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Working migration from the countries of Eastern and Central Europe: present state and perspectives

Recommendation 1748 (2006)

Reply from the Committee of Ministers
adopted at the 988th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (21 February 2007)

1. The Committee of Ministers has taken note with interest of Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1748 (2006) on working migration from the countries of eastern and central Europe: present state and perspectives. It transmitted the text to the European Committee on Migration (CDMG) for information and possible comments (see appendix).
2. The Committee of Ministers agrees fully with the Assembly's assessment of the importance of the developments in international labour migration. It thanks the Assembly for the substantial overview of the present situation and trends in Europe's labour markets set out in Resolution 1501 (2006), and recalls the focus given to migration issues by the Heads of State and Government at the Third Summit in May 2005. In a more specific context, it also recalls its Recommendation Rec(2004)2 on the access of non-nationals to employment in the public sector, which establishes principles for legislation and administrative practices in the public sector, stressing that "the public services have a particular responsibility to take the lead and set an example in their own employment practices, and thus encouraging other sectors to pursue open employment policies in respect to migrants/ethnic minorities".
3. With regard to the Assembly's request that labour migration and co-development be supported as the theme of the 8th Ministerial Conference for European Ministers responsible for migration and integration affairs (Kyiv, autumn 2008), the Committee of Ministers points out that in the framework of the adoption of the Programme of Activities for 2007, it has approved a new project entitled "Labour migrants – improving their integration and migration management". This project aims to prepare the Kyiv conference, which will serve as a forum for discussion of issues of labour migration from the countries of eastern and central Europe and will make proposals for improved management of migration within and from these regions.
4. The European Committee on Migration provides opportunities for exchanges of information on labour migration policies and good practice between the member states. As stated in the CDMG's appended opinion, the committee is currently reviewing its working methods, with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness of the Council of Europe's guidelines and recommendations in this area.
5. The Council of Europe's revised Migration Management Strategy provides guidelines for member states to improve their legislation with regard to labour migration. The European Committee for Social Cohesion's revised Strategy for Social Cohesion, adopted by the Committee of Ministers in November 2003, places access to employment as one of the fundamental conditions for the attainment of sustainable cohesive societies, and the CDSCS has developed an extensive programme of bilateral activities, essentially for eastern and south-eastern countries, in order to provide advice and assistance in applying the strategy. The Committee of Ministers encourages member states to make full use of the guidelines contained in these texts, as well as the provisions contained in the revised European Social Charter.
6. Finally, with a view to stimulating dialogue between the countries of eastern and south-eastern Europe on issues of migration, CDMG has organised two series of regional meetings of experts on challenges and priorities in the field of migration in these regions. The meetings are an opportunity to share useful experience and to discuss challenges and priorities in the migration field, and one of the principal

objectives is to prepare proposals for future activities of CDMG, with a view to assisting the member states to improve their migration policies and practice, including labour migration management.

Appendix to the reply

Opinion of the European Committee on Migration (CDMG)¹ on Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1748 (2006) – “Working migration from the countries of eastern and central Europe: present state and perspectives”

1. The European Committee on Migration (CDMG) welcomes the attention of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to the issue of working migration from the countries of eastern and central Europe.

2. CDMG appreciates the support given by the Parliamentary Assembly to the choice of the theme for the 8th Ministerial Conference of European Ministers responsible for migration affairs (‘Improving and strengthening the co-operation and partnership between countries of origin, transit and destination in the context of labour migration (integration and migration management)’). The conference that is planned to take place in Kyiv in autumn 2008 will serve as a forum where issues of labour migration from the countries of eastern and central Europe will be discussed and proposals for improved management of migration within and from the region will be made. CDMG would welcome the assistance of the Parliamentary Assembly in preparing the 8th Ministerial Conference.

3. CDMG also agrees with the Parliamentary Assembly that effective exchange of information and good practices on labour migration is of paramount importance for improving the management of labour migration. It wishes to inform the Parliamentary Assembly that CDMG strives in its activities to encourage and facilitate the exchange of relevant information between the member states. CDMG is currently reviewing its working methods with a view to improving the effectiveness and relevance of its activities. One of the objectives of this review is to make the guidelines and recommendations prepared by CDMG an effective mechanism for sharing good practices and policy experience among the member states.

4. CDMG wishes to inform the Parliamentary Assembly that it is currently preparing draft proposals for guidelines on the integration of migrants and people of immigrant background to the labour market. The guidelines are based on an analysis of good practice in the member states. The committee will finish its work in 2007. Representatives of the countries of eastern and central Europe actively participate in the work and ensure that the measures that will be proposed in the guidelines are relevant in the context of that region.

5. In order to stimulate dialogue between the countries of east and south-eastern Europe on the issues of migration, CDMG organises two series of regional meetings on challenges and priorities in the field of migration. The first series of meetings involves the countries of east and south-eastern Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”). Three meetings of experts took place in 2005-2006 and fourth (and final) meeting will be held in November 2006. During these meetings, experts from participating countries have had an opportunity to present their national migration policy, to share useful experience and to discuss with colleagues their challenges and priorities in the migration field. The second series of meetings will be organised for experts from eastern Europe (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Russian Federation, Ukraine). The first meeting took place at the end of September 2006 in Kyiv, Ukraine.

6. One of the principal objectives of the meetings of national experts from south-eastern and eastern Europe is to prepare proposals for future activities of CDMG in the region with a view to assisting the member states from the regions to improve their migration policies and practice, including labour migration management. The experts from south-eastern Europe should finalise their proposals by the end of 2006 and present them at the meeting of CDMG in April 2007. On the basis of these proposals CDMG will make proposals regarding specific activities in the region.

¹ Opinion prepared by the Bureau of CDMG and finalised by the Secretariat after its 63rd meeting (Kyiv, 27 September 2006)