



Opinion 47 (1967)¹

European Population Conference

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

Recalling its [Recommendation 381 \(1964\)](#) concerning the problems raised by population trends in Europe, in which it asked that the Committee of Ministers :

1. Convene, within the framework of the Council of Europe, a "European Population Conference" with the following terms of reference :

- a. to examine the problems of every kind raised by population trends in Europe and the proposed remedies ;
- b. to draw up a plan of research into these problems, dividing the work to be done among countries participating in the Conference and their specialised institutes ;
- c. to suggest means of implementing a European population policy ;
- d. in agreement with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, to put forward any practical suggestions for synchronising population censuses in member countries of the Council of Europe and standardising the definitions in general use for such surveys ;

2. Thanking the Committee of Ministers for the favourable action taken on the aforesaid Recommendation ;

Expressing its satisfaction at the excellent organisation of the European Population Conference held at the instigation of the Committee on Population and Refugees ;

Having been represented at the Conference by its own delegation ;

Stresses the marked success of the Conference which took place at a very high scientific level and which opened the way to European co-operation in demographic matters among member countries of the Council as well as laying the foundations for co-operation with non-member countries in accordance with the principles set out in Assembly [Recommendation 474 \(1967\)](#) ;

Having examined the Conclusions and Recommendations of the European Population Conference ;

Having regard to the request by the Committee of Ministers for an opinion on the proceedings of the Conference, in pursuance of the final paragraph of the above-mentioned [Recommendation 381 \(1964\)](#) ;

Having examined the report of its Committee on Population and Refugees, to whom the subject was referred, and considered the opinion of the other committees concerned ;

1. With regard to [Recommendation 1 on comparative research into fertility in Europe](#)

(1) Approves the stress laid by the Conference on the deficiencies and gaps in research, particularly in regard to psycho-sociological variables and birth control ;

1. Assembly Debate on 28th April 1967 (7th Sitting) (see [Doc. 2197](#) and Appendices and [Doc. 2220](#), [Doc. 2220](#), report of the Committee on Population and Refugees). Text adopted by the Assembly on 28th April 1967 (7th Sitting).



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(2) Considers accordingly that the Committee of Ministers should take action on this Recommendation with a view to bringing about a better understanding of the opinions and motivations underlying the formation and development of families ;

II. With regard to Recommendation 2 on the changing needs of elderly people

(1) Considers that the Conference was right to draw attention to one of the basic features of European demography, namely the ageing of the population ;

(2) Notes that Recommendation 2 does not cover the whole problem and that the effects of work at greater ages deserve investigation in this context ;

(3) Is of the opinion that the documentation assembled by the Conference on this subject might be used to advantage in the preparation of the Recommendation to Governments on the social problems of old people which is an item in the Intergovernmental Work Programme of the Council of Europe (Chapter III, B, 5) ;

III. With regard to Recommendation 3 on international aspects of regional planning

(1) Considers that this Recommendation, in which the Conference stresses the dangers resulting from the disturbance of the balance between town and country caused by the rural exodus and the overcrowding of urban centres, deserves unqualified support ; and invites all public authorities and organisations concerned to adopt the principles set forth in that Recommendation as a guide ;

(2) Is gratified that the Conference, in recommending close co-operation between member countries in regional planning, especially in frontier areas, endorses in so doing the Assembly's own views ;

(3) Invites its Committee on Local Authorities and its Working Party on Regional Planning to bear this Recommendation in mind in its future work ;

(4) Invites its Committee on Agriculture to investigate in greater detail the economic and social consequences of the rural exodus ;

IV. With regard to Recommendation 4 on the demographic basis of family policy

(1) Considers that the provisions of this Recommendation, which in general it approves, cover a very vast range of problems ;

(2) Believes that the measures recommended for equalising the financial burden on families, which are specifically referred to in Article 16 of the European Social Charter, might have included recommendations in regard to employment in general, security of employment, social advancement and incomes ;

(3) Is of the opinion that the question of women's work required a separate recommendation which, in view of the increasing proportion of women in the labour force, should cover the following fields :

- a. the training, in particular the technical training, of women workers ;
- b. the protection of women against any discriminatory measure in respect of access to and maintenance in employment ;
- c. the promotion of women in their occupation and their access to responsible posts ;
- d. the equalisation of men's and women's wages and salaries ;
- e. the combination of outside work and home duties ;
- f. the length of maternity leave ;
- g. part-time work for women ;
- h. the social and medical effects of migration on working women ;

(4) Invites its Social Committee to take account of the above points in its current study on the political, social and civic situation of women in Europe ;

V. With regard to Recommendation 5 on problems of training and housing migrant workers

(1) Notes that this Recommendation deals with matters in which the Assembly has been interested for several years, as is shown by its [Recommendation 445](#) and the work carried out in this field by the Special Representative for National Refugees and Over-Population, and his Advisory Committee ;

(2) Considers accordingly that the Special Representative should be encouraged to pursue the studies in hand to improve the conditions in which migrant workers and their families return to their country of origin, and to seek administrative and financial solutions to the problems with which immigration countries are faced in providing housing accommodation for migrant workers ;

VI. With regard to [Recommendation 6](#) on the policy implications of mortality trends

(1) Recalls that the problem of road safety has been the subject of several Assembly Recommendations which have received the approval of the Committee of Ministers, as may be seen from the Council's Intergovernmental Work Programme ;

(2) Stresses that the important problem of pre-natal and infantile mortality and the steps which need to be taken to improve medical care and welfare measures during pregnancy and delivery, particularly in the least favoured strata of society, deserves special attention, particularly from the European Public Health Committee ;

(3) Considers that the social effects of increasing excess male mortality need to be thoroughly studied ;

VII. With regard to [Recommendation 7](#) on the publication of urban pathology statistics

(1) Approves the proposals contained in this Recommendation ;

(2) Recommends that the Committee of Ministers place this question on the Intergovernmental Programme of Work of the Council of Europe and instruct the Conference on Local Authorities to consider how the Recommendation should be implemented ;

VIII. With regard to [Recommendation 9](#) on the improvements of population statistics

(1) Stresses the fundamental nature of this Recommendation for European cooperation in the sphere of demography ;

(2) Regrets, however, that in spite of the Assembly's [Recommendation 381](#) and its action on subsequent occasions, the Conference was not able to adopt any recommendation on the synchronisation of census-taking in Council of Europe countries and regards this as an omission which should be remedied ;

(3) Points out that the Assembly's views and those of the Committee of Ministers on the need to synchronise and standardise census-taking coincide absolutely ;

(4) Requests the Committee of Ministers to place this subject on the Intergovernmental Work Programme of the Council of Europe ;

(5) Invites its Committee on Population and Refugees to prepare a draft Recommendation on the subject, bearing in mind the work already accomplished in this sphere by the Special Representative and other international organisations ;

IX. With regard to [Recommendation 10](#) on the development of demographic research

(1) Is of the opinion that the growing similarity of population problems as member countries become more industrialised calls for close co-operation between institutes and individuals working in Europe in the sphere of demography, and in particular between scientists and parliamentarians ;

(2) Hopes that, by the spread of demographic teaching to all levels of the population, public opinion will be awakened to the problems raised by population development ;

(3) Stresses that the Council of Europe is the framework most suited to the forward-looking action required by the nature of demographic studies and recalls in this connection the ideas expressed in [Resolution 302](#) adopted at the instigation of the Cultural and Scientific Committee ;

X. With regard to [Recommendation 8](#) on the continuation of the work begun by the Conference

(1) Considers that the European Population Conference has brought out clearly the extent to which population problems in Europe are peculiar to this continent thanks to its historical, political, economic and social development ;

(2) Is convinced that these problems call for solutions suited to European conditions but which can also serve as an example to the developing countries, in as much as our problems today will be theirs tomorrow ;

(3) Considers that the work begun by the Conference must be continued ;

(4) Welcomes the decision taken by the Committee of Ministers in favour of calling a second European Population Conference under the Council of Europe auspices with a limited agenda of subjects likely to give rise to more concrete recommendations in order to facilitate as far as possible the preparation of European conventions or agreements ;

(5) Proposes for the agenda of a second Conference three groups of subjects covering the following points (in order of priority) ;

a. Methodology :

1. Practical measures to synchronise and standardise census-taking in member countries ;

b. Major topics :

The development of families (an extension of [Recommendation 1](#) of the Conference) ;

The ageing of the population in Europe and its repercussions (following on from [Recommendation 2](#) and Point 5 of [Recommendation 6](#)) ;

Internal migration, urban concentration and rural exodus (following on from [Recommendation 3](#)) ;

Differential mortality ([Recommendation 6](#) and Part III of [Recommendation 9](#)) ;

International migration in Europe ;

c. Sociological studies :

Women's work ;

The school population.

(6) Considers, in the light of experience, that the Organising Committee for the second Conference should comprise :

a. as members responsible to the Council of Europe :

1. certain number of governmental experts representing the broad geographical zones of Europe ;

2. the Consultative Assembly representative ;

b. as observers in an advisory capacity :

1. the representatives of intergovernmental and international non-governmental organisations directly concerned ;

2. one or two experts from non-member countries.