



Opinion 74 (1976)¹

Draft medium-term plan 1976-80

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having regard to the Communication from the Committee of Ministers transmitting the draft medium-term plan 1976-80 to the Assembly ([Doc. 3669](#)) ;
2. Having regard to the contribution of the CCC for the fields of culture and education ([Doc. 3721](#)) ;
3. Having regard to the report of its Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme, and the opinions of the Political Affairs Committee, the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, the Committee on Social and Health Questions, the Legal Affairs Committee, the Committee on Culture and Education, the Committee on Science and Technology, the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities, the Committee on Agriculture, and the Committee on Population and Refugees ([Doc. 3709](#)) ;
4. Expressing its satisfaction on the decision of the Committee of Ministers to seek the opinion of the Assembly before the final adoption of the plan, and to examine it with the greatest interest and care ;
5. Thanking the Chairman of the Ministers' Deputies for presenting the draft medium-term plan to the Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme ;
6. Recalling the important part the Assembly has played in introducing medium-term planning in the Council of Europe, notably through its [Opinion No. 61 \(1972\)](#) and [Recommendation 704 \(1973\)](#) ;
7. Taking into account Resolutions (74) 4 and (74) 33 of the Committee of Ministers, as well as the report of the working party of the Ministers' Deputies on the definition of general criteria for the selection of the various activities in each sector of the Work Programme and for the attribution of priority degrees to each of these activities ;
8. Having regard to the decision taken by the Committee of Ministers to revise the plan every two years in the light of political developments, progress in European co-operation and achievements within the framework of the Council of Europe during the intervening period ;
9. Regretting that the Committee of Ministers has not introduced the plan with a general policy statement setting out an overall strategy for the next five years, as requested by the Assembly in [Opinion No. 61 \(1972\)](#) and [Recommendation 704 \(1973\)](#) ;
10. Considering that the plan must on no account be regarded as imposing a straitjacket on the Council of Europe's activities,
11. Regrets the circumstances that delayed submission for opinion to the Assembly of the sectors for education and culture, themselves among the Council's most important activities ;
12. Stresses the fact that the interdependence and multidisciplinary nature of the plan's objectives must be brought out more clearly ;

1. Assembly debate on 27 January 1976 (20th Sitting) (see [Doc. 3709](#), report of the Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme). Text adopted by the Assembly on 27 January 1976 (20th Sitting).



13. Notes that the draft medium-term plan as forwarded to the Assembly gives no indications of the priorities to be assigned to the various fields and sectors of activity, nor states any order of priority between the objectives, despite the provision in paragraphs 13 and 14 of Resolution (74) 33 ;

14. Recalls the general criteria set out in [Opinion No. 61 \(1972\)](#) for defining plan sectors and objectives, and for selecting programme activities ;

15. Insists on the need to set up appropriate machinery for determining priorities if the Council of Europe is to influence political developments in Europe instead of merely commenting on them as at present ;

16. Considers that every sector in the plan should have political relevance for the protection and reinforcement of democracy, the rule of law, human rights and social justice ;

17. Believes that political consultation and co-operation at intergovernmental level should be related to the plan on a triple basis :

associating non-member states with certain technical aims in the plan ;

using the Intergovernmental Work Programme of the Council of Europe as a contribution to implementing the conclusions embodied in the final document of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe ;

evaluating the Council of Europe's role as a regional organisation in a world context ;

18. Reserves its opinion on the relationship between the follow-up to the CSCE and the Intergovernmental Work Programme of the Council of Europe, and recalls that it will discuss this question at its next part-session ;

19. Hopes that the conclusions of the Conference on the Development of Democratic Institutions in Europe, which the Assembly is to organise in April 1976, will be taken into consideration at intergovernmental level ;

20. Recalls the important role played by the Council of Europe in the field of local and regional authorities, and emphasises the need to accord these questions a high measure of priority ;

21. Emphasises the role of conferences of specialised Ministers which, provided those conferences are endowed with sufficient resources, constitute, by their contribution to policy-making in specific fields, the most appropriate forum for dealing with the main problems that arise in given sectors ;

22. Recalls the importance attached by the Assembly to the holding of periodic parliamentary and scientific conferences, and expresses the wish that the conclusions reached by these conferences be embodied in the plan, in so far as they are concerned with intergovernmental co-operation ;

23. Expresses a wish that, if necessary, the results of the work undertaken by the scientific co-operation groups set up by the Assembly be further exploited at intergovernmental level to ensure that full practical benefit is derived from them ;

24. Emphasises that, in order to assume its respective planning responsibilities, as provided in Resolution (74) 33 of the Committee of Ministers, the Assembly needs to have appropriate information covering particulars of the budget policy for the period covered by the plan and the proportion of annual budgets earmarked for intergovernmental activities, and to receive regular reports on the implementation of the plan ;

25. Emphasises the need for a comprehensive publication policy as an integral part of programme-planning, and of the implementation of objectives and activities at all levels ;

26. Urges member states to provide the Council of Europe, on the basis of a formal undertaking, with the financial resources it needs to fulfil its mission ;

27. Issues the following opinion on the sectors and objectives contained in the draft medium-term plan :

Area No. 1 : Safeguard and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms

a. The Assembly attaches particular importance to sector 1. Sector 2 should be extended to cover aspects such as the "right to conscientious objection" and the "right to asylum". Legal aspects of the "rights of the sick" could also be included in this sector. The need to recognise the right to the quality of life, and in particular social rights, the right to work, the right to a home and decent living and recreational conditions, should be

considered from the general point of view of human rights. One of the sectors in this area should also give a follow-up to the Conference on the Development of Democratic Institutions in Europe, which will be organised by the Assembly in April 1976. The views of young people should also be taken into account.

Area No. 2 : Social and socio-economic problems such as those concerning migrant workers

b. It is regretted that a forward-looking approach in this area is missing. Long-range research and social planning are indispensable to develop a sound social policy. A follow-up to the CSCE could be considered in this field.

c. The following remarks are made on sector 4 :

particular importance is attached to objective 4.1 ;

sub-objective 4.1.2, dealing with the protection of workers against the effects of unemployment, should be cross-referenced with sector 5, in order to examine the problem from the point of view of redundancy conditions ;

the inclusion of sub-objective 4.2.3 is welcomed ;

sub-objective 4.3.3 should include the preparation of an international sickness insurance form.

d. Sector 5 calls for the following comments :

the inclusion of objective 5.1 is welcomed, but it is recalled that work should be carried out in the light of Assembly [Resolution 564 \(1974\)](#) ;

it is recommended to add, after objective 5.6, the particular problems relating to agricultural and rural youth ;

the Assembly also attaches importance to supervision of the application of the Social Charter.

e. The Assembly would also like to see a new sector, relating to consumer protection, inserted in the medium-term plan, in accordance with the assurances given by the Committee of Ministers in its reply to [Recommendation 705 \(1973\)](#).

f. Sector 7 :

the Assembly is pleased with the inclusion in objectives 7.3 and 7.6 of certain points derived from the 2nd European Population Conference ;

objective 7.5 is also welcomed, as it provides the necessary background for the work to be carried out in sector 9 ;

when examining objective 7.6, the economic and social consequences should, in particular, be taken into account.

g. Sector 9 :

the Assembly attaches importance to the implementation of the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers, an instrument to which prominence is given in the introduction to this sector ;

in particular, it considers that priority should be given to sub-objective 9.3.2, relating to frontier workers ;

it regrets that no corresponding objective to an activity included in the 1975 Programme, on the "participation of migrant workers in local community life", appears in the plan ;

two further objectives should be included in this sector, one relating to the problems of the return of migrant workers to their countries of origin, and another concerning the transfer of capital and industry to emigration countries ;

the particular problem of migrant children and youth should be pointed out, and the great potential value of the views of these young people for breaking down national barriers should be taken into account ;

the social aspect of conservation and rehabilitation should be enhanced in the context of sectors 4 to 9, by introducing a cross-reference to the relevant parts of sectors 18 and 19, thus mentioning social structuring in town and country planning in general.

Area No. 3 : Educational and cultural co-operation

h. The Assembly welcomes the CCC's contribution to the medium-term plan as regards its substance. It recommends, however, that the educational and cultural co-operation chapter be formulated to indicate the major long-term objectives of the Council of Europe in this field :

Consciousness of European cultural identity. To discern and to promote awareness of the common cultural values of Europe in the contemporary world context.

Democratisation of culture. To ensure equal access to education, culture and science, while permitting the definition of these fields to reflect the views of those participating.

Development of European culture. Maintenance of existing educational standards and cultural values, subject to evaluation and continuous improvement.

"Culture" is understood in its wider sense : embracing the three fields of education, culture, and science.

"Sport for All" should be incorporated under these objectives.

i. The Assembly also suggests that account be taken of the following aspects when defining the aims of these sectors :

the conclusions of the ad hoc Conference on Attitudes to the Study of Science and Technology, which is to be held at the suggestion of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education ;

the possibility of including the problems of university research in the work programme of the Committee for Higher Education and Research ;

the inclusion in the CCC's activities of scientific and technological policies as factors which determine the cultural development of European societies ;

the general declaration and the recommendations of the 4th Parliamentary and Scientific Conference, particularly [Recommendation No. 1](#), paragraph 13.B.iii and iv, and [Recommendation No. 2](#), paragraphs 5.B, E, F and G ;

the activities of the European Joint Committee on Scientific Co-operation and its working parties have an important role to play in initiating European co-operation in specific scientific fields, in serving as a link between the scientific activities of national and international research bodies and the Council of Europe Work Programme, and as a meeting place for a constructive and continuing dialogue between parliamentarians and scientists ; these functions can only be effectively and fruitfully pursued within the framework of the Parliamentary Assembly ;

deciding on methods of co-operating with the European Science Foundation, in the light of the possibilities for contact and the exchange of information offered by the European Joint Committee on Scientific Co-operation.

Area No. 4 : Youth questions

j. It is suggested that each area of the plan should contain a separate sector to take particular account of future developments in society and of the views of young people in formulating an approach towards these developments. Area No. 4 should therefore concentrate on problems relating to youth as such, and not attempt at the same time to cover the quite separate objective of including the views of young people in the construction of their future society. Accordingly this area should be divided into two sectors rather than one :

the title of sector 13 should include a reference to associating youth with the safeguarding of the cultural values of Europe and comprise three aims :

improving Council of Europe contacts with young people, and involving intensification of European Youth Centre and European Youth Foundation activities (objective 13.1) and their closer co-ordination within the CCC ;

an appreciation of the views of young people in Council of Europe activities, with a cross-reference to the rest of the plan ;

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the encouragement of the active participation of young people in democratic decision-making ;

the second sector should group together those parts of the plan concerned with youth problems as such.

Area No. 5 : Protection and promotion of public health

k. It is remarked that the formulation of objective 14.1 is too vague to give a satisfactory answer to the Assembly, which had requested the improvement of medical care in hospitals.

l. Sector 15 should comprise a special effort towards young people.

m. The findings of the study groups of the Committee on Science and Technology, operational in this field, should be taken into consideration.

Area No. 6 : Protection of nature and the management of natural resources, the man-made environment and regional planning

n. With regard to sector 16, the Assembly considers it desirable :

actively to promote the protection of ecologically sensitive areas on the basis of prior assessments and inventories, and progressively to determine criteria enabling models to be devised for the use of landscapes according, in particular, to their ecological value ;

rapidly to complete European legal instruments affording effective protection for endangered wildlife, especially migratory birds and their natural habitats, and to prepare strict, harmonised rules governing hunting, shooting and fishing ;

to increase efforts to protect water in Europe on the basis of the draft convention now before the Committee of Ministers, supplemented by further measures for the protection and management of all surface and underground waters, and to secure the conduct of these activities by setting up a permanent committee ;

to gear the activities of the European Information Centre for Nature Conservation to coverage of all aspects of the environment, including the man-made environment (regional planning, monuments and sites), and to provide it with the requisite resources and machinery ;

the economic implications of these measures must also be taken into account.

o. With regard to sector 17, the Assembly :

congratulates the Committee of Ministers on its decision to include regional planning for the first time in the Work Programme and to give it high priority ;

advocates that the programme, while based on the very important proposals of the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (ECMRP), should be dealt with by a body working within the institutional framework of the Council of Europe ;

is convinced that priority activities in this field, such as cartography and statistics for regional planning, cannot be successfully completed by means of ordinary Council of Europe resources, and accordingly suggests that special funds be voted for this purpose, for example a subsidiary budget as requested by the ministerial conference itself

p. The need for educating citizens in the process and principles of local and regional planning should be included in sector 17 and cross-referenced with sector 19.

q. Importance is also attached to sector 17, with particular reference to underprivileged areas and to the identification of cultural parameters in the context of regional planning.

r. With regard to sector 18, the Assembly advocates multidisciplinary co-operation in this field between the bodies working in the cultural and regional planning fields, including the ministerial conferences, but also with the bodies in the local authority sector.

s. An objective on the follow-up to European Architectural Heritage Year, and in particular the implementation of the European Charter of the Architectural Heritage and the Declaration of Amsterdam, should be included in sector 18, as well as an objective on the review of progress in architectural conservation. The general need for craftsmanship should be emphasised and included in sub-objective 18.2.2.

Area No. 7 : Local authorities : matters relating to regional and municipal co-operation

t. With regard to sector 19, the Assembly :

considers that the main aim of activities in this sector should be to increase local freedom by strengthening local government structures and means of action, enabling them to fulfil their function as the basic unit of democratic freedoms ;

declares that all Council of Europe action in contact with local authorities assures it of a special place and role among the European institutions ;

repeats its wish for the speedy preparation of a European legal instrument affording a sound basis for co-operation between local and regional authorities across national frontiers and, in particular, facilitating co-operation between different authorities with equal powers ;

appeals to the Committee of Ministers to review the allocation of funds within the eight priority fields by allocating a fairer share to relatively new sectors such as regional planning and local and regional co-operation.

Area No. 8 : Co-operation in the legal field, including the harmonisation of national legislation and practice in specific legal sectors, the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders

u. It is proposed to take up in the plan objectives relating to the following subjects :

harmonisation of the rules of conflict of private international law ;

torture in the world ;

the legal status of aliens ;

a procedure to ensure that new national legislation conforms with certain agreed general principles.

v. Importance is attached to sub-objectives 21.1.6 and 21.2.11.

w. An appropriate objective might be inserted in sector 20 on the implementation of the Charter on the European Architectural Heritage. Objective 21.2 could take into account the legal provisions relating to conservation of the architectural heritage.

x. The subject dealt with under objective 21.2 should not be approached in a purely legal way. Scientific and technological aspects should be taken into account. The findings of the 4th Parliamentary and Scientific Conference should be integrated in the plan.

y. When examining sub-objectives 21.2.6 and 21.2.9, account should be taken of young people. A new objective could study the effects of commercial exploitation of the youth sector of consumers. Youth problems should also figure in the implementation of sector 22, and efforts should already be directed towards this end. Objective 22.1 could be cross-referenced with Area No. 3.

z. As already emphasised on several occasions, the Assembly considers that joint action by Council of Europe member states is needed to combat terrorism. An appropriate objective should thus be included in the medium-term plan.