



**Recommendation 1260 (1995)<sup>1</sup>**

## **International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 5-13 September 1994): follow-up by the Council of Europe and its member states**

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly welcomes the success of the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994, and takes note of the report on the conference and its follow-up prepared by its Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography.
2. The Assembly recalls its [Recommendation 1243 \(1994\)](#) and its Order No. 498 (1994) on demographic change and sustainable development, whose conclusions broadly match those of the Cairo conference.
3. In response to numerous interrelated global problems, one sign of which is the steep rise in certain populations, the Cairo conference set itself various qualitative targets whose attainment should, in the long run, lead to a stabilisation of the world's population. A programme of action was adopted for this purpose, containing policies to be implemented over the next twenty years. The Assembly welcomes the fact that, rather than setting precise demographic objectives, these policies stress the need for profound economic and social changes, particularly aimed at meeting health and educational needs.
4. The Assembly particularly welcomes the recognition that women's position in society plays a crucial role in development and in stabilising the world population, as well as the importance which the conference attached to improving women's condition. It supports the principle that individuals and couples should have freedom of choice with regard to reproduction and right of access to information and the means to enable them to exercise this freedom. In this connection, it also stresses men's responsibility to promote equality between the sexes and in the matter of responsible procreation.
5. The Assembly recalls that sustainable development on a global scale is a shared, albeit differentiated, responsibility of the entire international community and that the countries of Europe must participate in this world-wide effort. It therefore appeals to its member states, firstly, to make a substantial contribution to the financing of the programmes in the action plan, and secondly, to apply the criteria of sustainable development to their production processes and consumption practices.
6. As well as helping to solve global problems, European countries must also take the necessary steps to adapt to their demographic situation. This concerns in particular the increase in the number of people over 65, changes in family structure, and the increase and diversification of migratory movements.
7. The Assembly is concerned about the situation in the countries of central and eastern Europe which, in certain fields, face specific demographic problems such as high mortality and abortion rates. Moreover, their economic difficulties entail reduced levels of government-funded social welfare provision.
8. The Assembly stresses that parliamentarians have a major part to play in the implementation of the Cairo Programme of action. They should work towards the application of the principles of sustainable development, contribute to the necessary mobilisation of resources, help to establish corresponding national policies and exercise a democratic overview of the implementation of these policies.

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1. Assembly debate on 3 February 1995 (8th Sitting) (see [Doc. 7208](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, rapporteur: Mrs Robert). Text adopted by the Assembly on 3 February 1995 (8th Sitting).



9. It welcomes the Committee of Ministers' positive response to its proposal to organise a Mediterranean Conference on Population, Migration and Development in Palma de Mallorca (Spain) in 1996 and proposes to contribute to its preparation.
10. The Parliamentary Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
  - 10.1. take account of this recommendation when preparing the Council of Europe's contribution to the 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing, 4-15 September 1995);
  - 10.2. ensure the early completion of work under way on a protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights providing for a fundamental right to equality between women and men;
  - 10.3. take the necessary steps to ensure the Council of Europe's active and permanent participation in the United Nations' activities;
  - 10.4. continue to support and strengthen the activities of the Council of Europe's North-South Centre in Lisbon designed to increase public awareness of issues relating to global interdependence, notably in connection with problems of population and sustainable development;
  - 10.5. support the initiatives of the European Population Committee (CDPO) aiming to analyse in greater depth the demographic situation of the European countries;
  - 10.6. continue to involve the Parliamentary Assembly in any follow-up to the Cairo conference;
  - 10.7. invite the European Union to devote a greater proportion of the aid granted under its Phare and Tacis programmes to solving the population problems of the countries of central and eastern Europe.
11. The Assembly also recommends that the Committee of Ministers invite the member states to:
  - 11.1. intensify their efforts to achieve, if they have not already done so, the spending target of 0,7% of their GNP on public development aid, increase substantially the proportion devoted to the social sector and population programmes and make a significant contribution to the financing of the programmes planned in the Programme of action, bearing in mind the five criteria for future development assistance which it set out in [Resolution 981 \(1992\)](#) (the level of poverty in recipient countries, respect for human rights and democracy, efforts to introduce social and economic reforms, reducing military spending and environmental protection);
  - 11.2. encourage an open and non-discriminatory international trading system, reduce developing countries' debts, stimulate direct investment, and improve their access to technology (ensuring that such investment and technology are compatible with sustainable development);
  - 11.3. ensure that a sufficient proportion of the aid allocated to the implementation of the Cairo Programme of action goes towards solving the demographic problems of central and eastern Europe;
  - 11.4. encourage transformation of their production processes and consumption practices so as to make them compatible with the criteria of sustainable development, particularly by reducing energy and material flows and the volume and toxicity of waste, in accordance with the recommendations adopted at the International Conference on Environment Sustainable and Development (Rio de Janeiro, June 1992);
  - 11.5. introduce transparent immigration policies, co-ordinated at the European level and based on the number of migrants they are willing to accept, the recognition of the right to family reunion, the introduction of forms of temporary migration, equal economic and social rights for migrants, guaranteed security of residence for long-term migrants, measures to combat racism and intolerance and the protection of refugees;
  - 11.6. support the organisation of an international conference on migration within the framework of the United Nations;
  - 11.7. eliminate all discrimination against women, particularly in the fields of education and employment, encourage their equal participation in public and political life, introduce measures to enable them to reconcile their maternal role with their occupational activities and eliminate all forms of violence against them, including sexual harassment;
  - 11.8. ratify, if they have not already done so, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women;
  - 11.9. respect the right of all couples and individuals to decide freely the number of children they will have, and the timing of their birth, and to have the necessary information for this purpose;

- 11.10. make family planning services available to all those who need them and wish to use them;
- 11.11. guarantee universal access to primary health services, particularly those for mothers and young children, and ensure that people receive training in disease prevention, paying particular attention to increasing awareness of the fight against Aids;
- 11.12. give high priority to reforming their retirement and health insurance systems so as to maintain the incomes and health care of the growing numbers of people dependent on them;
- 11.13. strengthen safety nets and support systems for elderly people.