Recommendation 592 (1970)[1]

Youth problems in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having regard to the report presented by its Committee on Culture and Education on youth problems in Europe (Doc. 2610) ;

2. Recalling its Recommendation 531 (1968) adopted by the Assembly on the basis of a report on the present crisis in European society (Doc. 2432) ;

3. Considering that the student unrest which led the Consultative Assembly to pass Recommendation 531 (1968) is in fact only one expression of a world crisis of society ;

4. Noting that this process is characterised in the political sphere by an increasingly acute conflict between the growing and often arbitrary demands of state organisation and an unreasoning attitude of total protest, and in the social and economic sphere by an increasing imbalance between artificially stimulated individual consumption and the requirements of providing collective facilities ;

5. Convinced, therefore, that what are generally called youth problems are in the final analysis only the "youth" aspects of a global problem, that of the reform and consequently of the future of society ;

6. Being convinced of the urgent need for appropriate measures to maintain, or to re-establish, dialogue and then to overcome the negative consequences of this conflict, in order to achieve the necessary reforms ;

7. Convinced that the Council of Europe has an important part to play in this field, and that the action it has already taken represents a step in the right direction ;

8. Noting with satisfaction, moreover, the appeal addressed by the non-governmental youth organisations to the Council of Europe and that, when consulted on this subject, they manifested their approval for dynamic initiatives in this field ;

9. Considering that youth problems can be solved only by a comprehensive, forward-looking policy based on scientific data, a methodology and cultural options common to the member states of the Council of Europe ;

10. Being of the opinion that it would be advisable for the Council of Europe to arrange a European symposium on interdisciplinary problems in European society regarded in their youth context ;

11. Emphasising that, in the long run, no reform of society can be effective without a thorough going reform of education ;

12. Considering, therefore, that there is urgent need for reform in education, in which it must henceforth be regarded as the teacher's primary task to stimulate his pupils and not merely to expound knowledge ex cathedra, that this reform must be carried out in an integrated system of permanent education, and emphasising once more the need for a European long-term cultural development programme ;

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1. Assembly debate on 26 January 1970 (21st Sitting) (see Docs. 2713Docs. 2713 and Doc. 2610, reports of the Committee on Culture and Education). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26 January 1970 (21st Sitting).

13. Recalling the growing importance of the role of youth in an ever more rapidly changing world, and the crucial importance of permanent dialogue with youth and of the effective participation of young people in political, economic and social life ;

14. Being of the opinion, therefore, that all possible steps must be taken, especially by providing material assistance, to help youth organisations in their work, not only at European and national level but also at regional and local level ;

15. Considering, moreover, that a special effort must be made in the field of European civic education, and being of the opinion that the question of lowering the voting age must be examined in the light of recent experience ;

16. Recalling its views on the desirability of giving the European Youth Centre a role which goes beyond pure and simple socio-cultural leadership, and emphasising once more that this body is by its very nature a forum in which all kinds of problems relating to the lives of young people can and must be discussed ;

17. Considering also that a body must be created at European level which is capable of co-ordinating and promoting the united activities of youth organisations, and welcoming in this connection the results of the meeting of the ad hoc working party of government representatives held in Bonn on 8-9 January 1970 on the subject of the proposed creation of a European Youth Office ; noting furthermore with interest the statement by Mr. Westphal, Parliamentary Secretary of State of the Federal Republic of Germany,

18. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

I.

invite the governments of the member countries :

1. to take the necessary steps to ensure a more strictly scientific approach to youth problems by better co-ordination of terminology and methodology ;
2. to maintain the closest possible contact with all the international organisations which are concerned with the same problems and are seeking adequate solutions, and to encourage the Council of Europe, and especially the Council for Cultural Cooperation (CCC), to co-ordinate the separate vertical projects of the various international organisations, projects which should be replaced by comprehensive horizontal projects, in the elaboration of which all interested parties should take part ;
3. to grant youth organisations, national, regional and local, all the material assistance they need to pursue and develop activities which they alone are able to carry out ;
4. to accelerate the reform of systems of education, adopting methods and aims which truly meet the demands of present-day life in society ; such reforms should be particularly concerned with the following points :
    - *a.* permanent education, permitting especially man to overcome social, scientific, aesthetic and physical "illiteracy", and to adjust to successive changes in society ;
    - *b.* the new role of the school, whose efforts must be directed towards the acquisition of method by its pupils rather than the accumulation of knowledge ; the school must help to form the character of young people and must both prepare them for working life and train them to make choices in the consumer society ; it must be the centre where the child's creative ability is developed from an early age ; to that end, the child should be encouraged to participate in decision-making ;
    - *c.* the training of teachers, which must be re-orientated to produce teachers capable above all of stimulating their pupils ;
    - *d.* leisure activities, for which a leisure policy must be elaborated which will make leisure an opportunity for creative activity and for man's development as an individual and as a member of society ;
    - *e.* civics, in connection with which appropriate steps should be taken to develop young people's civic sense ;
5. to examine the advisability of lowering the voting age ;

II.

19. to call under the Council of Europe auspices a European social and human science conference of experts on youth problems, such as sociologists, psychologists, biologists, doctors and lawyers, to be assisted also by representatives of the Assembly, for the purpose of :

a. studying the "youth" aspects of the problems of present-day European society in a comprehensive forward-looking light ;

b. working out a co-ordinated plan of research into the youth problems thus brought to light, concentrating essentially on the points most valuable for the enlightenment and guidance of public authorities ;

20. to give the European Youth Centre a dimension enabling it to play the role of a forum where all kinds of problems concerning young people can be discussed between representatives of youth organisations and governmental and parliamentary representatives ;

21. to provide the Centre with a type of organisation inspired by the will to engage in dialogue and the need for participation, these being the prerequisites for dynamic action ;

22. to instruct the CCC to consider as quickly as possible, in the light of the results of the meeting of the ad hoc working party of government representatives held in Bonn on 8-9 January 1970 at the invitation of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, ways and means of meeting the demand formulated by the non-governmental youth organisations for the creation of a European Youth Office (Foundation).