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Activities of Western European Union in the social field

Report[1]
Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee
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1. 1958 - 10th Session - First part

Draft Resolution presented with a request for urgent procedure by the Social Committee

1. The Consultative Assembly has examined with much interest the work of W.E.U. in the social field between 1st February and 31st December 1957.

2. Giving its opinion on the same subject last year, in Resolution 128 (1957), adopted on 4th May 1957, the Consultative Assembly drew the attention of the competent organs of W.E.U. to the fact that most of the items on the WEU Agenda had already been the subject of careful study, and indeed of decisions, not only by the Council of Europe itself, but also by other organisations such as O.E.E.C., the I.L.O., the E.C.S.C., etc. The following items in particular were concerned:

a. Public health;

b. Drafting of a European Convention on Social Security ;

c. Manpower mobility;

d. Vocational training ;

e. Application of the ILO Conventions, Recommendations and Resolutions;

f. European Social Charter.

In the same Resolution 128 (1957), the Assembly pointed out that the item " harmonisation of legislation concerning atomic protection ", which also appeared on the WEU Agenda, might come within the scope of Euratom. The concern of the Assembly was increased by the fact that, since the Treaty instituting the European Economic Community has now entered into force, that Community will inevitably be required, in its turn, to deal with social questions.

3. The Assembly noted that, among others, the following social items were added to the Agenda of W.E.U. during 1957:

a. Policy of the WEU countries with regard to foreign manpower;

b. Exchanges of student employees and workers;

c. Frontier workers;

d. Automation;

e. Vocational training;

f. Social security;

g. Preparation of statistics for earnings, wages and social costs;

h. Health control of Sea and Air Traffic;

i. Cancer control;

j. Study of the pollution of the atmosphere;

k. Studies on poliomyelitis, rabies and salmonellosis (food poisoning), and the influenza epidemic;

l. Studies on the use of chlorine to purify drinking water and the pooling of spa treatment;

m. Admission of foreigners to practise and study medicine;

n. Relations with UNICEF with regard to aid for children;

o. Studies on the health aspects of the peaceful uses of atomic energy;

p. Health control of food stuffs;

q. Classification and standardisation of pharmaceutical products;

r. Narcotics and poisons.

4. The Assembly therefore considers it necessary, in the present Resolution, to repeat forcefully and in full that part of Resolution 128 (1957) which states as follows: " ...In view of the vital importance to the future of Europe of ensuring co-ordination between the various intergovernmental organisations, the Assembly:

a. Stresses the gravity and urgency of this problem and trusts that the Ministers will give it their full attention;

b. Appeals to all parliamentarians to seek ways and means of solving it;

c. Considers that measures for improving the present situation should include:

1. arrangements whereby observers from the secretariats of each of the two organisations may attend meetings of the social organs of the other;

2. the holding, whenever deemed appropriate, of joint meetings of the Social Committees of the two organisations;

3. the organisation of such a meeting with the minimum of delay, for the purpose of joint examination of this Resolution;

d. Hopes that, in accordance with the spirit of co-operation shown by the adoption, on 12th January 1957, of the joint Resolution of the Bureaux of the two organisations, this serious problem may be solved in a manner consonant with the interests of European unity ".

5. The Assembly further notes the WEU plan for preparing a meeting of the seven Ministers of Social Welfare of the Member States to lay the foundations of a joint social policy and to decide on W.E.U.'s attitude towards the European bodies dealing with social questions. In this connection, the Assembly recalls that, during its eighth Session, in Recommendation 113 (1957), on the co-ordination of social and manpower policies of Member States (adopted on 8th January 1957), it recommended that the Committee of Ministers should consider the possibility of convening, within the Council of Europe framework, periodical conferences of the Ministers of Labour and Social Welfare with a view to promoting the adoption of a common European policy.

6. On the other hand, the Assembly considers that it is its duty fully to support W.E.U. in specific fields of action, such as those of industrial safety and health, the public health aspects of the protection of the civil population in time of war, and the rehabilitation and resettlement of the disabled.