Recommendation 905 (1980)[1]

Co-operation between countries of Northern and Southern Europe follow-up to Rec.861 (1979)

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having taken note of the report on cooperation between the countries of Northern and Southern Europe - Follow-up to Recommendation 861 (1979) (Doc. 4574), presented by its Political Affairs Committee and its Committee on Economic Affairs and Development ;

2. Reiterating its Recommendation 861 (1979) whose principles and proposals retain their validity and which has not yet received a definitive reply from the Committee of Ministers ;

3. Recalling its Opinion No. 98 (1980) on the second mediom-term plan for the Council of Europe's intergovernmental activities and its Recommendation 887 (1980) on the functions of the Special Representative of the Council of Europe for National Refugees and Over-Population, which go into certain of the proposals contained in Recommendation 861 (1979) in greater depth, and deeply desiring that the Committee of Ministers reconsider the negative stance it recently took concerning the continuation of the functions of the Special Representative ;

4. Observing that the crisis affecting the economies of the industrialised countries is aggravating economic and social imbalances to the detriment of the less favoured countries and regions, especially in Southern Europe ;

5. Being of the opinion that a better balance throughout Europe - like a new international economic order - cannot be brought about simply by massive transfers of financial resources to the Southern countries, but will require the implementation of coherent European policies in economic, social, cultural, scientific, legal and administrative matters, which fall within the purview of the Council of Europe (Article 1.b of the Statute) ;

6. Considering that the entry of Greece into the European Communities in the very near future and the prospect of the entry of Spain and Portugal are positive factors which will make for more balanced economic relations between the countries of Northern and Southern Europe ;

7. Considering, however, that the enlargement of the European Communities towards the south will not resolve all the problems of balance in Europe, which are not only economic and which also concern countries that have not applied for membership ;

8. Taking note with satisfaction of Resolution 149 (1980) of the Governing Body of the Resettlement Fund in which it "declares its willingness to take such steps as may prove necessary to give greater support to projects likely to make a concrete contribution to a better balance among its member states" ;

9. Observing that the Committee of Ministers has devoted its most recent sessions to studying the question of balanced European development, but that it has still not taken any decision to back up the action of the Council of Europe by closer co-operation between its member states, even though any delay can only aggravate the problem ;

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1. Assembly debate on 2 October 1980 (19th Sitting) (see Doc. 4574, report of the Political Affairs Committee and of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development). Text adopted by the Assembly on 2 October 1980 (19th Sitting).

10. Reiterating its desire to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Committee of Ministers, in particular by means of a joint working party in which its Sub-committees on Co-operation between the Countries of Northern and Southern Europe would take part ;

11. Taking note also with satisfaction of the potential value, as an instrument for improving co-operation between the countries of Northern and Southern Europe in science and the transfer of technology, of the various working parties and study groups operating within the framework of its "Exercise in Scientific Co-operation",

12. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers take action without delay on the proposals contained in Recommendation 861 (1979), and consider in particular the following measures :

12.1. co-ordinating member governments' policies by holding regular meetings of the Committee of Ministers or of their Deputies devoted exclusively to discussing possible means of redressing the balance in Europe, and by publishing a regular report on political, economic and technical progress towards unity between Council of Europe member states ;

12.2. including in the second medium-term plan for the Council of Europe's intergovernmental activities (1981-86) "a comprehensive scheme to correct imbalances in Europe, either in the form of a ninth field or by incorporating more such concerns in the existing eight fields", as asked for by the Assembly in its Opinion No. 98 (1980) ;

12.3. inviting each intergovernmental committee to determine which activities in their work programmes are of particular value for the less favoured countries and regions, and to give them high priority ;

12.4. instructing the Standing Conference on University Problems, for the specific purpose of improving scientific co-operation and transfers of technical expertise, to examine how its programme of postgraduate training modules might be developed and expanded ;

12.5. implementing a programme of technical cooperation in aid of Southern European countries, closely co-ordinated with the programme of intergovernmental activities, of which it would be a projection in the operational sector, on the pattern of the programme for co-operation with Portugal ;

12.6. increasing the financial resources of the Resettlement Fund by encouraging the three Council of Europe states which are not members to join, further raising the subscriptions of all member states and calling for the additional unilateral payment of contributions to specific projects :

12.7. inviting the organs of the Fund to expand the "social portfolio", which is used to finance loans at reduced rates of interest, by feeding into it a larger share of its profits ;

12.8. appointing a co-ordinator for all activities aimed at closer co-operation between the countries of Northern and Southern Europe, whose role would be one of political stimulation and coordination and who should also establish close relations with the Special Representative of the Council of Europe for National Refugees and Over-Population whose functions should be continued and modified on the lines suggested in Recommendation 887 (1980) ; this co-ordinator could be assigned the further temporary task of analysing the causes and mechanisms of imbalances in Europe, if need be with the assistance of a committee of independent advisers ;

12.9. making sufficient means available to the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe to involve the peripheral or less prosperous regions more closely in the Council of Europe's work for more balanced development in Europe;

13. Recommends, furthermore, that the Committee of Ministers invite all the European conferences of specialised ministers to investigate how they might contribute in their own fields to redressing the balance in Europe.