Resolution 92 (1955)[1]

Reply to the first and second Reports of the Common Assembly

Parliamentary Assembly

A. General considerations

1. This being the first comprehensive reply[2] by the Assembly of the Council of Europe to a Report from the Common Assembly, mention should be made at the outset of the satisfaction felt by the Consultative Assembly at the close and well regulated co-operation obtained in a field so important as that of coal and steel. The failure of the E. D. C., the second scheme of this kind, has made the Consultative Assembly all the more anxious to see the E. C. S. C. achieve complete success. The creation of a United Europe is a long-term task. For this reason all methods of integration likely to help in this task must be fully exploited in order to attain the goal in the shortest time[3]. For this reason the Assembly does not regard the E. C. S. C. as an end in itself, but as a stage in the progressive attainment of the final aim of European unification.

2. The Consultative Assembly believes it to be of the greatest importance that any scheme which is put into effect should be open to all and that this should apply especially to the E. C. S. C. Consequently, it very much welcomes the reaffirmation of the principle in both the first report (Doc. 319, para. 57) and the second (Doc. 396, para. 73). It feels that the Common Assembly would agree with it in interpreting the E. C. S. C.'s policy on this point as follows : every member of the Council has a "standing invitation" to enter the Community at any time it feels to be appropriate. It is to be hoped, indeed, that membership of E. C. S. C., or association with it, will be viewed in a different light by some of the member countries of the Council now that the direct link with the E. D. C. no longer exists.

3. Besides, member countries unwilling to commit themselves to full participation should have the choice between various forms of association, conceived in a broad and sympathetic spirit. The Agreement of Association concluded with Great Britain is a good precedent, for which both Great Britain and the Community are to be congratulated. Nevertheless, the forms of association adopted by other member countries will not necessarily be exactly the same. As regards the Scandinavian States, agreements should be concluded from now on with the individual Governments without waiting for the institution of a common market, which is not likely to come about in the immediate future.

4. The policy of the E. C. S. C. in regard to non-member States was to encourage them to become full members, arguing that "no country can claim benefit of the common market while declining the obligations devolving upon Members of the Community" (Doc. 396, para. 73). Certain earlier discussions within international organisations may explain this attitude on the part of the Community. However well-founded this affirmation may be, we may wonder whether too much emphasis on the point, so far from encouraging member countries to join, will not rather deter them from seeking even associate membership.

5. Only by observing the principle of membership open to all can we avert the risk of Europe being split up into small groups, with the resultant diffusion and waste of effort. In the same way, this principle in itself fully justifies the remark made in the above-mentioned introductory report to the Consultative Assembly on

1. This Resolution was adopted by the Assembly at its 27th Sitting, on 27th October, 1955 (see Doc. 319 and Doc. 396, First and Second Reports of the Common Assembly, and Doc. 435. draft Resolution of the Committee on General Affairs).
2. See Resolution 65 adopted on 10th December, 1954, as an interim reply.
3. See Doc. 362, Introductory Report on European integration, presented by Mlle. Klompé, para. 8.

European integration (Doc. 362, para. 14) that "it would be a great gain to our common enterprise if countries willing here and now to delegate authority to common institutions would take the plunge, so that the diffident may be inspired to follow their example". For this reason the Assembly is glad to note the appreciation made by M. Motz in the Second Report on the activities of the Common Assembly (Doc. 396, para. 8), that it had over the last two months continued to exercise its role as initiator both within the framework of the Community and the wider setting of the new Europe as a whole. There is no doubt that this had a favourable effect on the action undertaken by the Member Governments of the E. C. S. C. before and after the Messina Conference.

B. Relations between the Common Assembly and the Consultative Assembly

6. If the work of the E. C. S. C. is to be geared to the general process of unification, it is of the greatest importance that there should be organic links or at least close liaison between its organs and the Council of Europe and its Assembly, as being "the general framework of European policy". While we have reason to be satisfied with the links that have already been forged, it is, nevertheless, to be regretted that it has not yet been possible to organise joint meetings between the members of the Committees of the two Assemblies, as the Consultative Assembly would have wished. The latter would welcome any new proposal that the Common Assembly and its committees might wish to make on this point, in particular any proposal developing the authority already given to committees of the Common Assembly (see First Report Doc. 319, para. 67) to invite members of Consultative Assembly committees to their meetings. At such meetings the representatives of non-member countries would gain a better understanding of the way in which the Community discharges its functions.

7. The joint meetings between the two Assemblies have proved fruitful for both parties, and they should therefore be continued. They owe their success to their informality.

8. The Second Report of the Common Assembly (Doc. 396, para. 71) draws attention to the problem of establishing direct relationships between the Common Assembly and the British Parliament under the Agreement of Association concluded between the E. C. S. C. and the United Kingdom. It would be in keeping with the spirit of the Eden Plan if these relationships were organised on the basis provided by the Consultative Assembly, that is by the British Representatives to the Consultative Assembly meeting together with the Representatives to the Common Assembly in a sort of Sub-committee of the Joint Meeting. This body would be responsible for considering the General Report of the Council of Association set up under the association agreement. The same procedure could be followed in similar cases which may arise in the future.

C. Relations with Inter-governmental bodies

9. The Consultative Assembly is interested to note the desire expressed by the Common Assembly in its Second Report (Doc. 396, para. 7) for co-operation with the Inter-governmental Committee set up by the Messina Conference. It recalls that, in its introductory debate in July, 1955, it instructed the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe to inform the Inter-governmental Committee of its own work in the fields mentioned in the Messina communiqué. It hopes to hold a debate on the results of the Inter-governmental Committee's activities as soon as they have been published. The importance of this discussion lies in the fact that not only will it give the representatives of the member countries of the Intergovernmental Committee an opportunity of commenting on the decisions of that body, but it will also show to what extent the representatives of non-member countries wish to be associated with this work at a later stage.

10. The Consultative Assembly awaits with interest the conclusions reached by the Working Party of the Common Assembly (Doc. 396, para. 77). It can assure the Common Assembly of its fullest support, as stated in the Introductory Report on European integration (Doc. 362, para. 27) : "In view of the interdependence of these activities (coal and steel and other sources of energy), this extension (of the competence and powers of the organs of the E. C. S. C.) is essential if the aims of the Treaty are to be fully attained. After having taken cognisance of the proposals of the Common Assembly in this respect, the Consultative Assembly will no doubt wish to support them energetically."

11. The Common Assembly, as will be seen from its Second Report, aims at establishing direct relations with the Special Council of Ministers. The Consultative Assembly awaits with interest the experiments made by the Common Assembly in this respect, in actual fact, in spite of all the differences between the two

organisations, the Common Assembly can only exercise, with regard to the Special Council, an advisory function similar to that of the Consultative Assembly. Albeit, the experiments made by the latter with the advisory function in relation to Governments have not been very successful.

D. Particular problems

(a) Liaison with economic, trade union and professional organisations

12. The Second Report (Doc. 396, para. 21) mentions the desire of the Common Assembly to maintain direct relations with economic, trade union and professional organisations. The Consultative Assembly would like to draw the attention of the Common Assembly to the system it has adopted of granting non-governmental organisations a different consultative status according to the extent to which they are concerned with European unification. The Common Assembly might usefully examine the question whether a similar procedure, adapted to its own particular need, could not be applied to bodies which are not represented in the Consultative Committee of the E. C. S. C.

(b) Universal suffrage

13. The Second Report (Doc. 396, para. 27) mentions the interest of the Common Assembly in the election of its members by universal suffrage. The Consultative Assembly, in particular its Committee on General Affairs, has also considered this problem, but has decided that it should be thoroughly examined only in close co-operation with the Working Party and its Subcommittee especially appointed to deal with the problem.

14. In preparing this Report, the Consultative Assembly has endeavoured to reply to those questions raised in the First and Second Reports of the Common Assembly which seem to be of common interest to both Assemblies. It suggests to the Common Assembly that in future reports it should indicate the questions on which it wishes to have the opinion of the Consultative Assembly; this procedure would facilitate the work of the Rapporteur and would concentrate the interest of the two Assemblies on common problems.