



**FEDERAL COMMITTEE  
MEETING**

**31 October –  
2 November 2014  
Bologna  
Italy**

**ADOPTED RESOLUTION**

**‘Genuine Free  
Movement for All  
–  
Advancing  
Citizenship and  
Welfare Rights  
across all EU  
Member States’-**

**‘Genuine Free Movement for All –  
Advancing Citizenship and Welfare Rights  
across all EU Member States’**

**JEF-Europe,**

*Recognising* free movement of persons in the EU as one of the four important pillars of the Single European Market that constitutes one of the core achievements of European integration so far;

*Pointing out* that mobility of people across different countries promotes intercultural understanding and contributes to creating a common European identity.

*Emphasising* that genuine free movement for all alleviates the burdens of the still on-going financial crisis in Europe, especially as regards an enhanced allocation of skills across member states to dampen unprecedented high unemployment levels, particularly among the young generation;

*Highlighting* that EU free movement provisions nowadays entail rights not only to European citizens who are employed but also to those not in employment on the basis of European Citizenship;

*Recalling* that such rights do not only cover the right to reside in other member states but also the right to access welfare benefits such as social assistance under certain conditions;

*Fully alarmed* by generally unfounded governmental complaints about welfare tourism in respective member states, especially referring to the March 2013 letter to the European Commission by Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK;



*Noting with concern* that some of the media in several cases do not only uncritically portray these complaints but also disseminate incorrect information about free movement fundamentals and rights in the EU;

*Worried about* rising anti-immigrant and anti-EU attitudes among citizens as a consequence of such unfounded and misleading scaremongering, particularly visible during the 2014 EP elections;

*Deeply concerned* by the lack of enforcement of current EU legislation in several member states on cross-border access to labour markets and welfare benefits, resulting in discrimination between domestic, migrant, posted and frontier workers as well as those unemployed;

*Contemplating* remaining administrative hurdles for EU citizens wishing to reside, work or pursue training programmes in another EU member state;

*Further observing sceptically* that certain member states are currently drafting new legislation to restrict free movement rights of certain EU citizens, particularly those unemployed, by, for instance, introducing re-entry bans or restricting child allowance measures;

*Concerned about* free movement rights in the EU still largely being exercised solely by a privileged group of few well-educated citizens, due to limited material resources, language skills or high costs of transportation, and also due to fragmented and unclear European legislation on mutual recognition of professional qualifications;

*Recognising* that the heterogeneous macro-economic situation across as well as within member states puts additional strain on finding effective solutions to the above challenges, particularly in a European Union where enlargement processes are still on-going;

*Recalling* several policy documents by JEF Europe that have already highlighted the importance of free movement rights in the EU such as the Political Platform, and Resolutions on 'Empowering Young People' as well as on 'Unity among European Citizens.'



## Therefore, JEF Europe

*Calls upon* immediate measures that preserve and advance our core achievement of European integration – genuine free movement for all European citizens;

### **1. Full and correct implementation of EU legislation on free movement**

*Urges* member states to discard the current drafting of new legislation that will restrict free movement of EU citizens as well as their concomitant cross-border residence and welfare rights;

*Prompts* member states further to timely and correctly implement EU legislation on free movement and cross-border welfare rights for workers, particularly Directive 2014/54/EU, as well as for all EU citizens in general, especially Directive 2004/38/EC;

*Further reminds* relevant decision-makers in member states that this correct implementation does not end with the transposition into domestic legislation but importantly also requires the respective adaptation of administrative processes;

*Invites* policy-makers in the EU and on the national level to consider further opportunities to cut red tape, particularly in relation to identity and residence documents, and to enhance cross-border administrative co-operation so to facilitate the exercise of free movement rights even further;

### **2. More comprehensive and correct information on free movement rights to EU citizens**

*Believes in* the importance of EU citizens being correctly informed about their free movement rights in the Union, including residence and welfare rights, in order to attain the full potential of European integration feasible to-date;

*Reminds* that this information should particularly address young people so that they can easily find out about possibilities to develop their skills, find a job, and thus contribute to growth in the EU;



*Invokes* not only European institutions and member states to comprehensively inform their citizens on free movement rights through portals such as 'Your Europe,' 'Europe Direct,' or 'EURES' but also the media to correctly portray relevant EU provisions and their benefits for citizens;

### **3. Reconsidering qualifying periods for residence and welfare rights**

*Prompts* a mid-term revision of the Citizenship Directive 2004/38/EC as regards qualifying periods for permanent residence status and accessing welfare benefits in order to further facilitate free movement in the EU;

*Advises* prolonging the period of unconditional residence rights for EU citizens in other member states from three to six months in a long-term perspective;

*Suggests* shortening the qualifying period for attaining permanent residence status for EU citizens living in other member states from five to three years in the long-term, entailing an equally shortened period of access to welfare benefits for those not in employment;

### **4. Enhancing mutual recognition of professional qualifications**

*Recommends* facilitating the mobility of citizens throughout Europe, especially of the younger generation, by recognising foreign university diplomas or training certificates and other professional qualifications more quickly via more efficient administrative procedures

*Proposes* transferring the current threefold and unclear approach to recognising professional qualifications in the EU, which includes mutual recognition of formal and non-formal qualifications as well as partial harmonisation, into a simpler comprehensive one;

### **5. Broadening foreign language tuition**

*Calls for* the Member States to provide integration and language courses for in-coming migrants should migrants wish to have it,



collectively financed by, member states and, for instance, the European Social Fund;

*Endorses* broader foreign language tuition in schools and encourages a member-state wide comparison of the quality of foreign language teaching in order to specifically pressure and support member states with low performance to improve their teaching;

## **6. Reducing macro-economic imbalances across Europe as a long-term solution**

*Recalls* that the adjustment of macro-economic imbalances, not only across member states but, importantly and often ignored, also within countries, has to be a priority for further EU policy-making to ease challenges for member states associated with free movement of EU citizens;

## **7. Establishing a European Mobility Fund**

*Supports* the demand for a European Mobility Fund, which should assist member states reporting disproportionate pressure on their social security systems resulting from immigration of EU citizens into their country, potentially through temporary co-funding;

*Recommends* that this fund could initially be financed by transfers from funds, similar to the European Globalisation Fund while a proper budget line is being set up;

## **8. Facilitating genuine freedom of movement for all**

*Endorses* measures that facilitate family reunification across member states such as further supporting the search for a new school for migrants' children or aiding the application for welfare benefits;

*Encourages* policy-makers to also ease free movement rights to citizens from candidate countries into the EU in order to facilitate future integration processes;

*Reminds* that free movement of persons in the EU as one of the core achievements of European integration and that it can only be truly



sustained and advanced by consolidated actions – uniting people from all spheres of public life such as politics, media, and civil society;

**9. Promoting a new vision on free movement in Europe – the role of JEF**

*Calls upon* our own members to become active in externally promoting our vision on free movement in Europe, for example by issuing policy briefs on the issue to address decision-makers directly, or by publishing articles in relevant journals or on web fora to inform the wider public;

*Further invites* our sections to internally raise awareness and knowledge on free movement, citizenship and welfare rights in the EU by, for instance, conducting JEF-wide actions on specific occasions such as the European Day of Languages and domestic or international seminars as well as by further promoting cross-border co-operations between neighbouring JEF sections.