

Status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents

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The committee adopted the report by Sarah LUDFORD (ELDR, UK) amending the proposal under the consultation procedure. Whereas the Commission was proposing that long-term resident status be awarded to individuals who have resided legally and continuously for five years in a given Member State, the committee wanted Member States to be able to make the award of such status contingent on "other evidence of integration", such as "adequate knowledge of a national language of the Member State concerned". The committee also fleshed out the part of the Commission proposal which stipulated that long-term resident status may be refused to anyone whose conduct can be taken to constitute a threat to public order or domestic security. The committee said that such a threat should be deemed to exist if the person concerned had committed more than one or more than a minor breach of the law. It must also be assumed that individuals pose a threat if they "involve themselves in violent acts in pursuit of political aims"; if they make public appeals for the use of violence; and if they threaten the use of violence or if there is evidence to justify the assumption that they belong to an association which supports international terrorism. Although the proposal stipulated that emergency expulsion procedures against long-term residents should be prohibited, the committee wanted to ensure that Member States should be able to derogate from this where justifiable on the grounds of overriding security interests. It also rejected the provision which stipulated that expulsion decisions could not be accompanied by a permanent ban on residence, arguing that such a ban should not be ruled out in advance. Lastly, as part of the "equal treatment" to be enjoyed by long-term residents under the proposal, the committee wanted to see participation in public life at local level as well as a right of access to legal proceedings and legal remedies.