



Opinion 84 (1977)¹

First revision of the medium-term plan 1976-80

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having regard to the medium-term plan 1976-80 of the Council of Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 May 1976 by Resolution (76) 29 after obtaining the Assembly's [Opinion No. 74 \(1976\)](#) ;
2. Having regard to the letter from the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers to the President of the Assembly dated 25 January 1977, asking for the Assembly's views, comments and suggestions on the first revision of the medium-term plan ([Doc. 3931](#)) ;
3. Having regard to the views expressed by its committees concerned ;
4. Regretting that the Committee of Ministers has not taken the opportunity to reply to the Assembly's opinion in one of the statutory reports, and thus gives the impression that it is seeking to avoid an effective dialogue in the field of planning the Council of Europe's intergovernmental activities ;
5. Regretting further that the final version of the medium-term plan does not take up any of the basic considerations expressed by the Assembly in its opinion, and merely includes some of the Assembly's suggestions for the definition of the objectives of the plan ;
6. Recalling in particular its observations made in paragraphs 8 and 12 of [Opinion No. 74 \(1976\)](#), referring to the need for a general policy statement setting out an overall strategy for the plan and the indication of priorities,
7. Stresses that it is the statutory role of the Assembly to take up at any given time any topical subject of political relevance, and to address recommendations to the Committee of Ministers, without being limited by any instrument of planning applicable in the intergovernmental field ;
8. Is of the opinion that some kind of mechanism is therefore necessary to adapt the plan at short notice, in order to take appropriate action at the intergovernmental level on recommendations made by the Assembly ;
9. Believes that it would have been more useful to consult the Assembly after the Secretary General and the Steering Committees had made their own proposals for revision, and not to expect the Assembly to work on the basis of the plan as originally adopted in May 1976 ;
10. Stresses again the importance of the implementation of paragraphs 13 and 14 of Resolution (74) 33, referring to priorities within the medium-term plan and the need for setting up appropriate machinery for their determination ;
11. Calls upon the Committee of Ministers to provide the Assembly with much fuller information about its budget policy for the period covered by the plan, including the apportionment of the budgetary resources and staff available to each of the major sectors ;

1. Assembly debate on 29 April 1977 (6th Sitting) (see [Doc. 3970](#), report of the Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme). Text adopted by the Assembly on 29 April 1977 (6th Sitting).



12. Insists on the need for a meaningful dialogue between the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly on the planning and programming of the intergovernmental activities of the Council of Europe ;
13. Proposes that an ad hoc delegation of parliamentarians representing the Assembly committees directly concerned should discuss the medium-term plan at a special meeting of the Joint Committee, which could, at least in the first instance, meet at the level of the Ministers' Deputies ;
14. Issues the following opinion on the medium-term plan 1976-80, and asks the Committee of Ministers to consider the following questions in addition to those it had asked for in its [Opinion No. 74 \(1976\)](#) ;

Introduction

a. Reference should be inserted to co-ordinating the work of the Council of Europe with that of other intergovernmental organisations, with specific reference to Unesco, OECD and the European Communities.

Field I - Safeguard and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms

b. The inclusion in the European Convention on Human Rights of a guarantee of the independence of legal assistance ([Recommendation 791 \(1976\)](#)) ; its amendment in such a way as to exclude restrictions at present authorised by Article 16 with respect to political activity or the exercise by aliens of the freedoms guaranteed by Articles 10 and 11 ([Recommendation 799](#)) ; the examination of the rights of the sick and the dying ([Recommendation 779](#)) ; the extension of the Human Rights Convention or the creation of a separate instrument to cover cultural rights such as the right of access to culture for the individual ; follow-up to the various rights indicated in the CSCE.

Field II - Social and socio-economic problems, such as those concerning migrant workers

c. Protection of workers against the effects of unemployment with a view to preparing a European convention ([Recommendation 804](#)) ; further stress on work on the relationship between education and the world of work, especially for young people ; improvement of the social status of artists preferably by categories, such as the performing artist or the writer ; encouragement of the crafts ; co-ordination of the effort towards migrants ; establishment of consultative councils to represent the views of aliens at the level of local authorities ([Recommendation 799](#)) ; simplification of administrative procedure in the event of sickness occurring during a temporary stay in a member state, including the establishment of an international medical credit card ([Recommendation 792](#)) ; setting up of an advisory committee within the Council of Europe to improve the relations with management and labour ([Recommendation 805](#)) ; study of the implications of demographic change for social and migration policy ; follow-up to the adoption and entry into force of the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers ; teaching of languages to migrant workers ([Recommendation 766](#)) ; promotion of family reunion ([Recommendation 796](#)) ; study of the problems relating to the return of migrant workers to their country of origin ; study of the possibility of transferring capital and industry to emigration countries ([Recommendations 712, 766, 796](#)) ; above all a greater degree of co-ordination is called for of Council of Europe countries on migrants ; consideration of the status of "off-shore" operations, paying particular attention to the conditions of employment and social security measures applicable to workers therein ([Recommendation 797](#)).

Field III - Co-operation in the field of education, culture and sport

d. Further to the views expressed in [Opinion No. 74 \(1976\)](#) and the opinion of its Committee on Culture and Education, and in the opinion of the Committee on Science and Technology, the Assembly recognises the progress being made by the CCC's own working party on evaluation and planning which has recently been asked to make proposals for this field. It would be premature to insist on individual points at this stage until these proposals for the overall field are available and can be considered in the light of budgetary resources. Only then can programme priorities properly be evaluated.

e. Moreover, a reorientation in the presentation of activities is called for to take account of the following developments : the results of the 4th Parliamentary and Scientific Conference, having particular regard to the fact that the proposals included in [Recommendation 789 \(1976\)](#) bear on the general orientation of the plan, the ad hoc Conference on the Study of Science and Technology, the enquiry by the Committee for Higher Education and Research into the state of research in European universities and the establishment of working relations between the Committee for Higher Education and Research, the European Joint Committee for Scientific Co-operation and the European Science Foundation.

f. Importance is attached to Objective 11.6, "European culture in a world setting", if this is expressed as "understanding Europe's cultural identity and cultural values in the world context". The idea of "presenting and vindicating European cultural policies" should be deleted.

Field IV - Youth questions

g. Emphasis should be placed in this field on improving Council of Europe contacts with young people with a view to encouraging the active participation of young people in democratic processes. The proposals on science and the future of man in a European society ([Recommendation 789 \(1976\)](#)) should be taken into account.

Field V - Protection and promotion of public health

h. Pro memoria

Field VI - Protection of nature and the management of natural resources, the man-made environment and regional planning

i. In Sector 16, new activities include the drafting of a European convention on the conservation of wild life and natural habitats which was advocated by the Assembly since 1973 ([Recommendation 720](#)).

The Assembly also welcomes the inclusion of a new specific project concerning the protection of groundwater against pollution.

j. It is felt that in particular Sector 17 (Regional planning) includes a number of "ghost" projects. Although at first glance this programme may seem impressive, it must deeply be deplored that the resources allocated for its implementation are totally inadequate, and the programme is dangerously deceptive since it may create the illusion that virtually all the recommendations made by the Ministers for Regional Planning and by the Assembly are being put into effect.

k. Concern has also been expressed that preservation of Europe's cultural heritage is only explicitly covered in Sector 18 of the plan- "Integrated conservation of the architectural heritage and town planning". A separate section on the preservation of Europe's cultural heritage in general would be desirable.

l. When considering the whole of Field VI, one remains under the impression that the operational budget of the Council suffers from serious imbalance between the fields of traditional activities taking the lion's share and the newer sectors such as regional planning, cultural heritage and even conservation and local authorities receiving the budget's crumbs. This serious imbalance casts doubt on the various ministerial resolutions on priority areas.

Field VII - Local authorities : matters relating to regional and municipal co-operation

m. It must be underlined with great satisfaction that the local authorities sector has aroused increased government interest in recent years, reflected by comparatively good appropriations.

Field VIII - 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

n. Ongoing studies of legislation protecting the architectural heritage should be mentioned here. Action against commercial exploitation should be extended to include protection of young artists and European cultural standards in general. Firm action should be envisaged on the underwater cultural heritage, on art thefts, on copyright and public lending right.

o. Examination of the possibilities of settling any disputes between member states involving the law of the sea by applying the 1957 European Convention for the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes ([Recommendation 797](#)).