Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire

COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Making multiple nationality an important component of modern integration policy throughout Europe

Motion for a recommendation
presented by Mr KESKIN and others

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

1. There are still many millions of people with a migrant background living in the Council of Europe member countries who do not hold the nationality of their respective host countries, despite their long years of permanent residence. Because of the disparate national regulations, their legal position as regards residence and citizenship differs extremely.

2. In the Federal Republic of Germany alone, there are still about 7 million people living under the special status of "foreigner", though some of them have already lived there for decades or were born there. From the 1950s onwards migrants were recruited to work in many European states, leading to the lasting settlement of migrant women and men principally in the industrial centres. Even today, many of these former migrant workers and their descendants have only limited civil rights and cannot participate in elections. As a result, they are systematically excluded from political participation. This situation is unacceptable in democratically constituted societies characterised by migration across national boundaries and cultural exchange.

This kind of persistent withholding of full civil rights from important sectors of the resident population infringes fundamental principles of human rights to which the member states have committed themselves.

3. Today the integration of minorities of migrant origin is already one of the most important tasks of social policy. The increased mobility and growth of migration flows will mean a further gain in importance for integration policy. The contribution of migrant women and men to the prosperity of their countries should be recognised by granting full civil rights. This is a major step towards successful integration.

4. In this connection, multiple nationalities should be accepted because migrants' cultural identity is often marked by their earliest origin. For reasons of personal identity and emotional ties with the country of origin, many immigrants do not wish to renounce their original nationality. For them, being compelled to renounce their former nationality represents an enormous obstacle to the acquisition of a new nationality, hence to successful integration in their new homeland.

5. The legitimacy of democratic societies is founded on free, democratic, secret and fair elections. In many member states a huge increase in abstainers can already be observed today.

Some states show concern over this development, but at the same time consciously deprive themselves of the votes of part of their resident population, by denying migrant women and men rights of political participation. Their identification as "people of the nation and resident population" should be aimed at and would be a way towards improvement.

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Multiple nationality thus forms a suitable means of solving this pressing fundamental problem of democratic legitimacy.

6. Their traditional responsibility for furthering and safeguarding democracy places the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly under the obligation to discuss the aforementioned deficiencies and contribute to their resolution. It is important to find out about the consequences of refusing multiple nationality and to recommend definite action to the governments of member states.

7. Against a background of demographic development and its implications for national labour markets and national economies, migration will acquire increased importance in the future. The states of Europe above all will be inordinately affected by this tendency but will also gain from it.

It is therefore imperative to create the conditions, in terms of citizenship, for a sustainable integration policy. A modern nationality law tolerating multiple nationalities would permit integration in the framework of cultural diversity and self-determination.

8. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe calls on the member states:

– to examine mutually their citizenship regulations and evaluate the inhibiting as well as the stimulating effects of those regulations on integration;

– to create a modern law of nationality in keeping with worldwide mobility and cultural interaction;

– to introduce multiple nationality as a general norm of nationality law and thus permit the retention of previously acquired nationalities.

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
NR: not registered in a group