Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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Recommendation 881 (1979)[1]

Rural architectural heritage

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having noted the report of its Committee on Culture and Education on the rural architectural heritage, Doc. 4421 ;

2. Considering that European Architectural Heritage Year 1975, as also the European Charter of the Architectural Heritage laid equal stress on the importance of the rural heritage as well as the urban ;

3. Concerned, however, that the attention paid to the rural heritage and to the problems of its conservation have not significantly increased since 1975, but that the process of destruction, often under the guise of "modernisation", has continued rapidly ;

4. Welcoming recent initiatives by the Council of Europe relating to the rural heritage, and in particular the Appeal of Granada (1977) and the Final Declaration of the 3rd European Symposium of Historic Towns (Munich/Landshut, 1978) ;

5. Stressing the application of its recent Recommendation 880, on the conservation of the architectural heritage, to rural architecture as well as urban, in particular as regards listing, protective legislation and the provision of financial support, and in addition pointing out the need for further study and research into the rural architectural heritage ;

6. Stressing the importance of the rural heritage in its local cultural and sociological context, as also its wider ecological and economic roles ;

7. Believing that the retention and conservation of the historic architectural environment in rural areas is essential if country people are to have the opportunity to develop their particular social and cultural values ;

8. Hoping that those responsible for commercial activities in rural areas will accept their obligation to contribute to the conservation of the rural architectural heritage as well as its natural setting;

9. Noting a growing appreciation of the values of the countryside by urban dwellers and especially by younger people, and asking the official bodies concerned to support this tendency, but also to ensure that tourism, week-end visiting and second homes do not endanger the rural way of life ;

10. Believing that a satisfactory balance and positive relationship will only be obtained between town and country in the context of overall policies for regional development, based on equal consideration of both town and country planning ;

11. Expecting a constructive response to the need for action to conserve the rural architectural heritage from other bodies concerned with questions related to rural areas, most importantly from the European Ministers responsible for Regional Planning, and from the European Communities,

1. Assembly debate on 8 October 1979 (16th Sitting) (see Doc. 4421, report of the Committee on Culture and Education). Text adopted by the Assembly on 8 October 1979 (16th Sitting).

12. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

a. transmit this recommendation to the various bodies likely to be concerned with the decisions affecting the rural heritage ;

b. ensure that due account is taken of the rural heritage in the framework of the second medium-term plan of the Council of Europe ;

c. ask its Steering Committee for Regional Planning and the Architectural Heritage to consider balancing its 1980 campaign on urban renaissance with a subsequent campaign on the revitalisation of village life ;

d. urgently consider the need for action to preserve the quality of the heritage and the natural life of rural areas, which involves the questions of habitat and landscape as well as those of the important architectural inheritance.