Development and Migration

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report on development and migration drawn up by Marie-Arlette CARLOTTI (PES, FR) ahead of the high-level dialogue on this subject scheduled to be held at the UN in September 2006 . The report, which cited many statistics, said that "the European Union must play a major role to make migration a lever of development". Among its recommendations, it said that the EU should adopt two priority instruments: a specific fund enabling co-development measures to be financed; and a guarantee fund to ensure the long-term existence of migrants' micro-projects and maximise their impact on development. In view of the importance of remittances as a source of external finance for developing countries, the report also called for measures to ease the transfer of migrants' funds, improve their access to financial services, channel their funds towards productive investment in their home countries and ensure the transparency of financial transactions through 'informal channels'.

The committee stressed that the practice of "circular migration" or "commuting" between host countries and countries of origin can be beneficial to both sides. It called for programmes "to involve skilled people in the diasporas in the process of development by covering the costs of wage differentials for highly skilled migrants prepared to return to their countries or by setting up ‘dual post’ systems for public sector personnel in southern countries (teachers, researchers and doctors)". It also welcomed measures proposed by the Commission to combat the brain drain from poorer countries.

Among other issues, the report called for greater emphasis to be placed on the specific role of women in migration and development and on the rights of migrant women. Member States were urged to grant an autonomous status and a work permit to the spouse and children of the principal legal status holder once a request for family reunification is accepted, to protect their rights fully and facilitate their social integration.

Lastly, the Commission and the Council were asked to give "EU priority status" and sufficient funding to the fight against trafficking in human beings linked to migration and "not to criminalise the victims but to focus on punishing the perpetrators".