



Recommendation 1108 (1989)¹

Twenty years of regional planning in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having taken note of the report "Twenty years of regional planning in Europe" presented by its Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities ([Doc. 6034](#)) ;
2. Recalling its many earlier studies and reports on regional planning, and in particular its 1968 report on "Regional planning - A European problem", which led to the setting up of a ministerial conference and an extensive programme of intergovernmental co-operation in the regional planning field ;
3. Welcoming the very close co-operation instituted from the outset, in 1970, between the ministerial conference and the Parliamentary Assembly, which has been a source of permanent dialogue, mutual inspiration and concerted action ;
4. Gratified in particular to have been able to contribute in this way to the gradual implementation of a European regional planning policy, which was defined and found its fullest expression in the European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter adopted by the 6th CEMAT in Torremolinos in May 1983 and was approved by a recommendation of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers in January 1984 ;
5. Noting with satisfaction that the work based on the principles of this charter has led to the drawing up of a first draft European regional planning strategy presented by the Luxembourg delegation at the 8th Session of the CEMAT in Lausanne in October 1988 ;
6. Recognising, however, that the objectives of European regional planning have not been fully attained, partly because these objectives were not of a sufficiently practical nature and because the necessary adjustment to changes in society and its environment was not made in time ;
7. Believing that the political leaders and governments of European countries have unduly neglected long-term planning objectives in the last few years in favour of short-term decisions and arrangements ;
8. Convinced moreover that, more than ever, Western economies require guidance if they are to recover, particularly in the form of long-term spatial planning taking into account not only social welfare and progress but also the conservation of natural resources, and particularly the soil, for the benefit of future generations ;
9. Emphasising in this connection that a remodelled regional planning policy should be geared, more than in the past, to implementing the principle of respect for and preservation of the natural heritage, and in particular the soil, and its sparing use for society's and individuals' various needs ;
10. Emphasising also the importance of fostering public awareness of regional planning problems, thus enabling citizens actually to participate in the decision-making process in that field, especially at local and regional level ;

1. Assembly debate on 12 May 1989 (7th Sitting) (see [Doc. 6034](#), report of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, Rapporteur : Mr Ahrens ; and [Doc. 6033](#), report of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, Rapporteur : Mr Redmond). Text adopted by the Assembly on 12 May 1989 (7th Sitting).



11. Considering that the European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter and the recommendation adopted by the Committee of Ministers in January 1984 already provide a sound theoretical basis for a coherent national and European policy ;
12. Anxious to see these principles applied in a practical way at all levels of decision-making, and particularly at European level,
13. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :
 - a. review, in the light of recent proposals (Colombo Commission, communication from the Secretary General, reports by the Political Affairs Committee and the Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme on the Council of Europe's future role), the place given - in the work programme and general objectives - to regional planning as a special instrument for planning and protecting man's environment in Europe ;
 - b. ensure that an integrated approach is adopted to the Council of Europe's intergovernmental activities in this field with a view to protection and improvement of the environment and rational management of space and land ;
 - c. review for this purpose, in keeping with the suggestions made by the Secretary General, the structure of the existing intergovernmental committees in this field, and envisage the setting up of a single steering committee or council for problems relating to living conditions and the natural environment in Europe, which would be responsible for planning and co-ordinating the work of technical committees or rapporteur groups working in fields which have been unduly compartmentalised hitherto, such as regional planning, environmental management and conservation of the historic heritage ;
 - d. ensure that the work of the three conferences of specialised ministers is also co-ordinated, possibly through the holding of joint ministerial sessions or the setting up of permanent machinery for mutual consultation ;
 - e. take all appropriate measures for the time being to ensure that the drawing up of a European strategy for soil management and conservation is the fruit of close co-operation between the regional planning and natural resources fields, and is the starting-point for a common approach to the problems of protection of the quality of life and planning of the natural and built environment to which the Council of Europe must provide solutions ;
 - f. give the technical fields, recognised as having priority and promising practical results for European co-operation, such as conservation of the historic heritage, management of natural resources, the promotion of transfrontier co-operation, the drawing up of a European regional planning strategy, the dissemination of information and the fostering of public awareness, the essential material resources commensurate with the tasks which are to be carried out for the benefit of Europe as a whole ;
 - g. take account of the fact that the whole of this field of activity holds out particularly encouraging prospects for real co-operation with the countries of Eastern Europe.