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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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Relations between the Council of Europe and the O.E.E.C.

Communication
Secretary General

1. Joint Interim Report[1] of the Committees of the Council of Europe and the O. E. E. C. responsible for liaison between the two bodies

In the course of four joint sessions held between June and October 1957 t h e Committees responsible for liaison between the Council of Europe and the 0. E. E. C. examined the report prepared by the Acting Secretary- General of the Council of Europe in pursuance of Resolution (56) 24, adopted at Strasbourg by the Committee of Ministers on the 15th December 1956 (see Appendix I) and transmitted to the Council of the 0. E. E. C. in conformity with Resolution (57) 10 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 29th April 1957 (see Appendix II).

2. The Liaison Committees are in agreement with many of the points made in the Report of the Acting Secretary-General of the Council of Europe and, in particular, with the suggestion in paragraph 12 t h a t " in the present circumstances it is not enough to accept that the overlapping in competence between the two organisations will continue and to seek means to limit the resulting inefficiency; a more positive and constructive solution is required which will ensure that the work of the two organisations is in every respect and at all stages complementary, and will thus enable each to obtain the maximum benefit from the existence of the other."

3. Since that Report was submitted, two events have occurred which seem to change somewhat the basis on which the Liaison Committees should conduct their work. In the first place, the Council of the 0. E. E. C. has taken a Decision (C (57) 221 of 17th October) in which the Council declares " its determination to secure the establishment of a European Free Trade Area which would comprise all member countries of the Organisation." The Liaison Committee of t h e 0. E. E. C. considers t h a t any major changes to be made in the present arrangements between the Council of Europe and the 0 . E. E. C. should be conceived in the light of this Decision.

4. Secondly, the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe has expressed its opinion on the relations between the Council of Europe and the 0. E. E. C. (Opinion No. 26 of 26th October). It recommends to the Committee of Ministers " t h a t they should do everything in their power to secure t h e amalgamation of the 0. E. E. C. and the Council of Europe at an early date, the Consultative Assembly becoming also the Assembly of the 0. E. E. C ".

This Opinion will be examined by the Committee of Ministers of t h e Council of Europe at their next session.

5. The Liaison Committees therefore submit this joint interim report and suggest that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and the Council of 0 . E. E. C. re-examine the whole question, with a view to considering proposals regarding the new relationship which it may be appropriate to establish between the

1. Transmitted to the Consultative Assembly for information (Decision of the Committee of Ministers, 14th December 1957).

two organisations, particularly in connection with the institutional arrangements for the Free Trade Area. To this end, the Committee of Ministers of t h e Council of Europe and the Council of 0. E. E. C. will keep each other informed through the medium of the Liaison Committees.

6. Meanwhile, the Liaison Committees wish to emphasise the importance which they attach to the elimination of duplication in the activities of the two organisations and to this end put forward the following suggestions:

a. The Committees hope that the practice of presenting OEEC reports to the Consultative Assembly by a Minister representing t h e 0. E. E. C. will be continued and developed further. They suggest t h a t it may be possible to give t h e Assembly the opportunity of addressing written questions on these reports to the 0. E. E. C, before the reports are presented by a Minister in plenary session.

b. The Committees suggest that, in order to avoid overlapping in the activities of the governmental bodies of the two organisations, more frequent, regular meetings of the Committees should take place to discuss any questions of an economic nature which may arise either from the discussions of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, or from those of the Council of the 0. E. E. C.

c. As regards texts approved by the Consultative Assembly relating to questions which are of interest to the 0. E. E. C, the Committees recommend the adoption of the following procedure :

> *Such texts should be transmitted to the 0. E. E. C. as quickly as possible. In this connection, the Liaison Committee of the Council of Europe suggests that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe should give standing instructions to the Secretary- General of the Council of Europe to transmit these texts directly to the 0 . E. E. C.*
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> *When such texts are transmitted to the 0. E. E. C, they should be examined by the Liaison Committees—which should, in any case, meet after every session of the Consultative Assembly —with a view to determining which of the two organisations can more appropriately deal with the questions raised; it would then be either for the Council of the 0. E. E. C. or for the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (after a technical opinion had been given by 0. E. E. C.) to take final decisions on the substance. These two bodies should keep each other mutually informed of their decisions, and it should rest with the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to inform the Consultative Assembly.*
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> *The Liaison Committees hope that the Ministers who present an OEEC report to the Assembly will continue the practice of taking part in the meetings of the Economic Committee, assisted by their advisers and by members of the Secretariat of the 0. E. E. C.*

7. The Committees agree that, whilst the time is not ripe for making concrete proposals, from a practical standpoint common headquarters for the 0. E. E. C. and the Council of Europe would allow a better use of the secretariat facilities of both organisations and open the way to economies ; i t would also make it easier to eliminate duplication. In all circumstances the Liaison Committees call attention to the vital necessity for complete co-ordination in the instructions given by Governments to their representatives in the two Organisations.

8. The Liaison Committees hope that the foregoing proposals may be favourably considered by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and by the Council of the 0. E. E. C.

Appendix 1 APPENDIX I

Duplication of work between European Organisations

Resolution (56) 24 - (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 15th December 1956)

The Committee of Ministers,

Reciprocating the views of the Assembly that the overlapping in the competence and work of European organisations should be avoided as far as possible in the interest of efficiency;

Taking note of the results of the preliminary meeting of the Secretaries-General of international organisations having their seat in Europe, convened to examine overlapping in the day-to-day activities of the organisations in question;

Considering that a comprehensive study should in due course be made of the institutional structure of European collaboration,

As an introduction to this study, instructs the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe to approach the Secretary-General of 0. E. E. C. with a view to preparing and submitting to the Committee of Ministers at its next meeting a report on the respective competence of the organisations in question; on their present working relations and on the measures which might be taken to introduce more effective collaboration between them.

Appendix 2 APPENDIX II

Relations between the Council of Europe and the O. E. E. C.

Resolution (57) 10 - (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 29th April 1957)

The Committee of Ministers

Recalling its Resolution (56) 24 of 15th December 1956, on relations between the Council of Europe and the 0. E. E. C.,

Taking note of the Report of the Acting Secretary-General, submitted in accordance with the instructions contained in the said Resolution,

1. Decides to transmit the Report to the Council of 0. E. E. C. with a view to undertaking, in discussion with the Council, a thorough review of the activities and structure of both organisations in order by joint effort to bring more strength to European co-operation. The discussion should take place through the medium of the Liaison Committees of the Council of Europe and 0. E. E. C, and a report should be submitted to the Committee of Ministers and the Council of 0. E. E. C. not later than 1st October 1957;

2. Decides to transmit the Report of the Acting Secretary-General to the Consultative Assembly for opinion.