

General programme "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows": European Fund for the Integration of Third-country nationals, 2007-2013

2005/0048(CNS) - 14/12/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament approved four programmes as part of the Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows framework programme. The framework aims to facilitate a fair share of responsibilities between Member States managing the external border and the implementation of common asylum and immigration policies. Four funds are created: **the External Borders Fund (COD/2005/0047), the European Refugee Fund (COD/2005/0046), the Return Fund (COD/2005/0049) and the Integration Fund (COD/2005/0048).**

The **Integration Fund** (starting 1 January 2007) is particularly targeted at new immigrants and provides EUR 825 million to Member States to favour their integration process. It will support the forthcoming Framework Directive on the rights of legally residing migrants and projects fashioned to promote the Community integration strategy. This new instrument will also help Member States to share their experiences and best practices, thereby strengthening teamwork at European level. Programmes covering civic orientation, language, history and cultural are all supported.

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Barbara **Kudrycka** (EPP, Poland) and made several amendments to the Commission's proposal, which were compromise amendments that had previously been agreed with Council.

The main amendments were as follows:

- the financial reference amount or the implementation of actions financed by the Fund for the period from 1 January 2007 until 31 December 2013 shall be EUR 825 million. Each Member State shall receive a fixed amount of EUR 500,000 from the Fund's annual allocation;
- third-country nationals who are on the territory of a third country and who are complying with specific pre-departure measures and/or conditions set out in national law, including those relating to the ability to integrate in the society of this Member State fall under the scope of the Decision. However, third-country nationals who have made an application for asylum in respect of which a final decision has not yet been taken, or enjoy refugee or subsidiary protection status, or qualify as refugees or are eligible for subsidiary protection in accordance with Council Directive 2004/83/EC, are excluded from the scope of the Decision;
- the general objective of the Fund is to support the efforts of Member States in enabling third-country nationals of different economic, social, cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds to **fulfil the conditions of residence and to facilitate their integration into the European societies;**
- the Fund shall primarily focus on actions relating to the integration of newly arrived third-country nationals;
- the national integration strategies for third-country nationals must take into account the principle that integration is a two-way dynamic process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States;

- the Fund's specific objectives now include exchange of information, best practices and co-operation in and between Member States in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies and measures for the integration of third country nationals;
- actions supported under the Fund now include setting up programmes and activities aiming at introducing newly arrived third country nationals to the host society and enabling them to acquire basic knowledge about the host society's language, history, institutions, socio economic features, cultural life and the fundamental norms and values, as well as complement such existing programmes and activities. They also include improving the access of third-country nationals to public and private goods and services, and building sustainable organisational structures for integration and diversity management;
- in the framework of the implementation of national programming, Member States must select projects for financing on the basis of the following minimum criteria : the situation and requirements in the Member State; the cost-effectiveness of the expenditure, inter alia in view of the number of persons concerned by the project; the experience, expertise, reliability and financial contribution of the organisation applying for funding and any partner organisation; the extent to which the projects complement other action funded by the general budget of the European Union or as part of national programmes;
- the annual amount set aside for technical assistance may not exceed: 7% of the total annual amount of co-financing allocated to the Member State, plus EUR 30,000 for 2007-2010 and 4 % of the total annual amount of co-financing allocated to the Member State, plus EUR 30,000 for 2011-2013;
- the Commission shall adopt the strategic guidelines relating to the multiannual programming period on 31 May 2007 at the latest;
- the Commission shall review the strategic guidelines and where necessary, adopt, on 31 March 2010 at the latest, new strategic guidelines for the period 2011- 2013. If such strategic guidelines are adopted, each Member States shall re-examine its multi-annual programme and where appropriate, revise it;
- the Commission shall lay down guidelines to ensure the visibility of the funding granted under the Decision.