Recommendation 615 (1970)[1]

Declaration of Principles on Local Autonomy

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Recalling the numerous steps taken by it, since the creation of its Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs in 1952,with a view to guaranteeing on the European level the rights and freedoms of local communities ;

2. Recalling its Resolution 410 (1969) approving the principles contained in Resolution 64 (1968) adopted by the European Conference of Local Authorities, and instructing the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities to prepare a joint text meeting the considerations both of the Consultative Assembly and of the European Conference of Local Authorities ;

3. Convinced that European Society is developing towards an ever acuter appreciation of the essential role of the basic units of society and towards an ever more active participation of these units in the management of national and international affairs ;

4. Believing that governments have a duty to recognise this profound aspiration of the basic units of which our member States are composed ;

5. Considering that the Declaration of Principles on Local Autonomy reproduced below, which was drafted jointly by the European Conference of Local Authorities and the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities, constitutes, for the representatives of these authorities, a minimum which they have accepted in the hope of obtaining the agreement of all member governments of the Council of Europe on a text which would constitute a common organisational basis for local communities in Europe,

6. Recommends the Committee of Ministers to adopt, in the name of the member governments of the Council of Europe, the following Declaration of Principles on Local Autonomy :

6.1. "The autonomy of the local communities is the right of those communities to manage under their own responsibility their own affairs through freely elected assemblies ;

6.2. The principle of local autonomy shall be embodied in the Constitution of each State ;

6.3. To safeguard their autonomy, local communities shall be allowed such form of organisation as will enable them to meet the requirements of the population to the extent provided by their powers ;

6.4. Local communities shall have the right to associate with each other for any purpose serving their common interests ;

6.5. Any measures affecting local interests shall be taken by the local authorities in preference to the authorities of larger communities ;

6.6. Any proposal seriously affecting the future of a local community shall be referred to that community or its representatives for a prior opinion ;

6.7. The activities of local communities in the exercise of their powers shall be subject only to the control of law ;

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1. Assembly debate on 25 September 1970 (19th Sitting) (see Doc. 2793, report of the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 September 1970 (19th Sitting).

6.8. Autonomy implies that local communities shall have the free disposal of their own financial resources distinct from those of the State ;

6.9. The allocation of resources to local government and their distribution amongst the local communities shall be in proportion to the tasks assumed by those communities."