Opinion 181 (1994)[1]

Texts adopted by the Standing Committee of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) (30 August 1993 and 18 March 1994)

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Owing to the reform of the CLRAE and the creation of the new Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, the Assembly is presenting its opinion on texts adopted by the CLRAE for the last time in this form. It would like at the outset to salute the creation of the Congress, which it had always encouraged.

2. It would also like to point to the support that it has consistently given to CLRAE initiatives, convinced not only of its importance within the Council of Europe but also, and above all, of the importance of local democracy as the basic level of democracy which is vital if our societies are to function smoothly in accordance with the principles upheld by the Council of Europe. In this respect, it is delighted at the excellent mutual co-operation which has always existed between the Assembly and the CLRAE and hopes that this will continue with the new Congress.

3. The Assembly would like to assure the Congress of its intention to pay close attention to such continued co-operation in the interests of defending local democracy and respecting local self-government, aspects which are of particular significance, notably with regard to the countries of central and eastern Europe.

4. In keeping with its terms of reference, the Assembly hereby sets out its opinions on the texts adopted by the Standing Committee of the CLRAE on behalf of the Conference.

A.Resolution 255 (1993) on HIV/Aids - activities of local and regional authorities[2]

1. The Assembly supports all awareness-raising initiatives aimed at the prevention of Aids. Indeed, it is extremely concerned about the global scale of the Aids epidemic, its ravages on continents such as Africa and the worrying development of the disease in central and eastern Europe.

2. Aids presents us with the same dilemma as other illnesses, but in a particularly acute form, namely, that of reconciling the demands of public health protection and respect for individual liberty. It is, therefore, a challenge to democracy. The Assembly reaffirms its abhorrence of discrimination and exclusion and advocates that the disease and its consequences be handled in a democratic way.

3. The Assembly can, therefore, promise the Conference its unreserved support and assistance for all multidisciplinary initiatives and hopes that the fight against Aids will be one of the priorities of the Council of Europe's Intergovernmental Programme of Activities.

4. It should also be stressed that, in order to obtain a universal vaccine and to eradicate Aids as swiftly as possible, there is a need for a truly concerted scientific research policy at European, or even world level.

B.Resolution 256 (1994) on the 3rd Conference of Mediterranean Regions

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1. SeeDoc. 7077, report of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, Rapporteur: Mr Jung. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 18 May 1994.
2. The opinion on this resolution was prepared by the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee.

1. The Assembly welcomes this third conference and concurs with the CLRAE on the development of Mediterranean co-operation.

2. The Assembly has always been and remains particularly sensitive to the problems of the Mediterranean basin, which is a region where European stability and democratic security might be called into question. Whilst the Council of Europe is currently giving priority attention to central and eastern Europe, the Assembly does not as a consequence intend to neglect the Mediterranean region.

3. It is continuing its work on this region, notably preparations for a debate on the various issues raised at the 3rd Conference of Mediterranean Regions.

4. In addition, it shares the CLRAE's concern to ensure that the fourth conference, to be held in Cyprus in 1995, is thoroughly prepared.

C.Resolution 257 (1994) on integrated planning and local development

1. The Assembly endorses the CLRAE's account of the widening disparities in levels of development between European regions and can therefore only encourage its proposals to promote more balanced development.

2. In keeping with the principle of subsidiarity, it particularly supports the proposal to base new development strategies at local and regional levels, which are best placed to exploit the full potential of the areas concerned.

3. It also endorses the principle of administrative co-ordination whereby development policies would be based on co-operation between all the competent administrations in the interests of economy of resources and efficiency of investment and results.

4. The Assembly is concerned at such disparities in development between European regions but also between countries, in particular with regard to the countries of central and eastern Europe and is therefore prepared to back any initiative designed to promote the socio-economic growth of regions experiencing development problems. When the time comes, it would like to be involved in the conference proposed by the CLRAE in order to monitor the effectiveness of the proposed models.

D.Resolution 258 (1994) on co-operation between public and private sectors[3]

1. The Assembly welcomes the prospects for increased co-operation between the public and the private sector at national, regional and local level, as outlined in Resolution 258. It refers to its own position on the related subject of privatisation, contained in Resolution 953 (1990) on "privatisation _ rewards and problems".

2. It does, however, draw attention to certain principles contained in Resolution 953 which should be borne in mind in any CLRAE follow-up. Thus, it must be ensured "that the consumer benefits from a given privatisation in the form of a wider choice between better and less costly products or services", that privatisation "must lead to savings in government expenditure", and that it "should be more efficient in meeting the social and other objectives associated with the system it replaces".

E.Resolution 259 (1994) on regional and local authorities and transfrontier or transnational school co-operation[4]

1. Many of the general principles expressed in this resolution (such as the importance of educational exchanges, the European dimension of education, the need to combat intolerance) and certain considerations of a more specific nature (such as the importance of minority languages) directly reflect Assembly interest.

2. The Assembly has not had the opportunity to examine in the time available the various model agreements proposed by the CLRAE. These cover a wide range of fields, certain of which are under current investigation by the Assembly (for example heritage classes).

3. The general position of the Assembly's Committee on Culture and Education is one of full support for action at the local and regional levels in the cultural sector.

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3. The opinion on this resolution was prepared by the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development.
4. The opinion on this resolution was prepared by the Committee on Culture and Education.