Parliamentary Assembly
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Recommendation 1091 (1988)[1]

European Campaign for the Countryside - A new management approach for rural areas

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having taken note of the report on the European Campaign for the Countryside - A new management approach for rural areas, presented by the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities (Doc. 5963), and of contributions by the Committee on Culture and Education (Doc. 5934) and the Committee on Agriculture ;

2. Having also taken note of the conclusions of the Hearing on ‘‘A new management approach for rural areas" organised by the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities on5 and 6 September 1988 in Strasbourg ;

3. Aware that the countryside represents 80% of Europe and that one European in three is a country-dweller, so that the grave crisis in rural society today affects society as a whole ;

4. Convinced that the countryside's human potential, solid economic values and ecological and cultural heritage form major assets for European society ;

5. Recalling the Parliamentary Assembly's consistent past interest in rural issues, expressed in particular in its Recommendation 935 (1982) on the revival of disadvantaged rural areas, as well as through its participation in the various events of the European Campaign for the Countryside ;

6. Also recalling its Recommendation 881 (1979) on the rural architectural heritage, and stressing the importance of other aspects of the cultural heritage of the countryside, including crafts, traditional music and dance, and minority languages ;

7. Welcoming the contribution which the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) made to the success of the campaign by organising the European Conference of Mountain Regions (Trento, 9-11 May 1988), in which an Assembly delegation took an active part ;

8. Also welcoming the action envisaged within the Commission of the European Communities to reform Community agricultural policy and assist the country,side, and the work commenced in this field within OECD and FAO ;

9. Noting the overall record of the campaign and the successful results achieved so far ;

10. Convinced that the urgent need for action to take up the rural challenge requires the momentum of the campaign to be maintained beyond October 1988 ;

11. Expressing the wish therefore that the national committees for the campaign be maintained in existence and continue to provide information and encouragement in close contact with the Council of Europe ;

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1. Assembly debate on 8 October 1988 (17th Sitting) (see Doc. 5963, report of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, Rapporteur : Mr Bota, and Doc. 5934, opinion of the Committee on Culture and Education, Rapporteur : Mr Günther Müller). Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 17 November 1988.

12. Considering, in the light of the foregoing, that the continuation of certain activities - both at European and at national level - is indispensable in order to turn to account the financial and human resources invested in this undertaking ;

13. Further requesting that the issues dealt with by the campaign should remain on the agenda of its competent committees,

14. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

a. make provision - especially through joint action with the EEC and OECD - in its intergovernmental programme of activities for 1989 and 1990, for the proposals made by the International Co-ordinating and Organising Committee of the European Campaign for the Countryside under the third medium-term plan ;

b. place priority on the development of strategies to resolve the immediate and long-term problems of young people in rural areas ;

c. provide the intergovernmental sectors concerned with the necessary means ;

d. follow up the proposal made by the Parliamentary Assembly in its Recommendation 966 (1983) to prepare within the Council of Europe a soil protection convention ;

e. implement Resolution 934 (1987) of the Resettlement Fund, which establishes as criteria for intervention by the Fund : the development of regions or areas which are declining or which are disadvantaged, and the restructuring of the agricultural sector, and which gives priority to loan applications concerning projects in development areas or regions ;

f. invite the member states :

1. to adopt a new social contract in the context of a renewed rural policy, aimed at a more satisfactory economic, cultural and social balance between the urban and rural populations, and at more rational management of rural areas ;

2. to adopt a territorial approach which should be integrated and multidisciplinary, in contrast to the traditional approaches which are sectoral or according to social groups ;

3. to promote leisure and devise social and cultural schemes to revitalise struggling villages, improve living conditions in the country and forge new solidarity between country- and town-dwellers in an atmosphere of respect for each other's identity ;

4. to pursue endogenous development founded on the natural and human potential of each territorial unit or region concerned, as well as on a policy of partnership ;

5. to pay special attention to the training of men and women living in the countryside, by making the best use of their abilities and, in particular, by establishing rural higher education centres ;

6. to promote modern communication technologies in the countryside, and establish at regional level co-ordinated research programmes conducted from field observatories, so that the feasibility of choices made by upper authorities can be ensured ;

7. to enhance the powers and resources assigned to local and regional authorities of rural areas, particularly through more effective financial equalisation ;

8. to encourage tourism in rural areas, for example by the promotion of historic cultural itineraries.