



Opinion 194 (1996)¹

Application by Japan for observer status with the Council of Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Government of Japan has made a formal request for observer status under the terms of Statutory Resolution (93) 26. By letter of 11 January 1996, from the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers to the President of the Assembly, the opinion of the Assembly has been requested.
2. The Assembly welcomes this request, not least because of its long-standing relations with the Japanese Diet. Since 1974, delegations of the Diet have taken part in the Assembly's annual enlarged debates on the activities of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). They have regularly attended the Assembly's parliamentary and scientific conferences and the Strasbourg conferences on parliamentary democracy. In 1992 a Japan/Council of Europe Parliamentary Association was established.
3. Japan sends observers to many Council of Europe meetings, notably in the field of legal co-operation; to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) and to the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission).
4. In 1992, Japan opened a consulate general in Strasbourg. Since 1993, Japan has been making significant contributions, through finance and the provision of consultants, to specialised meetings within the framework of the Council of Europe's programmes for democracy in central and eastern Europe.
5. Dialogue with the Council of Europe has also been developed through the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE, formerly the CSCE), with which Japan has the status of "partner for co-operation".
6. Through the OSCE, the United Nations and the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia (ICFY), Japan has contributed, among other things, funds and personnel to the international search for a solution to this intra-European conflict and for setting up humanitarian relief for refugees and displaced persons.
7. Japan is a capital subscriber to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and contributes to its market economy transition projects and its nuclear safety account.
8. Japan contributes to the voluntary funds of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, of which it is an active member, and contributes personnel for its work on prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities. It also plays an active role in the development of the North-South dialogue.
9. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly is of the opinion that Japan meets the requirements for observer status with the Council of Europe as set forth in Statutory Resolution (93) 26; and proposes in due course to examine the question of its relations with the Japanese Diet.

1. See [Doc. 7500](#), report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteurs: MM. Baumel and Iwinski. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 20 March 1996.

