



Recommendation 1110 (1989)¹

Distance teaching

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Drawing attention to the report by its Committee on Culture and Education on distance teaching ([Doc. 6065](#));
2. Recalling its [Recommendation 650 \(1971\)](#) on the creation of a "European Television University" (European Inter-University Institute for the development of multi-media distant study systems);
3. Recognising the role played by distance teaching universities in providing both students and the general public with a cost-effective means of completing or extending their education and training;
4. Considering that recent technological developments in the fields of direct broadcasting by satellite, storage and retrieval equipment and interactive systems make it possible for distance teaching institutions to deliver high-quality material to a wider public, at an acceptable cost;
5. Welcoming trends of internationalisation and harmonisation in higher education, and hoping that these, together with the increasing mobility of students and teachers and the increasing need for international co-operation at university level, will facilitate the emergence of a European open university network;
6. Wishing at the same time to encourage distance teaching and the use of the new communication technologies in traditional universities and other institutions of higher and further education;
7. Noting also the role that public service broadcasting should play in contributing both to specific educational and professional needs and to the information and education of the public in general;
8. Welcoming the setting up in 1987 of the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) to promote higher distance education in Europe by means of supporting contacts between academic staff and co-operation in the fields of research, course development, course and credit transfer, and of developing new methods and techniques, including new technologies and media;
9. Having noted that a substantial number of complementary European initiatives and projects relevant to distance teaching have been proposed or implemented recently, and among them:
 - co-operation between universities, industry and professions in projects such as SATURN, EuroPACE (formerly PACE) and EuroTransMed;*
 - the development of distance teaching through the support of European Community programmes;*
 - the launching by the European Space Agency (ESA) of the experimental Olympus satellite, covering approximately the member states of the Council of Europe with nine hours daily dedicated to distance learning programmes;*
10. Welcoming the recent setting up of the European Association of Users of Satellites in Training and Education Programmes (EUROSTEP) as an interface between educators, broadcasters and satellite operators, contracted by ESA to manage the nine hours daily of educational broadcasting on Olympus;

1. See [Doc. 6065](#), report of the Committee on Culture and Education, Rapporteur : Sir William Shelton. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 6 July 1989.



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11. Considering that there is an urgent need in Europe for an independent and internationally acknowledged editorial body, or board for distance teaching in Europe, to serve not only as a catalyst and to ensure a minimum co-ordination of European initiatives and standards in distance teaching, but also to analyse and evaluate such initiatives and to propose new ones ;
12. Believing that it is appropriate for the Council of Europe, being the widest political body in Europe for cultural co-operation, to take the initiative of setting up such an international co-ordination body, and understanding that EADTU, EUROSTEP and other interested parties would support this idea ;
13. Believing that distance teaching as a medium is of common interest to both Eastern and Western Europe, and recalling its [Recommendation 1098 \(1989\)](#) on East-West audiovisual co-operation,
14. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :
 - a. invite governments to create in the framework of the Council of Europe a board for distance teaching in Europe, possibly on the basis of an open partial agreement ;
 - b. initiate and promote intergovernmental co-operation on distance teaching, on the multilateral co-production of distance education material and on the interaction of distance teaching developments with ongoing traditional teaching in schools and universities ;
 - c. give encouragement to moves towards a European open university network based on co-operation between distance teaching universities in all European countries ;
 - d. encourage the necessary legal harmonisation to facilitate credit transfer and also the harmonisation of copyright regarding course transfers between educational institutions in different countries ;
 - e. promote the more general use of satellite technology for distance education, and encourage networking among universities and scientific institutions in post-academic courses and areas of advanced technology (for example medicine) ;
 - f. invite broadcasters to collaborate more closely with educational bodies on the production and transmission of suitable educational programmes ;
 - g. encourage the exchange of information on developments in this field ;
15. Asks the Secretary General to bring these proposals to the attention of the European Ministers of Education who will be considering distance teaching at the 16th Session of their Standing Conference in October 1989.