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

Motion for an Order

tabled by the Committee on Culture, Science and Education

The Assembly,

Having regard to the creation of the Cultural Fund;

Having regard to Article IV, 1 (b) of the Statute of the Fund, which provides for voluntary contributions from Governments,

Instructs the Working Party on relations with national parliaments to use the good offices of its members in securing a voluntary contribution by their country to the Cultural Fund, possibly by means of a special provision in the national budget, as has been done in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Explanatory Memorandum

1. Under Article IV of the Fund's Statute three different sources of revenue are envisaged : first, there is the fixed governmental contribution, which is apportioned among the member countries and countries acceding to the European Cultural Convention and takes the form of an annual payment to the Cultural Fund, included in the Council of Europe Budget. This contribution amounts to 40,000,000 French francs for a period of three years. The Fund is also to be financed by contributions from non-governmental sources. In that connection the Assembly adopted Resolution 163 " on the provision of private financial and moral support for the Cultural Fund ", advocating, in particular, the setting up of national committees which would collect " all other contributions " from private sources. Finally, the Statute of the Fund provides for voluntary contributions from the Members of the Council of Europe or non-Member States acceding to the European Cultural Convention.

2. This last-mentioned provision is of special importance and the background to it is worth recalling.

As we know, the main reason why the Cultural Fund was set up was the impossibility of increasing the Council's cultural budget in its original form, when it was part of the general Budget.

This difficulty arose from the fact that many Member States, though well disposed towards an expansion of the Council's cultural activities, were nevertheless unable to increase the appropriations included in their national budgets towards the administrative costs of one or other of the international organisations.

Only the creation of a Cultural Fund could enable them to subsidise the cultural activities of the Council outside and independently of their compulsory contribution to those administrative costs, which they desire to keep strictly to the minimum.

3. The time has come to remind Governments to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Statute of the Cultural Fund.

Here the national parliaments have a decisive part to play. Even if the initiative has not come from them, it remains a fact that any credit requested by a Government for the Cultural Fund, under a national budget, will require parliamentary approval and support.



It is on the national parliaments that the final amount of the optional governmental contributions to the Cultural Fund will depend.

4. It would thus seem appropriate for members of the Working Party on relations with national Parliaments to take the necessary steps, in due course, to obtain this voluntary contribution to the Fund from the Government of their country—if possible by the inclusion of a special appropriation in its national budget.