



Recommendation 629 (1971)¹

Pollution of the Rhine valley water-table

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having regard to the report on the pollution of the Rhine valley water-table presented by its Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities ([Doc. 2904](#)) ;
2. Recalling its earlier views on fresh water pollution control, in particular [Recommendation 436 \(1965\)](#) calling for a Water Charter and [Recommendation 555 \(1969\)](#) on the conclusion of a draft European Convention on the protection of fresh water against pollution ;
3. Welcoming the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of Resolution (70) 30 on 24 October 1970, on planning of the management of water resources, while regretting that this resolution makes no mention of the problems peculiar to water-tables ;
4. Considering that the efficacy of fresh water pollution control depends on the acceptance of certain principles by as many countries as possible, and at least by the countries of Western Europe, and in general calls for concerted action within a given drainage basin in accordance with the eleventh principle of the European Water Charter ;
5. Reaffirming that most environment problems, including water pollution, are of an international character ;
6. Noting in this connection that the Rhine valley water-table is not only the most important fresh water reservoir in Europe but also the indivisible asset of a number of European countries ;
7. Noting that, although it is not immediately apparent to the public, pollution increasingly threatens this vital fresh water reserve ;
8. Emphasising the urgent need for such co-operation, which is a proof of both the solidarity existing between frontier regions and the practical nature of the problems calling for common action,
9. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :
 - a. invite the governments concerned to institute such co-operation in regard to the Rhine valley water-table and to refer the question to the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning through their Committee of Senior Officials, in accordance with the Bonn resolution which urges, inter alia, co-ordinated action in frontier areas with a view to "the tracing of sources of pollution whose effects extend beyond the frontier" ;

1. Assembly debate on 22 January 1971 (23rd Sitting) (see [Doc. 2904](#), report of the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities). Text adopted by the Assembly on 22 January 1971 (23rd Sitting). Text adopted by the Assembly on 22 January 1971 (23rd Sitting).



- b. initiate concrete action on their own Resolution (68) 36 concerning studies on groundwater deposits, adopted in November 1968, by taking the following decisions, which are calculated to promote international co-operation in regard to research into pollution control and to lead to joint management of the Rhine valley water-table :

to invite the governments directly concerned to initiate such co-operation among themselves and to entrust the Institut de Mécanique des Fluides in Strasbourg with the task of co-ordinating research work ;

to authorise the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to grant his patronage and administrative aid to such an international institute for co-ordination and research in regard to the Rhine valley water-table, as a first step towards co-operation between the Council of Europe and technical bodies specialising in research into surface and underground water resources ;

to instruct the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to seek ways and means of co-operating with the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine against Pollution ;

to transmit this recommendation and the report of the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities (Doc. 2904) to :

the Committee on Co-operation in Municipal and Regional Matters, with the request that it be taken into account by the latter body in its study of transfrontier co-operation, a subject included in its work programme ;

the European Committee for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, for the attention of its Ad Hoc Study Group on Water Pollution;

the European Ministerial Conference on the Environment which will be held in Vienna in 1972.