



DECLARATION OF SEVILLA

ON THE ROLE OF EUROPEAN LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN RELATION TO MIGRATION

Adopted by the Policy Committee of CEMR
Sevilla, 23 October 2006

We, mayors and elected representatives of Europe's local and regional governments, meeting together within the Policy Committee of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions in Sevilla, Spain, on 23rd October 2006,

Recalling that the issue of migration is above all a question of human beings;

Affirming therefore that in all cases the basic principles of human rights and human dignity, as well as the values of the European Union, must apply;

Conscious that migratory flows into Europe, and often within Europe, are increasing in scale;

Emphasizing the need for effective European-level policies and co-ordination in order to deal with the causes, processes and consequences of large-scale migration, including for those States that are affected most by unplanned inward migration from other continents

Recognizing that these migratory flows arise from a variety of motives – including economic, humanitarian and political;

Aware that Europe faces major demographic changes with profound economic and social consequences, and that the role of inward migration as a positive response – not least for the effective realization of the Lisbon Agenda - needs to be carefully evaluated in this regard;

Conscious also that European policies on migration must avoid creating negative effects on the social and economic systems of developing countries;

Declare as follows:

1. The adoption of a European policy on migration is a vital element to assist local and regional authorities to implement effective local policies;

Moreover, this policy must be interlinked with a firm commitment to implement policies for the common development of the countries of origin and transit of migrants, including local and regional partnerships;

2. Local and regional governments, across Europe, responding to the growing number of migrants wishing to settle in our cities and towns, have an essential role to play in this field, in particular via the provision of essential public services, and through policies that promote integration, cohesion and tolerance;

3. Whilst this role in relation to migration is of particular significance for Europe's larger cities and regions, it is also of growing importance for the large majority of our towns and local governments;
4. The challenge of successfully managing inward migration, in its diverse forms, requires a high level of co-ordination and partnership between all the different levels of government – European, national, regional and local - and across the different kinds of public authorities;
5. Local governments must have the necessary competences to enable them to carry out their tasks effectively in relation to the successful integration of migrants and migrant communities;
6. In particular, the national systems of financing local government need to ensure that the costs of managing inward migration, and in particular of providing the necessary public services, are fully taken into account, including the need for any short-term financial assistance in cases of urgency or rapid developments;
7. There are many examples of excellent practice by local governments, in promoting the integration of migrants into their life and economy from which all of us can learn; for example, in a number of countries the right of migrants to vote in local elections has already been recognised;
8. We therefore request the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, in co-operation with the European Commission and the CLRAE, to organise activities in 2007 for the exchange of experience in relation to the integration of migrants in our communities, in the context of the European Year for Equal Opportunities.

