Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Opinion 150 (1990)[1]

Texts adopted at the 25th Session of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) (Strasbourg, 6-8 March 1990)

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly welcomes the co-operation that has been established between its different committees and the Conference in the implementation of joint projects and, hence, in the pursuit of the Council of Europe's objectives.

2. The Conference's commitment to co-operation with the countries of Eastern Europe is welcomed.

3. The Assembly gives its opinion on the texts adopted by the Conference at its 25th Session :

a. Resolution 210 on the revitalisation of the countryside : local and regional government action

1. The Assembly shares the Conference's concern for the revitalisation of the countryside in order, interalia, to preserve the duality and complementarity between rural and urban areas, a feature of our societies.

2. It recalls its own Recommendation 1091 (1988) on the European Campaign for the Countryside - A new management approach for rural areas, aimed at giving a real and co-ordinated follow-up to this campaign - in the field of intergovernmental activities - in the same way as other organisations, such as the European Communities and OECD.

3. It was in the same spirit that its Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities held a colloquy at the beginning of the year on the integration of rural tourism in Europeansocieties.

4. The Assembly firmly supports the request addressed to the Committee of Ministers to create a structure for intergovernmental co-operation in matters concerning the countryside.

5. It also emphasises the importance of co-operation with OECD, which has undertaken an ambitious programme in this field.

b. Resolution 211 on the regional impact of the reform of the common agricultural policy

1. The Assembly shares the opinion that agriculture plays an important role in the maintenance of aliving European countryside and that agricultural policies must have a longer-term perspective and abroader base than the simple production of food. It endorses the principle that local and regional authorities should be fully involved in drawing up and implementing such policies.

2. It welcomes the request for improved infrastructures in rural areas and for measures to encourage the,development of non-agricultural activities (tourism, leisure, small and medium-sized enterprises, etc.).

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1. See Doc. 6197, texts adopted at the 25th Session of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, Doc. 6254, report of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, Rapporteur : Mr Adriaensens, and Doc. 6262, opinion of the Committee on Agriculture, Rapporteur : Mr Thompson. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 3 July 1990.

3. It believes that adequate telecommunication infrastructures will be of particular importance for increasing the competitiveness of economic activities in rural areas, including farming itself(Recommendation 1122 on the revival of the countryside by means of information technology).

4. It agrees with the concern expressed for increased regional autonomy, which is an important factor for the construction of a more united Europe whose well-being will depend on the health of each region.

c. Resolution 212 on flood control and the role of local and regional authorities

1. The Assembly shares the CLRAE's anxiety at the major floods experienced by Europe in recent years, which have caused considerable damage.

2. It supports the recommendations addressed to local and regional authorities, emphasising in particular the restoration and protection of natural flood-retention areas and the development of streams and rivers either naturally or in a manner close to nature.

3. It subscribes to the proposals to set up national funds for helping victims and to consider the possibility of drawing up a convention on precautions to be taken against flooding.

d. Resolution 213 on the contribution of local and regional authorities to the opening towards the Central and East European countries

1. The Assembly welcomes the CLRAE's involvement in the open-door policy towards the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and in the promotion of democracy and human rights.

2. The Conference's request for an increase in financial resources for the speedy implementation of the ‘‘Democratic City'' programme is a priority matter, and the Assembly hopes that governments will decide to act favourably thereon ;

3. It agrees with the importance attached by the Conference to the establishment of ‘‘regional transfrontier solidarity'' between countries of Eastern and Western Europe, as well as between the East European countries themselves.

4. It wholeheartedly supports the proposal to make full use of the Council of Europe's European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, especially as the proposal is in line with its own Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities' thinking on problems concerning the situation of frontier workers and populations.

5. Like the Conference, the Assembly considers it important to turn to account such instruments as the European Charter of Local Self-Government, which may provide a democratic solution to many of the problems confronting the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

6. It shares the Conference's wish that all the possibilities offered by the Council of Europe's Social Development Fund be examined in order to meet - at least partly - the financial needs of local and regional entities in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

e. Resolution 214 on the activities report of the Conference (1989-90) and on the follow-up given to the resolutions of the Conference by the Committee of Ministers and by the Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly cannot but subscribe unreservedly to the Conference's wish that the Committee of Ministers act more speedily on its resolutions, especially as the Assembly itself regularly makes the same request.

2. It supports the desire for closer links between the Conference and other organs, such as the Committee of Ministers, the steering committees and the ministerial conferences.

3. In particular, it takes note of the Conference's wish for even closer co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly.

f. Resolution 217 on the impact of the completion of the internal market on local and regional autonomy

1. While reaffirming its belief that the completion of the single market will be a crucial stage in the process of European construction, the Assembly agrees with the analysis of the risks which the political integration of the Twelve may involve for local and regional authorities.

2. It shares the fear expressed many times that, unless appropriate measures are taken, the single market might aggravate the ‘‘frontier effect" at the Community's external borders and supports the wish for increased transfrontier co-operation that will strengthen cultural, social, political and economic links between the EEC states and other countries.

3. It supports the Conference's statement concerning the role and powers of local and regional authorities in the environmental field, which justifies their reinforcement.

4. It subscribes to all the requests addressed to the institutions of the European Communities,particularly those concerning the development of regional planning activities and co-operation with the Council of Europe with a view to establishing a genuine European environmental area. Only such an approach would make it possible to tackle the often serious and urgent environmental problems experienced by all European countries, which call for global solutions.