



Resolution 2043 (2015)¹

Provisional version

Democratic participation for migrant diasporas

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Today, diasporas play a more prominent role in politics than in the past. The members of diasporas can help to build bridges between States and to promote democracy both in their countries of residence and in their countries of origin.
2. The Parliamentary Assembly believes that diasporas' right to democratic participation is a fundamental condition for their political integration. Regrettably, most European countries still deprive migrants of the right to vote despite their advanced policies of integration. Unless the migrants and local residents of all backgrounds are given the right to vote, at least in the local elections, the process of integration will remain incomplete.
3. The Assembly considers that allowing dual citizenship or introducing, in their countries of origin, a special legal status for nationals living abroad would encourage their constructive involvement in policy shaping in their home countries. However, the dual citizenship status should not be misused to promote expansionist policies and violate the sovereignty of other States.
4. Furthermore, the Assembly encourages co-ordination between the governments of the countries of residence and the countries of origin in addressing the issues of the political status and participation in local, regional, and national elections of people holding double nationality.
5. The Assembly believes that governments, both in host countries and countries of origin, have to play a key role in engaging diasporas in decision-making policies, developing collaboration between governmental institutions and formulating recommendations on drafting diaspora-oriented programmes to ensure economic, social and cultural development.
6. The Assembly welcomes the role of diaspora associations in helping migrants integrate into the host society.
7. The Assembly is especially concerned about the rise of racism and xenophobia in Europe and stresses the role that diaspora policies can play in fighting these extremist tendencies.
8. The media have a major role to play in countering the binary stereotypes of migrants as victims or criminals. Television channels, newspapers and electronic media should give them genuine opportunities to portray their economic and intellectual potential, which benefits both their country of residence and their country of origin.
9. With the aim of improving the democratic participation of diasporas in Europe, the Assembly calls on member States to:
 - 9.1. ensure the effective exercise of the voting rights of members of diasporas, and in particular:
 - 9.1.1. sign and ratify the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level (ETS No. 144), if they have not already done so;

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 6 March 2015 (see [Doc. 13648](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, rapporteur: Mr Andrea Rigoni).*

- 9.1.2. introduce the right to vote and to stand in local and regional elections for foreigners after a maximum residence period of five years;
- 9.1.3. simplify the electoral legislation with regard to external voting, including the extension of proxy, postal and e-voting to diaspora members, and introduce effective measures aimed at ensuring the exercise of the right to an external vote for those concerned;
- 9.1.4. establish bilateral committees composed of lawmakers from the country of residence and the country of origin to examine complex cases relating to the dual citizen's active political participation in more than one country;
- 9.2. introduce policies which would facilitate diaspora involvement in political life, and in particular:
 - 9.2.1. review national legislation with a view to granting a special status to members of diasporas in their countries of origin, delivering a residence and work permit, and facilitating the return process where appropriate;
 - 9.2.2. promote diaspora members' contribution to the development of their country of origin by, *inter alia*, transfer of their knowledge, education and experience;
 - 9.2.3. co-ordinate the integration policies of host countries with the diaspora-related programmes of countries of origin with a view to achieving a bigger impact;
 - 9.2.4. ensure policy coherence between measures targeting diasporas abroad and migrant diasporas in the host countries;
 - 9.2.5. create specific ministries or intergovernmental structures to deal with diaspora policy;
 - 9.2.6. actively involve members of diaspora organisations in the development of integration programmes for migrants;
 - 9.2.7. in regions with settled diasporas, develop strategies of co-operation with diasporas at the local level;
 - 9.2.8. ensure that diplomatic representations have staff trained to deal with issues of concern for diaspora;
- 9.3. promote the activities of diaspora organisations:
 - 9.3.1. supporting the initiatives of diaspora organisations through specific budgetary programmes;
 - 9.3.2. encouraging political parties to involve diaspora members in their activities;
 - 9.3.3. encouraging the use of new communication technologies with a view to reinforcing links between different diaspora organisations;
 - 9.3.4. creating a database on the activities and networks of diaspora organisations.

10. The Assembly invites international organisations, in particular the United Nations, the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Interparliamentary Union (IPU), the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union, to promote and protect the cultural and political rights of diasporas and to support projects aimed at their democratic participation.

11. The Assembly considers that it could act as a platform for developing a parliamentary dialogue on diaspora participation by proposing the creation of a parliamentary network on diaspora policies.