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## The Turkish presence in Europe: migrant workers and new European citizens

Opinion<sup>1</sup>  
Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee  
Rapporteur: Ms Fatma Pehlivan, Belgium, Socialist Group

### I. Introduction

1. The committee wishes to congratulate the rapporteur, Mr Ali Riza Gülçiçek of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, on his initiative and the excellent report which he is presenting. The report is most thorough, gives a good comprehensive overview of the Turkish presence in Europe, and the committee recommends its perusal.

2. While supporting this draft recommendation, the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee would like to propose some amendments.

### II. Explanatory Memorandum

3. Accordingly, as regards the historical survey of the Turkish population's migration movements, it should be made clearer that in 1961, under the bilateral agreements between Turkey and the host countries, workers came by explicit request of those countries. This manpower came principally from the rural areas. From the years 1963 and 1964 onwards, workers came on their own initiative, originating not only from rural but also urban areas. Finally, as from the 1970s, the family reunion phenomenon as mentioned in the report became the principal factor of the migration movements (cf. amendment No.1).

4. Turkey's prospects of accession to the European Union are a sensitive issue. It has to be mentioned but, in the rapporteur's opinion, does not fit the logic of paragraph 4 on the level of integration; its proper place would be in paragraph 6 on the process of democratisation in Turkey (see proposed amendments Nos 2 and 3).

5. In Belgium, a recent study has shown that over half of migrants live below the poverty line, which means living on a monthly income of less than 772 euros. According to the study, 55% of resident aliens from Morocco live below the poverty line, while the proportion rises to 59% for those from Turkey. The average income of these households varies from 610 to 742 euros. Thus there is a sub-category of "new poor" which has formed, made up of persons arriving in difficult circumstances in the host countries and remaining there under conditions of extreme poverty. This situation should be plainly mentioned in the draft recommendation (see proposal No. 4).

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<sup>1</sup> See Doc. 11083 tabled by the Committee on Migrations, Refugees and Population.

6. Integration calls for a proactive policy, whose effectiveness needs to be assessed, on the part of receiving countries. It is not only a matter of learning a language, but also of being conversant with the host country's democratic values and operating rules. The worker is not the sole target; the migrant's whole family must be reached – women especially. The rapporteur has therefore elected to mention certain provisions of Resolution 1478 (2006) on the integration of immigrant women in Europe (see amendment No. 5).

7. Learning to live in multicultural societies is an imperative if social cohesion is to be guaranteed. This learning must be done particularly in the context of basic education (see proposal No. 6).

8. Employment is a setting for integration. All the recommended measures should be applied both to the private and to the public sectors. The rapporteur considers that workplace diversity plans have a very important part to play in eradicating discrimination at work. By introducing such a plan, the enterprise/administration can realise its policy on diversity with respect for its distinctive characteristics, hence the amendments Nos. 7, 8 and 9.

9. Lastly, it would be desirable to have uniform rules, valid for the entire European Union, concerning days of leave for religious festivals. This area ought not to be regulated through bilateral agreements, as this causes wide differences between the European countries. It is the object of amendment No. 10

## **II. Amendments to the draft recommendation**

### **Amendment No. 1**

In paragraph 1, after the first sentence, add the following sentences: "In 1961, this involved workers under contract pursuant to agreements concluded between Turkey and the host countries, coming chiefly from rural areas in Turkey. From the years 1963/1964 onwards, up to 1970, workers of Turkish origin came on a voluntary basis, and originated not only from rural but also from urban areas."

The last sentence in this paragraph would thus be deleted.

### **Amendment No. 2**

At the end of paragraph 4, delete the words ", particularly in the context of Turkey's prospects for accession to the European Union" and add a sentence worded as follows: "Until the mid 1980s, both Turkey and the host countries always considered it a case of guest workers ("Gastarbeiter") who would eventually return to Turkey. This very widespread idea gave the debate on integration a wrong bias from the outset, so that the host countries have not made a commitment to an integration policy".

### **Amendment No. 3**

In paragraph 6, before the last sentence, add the following phrase: "... human rights, very well exemplified by Turkey's prospects of accession to the European Union. The Turkish case load ...".

### **Amendment No. 4**

Amplify paragraph 8 as follows:

"It is evident from recent studies that over half of migrants live below the poverty line in the host country. This is due to various factors: firstly there is a low educational standard, poor knowledge of the host country's language (or languages), and discrimination on the labour market. Thus, whether or not born in the host country, a person's surname is a point of discrimination. All this quite obviously hampers the social and economic integration of migrants".

### **Amendment No. 5**

Replace sub-paragraph 11.3.6.4. by "to organise for migrant workers and their families, particularly at local level and as far as possible free of charge, learning of the host country's language by means of personalised, practical courses focused on the main centres of interest in their lives, as well as instruction, suited to the specific needs of immigrant women, in rules of law and fundamental democratic values including gender equality, and ensure that the effectiveness of these arrangements is evaluated".

### **Amendment No. 6**

Insert a new sub-paragraph 11.3.6.5:

“to devise specific training courses for primary teachers on the theme ‘how to live in a multicultural society/live with diversity?’, and make provision in primary education for lessons on the same theme for pupils (both of foreign origin and nationals)”.

**Amendment No. 7**

In sub-paragraph 11.3.7 in “with regard to employment”, add the words “in both the public and private sectors”.

**Amendment No. 8**

In sub-paragraph 11.3.7.2, after the words “... discrimination and exclusion at work, particularly through”, add “the introduction by employers of workplace diversity plans (possible content being the nomination of a manager in charge of diversity, anonymous requests, quotas, ...), and through more active engagement .... (unchanged) ...”.

**Amendment No. 9**

In sub-paragraph 11.3.7.3, add after “migrant workers’ access” the words: “, particularly for those self-employed, ...”

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*Reporting committee* : Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population

*Committee for opinion* : Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee

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*Secretaries to the committee* : Mr Mezei, Mrs Nollinger, Mrs Meunier