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European conference of Local Authorities

Report¹

Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities

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1. 1959 - 11th Session - Second part



A. Draft Recommendation

The Assembly,

Considering the work done by the European Conference of Local Authorities at its first two Sessions;

Taking note of the very promising way in which the studies being carried out by various organs of the Conference, following the work of the Conference, are progressing;

Noting with satisfaction the agreement of the Committee of Ministers to vote the necessary appropriations so as to enable the Conference to hold its third Session in 1960; even though these appropriations are still inadequate;

Welcoming the decision by which the Committee of Ministers has approved the principle of meetings of the organs of the Conference between Sessions in order to ensure the continuity of its work;

Noting with satisfaction that the Committee of Ministers has announced that it is prepared to consider requests for the holding of further Sessions of the Conference, while reserving the right to examine each request on its "individual merits", though it has refused so far to accept the principle that such sessions should be held periodically;

Conscious of interpreting the wishes of the great majority of European local authorities;

Convinced that the work of the Conference can be fully effective only if it is carried out under stable and regular conditions;

Being most anxious to avoid any controversy of principle with the Committee of Ministers which would harm its relations with that Committee and the very future of the Conference itself, particularly since there is a fundamental understanding between the Conference and the Committee auguring well for the future of the Conference,

Recommends that the Committee of Ministers should be so good as to consider forthwith what steps will be necessary to hold a highly desirable fourth Session of the Conference and that it should also give sympathetic consideration to the need to ensure continuity and regularity of the work of the Conference.

B. Explanatory Memorandum

1.

Despite the reluctance of the Committee of Ministers to give full support to its views, the Assembly was undoubtedly right to plan a EuroJJean Conference of Local Authorities, representing all the national associations of local authorities, to be regularly convened every year, with a view to securing for the Council of Europe the effective cooperation and support of the very large proportion of the public whose local representatives are its qualified spokesmen. The range of the current work of the Conference testifies to the usefulness of this task, as shown by the steady increase in the circles interested in its activities including, first and foremost, the executives of the European Communities.

By its Resolution No. 10, the second Session of the Conference confirmed, if such confirmation was still needed, the unanimous appreciation of the representatives of European local authorities of the usefulness of the Conference and their steadfast resolution to be associated "with the task of European integration at all stages of its realisation and in all fields in which municipalities' life and integrity are at stake".

In its Tenth Report to the Consultative Assembly, tabled on 19th April 1959, the Committee of Ministers, while refusing to grant the Assembly's request that the Conference be held every year, considered that it would be helpful to ensure continuity of the Conference's work by providing the necessary means to enable some of the Conference's organs to hold ordinary meetings between Sessions.

Thus, despite its hesitancy, the Committee of Ministers has adopted an encouraging attitude which constitutes a real step forward, especially in view of its declared readiness to consider requests for future Sessions of the Conference on their individual merits.

The Assembly feels entitled to point to the present favourable atmosphere, which augurs well and is, indeed, essential to the successful accomplishment of what the local authorities are striving to achieve.

The Assembly should, while urging the Committee of Ministers to play its part in further improving this atmosphere, emphasise the value of the stability, continuity and regularity of the Conference's work.