



OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Warsaw, 24 September - 5 October 2007

Working Session 5 'Humanitarian Issues and other commitments'

Contribution of the Council of Europe

MIGRATION

RECENT ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Introduction

The action of the Council of Europe in the field of migration focuses mainly on its human rights dimension and the respect for the human dignity of migrants.

The principal intergovernmental organ of the Council of Europe responsible for activities in the migration field is the **European Committee on Migration (CDMG)**. CDMG is responsible for the development of European co-operation on migration, the situation and social integration of populations of migrant origin and refugees and on community relations.

The current programme of activities of CDMG is guided by the recommendations adopted by the European Ministers responsible for Migration Affairs at their 7th Conference (Helsinki, September 2002).

In their final declaration, the Ministers recommended the implementation of an Action Plan focusing on the following key elements – the **Helsinki Action Plan**:

- Regional and international co-operation
- Integration policies in the light of demographic changes in Europe
- Access to minimum rights for the migrants
- Implementation of a comprehensive migration management strategy.

2008 Ministerial Conference

CDMG continues its preparatory work on the 8th conference of European Ministers responsible for Migration Affairs (Ukraine, 2008). The conference theme will be: *Economic migration, social cohesion and development: towards an integrated approach*. Three sub-themes have been identified: social cohesion, migration management and development. All main international organisations working on migration are involved in the preparation of the conference. It is foreseen that countries of origin will be also associated.

Migration Management

In the field of migration management the Council of Europe aims to establish a genuine dialogue between all involved countries (origin, transit and destination) based on the respect and conciliation of their interests and to consider the impact of national policies on individuals in order to ensure the respect of their human rights.

Challenges and priorities of countries of origin

The 6th session of the Political Platform¹ (November 2006), organised during the 52nd Meeting of the European Committee on Migration (CDMG), focused on two main issues: the improvement of the quality of co-operation between countries of destination and origin, with particular attention paid to challenges for countries of origin, and on the regional co-operation the Euro-Mediterranean area and West Africa.

The discussion was based on report on “*Towards a management strategy for migratory flows: challenges for countries of origin*”, adopted by CDMG in 2006.

Life projects for unaccompanied migrant minors

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted on 12 July 2007 Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)9 on life projects for unaccompanied migrant minors.

This recommendation explains how to promote the welfare of unaccompanied migrant minors through life projects. It seeks to protect, on the basis of the best interest of a child, their basic human rights. It gives detailed advise on measures that should be taken at the national level to ensure the implementation of life projects.

¹ The Political Platform was conceived to promote dialogue and partnership between countries of origin, transit and destination the Political Platform on Migration brings together Council of Europe member states and interested countries from Africa and Asia. During its six sessions it allowed representatives of governments, parliaments, local authorities and NGOs as well as other international organisations to discuss common policy and set standards on migration with a human rights approach.

Life projects aim to develop the capacities of the child, allowing him or her to acquire and strengthen the necessary skills to become independent, responsible and active in society. In order to achieve this, life projects should seek to promote the social integration of the child, his or her personal development, cultural development, housing, health, studies and vocational training and employment.

The recommendation give members states a tool that should improve their capacities to deal with the migration of unaccompanied children.

Migrants and co-development

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted on 12 July 2007 Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)10 on co-development and migrants working for development in their countries of origin.

This recommendation aims to provide a detailed policy framework for member states of the Council of Europe to ensure that co-development programmes and projects have real and sustained impact on development in countries of origin, whether these be in Europe or elsewhere.

This recommendation identifies pre-conditions for co-development programmes and projects. Strengthening and facilitating the role of migrants and their associations is a key objective of the recommendation. The importance of partnerships – international and national, is underlined as a means for creating the necessary links, particularly between local actors in the countries of origin and potential investors in co-development projects, and also as a means of bringing together and deploying the necessary resources in terms of skilled personnel, material and finance.

Attention is also given to the situation in receiving countries where migrants' associations are not yet an active element of civil society.

Integration and Community relations

Through its work on integration and community relations, CDMG aims to promote the process of integration based on the following principles:

- Promoting diversity in multi-cultural and ethnically diverse societies and respecting individual human rights
- Pursuing a holistic approach that places emphasis on the interaction between migrants and host societies, and directing policies at society as a whole
- Promoting equality of opportunity and equal access to rights and services.

A framework for integration policies prepared by CDMG covers legal measures; employment; housing; health and other services; religion, culture and language; education; the media; government functions; and monitoring and evaluation.

CDMG continued to pursue activities on the integration of migrant children and the access of migrants to the labour market.

Integration of migrant children

A final meeting held in December 2006 allowed a select committee of experts to finalise a draft recommendation on strengthening the integration of migrants children and children of immigrant background in December 2006. The text of the draft recommendation will be considered by CDMG in October 2007.

It is foreseen to prepare a training manual for service providers on the application of the guidelines set out in the draft recommendation. The draft manual is expected to be submitted to CDMG in spring 2008. Finally, preparations for a series of follow-up activities to implement the proposals contained in the draft recommendation have been started in several member States, such as Germany, Norway and Switzerland.

Access to employment

In the course of three meetings held in 2006-2007, a work on a draft recommendation on improving access of migrants and persons of immigrant background to employment has progressed. The provisional text should be finalised by the end of October 2007. It is expected that the draft recommendation will be considered by CDMG in spring 2008.

Legal status of migrants

European Convention on the legal status of migrant workers

The Convention aims to eliminate the discrimination that exists in national legislations and to guarantee that migrant workers and members of their families are treated no less favourably than the nationals of the receiving State. Since the last HDIM meeting, it has been ratified by two more member states: Albania and Ukraine. Thus, the number of member states that have ratified the convention raised to eleven parties: Ukraine (2/07/2007), Albania (3/4/2007), Moldova (20/6/2006), Italy (11/01/1983), Norway (03/02/1989), France (29/04/1982), Netherlands (24/11/1977), Turkey (24/11/1977), Spain (24/11/1977), Portugal (24/11/1977) and Sweden (24/11/1977).

Policies on irregular migrants

CDMG has conducted a review of national policies in five member states with regard to irregular migrants and authorised publication of a synthesis report and national reports (Available reports: Armenia, Germany, Greece, Italy and the Russian Federation). It is foreseen to commission a second series of reports covering situation of irregular migrants in other five member states.

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