Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1123 (1990)[1]

Practical educational assistance to Central and Eastern Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly considers that the rapid moves towards democracy throughout Central and Eastern Europe have brought about fundamental changes at all levels of education in these countries, including out-of-school education and professional training.

2. As more languages are taught, there is now an urgent need for more varied language teaching material and teachers.

3. As pluralism increases, there is a need for history textbooks and books on current affairs of all sorts.

4. There is a wide and general lack of up-to-date research material.

5. At the same time, an increasing gap is developing as further innovations, for example distance-teaching methods, are introduced in Western Europe..

6. The lack of educational material is aggravated by a general shortage of publications for all levels of society (from cultural to current affairs, from literature to reference books).

7. In the present economic situation, priority can usefully be given to sending West European experts, technicians, teachers and students to Central and Eastern Europe rather than hosting visits of their East European counterparts.

8. The fact that Central and East European countries are gradually entering into the area of co-operation covered by the Council of Europe, notably through the European Cultural Convention, but also on a more radical basis, should help convert the present situation of aid into one of more constructive mutual co-operation.

9. The Assembly therefore makes the following recommendations to the Committee of Ministers :

   9.1. The Council of Europe should co-ordinate assistance in the field of education to Central and Eastern Europe between parliamentary, governmental and non-governmental bodies, so as to avoid duplication and to ensure the most effective concerted use of resources.

   9.2. The Council of Europe should also itself continue, in a spirit of European solidarity, to develop its own practical educational assistance to Central and Eastern Europe. An immediate and high priority should be given to this field in the intergovernmental action of the Council of Europe, and notably in the activities of the Council for Cultural Co-operation (in teacher training schemes, language learning projects, distance-teaching methods, etc.) and, at university and higher education level, in the Standing Conference on University Problems. Emphasis should be placed, wherever appropriate, on the European dimension of education.

   9.3. Constant attention should be given to the promotion of contacts and the establishment of networks (of young parliamentarians or cultural institutes, for example).

   9.4. Attention should be given to ensuring continued evaluation of the needs of Central and Eastern Europe in the light of political evolution and real changes.

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1. Assembly debate on 7 May 1990 (1st Sitting) (seeDoc. 6200, report of the Committee on Culture and Education, Rapporteur : Mrs Fischer). Text adopted by the Assembly on 7 May 1990 (1st Sitting).

9.5. Full support should also be given to the parallel initiatives of other international bodies, for example the European Inter-University Solidarity Campaign launched (with special reference to Romania) by the Conference of European Rectors (CRE), Unesco's European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES) and the International Association of Universities (IAU), as well as the programmes being proposed by the European Communities (Foundation and TEMPUS).

9.6. Governments should be asked in particular :

a. to step up national assistance in educational material to Central and East European countries ;

b. to provide increased funding to universities and research institutions for them to develop co-operation with Central and Eastern Europe ;

c. to facilitate exchanges of pupils, students, teachers and research workers in all fields, and in the first place with priority on movement from West to East, for example by providing, in countries where visas are necessary, yearly multiple-entry visas for research workers from Central and Eastern Europe ;

d. to furnish means of practical training in such fields as business management, banking, commercial law, journalism, museum administration, politics and parliamentary procedures.

10. The structures relating to the Strasbourg Conference on Parliamentary Democracy should also be invited to make a contribution.