Opinion 78 (1976)[1]

Accession of Portugal to the Council of Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having received from the Committee of Ministers a request for opinion on the accession of Portugal to the Council of Europe (Doc. 3822), in pursuance of Statutory Resolution (51) 30 A adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 May 1951 ;

2. Recalling its Resolution 563 (1974), Recommendation 740 (1974) and Resolutions 593 (1975), 601 (1975) and 627 (1976), on the situation in Portugal ;

3. Recalling that, in Recommendation 563 adopted on 9 May 1974, it expressed the hope that Portugal would joint the Council of Europe,

4. Notes that the Portuguese people voted overwhelmingly on 25 April 1976, as on 25 April 1975, for political parties which accept democratic principles ;

5. Notes that, after the presidential elections on 27 June 1976 and the vote of confidence in the Portuguese Government on 11 August 1976, the democratic institutions provided for under the Portuguese constitution have been firmly established, and that after a period of transition the dual aim of democratisation and decolonisation has been achieved ;

6. Notes with deep satisfaction that, in these circumstances, Portugal is in a position to comply with the provisions of Article 3 of the Statute of the Council of Europe, whereby "every Member of the Council of Europe must accept the principles of the rule of law and of the enjoyment by all persons within its jurisdiction of human rights and fundamental freedoms ..." ;

7. Welcomes the acceptance by Portugal of the Council of Europe's aim set out in Chapter I of its Statute, as expressed in the request for membership transmitted by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in his letter of 12 August 1976 addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and stating that "... Portugal's presence as an integral member of the European institutions will stress the importance that (his) government attaches to the existence of a strong, united and democratic Europe, thus contributing towards cooperation between the states and their peoples" ;

8. Takes note that Portugal thus fully satisfies the conditions for membership of the Council of Europe as laid down in the Statute, and accordingly declares itself in favour of the Committee of Ministers' inviting Portugal to become a Member of the organisation ;

9. Welcomes the intention expressed by the Portuguese authorities to become a contracting party to the European Convention on Human Rights ;

10. Proposes that Portugal should have seven Representatives in the Assembly, and that Article 26 of the Statute be amended to that effect.

---

1. Assembly debate on 16 September 1976 (9th Sitting) (see Doc. 3829, report of the Political Affairs Committee). Text adopted by the Assembly on 16 September 1976 (9th Sitting).