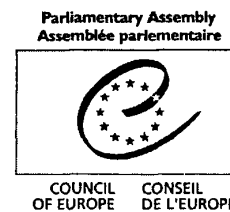


## Parliamentary Assembly Assemblée parlementaire



Doc. 10909  
21 April 2006

### Integration policies for adult migrants in Europe – the place of language learning

Motion for a recommendation  
presented by Mr Çavuşoğlu and others

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

1. The riots in France in the autumn of 2005 sounded the alarm in many countries across Europe that policies of integration needed overhauling as a matter of urgency.
2. Employment, housing, education, health and social connections have all come under scrutiny. Although integration in these areas cannot be guaranteed, it may be significantly facilitated by knowledge of the language of the host society. Language learning can therefore be seen to be an important element in any Government integration strategy.
3. Many European countries are introducing or formalising linguistic requirements for migration, integration, employment and citizenship purposes. Among other requirements, language tests or other formal assessment procedures are increasingly being introduced.
4. While there is general agreement at a European level on the importance for integration of learning the language of the host society, there is no common agreement as to the level(s) of language skills required or how quality language education might best be provided/assured. There is furthermore no agreement on whether the learning of the language of the host society should be treated as a right of the individual or as a responsibility incumbent on the persons concerned.
5. The Revised European Social Charter puts the obligation on the State to “promote and facilitate the teaching of the national language ....to migrant workers and members of their families” (Article 19 paragraph 11). The Parliamentary Assembly has in Recommendation 1625 (2003) on policies for the integration of immigrants in Council of Europe member states, called on member states to make language tuition “accessible and on a voluntary basis”.
6. While both the Revised European Social Charter and the Parliamentary Assembly provides some guidance on a rights based approach to the issue, it leaves open many question, including, *inter alia*, the following:
  - Should language education be voluntary or compulsory?
  - Should it be before or after entry into the country for new migrants?
  - Should priority be given to certain groups of persons (refugees, migrants with job offers, migrant spouses, etc.)?
  - Should education be free of charge, subsidised or paid for, or should there be financial incentives?
  - Should the education be regulated to ensure quality, and organised according to the needs of different target groups?
  - Should language training be vocationally linked?
  - Should there be tests or other forms of validation of learning, and if so who should administer these and how should they be administered so as to ensure transparency and fairness, as well as a positive impact?

7. The issue of testing or validation of learning raises a number of particular concerns. Tests can have serious consequences for the test takers, including when the need to succeed is linked to social benefits or residence. Appropriately devised and administered high-quality validated tests can facilitate the process of language learning and integration of the test takers in a multicultural society; poor-quality tests or inappropriate uses can have a counter-productive effect on integration policies and may lead to social exclusion, and even a breach of the individual's rights.

8. Language tests for migrants seeking to enter a country have been much debated as a method for ensuring rapid integration of newly arrived migrants. There are however concerns that such testing could be used to prevent migration taking place, impacting, for example, on the possibilities for family reunification.

9. There are no clear guidelines to help member states in tackling these different issues linked to the integration of migrants through learning the language of the host society. There is a lack of proper needs analysis concerning the language skills actually required for integration and participation. State practices differ widely and there is no current system of analysing the policies adopted by member states. While some good practices are developing, a number of ad-hoc unsatisfactory practices are also taking shape and becoming entrenched.

10. In view of the above and given the importance of integration of migrants through learning of the language of the host society, the Parliamentary Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers invites member states to:

- facilitate informed and participative public discussion on the policy issues related to language education outlined above;
- share their survey data and experience of policies and practices concerning learning the language of the host country as a means of integration of adult migrants in Europe;
- proceed with the compilation of best practices with a view to drawing up guidelines for policies in this area;
- involve all concerned parties in discussions on the issue, including migrants and their representatives, central and local governmental representatives, teachers, language testers, etc.;
- take measures to ensure quality in language education and in assessment procedures where these exist, including training courses for all those responsible for providing language learning for adult migrants and for those responsible for assessment;
- carry out surveys on language needs and provision from time to time to guide policy making;
- raise awareness of the added value of the migrants' languages for the host countries, and the importance of respect and support for their languages in our multilingual societies.

*Signed*<sup>1</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> SOC: Socialist Group  
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