

Recommendation 815 (1977)¹

Freedom of expression and the role of the writer in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having considered the report on freedom of expression and the role of the writer in Europe presented by its Committee on Culture and Education ([Doc. 4012](#)) ;
2. Convinced of the important role of writer and of the writing profession in democratic society ;
3. Regretting the economic situation of full-time writers in member states, and in particular the inadequate social security benefits available to them ;
4. Noting that, despite constitutional guarantees for freedom of expression, the cost of publishing and other economic factors prevent this from being fully realised by many writers ;
5. Recalling its past concern for the position of writers in its [Recommendation 512 \(1968\)](#), on the Stockholm Conference on Intellectual Property, and [Recommendation 719 \(1973\)](#), on the exercise of freedom of artistic expression ;
6. Wishing to support and develop existing international agreements in this field, including the third basket of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and the several recommendations of Unesco. in particular those adopted at the Helsinki Conference of 1972 ;
7. Noting the 1st Congress of European Writers' Organisations, held in Berlin on 11-13 February 1977 ;
8. Believing that there is need for more information on the situation of writers in Europe, and for the wider public exchange of such information and experience ;
9. Believing also that changes in cultural policy and in the social situation in member states necessitate a review of the application to writers of the European Cultural Convention and the Social Charter of the Council of Europe, and recalling in this context the conclusions reached by the European Ministers with responsibility for Cultural Affairs, when meeting in Oslo in 1976, who stressed the need for an acceptable economic, social and juridical basis for the active participation in society of writers and others working in the cultural field,
10. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers invite the governments of the member states :
to implement those conclusions reached by the European Ministers of Culture in Oslo in 1976 that concern writers, with particular reference to :
 - a. *better use by the various sectors of society of the services and works which artists can provide, without forgetting, however, the nature of their vocation ;*
 - b. *better and more diversified remuneration for these services and works (e.g. remuneration for participation in social, educational and cultural activity in the broad sense, additional opportunities to secure commissions and employment), and recourse to contractual arrangements whenever the artist's work is at stake ;*

1. Assembly debate on 6 October 1977 (8th Sitting) (see [Doc. 4012](#), [Doc. 4012](#), report of the Committee on Culture and Education). Text adopted by the Assembly on 6 October 1977 (8th Sitting).



- c. *bringing the welfare, unemployment and pension rights of professional artists as far as possible into line with those of other categories of workers, while paying due regard to the special conditions of creative work in the arts ;*
 - d. *tax provisions allowing for the specific features of artistic production ;*
 - e. *implementing and extending schemes for grants and other kinds of support for artists, especially for those working in fields which preclude them from earning sufficient immediate income ;*
 - f. *including as part of cultural policy the protection of freedom of expression, the encouragement of innovation, and the integration of art in everyday life ;*
- to encourage and support the literature of ethnic minorities ;*

11. Further recommends that the Committee of Ministers assist governments of the member states in the exchange of experiences in this field :

by analysing the European Cultural Convention and the Social Charter, together with existing national legislation concerning writers, with a view to harmonising this legislation where practicable in specific fields, and with the general aim of setting up a European statute for writers ;

by considering means of making special arrangements between member states to grant more extensive rights to authors in copyright and other fields than are conferred by existing international instruments, but without injury directly or indirectly to the diffusion of certain works which could not published in their authors' own country ;

by issuing on a regular basis information on the situation of writers in member states.