



Recommendation 642 (1971)¹

Ratification of the UN Covenants on Human Rights

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering that on 16 December 1966, the General Assembly of the United Nations, by its [Resolution 2200 \(XXI\)](#), adopted the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ;
2. Convinced that the unanimous approval by the UN General Assembly of the Covenants represents a milestone in the United Nations efforts to win universal recognition and respect for human rights in accordance with the provisions of the UN Charter ;
3. Aware that the co-existence of the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocol and the European Convention on Human Rights raises a number of important questions for the Contracting Parties to the European Convention, both on account of the different definitions given in the two instruments and by reason of the possibility that international procedures for the protection of human rights might operate in different and possibly conflicting ways ;
4. Welcoming the study made of these questions by the Committee of Experts on Human Rights, the conclusions of which were reported to the Assembly by the Committee of Ministers in its Statutory Report of 3 September 1970 ([Doc. 2795](#), pp. 20 - 22), and the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of its Resolution (70) 17 ;
5. Believing that the completion of this study has indicated the measures necessary to remove the difficulties which might arise, and thus makes it possible for member States to ratify the United Nations texts, in the elaboration of which their representatives played a prominent part ;
6. Recalling its [Recommendation 548 \(1969\)](#) in which the Assembly recommended that member governments should ratify the UN Covenants, once the necessary decisions about the problem of co-existence had been taken ;
7. Convinced that the two systems of protection of human rights, regional and universal, are not conflicting but complementary ;
8. Recalling that both the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights require thirty-five ratifications before entering into force, and that the Optional Protocol requires ten ratifications to enter into force ;
9. Noting that of the eleven States which have so far ratified the Covenants there is only one member State of the Council of Europe, viz. Cyprus, and that no member State of the Council of Europe appears among the four States which have so far ratified the Optional Protocol,

1. See [Doc. 2962](#), report of the Legal Affairs Committee. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 8 July 1971.



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10. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers invite member States (other than Cyprus) to ratify as soon as possible the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Optional Protocol thereto, taking account of the recommendations made by the Committee of Ministers concerning the problems that might arise owing to the co-existence of the UN Covenant and the European Convention on Human Rights.