Resolution on respect for the fundamental right of free movement in the EU

2013/2960(RSP) - 16/01/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted on respect for the fundamental right of free movement in the EU.

The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA, and GUE/NGL groups.

Recalling that as of 1 January 2014, transitional arrangements for the free movement of workers from Bulgaria and Romania had been abolished, it **strongly contested the position taken by some European leaders calling for restriction of the free movement of citizens**, and **rejected altogether any proposal to cap numbers of EU migrants** as being in contradiction to the EU Treaty principle of the free movement of people. Mobility of labour contributed to the competitiveness of the European economy, and Parliament called on Member States to comply with Treaty provisions and to refrain from any actions that could affect the right of free movement which is based on core EU legislation.

Although only 2.8 % of all EU citizens live in a Member State other than their own, Parliament stated they were nonetheless a key element in the success of the internal market and boosted Europe's economy. Recent Commission studies had shown that mobile workers are net contributors to the economies and budgets of the host countries. Member States should not to discriminate against EU mobile workers, **wrongfully associating the right of free movement for work purposes with alleged abuse of social security systems**. Parliament stressed that **none of the Member States claiming this burden had presented proof to the Commission** as requested. Moreover, healthcare spending on non-active EU mobile citizens was very small relative to total health spending (0.2 %) or to the economies of the host countries (0.01 % of GDP), and EU citizens accounted for a very small proportion of the recipients of special non-contributory benefits.

Noting that with the European elections approaching, the free movement of EU citizens has become a campaign issue for some political parties, Members were concerned that there was a risk that this debate, if not addressed rationally, could lead to **scapegoating EU citizens** from some Member States, or EU mobile citizens, and could **lead to a rise in racism and xenophobia.**

Parliament called for **strict enforcement** of Union law so as to guarantee that all EU workers are treated equally as regards access to employment, employment and working conditions, remuneration, dismissal, and social and tax benefits. It welcomed the five actions set out in the Commission communication to help Member States and their local authorities apply EU laws.

Member States were asked to **use the resources available under European funds** (such as the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund) to promote integration, social inclusion and the fight against poverty.

Lastly, Parliament encouraged the Commission to continue its current efforts to ensure that the Member States **transpose and implement Directive 2004/38/EC** fully and correctly, making full use of its power to launch infringement proceedings.