Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**Doc. 920**
19 December 1958

# Reply to the First Raport of the European Parliamentary Assembly

**Report**
Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy
Rapporteur: Mr Peter STRASSER, Austria

**A. 1. Draft Resolution submitted by the Political Committee**

The Assembly:

1. Thanks the European Parliament for the transmission of its First Report and trusts that further methods of collaboration may be instituted ; and, in particular, that, in addition to the transmission of an Annual General Report by the European Parliament and the holding of Joint Sessions of the two Assemblies, arrangements will be made for appropriate liaison where necessary between corresponding committees ;

2. Notes with special interest the longterm political considerations shown in the Report as underlying the guidance which the Parliament gives to the work of the Communities ;

3. Notes the particular importance attached by the European Parliament to the social development of the Communities and expresses its belief that continuous parliamentary consideration of social questions is particularly important in present economic conditions ;

4. Expresses its agreement with the European Parliament's view that a co-ordinated policy for the development of all sources of energy is vitally necessary for Europe's future economic growth; hopes, like the European Parliament, that the successful completion of the transitional period for the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community will facilitate the inclusion of the coal and steel sectors in a European Economic Association; and hopes also that the European Parliament will press for the greatest possible development of its relations with the European Nuclear Energy Agency;

5. Expresses its particular concern regarding the development of the association of overseas countries and territories with the Communities and hopes that the next Report of the European Parliament will contain as much detailed information as possible on this subject, particularly in connection with the wish expressed by the Parliament to see representatives of these countries and territories participate in the work of the institutions of the Communities;

6. Expresses its agreement with the European Parliament that it is essential to ensure that the three Communities must not develop separately but must harmonise their policies and organisation into a single effort in the direction of European integration; and hopes, further, that the European Parliament will support efforts to ensure that, where possible and appropriate, such harmonisation of the technical work of the Communities may be extended to assist the work of a future European Economic Association;

7. Welcomes the continued references in the Report to the open character of the Six and hopes that the European Parliament will give every possible support to the efforts being made at the present time to bring about the European Economic Association.

**B. 2. Explanatory Memorandum (Rapporteur : M. STRASSER)**

1. The Assembly will wish to give most careful consideration to this First Report transmitted by the Assembly of the Communities of the Six, which is a comprehensive account of the last stages of the work of the Common Assembly in relation to the Coal and Steel Community, its metamorphosis into the European Parliament, and the first period of its work as the organ of parliamentary control over the three Communities. The Report contains some sections which deal primarily with the internal affairs of the Communities—and others which are of particular concern to States outside the Six. I think it is natural that our reply should concentrate largely on the latter aspects of the Report, and it is these which primarily figure in the draft Resolution.

2. The first paragraph of the draft Resolution deals with collaboration between the two Assemblies, of which the transmission of the European Parliament's First Report, and the agreement to hold Joint Sessions, as in the past, are the first and very welcome manifestations. The European Parliament's Report says (paragraph 7) that the transmission of an annual report to the Consultative Assembly and the holding of joint sessions will " contribute to a fruitful exchange of views, will strengthen links between the countries of Europe, and promote the comprehensive integration of Europe ". It will certainly be the wish of the Assembly that collaboration be established to this end, and I am sure that we can count on a sympathetic reception of our proposals for other forms of collaboration.

3. We may perhaps recall that it is as a result of the efforts of the Consultative Assembly no less than those of the Common Assembly that the creation of a fourth European Assembly was avoided and, as we learn from the Report (paragraph 80), since February 1957 there have been meetings between the Bureaux of the three European Assemblies in order to ensure the better co-ordination of European parliamentary work. It is assumed that this kind of regular meeting to co-ordinate the day-to-day programmes of the three Assemblies will continue, but a word should perhaps be added about the particular additional type of collaboration mentioned in paragraph 1 of the draft Resolution—joint meetings of the appropriate committees of the Assemblies. Paragraph 84 of the Report says that, although the external relations of the European Communities are primarily an economic matter, " their political effects must not be underestimated ". It is also said that as a. result of the experience of the Common Assembly, which in February 1957 created a sub-committee for questions of commercial policy, " the European Parliament—also convinced of the utility of separating external relations from politico-institutional questions—set up a special committee for commercial policy and relations with third countries." At a time when the negotiations for the setting up of a European Economic Association are still at a critical stage, and when the effects of the first measures of tariff reductions and quota increases will need to be given the closest scrutiny, it seems fair to hope that it will be possible to arrange for such meetings as may be required, for example between the Consultative Assembly's Economic Committee and the European Parliamentary Assembly's committee mentioned above for commercial policy and relations with third countries.

4. I would like to mention at this point the more general political problem which the Report touches upon—relations between the two Assemblies. There does not seem to be anything at this stage which could usefully be said on the subject in the draft Resolution, but, since extensive (the whole of Chapter VI) and thoughtful comment is devoted to it in the Report, some general comment may not be out of place. We can perhaps agree with Professor Furler's conclusion that (paragraph 105), " the further unification of parliamentary work can only develop very slowly, since the tasks of the European parliamentary bodies cover very different fields." Professor Furler's Report says, moreover, in its very last paragraph, that " the parliamentary idea can only be realised through the attribution of real competence and the performance of concrete tasks. The Consultative Assembly, as a result of the large number of Member States of the Council of Europe, has a more comprehensive task—which it has to carry out, however, without direct powers of supervision and decision. The province of the European Parliament is smaller, but its tasks are more concrete and affect more directly the life of the peoples of the six States, especially through the important powers of supervision and decision which fall to it." Dr. Furler concludes that " both Assemblies must continue to lead an independent life for some time if their respective tasks are to be fulfilled ". I cannot think that there would be any disagreement with this final conclusion, though it cannot be emphasised too strongly that there must be the closest co-operation between the two bodies, particularly when, as we hope, the Consultative Assembly will find its own sphere of interest considerably enlarged through the setting up of a European Economic Association.

5. Though the work of the three European Communities concerns economic matters, these, as has been said earlier, have political effects which must not be underestimated. It is precisely the role of a parliamentary body to evaluate these effects and to see that the right political guidance is given in relation to them. That this important side of the European Parliamentary Assembly's work is not neglected is clear at several points—paragraph 20, where long-term implications of coal and steel policy are mentioned; paragraph 24, where the role of the Parliament in welding together the individual measures taken by the High Authority into a coherent

policy is stressed; paragraph 28, where the Report proclaims the need for the Common Market to immunise itself against economic recessions in other parts of the world; paragraph 42, where, with a federalised Europe clearly in mind, the Report speaks of a transport authority, somewhat on the lines of the American Inter-State Commerce Commission, as a long-term objective; paragraph 48, where the vital importance of creating a common economic policy in times of recession is stressed; and paragraph 91, where we read " in all developments, the basic political will must be maintained and given a concrete form ". This basic aspect of the European Parliamentary Assembly's work seems to justify special mention in our Reply (paragraph 2).

6. A welcome feature of the present report is the space given to social questions: the social difficulties arising from the full integration of the Belgian coal mining industry into the Coal and Steel Community (paragraph 10); the importplus ance for workers of the Common Market's coming jnto being in a period of economic expansion (paragraph 25); the importance of ensuring that the present difficulties over coal are not allowed to create excessive difficulties for the mining community (paragraph 30); the close watch on the appearance of more disquieting unemployment figures in the last year or so of the European Coal and Steel Community's operation (paragraph 30); the description given of the work of the High Authority in the questions of freeing movements of workers, and their re-training (paragraphs 31 and 32); and the emphasis put upon re-training as one of the most important factors in the setting up of a common market—all these points are of the greatest interest. Details are also given of the building programme sponsored by the High Authority (paragraph 34), and the latest work in the Community on security in mines (paragraph 35), while a whole section (paragraphs 43 and 44) deals with the work of the Social Committee of the Parliament, in particular connection with wages policy and shorter working hours. We also read (paragraph 51) of the important agreement on social security for migrant workers. In view of all this, a paragraph has been specially included in the Reply to cover social matters.

7. Throughout the Report there is mention of the need for a co-ordinated policy on energy (paragraphs 22, 27, 39, 49). This is something on which we must all be agreed, and we particularly welcome the statement in the Report (paragraph 86) where the association agreement between the European Coal and Steel Community and the United Kingdom caused particular satisfaction to the European Parliament because this " facilitated the incorporation of coal and steel into a free trade area ". It is, indeed, much to be hoped that the setting up of a European Economic Association will facilitate still further the co-ordination of European policies on energy. It is perhaps a pity that in the discussion of the external relations of the European Atomic Energy Community (paragraphs 56, 57, 100 and 101) no mention whatever is made of co-operation with the European Nuclear Energy Agency. This is something to which the Consultative Assembly is profoundly attached, and in view of the fact that relatively few commercial barriers exist to trade in nuclear products, and co-operation is to that extent considerably facilitated, we must hope that the Consultative Assembly can work together with the European Parliamentary Assembly in ensuring maximum co-operation in the field of atomic energy between the Six and the Seventeen.

8. Paragraph 5 of the draft Resolution deals with the association of overseas territories and countries with the Common Market. It is clearly too early to expect much information on this subject, which must be a matter of vital concern to the Assembly. The overseas countries and territories are all, more or less, industrially under-developed and, since other States in this category have expressed anxiety lest the new trade patterns to be established between the Common Market and associated overseas territories operate to their own disadvantage, it is desirable that as much information as possible be made available.

9. The European Parliamentary Assembly, the Report indicates, is determined to regard the three Communities as but three facets of the same development (paragraph 74). There is great determination to ensure the proper coordination and harmonisation of the activities of the three executives. The three budgets are regarded as one (paragraph 72), regret is expressed that the Rome Treaties do not provide organic links between the executives (paragraph 76); and, after much parliamentary insistence (paragraph 77), some co-ordination has already been achieved—for example, common statistical, information and legal services have been set up.

10. In some instances (statistical, for example) it may well be that there is need for co-ordination at the level of the Seventeen, when a European Economic Association is brought about. This suggestion therefore figures in paragraph 6 of the draft Resolution.

11. There is, finally, the question of the European Economic Association. This will no doubt be the subject of further reports from both the Political and Economic Committees of the Assembly, and I have therefore thought it right not to go into the substance of the problem here. The importance, however, of the Joint Meeting of the two Assemblies, as an occasion for discussing at parliamentary level the ways in which a European Economic Association must now be sought, cannot be over-emphasised. Contacts between Governments on this subject have been in recent months fairly close, although, as we know, they can hardly

be described as having been very fruitful so far. Close contact between parliamentarians primarily concerned with the affairs of the Six and those who, like ourselves, are more concerned with problems at the level of the Seventeen, has, on the other hand, been signally lacking, and it seems likely, indeed, that the European Economic Association will come to dominate the debates with the European Parliamentary Assembly. Since, moreover, the Reports to be submitted to our own Assembly may be available at that time, the last paragraph of the draft Resolution merely gives general expression to the hope that co-operation between parliamentarians both inside and outside the Six will lead to a successful conclusion of the present negotiations.

**1.**