Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1002 (1985)[1]

Island farming and problems of agriculture in small islands

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Recalling the Tenerife and Azores Declarations, adopted by the Conferences of European Island Regions in 1981 and 1984, which urge governments to help islands overcome their increasing economic, social and cultural disadvantages ;

2. Concerned that the depopulation and loss of economic competitiveness suffered by Europe's thousands of small islands will lead to a growing economic imbalance between regions, and will, if these communities are allowed to die out, reduce Europe's cultural diversity ;

3. Aware that island populations, because of their dispersion and remoteness, often cannot contribute effectively to the formulation of national policies affecting them ;

4. Recognising that agriculture could form the basis of a prosperous economy for many islands if due compensation were provided for such factors' as high transportation costs, lack of food processing facilities, infrequent and expensive veterinary and agricultural services, the high prices of everyday commodities, and an insufficient social infrastructure as regards schools, hospitals and collective transport ;

5. Conscious that agriculture in many islands is also hindered by inefficient farm structures and adverse climate and soil conditions,

6. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers call on the governments of member states to take special measures to help agriculture in small islands, more especially by :

6.1. introducing a system of subsidy for ferry transport, which does not disadvantage the economic lifestyle of any island community ;

6.2. by building, wherever possible, Ro-Ro (roll-on roll-off) piers at ferry ports to allow efficient transport of agricultural products and livestock, as well as food processing facilities such as slaughter houses in certain islands ;

6.3. encouraging a shift of agricultural production in islands away from large-volume, low-value crops towards higher-priced specialised products ;

6.4. creating special development boards for islands and remote mainland areas to help agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and small-scale industries in the crafts, advanced technology and tourism ;

6.5. guaranteeing island fishermen a part of catches in local waters and the possibility of having it processed locally ;

6.6. encouraging joint buying by farmers of inputs such as fertilisers and seeds, and group selling of livestock, to cut costs and increase income ;

6.7. making sure that a sufficient power supply is available to run any new processing industry and to improve the living standards of the inhabitants ;

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1. Assembly debate on 29 January 1985 (23rd Sitting) (see Doc. 5324, report of the Committee on Agriculture). Text adopted by the Assembly on 29 January 1985 (23rd Sitting).

6.8. increasing the assistance given to small islands through international institutions such as the Council of Europe's Resettlement Fund and raising, within the Ten, Community funding for the same purpose.