



Doc. 925

12 January 1959

European Conference of Local Authorities

Report¹

Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities

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1. 1958 - 10th Session - Third part



A. Draft Recommendation presented by the Committee of Local Authorities

The Assembly,

Welcoming the fact that, in accordance with Resolution 76 (1955), the European Conference of Local Authorities has held its first two sessions, in 1957 and 1958 respectively;

Considering that, as a result of the establishment and sessions of the Conference, the Council of Europe has received effective support from the populations of towns and municipalities of member countries;

Considering the importance of the work accomplished by the Conference since it was set up;

Recognising the valuable contribution made by Opinions and Resolutions of the Conference to the work of the Assembly;

Considering that participation of local authorities in the activities of European institutions, as a result of the Conference, is one of the most effective means of enhancing the work of the Council of Europe and providing a sound foundation for the Council's future;

Anxious to ensure respect for the unanimous determination of the Conference to take part in the work of European institutions and to be convened annually for this purpose [Opinion No. 4 (1957) and Resolution No. 10 (1958)];

Solemnly confirming to the local authorities of member countries and, in particular, to the Committee of Ministers its Resolution 76 (1955) in which it affirmed the need " to convene an annual conference to be attended by representatives of all the qualified national associations of the local authorities of member countries ",

1. Proclaims its full support of the important declaration made by the Committee of Ministers on 14th December 1957, in its Resolution (57) 28, that it was " aware of the importance for the development of European co-operation of the participation of local authorities in European institutions "; and

2. Recommends to the Committee of Ministers that, in order to give the most practical effect to this Resolution and in order not to disappoint the representatives of the Local Authorities who already participate in this work, it should now declare its acceptance of the principle of holding every year the European Conference of Local Authorities and to provide in the budget the necessary appropriations enabling the Conference to hold its third Session in the course of 1959.

B. Explanatory Memorandum by M. SANTERO

1.

1. As requested in the Assembly's Resolution 76 (1955) the European Conference of Local Authorities held its initial sessions in 1957 and 1958. For each of these sessions the Committee of Ministers granted appropriations whose modest amount appears to have been due to the difficulties which invariably arise at the beginning of any undertaking as novel as the Conference in question.

Thanks to the determination of the local authorities and the effective support of their associations since the Conference was instituted, the latter has established its position. The second session held in October 1958 was unanimously agreed by all as marking the successful completion of a first step and appeared to ensure the future of the Conference.

2. One of the most valuable features of the work of the Conference lies in its being convened annually; and the need for it to be so convened has been affirmed by both the Conference and the Assembly.

3. The Assembly's request to the Committee of Ministers [Opinion No. 28 (1958)] to provide appropriations enabling the Conference to hold its third session in 1959 was considered by the Joint Committee on 15th December 1958.

On that occasion the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers stated that the Committee was in favour of a third session of the Conference being held, but it was not sufficiently informed to take an immediate decision whether the third session should be held during 1959. The Ministers' Deputies have accordingly been instructed to decide upon the necessary administrative and financial measures and to fix the date of the third session.

4. The principle of holding the Conference was fully agreed by both the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly.

The meeting of the Joint Committee revealed, however, that agreement had not yet been reached concerning the interval of time at which the sessions of the Conference should be held, although, this question is one of very considerable importance for the future of the Conference.

5. The Assembly, in its Resolution 76 (1955), and the local authorities, whose opinion it expressed, took the view that the Conference should be held annually.

6. At its meeting on 11th December 1958, the Committee of Local Authorities unanimously supported the Assembly's Resolution 76 (1955) and decided that the principle of holding the Conference each year should no longer be questioned; any proposal to hold the sessions every two years would conflict with this decision, as well as with Resolution 76 (1955) of the Assembly and the Opinions and Resolutions adopted by the Conference at its first and second sessions.

(a) On the occasion of this unanimous decision, the Secretary-General of the Council of European Municipalities stated, on behalf of both his own Organisation and the International Union of Mayors, that the second session of the Conference had given additional proof of the value of the co-operation of local authorities in European institutions and of the importance of the work they had accomplished. A decision to convene the Conference only every two years would meet with a very poor reception by the local authorities of Member States.

(b) The representative of the International Union of Local Authorities said he agreed with the views of the Secretary-General of the C.E.M. and, on behalf of his organisation, expressed his thanks to the Committee for having unanimously confirmed the need for a session of the Conference to be held each year and having thereby enhanced the value of the relevant texts adopted previously. The representative of the International Union of Local Authorities added that the Union fully associated itself with the Committee's Resolution and would take every step to ensure that it was implemented.

2. Conclusion

Considering that a decision regarding the date of the third session of the Conference has not yet been taken, the Assembly will no doubt wish to express its determination that the Conference be held each year and to ask the Committee of Ministers:

a. to accept the principle of holding the Conference every year; and

- b.* to provide in the Budget the necessary appropriations enabling the Conference to hold its third Session in 1959.