



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 10 November 2016
(OR. en)

14096/16

LIMITE

**MIGR 189
EDUC 354
JEUN 92
SPORT 76
CULT 104
SOC 673
EMPL 461
ASILE 69**

NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Delegations

Subject: Draft Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States on the integration of third-country nationals legally residing in the EU

Delegations will find in Annex a set of draft Council Conclusions, revised taking into account the comments made by delegations at the meeting on 7 November 2016 as well as the changes suggested by English language editors. Changes to the previous document in 13926/16 appear in bold and strikethrough.

Draft Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States on the integration of third-country nationals legally residing in the EU

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES

EMPHASISE the need for effective integration policies for third-country nationals residing legally in their territories,

RECOGNISE that **increased** ~~the recent~~ migratory influxes ~~is posing~~ additional integration challenges, ~~in particular in the Member States which have received the increased number of persons to be integrated,~~

NOTE that the effective integration of third-country nationals legally ~~present~~ **residing** is a contribution to **the** building of inclusive, cohesive and prosperous societies, which is **of** a common interest ~~for~~ **to** all Member States,

ACKNOWLEDGE the European Commission's Communication **entitled** "Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals"¹,

NOTE that the Action Plan looks at the key policy priorities in the field of integration and proposes concrete tools to support integration in five thematic areas, including financial support from EU funds, and promotes policy coordination between actors involved in the integration process,

ACKNOWLEDGE the New Skills Agenda for Europe and *WELCOME* its ~~attention for~~ **focus on** improving and making better use of the skills and qualifications in the EU, including **those** of third-country nationals,

¹ COM(2016) 377 final

TAKE NOTE of the Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Integration of refugees in the EU, the European Parliament Resolution of 5 July 2016 on refugees: social inclusion and integration into the labour market² [and **the** Opinion of the Committee of Regions' Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs **entitled** "Action plan on the integration of third-country nationals"],

RECALL the specific legal basis for integration of third-country nationals provided by Article 79(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

REAFFIRM their commitment to take into account the **common basic principles** for immigrant integration in the design **and implementation** of integration policies and in particular the fact that integration is a dynamic two-way process of mutual accommodation between the host society and third-country nationals, **which implies commitment from both sides**,

UNDERLINE that the respect of ~~common European values~~ **values underpinning European societies**, as enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, is a ~~condition~~ sine qua non for social cohesion within the European Union,

WELCOME the strengthening of the role of the **national contact points** on integration and ~~its~~ **their** transformation into the European Integration Network, with a stronger coordination role and mutual learning mandate,

RECOGNISE the role of regional and local authorities, civil society, social partners ~~and as well as~~ local **partners and** communities in the integration process, in close cooperation and coordination with national authorities ~~with~~ **while respecting to the** division of competencies in the Member States,

² 2015/2321(INI)

TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION the proposed measures embedded in the Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals while respecting the specific situation and conditions in the Member States,

WELCOME the Commission's efforts to increase the ~~resources~~ **funding** available for integration, **in addition to the existing resources available**, under the asylum migration and integration fund in the context of its proposal for the annual budget for 2017;

INVITE Member States to:

1. Participate actively in the exchange of best practices in the area of integration of third-country nationals, by sharing knowledge and experience through study visits, thematic seminars, online tools and peer learning activities, in particular through the European Integration Network;
2. Where appropriate, make use of the tools announced under the New Skills Agenda for Europe to address the assessment, validation, and recognition of qualifications and skills of third-country nationals, ~~in particular~~ **including** recently arrived beneficiaries of international protection, recalling that the relevant Council preparatory bodies will examine the relevant proposals under the New Skills Agenda for Europe;
3. Fully implement the partnership principle as enshrined in Article 12 of Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council;
4. Improve monitoring and assessment of integration outcomes and integration policies by promoting better use and further development of the current tools and indicators, including the EU Indicators of Immigrant Integration (the so-called Zaragoza indicators);

5. Focus their efforts on the following areas ~~taking account~~ **in accordance with** ~~of their~~ **the** national **policies and** priorities:
- a) Pre-departure, pre-arrival and early integration measures, in particular those favouring early access to education, to vocational training and to the labour market, including **a** focus on introductory and language courses and on providing basic information ~~on~~ **about** the ~~receiving~~ **host** societies;
 - b) Offering opportunities to third-country nationals to actively participate in the economic, social, civic and cultural life of Member States; combating discrimination and segregation; ~~guaranteeing~~ **providing** equal opportunities and promoting intercultural dialogue and mutual acceptance between third-country nationals and host societies;
 - c) Active promotion, for instance ~~via~~ **through** civic orientation programmes, of ~~common~~ values **underpinning European societies**, such as democracy, the rule of law and the respect for fundamental rights;
 - d) Education and vocational training, in particular activities targeting language learning, early childhood education, **as well as** ~~and~~ non-formal ~~education~~ **and informal learning**; promoting access to the mainstream education system and encouraging **third-country nationals** to take up and complete such education, as well as support ~~to~~ **for** and training of **teachers, educators and youth workers** as well as professionals in the field of culture and sport working with third-country nationals, in particular with ~~the youth~~ **young people**;

- e) Employment and social policies; promotion of labour market integration of third-country nationals, including of beneficiaries of international protection, to ~~foster~~ **encourage** their contribution to the economy and society **while** taking into ~~consideration~~ **account the specific situation of** the vulnerable groups, and support ~~to~~ **for** migrant entrepreneurship;
- f) Involvement of the private sector ~~to~~ **in promoting** respect ~~of~~ **for** diversity and ~~to~~ **enhance ensuring** non-discrimination ~~at~~ **in** the work place; ~~and~~ close cooperation with social partners and civil society ~~are~~ **being** central issues in promoting labour market integration;
- g) Promoting access to basic services for third-country nationals through an integrated approach, in particular as regards housing, health, **education, and** social services involving different ~~actors~~ **bodies** at national, regional and local level;
- h) Ensuring better coordination of key actors at national, regional and local level and promoting mainstreaming of integration in all relevant policy areas;
- i) Promotion and support of volunteering activities for the integration of third-country nationals, including by youth organisations;
- j) Promotion of participation of third-country nationals in cultural and sports activities and organisations as a means to facilitate contacts between third-country nationals and ~~the~~ host society, ~~and~~ **equipping** them with intercultural competences and **fostering** intercultural dialogue;
- k) Addressing the specific needs of the most vulnerable third-country nationals, such as children, in particular unaccompanied minors, women, the elderly and the disabled;

- l) ~~Need to e~~**Countering** stereotypes, intolerance, discrimination, racism and xenophobia, including through targeted **research, training and supporting** programmes ~~addressed to~~ **for public administration authorities** and other stakeholders including NGOs, academia, cultural institutions and enterprises to raise awareness and improve knowledge about **and responses to these phenomena** ~~racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance;~~
- m) Awareness raising measures regarding the challenges and opportunities that migration can represent for the European societies;
- n) Investment in policies promoting social inclusion of third-country nationals to make **European societies** more prosperous, cohesive and inclusive in the long run.

INVITE THE COMMISSION TO:

1. Provide support ~~to~~ **for** Member States as regards ~~the~~ assessment, validation, and recognition of qualifications and skills of third-country nationals, ~~in particular~~ **including** recently arrived beneficiaries of international protection lacking documentary evidence of their qualifications;
2. **Consider the need for allocating more resources from the EU budget for the integration of third-country nationals in** ~~Request more funding from the budgetary authority for the integration of third-country nationals in the context of~~ the future annual budgetary procedures and to provide guidance to Member States on how to maximise the ~~use of~~ EU funding supporting integration, ~~in particular on how to reinforce synergies and complementarities at national level between the relevant EU Funds;~~
3. Ensure better coordination and exchanges between national and EU level and between existing EU expert groups and fora working on topics related to integration;

4. Explore ways for EU action and support ~~to~~ **for** Member States on the following issues not mentioned in the Action Plan, with a view to:
- a) disseminate**ing** good practices with regard to the integration of illiterate third-country nationals;
 - b) promote**ing** cooperation with the media by organising seminars or conferences, especially on fighting negative stereotypes and **creating a balanced**~~ing~~ public perception of migration (role of mass media, communication campaigns, promoting exchanges between third-country nationals and host society), as well as raising awareness of the positive impact of cultural diversity ~~in all areas~~ **and intercultural dialogue**;
 - c) strengthen**ing** ~~the~~ cooperation with the ~~already~~ existing Council preparatory bodies and committees (in particular the **Education Committee, the Social Questions Working Party, the** Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee) in order to improve, if appropriate, country-level data to better monitor integration policy outcomes ~~on the~~ **at** EU level, and to improve ~~their~~ current methods and tools ~~of their work~~;
5. Closely and regularly monitor and report to the Council and the European Parliament on the implementation of the EU-level actions to support Member States included in the Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals.
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