Immigration: Community policy

2001/2047(COS) - 12/09/2001

The committee adopted the report by Hubert PIRKER (EPP-ED, A) broadly welcoming the Commission communication. However, it stressed that various historical, economic and social features in the individual Member States made it impossible to lay down uniform requirements for labour from third countries for the entire EU. Member States should gear authorisation for entry and residence in their territory to the requirements of their own labour markets and restrict such authorisation on the basis of their own abilities to accommodate migrants. Moreover, in drawing up an immigration policy, account must be taken of the forthcoming enlargement and its possible implications for Member States' labour markets. Member States should fill job vacancies initially with third-country nationals already resident in the EU. The committee said that immigrants were expected "to respect the community of values" but it stressed that Member States were also obliged to respect the rights and freedoms of third-country nationals. Integration into society must be promoted but immigrants should also show a willingness to integrate. MEPs also stressed the need to combat illegal employment and trafficking in human beings. Measures were needed to mitigate the brain drain from migrants' countries of origin. The report welcomed measures to allow for freedom of travel for third-country nationals resident in the EU but emphasised that the right to work and the right of residence granted to third-country nationals applied only in the Member State where those rights were granted. Overall the committee called for uniform European legislation on the conditions governing entry and residence for migrant workers; a flexible and coherent concept for issuing visas; a graduated system of residence permits for migrant workers; mobility of third-country nationals holding a residence permit for one Member State; and the introduction of a combined work and residence permit for immigrants, allowing free movement within the EU while restricting in the short term the right to live and work to a single Member State.