Resolution 75 (1955)[1]

Exchange of visits between members of European local authorities

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

Desiring to promote and foster exchanges and contacts between members of European local authorities without increasing expenditure by Member States;

Believing that such exchanges will be an important factor in disseminating among local populations the idea of a European community;

Considering also that by facilitating exchange of information and comparison of experience such visits may be largely instrumental in the improvement of methods of local administration;

Noting that the International Union of Local Authorities and the Council of European Municipalities have agreed to the scheme worked out by the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs to promote the exchange of visits between local authorities in Europe;

Considering that this scheme can be put into effect without additional expenditure by the Council of Europe such as would necessitate an increase of the Budget,

1. Approves the scheme mentioned below for exchange of visits between members of European local authorities;

2. Instructs the Secretary-General to make the necessary arrangements for putting it into effect;

3. Decides to acquaint the Committee of Ministers with the scheme in the hope that Member Governments will be disposed to give it favourable publicity.

Scheme for exchange of visits between members of European local authorities

I. Objects of the scheme

The purpose of the scheme is to enable persons responsible for local government in European countries to increase their knowledge and understanding of the institutions and methods in use in local government in other European countries. Whereas there is at present a considerable interchange of visits on an official basis between mayors, high officials of local government and other distinguished personages, there is relatively little exchange belween the rank-and-file of elected members of local authorities or local authority staffs. It is desired to promote such an exchange and thus to broaden the outlook and expand the knowledge of many people engaged in local government who would not normally have such an opportunity.

It is thought that a considerable number of people engaged in local government work who already visit foreign countries either on holiday or for business reasons might be glad, if informed of the special facilities offered by this scheme, to take the opportunity of studying local administration in other countries.

1. (see Doc 395Doc 395, draft Resolution of the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs and Explanalory Memorandum by Mr. Smithers, Rapporteur). This Resolution was adopted by the Assembly at its 12th Sitting, on 14th October, 1955

The object of the scheme is therefore to make appropriate arrangements and to bring them to the attention of the parties concerned.

II. Preliminary arrangements " host " authorities

A number of individual members of local authorities, both urban and rural, herein referred to as " host " authorities, declare their willingness to offer hospitality to visiting councillors or officials of a foreign municipality.

(a) A visitor may stay for not more than three nights. Hospitality may also be extended to a wife or husband.

The visitors pay their own travelling and other expenses.

(b) The host undertakes to instruct his visitor in the working methods of local government in the particular area.

(c) A local authority one or more of whose members are willing to act as host states the maximum number of visitors it is prepared to receive each year. It will also provide information regarding the dates of its sessions.

III. Development of the scheme

Once members of a number of local authorities have agreed under the above conditions to participate as hosts, the second stage will consist in bringing the scheme and its offers of hospitality to the attention of the parties concerned, i. e. in making it known to as many European municipal councillors and local officials as possible:

1.
   a. the Secretariat-General of the Council of Europe, with the assistance of the International Union of Local Authorities and the Council of European Municipalities, will send particulars of the scheme to the national associations of local authorities with a request that they and their member authorities participate;

   b. the national associations of local authorities will bring the scheme to the notice of their members and invite them to take part as " host " authorities, on the conditions specified in Section II above;

   c. local authorities will send a list of their members willing to act as hosts, accompanied by a statement of the maximum number of visitors they are prepared to receive, to the national associations, which will forward them to the Secretariat-General of the Council of Europe, either directly or through their international organisation;

2. the Secretariat-General of the Council of Europe will collect the lists received from the national associations in a yearbook, which will be sent to the national associations in all participating countries. The yearbook will contain a list of the host authorities and the name of the national association to which they belong, with the number of visitors they are prepared to receive, and will be brought up to date each year;

3. the national associations will circulate the yearbook to their members;

4. a councillor or an official of a municipality participating in the scheme who wishes to visit a municipality in another country will write to the national association of the country in question to that effect;

5. the national association will notify the municipality concerned and note on its national list that this municipality has already received a visitor.

IV. Administrative Committee

The scheme will be administered by a Committee under a Chairman appointed by the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs. The Committee will be composed of the Chairman and one representative respectively of the International Union of Local Authorities, the Council of European Municipalities and the Secretariat-General of the Council of Europe. It will present to the Special Committee an annual report on the working of the scheme and the results achieved.