

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RECOMMENDATION No. R (84) 13

OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES CONCERNING THE SITUATION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS ¹

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 June 1984
at the 374th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

1. Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members, and that this aim can be pursued notably by common action in cultural matters ;
2. Having regard to the European Cultural Convention ;
3. Having regard to the European Convention on the equivalence of diplomas leading to admission to universities ;
4. Having regard to the European Convention on the equivalence of periods of university study ;
5. Having regard to the European Convention on the academic recognition of university qualifications ;
6. Having regard to the European Agreement on continued payment of scholarships to students studying abroad ;
7. Considering that the Council of Europe has always encouraged academic mobility without any form of racial, religious, political or sexual discrimination ;
8. Considering that the political, economic, social, cultural, educational and scientific interdependence between the States Parties to the European Cultural Convention, and between those States and others, is getting closer and more intensive ;
9. Considering that the practice of study in a country other than a student's home country is likely to contribute to a student's cultural and academic enrichment ;
10. Considering that for the purpose of this recommendation the term "university" shall be understood in its broadest sense, that is to say implying :
 - i. universities ; and
 - ii. those other institutions of higher education and research not having the title of university but regarded as undertaking work of a generally equal nature by the competent authorities of the state in whose territory they are situated,

1. When this recommendation was adopted, and in application of Article 10.2.c of the Rules of Procedure for the meetings of the Ministers' Deputies, the Representatives of Austria and Belgium reserved the right of their governments to comply or not with paragraph 12 of the appendix to the recommendation, and the Representative of the United Kingdom reserved the right of her government to comply or not with paragraphs 12 and 13 of the said appendix.

I. Recommends the governments of member states :

a. to take account, in the establishment of their policies affecting universities, of the principles set out in the appendix hereto or to draw them to the attention of the competent bodies concerned, so that they can be considered and, where practicable and appropriate, taken into account ;

b. to ensure that this recommendation is distributed as widely as possible among all persons and bodies concerned with the situation of foreign students ;

II. Instructs the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to transmit this recommendation to the governments of those contracting Parties to the European Cultural Convention which are not members of the Council of Europe.

Appendix to Recommendation No. R (84) 13

**Principles for the formulation of policies
regarding the situation of foreign students**

I. Study abroad : basic principles

A. Preference for periods of study

1. In general, students should be encouraged to spend limited periods of study abroad, one or two years, depending upon the course of study.
2. In the interest of the students themselves, studies should normally be begun and carried on in the country of origin for about two years, allowing the students to acquire the necessary grasp of their field of study, unless the very nature of the study requires that the courses be started abroad.
3. Special encouragement should be given to any study abroad being planned and agreed by the institutions concerned as part of an integrated course or joint study programme.

B. Students from developing countries

4. A special admission policy for students from developing countries favouring the needs of these countries should be encouraged.
5. Students from developing countries should in general first complete university studies in their own country before embarking on professional specialisation by means of complementary intensification and research studies in foreign countries. Such further education should be recognised in their own countries.
6. Where students from developing countries, because of the particular situation in their countries of origin, have reasons for pursuing full degree courses abroad, these courses should, if possible, take account of the problems and needs of the developing countries. The design of such courses necessitates a dialogue between the competent authorities in the countries of origin and in the states where such courses are held.

C. Political refugees

7. Foreign nationals who have been granted the status of refugees under the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Geneva 1951) in a state, should be treated as a national of that state as far as access to universities is concerned, and, where necessary, special help should be given to acquire an adequate command of the language and to reach the required academic level.

II. Access of foreign students to universities

8. In principle, the host state and/or its academic institutions should not accept a candidate who would not be entitled to go on to universities in his own country, but without taking possible admission limitations into consideration.
9. If they so wish, a state and/or its academic institutions may institute more liberal measures ; but their own requisite academic qualifications should in no case be altered.

10. It is of paramount importance that the responsible body in the host country checks that the candidates' command of the language is sufficient to enable them to understand the various courses they wish to follow before a place is offered in a university.

11. A special admission policy should be adopted for students coming from states with no universities, or without complete study courses.

12. As far as possible, where fees (registration, etc.) are payable, foreign students should not be required to pay higher fees than those applied to national students.

III. Return and reintegration

13. In admitting foreign students to university studies, the host countries proceed on the assumption that the foreign students, especially those who have been accepted for a full course of study, will return to their home country upon completing their courses of study and that they will on their own responsibility undertake every effort to secure their social and professional reintegration. Where necessary, measures to facilitate return and reintegration of foreign students should be introduced and/or improved.

IV. Information on studies abroad

14. Updated information on studies abroad should be furnished by the competent authorities of each state; it shall be distributed and where necessary supplemented by specialised departments in each university. The Council of Europe network of national mobility information centres should be put in a position to play an important role and exploited accordingly by all those concerned.

V. Financing and scholarships

15. Where appropriate, every effort should be made to establish or increase financial support for students wishing to study abroad in order to promote mobility.

16. Foreign students should be advised not to anticipate paid employment to meet their living costs, and before their arrival they should be requested to make provision for the financial means needed to complete their studies.

17. Each state, or university institution of such, should endeavour to set up, if such services are not provided for by other institutions, a University Solidarity Fund to assist students in temporary financial difficulties not due to their own fault (such as late payment of grants or scholarships).

VI. Reception services

18. To overcome the obstacles and the problems facing foreign students in their daily life, reception services (public or private, university or university-attached) should be set up, for effective reception, assistance, accommodation and guidance. Specialist staff should be trained for this type of work.

19. The administrative departments, both in the universities and in other responsible bodies, should simplify the various formalities that govern the personal situation of foreign students, notably the obtaining of residence permits and accommodation.

VII. Review, consultation and agreements between states

20. While respecting the responsibility of the individual states and institutions to determine their own policies on the admission of foreign students, states should be willing to undertake regular reviews of their own policies both by themselves and in consultation with other states, in order to monitor the effects of their own policies on student mobility.

VIII. Statistics and surveys

21. Statistics regarding foreign students should be improved, harmonised and continually updated, in particular regarding the various main groups (students spending only a part of their period of study abroad, students completing a full course of study abroad).