

**28 Ocak 2014**

*A strategy to prevent racism and intolerance in Europe and tackling racism in the police*

*(joint debate)*

Mr DIŞLI (*Turkey*) – I thank the rapporteur, Mr Tiny Kox, for his excellent work. He has covered every aspect of developments and obstacles in Palestine. The Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights fully supports the draft resolution.

We join in the encouragement given to members of the Palestinian Partner for Democracy delegation to help speed up the implementation of legal reforms. We hope that the United Nations Security Council will agree unanimously to recommend a full membership application from Palestine to the United Nations. We also recommend that Hamas and the PNC unite behind the Partner for Democracy status, which will strengthen Palestine's efforts for better democracy and also help make it easier to conduct talks and negotiations with Israel. Like Mr Kox, we are very happy to see the active participation of the Palestinian delegation in the work of our Assembly.

Ms BILGEHAN (*Turkey*)\* – I congratulate Mr Kox on his detailed report on the progress in implementing commitments undertaken by the Palestinian National Council in the context of its request for Partner for Democracy status. I welcome the fact that the report addresses on several occasions the issue of women's rights, which was one of the PNC's commitments in October 2011. Like Mr Kox, I stress from the outset that Israeli occupation and the refusal of Hamas to respect the reconciliation agreements are major hurdles against the implementation of the PNC's commitments. However, notwithstanding the difficult circumstances, improvements can and must be made, especially with respect to the situation of women.

Major clarifications are needed with regard to the situation of women in Palestine. Women's representation in the parliament has not progressed since 2006. There are three women in the government, which is not so bad, but when local elections were held in the West Bank in autumn 2012, 20.1% of those elected were women and a woman was elected Mayor of Bethlehem.

Palestinian women have a crucial role to play in the peace negotiations and the building of a Palestinian State. None the less, they have marginal representation in key decision-making positions, although that is the case in most places. The plight of women is a major cause for concern and there have been no serious improvements since October 2011. As Mr Kox has pointed out, legislative power is, in effect, absent from Palestine and that prevents implementation of the rights of the family and compliance with international standards.

All in all, I endorse what Mr Kox has said and I support the efforts of the Palestinian Authority to continue to demonstrate its commitment to gender equality and improving the status of women in Palestine. The political and legal situation makes it difficult to make real progress, but it is clear that the resolve to move towards an inclusive, democratic society remains intact. I therefore support Mr Kox's proposal to continue co-operation with the Palestinian National Council and for a second assessment in two years' time.

**29 Ocak 2014**

***Syrian refugees: how to organise and support international assistance?***

Mr DIŞLI (*Turkey.*) – First, may I congratulate you, Madam President, on your election?

I thank my fellow rapporteur for this excellent work, and for our very good co-operation. Mr Bockel provided detailed information on the situation of Syrian refugees in the neighbouring countries to Syria. I also thank previous rapporteurs and this Assembly for the action taken since the beginning of the crisis and for keeping this issue on our agenda.

The situation of refugees and displaced persons has continued to deteriorate. In December 2013, Amnesty International issued a document titled “An international failure: the Syrian refugee crisis” in which it stated that the international community has failed miserably to support refugees from Syria and the main countries receiving them.

In addition to the starvation and the death toll, the number of refugees, who are mainly women and children, is also increasing. Concerns about women and children suffering from sexual and gender-based violence in some of the camps should specifically be tackled. I thank our colleague Mr Schennach from Austria for bringing that terrible tragedy to our attention in previous sessions.

Due to the long-running conflict, various branches of al-Qaeda groups have become active in some parts of Syria, causing great concern to neighbouring countries. Unfortunately, out of desperation, Syrians are sympathising with those warlords. Another concern for neighbouring countries is the increasing number of smugglers and human traffickers.

Unfortunately, the same co-operation and understanding of the international community on the use of chemical weapons has not been seen in the effort to secure a ceasefire. I sincerely hope that the Geneva II conference will be successful in finding a durable solution to the tragedy.

I conclude by joining the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons to call on Council of Europe member States to show further solidarity and to share responsibility by taking necessary measures to cater for Syrian refugees as much and as effectively as possible.

Mr GÜR (*Turkey*) – I congratulate you on behalf of my group and party, Madam President. I believe that women are better at governing the world and I wish you every success.

In discussing refugees and the humanitarian crisis in Syria, we should not forget to keep an eye on the problems facing internally displaced persons. It is true that neighbouring countries have received millions of refugees, but there are still many millions in Syria who are vulnerable and waiting for international assistance. For example, the population of Rojava Kurdistan, where the Kurds are dominant and control the land, has doubled. There are hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons there and they are still waiting for humanitarian aid from international organisations. Up to now, no refugees or IDPs there have received humanitarian aid from these bodies, so I ask you please to keep an eye on the IDPs. The conflict is not only between regime and non-regime groups; some other groups, such as

those linked to al-Qaeda, are causing horrible situations. They block roads and they block regions, which is why most people could not receive humanitarian aid in Syria. Turkey is one of the key countries, opening its border and creating humanitarian aid corridors so that international organisations such as the United Nations, Red Cross and Red Crescent can provide international aid to IDPs in Syria.

A humanitarian crisis has been unfolding in Syria before our eyes. We have all been witnesses to it, but nobody could prevent it by intervening properly to stop the bloodshed. Geneva 2 could be a chance to discuss it and stop it, but most of the democratic dynamics of Syria are not represented at Geneva 2. I am thinking of the Kurds, Armenians and Assyrians. The Kurds are not only helping IDPs, but protecting minorities in Syria.

***Migrants: ensuring they are a benefit for European host societies***

***Integration tests: helping or hindering integration?***

***Joint debate***

Mr SELVI (*Turkey*) – We are discussing an important issue. There are large Turkish communities living in many European countries. Therefore, as a Turkish parliamentarian, I have read both reports with great interest. First, I would like to touch upon the excellent work by Ms Strik. The explanatory memorandum gives almost a complete picture of the situation and thus it is very informative indeed.

I think we are unanimous in agreeing the necessity and significance of learning the language of the country of residence. Language is the key for successful integration. It is not obvious however that integration tests, especially the pre-entry ones, help integration. In fact the very existence of pre-entry requirements is legally questionable.

In the explanatory report, a reference is made to the Turkey-EEC association law. Indeed, that includes the so-called “stand-still clause” and integration tests are against European Union law. The Netherlands was again the first country to give up pre-entry tests. I expect the same initiative from Germany. Moreover, integration tests clearly risk violating two paramount legal documents of the Council of Europe: the European Convention on Human Rights and the European social charter.

The report entitled “Migrants: ensuring they are a benefit for European host societies” includes many illuminating facts and rather brave statements on migration, which, in this age of relative intolerance and the rise of populism, are not common, so I congratulate the rapporteur, Ms Kyriakidou.

It is useful to know that, generally, migrants contribute more than they take from the social system. This is especially true in the case of the so-called first generation, as they tend to work for a shorter period and retire earlier, thus taking considerably lower retirement benefits and salaries.

I am fully aware of the political sensitivity of this issue in many countries. Extreme-right and populist circles are more than happy to abuse any negative media report relating to an

immigrant. Many politicians deem it necessary from time to time to climb on a soapbox and make anti-immigration remarks to soothe or woo their constituencies.

Efforts should be intensified to make sure that we are successful in our integration policies, which will in turn pay off both for the immigrants and the host countries. Thank you for your attention.