Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1112 (1989)[1]

East-West co-operation at the close of the twentieth century (General policy of the Council of Europe)

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Recalling its previous debates on East-West relations and on the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, its Resolution 909 (1988) and, in particular, its Recommendation 1103 (1989) on the future role of the Council of Europe in the process of European construction ;

2. Recalling also its institution, by Resolutions 917 and 920 (1989), of the status of special guests, a status accorded on 8 June 1989 to the legislative assemblies of Hungary, Poland, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, whose delegations made their first contribution to the current affairs debate on East-West relations on 7 July 1989 ;

I. Consolidation of peace, confidence, security and freedoms in Europe

3. Welcoming the signature of the concluding document of the Vienna Conference, in the CSCE framework, and considering that the agreements reached, which were in accordance with the Assembly's hopes, constitute clear progress towards effectively advancing the protection of human rights in Europe ;

4. Reaffirming the Assembly's determination to ‘‘play a role in the follow-up to the Vienna concluding document and monitor the practical implementation of the appropriate aspects of undertakings contained in that document for all thirty-five participating countries" (Recommendation 1103) ;

5. Regretting, however, that no mechanism could be instituted in time to associate the Assembly with the first two CSCE meetings following the Vienna Conference of particular relevance to the Council of Europe's recognised vocation in the cultural and human rights fields, namely the London Information Forum (18 April-12 May 1989) and the Paris Conference on the Human Dimension (30 May-23 June 1989), while welcoming the fact that the leader and deputy leader, respectively, of the national delegations which played host to these meetings, briefed the competent bodies of the Assembly on 21 September 1989 ;

6. Considering as particularly positive the recent developments which have led to the organisation of legislative elections, more competitive than in the past, in the Soviet Union, in Poland and soon in Hungary, and which have opened the way for more open parliamentary debate and more pluralistic representation of their peoples ;

7. Welcoming the aims affirmed before the Assembly by President Gorbachev and by the spokesmen of the guest delegations, designed to bring about substantial transformations in the systems of government of these countries and genuinely to introduce the rule of law, expressly including the recognition and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as initiating genuine separation of powers, growing responsibility before their peoples, respect for the rights of minorities to express and assert themselves and, especially, their acceptance of the primacy of international law over internal laws ;

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1. Assembly debate on 25 September 1989 (14th Sitting) (see Doc. 6117, report of the Political Affairs Committee, Rapporteur : Mr Martinez Cuadrado). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 September 1989 (14th Sitting).

8. Welcoming with emotion the alternation in the exercise of power in Poland, taking account for the first time since the second world war of the wishes of the Polish people, expressed through universal suffrage, and hoping that this event, which alone reveals a very profound change in the political system, will be confirmed in the future as having been a historic turning-point for democracy in Europe ;

9. Recalling its Recommendation 1106 (1989) on the reception and settlement in the Federal Republic of Germany of refugees and resettlers of German origin coming from Central and Eastern Europe, considering that the situation which has developed throughout 1989 aggravates the fate of refugees in countries of transit, and appealing to the states concerned to find solutions, with the minimum delay, guaranteeing the free circulation of persons from countries participating in the CSCE process, as expressed in paragraph 20 of the concluding document of the Vienna meeting, adopted in January 1989 ;

10. Congratulating the humanitarian organisations and the authorities and their agencies of countries participating in the CSCE for the efforts they have deployed, calling for the introduction of more effective mechanisms for the protection and safeguard of refugees than those available up to now, and expressing the wish that the Secretary General of the Council of Europe will explore new avenues of co-operation to this end ;

11. Noting with satisfaction that the fourth main meeting (after Belgrade, Madrid and Vienna) organised in the framework of CSCE follow-up will take place in Helsinki in 1992, if necessary at the highest level ;

II. Widening of co-operation

12. Noting with satisfaction that the President of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR took advantage of the rostrum of the Assembly to present his ideas and his concrete projects for establishing and developing East-West co-operation in Europe, which - coinciding with the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Council of Europe, founded in 1949 by ten states which have become twenty-three in 1989 - confirms the efforts undertaken by the Council of Europe in the field of intergovernmental co-operation, as well as its pioneering role in Europe, not only where Western Europe is concerned, and that this historic task still offers hope and promise for all the citizens of Europe ;

13. Noting that the resolution of the Congress of the People's Deputies of the USSR in the field of disarmament aims to create a climate of confidence, and in consequence, to build a more secure basis for the development of pan-European co-operation, while respecting alliances between more homogeneous systems, with their own modes of co-operation, wishing to preserve their security and their values ;

14. Recalling its past recommendations aiming to help refugees and minorities in Europe, and considering that the urgent task of the new East-West co-operation is to rise to this double challenge at every level of co-operation ;

15. Considering as very positive the proposal made in President Gorbachev's speech to create a genuine European legal area, and recalling that the consolidation of the rule of law simultaneously involves constitutional and international law, as well as the reform of civil and commercial law and the rest of the internal legal order of states ;

16. Further recalling that the states of the European Community have committed themselves to revise in depth, by the end of 1992, their whole legal order, with a view to preparing appropriate conditions for the Single Market project, and hoping that political co-operation between European states will bring closer not only laws but the citizens affected by them ;

17. Stressing the achievements of the economic and social agencies in Europe over the last years on the basis of principles of fundamental freedoms, as well as freedom of movement for persons, goods and capital, and that these principles constitute the new foundation of European construction, both in the Community and the EFTA framework, and considering that it would be possible to build on these principles the new deepened co-operation sought by President Gorbachev and by the other guests who spoke of a market economy on 7 July 1989 ;

18. While awaiting the emergence of this European legal area from the present approach and from the interest in Council of Europe conventions shown by the states enjoying special guest status, calling for the setting up, in association with these guest states, of working groups specialising in many fields of common interest in the legal area in the framework of the intergovernmental work programme of the Council of Europe, and expressing the hope that representatives of the delegations granted special guest status will participate actively in the work of committees wherever an invitation is issued ;

19. Expressing itself in favour of the development of wider economic co-operation, linked with guarantees giving it chances of outlasting the contingencies of normal politics and traditional case-by-case agreements ;

20. Recognising that the relations between international organisations of economic co-operation, such as CMEA, the European Community and EFTA, contribute to the process of regional integration in Europe and improve prospects for European construction inspired by the vision of unity from the Atlantic to the Urals ;

21. Considering that proposals for the drawing up of a long-term continent-wide ecological programme would constitute a positive next step towards multilateral co-operation, simultaneously legal, economic, scientific and educational, and would benefit from the broadly favourable support of public opinion among the peoples of Europe ;

22. Recognising the work of the Pompidou Group, but reiterating the need for international co-operation and action to prevent drug misuse, to control and reduce illicit supply of illegal drugs, to discourage and suppress drug-trafficking, and to improve treatment and rehabilitation for drug-dependent people ;

23. Expressing the wish that co-operation in the fight against terrorism may be established on a legal and political basis with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which are ready to accept the principles on which the European Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism is based ;

24. Calling for the setting up as soon as possible to this end of a flexible organisation in the framework of the Council of Europe, with funds and resources to be determined by the member states and other participating states, in the interest of the whole of Europe ;

25. Convinced that the Council of Europe is in a position to provide deepened co-operation through its services and achievements over forty years of intergovernmental co-operation in Western Europe in the scientific, educational, sporting and cultural fields, as well as in those of communication or preservation of the architectural heritage and of nature and of the struggle against desertification ;

III. East-West solidarity and common action to keep peace in the world

26. Convinced that the highest degree of human solidarity is the principle which should guide our action ;

27. Stressing the particular interest also of numerous recent Council of Europe activities beyond Europe, such as :

a. the Strasbourg Conference on Parliamentary Democracy and the Institute for Democracy which the conference has decided to set up ;

b. the Colloquy organised by the Secretary General (Strasbourg, 17-19 April 1989) on ‘‘the universality of human rights in a pluralistic world'' ;

c. the enlarged parliamentary meeting on peace prospects in the Middle East (Strasbourg, 22-23 June 1989), with the participation of parliamentary representatives from the Soviet Union and from the region concerned ;

d. the Africa-Europe Encounter (Porto Novo, Benin, 31 August-3 September 1989) in the framework of the European Public Campaign for North-South Interdependence and Solidarity ;

28. Noting the democratic inspiration exercised by the newly constituted parliaments in Poland and the Soviet Union, especially where the countries hesitating to join the reform movement are concerned, and recalling that its Resolution 800 (1983) on the principles of democracy defined pluralistic elections as ‘‘the irreplaceable core of democratic political life'', specifying that such elections must involve a ‘‘secret ballot and universal suffrage, at reasonable intervals, to parliaments enjoying a large measure of sovereignty and composed of representatives of political parties with freedom to organise and express themselves'' ;

29. Welcoming the efforts made at the Tela Conference to restore peace in Central America and achieve democratic normalisation through free pluralistic electoral processes, and declaring its readiness for co-operation with the Central American nations which have just created an organ of intergovernmental and parliamentary co-operation as envisaged by the Esquipulas Agreements ;

30. Declaring its readiness to support efforts in other regions of the world to promote democracy and human rights, through other international organisations, wherever this is appropriate ;

31. Being convinced that the Council of Europe will only be able to meet the new expectations placed upon it and recognised, on 11 July 1989, at the first ‘‘quadripartite meeting" (between the Secretary General and the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, the Chairman of the Council and the President of the Commission of the European Communities) if its resources can be substantially increased ;

32. Recalling the declaration on East-West co-operation adopted by the Twelve at the European Council held in Madrid in June 1989 ;

33. Attaching great importance, in this connection, to the proposals being prepared by the Secretary General in the spirit of the Political Declaration adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 5 May 1989, and of its own Resolution 909 of 6 October 1988, in which it was already decided to ‘‘seek the necessary financial provision for intensified co-operation with Eastern Europe in the light of the new requirements and priorities",

34. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

34.1. reply to the invitation already addressed to it in Recommendation 1103 (1989) to ‘‘explore the possibilities for the Council of Europe to play an active and leading role in the CSCE process and the follow-up conferences now in preparation, both at governmental and parliamentary level" ;

34.2. fix, in conformity with their Resolution (89) 40 of 5 May 1989, with the President of the Assembly, a date for a Joint Committee meeting, to be held in good time before the November ministerial meeting, so that urgent requests for the necessary extra resources can be co-ordinated, at both parliamentary and governmental level in member states ;

34.3. examine as soon as possible the establishment of a joint working party to define the legal bases, objectives, resources and powers required for a European environmental agency, programme or centre ;

34.4. examine how a campaign might be launched which, if agreed, could raise public awareness throughout Europe, leading to increased East-West economic co-operation.