Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 882 (1979)[1]

Water pollution of the Rhine river basin

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having noted the report by its Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities on water pollution in the Rhine river basin, and specifically on the results of the parliamentary hearing organised in Strasbourg on 29 May 1979 (Doc. 4403) ;

2. Recalling its constant concern to make progress with a genuine European water policy making it possible to deal with the problems of pollution and depletion of fresh water resources in Europe ;

3. Concerned by the overall state of fresh water in Europe, which has continued to deteriorate over the past years despite certain local improvements ;

4. Convinced that only close international cooperation, at both bilateral and European level, on the basis of international agreements and regulations laying down common standards and obligations, will enable real solutions to be found to the problem of the quality of European water resources ;

5. Bearing in mind the precarious nature of water resources and the practice of discharging polluted water into international watercourses ;

6. Noting that, in discussing the Bonn Convention, the great majority of European experts concluded that the injection of salt into a deep-lying stratum did not present any foreseeable danger to the environment ;

7. Considering that at the European level the management of international watercourses and supervision of the application of the relevant international agreements should be gradually taken over by specialist European organisations with regional responsibilities (European catchment area agencies) or general responsibilities (European water agency) ;

8. Considering that this objective can only be attained in stages, of which the first is the implementation of agreements and directives drawn up under the auspices of the Council of Europe, the European Communities and the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine against Pollution ;

9. Conscious, in particular, that priority should be given to measures aimed at reducing pollution of the Rhine, which having been the main European sewer should become a symbol of European solidarity,

10. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

a. invite the governments of the Rhine riparian states to immediately implement the Convention on the Protection of the Rhine against Chemical Pollution and the Convention on the Protection of the Rhine against Chloride Pollution, signed in Bonn in 1976 under the auspices of the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine against Pollution ;

b. invite the governments of the Rhine riparian states to resume the negotiations aiming at a further reduction of the pollution of the Rhine by chlorides, by the adoption of more comprehensive measures, including recommendations concerning salt marketing and storage ;

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1. Assembly debate on 11 October 1979 (19th Sitting) (see Doc. 4403, report of the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities). Text adopted by the Assembly on 11 October 1979 (19th Sitting).

c. invite the governments of the Rhine riparian states not included in the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine against Pollution to join this organisation, or to associate themselves with its work in other ways ;

d. invite all governments of member states to adopt measures severely restricting the use of phosphates both in washing products and in agricultural fertilisers ;

e. finalise the draft European Convention on the Protection of International Watercourses against Pollution by the end of the year, without reducing its scope, and open it for signature by the governments in the spring of 1980.