



Recommendation 290 (1961)¹

Air pollution

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

Having noted the introductory report on air pollution, submitted by the Social Committee ([Doc. 1292](#)) ;

Having noted with concern that experts believe the increase in air pollution and the increase in cases of such serious illnesses as cancer, cardiac diseases, pulmonary diseases, nervous complaints, etc., to be unquestionably correlated ;

Whereas air pollution also affects the growth of food-crops, thus constituting a possible danger when such plants are incorporated in the diet ;

Whereas, according to the experts, estimated losses, directly or indirectly, caused by air pollution amount to several hundred million pounds annually in each of the most highly industrialised countries of Europe ;

Whereas air pollution is harmful not only to the health of men and animals, and to individual and national prosperity, but also to scenic beauty ;

Whereas, in spite of the efforts accomplished, the problems of air pollution caused by factory chimneys, domestic fires or motor vehicles are far from being solved, and considerable research is still necessary in this sphere ;

Whereas this work requires a highly specialised body of experts and involves expenditure beyond the means of any individual European country ;

Whereas, especially in frontier areas, air pollution may often be a question of interest to several countries, and the establishment of new industries may raise problems which extend beyond a national framework ;

Whereas other aspects of air pollution, caused by motor vehicles for example, are of European interest ;

Whereas anti-pollution equipment would be much cheaper if manufactured on a European scale ;

Whereas it is vital to carry out a publicity campaign on this scale to draw the attention of the general public to the dangers of indiscriminate multiplication of factories, motor vehicles, etc., and impress upon people generally the part they play in increasing air pollution ;

Whereas a clean-air campaign calls for co-operation between many and varied branches of science and industry ;

Whereas the great majority of European countries have as yet no homogeneous body of legally established standards in this sphere ;

Whereas the foregoing considerations stress the advantages of a pooling of efforts and resources by the European countries to cope with the effects of air pollution ;

Being of the opinion that urgent action must be taken,

1. Assembly debate on 23rd September 1961 (12th Sitting) (see [Doc. 1349](#), Report of the Social Committee). Text adopted by the Assembly on 23rd September 1961 (12th Sitting).



Recommends that the Committee of Ministers should :

1. convene a European Conference on air pollution, under the auspices of the Council of Europe :
 - a. to study and propose technical and scientific measures to combat the causes and the effects of air pollution on health and individual and national economies and for this purpose to study the possibilities :

of establishing permanent collaboration between the various national research institutes ; (ii) of setting up a European Centre for research, documentation, information and scientific and technical aid in the clean-air campaign ;
 - b. to study, in the light of present national legislations, the possibility of drawing up a European Convention on air pollution ;
 - c. to organise a publicity campaign on the growing dangers of air pollution ;
2. invite the following to attend this Conference :
 - a. European experts in the fields of science, technology, medicine, industry, law, economics and journalism as well as representatives of local communities, civil servants, etc. ;
 - b. a representative of the World Health Organisation ;
 - c. the Surgeon-General of the Public Health Service, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, U.S.A. ;
 - d. a delegation from the Consultative Assembly ;
3. invite the Conference to seek the Assembly's opinion on its recommendations.