

CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF EUROPE

Resolution 153 (2003)¹ on employment and vulnerable groups

The Congress,

1. Having examined the report on employment and vulnerable groups: the role of local and regional authorities, where three of the vulnerable groups were examined (people with disabilities, persons (previously unemployed) who have set up in business, immigrants and ethnic minorities), presented by the rapporteur Mrs Luisa Laurelli (Italy) of the Chamber of Local Authorities and Mrs Cigdem Mercan (Turkey) from the Chamber of Regions at the present session;

2. Recalling that the fifth Plenary Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) adopted Resolution 72 (1998) and Recommendation 52 (1998) on the regions and employment: contribution to social cohesion in Europe, accompanied by a memorandum prepared by Mr Van Cauwenberghe entitled "For an active policy of the regions on employment and socio-economic development". Subsequently, the sixth Plenary Session of the CLRAE adopted Resolution 81 (1999) and Recommendation 62 (1999) on local authorities and employability;

3. Recalling the Malta Declaration on Access to Social Rights, adopted at the Conference on Access to Social Rights held in Sant Julians, Malta on 14 and 15 November 2002 and by the Committee of Ministers at its 825th meeting on 22 January 2003, which calls on governments and other political, social and business partners, to develop and implement policies promoting access to social rights in, *inter alia*, "actively combating discrimination against users with particular attention to vulnerable groups",

4. Calls on regional authorities to continue to play their role as promoters of the nexus between the national and the local spheres regarding the adoption and implementation of policies for the access of vulnerable groups to employment, by:

a. removing the legislative impediments to communication and vertical co-ordination;

b. supporting initiatives for the integration of the most vulnerable groups (persons with disabilities, long-term unemployed aspiring to self-employment, migrants and ethnic minorities);

c. encouraging strategies and measures whereby territorial and gender imbalances can be prevented;

d. providing the local services with adequate resources for the purposes of long-term planning and commitment;

e. encouraging and supporting co-ordination processes between the operators concerned;

f. defining and applying quality standards and models for evaluation as necessary conditions for obtaining funds, of whatever type;

g. establishing and encouraging systems for bottom-up circulation of information;

h. creating independent observatories to monitor the proper application of measures,

5. Calls on local authorities to offer further support to the access of vulnerable groups to employment by:

a. improving their knowledge of vulnerable groups and devising measures adapted to their needs, taking into account also gender equality;

b. encouraging and securing the social commitment of all players, participation being an essential instrument of co-ordination in the local and regional government context;

c. promoting and facilitating dialogue between the different vulnerable groups and their organisations;

d. using common planning devices;

e. setting objectives and developing activities;

f. transmitting to the regional and national authorities the needs and requests of the vulnerable groups and their organisations;

g. supporting the initiatives aimed at the most vulnerable groups and aiding participation by them and their organisations;

h. promoting and supporting the voluntary movement among vulnerable groups, particularly those least accustomed to organising themselves;

i. facilitating access to specific measures and programmes by improving the circulation of decisions and simplifying the conditions and procedures;

j. devising monitoring and evaluation systems with reference to general objectives and not the specific features of each organisation;

k. drawing up transparent evaluation instruments accessible to beneficiaries;

l. disseminating and exchanging data on constructive experiences;

6. Calls on the European Committee for Social Cohesion:

a. to continue to examine the problems of the role of local and regional authorities in promoting access to social rights, particularly for vulnerable groups and not only regarding access to employment;

b. to focus, as a first step, on the problems of immigrants and refugees, particularly in the most sensitive areas such as the Mediterranean basin, as a direct link to the report under way on migration flows and social cohesion, and on the role of local and regional authorities;

c. to ensure the largest possible dissemination of the results of the report on employment and vulnerable groups:

the role of local and regional authorities, the related recommendation and the present resolution.

1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 22 May 2003, 3rd Sitting, (see Document CG (10) 7, draft resolution presented by Mrs L. Laurelli and Mrs C. Mercan, rapporteurs).