Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 911 (1981)[1]

Impact on the environment of major industrial installations

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Recalling its firm commitment to protection of the environment in Europe, as indicated, in particular in respect of energy installations in Recommendation 846 (1978) ;

2. Concerned by the growing dimensions of the environmental impacts- whether local, regional, transnational or global- of industrial and ancillary industrial activities ;

3. Observing the serious problems caused by the discharge of large quantities of toxic substances into the natural environment, particularly around major industrial installations ;

4. Welcoming the efforts of OECD to devise measures for monitoring toxic discharges ;

5. Emphasising that the environmental activities of OECD and the Council of Europe complement each other ;

6. Believing it important that, in environment protection, international organisations and agencies should not all concentrate on the same subjects, but that each should act in the fields where it has demonstrated its competence while being aware of the activities of other organisations ;

7. Wishing that OECD continue to deal with problems of toxic substances monitoring and that the Council of Europe concentrate on protection of the natural environment and the quality of life ;

8. Reaffirming the need to make ecological planning an integral part of plans for economic, industrial and urban development, entailing an impact on the environment ;

9. Recalling its Resolution 592 (1975), on the economic consequences of "the limits to growth", in which the Assembly urged the governments of the member states to introduce the polluter-pays principle and to enforce its uniform observance, in order to avoid unfair distortions in international trade and investment ;

10. Stressing the growing importance of assessing the ecological impact of industrial projects, and of reaching agreement on an assessment model which may serve as an instrument of international co-operation ;

11. Drawing attention to the relevance and necessity of consultation prior to the granting of industrial planning permission ;

12. Recognising that the requirements of economic development are compatible with those of environmental protection provided that there are no lasting adverse effects on the quality of life ;

13. Being aware of the special importance of impact studies and prior consultation procedures, in frontier regions, applauding the inclusion of relevant provisions in the Nordic Convention on Protection of the Environment, and aware of the progress of the European Communities towards the adoption of a directive on a common system of environmental impact assessment for major industrial projects ;

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1. Assembly debate on 27 January 1981 (21st and 22nd Sittings) (see Doc. 4641), report of the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities). Text adopted by the Assembly on 27 January 1981 (22nd Sitting).

14. Wishing that the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities may become operational,

15. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

a. urge member governments of the member states that have not already done so to sign and ratify the Council of Europe and United Nations environment conventions ;

b. urge governments of the member states to co-ordinate their environment protection policies so as to avoid upsetting the competitive position of their national industries ;

c. instruct the European Committee for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources :

1. to arrange for the exchange between member states of information and documentation on methods of assessing the environmental impact of industrial installations and of procedures for prior consultation ;

2. to work out general principles to form the basis of methodological models for environmental impact assessment ;

3. to examine closely examples of successful action by the member states in this field ;

d. by comparing in particular experiences in this field, and keeping in mind the draft directive of the European Communities on environmental impact assessment, search for the best ways of bringing about genuine democratic consultation of the public involved, satisfying the need for environmental protection and efficiency on the one hand and the requirements of parliamentary democracy on the other, founded on the sharing of responsibility for decisions between elected representatives and the executive ;

e. draft a model agreement on prior consultation procedures in frontier regions, along the lines of the Nordic Convention on Protection of the Environment, and taking into account the principles contained in the draft directive of the European Communities, as a means of supplementing the European Outline Convention on Trans-frontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities.