Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1119 (1990)[1]

Situation in Central and Eastern Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Recalling its Recommendation 1118 of November 1989, on recent events in the German Democratic Republic, which called upon the Committee of Ministers to ensure that the Council of Europe position was made known at the forthcoming summits (Malta, 2-3 December, and Strasbourg,7-8 December), and to organise an extraordinary ministerial meeting in early 1990 on measures of support for certain countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as to grant the Council of Europe the means necessary to implement its policy of overture and co-operation with those countries and peoples which are embracing, as an integral part of their common European heritage, the principles defended by the Council of Europe

2. Saluting the populations of the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania, after those of Poland and Hungary, for claiming rights long denied them although enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and subsequent CSCE documents, including the concluding document (January 1989) of the Vienna meeting, and expressing the firm hope that free, pluralistic elections can be organised in all these countries in the course of 1990 ;

3. Saluting the heroism of the Romanian people, at the cost of heavy loss of life, in ending an oppressive dictatorship, and underlining the importance of President Gorbachev's decision to refuse any Soviet military intervention, while expressing the hope for early stabilisation of the situation there, in the context of pluralistic parliamentary democracy and the rule of law ;

4. Welcoming also President Gorbachev's strong reaffirmation of support for the CSCE process, in which he reiterated the call he made in Strasbourg on 6 July 1989 for reconvening in 1990, at the highest level, the thirty-five signatory states of the Helsinki Final Act, with a view to guaranteeing, with full North American participation, harmonious develop,ment towards new improved relations between states in Europe, a proposal also supported, among others, by President Mitterrand on behalf of the Twelve ;

5. Reiterating, however, that priority should be given to full implementation of commitments already agreed in the CSCE framework ;

6. Welcoming the adoption in Strasbourg on8 December 1989, by the heads of state and government of the European Community (European Council), of a declaration seeking to strengthen the state of peace in Europe, in which the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic can gain their unity by freely exercising self-determination, ‘‘in the context of European integration and of a peaceful and democratic process, respectful of existing treaties and of all the principles of the Helsinki Final Act" ;

7. Noting that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted in December 1989 a budget for 1990 showing an overall increase, still woefully inadequate, of 4,74% in real terms, taking account of the final communiqué of its 85th Session at ministerial level (16 November 1989), in which the Ministers ‘‘instructed their Deputies and the Secretary General to continue and step up concrete co-operation programmes in these fields, which are paramount for the Council of Europe, with European non-member countries embarking upon the course of democratic reform" ;

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1. Assembly debate on 30 and 3l January 1990 (23rd, 24th and 25th Sittings) (see Doc. 6168, report of the Political Affairs Committee, Rapporteur : Mr Ludwig Steiner). Text adopted by the Assembly on 31 January 1990 (25th Sitting).

8. Welcoming the fact that it was further agreed, at the 85th Session, to hold a high-level meeting between member governments in early 1990 to take stock of developments in Europe, and to assess and reinforce the Council of Europe's role as a framework for dialogue and co-operation able to embrace all European states sharing the same values ;

9. Noting that the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe will also be participating, in early 1990, in a second quadripartite meeting with the Chairman of the Council and the President of the Commission of the European Communities, which will need to take full account, from the point of view of rationalising the work of the various European organisations, of the recognition embodied in the Strasbourg Declaration of the European Council that ‘‘the future European equilibrium will be still better ensured by a parallel development of the role of the Council of Europe, EFTA and the CSCE process", alongside the role of the European Community ;

10. Concerned, however, at the absence of the parliamentary dimension in such consultations, which it considers a serious shortcoming in need of urgent rectification ;

11. Noting the contribution that the Assembly is itself making to the development of cultural co-operation with Eastern Europe with the colloquies on audiovisual co-operation (Orvieto, October 1988), on linguistic diversity (Warsaw, December 1989) and the round tables on the contribution of young people (Strasbourg, September 1988 and April 1990),

12. Expresses its satisfaction at the interparliamentary co-operation already developing on the basis of the special guest status, which will need to be significantly expanded to take account of the latest developments in the various countries concerned ;

13. Notes with satisfaction the support expressed by President Bush, following the Malta Summit, for progressive integration of the Soviet Union into the structure of international economic co-operation, with the offer of more favourable bilateral trade agreements as well as participation in the work of international economic organisations ;

14. Calls upon the Committee of Ministers to ensure that the high-level meeting it has decided to hold should, in a spirit of human and European solidarity :

14.1. go beyond consideration of technical co-operation and invitations to accede to those European conventions which are open to non-member states, in order to examine urgently appropriate forms of institutionalised association, giving opportunities, at intergovernmental level, for participation in the work of the Council of Europe as such, parallel to those offered, at the level of legislative assemblies, by the special guest status created by the Parliamentary Assembly ;

14.2. prove its determination to build on the Council of Europe's forty years of experience, which qualify it uniquely to provide a structure for bringing together, on the basis of shared values, all the states of Europe, thereby contributing to the practical realisation of such visions as the ‘‘common European home" already expressed two decades ago in the Parliamentary Assembly, or the ‘‘European confederation" called for by President Mitterrand in his New Year message for 1990 ;

14.3. consider the possibilities of more closely involving the two non-European participants in the CSCE process, the United States and Canada, in the work of the Council of Europe ;

15. Recognises the effort made by the Committee of Ministers as regards the budget for co-operation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, referred to in paragraph 7 above, but stresses at the same time the new demands resulting from a rapidly-evolving political situation ;

16. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers hold a special session as soon as possible - preceded by a colloquy (Enlarged Joint Committee) - devoted to the intensification of co-operation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and decide to introduce an urgent special budget, providing this co-operation with the necessary funds ;

17. Welcomes the recent accession of Hungary and Poland to the European Cultural Convention and the full participation of these countries in the Council of Europe's activities in the fields of education, culture, university co-operation, sport and youth ;

18. Repeats its concern that participation in the Council's other cultural activities in the fields of media and cultural heritage should also be extended to all states party to the European Cultural Convention ;

19. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers continue to encourage other Central and East European non-member countries to accede to this convention in order that it may, as soon as possible, provide a full basis for cultural co-operation throughout Europe ;

20. Recalls the importance of providing proper funding for the operational needs of the convention ;

21. Stresses that the aim of the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly alike must be to support developments in Central and Eastern Europe, to enable the countries concerned to fulfil the conditions for membership of the Council of Europe as soon as possible, so that they may participate fully in the task of European construction.