Third-country nationals in the Member states : Convention on rules for the admission

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The Committee has adopted the report by Klaus-Heiner LEHNE (EPP, D) on the draft Convention on rules for the admission of non-EU nationals to EU Member States.The report had been accepted in committee once before, in 1998, but the plenary decided to return it to the committee for further examination. The committee believes that the EU must adopt a global approach to immigration. It should be pointed out that some steps have already been taken to introduce a common strategy in this area. The Commission proposal seeks to take these measures further. First of all, the convention lays down common rules on the initial admission of non-EU nationals to a Member State for the purposes of paid employment, pursuing an independent economic activity, study and vocational training, non-profit-making activities and family reunification. Then, it establishes basic rights for non-EU nationals who are long-term residents, including provisions on the possibility of accepting employment in another Member State. The committee advocates granting non-EU nationals free access to the labour market and the right to practice an independent economic activity, provided they have pursued such an activity for at least five years. As regards admission for the purposes of study or vocational training, the committee believes that Member States should be allowed to require non-EU nationals to prove that they have the financial means to pay for their studies and living expenses, so that during their stay they do not need to claim social assistance in the host Member State and so that the earning of an income is not their principal aim. In addition, Member States should be allowed to require evidence of health cover for all risks in the host Member State if required by national legislation. The committee also adopted an amendment providing for the following persons to be admitted for the purposes of family reunification, provided that the marriage or partnership is compatible with the fundamental principles of the law of the Member State: - the resident's spouse or partner of either sex; - children, including adopted children, of the resident or his or her spouse or partner; - dependent relatives in the ascending line.