



Recommendation 527 (1968)¹

Creation of new towns

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering that the population pressure and the drift from the land have led to most of our big European cities being over-populated and over-crowded ;
2. Realising that in many cases this development in urban concentration has reached the limits of what is in keeping with physical and mental health, and in some instances with the very dignity of man ;
3. Recognising that population growth and gradual urbanisation are two predominant features of our civilisation ;
4. Considering in particular the estimates of numerous experts, who maintain that by the end of the present century the built-up areas handed down by previous generations will have to be doubled, and that within the same period urban areas are liable to be tripled,
5. Emphasises that the formidable problem of the urbanisation of our society lies outside the scope of private individuals and local authorities, and engages the responsibility of the governments, which it urges to co-operate closely at European level ;
6. Draws the attention of the governments to the serious situation in numerous European countries and the urgent need for new solutions making it possible to come to grips with the issue ;
7. Also draws their attention to the fact that in many cases the process of urbanisation can no longer be carried on in conditions compatible with the dignity and well-being of man, simply by taking steps to renovate or replan towns, by adding new districts to the towns already in existence or even by providing for an octopus-like system of satellite towns ;
8. Voices its conviction that the creation of new towns, based on modern technology and our knowledge of the needs of twentieth-century man, may in some conditions be one of the most effective replies to the problems raised by the urbanisation of our society and at the same time to the threat of suffocation facing our large towns ;
9. Makes a point of specifying that the concept of "new town" applies to an urban area of a certain dimension :

created by man's determination ;

established on an empty site, or on the site of small towns or rural communities, integrated within the new urban unit ;

guaranteeing a certain balance between the residential population and the jobs available on the spot ;

providing the facilities needed by commerce, for the education, leisure and cultural activities of the inhabitants ;

also providing a development centre for the surrounding region ;

1. Assembly debate on 10 May 1968 (9th Sitting) (see [Doc. 2383](#)see [Doc. 2383](#), report of the Committee on Local Authorities). Text adopted by the Assembly on 10 May 1968 (9th Sitting).



10. Is gratified to note that the experience acquired in this field over the last twenty years in Great Britain, with the creation of 21 new towns and a further 3 currently under construction, is such as to confirm the effectiveness of such a policy ;

11. Observes with interest that France, too, is apparently ready to undertake a fullscale policy for the promotion of new towns, within the more general context of the overhaul of local institutions ;

12. Notes that the recent formation of a working party, attached to the Federal German Housing and Town Planning Ministry, to draw up and submit a coherent programme on urban policy, is indicative, too, of the Federal Government's anxiety that the problem shall be tackled at national and even international level, as can be seen from the working party's terms of reference ;

13. Considering that many other European countries are beset by the same problem and have already introduced some interesting solutions ; and

14. Convinced of the need for further wide-ranging exchanges of information and European co-operation between the relevant authorities and national and regional institutions in this field,

15. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers invite member governments to :

frame with all possible speed a comprehensive policy on housing, town planning and employment, in an endeavour to strike a new balance between town and countryside ;

establish at national level bodies responsible for the study and implementation of a truly national, and perhaps European policy for town planning ;

place this policy within the framework of a comprehensive town and country planning policy at regional, national and European level ;

study more closely the highly encouraging pilot experiment carried out by Great Britain with respect to the creation of "new towns" as well as experiments carried out in other European countries ;

adopt the same course whilst making the necessary adjustments to such a policy ;

ensure in particular that certain fundamental principles, mainly the outcome of twenty years' experience in Britain, are observed when a new town is created, namely :

a. *a decision of principle on the creation of a new town concerns principally the authorities in the region in question ; where such authorities do not have adequate political or financial means, the decision lies with the national authorities responsible for town and country planning ; in such cases the local and regional authorities concerned must be consulted anyway before such a decision ; the draft master outline plan must be referred to a public inquiry ;*

b. *the local populations and authorities affected should participate by being fairly represented in the body with responsibility for putting the urban operation into effect ;*

c. *there should be an attempt to associate landowners with the implementation of town development plans, so as to avoid compulsory purchase wherever possible ;*

d. *all the time a new town is being created, it is vital to preserve the unity of the plans and their implementation ; in Britain this task has been successfully entrusted to the Development Corporation ;*

e. *basic facilities should be financed by special long-term credit granted by regional or national authorities and there should be an attempt to attract private capital ;*

f. *the scale of the future town should be demarcated and should not in principle have a number of inhabitants exceeding 150-250,000 ;*

g. *consideration should be given in each instance as to whether regional conditions warrant the establishment of a new town parallel to urban centres already in existence, or whether it would be better to develop one or more former urban centres existing previously, or to establish an intermeshing network of small centres of a combined rural-urban nature, on the lines of the "rural city" of Craigavon, in Northern Ireland;*

h. *it is better to create a new town than to expand a built-up area already in existence :*

when the built-up area looks as though saturation point has almost been reached when it comes to accommodating more dwellings and collective installation ;

when the surrounding areas show signs of excessive expansion, resulting in over-long daily journeys to and from work ;

when the population and urban centres must be better distributed, and social, cultural and other facilities better apportioned, if a region is to develop smoothly ;

- i. it is inadvisable to create a new town if it is liable :
to encourage the extension of an urban concentration already in existence, or
to encourage the drift from the neighbouring countryside ;*
- j. it is essential to ensure that the new town is not in turn gradually swallowed up by the urban infiltration of a neighbouring city ;*
- k. a certain balance needs to be observed at all stages in the creation of a "new town" between residents, social and cultural facilities and the jobs available locally ;*
- l. the new urban unit must be provided with democratic structures of its own as soon as a certain independence in municipal matters becomes feasible ;*

16. Further recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

arrange for a wide-ranging international confrontation on problems of town planning and regional development through the Council of Europe bodies and other means - such as a European Conference of Ministers with responsibility for town and country planning ;

instruct the Committee on Co-operation in Municipal and Regional Matters to study the question of the creation of new towns, with a view to ensuring that all member states may benefit from the experience acquired by some European countries, within the context of the intergovernmental cooperation called for by the serious problem of over-population in European towns.