Recommendation 958 (1983)[1]

Environment policy in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Recalling its concern for protection of the environment as the natural setting for human activities ;

2. Noting with satisfaction the entry into force on 1 June 1982 of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats drawn up within the framework of the Council of Europe ;

3. Also welcoming the entry into force in June 1982 of the European Convention for the Protection of Animals for Slaughter, a subject on which the Assembly called for a convention in its Recommendation 709 (1973) ;

4. Considering, however, that certain Council of Europe activities on conservation of wildlife and natural habitats could be so much specialised as to make it difficult to popularise them or give them wide publicity ;

5. Aware of the budgetary difficulties facing both national and international environmental protection programmes ;

6. Noting with satisfaction that the international organisations active in the environmental field are concerned to avoid overlapping between their activities ;

7. Praising the exemplary devotion of the many non-governmental organisations dealing with nature protection in Europe ;

8. Considering that national parliaments could more actively contribute to environmental protection, on the one hand by playing their part in the procedures of ratification of legal instruments, on the other by keeping a check on budgetary allocations for environmental affairs,

9. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

a. invite the governments of the member states :

1. to improve financial resources awarded to environmental protection ;

2. to increase local and regional authorities' involvement in pollution control ;

3. to apply effectively at national level the various international legal instruments which they have ratified ;

4. to adopt practical measures to combat industrial pollution ;

b. review the Intergovernmental Work Programme so as to pay greater attention to informing and educating public opinion about matters involving the environment and to establish procedures for public participation in decisions concerning the environment ;

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1. Assembly debate on 25 January 1983 (22nd Sitting) (see Doc. 5010, report of the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities, and Doc. 5015, opinion of the Committee on Science and Technology). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 January 1983 (22nd Sitting).

c. give a new direction to the work of certain committees dealing with conservation of wildlife and natural habitats whose work is of such a specialised nature as to restrict scope for its popularisation and dissemination to the general public ;

d. examine the environment directives of the European Communities to establish which of them- particularly among those concerned with technical standards for purity of water and air, with pollution by lead, with waste and industrial accident hazards- can be suitable for wider European adoption through the Council of Europe ;

10. Urges the Committee of Ministers to conclude without further delay the draft Outline European Convention for the Protection of International Watercourses against Pollution, to ensure that marked progress be made ;

11. Urges the Committee of Ministers to study and take action on the more effective integration of environmental considerations into sectoral policy-making by governments, particularly in transport policy-making where, for example, the projected growth of very heavy lorry traffic in the next two decades by over 50 % could bring disaster for whole communities ;

12. Urges the Committee of Ministers to study the draft EEC directive on an agreed system for checking on the environmental effects of major construction and similar projects before planning authorisation is given in member states, with a view to formulating a similar system to protect the environment throughout the member states of the Council of Europe.