Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 718 (1973)[1]

Place of freedom of expression in the work of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering the work of the Florence Symposium on freedom of expression and the role of the artist in European society (29-30 June 1973) ;

2. Having noted the report of its Committee on Culture and Education (Doc. 3329) ;

3. Recalling that this symposium brought together, for the first time at European level, political figures (government representatives, chairmen of parliamentary committees on culture and education, members of the Consultative Assembly), and writers and artists representing the major forms of artistic expression ;

4. Noting that during the Florence Symposium many participants, especially among the artists, stressed the danger of collusion between State capitalism and private capitalism, which would be detrimental to writers' and artists' freedom of expression and might endanger the foundation of the cultural values common to the parliamentary democracies ;

5. Urging that the agreements which will be concluded following the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) should not lead, in the member States, to any retreat from freedom of expression ;

6. Stressing that security and detente cannot be allowed to serve as alibis for deals or compromises dangerous to freedom of expression, which should never be used as a bargaining counter, as it has no market value ;

7. Aware that European public opinion, in the East and the West, in the North and the South, will undoubtedly judge the results of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe by the solutions it brings to the problem of the free movement of persons and ideas, and that in this respect the intensification of official cultural exchanges (opera, theatre, ballet etc.) cannot be considered by Europeans, and by artists in particular, as an adequate response to their desire for freedom ;

8. Considering that during the second phase of the CSCE particular attention should be given to the protection of minorities, whose cultural role - an important factor in European cooperation - should be recognised, and maintaining that the member States should vigorously defend the principle of non-discrimination towards them,

9. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers ask member governments :

a. to give greater importance to the third aspect of the CSCE (free movement of persons and ideas) during the second phase of the conference, and to see to it, in particular, that the desirable and necessary improvement in relations between countries with different social systems is accompanied by practical measures designed to guarantee freedom of expression in compliance with the standards defined in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ;

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1. Assembly debate on 28 September 1973 (14th and 15th Sittings) (see Doc. 3329, report of the Committee on Culture and Education). Text adopted by the Assembly on 28 September 1973 (15th Sitting).

b. to request the CSCE to recognise the cultural role of minorities as a factor favouring European cooperation.