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Europe's population decline and migration

Motion for a resolution
presented by Mrs Hajiyeva and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

1. By the year 2050, Europe's population will have dropped by 67 million, from 731 million in 2005 to 664 million, according to a report by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This population fall may increase the continent's dependence on immigration, not least to assure a functioning economy and the maintenance of social structures.
2. The world population is projected to rise from today's 6.7 billion to 9.2 billion in 2050. This, according to the report, assumes that fertility will continue to fall in developing countries. If it stays at current rates, the world will add about 5 billion people, nearing 12 billion by 2050, with the less developed nations' population increasing to 10.6 billion, instead of 7.9 billion.
3. This underlines the urgency of meeting family planning needs in developing nations, thus giving couples, and in particular women, the means to exercise their human right to freely determine the size of their families, according to UNFPA Executive Director, Thoraya Ahmed Obaid.
4. All European countries are experiencing a rising longevity of its population and many countries are concerned about low fertility rates. The population of more and more countries are greying. The challenges facing European society because of population ageing can only increase, as the main thrust is yet to come when the populous "baby boom" generation reach retirement age.
5. Europe's share of the world population has declined from some 25 % at the beginning of the 20th century to at current 11 %, and with a perspective of some 7 % in 2050.
6. Migration is, in addition to natural growth/decline, the other, increasingly dominant, population growth factor. The highest rates of positive net migration (the balance of immigration and emigration) are witnessed in Southern Europe. However, some European countries or regions have also experienced higher emigration than immigration rates, which leads to a shrinking of the population. Some of these countries or regions have been particularly concerned about the emigration of highly educated young people.
7. Population decline, migration and ageing of the population need to be looked at together, to assess the future of Europe's population. European policymakers need to understand how each of these three factors inter-link when devising policies linked to population management, migration management and management of an ageing population.

8. The Council of Europe and in particular its Parliamentary Assembly could be a privileged forum to take up this pan-European debate on European population decline and its multiple consequences, including for future migration policy. It is also important that the Assembly be aware and debate the population developments in developing countries, in particular the poorest ones, where family planning and health care are crucial factors for development.

9. The Assembly therefore calls on Council of Europe member governments to:

9.1. compare and review their population-related policies;

9.2. assess the needs of the economy for labour of different categories in view of assuring economic growth and social progress;

9.3. design migration policies responding to identified needs without causing un-necessary harm, such as brain and skills drain, to countries of emigration, including by promoting co-development policies and circular migration.

10. The Assembly also calls on the UNFPA to continue its mission of promoting the rights of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity, and asks Council of Europe member governments to help assure necessary funding for UNFPA's work programme.

*Signed*¹:

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EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democratic Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
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