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Co-development policy as a positive measure to regulate migratory flows

Recommendation 1718 (2005)

Reply from the Committee of Ministers

adopted at the 961st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (5 April 2006)

1. The Committee of Ministers has studied with interest Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1718 (2005) on co-development policy as a positive measure to regulate migratory flows. It has also studied the substantial proposals made directly to member states in this area in Assembly Resolution 1462 (2005) on the same subject. It concurs with the Assembly's statement in paragraph 2 of the resolution that migrants contribute to the development of their countries of origin, and that international recognition of the positive impact of migration on development is increasing.
2. The Committee of Ministers also supports the idea that co-development policies enhance – in terms of involving migrant groups in development co-operation – the interaction between migration and development, as migration contributes to sustainable development and development in turn enables efficient migration management (paragraph 3 of the resolution). In this context, it recalls the priority given to migration management in the Action Plan of the Third Summit (Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005), in which the Heads of State confirm their awareness of the importance of population movements within Europe and from other continents to Europe, and the necessity for the Council of Europe to pursue its activities in the sector (Chapter III.8).
3. The Committee of Ministers draws the attention of the Parliamentary Assembly to the considerable range of activities currently carried out by the relevant Council of Europe bodies in the field of migration to encourage co-development policies. These are extensively set out in the appended comments of the European Committee on Migration (CDMG) on Recommendation 1718 (2005). Several of these activities constitute a precise response to the Parliamentary Assembly's recommendations.
4. The Organisation's Political Platform on Migration agreed on a series of proposals for possible measures to promote co-development at its 4th session in April 2005, a session specifically devoted to the issues of co-development and links between migrants and their countries of origin (see paragraph (d) of the appendix). Moreover, the Political Platform invited representatives from seven non-European countries to participate in the session, as well as several NGOs working on co-development projects.
5. Regarding the Assembly's request for policy guidelines (paragraph 3.1), the Committee of Ministers points out that two committees of experts were set up in 2005, one of which, the Select Committee of Experts on Associations and Co-development (MG-R-AC), focuses its work on co-development. Its task is precisely to develop guidelines that public authorities may follow in order to support associations or organisations working to promote the socio-economic development of migrants. The Select Committee of Experts on the Countries of Emigration (MG-R-PE) also addresses certain aspects of co-development in the course of the review of the CDMG's Migration Management Strategy it has been instructed to carry out.

6. The Council of Europe's North-South Centre's work related to co-development is already part of its priorities, as recommended by the Assembly in paragraph 3.2 of the recommendation. In particular, in 2004 and 2005 the CDMG organised four technical workshops on migration and co-development in partnership with the Centre. In conformity with paragraph 3.3 of the recommendation, the Committee of Ministers brings Assembly Recommendation 1718 (2005) to the attention of the Council of Europe Development Bank.

Appendix to the reply

Comments of the European Committee on Migration on Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1718 (2005) – Co-development policy as a positive measure to regulate migratory flows

a. The European Committee on Migration (CDMG) welcomes the attention of the Parliamentary Assembly to the issue of co-development. It also considers co-development as a positive measure that may impact on migratory flows and agrees that international efforts with a view to promoting co-development policies and projects should be reinforced.

b. The CDMG shares the view expressed by the Parliamentary Assembly that the Council of Europe should play an active role in promoting co-development and that the Council of Europe Development Bank should be encouraged to participate in financing co-development projects. The CDMG wishes to emphasise the fact that it pays considerable attention to co-development in its current work and undertakes a number of activities aimed at strengthening international co-operation in this area.

c. Firstly, the CDMG organised, in co-operation with the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity in Lisbon (North-South Centre), a series of technical workshops on migration and co-development. Four workshops took place in April 2004 (Migrants: actors and partners in development, here and there), December 2004 (The role of local authorities), March 2005 (Co-development and migration. Migrants: economic players in the development of their countries of origin) and October 2005 (Financing co-development). The fifth (and final) workshop will be organised in co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly in the first half of 2006.

d. Furthermore, the 4th session of the Political Platform of the Council of Europe on Migration which took place on the second day of the 49th meeting of CDMG (20-22 April 2005) was devoted to the issues of co-development and links between migrants and their countries of origin. Representatives from Algeria, Bangladesh, Kenya, Morocco, Pakistan, Senegal and Tunisia participated in the session. Several NGOs that work on specific co-development projects also took part. The Political Platform agreed that co-development should be considered within a context of migration policies and linked with management of migration flows and integration. The following proposals were deemed useful:

- conditions to channel migrants' remittances into productive investments should be created;
- migrants' trips to their countries of origin should be facilitated in order to help them develop durable partnerships with actors there;
- assistance (financial, logistical, intellectual) should be offered to migrants' associations involved in co-development projects; migrants should be encouraged to form their associations in both the countries of origin and destination;
- co-development implies mobility of legal residents in and out of Europe; obstacles to such circulation (especially in terms of the possibility of returning to Europe) should be removed;
- incentives to local development and investments in social infrastructure should be developed in the countries of origin;
- a system of 'territorial diagnostic' should be elaborated in order to be able to assess the role of migrants in local communities and to identify the types of assistance that is required etc.;
- priority areas for co-development projects should be identified in each particular country and explained to migrants who wish to invest;
- entrepreneurial actions by migrants should be supported both in the countries of origin as well as in the countries of destination and efforts should be made to make these actions visible;

- partnership with local authorities should be reinforced and the support of central government should be obtained in order to facilitate decentralisation of services that are crucial to the success of co-development;
 - processes should be initiated at a European level in order to pursue projects similar to those of North-South co-development initiatives between western, central and eastern European countries.
- e. Moreover, the issues of co-development are dealt with by two committees of experts established by the CDMG:
- Select Committee of Experts on Associations and Co-development (MG-R-AC), that was set up in 2005, focuses on co-development policies. It reviews the policy and practice in member states on how migrants' associations and other associations or organisations working to promote the socio-economic development of migrants – both in their countries of origin and destination, are supported by governments, local authorities, financial institutions and other agencies. On the basis of this review, it will prepare guidelines for the support of these associations. The committee intends to complete its work by the end of 2006.
 - Some aspects of co-development are addressed by the Select Committee of Experts on the Countries of Emigration (MG-R-PE). This committee was established by the CDMG in 2005 with the task to review the Migration Management Strategy of the CDMG in the light of the current challenges faced by countries of emigration in Europe. It has prepared a report that makes proposals to improve the quality of the dialogue and co-operation between countries of destination and origin, and identified some areas of major interest for countries of origin in achieving an improved management of migration. The report prepared by the Committee MG-R-PE will be submitted to the CDMG in April 2006.
- f. The CDMG is strongly committed to continuing its work on co-development in the future.