



Recommendation 983 (1984)¹

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Recalling that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea was opened for signature on 10 December 1982 ;
2. Considering that this convention, with its 320 articles and 9 annexes, deals with practically every possible use by mankind of the high seas and oceans and their floor, such as navigation, exploration and exploitation of the sea-bed, delimitation of maritime zones, fishing, conservation and pollution, scientific research, and also with the peaceful settlement of disputes ;
3. Aware that a number of issues in the convention are controversial as a result of opposing interests between industrialised and developing countries, while other issues such as fisheries, the passage of ships through straits and the delimitation of maritime boundaries divide a number of Council of Europe member states ;
4. Considering that, on the one hand, the convention- through its recommendation that coastal states take full responsibility for fisheries management, including water quality surveillance, within their exclusive economic zones- may lead to less ruthless competition for scarce and vulnerable fish resources :
5. Aware, on the other hand, that this may have serious consequences for other countries suddenly excluded from traditional fishing areas, and believing that the coastal state concerned should, in conformity with the convention, consider requests from countries wishing to preserve their rights, and conclude agreements with them regarding continued rights in as positive a spirit as possible ;
6. Considering the primordial importance of the convention and its outstanding contribution to an international legal order for the world's seas ;
7. Convinced that close co-operation between industrialised and developing countries in the field of marine scientific research would contribute towards minimising the restrictive impact of the convention on the freedom of scientific activities ;
8. Expressing the hope that the convention, adopted by an overwhelming majority of the world's nations, will win the widest possible acceptance, and thus serve its purpose in a global context ;
9. Considering that the convention is open for signature until 9 December 1984 ;
10. Considering that signature of the convention offers particular advantages such as membership of the Preparatory Commission for the International Sea-Bed Authority and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the possibility to take part in pioneer activities without entailing for states an automatic obligation to ratify ;

1. Assembly debate on 10 and 11 May 1984 (7th and 8th Sittings) (see [Doc. 5194](#), report of the Legal Affairs Committee, and [Docs. 5217](#), [Doc. 5221](#), [Doc. 5202](#) and [Doc. 5198](#), opinions of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, of the Committee on Culture and Education, of the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities, of the Committee on Agriculture and of the Committee on Science and Technology). Text adopted by the Assembly on 11 May 1984 (8th Sitting).



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11. Appealing to the governments of the member states of the Council of Europe to sign the convention before the end of 1984 and to ratify it ;
12. Recalling its [Recommendation 848 \(1978\)](#) on the underwater cultural heritage and, in particular, paragraphs 6.a, b and c, relating to a European convention ;
13. Noting that the protection granted by the United Nations convention to the underwater cultural heritage might be extended and improved by regional agreements,
14. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :
 - a. invite the governments of the Council of Europe member states :
 1. to sign the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea before the deadline of 9 December 1984 ;
 2. to play an active role in the Preparatory Commission for the International Sea-Bed Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea ;
 3. to foster genuine and close co-operation with developing coastal countries in the field of marine scientific research and the protection of the marine environment ;
 - b. use the convention's full potential for intensifying international fisheries co-operation, in particular to preserve stocks and fight pollution ;
 - c. do whatever is in its power to accelerate the drawing up and implementation of a European convention on the protection of the underwater cultural heritage and promote continued European co-operation in this field, in particular on such questions as relations between professional and amateur interest in the underwater heritage, and means of ensuring that cultural heritage protection has precedence over salvage ;
 - d. promote regional co-operation among Council of Europe member states in the field of marine scientific research and the protection of the marine environment.