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Role of the Consultative Assembly in putting into operation the Cultural Fund of the Council of Europe

Report[1]
Committee on Culture, Science and Education
Rapporteur: Mr William van REMOORTEL, Belgium, Socialist Group

I. Draft Recommendation relating to the representation of the Consultative Assembly on the Administrative Board of the Cultural Fund of the Council of Europe.

II. Draft Recommendation on the immediate opening of official negotiations between the Council of Europe and the European Cultural Foundation.

III. Draft Resolution on the creation of National Committees for the Council of Europe Cultural Fund.

IV. Explanatory Memorandum.

1. 1958 - 10th Session - Second part

A. I. Draft Recommendation relating to the representation of the Consultative Assembly on the Administrative Board of the Cultural Fund of the Council of Europe

The Assembly,

Having regard to Recommendation 74 (1955) on the establishment of a Cultural Fund of the Council of Europe;

Having regard to Resolution (58) 13 of the Committee of Ministers instituting the Cultural Fund;

In view of the important part which the Assembly will be called upon to play in collecting contributions from non-governmental sources, in accordance with Article IV, paragraph 1 (c), of the Statute of the Cultural Fund,

Recommends that the Committee of Ministers should give the Government representatives on the Administrative Board instructions for the co-opting of three members of the Assembly, including the Chairman of the Cultural Committee, in accordance with the provisions of Article V, paragraph 3, of the Statute of the Cultural Fund.

B. II. Draft Recommendation on the immediate opening of official negotiations between the Council of Europe and the European Cultural Foundation

The Assembly,

Having regard to Recommendation 74 (1955) on the establishment of a Cultural Fund of the Council of Europe;

Having regard to Resolution (58) 13 of the Committee of Ministers setting up the Cultural Fund;

Considering that the working of the Fund would be greatly facilitated if an arrangement were concluded with the European Cultural Foundation in Amsterdam, in accordance with Article III of the Statute of the Cultural Fund;

Considering that an arrangement of this kind is particularly necessary for the collection of contributions from non-governmental sources;

Believing it to be desirable that for an arrangement of this sort negotiations should be opened without delay,

Recommends that the Committee of Ministers should decide that official negotiations be opened immediately between the Council of Europe and the European Cultural Foundation, and be carried out by an ad hoc Liaison Committee among whose members should be three Representatives to the Consultative Assembly, including the Chairman of the Cultural Committee.

C. III. Draft Resolution on the creation of National Committees for the Cultural Fund of the Council of Europe

The Assembly,

Having regard to Recommendation 74 (1955) on the establishment of a Cultural Fund of the Council of Europe;

Having regard to Resolution (58) 13 of the Committee of Ministers instituting the Cultural Fund;

Believing that the progress of the Cultural Fund will depend largely on the moral and financial support it receives in each member country, and that it is advisable to set up National Committees for this purpose

Invites its members to take suitable steps to promote the formation in each member country of a National Committee with the twofold object of stimulating public interest in the cultural activities of the Council of Europe and of giving moral and financial support to the activities of the Cultural Fund. This Committee should as far as possible:

1. be constituted as a non-profit-making association and governed in accordance with the laws of the country concerned;
2. be under the most distinguished patronage and be assured of the co-operation of bodies and institutions already working in the cultural field;
3. collaborate closely at national level with all Funds or Foundations concerned with European cultural activities, with a view to ensuring the co-ordination of their tasks;

Instructs the Secretary-General to afford Representatives every assistance in implementing this Resolution;

Instructs its Cultural Committee to submit periodically a general report on the activities of the National Committees.

D. IV. Explanatory Memorandum presented by M. VAN REMOORTEL

1. A. BACKGROUND

In July 1955 the Consultative Assembly, in Recommendation 74, proposed the establishment of a Cultural Fund in order to increase the financial resources available for the cultural activities of the Council of Europe. Chapter IV of the Special Message of the Committee of Ministers in 1954 had an appendix containing a long list of projects drawn up by the Cultural Experts which could not be carried out owing to lack of funds.

It was impossible, under the budget arrangements of the time, to increase appropriations to the extent necessary in order to fulfil the programme of the Committee of Cultural Experts. It was therefore essential, if the Council of Europe was to accomplish its task in the cultural field as defined in its Statute and in the European Cultural Convention, to find new methods of financing. The Assembly felt that it was desirable to supplement the contributions of the Governments by seeking additional revenue from non-governmental sources.

After considering the matter for three years, the Committee of Ministers decided to set up a Council of Europe Cultural Fund as from 1st January 1959. The Statute of the Fund, as adopted by the Ministers, follows the general lines of the Assembly's proposals. Although the Cultural Fund is official in character, its Statute provides for different sources of income: governmental contributions paid in to the Fund through the Council of Europe Budget, voluntary contributions by Governments and contributions from non-governmental sources. The Statute indeed improves on Recommendation 74 by binding the Governments to make a fixed annual contribution. That contribution has been fixed at a total of 35 million French francs for each of the first three years.

The great advantage of the Fund, however, is that, with the agreement of the Committee of Ministers, it can receive voluntary contributions up to an unlimited amount in addition to the fixed governmental contributions. Without these further resources, the Fund would have little purpose: for contributions by the Governments will be much the same as in the former cultural budget. If, then, the Fund is to be an effective instrument, the fullest use must be made of the possibilities it holds of attracting fresh resources.

As the Statute of the Fund gives no indication as to how non-governmental contributions may be obtained, it is for the Assembly to make concrete suggestions. Recommendation 74 contains the following passage on this subject:

8. A National Committee shall be set up in each country which has agreed to take part in the establishment of the Fund; this Committee shall be composed of at least three representatives appointed by the Consultative Assembly, who shall co-opt other eminent persons.

9. This National Committee shall be responsible for planning and carrying out measures to obtain support for the Fund.

10. The subscription campaign shall be conducted in accordance with the customary methods of appealing for public subscriptions in the country concerned.

The National Committees may request the assistance of non-governmental organisations and may seek the advice of experts with a special knowledge of such methods.

The Governments may give their official support to the campaign.

11. The National Committees shall periodically report to the Assembly."

Clearly, what the Assembly had in mind was to organise a campaign to raise money for the Cultural Fund from non-governmental sources. It is now for the Assembly to decide how this is to be done.

2. B. NATIONAL COMMITTEES

Your Committee believes that the time has come to proceed with the formation of National Committees, as proposed in Recommendation 74. It is a well-established tradition in our countries to set up such committees in order to further causes of public interest in unofficial circles, and it would be hard to think of a more effective means of securing the required moral and financial support for the Cultural Fund.

2.1. (a) Aims

The National Committees will pursue a twofold aim. In the first place, they will have the practical task of collecting as much money as possible for the Cultural Fund in their own countries. But, in order to carry out that task satisfactorily, it will be necessary to awaken the interests of the public in the aims and activities of the Council of Europe in general and the Cultural Fund in particular. Before asking anyone to contribute to a cause, it is as well to explain to him what it is about and to convince him that it is worth while. The immediate task of the National Committees will thus be one of information. To their fund-raising function will be added a role of public relations.

2.2. (b) Legal status

Subject to allowance being made for social structure, customs and legislation in different countries, it will be best for the National Committees to take the form of non-profit-making associations and to benefit, as far as possible, by the tax concessions accorded to organisations approved as being of public interest. It is important to ensure that the Committees benefit as much as possible by the provisions of Article IV (2) of the Statute of the Fund, which lays down that " Members of the Council of Europe and non-Member States acceding to the European Cultural Convention shall, in so far as their laws permit, accord to the subsidies granted by the Cultural Fund and to any donations or legacies that it may receive the fiscal privileges and exemptions which apply in their respective countries to educational, cultural, scientific, charitable or other activities of a nonprofit-making character."

2.3. (c) Title

Each National Committee will choose the name it considers best fitted to make its objects clear to the public. In one country it may decide on the title " Committee of the Cultural Fund of the Council of Europe ", while in another it may prefer to call itself " Association of Friends of the Council of Europe Cultural Fund ", and so forth.

2.4. (d) Campaign methods

Each Committee will decide on the campaign methods best suited to conditions in its own country. As and when appropriate, it will send out circulars, distribute printed matter or organise discussions, lectures and meetings of a cultural or social character. It may also sponsor or organise concerts and exhibitions to raise money for its purposes. In this connection, the example given by the Atlantic Community Associations in the member countries of N.A.T.O. is well worth studying (see AS/Cult (10) 10).

2.5. (e) Formation

The initiative in setting up a National Committee should come from a Consultative Assembly Representative entrusted with that task by his country's parliamentary delegation to the Assembly.

2.6. (f) Membership

2.6.1. Assembly representatives

The national delegation should form a kind of nucleus of each National Committee. At the same time we might usefully call on former members of the Assembly who, with the experience gained at Strasbourg, have continued to follow the Council of Europe's work. A list of these members will enable Representatives to look out for the names of suitable persons in their respective countries (see AS/Cult (10) 7).

It will then be advisable to enlist the co-operation of a number of prominent personalities as presidents or patrons. It would also be wise to obtain the support of existing cultural organisations and institutions of recognised authority and standing.

2.6.2. Honorary members

The contribution of honorary members to the work of the Committees will be the prestige of their name. In certain countries the Head of the State himself may grant his patronage to the Committees; in other countries the Committees will be under the patronage of a member of the royal family or of a prominent public figure of

high standing in the political or cultural world, who is well known for his interest in European questions. Without such figureheads it will be impossible to attract the necessary public attention to the Committee's activities.

2.6.3. Cultural organisations and institutions

representatives of the different cultural organisations and institutions which play a decisive part in the life of their country. There are two arguments in favour of this policy: it is evident that even in a wealthy country the amount of money available for cultural purposes is limited. If funds are subscribed to a new organisation, existing subsidies for others may have to be withdrawn. This is as true of private as of public funds. It would be lamentable if the National Committees were to function at the expense of national institutions themselves maintained by private contributions.

This collaboration will be the more easily obtained as these organisations have learnt from their own experience the. necessity and usefulness of European cooperation. It is obvious that the creation of a body with European financial backing such as the Cultural Fund answers a real need.

It is also vital from another point of view that members of these organisations should take part in the work of the National Committees; nobody is better able to advise the authorities of the Cultural Fund on desiderata and make concrete proposals for the Fund's programme. It must be remembered that it will be the task of the National Committees not only to supply the Cultural Fund with money but also to make suggestions as to how it should be used.

It would be difficult here to go into further detail about these organisations and institutions without drawing up a very long list of examples, which vary considerably from one country to another, We might recall, however, that in almost all Member States institutions exist to promote scientific research and the applied sciences; these institutions^ are maintained by Government funds and by private grants (see AS/Cult (9) 40). Among these institutions may be named the permanent conference of University Chancellors and Vice-Chan-cellors, organisations such as the British Council and also learned societies, all of which play a prominent part in the cultural life of a country.

The UNESCO National Commissions might serve as an example for the collaboration advocated above.

2.6.4. Other members

Once the Committee of patronage has been formed and the assistance of private organisations obtained, each National Committee should endeavour to enrol as many members as possible. Any corporate body or private person interested in cultural activities in general and the Council of Europe in particular can belong to the National Committee. An appeal should be made to scholars, artists, writers, university professors, journalists and men of letters, industrialists, high ranking civil servants, to mayors and also to representatives of the liberal professions.

Obviously, most of these members will only be able to play a passive part, but they will be kept informed of the activities of the National Committee, of the Cultural Fund and of the Council of Europe. Only in exceptional cases will their assistance be requested, to carry out a particular project such as organising a function on behalf of the committee in the town where they live. As regards the different degrees of affiliation, we may quote the examples of the French Association of the Atlantic Community, which makes provision for active members, associates, subscribers, donators, founders and benefactors with a corresponding scale of annual subscriptions (see Doc. AS/Cult (10) 10).

2.6.5. Municipalities

The role which municipalities will be able to play in National Committees should be examined in due course.

2.7. (g) Administrative structure

The administrative structure of each National Committee will depend on the number of its members and the growth of its activities.

2.7.1. Central Committee

It is indispensable to form a small central committee of at most twenty members to be responsible in particular for the Committee's activities.

2.7.2. Local and regional sub-committees

In countries with a federal constitution, when the National Committee is sufficiently well established, it will be possible to create subcommittees in the most important provincial centres.

2.7.2.1. Secretariat

Each National Committee will organise its secretarial services according to its needs.

2.8. (h) Relations of National Committees with the authorities of the Cultural Fund

The Secretary-General of the Council of Europe will be responsible for official relations between the Committees and the authorities of the Cultural Fund. The help which the Secretary- General can give members of the Assembly wishing to form a National Committee in their own country will contribute greatly to the success of their efforts.

Although the National Committees will have to decide how they want to organise publicity for the Fund in each country, their activity should be brought into line and synchronised as far as possible with any steps that the Press and Information Directorate of the Secretariat-General in Strasbourg may take. Accordingly, it will be necessary to examine to what extent appeals can be made to correspondents of the Press and Information Directorate in the Member States.

It would, moreover, be desirable for the Committees to be associated as closely as possible with their Government representative on the Administrative Council of the Cultural Fund, who, in the beginning, will doubtless be a high-ranking official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Education.

So that the Assembly may follow •closely the activities of the National Committees the Cultural Committee will gather all relevant information and report thereon regularly.

2.9. (i) The draft Resolution to set up National Committees

It should be emphasised that the above -comments are merely suggestions, for it is impossible to lay down rules valid for fifteen countries. Before the National Committes can be formed, the special circumstances and actual possibilities in each country will need careful examination. The draft Resolution presented by the Commission is therefore intentionally limited to general suggestions.

3. C. THE CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY'S REPRESENTATION ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL OF THE CULTURAL FUND

If the Assembly is to play its part successfully in the collection of non-governmental contributions to the Cultural Fund, close contact must clearly be established between the Assembly and the Governing Body of the Fund. It would therefore appear advisable for the Assembly to be represented on the Administrative Council.

In Recommendation 74 (paragraph 15) it was proposed that membership of the Administrative Council (apart from the Secretary-General should consist of: members of the Committee of Cultural Experts (appointed by the Committee of Ministers), members elected by the Cultural Committee of the Consultative Assembly and persons " eminent in the cultural and scientific fields " selected by the Committee of Ministers from a list drawn up by the above-mentioned members.

The Statute adopted by the Committee of Ministers however provides (Articles V (2 and 3)) for two categories of membership only namely:

a. a representative for each member country of the Council of Europe (or a country which has acceded to the Cultural Convention). The representative must be a member of the Committee of Cultural Experts

b. five members co-opted with the consent of the Committee of Ministers.

Who are to be the co-opted members is nowhere specified. In a speech during the debate on the second supplementary report to the eighth report of the Committee of Ministers, in January 1958, M. Kraft expressed the views of your Committee in these words:

" In our opinion, the (Administrative) Board should not be composed of Government officials only; the governmental representatives, in our view, should include personalities such as M. Robert Schuman and our colleague M. Smitt Ingebretsen, and other well-known Europeans of high standing, as was suggested in the Recommendation."

In an address to the Ministers' Deputies, on 12th June 1958, in which he expressed the unanimous opinion of the members of the Joint Cultural Committee, M. Kraft declared:

" There is one point which is of special interest to our Committee: that is the composition of the Administrative Board. The Assembly attaches great importance to having representatives on that Board, having regard to the fact that the Fund is essentially the child of the Assembly which proposed it first in 1954.

The best solution from the point of view of the Assembly would be that the Statute of the Fund should provide for participation of the Assembly in the work of the Board. If, however, it would make difficulties for the Governments to change the Rules at this late stage in the negotiations, then I hope that this Committee will arrange that in fact two or three representatives of the Assembly are included among the five co-opted members. "

The Committee considers that this point of view should be backed up by a formal recommendation, the draft of which is given at the beginning of this report.

4. D. RELATIONS OF THE CULTURAL FUND OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE WITH THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION AT AMSTERDAM

In order to avoid competition in seeking funds and a possible overlapping in their distribution, Recommendation 74 states that

" agreements should be concluded with other special Foundations concerned with European cultural activities, both in respect of the use of available credits and the distribution or co-ordination of the cultural tasks to be undertaken. "

The Committee noted with pleasure that Article III (" Co-operation with other foundations ") of the Statute of the Fund follows almost literally the text of the Recommendation.

The Committee of Cultural Experts has considered how to set about establishing close relations with the European Cultural Foundation and recommends setting up a joint working party •composed of members of the Administrative Council of the Cultural Fund and the Directors of the Foundation.

It had been suggested, in a preliminary agreement resulting from an unofficial exchange of views between the representatives of the Foundation and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, that:

" the collection of funds should be entrusted to National Committees or representatives, who should arrange to co-operate very closely in this connection."

The Committee considers that it is the task of National Committees to co-operate with the representatives of the Foundation in collecting contributions. The Committee considers it desirable that the representatives of the Foundation in the various countries should be invited to become members of the National Committees and that the agreement on collecting contributions should be negotiated within these committees. It is possible that the activities of the two institutions on the national plane may be merged and that the committees may act on behalf of both organisations since their objectives are essentially the same. Such close collaboration will be rendered easier by the fact that several members of the Consultative Assembly have already agreed to become members of the Amsterdam Foundation. The ways and means of achieving this collaboration will necessarily vary from country to country. The form it assumes will, however, depend on the decisions taken and the experience gained on the European scale and on the Liaison Committee.

Your Committee considers that, if national committees are to be established and co-operation on a European scale to be set in motion, official negotiations must be held without delay between the Council of Europe and the Foundation.

In view of the important role which the Assembly expects to play in setting up National Committees, it would be highly desirable that it should take an active part in the negotiations. To set up an ad hoc Liaison Committee would appear to be the obvious solution. The Committee will consist of representatives of the European Cultural Foundation and of the Council of Europe, and it should be easy to make the Council delegation truly representative by including a spokesman of the Assembly as well as of the Committee of Cultural Experts.

The second draft Recommendation submitted by the Committee in this Report proposes the immediate setting up of this ad hoc Laison Committee to negotiate the main lines of co-operation between the European Cultural Foundation and the Cultural Fund.