Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1124 (1990)[1]

Relations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (General policy of the Council of Europe)

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly recalls its Recommendation 1119 (1990) on the situation in Central and Eastern Europe, and its Recommendation 1112 (1989) on East-West co-operation at the close of the twentieth century.

2. It notes with great satisfaction that ad hoc observer committees of the Assembly pronounced the pluralistic parliamentary elections held in the German Democratic Republic (18 March) and in the Republic of Hungary (25 March and 8 April) free and fair. It expresses the great hope that similarly free and fair parliamentary elections will soon be observed in Romania (20 May), Czechoslovakia (8 and 9 June) and Bulgaria (10 and 17 June).

3. The Assembly congratulates the Portuguese chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers on organising a special meeting in Lisbon (23 and 24 March 1990), in which five Ministers for Foreign Affairs and two deputy ministers from European non-member states were present alongside the Foreign Ministers from member states. It welcomes the fact that the President of the Assembly and the President of the Commission of the European Communities were also invited to contribute to this important meeting, while regretting that the Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament continue to be excluded from the twice-yearly ‘‘quadripartite" meetings, intended to facilitate the indispensable co-ordination of the work of the Council of Europe and the European Community.

4. The Assembly fully supports the Committee of Ministers in its conviction, expressed in the reply to Recommendation 1119, that the protection of minorities demands special attention in the context of assistance to Central and East European countries, and in its urgent appeal launched to all the parties concerned to exercise restraint, refrain from violence and seek peaceful solutions through political dialogue.

5. In this context, it notes the clear decisions of the democratically elected parliaments of the three Baltic Republics to restore their independence.

6. The Assembly calls upon the Governments of the Soviet Union and the Baltic Republics carefully to negotiate the restoration of the latter's independence in conformity with the principles of mutual security and co-operation in the spirit of the CSCE process.

7. Furthermore, the Assembly encourages the Committee of Ministers to take full account of the possibilities of the Council of Europe to initiate, in co-operation with the Venice Centre for Democracy through Law and the International Institute for Democracy, a multidisciplinary study of means of protecting minorities, including cross-border minorities, under international law.

8. It is recalled that the Parliamentary Assembly is proposing (in Resolution 943 (1990) on relations between Europe, the United States of America and Canada in the 1990s) to enhance its own role in providing the missing ‘‘parliamentary dimension" of the CSCE process by creating, for the purpose of special debates, ‘‘associate CSCE-membership", with full voting rights for all European and North American non-member states which are signatories of the Helsinki Final Act.

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1. Assembly debate on 8 May 1990 (2nd and 3rd Sittings) (see Doc. 6216, report of the Political Affairs Committee, Rapporteur : Mr Soares Costa ; and Doc. 6220, opinion of the Committee on Relations with European Non-Member Countries, Rapporteur : Mrs Palacio). Text adopted by the Assembly on 8 May 1990 (3rd Sitting).

9. It is concerned in this connection that the reply of the Committee of Ministers to the above-mentioned recommendation states that only ‘‘some delegations felt that the development of contacts with the United States and Canada should be considered".

10. The Assembly agrees with the opinion of the Committee of Ministers, in the context of discussions on the future structures of European co-operation :

a. that the Council of Europe is a ‘‘suitable framework for initiating Central and East European countries into full participation in the construction of Europe" and ‘‘could usefully contribute to the political, legal, social and cultural dimensions of Europe" ;

b. that the Council of Europe should be included in a delegation to CSCE meetings, starting with the forthcoming meeting to be held next summer in Copenhagen on the human dimension.

11. It notes that the Secretary General of the Council of Europe has been asked to submit to the Committee of Ministers' 86th Session (10 May 1990) proposals for an adequate increase in the Council of Europe's resources.

12. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers ensure, in the context of preparations for the forthcoming CSCE summit meeting :

12.1. that any new tasks are performed, wherever possible, by existing institutions rather than creating new ones ;

12.2. that full account is taken of the uniquely relevant structure (intergovernmental and parliamentary) and experience of the Council of Europe, over the full range of its activities, and particularly in the fields of the promotion of parliamentary democracy and the protection of human rights.