Recommendation 1193 (1992)[1]

Future of European construction

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The changes that have taken place in Europe since Recommendation 1129 on structures of European co-operation was adopted in September 1990, mean that European construction now requires a new approach.

2. For decades the process of construction was limited to the countries of western Europe alone, but today it concerns all the new democracies that have emerged in the eastern part of the continent.

3. However, if we wish to prevent citizens from turning away from European construction and forestall the re-emergence of exacerbated nationalism or narrow corporatism, it is a matter of urgency to fill the ‘‘democratic deficit" which threatens the very political basis of such construction.

4. Experience with the ratification procedure for the Maastricht Treaty shows that the European peoples are in great need of information.

5. The various institutions that are working in favour of European union are in the process of adapting themselves to the new situation. Following the signing of the Maastricht Treaty on European Union, the European Community is witnessing a further increase in its economic and political influence. This remains undisputed, even though the Maastricht Treaty has given rise to opposition and it is not possible to say at present whether this will be strong enough to influence the text's future.

6. The different organisations that are active on the continent must co-ordinate their work in order to avoid duplication of effort, wastage of available resources, conflicts of jurisdiction and legal uncertainty.

7. The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) should assert itself in accordance with the essential role it has to play, in the sphere of security and crisis prevention, relying on the support of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and Western European Union (WEU). As a consequence of the recent disastrous experience, it is urgent to create an effective mechanism of co-operation of those organisations with the countries of central and eastern Europe. The Helsinki Declaration of 10 July 1992 establishes this direction for the CSCE's future activities.

8. As far as economic co-operation is concerned, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the European Community have the key task of helping the new democracies in their transition towards a market economy. In setting up the European Economic Area (EEA), the European Community and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) confirmed their essential role as the driving force of the European economy.

9. In terms of the consolidation of parliamentary democracy, respect for human rights and the cultural dimension of European co-operation, the Assembly believes that the Council of Europe is the most appropriate organisation. However, it must adapt its structures and working methods to the new requirements and to its own enlargement.

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1. Assembly debate on 5 October 1992 (16th and 17th Sittings) (see Doc. 6671, report of the Political Affairs Committee, Rapporteur : Mr Flückiger). Text adopted by the Assembly on 5 Octobre 1992 (17th Sitting).

10. At the same time it is essential to explain in clear terms outside the countries of the European Community and EFTA, as well as outside Europe, the objectives of European construction in order to overcome the image of a ‘‘fortress" Europe vis-à-vis the countries of central and eastern Europe and developing countries. Dialogue and solidarity should inspire the foreign policies of European democracies.

11. The Assembly welcomes the decision of the Committee of Ministers to accept the invitation of the Austrian Government to hold, in Vienna in October 1993, a summit of the heads of state and government of member states to discuss the future role of the Council of Europe at pan-European level and the implications thereof.

12. Therefore the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

12.1. submit to the participants of this summit such questions as :

a. the new role of the Organisation in European co-operation ;

b. new spheres of activity ;

c. the enlargement of the Organisation and the conditions of membership ;

d. the essential revision of the Organisation's Statute ;

e. the reform of the mechanisms of the European Convention on Human Rights ;

f. the alignment of the content and working methods of the European Cultural Convention with the challenges facing cultural co-operation ;

g. the protection of the rights of minorities, notably through an additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights as proposed in Recommendation 1177 (1992) ;

12.2. define the principles and forms of co-operation between the Council of Europe and other European institutions, and in particular, invite the European Community to adhere to the European Cultural Convention as soon as possible ;

12.3. seek ways to improve citizens' participation in European construction.