Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1079 (1988)[1]

Protection of the North Sea against pollution

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having taken note of the report on the protection of the North Sea against pollution, presented by its Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities (Doc. 5881) ;

2. Recalling in this connection its previous initiatives aimed at a large-scale European campaign against the pollution of water and coasts, in particular :

a. the holding of a European parliamentary hearing in Paris, in July 1978 ;

b. the discussion of a report and the adoption of Recommendation 847, in October 1978 ;

c. the numerous initiatives for the protection of the Rhine (Recommendations 882, 1052, etc.) ;

d. the discussion of a report and the adoption of Recommendation 997 on regional planning and protection of the environment in European coastal regions, in October 1984 ;

e. the discussion of a report and the adoption of Recommendation 1015 on protection of the Mediterranean environment, in September 1985 ;

3. Noting that the inland waterways of the European continent are the main sources of pollution of the North Sea ;

4. Noting that the air pollution of the European continent and the United Kingdom and Ireland is also a considerable source of pollution of the North Sea ;

5. Considering, therefore, that any policy for the protection of the North Sea must first of all be applied to the protection of inland waterways against pollution and to the reduction of air pollution ;

6. Noting in this connection that, whereas pollution of waterways by industrial and domestic waste has been considerably reduced in recent years, there appears to have been an increase in agriculture-related pollution ;

7. Noting also that oil pollution still accounts for much of North Sea pollution, but that the proportion thereof that is due to accidents is considerably less than that due to clandestine discharge by ships, barges and oil rigs ;

8. Noting, finally, that pollution by heavy metals, such as lead, cadmium and mercury, and pollution by chemicals, such as polychlorides, aldrin, dieldrin and endrin, pose a serious threat to the ecological equilibrium of marine life ;

9. Noting that many international conventions and Community directives aimed at protecting inland waterways and the sea have been concluded in recent years ;

10. Noting also that these international and European texts appear to be inadequately applied by states, and that a special effort will be required to ensure their full implementation ;

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1. *Assembly debate* on 6 May 1988 (8th Sitting) (see Doc. 5881, report of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, Rapporteur : Mr Ahrens). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 6 May 1988 (8th Sitting).

11. Noting also that the Conference of Ministers of the North Sea States made a considerable effort to protect the North Sea,

12. While also recalling the terms of its Recommendation 847 (1978), recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

a. invite member states to review the situation regarding the application of international conventions and Community directives on the protection of coasts and seas, particularly the North Sea, as well as the various international or Community texts on the protection of inland waterways ;

b. invite the member states directly concerned to implement without delay the decisions taken and proposals made by the 2nd International Conference for the Protection of the North Sea, held in London on 24 and 25 November 1987 ;

c. invite member states bordering the North Sea, in particular, to take all necessary legislative, administrative and technical measures with a view to :

i. reducing the pollution of the inland waterways and air pollution ;

ii. ensuring that ships' waste is stored and treated in ports, and that any discharge of such waste at sea is severely punished ;

iii. monitoring the compliance of ships with safety standards, and denying them access to ports in the event of non-compliance ;

iv. providing ships' crews with appropriate information on safety requirements and regulations ;

v. setting up a permanent international surveillance system for the North Sea and inland waterways, using all available remote-sensing and telemetric resources in order to detect and penalise all infringements of regulations for the protection of seas and inland waterways ;

d. work closely together with the EEC in the common battle to protect the North Sea, so as to avoid duplication of activities by the EEC and the Council of Europe.