



pace

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Council of Europe

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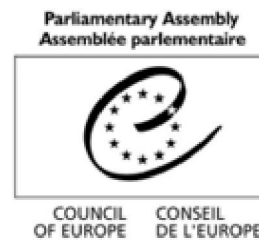
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Doc. 8647
4 February 2000

Freedom of movement for the residents of Latvia and Estonia

Motion for a recommendation

presented by Mr Cilevics and others

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

The Assembly,

- 1. Being aware of the difficulties faced by Latvia and Estonia in respect of integrating the societies of these countries after the restoration of independence;
2. Welcoming efforts aimed at regularising the legal status and social situation of the permanent residents of Latvia and Estonia who have no citizenship, made by the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the Council of the Baltic Sea, and other European organisations, as well as Latvia and Estonia themselves;
3. Considering the remaining serious problems in this area a major impediment and threat to further democratic development of Latvia and Estonia;
4. Considering that political, organisational and financial support of the Council of Europe member states is the key prerequisite for successful resolution of these remaining problems;
5. Recognising that freedom of movement is one of the basic human rights which must be guaranteed to everybody, regardless of citizenship;
6. Stressing that equal opportunities to travel within Europe for all residents of Latvia and Estonia is an important factor to facilitate integration;
A. Welcomes decisions made by Latvia and Estonia to issue identification documents to permanent residents who have no other citizenship than "the former USSR", which guarantee to these persons the unconditional right freely to return to their country of residence after travelling abroad, and the decision of Latvia to provide consular protection for these persons during their stay abroad;
B. Encourages Latvia and Estonia to continue the integration of the countries' societies on the basis of full and fair implementation of the minority rights standards enshrined in the Council of Europe documents, and bearing in mind that providing equal opportunities to travel abroad is a substantial aspect of this process;
C. Supports the initiative of the Council of the Baltic Sea States' Commissioner on Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, including the Rights of Persons belonging to Minorities, Mr Ole Espersen, aiming at extension of the bilateral agreements on entry without visa signed between Latvia and Estonia, on the one hand, and other European states, on the other, to the permanent resident non-citizens of Latvia and Estonia;
D. Welcomes the decision of Denmark to grant the right to visa-free entry also to the permanent resident non-citizens of Latvia, besides Latvia's citizens;
E. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers

- i. call on the governments of those member states of the Council of Europe which have not yet recognised the non-citizens' (aliens') passports issued by Estonia as valid travel documents, to speed up recognition of these passports;
- ii. call on the governments of those Council of Europe member states which concluded bilateral agreements on visa-free entry with Latvia and/or Estonia, to extend the visa-free regime to permanent resident non-citizens holding passports issued by Latvia and Estonia.

Signed : ¹

Cilevics, Latvia, SOC

Bojars, Latvia, SOC

Err, Luxembourg, SOC

Gjellerod, Denmark, SOC

Ivanov, Estonia, SOC

Judd, United Kingdom, SOC

Jurgens, Netherlands, SOC

Kovalev, Russia, LDR

Shishlov, Russia, LDR

Solonari, Moldova, SOC

Timmermans, Netherlands, SOC

¹ SOC: Socialist Group

EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party

EDG: European Democratic Group

LDR : Liberal, Democratic and Reformers' Group

UEL: Group of the Unified European Left

NR: not registered in a group