# Links between legal and illegal migration and integration of migrants

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report by Patrick GAUBERT (EPP-ED, FR) on the link between legal and illegal migration and the integration of immigrants. (Please see the summary of 26/04/2005.) The report was adopted by 431 votes to 124 with 49 abstentions. Parliament agreed with the Commission that the mass regularisation of illegal immigrants is not a solution to the problem of illegal immigration. In the absence of a common immigration and asylum system, it should be a one-off event, since such measures do not resolve the real underlying problems. It called upon the Commission to study the Member States' good practices, to be developed in the framework of an information-sharing and early-warning system.

Parliament rejected the idea whereby camps in which immigrants without papers or asylum seekers would be accommodated or detained might be set up outside the EU's borders, in regions in which immigration originates. It was worried by the setting up in the Mediterranean countries, at the request of certain Member States, of ‘preliminary reception centres’ for immigrants heading for the Union’s territory, which do not offer minimum guarantees to the people concerned in terms of fundamental rights. Parliament recalled that management of migratory movements must not be approached exclusively in security terms, but also on the basis of managing sustainable social development.

It regretted that action taken thus far by the Council and the Member States to control migration flows has taken the form of repressive measures, rather than positive, proactive measures. Strategies designed to reduce poverty, improve living and working conditions, create jobs and develop training in migrants' countries of origin help in the long term to normalise migration flows. Parliament felt that for demographic and economic reasons as well as with regard to a possible contribution to the reduction of illegal immigration, legal immigration channels should be created in the Member States on the basis of their absorption capacity. It noted that Europe needs legal, controlled economic migration, because, as several studies have shown, the decline in its active population will mean a drop of around 20 million in the number of workers between 2005 and 2030.

Member States should be encouraged to sign bilateral agreements with major countries of emigration with a view to meeting European labour needs or opening new legal migration channels in order to make the migratory process better organised and to foster relations with third countries in the context of a close partnership. Also, concluding bilateral migration-management agreements with countries of origin will enable a proper partnership with those countries to be established in combined efforts to combat illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings (involving in particular more vulnerable groups such as women and children).

Parliament also encouraged the integration of the migration issue into EU external policy. It called on the Member States to tackle the root causes of immigration by setting up partnerships with the developing countries based on genuine dialogue. It stressed, however, that recourse to development aid and the EU’s economic partnerships will not suffice as a way of tackling the root causes of emigration. However, it is important for the EU to include clauses on the common management of migration flows and obligatory readmission in cases of illegal immigration in all the association and cooperation agreements to which it subscribes;

Parliament pointed out that many female migrants were involved in the areas of domestic work and family care, and it felt that a new formula must be devised which will allow the families who employ them to find a legal solution which allows these workers to have social security cover.

Finally, Parliament felt that the international community had not yet realised what the potential is of immigrants' remittances to their country of origin as a means of supporting their development policies. It called upon the Commission to propose practical ways of facilitating the voluntary transfer of part of an immigrant's earnings to his or her country of origin at minimum cost.