Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 875 (1979)[1]

Public participation in decision-making on aircraft noise matters

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Recalling its Recommendation 538 and its Resolution 383 of 1968, on aircraft noise abatement ;

2. Noting with satisfaction that, since that time, sustained and successful efforts have been made by national governments, by airlines and airport operators, by airframe and aero-engine manufacturers, and by international bodies such as the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC), to reduce the levels of noise experienced at or near major airports ;

3. Recognising, nevertheless, that the volume of air traffic is still increasing, and that aircraft noise remains a serious nuisance for many people ;

4. Believing that there is considerable scope for improvement in the area of public participation in and consultation on decisions on aircraft and airport noise matters, including the siting and development of airports,

5. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers invite the governments of member states :

5.1. to establish on a statutory basis at all major national and international airports in Europe an Airport Consultative Committee to provide for the fullest possible consultation and exchange of information concerning the impact of aircraft noise, and the operation of the airport and all its services upon the interests of the local community, and to extend representation on such consultative committees to users of the airport and airline employees, and to local residents, in whatever form is most appropriate, as well as to the airport operators, the airline operators, and the technical authorities responsible for civil aviation policy and air traffic control matters ;

5.2. to take no decision on major extensions of any civil airport, or on building a new civil airport, without a full preliminary enquiry in public ;

5.3. to publish regular projections of significant traffic growth at any major civil airport as far in advance as possible, for the information of local authorities, and particularly land-use planners, and of the general public, as well as of airlines using the airport concerned ;

5.4. to establish at all publicly licensed airports effective procedures for the handling of complaints about aircraft noise by members of the general public ;

5.5. to require the military authorities at all operational airfields to establish procedures for giving local residents reasonable notice of any changes in the level or type of flying activity which may cause additional noise nuisance, and so far as is practicable to take account of local views in determining the pattern of use of any particular airfield ;

1. Assembly debate on 4 October 1979 (11th Sitting) (see Doc. 4375, report of the Committee on Social and Health Questions). Text adopted by the Assembly on 4 October 1979 (11th Sitting).

5.6. to give the opportunity, in any case where it is proposed to build or extend a military airfield, for the public concerned by these proposals to be consulted, and to provide appropriate compensation to those affected by such work ;

5.7. to establish effective procedures to give advance warning of any planned changes in the pattern of low-flying training, especially where this involves a marked increase in activity, or any substantial activity at weekends or during the hours of darkness, and wherever possible to adjust such plans to meet reasonable objections from local residents ;

5.8. to establish wide consultation procedures to discuss the desirability and feasibility of further measures to abate the impact of aircraft noise, including night curfews, provision of double-glazing for noise insulation, improved flight paths and differential landing charges to induce airlines to buy quieter aircraft ;

5.9. to review flight paths with a view to avoiding damage to historic monuments, and to ensure that the views of independent conservation associations are taken into account in the future development of air traffic.