



Recommendation 752 (1975)¹

Environment policy in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having taken note of the report of its Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities on environment policy in Europe in 1973-74 ([Doc. 3530](#)), and recalling Recommendations 720 (1973) and 723 (1974) to which no reply has been received from the Committee of Ministers ;
2. Noting the substantial progress achieved in several member countries on environment protection, and the work accomplished or begun by European and other international organisations, particularly within the Council of Europe ;
3. Observing that environment policy has now passed from the stage of statements and generalities to that of action ;
4. Considering in this connection that many principles which are accepted in theory, particularly the "polluter pays" principle, still need more detailed research before being applicable to all actual cases, and desirous that its Committee on Economic Affairs and Development should follow up the study of the question ;
5. Considering the problem of the relation between energy and environment, and the question of transfrontier pollution ;
6. Acknowledging the urgent need for most European countries to develop nuclear energy rapidly as a medium-term economic solution to the energy problem ;
7. Concerned nevertheless by the problems of waste and thermic pollution, which are particularly serious with this form of energy production ;
8. Concerned likewise by the damage done to the landscape by electric power stations as a result of their being sited according to criteria that are too exclusively economic, disregarding the needs of active nature and landscape protection ;
9. Observing that duplication between organisations is more apparent than real, but that there is nevertheless a regrettable lack of the co-operation and co-ordination which should ensure much greater effectiveness of the work of each of these organisations,
10. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :
 - 10.1. invite member governments, when formulating national policies :
 - a. to follow the example of several member countries by adopting, if necessary by consolidating existing laws and legal provisions, a general law on the environment which would allow a more coherent policy to be carried through and have a more direct influence on public opinion ;
 - b. to take into account when drafting such a law, which could be an outline law, principles which have been stated in recent years by international institutions such as the United Nations, OECD and the European Communities, and by the various organs of the Council of Europe ;

1. Assembly debate on 24 and 25 January 1975 (21st and 22nd Sittings) (see [Doc. 3530](#), report of the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 January 1975 (22nd Sitting).



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- c. to take particular care that citizens have complete advance information about major projects directly affecting their environment, giving them the opportunity to express their opinion and suggest alternative arrangements ;
 - d. to ensure, in particular, that all plans for nuclear power stations are brought to the notice of public opinion, together with objective information about the possible effects, and that local and regional authorities are consulted about the definitive choice of the sites ;
 - e. to give priority to research, for example through the intermediary of the Nuclear Energy Agency of OECD, into the limitation of thermal pollution and the use of residual heat, and to dispose of nuclear waste in conditions of safety for man and the environment with a permanent waste monitoring system ; any dumping into the sea being in future avoided or carried out in strict compliance with the stringent standards that have been or will be established by the competent scientific international organisations ;
 - f. to give high priority also to research into increasing the effectiveness of the use of energy and into developing alternative sources of energy less harmful to the environment such as solar and geothermal energy ;
 - g. to make specific and binding application, on the national and bilateral level, of the principles relating to transfrontier pollution problems as set forth in Resolution (71) 5 of the Committee of Ministers and supported in November 1974 by the Council of OECD ;
- 10.2. strengthen the campaign of the Council of Europe for a European environment policy by :
- a. signing without delay the draft European Convention for the Protection of International Watercourses against Pollution ;
 - b. further developing the system of protection of fresh waters in Europe according to the proposals made by the Assembly in [Opinion No. 67 \(1974\)](#) and by the European Colloquy on the Organisation of the Protection of Fresh Waters (see [Doc. 3545](#)) ;
 - c. broadening, with this in view, the terms of reference of the committee of technical experts set up by Resolution (74) 12 of the Committee of Ministers, so that it can prepare the necessary technical and legal instruments ;
 - d. drawing up legal instruments for settling transfrontier pollution problems according to the principles mentioned in point I.f above and in Assembly [Recommendation 693 \(1973\)](#) ;
 - e. intensifying and diversifying the education and information of all Europeans, in order to secure their active help in defending their environment and its rational use, in accordance with the principles of balanced regional planning ;
 - f. strengthening, for that purpose, the facilities for action of the European Information Centre for Nature Conservation, possibly redefining its functions, also implementing a European regional planning programme as proposed by the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning.