



## Recommendation 646 (1971)<sup>1</sup>

# Action to be taken in tracing missing persons

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having taken note of the report on action to be taken in tracing missing persons presented by the Committee on Social and Health Questions ([Doc. 2996](#)) ;
2. Concerned about the great number of persons reported missing every year in the Council of Europe member States, which in many instances causes hardship and strain to the family left behind ;
3. Noting that in the Council of Europe member States legislation and regulations governing the tracing of missing persons differ from country to country, notably with regard to the procedure for tracing persons in the interest of their families ;
4. Stressing the need for a common approach in the Council of Europe member States to measures to be taken in tracing missing persons with a view to facilitating searches at international level ;
5. Considering that in the cases of voluntary disappearance, which in some countries cannot lead on legal grounds to action on the part of the police authorities, the families affected by the disappearance need assistance in their efforts to reestablish a contact with their missing member, for instance for the purpose of settling conflicts or realising claims under civil law proceedings ;
6. Paying high tribute to the work of the International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) in conducting international searches for missing persons, as well as to the work of private organisations, in particular the Salvation Army and International Social Service, with a view to re-establishing contact between the missing person and his family, and providing relief and assistance to them,
7. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers, after consulting the international organisations referred to in paragraph 6 above, instruct the appropriate governmental committee of experts to draw up, on the basis of the conclusions formulated in the report, [Doc. 2996](#), and in collaboration with those international organisations, in particular Interpol, recommendations concerning :

*the categories of missing persons for which searches should be made and measures designed to improve the functioning of systems of tracing missing persons at national level ;*

*a common approach to the question of tracing missing persons in the Council of Europe member States with a view to facilitating international enquiries ;*

*assistance to be given to "missing persons" and their families.*

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1. Assembly debate on 4 October 1971 (8th Sitting) (see [Doc. 2996](#), report of the Committee on Social and Health Questions). Text adopted by the Assembly on 4 October 1971 (8th Sitting).

