



Resolution 2137 (2016)¹

The impact of European population dynamics on migration policies

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The significant changes in the dynamics of the European population in the 21st century call for an assessment of their impact on future migration policies in Europe.
2. The 47 member States of the Council of Europe have a total of 826 million inhabitants, which represents 11.3% of the world population. The average population density in Europe is 35 inhabitants per square kilometre, which is lower than the world average (55 inhabitants per square kilometre). There is therefore potential for population growth.
3. Furthermore, in contrast to other world regions, the Council of Europe countries are particularly concerned by a “demographic winter”: the average birth rate has dropped to 1.5 children born per woman, the lowest in the world. The demographic winter varies in intensity from one country to another, engendering diverging population trends.
4. At the same time, Council of Europe countries have the oldest population in the world, with the highest percentage of people aged 65 and over, and this situation will accelerate in the future as a result of increasing life expectancy. The resulting reduction in the proportion of the European population of working age creates a need to consider more actively how to attract young skilled migrants to the European labour market.
5. The Parliamentary Assembly believes that to make better use of the current substantial influx of migrants in Europe, countries of immigration need to develop long-term political strategies based on the needs of the labour market, responding to integration challenges and encouraging their rapid entry into the labour market.
6. The Assembly is also concerned about the negative impact of labour migration from some eastern European countries and its effect on their population dynamics and on the social situation of migrant families. These countries should counterbalance the negative effects of emigration on development by combating the main push factors for people leaving the country, such as corruption, bad governance and a lack of fair justice systems. Special support should be provided to vulnerable families, including children who have been left behind by their parents.
7. The Assembly is convinced that in order to respond to the present population challenges in Europe, a cross-sectoral approach to social, labour market and immigration policies should be applied, and that the human rights and dignity of all people should be put at the forefront of all related policies.
8. The Assembly therefore invites the Council of Europe member States concerned to:
 - 8.1. devise policies to address the European demographic winter by:
 - 8.1.1. promoting social policies which encourage couples to have as many children as they wish;

1. *Assembly debate* on 14 October 2016 (36th Sitting) (see [Doc. 14143](#) and [Addendum](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, rapporteur: Ms Kristin Ørmen Johnsen). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 14 October 2016 (36th Sitting).



- 8.1.2. devising policies to strike a better balance between family and working life, including promoting greater participation by men and women in the labour market by providing the necessary training programmes, flexible working hours, parental leave systems and family planning assistance, as well as material incentives;
- 8.1.3. introducing national childcare strategies to encourage young people to combine work and family life, including childcare at inconvenient hours;
- 8.2. devise special policies to curb the negative effects of population ageing by:
 - 8.2.1. introducing labour market reforms in order to encourage the employment of senior citizens, when necessary;
 - 8.2.2. implementing salary and pension system reforms in order to make the employment of senior citizens more attractive, when necessary;
 - 8.2.3. devising employment policies which appeal to young people and by preventing the rural exodus of young people;
 - 8.2.4. supporting lifelong learning initiatives aimed at increasing the proportion of skilled workers;
 - 8.2.5. fostering health-care policies to increase healthy life expectancy;
- 8.3. devise, as required, forward-looking migration policies, including safe transport of persons, to attract qualified migrants, in particular by:
 - 8.3.1. conducting sectoral analyses of the labour market to identify where there is a real shortage of skilled labour;
 - 8.3.2. ensuring that all obstacles are eliminated from national legislation for the rapid entry of refugees into the labour market;
 - 8.3.3. creating access to employment for regular migrants, responding both to the needs of host societies and eliminating the black labour market with its associated trafficking and exploitation of migrants;
 - 8.3.4. taking appropriate measures to ensure that migrant workers have pay and conditions equivalent to those of national workers;
 - 8.3.5. promoting vocational training for refugees to encourage their integration into the labour market;
 - 8.3.6. facilitating the recognition of the educational diplomas and vocational skills of migrants;
 - 8.3.7. further developing vocational training and language courses for migrants, especially for migrant women;
 - 8.3.8. promoting the successful integration of migrants and their families by revising integration policies to ensure that migrants are not segregated in the host society and that they are involved in the social and cultural life of local communities;
 - 8.3.9. enhancing public information on the economic benefits of legal migration and cultural diversity for society.
9. The Assembly encourages the development of policy co-ordination between the Council of Europe member States in relation to demographic trends and their influence on economic development. It also encourages the relevant international organisations (the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the European Union, for instance) to collect data on population dynamics in European countries and carry out comparative studies on population and migration-related issues.
10. Finally, the Assembly decides to come back to this issue on a regular basis.