Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 998 (1984)[1]

Environment and employment

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having examined the conclusions of the Colloquy "Environment and Employment" (Barcelona, 1-3 March 1984) organised by its Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities ;

2. Taking into account the conclusions of the International Conference on Environment and Economics organised by OECD in Paris, 18-21 June 1984 ;

3. Considering that several studies and experience have so far shown that the positive effects of an environment policy on employment are at least as great, and often greater, than the negative effects, and that the present economic crisis, with its negative effects on employment, must not serve as a pretext for not adopting stringent policies to protect the environment ;

4. Aware of the seriousness of damage to the architectural heritage and to the natural environment in Europe, and the need for a suitable policy to improve the quality of life as well as to preserve natural resources and thus secure the survival of our descendants ;

5. Aware of the need for an education policy geared to nature and environment ;

6. Believing that carefully planned environmental policies and projects can be useful in maintaining employment and can create an environmental industry which will generate jobs in the future ;

7. Convinced that a successful environmental industry will also contribute to the continued viability and stability of other industries and therefore of the national economy ;

8. Declaring its support for a new economic strategy to make good the damage done to the environment and ensure the renewal of available resources ;

9. Endorsing the conclusion of the OECD Conference : that renewed economic growth, whilst bringing benefits, will lead to higher levels of conventional pollutants, thus imposing greater pressures on environmental resources with higher damage costs, unless environmental measures are strengthened, and that renewed growth will also accelerate the emergence of new and more complex pollution problems, linked to new technological developments ;

10. Drawing attention to the importance of job creation schemes in the field of restoration and preservation of historical sites and monuments, renovation and construction of dwellings, and improvement of housing in general ;

11. Observing that a central concern in designing environmental policies is to meet the stated environmental goals at the least possible cost to society, and that to ease the burden that environmental regulations impose on the private sector, and in order to prevent harmful effects on employment, more cost-effective solutions should be reached ;

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1. Assembly debate on 4 October 1984 (21st Sitting) (see Doc. 5257, report of the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities). Text adopted by the Assembly on 4 October 1984 (21st Sitting).

12. Considering that the lack of real European agreement on national environmental policies has a negative impact on the environment and employment in our countries ;

13. Convinced that environment protection policies have positive effects on employment, provided that the required investment is carefully planned with a view to the necessary profitability, their effects on company tax payments and social security contributions, and the need to remain internationally competitive ;

14. Believing that with urban environment projects there is a need to assess the appropriate costs, to aim at lasting jobs and to give preference to the long term and to new solutions, and that, when environmental measures are included in short-term economic schemes, there must be sufficient continuity to enable the measures to yield their ultimate beneficial effects for employment ;

15. Considering that a significant change in environmental policies with a positive impact on employment would be to use a combination of market-oriented or incentive-based approaches with legal measures and guidelines in those cases where voluntary compliance with the stated goals cannot be expected ;

16. Emphasising the need for regional, national and international co-ordination of environment policies, and expressing the wish that central governments should do everything possible to facilitate action by local and regional authorities in this field by providing them with appropriate funds,

17. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

a. adopt a resolution or any other suitable instrument addressed to governments of member states, containing concrete measures to prevent differences between national environment policies from upsetting international economic competition ;

b. bring the conclusions of the Barcelona colloquy to the knowledge of the organising committee for the 3rd Conference of European Ministers of Labour ;

c. examine the following experiments and measures in environmental protection policy to generate new jobs :

1. improvement of water distribution and purification systems, dykes and dams ;
2. increase in the number of nature reserves and open spaces, accompanied by the implementation of reafforestation and rational forest management programmes ;
3. recovery of waste ground (in industrial areas) and elimination of unauthorised rubbish tips ;
4. development of "clean" technologies : tending to reduce pollution, and the use of natural resources ;
5. improvement of the urban and rural environment through the use of "clean technology" resources, and waste collection and recycling ;
6. improvement in the quality and durability of goods through the encouragement of new forms of economic behaviour, inter alia, if applicable, "repair or restore" rather than the outmoded "throw away, destroy and replace", which is wasteful of energy, raw materials and work, and creates pollution and waste ;
7. substantially increased research and development in the field of clean and inexhaustible alternative sources of energy, such as solar, wind, geothermal and tidal energy ;
8. rational energy use in association with industrial, transport and urban policies ;
9. promotion of the European environment industry- research and development should aim to improve Europe's position in the clean technology and new materials field (such as reduction of nitrogen oxide emissions and of other polluting substances, materials for reducing noise levels in towns) ;
10. promotion of industrial depollution by developing new technologies and preparing the ground for industrial reconversion, whilst ensuring that the shutdown of old plants does not lead to sudden redundancies ;

d. study the possibility of establishing a European fund to help and encourage member states to take the necessary environmental measures at national and regional level where, without such help, the environment would not be protected ;

e. examine the possibilities of further contacts with the Eastern European countries in the field of environmental policy.