



Recommendation 586 (1970)¹

Council of Europe activities on nature conservation and the protection of amenities

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having noted thereport of its Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities relating tothe activities of the Council of Europe on nature conservation and theprotection of amenities ;
2. Recalling that the problems of man'snatural environment have for ten years constituted one of its majorpreoccupations ;
3. Recalling in particular :
 - its [Recommendation 284 \(1961\)](#) concerning theestablishment within the Council of Europe of a permanent system of cooperationin matters concerning the protection of nature in Europe ;
 - its [Recommendation 290 \(1961\)](#) relating to air pollution and, inparticular, recommending the convening of a European conference on airpollution ;
 - its [Recommendation 436 \(1965\)](#) on fresh waterpollution control in Europe, and also its [Recommendation 555 \(1969\)](#) relating toa draft European Convention on this subject ;
 - its[Recommendation 341 \(1963\)](#) on the anti-noise campaign ;
 - its[Recommendation 538 \(1968\)](#) on aircraft noise abatement ;
 - its[Recommendation 543 \(1969\)](#) relating to the use of pesticides in agriculture;
 - its [Recommendation 562 \(1969\)](#) on the administration ofenvironmental health systems ;
4. Recognising withsatisfaction that the Committee of Ministers has on the whole shown itself tobe aware of the role that the Council of Europe was called upon to play inthese various fields of activity ;
5. Noting, however, that theresults obtained have not fulfilled the wishes of the Assembly and are notsufficient to meet the gravity of the threats which are increasingly facing thenatural environment of industrialised societies ;
6. Noting thathenceforth the problems of the natural environment should be approached in aglobal context, and that it is consequently necessary to re-think theactivities undertaken up to now in a to some extent isolated way by a number oforgans of the Council of Europe ;
7. Noting furthermore that numerousinternational organisations have included in their work programmes researchactivities relating to the various aspects of the environment ;
8. Noting, in particular, the recent formation under the North AtlanticTreaty Organisation (NATO) of a "Committee on the Challenges to ModernSociety", and the invitations issued to nine non-member countries by theCouncil of the European Communities of the Six to participate in certainresearch programmes concerning threats to the environment ;

1. Assembly debate on 26 January 1970 (20thSitting) (see [Doc. 2704](#), report of theCommittee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26 January 1970(20thSitting).



9. Noting, consequently, that the need for international action in these fields is felt with increasing urgency at all levels, and that the Council of Europe's activity over nearly ten years is likely to be duplicated by the activity of other European or international organisations ;
10. Recalling, in this regard, [Opinion No. 51 \(1969\)](#) of the Assembly on the Intergovernmental Work Programme (paragraphs 13 and 14) stressing the need for the rationalisation and programming of intergovernmental activities at the European level,
11. Reaffirms strongly that the Council of Europe constitutes the most appropriate framework for the successful conduct of European action for the protection of man's natural milieu ;
12. Recalls, to this effect, the general duty of the Council of Europe and the four spheres of priority action ascribed to it by the Committee of Ministers in its reply to [Recommendation 516](#), of which two at least are directly concerned with environmental problems :
 - the planning of regions and of man's surroundings in his urban and rural communities, and
 - the development of social institutions and the improvement of public health conditions ;
13. Recalls further that the conditions for coherent global action already exist in the Council of Europe which comprises on the one hand the Consultative Assembly and the European Conference of Local Authorities assuring the representation of the populations involved, and on the other hand numerous committees of experts qualified to examine the various aspects of the environment and its protection ;
14. Stresses also that the Council of Europe offers a most appropriate platform for linking concern for the protection of the natural environment with regional planning policy, this link being taken today to be a pre-condition for the success of any coherent action for the protection of the natural environment ;
15. Recalls, finally, that the Committee of Ministers, in its reply to [Recommendation 516](#), repeated that "it is making every endeavour - and will continue to do so - to ensure that the Council, in agreement with the other major international organisations, plays its full role as a 'regional agency for the peaceful development of European society' " ;
16. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :
 - a. draw the attention of member governments to recent action taken by other international organisations in the field of environment protection, to the consequent risk of duplication, and to the advisability of organising a combined effort to achieve a better distribution of work among international organisations in accordance with the particular competency of each ;
 - b. set up as soon as possible an ad hoc working party consisting on the one hand of experts qualified in the various field of environmental studies, whose names would be submitted by the Secretary General, and who would be assisted by representatives of the various committees of the Council of Europe particularly concerned with nature conservation, air pollution, water pollution and public health, and on the other hand of three or four representatives of the Assembly;
 - c. request this working party to submit concrete proposals on the most effective way of developing and promoting within the framework of the Council of Europe a coherent and co-ordinated policy on nature conservation and the protection of amenities, in conformity with the aims contained in a general and systematic policy for European regional planning, and to achieve its execution on a European as well as national level, in order to take full advantage of the terms of reference of the Council of Europe and to ensure that its powers are not diminished in relation to those of other international organisations ;
 - d. ask this working party, in formulating its proposals, to take into account :
 1. the present recommendation and the accompanying report of the Assembly, and the recommendations and resolutions adopted in recent years by the Consultative Assembly and the European Conference of Local Authorities in this field;
 2. the resolutions adopted by the Committee of Ministers;
 3. the draft recommendations or resolutions submitted to the Committee of Ministers by the various committees of experts ;
 4. the deliberations of the European Nature Conservation Conference;

5. the work of other international organisations ; and,generally, to take into account the need to prepare the way for coherent andeffective action in the European context, operating at the same time at thepolitical, technical, legal and administrative levels, and also on publicopinion, in order to ensure for the peoples of Europe an environment whichrespects the natural surroundings and thus contributes to the full developmentof the human personality ;
- e. submit theproposals of the working party to the Consultative Assembly for itsopinion.