Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1132 (1990)[1]

Protection of the North Sea and the Atlantic Seaboard

Parliamentary Assembly

1. On account of their geographical characteristics, the North Sea and the Atlantic seaboard are severely polluted sea areas. They are also areas in which the risk of pollution is aggravated by a high level of economic activity. Despite the efforts and initiatives of more than twenty years, pollution in both sea areas increases inexorably, bringing with it the threat of grave and in some cases irreversible consequences for the ecosystem.

2. In recent years, numerous conventions and other regional or international instruments have been framed with the aim of preventing marine pollution in every form. Since 1984, for example, the problems of North Sea pollution have also been addressed by the international conferences on North Sea protection, the third of which was held in March 1990.

3. Unfortunately, both the implementation of the conventions and the outcome of the conferences on North Sea protection have been disappointing ; meanwhile the situation in the North Sea and on the Atlantic seaboard continues to worsen.

4. Failure to take vigorous action in the past and to apply the conventions effectively has led to a situation where urgent measures are needed to halt pollution and protect these sea areas.

5. Any discussion of the ways and means of reducing pollution from various sources will inevitably take account of its scientific and technical aspects. Consideration of the scientific aspects and technological developments permits an integrated approach to the problem, which is essential when political decisions (legal instruments, regulations, etc.) are needed. In this way, technological and scientific development and economic policy become necessary components for any effective policy to safeguard the environment.

6. It is, therefore, indispensable that the states bordering these sea areas join forces, at all levels, and take urgent action to reduce and prevent further pollution.

7. The Assembly accordingly recommends that the Committee of Ministers invite member states :

   7.1. to take new measures for the disposal of domestic and industrial waste, in closer co-operation with the scientific community and with industry ;

   7.2. to initiate the conclusion of agreements with industries, professional organisations, port authorities and urban communities, as a means of generating concerted action ;

   7.3. to ratify the relevant international conventions, including MARPOL, the Oslo Convention and the Paris Convention, if they have not already done so ;

   7.4. to reinforce their co-operation under the applicable conventions and in any other appropriate forms ;

   7.5. following the example set by the states bordering the Baltic Sea at their intergovernmental conference on 3 September 1990, to draw up a precise programme for reducing discharges of toxic and polluting waste, with a binding timetable for its implementation ;

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1. Assembly debate on 29 September 1990 (12th Sitting) (see Doc. 6282, report of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, Rapporteur : Mr Ahrens). Text adopted by the Assembly on 29 September 1990 (12th Sitting).

7.6. to set up an international system for keeping the North Sea under surveillance and reporting any offences to the relevant national authorities and international or European agencies ;

7.7. to comply with the relevant recommendations adopted by the Assembly in the past, not least Recommendation 1079 (1988) on the protection of the North Sea against pollution ;

7.8. to exhibit greater determination in dealing with this problem, to campaign for the reinforcement of existing conventions so as to make provision for effective measures to reduce and prevent marine pollution, and to make resources available for this purpose.