Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**Recommendation 1272 (1995)**[1]

# Comprehensive European regional planning strategy (10th session of the CEMAT)

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Since 1961 the Parliamentary Assembly has carried out numerous studies on regional planning, and it was at the Assembly's instigation that the first ministerial conference in this field (European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning - CEMAT) took place in Bonn in 1970.

2. The conference was the first tangible result of the interest and commitment in this respect shown by the Parliamentary Assembly and the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE), which thus pioneered the theory of regional planning according to democratic, comprehensive, functional and forward-based concepts.

3. Mindful of local government's growing preponderance in the regional planning field, the 7th CEMAT, convened at The Hague in 1985, stressed the importance of the increasing role of local and regional authorities in the preparation and implementation of regional planning policies.

4. The work outlined above led, for instance, to the European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter approved in Torremolinos in 1983 and the European regional planning strategy, a first draft of which was presented at the 8th CEMAT session in Lausanne in October 1988 and which was later published after the 9th CEMAT session held in Ankara in 1991.

5. The Assembly, having regard to the geo-political upheavals affecting central and eastern Europe since 1989, has begun looking into the question of updating the European strategy presented in Lausanne so as to reflect Europe's new geographical range and provide for the necessary linkage of environmental protection with the introduction of a regional planning policy framed in a spirit of sustainable development.

6. At a time when the countries of western Europe are emerging from a period of serious economic difficulties, while the countries undergoing transition aspire to rapid and satisfactory development, it is crucial to provide a comprehensive and coherent framework, together with clear objectives, for the management of the new European space.

7. Such a framework should naturally make provision for strengthening the role of the regional and local authorities whose duty is to foster the development of their region's specific potentialities with due regard to the principles of participation and subsidiarity and the coherence of the comprehensive approach.

8. The Assembly is therefore convinced that the knowledge and experience accruing from almost thirty years of activities in this sector warrant assigning the Council of Europe a new Europe-wide regional planning policy.

9. The Assembly presented a contribution in this sense to the last session of the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (Oslo, 6-7 September 1994) and regrets that the ministers, despite their call for more intensive co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union,

1. See Doc. 7291, report of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, rapporteur: Mr Ruffy Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 22 May 1995.

gave this contribution a low-key reception, whereas it was fully in line with the conclusions of the Union's Council of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning meeting in Leipzig (21-22 September 1994), which it welcomes.

10. The Assembly notes with satisfaction that the Commission of the European Communities, with the report "Europe 2000+ - co-operation for European regional and local planning", has made a constructive contribution to the finalisation of a European regional planning strategy devised on the same principles as the strategy proposed by the CEMAT in Lausanne and the European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter adopted in 1983 at the 6th CEMAT session.

11. However, while appreciating the importance of the European Union's role in this area at the level of its member countries and of the countries bordering the Union, the Assembly remains convinced that the Council of Europe forms the proper framework for a comprehensive Europe-wide approach and more specifically as regards the central and east European countries not belonging to, nor adjacent to, the Union.

12. It is therefore important that the Council of Europe should be able to play its due part in this sector of activity, one which is vital to the future and the sustainable development of a wider, changing Europe.

13. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

13.1. give priority to the formulation of a comprehensive Europe-wide regional planning strategy based on Council of Europe achievements and taking into account the proposals made by the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE);

13.2. issue instructions for that purpose to the Committee of Senior Officials responsible for preparing the European Conferences of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning, asking them:

*a.* to develop a genuine partnership with the Commission of the European Communities taking into account the specialities of the two organisations;

*b.* to make co-operation arrangements with the European Union in which the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe and the European Parliament would be associated;

*c.* to extend their work to the relevant Council of Europe intergovernmental committees, such as the Steering Committee on Local and Regional Authorities (CDLR) and the Steering Committee for the Conservation and Management of the Environment and Natural Habitats (CDPE);

*d.* to examine the possibility of acting upon the proposal put forward not only by the Parliamentary Assembly but also by the Ministers of the European Union, and to organise existing European planning research institutes into a network ensuring their co-operation with governmental institutions.