Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Opinion 118 (1984)[1]

Texts adopted at the 18th Session of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (Strasbourg, 18-20 October 1983)

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having taken note of the texts adopted by the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe at its 18th Session (Doc. 5152) ;

2. Appreciating the quality of the work achieved by the CLRAE at this session and welcoming in particular the central debate on unemployment and the role of regional and local authorities ;

3. Expressing strong reservations on the manner in which the texts of the Conference are presented, as these often include an impressive list of recommendations addressed to a large number of European authorities,

4. Recognises the difficulties the Conference may have in ensuring continuity in its work at local and regional level ;

5. Recalls, in this connection, the Conference's twofold terms of reference :

a. that of a technical or advisory body called on to inform the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of its views on measures which are likely to have repercussions on local and regional authorities ; and

b. to keep local and regional authorities informed about the progress of European integration, and seek their support for the ideal of European unity ;

6. Invites the Conference to pay attention not only to its own work but more so to the work done by all the Council of Europe bodies, in order to avoid overlapping, and to keep local and regional authorities duly informed thereof ;

7. Reminds all its committees to consider seeking the opinion of the Conference whenever questions of possible relevance to the interests of local and regional authorities are under consideration ;

8. Expresses its opinion on the texts adopted by the Conference at its 18th Session as follows :

a. Resolution 137 (1983) on regional institutions covering urban agglomerations and neighbouring communities :

a. fully supports the call on territorial authorities to increase public participation in their policy-making process ;

1. See Doc. 5183, report of the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities and Doc. 5185, opinion of the Committee on Culture and Education. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 22 March 1984.

b. endorses the request for setting up coordination bodies based on the principle of voluntary co-operation of local authorities and with provisions both to achieve a fair representation for the authorities concerned relative to their size and to safeguard vital interests ;

b. Resolution 138 (1983) on the information policy of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe :

a. agrees that there is an important information deficit affecting the public in general as well as territorial authorities on the work carried out not only by the CLRAE but by the Council of Europe in general ;

b. considers that the introduction of a special CLRAE symbol will only further confuse the public on the already complicated European structures and thinks it essential that the Council of Europe should appear as a single organisation ;

c. reminds the Conference and its members, in so far as they shall endeavour to open a dialogue with national ministers, of the role that the Charter gives to the Conference ;

d. welcomes the appeal to delegates of the CLRAE to promote the European idea particularly during Europe Day, and thinks this should be used to publicise all the Council of Europe's work ;

e. deplores, in relation to the proposed information programme and the requested funding from the Secretary General, the absence of any meaningful attempt to publicise the work of other Council of Europe bodies outside the Conference ;

c. Opinion No. 23 (1983) on certain aspects of the European Community's transport policy :

a. sides with the Conference in believing that such a policy should be based on a comprehensive view of a European network of trunk communications, encouraging balanced development of all the European regions ;

b. recalls in this connection its own Recommendation 826 (1978) and Resolution 668 (1978) on recent developments in trunk communications and regional planning in Europe, as well as its Resolution 815 (1984), in reply to the 28th and 29th annual reports of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT), in which it recommended in particular the setting up of a "European network of high-speed trains" ;

c. jects the concept of the proposed European railway company and European airline ;

d. Resolution 139 (1983) on the revision of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference : - takes due note of these revisions that are largely a follow-up to the amendments of the Charter set down in Resolution (82) 13 of the Committee of Ministers but comprise also the introduction of an emergency procedure and an amendment to the rules of procedure in committee ;

e. Resolution 140 (1983) on the examination of the credentials of delegates to the Conference :

a. deplores with the Conference that a number of member countries have not yet provided information on their procedures for choosing national delegations as required by Article 2.c of the Charter ;

b. endorses fully the call upon member governments concerned to do so without delay ;

c. welcomes the initiative taken by the Conference to seek clarification on the concept of a "mandate as a person directly responsible to an elected local or regional assembly or to a national association of local or regional authorities" ;

f. Resolution 141 (1983) on the regional policy of the member states of the Council of Europe and the European institutions :

a. shares the Conference's opinion of the high importance of regional development specially in these times of economic crisis ;

b. supports the appeal for further impact assessment studies of sectoral policies and for enlarged regional co-operation as well as the setting up of regional development programmes ;

c. would welcome the shaping of a European regional planning strategy by the competent European institutions ; does not however believe that the proposed "European Planning Forum" would be the optimal framework for doing so ;

g. Resolution 142 (1983) on the status and working conditions of local and regional elected representatives : - agrees with the analysis made in this resolution on the harder working conditions of local and regional elected representatives and fully supports the proposed changes ;

h. Resolution 143 (1983) on the co-operation of the Alpine regions : - fully endorses the setting up of the proposed Association of Alpine Regions and draws attention to its own Resolution 687 (1979) on European regional planning and the role and function of Alpine regions ;

i. Resolution 144 (1983) on young people in towns :

a. shares the Conference's recognition of the problems facing young people in society today, and welcomes the intention of the Conference to consider this question in greater detail as its contribution to International Youth Year 1985 ;

b. recalls in this context its own Recommendation 963, on cultural and educational means of reducing violence, on which the Conference is to formulate an opinion ;

c. wishes also to draw attention to the need to consider the problems of young people not living in towns (such as rural or suburban youth) and of young people from migrant backgrounds, and also broader national factors such as mobility and the influence of the media ;

j. Resolution 145 (1983) on local and regional authorities and the challenge of unemployment : - refers to the draft recommendation on employment in Europe which it will consider during the first part of its 36th Session (May 1984) ;

k. Resolution 146 (1983) on local and regional authorities and nature parks in Europe :

a. accepts the need to promote development of natural parks and adjacent areas compatible with the aims of nature protection ;

b. elcomes the CLRAE proposal to ask the Committee of Ministers to instruct the competent Council of Europe body to draft, within the framework of the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, a model agreement on transfrontier parks ;

l. Resolution 147 (1983) on the dumping of radioactive waste at sea : - because the subject is clearly mainly within the overriding competence of the Assembly, intends to await the conclusions of the parliamentary hearing on disposal of radioactive waste, organised by its Committee on Science and Technology, to be held in Stockholm in autumn 1984.