place and take the form of social bridges with other communities, social bonds within a community and social links with institutions, including local and central government services.

19. The third category covers key facilitating factors for the process of indication. This includes language and cultural knowledge as well as safety and stability.

20. The fourth and final category concerns the foundations on which integration takes place, namely rights and citizenship or rights and responsibilities.

21. Using these indicators as a framework, your Rapporteur plans to examine briefly some of the issues that arise in terms of the integration of migrant women in Europe.

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<sup>9</sup> See Gendered Migrations, Towards gender sensitive policies in the United Kingdom, Eleonor Kofman, Parvati Raghuram and Matt Merefield, Institute for Public Policy Research, May 2005, page 22

<sup>10</sup> Indicators of Integration, final report, Alastair Ager and Alison Strang, Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh, Home Office Development and Practice Report, ISBN 1 84473 456 0

## **7. Integration in critical areas of daily existence**

### *7.1 Employment*

22. Integration in the workplace is one of the most essential factors of integration. It may not however be as dominant a factor for women as for men. The reason for this is that women also take on many other responsibilities, often linked to the family, in spheres such as education, health care, contacts with the authorities, etc.

23. That said, employment and the opportunities it offers is one of the most important aspects of integration for both migrant women and men. Unemployment rates unfortunately tend to be higher for migrant women than non-migrant women. Where migrant women are employed, they tend to heavily dominate certain sectors of work and migration has often had the effect of reinforcing existing gender divisions. Women migrants tend to work in domestic service (cleaning and child-care), industrial cleaning, catering and in health care. A clear disadvantage of this for women migrants is that these areas of work generally suffer from lower protection of social and economic rights and are often part of the shadow economy. This makes women migrants more vulnerable to exploitation, including for sexual purposes.

24. This however is not to say that women are not entering other domains, including professional domains, but the vast majority work in the low skilled, low paid sectors. It can be noted that sphere of work may mitigate against integration and may in fact contribute to a sense of isolation. Working as a domestic home helper, for example, will not bring a migrant into contact with a wide range of persons from the host community. Working in industrial cleaning, as another example, is likely to be with other migrant workers and thus limits the possible benefits that the workplace offers for integration.

25. One of the difficulties that migrant women face in accessing the labour market is the lack of suitable and affordable child care facilities. Without such facilities women may be confined to the home and are denied the opportunities of integration offered through employment.

26. One area or particular concern to your Rapporteur is the situation in certain countries where the right to work is tied to the employer rather than to the employee, or where a wife is dependent on her husband's status and residency for work. This puts the migrant woman into a particularly vulnerable situation of being reliant on the employer or the husband not only for the employment, but also for the legal right to remain in the country.

27. Your Rapporteur is of the opinion that greater research needs to be undertaken into employment prospects for migrant women in non-traditional areas of employment. It is through greater diversity of employment that greater opportunities for equality exist and that the benefits for integration can be increasingly realised.

28. Alongside research, Trade Unions and Employer Organisations also have an important role in opening the way for integration of migrant women through employment. They should be encouraged to take measure to ensure that policies of recruitment and retention are non-discriminatory and gender sensitive towards migrant women.

### *7.2 Health and health care*

29. In the field of health and health care, statistics play an important role in analysing whether migrant women enjoy the same level of health and health care as members of the host community.

30. One particular issue that arises in terms of access to health care is that of cultural sensitivity in the provision of health care. Issues concerning male doctors examining female

patients, children being used to interpret for parents, inappropriate dietary advice, etc, are all examples of where such issues may arise.

31. Your Rapporteur is however particularly concerned about the general lack of statistics on health conditions of migrant women. Migrants women often live in sub-standard housing conditions, work in poor conditions and suffer from a range of physical and psychological health problems. Certain health conditions are preoccupying for migrant women and include, *inter alia*, pregnancy-related morbidity, unwanted pregnancy, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS<sup>11</sup>.

### 7.3 Housing

32. As already mentioned, many migrant women live in sub-standard housing, or in ghettos with other migrants. These may be dangerous for women migrants and particularly young women migrants. If they are without employment and confined to these ghettos, their possibilities for integration are quickly whittled away.

33. The converse situation of dispersal around the country, for example of refugees or those with another status, may also adversely affect women migrants. A single man is more likely to be able to adapt to being dispersed to areas outside of the main hub of traditional refugee settlements whereas a single woman or one with a family will face a greater number of problems and issues including isolation and insecurity.

### 7.4 Education

34. Low attainment levels, low attendance levels, high drop out rates, bullying, de facto segregation are all issues that need to be addressed when examining the integration of migrant girls in the education system. Accurate statistics are clearly essential in tackling problems and devising policies and programmes which can contribute to the integration of migrant girls.

35. Migrant girls may face particular challenges in the school environment linked to family and cultural traditions. These may include issues such as, *inter alia*, wearing of the head scarf, contacts with members of the opposite sex as well as different religious practices. The school authorities as well as the parents, have an important role to play in ensuring that the demands for integration and the demands of family traditions and culture do not put a strain on migrant girls in the school environment.

36. One area in which there has been a significant growth in migration recently has been in the field of higher education, with statistics from, for example the United Kingdom, showing that there is almost a level of parity in terms of male and female migration<sup>12</sup>. Student migration offers a number of possible benefits for the host society if the students choose to remain in the country and are allowed to remain. Such students are likely to integrate more easily having already studied in the country, mastered the language, acquired a certain level of education, etc. While problems of brain drain should not be ignored, the advantages for the host society are apparent.

37. Another issue which particularly affects migrant women is the question of the recognition of certificates from third countries, and relevant occupational experience. Certain assumptions as

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<sup>11</sup> Hearing of Mrs Thoss, AS/EGA (2005) PV3 addendum 1, Minutes of the hearing on the integration of migrant women held on 1 March 2005 by the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, p. 14

<sup>12</sup> See Gendered Migrations, Towards gender sensitive policies in the United Kingdom, Eleonor Kofman, Parvati Raghuram and Matt Merefield, Institute for Public Policy Research, May 2005, page 20

to what might be a normal career history may not be applicable to women who have had their lives disrupted by migration and family and domestic responsibilities<sup>13</sup>.

## **8. Social bonds**

38. Social bonds cover connections within a community, with members of other communities and links with institutions, including local and central government services<sup>14</sup>.

39. Women migrants, because of the responsibilities they take on in relation with the family are often more likely to build up social bonds. That said, too much responsibility should not be placed on women to guarantee the creation and maintenance of such bonds. Men also have an important role to play. It is regrettable that there is an absence of strong male role models in certain immigrant communities, both at home and in the wider community at large. This is undoubtedly a contributing factor to some of the urban unrest seen in a number of cities and towns in France and other countries in Europe.

40. Particular groups of women migrants face particular difficulties. The isolation of women with large families was a problem highlighted already during a meeting back in 1994 in Strasbourg on Immigrant Women and Integration<sup>15</sup>. Ageing immigrant women also often find themselves in a particularly difficult situation. Their isolation in the home reaches new depths when the children have grown up and left and they are then left on their own without strong social bonds.

41. Media have an important role in facilitating connections between communities through, for example, dissemination of information about migrant communities, their culture, their reasons for migration, the conditions in which they live and their contribution to society. On a negative note, migrant women are at particular risk of suffering stereotyping in the media. Too often the articles that make headlines are about violence or restrictive community or religious traditions affecting migrant women. These articles tend to cover practices such as female circumcision, wearing of the head scarf, arranged or forced marriages, etc. It is rare to see reports of migrant women as success stories of integration, benefiting from integration in their host society while retaining the essential elements of their home culture.

## **9. Key facilitating factors**

### *9.1 Knowledge of language and culture*

42. Knowledge of the language of the host society as well as information on the society itself is essential for the integration of migrant women. Language is important not only for access to the labour market but also for access to education and building up social ties and bonds with the host society.

43. Member states of the Council of Europe are increasingly promoting language learning and providing introductory programmes and exams on rights and responsibilities in the host society.

44. France, for example has devised a new policy as part of a contract for reception and integration (*contrat d'accueil et d'intégration*) with 200 to 500 hours of language training for

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<sup>13</sup> Joint Specialist Group on Migration, Cultural Diversity and Equality of Women and Men. Final Report of Activities EG/MG (96) 2 rev, page 35

<sup>14</sup> Indicators of Integration, final report, Alastair Ager and Alison Strang, Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh, Home Office Development and Practice Report, ISBN 1 84473 456 0, page 4

<sup>15</sup> Immigrant women and integration, Directorate of Social and Economic Affairs, Council of Europe Publishing, 1995, page 8.



newcomers whose knowledge of French is inadequate. The Council of Europe itself has a project on language testing for citizenship run by the Language Policy Division. It has also developed an international proficiency level known as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) which, *inter alia*, provides a gauge by which employers can measure the language proficiency of applicants for a job.

45. Women migrants tend to have lower levels of knowledge of the language of host countries than men. This is in part due to lower education levels in home countries, but also because of lack of opportunities for learning the host language or picking it up if they are largely confined to the home or work without the need to speak the host language.

46. It is therefore all the more important that language proficiency training as well as introductory programmes on rights and responsibilities in the host society are geared towards the needs of women migrants.

## 9.2 Security and stability

47. Security and stability will be a particularly important issue for female asylum seekers who fled their country of origin. The reasons why women seek asylum need to be differentiated from the reasons why men seek refuge. Women do not flee only because of the persecution of their husbands, they flee also because they face persecution in their own right and often of a gender specific nature. In this respect one can mention female genital mutilation, violence for failing to follow and adapt to local codes of behaviour, trafficking and sexual violence, including rape as examples. To provide one example of the extent of the problem of rape, one study in the United Kingdom has reported that 50 per cent of women claiming asylum in the UK had been raped<sup>16</sup>.

48. Women are likely to face particular problems and have specific needs as asylum seekers or refugees. These needs will include psychological assistance in dealing with gender specific persecution. Women who are victims of trafficking will similarly also have specific needs, including important protection needs. Ratification by member states of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (ETS No 197) would be an important step in contributing to the protection of trafficked migrant women.

49. Security and stability for migrant women can be achieved in different ways. Racism and intolerance in society need to be tackled. High rates of domestic violence in some migrant communities have to be dealt with if women are to find their way out from the isolation that violent domestic situations engender. The regularisation of women migrants will also contribute to improving their security and stability, bringing them out of clandestinity and releasing them from the exploitation, including sexual exploitation, that such clandestinity brings.

## 10. Rights and responsibilities

50. Migrant women may have a double challenge in realising and enjoying their rights. Not only might they struggle to realise and enjoy their rights in the host society, including because of racism and discrimination, but they may also have to struggle to achieve emancipation and shrug off restrictions on their rights linked to customs or religion from their country of origin. In their most severe forms these may include forced marriages, polygamy, female genital mutilation, honour killings, etc. It would however be wrong however to consider that gender inequality acts as a greater barrier to integration than racial or ethnic discrimination<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> See Gendered Migrations, Towards gender sensitive policies in the United Kingdom, Eleonor Kofman, Parvati Raghuram and Matt Merefield, Institute for Public Policy Research, May 2005, page 28, reporting on a study by the Refugee Council (1996) Women Refugees, London

<sup>17</sup> Joint Specialist Group on Migration, Cultural Diversity and Equality of Women and Men. Final Report of Activities, EG/MG (96) 2 rev, p. 31

51. Migrant women also have a responsibility not to transmit traditions that oppress their daughters and hinder their integration<sup>18</sup>. Mothers in law also have a responsibility not to oppress their daughters in law.

52. If women are to enjoy their rights they need to enjoy effective participation in all areas of life whether this be public life, where political representation at local and national level remains low, or in terms of economic, social or cultural life. Ratifications of the European Convention on the participation of foreigners in public life at local level (ETS No. 144) remains disappointingly low and member States should be encouraged to ratify this legal instrument. While there has been a growth in the number and importance of NGOs dealing with migrant women issues, the message from such NGOs is that more needs to be done to enable migrant women to participate in affairs concerning them. The message is also clear that migrant women have great strength, will and determination and that any investment in them as a group or as individuals should reap significant dividends<sup>19</sup>.

## 11. Conclusions and recommendations

53. The challenges that migrant women face for integration are not the same for men. Policy and practice, based on accurate statistical information and sound academic research, needs to take this into account.

54. A brief examination of some of the major indicators for integration reveal stark problems for the full integration of migrant women in Europe.

55. In employment migrant women dominate certain sectors or work and migration has often had the effect of reinforcing existing gender divisions.

56. In health matters, migrant women do not enjoy the same level of health and health care as non migrant women. They often live in sub-standard housing conditions, have to work in poor working conditions and face a number of preoccupying health concerns including pregnancy related problems, sexually transmitted diseases, etc.

57. Education is one of the most important avenues for integration. Low attendance levels, high drop out rates, bullying and *de facto* segregation however all mitigate against the possibility of more effective integration through education.

58. A number of factors hinder migrant women from building up social bonds. The family and cultural traditions may hinder the development of such bonds. Particular groups of women migrants also face particular difficulties. In this respect women with large families and those whose children have grown up and gone away are especially vulnerable to isolation.

59. Media can play an important role in building bridges, but stereotyping women migrants as victims of domestic violence and victims of cultural and religious intransigence are unlikely to facilitate their integration.

60. Women migrants are less likely to have the linguistic skills necessary to integrate into the host society.

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<sup>18</sup> Hearing of Ms Amara, AS/EGA (2005) PV3 addendum 1, Minutes of the hearing on the integration of migrant women held on 1 March 2005 by the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, p. 8

<sup>19</sup> Hearing of Ms Chouhan, AS/EGA (2005) PV3 addendum 1, Minutes of the hearing on the integration of migrant women held on 1 March 2005 by the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, p. 17

61. Women migrants and women refugees have very specific security and stability needs. As refugees they face gender specific persecution. They also face domestic violence and issues of exploitation, in particular when in an irregular situation.

62. Women migrants have a double challenge in enjoying their rights. They have the challenge of enjoying them *vis à vis* their family and also *vis à vis* the host society.

63. The Assembly should call on member states:

63.1 to collect accurate disaggregated data concerning the integration of migrant women and encourage sound academic research on the issue

63.2 to support civil society initiatives by women migrants for women migrants, including where migrant women can act as factors for social cohesion and tolerance

63.3 to examine further how the host population can contribute to the integration of migrant women as part of a two-way process

63.4 to tackle the problem of large number of irregular migrant women, including by examining the possibility of regularisation programmes, granting of minimum rights, promoting voluntary returns or, where necessary, through forcible returns in compliance with the 20 guidelines adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe<sup>20</sup>

63.5 to ensure that the right to family reunion is adequately safeguarded

63.6 to address the higher unemployment rates for migrant women and develop employment conditions not just in traditional areas of migrant employment

63.7 to guarantee suitable and affordable child care facilities for migrant women

63.8 to ensure gender and cultural sensitivity in the provision of health care and adopt guidelines where necessary for health professionals

63.9 to tackle preoccupying health issues for migrant women, including reproductive health care issues

63.10 to ensure that a balance is found between the competing demands of schools and homes for integration on the one hand and respect for family and religious traditions on the other

63.11 to encourage the media to refrain from stereotyping migrant women and issues affecting them

63.12 to ensure that learning of the host society language is adapted to the needs of migrant women

63.13 to take fully into account gender specific forms of persecution when examining women's claims for asylum

63.14 to protect women victims of trafficking and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (ETS No 197) as a step in this direction

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<sup>20</sup> Forced return. 20 guidelines adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 4 May 2005

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63.15 to promote the participation of migrant women in all areas of life, whether these be political, social, cultural or economic, and ratify the European Convention on the participation of foreigners in public life at local level (ETS No. 144)

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*Reporting Committee* : Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

*Committee for opinion* : Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population

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*Secretaries of the Committee*: Mr Lervik, Mr Neville, Ms Karanjac