Resolution 148 (1958)[1]

Activities of Western European Union in the cultural field

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly has noted with great interest the Reply which the Assembly of W.E.U. proposes to make to Chapter VIII of the Third Annual Report of the Council of W.E.U.

2. In the present Opinion the Consultative Assembly will deal only with those cultural questions which are related to the work of the Council of Europe in this field. Its observations can appropriately be classed under the following headings :

(i) Relations between the Council of Europe and W.E.U. in the cultural field

3. The Assembly is still anxious that any duplication and confusion between the two organisations should be avoided. Against the background of this overriding principle, the Assembly wishes to congratulate W.E.U. on the important activities it is carrying on in the cultural field, independently as well as in cooperation with the Council of Europe. It seems to the Assembly that there is complete harmony between the aims of the two organisations in this field, while both benefit from the division of labour which is taking place.

4. The Assembly considers that this result is due to close co-ordination at the level of governmental cultural experts, the same persons frequently sitting on the Committees of both Organisations. The regular exchange of Observers at the various cultural meetings and the excellent relations which exist between the two Secretariats contribute towards making this co-ordination effective.

(ii) Co-operation between the two Organisations in the cultural field

5. Furthermore, the Assembly has been glad to learn that on certain subjects considerable progress has been made through co-operation between the two Organisations. In particular, it is pleased that the universities of the countries belonging to the Council of Europe but not to W.E.U. have, since 1957, taken part in meetings of the European Universities Committee, as the result of a financial contribution from the Council of Europe for the payment of the travelling and subsistence expenses of its representatives.

6. The Assembly was particularly interested in the preparation for the Conference to be attended at Dijon in 1959 by the Rectors and Vice-Chancellors of the chief European universities. It is gratified to learn that the important matters to be dealt with at that Conference will include the question of the shortage of research workers in the scientific field. This problem is of the greatest interest to the Consultative Assembly, which hopes that it will be kept informed of any progress that may be achieved at Dijon.

(iii) General cultural policy of the Council of Europe and W.E.U.

7. Finally, the Assembly has noted the general principles governing the cultural activity of W.E.U. It fully endorses the latter's policy of acting, as it were, as the testing-ground for new cultural activities that might possibly be transferred at a later stage to the wider setting of the countries which are Members of the Council of Europe or have acceded to the Cultural Convention. In this connection, the Consultative Assembly would

1. (a) Subject introduced on 25th April 1958 by the tabling of the documents of W.E.U.,Doc. 810, on the activities of W.E.U. in the cultural field.
(b) 29th April 1958, resolution referred to the Committee (Reference No. 206Reference No. 206).
(c) 30th April 1958, tabling of the Report of the Cultural Committee,Doc. 822.
(d) 3rd May 1958, debate in the Assembly (see 9th Sitting of the 10th Session). The Resolution was adopted unanimously.

like to be regularly informed of progress achieved by W.E.U. in cultural matters and, in particular, of any possibilities of transferring to the Council of Europe activities that have been undertaken experimentally within the framework of WEU member countries.

8. The Assembly has accordingly learned with much pleasure that the highly specialised Committees of W.E.U. were placing their knowledge and experience at the disposal of the Committee of Cultural Experts of the Council of Europe by transmitting direct to the latter Organisation such new projects as seemed likely to be better carried out within the framework of the countries which are Members of the Council of Europe or have acceded to the Cultural Convention.

9. The Assembly hopes that it will be possible to continue and maintain this procedure, which it considers to be fully in harmony with European cultural interests.