



## Recommendation 659 (1972)<sup>1</sup>

# Environment policy in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

- A -

The Assembly,

1. Having taken note of the report of the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities on environmental policy in Europe ([Doc. 3080](#)) and the specific contributions of the other committees concerned ;
2. Recalling its [Recommendation 586](#) on the Council of Europe activities on nature conservation and the protection of amenities, and its [Recommendation 603](#) and [Resolution 445](#) on the European Conservation Conference ;
3. Observing that the problems of human environment have become more and more serious, and that the action taken has proved to be insufficient to overcome the various forms of pollution ;
4. Reasserting that the Council of Europe is the natural focus for European action to improve human environment ;
5. Considering that there is a lack of co-ordination among European and international organisations in this field and that action by these organisations can be fully effective only if governments co-ordinate their activities ;
6. Considering that the success of the campaign to improve the environment in Europe depends largely on concerted international action and, consequently, on the granting of increased powers to the international bodies responsible for supervising application of the undertakings of States with regard to the harmonisation of regulations, norms and emission levels,
7. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :
  - a. define, in view of the Ministerial Conference on the European Environment to be held in Vienna at the beginning of 1973, the most urgent problems for which a European solution must be found, whilst making a contribution to the United Nations Conference on the Environment to be held in Stockholm in June 1972 ;
  - b. submit to the Vienna Conference the proposal to set up a European High Commissioner on the Environment entitled to make any proposals to governments concerning protection of the environment ;
  - c. speed up preparation of the draft Convention on the Protection of International Fresh Waters against Pollution, suggested in its [Recommendation 555](#) ;
  - d. make use of the structures already in existence in the Council of Europe to prepare other conventions and agreements on pollution control, where necessary in association with other international organisations ;
  - e. promote a policy on the planning of natural areas and landscapes, particularly those which are of European importance ;

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1. Assembly debate on 21 and 22 January 1972 (18th and 19th Sitings) (see [Doc. 3080](#), report of the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities). Text adopted by the Assembly on 22 January 1972 (19th Sitting).



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- f. strengthen the particular role of the Council of Europe in the field of information and education, by equipping it with the means to carry out this task within the framework of the permanent campaign on the environment recommended by the Committee of Ministers itself, and to arrange, through the European Conference of Local Authorities, for the necessary participation by local authorities in that campaign ;
- g. invite the governments of member States to incorporate urgently the principles set forth hereafter in national environment policies.

*Principles of a national environmental policy*

- I. To introduce at all levels of political decision and in all disciplines conducting applied research the criterion of respect for the environment, and to make a better living environment the essential factor in regional plans.
- II. To introduce into the legislation and regulations on pollution control the principle of the responsibility of the polluter, and to see to it that these regulations in force are strictly observed.
- III. To stipulate, in the case of certain industrial products particularly difficult to eliminate or to reuse, either a limit on use or a special tax to be included in the market price of such products and intended to finance their elimination after use.
- IV. To promote, through research, fiscal relief and subsidies, means of supplying and using energy that are favourable to the environment, such as electricity and gas.
- V. To establish in laws and decrees precise dates for the introduction of acceptable limits which would place tighter and tighter restrictions on the major pollutants and polluters.
- VI. To give priority to the promotion of a true public spirit in regard to the environment, and for that purpose to mobilise the resources of youth and adult education, particularly means of mass communication.
- VII. To examine the advisability of establishing, at the various administrative levels, departments particularly responsible for the control and protection of the environment and able to make any proposals to the competent authorities.
- VIII. To co-ordinate closely the work of the departments responsible for the protection of the environment and of those responsible for regional planning, and to integrate the two step by step.
- IX. To introduce into the penal code the concepts and description of crimes or offences against the environment which would entail severe sanctions.
- X. To ensure that the local authorities responsible for applying most of these provisions are provided with the means necessary for the execution of their tasks.

- B -

*Specific aspects*

The Assembly,

- 1. Considering that, in order to solve environmental problems, greater emphasis should be put on scientific research for the development of new technological solutions ;
- 2.
  - a. Believing that the dangers resulting from the technological revolution in agriculture have not yet been clearly identified ;
  - b. Conscious of the ambiguous role of farmers, subjected as they are to economic pressures on the one hand and to requirements concerning the protection of the natural environment on the other hand ;
  - c. Recognising the positive part played by farmers in the conservation of nature and the management of the natural environment, as well as the hazards to which the misuse of chemical fertilisers and pesticides can give rise in biological cycles ;
- 3. Considering :
  - a. that sustained economic growth is a necessary pre-condition of the availability of means by which the deterioration of the environment may be combatted ;

- b.* that the protection of the environment calls for a "qualitative" approach to economic growth, with all the important changes in economic policy that that will entail ;
  - c.* that close international coordination, particularly within OECD and GATT, is essential to prevent antipollution measures from becoming yet further tariff and non-tariff barriers to international trade,
4. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers invite member governments :
- a.* to take the necessary steps to promote the positive application of scientific and technological techniques to the solution of environmental problems, in particular by providing incentives to industrial and academic research in this field ;
  - b.* to remunerate fairly the new social function which European farmers fulfil in the technological society as guardians of the countryside, and make it possible for them to stop using products which contribute to the deterioration of man-made and natural environment.