Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 186 (1960)[1]

Reply to the First Report of the Administrative Board of the Cultural Fund

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly has taken note with great interest of the First Report of the Cultural Fund. It wishes to congratulate the Administrative Board on its excellent work and to thank the Chairman for having been good enough to present the Report to the Assembly personally. Replying to the Report, the Assembly does not, however, wish to limit itself to expressing its appreciation of the results achieved in 1959 but, turning to the future, wishes to make a number of concrete suggestions concerning the manner in which it would like to see the Fund develop. In so doing, the Assembly hopes to remain true to its role which has always been that of guiding the future action of the Council of Europe.

2. It must first of all be pointed out that, in the view of the Assembly, the Cultural Fund is not an end in itself, but is a means of enabling the Council of Europe to implement the large-scale cultural programme which corresponds to its statutory vocation and which the present-day situation makes it more than ever imperative to fulfil.

3. It is accordingly agreed that the cultural action of the Council of Europe must fit into a wider framework and become the corner-stone of European co-operation in this field, both at governmental level and in the private sphere. The Assembly has therefore noted with satisfaction three developments which tend to confirm the Council of Europe's role as centre of cultural action: the creation of the Committee of Higher Education and Research, which is to succeed the European Universities Committee; the transfer of the cultural activities of Western European Union to the Council of Europe and the Arrangement concluded between the Cultural Fund and the European Cultural Foundation.

Arrangement with the European Cultural Foundation

4. The Arrangement with the European Cultural Foundation, signed on 2nd July 1960 at Soestdijk, is of very special interest to the Assembly since it is directly affected by the provisions concerning the creation of joint national committees. The Assembly is aware of its obligations in this respect; in Resolution 163 (1959), which aims at securing private moral and financial support for the Cultural Fund, members of the Assembly undertook to assist in setting up national committees.

5. It now rests with the Cultural Committee to take steps to ensure that the interests of the Council of Europe are adequately represented on the joint national committees. In cases where members of the Cultural Committee are not in a position to assume new responsibilities, it could call on other members of the Assembly or on former Representatives.

6. It will also be the duty of the Cultural Committee to ensure that proposals to facilitate the setting up of national committees are put into effect, in particular by the publication of a booklet and of an information bulletin.

1. Assembly debate on 27th September 1960 (17th Sitting) (see Docs-1154Docs-1154, First Report of the Administrative Board of the Cultural Fund, and 1182, Report of the Cultural Committee) Text adopted by the Assembly on 27th September 1960 (17th Sitting).

7. The Assembly also wishes to entrust to its Committee the task of organising a meeting of the future "secretaries" of joint national committees, with a view to preparing with them and with the Strasbourg and Amsterdam Secretaries the setting up of the national committees and the methods of future operation among them[2].

8. The Assembly relies upon the Administrative Board to bring about as quickly as possible the harmonisation of the programmes of the Cultural Fund and of the Foundation as laid down in Article 3 of the Agreement. Indeed, the Assembly holds such harmonisation to be essential if the work of the national committees is to be successful.

9. The setting-up of national committees leads us to consider the "cultural programme" from a new angle, since it will be necessary to secure public support for it. An appeal to the imagination must be made with simple projects the necessity for which is beyond dispute and the implementation of which will not pass unnoticed. The Assembly notes with pleasure that execution of the programme of the Cultural Experts, which has met with the approval of the Administrative Board, is going-ahead and being directed more and more towards well-defined important spheres of activity, namely, universities, education, youth.

10. The Assembly wishes to make the following proposals in this connection.

Higher Education

11. The Assembly's interest in higher education is sufficiently well known to make it unnecessary to furnish further proof thereof. Without wishing to enter into discussion of the proposed European University, in regard to which it made known its attitude in Recommendation 242, the Assembly continues to urge the adoption of any measures likely to encourage the "Europeanisation" of universities. The creation of the Committee on Higher Education and Research brings to mind Assembly Recommendation 108 on the use of the Cultural Fund in the university sphere, in which the Assembly advocated :

11.1. the institution of specialised chairs in those fields where the problem and the development of European integration provide a new subject for research and specialised training;

11.2. the institution of open chairs to enable foreign professors to teach for long periods in universities;

11.3. the regular organisation of an equalisation fund to overcome financial obstacles to the exchange of teachers between universities.

12. The Assembly should now like to recommend that the Administrative Board of the Cultural Fund examine the possibility of giving concrete aid to the University Institutes of European Studies by devising a system of research fellowships on their behalf and by generously subsidising, wherever necessary, research and studies of European interest.

Youth

13. The Assembly wishes to draw the attention of public authorities and public opinion to the extent of the problems facing young people today. To solve such problems requires the building up of considerable investments both as regards equipment and the recruiting and training of leaders. For this purpose a "Protocol" for inclusion in the European Cultural Convention might be considered. Voluntary youth organisations would be asked to give their views on the points to be included in the Protocol.

14. So that youth may be closely associated with the building of Europe, suitable material and documentation should be made available to voluntary youth organisations and technical assistance given them. To this end, the Assembly urges that a European Youth Centre be set up at Strasbourg.

15. This pilot centre would have two functions :

As a model youth centre it would gather and collate, in practical form, information on the best of what is being done in Europe in this field making available for immediate use documentary material at present scattered and difficult to access, for adaptation to particular requirements. It would provide for leaders of youth movements complementary training from a European viewpoint and familiarise them with comparative teaching methods.

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2. See Order No. 170, on the creation of Joint National Committees for the Cultural Fund and the European Cultural Foundation

As a European centre it would gather and collate the material necessary for "presenting Europe" in accordance with the needs of young people.

16. "Presenting Europe" to young people should have the systematic support of the growing number of Europe Houses in member countries, which appear to wish that the Council of Europe should second their efforts.

17. The experience gained in the European Youth Centre would serve not only to promote effective co-operation with the Europe Houses; it would also provide a practical means of making youth European-minded.

Primary, secondary and technical education

18. The Assembly is greatly in favour of the early implementation of a vast programme of European co-operation in primary, secondary and technical education, as envisaged by the Administrative Board of the Cultural Fund. Convinced that if this venture is to be successful a specialised body must be set up, the Assembly formally recommends that, in the near future, a European Standing Committee of national education officials be set up within the framework of the Council of Europe.

19. The Assembly should like once more to compliment the Administrative Board on ensuring the continuity of European Schools' Day. In accordance with the opinion already expressed in the past by the Cultural Committee, the Assembly strongly supports the idea of giving this event a permanent place in the cultural programme of the Council of Europe

Presentation of Europe to non-Europeans

20. There remains one sphere of cultural co-operation wherein the action of the Council of Europe needs to be thoroughly reconsidered, namely that of the presentation of Europe to non-Europeans.

21. However the objectives of European cultural co-operation may be defined, there is no doubt that one of our main tasks must be to make quite clear the part Europe must play in a world in which its former supremacy is giving way to cultural pluralism.

22. The situation is critical; we did not need the recent developments in central Africa to warn us of this. In the minority at the United Nations and attacked continuously by countries professing ideologies of European origin rendered unrecognisable by national interpretations, isolated in a world which owes its civilisation to her, Europe is left without a voice to define her ideals and affirm her vocation.

23. The great difficulties which arise from the inevitable conflict between our liberal and technical culture and the traditional cultures of Asia, Africa and the Middle East require study and remedies which no single European country could undertake, much less impose. The difficulties are cultural rather than political. The only solution seems to be to reveal Europe as the cultural entity it fundamentally is.

24. One of the primary tasks will be to persuade the elite in Europe to compare their national culture with civilisations of other continents. It is particularly important that European civilisation should be presented to the outside world as a single unit embodying national variations. There can be no point of contact between French, English or Italian national culture and a completely different civilisation such as that of India or Mexico. Europe as a whole must be presented as a single entity to the rest of the world. Rivalry among national civilisations must give way to a community of cultures, in the same way as the Common Market will supersede economic competition among the nations of Europe in trade with the rest of the world.

25. The Council of Europe may play a leading part in this sphere in two ways. In the first place, a way must be found of presenting Europe outside Europe and then of giving non-Europeans resident in Europe a true picture of our civilisation, to ensure that they return home firmly impressed by European unity and solidarity.

Presenting Europe in Asia and Asia Minor

26. Presenting Europe in Asia should fall within the large-scale UNESCO project "Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values" regarding which the Consultative Assembly adopted Recommendation 128 (1958) advocating that exhibitions of European art be held in Eastern countries, and that in one or more Eastern countries courses of one week or more be held devoted to presenting the European idea, at which

eminent Europeans would lecture on European culture; this programme might be supplemented by other manifestations of European culture. The Assembly is glad to note that the programme of the Cultural Fund makes special provision for this activity of outstanding importance

Presenting Europe in North and South America

27. With regard to transatlantic cultural exchanges which are at present the province of NATO, the Assembly again draws attention to its Recommendation 205 urging Governments of member countries to use as far as possible the Council of Europe as the framework of a programme to strengthen links between Europe and North America.

Presenting Europe in Africa

28. The presentation of Europe as a cultural entity is of particular importance in the case of Africa. Here the problem is closely bound up with technical aid to those countries which, in process of development, have acquired premature and perhaps somewhat precarious independence. Cultural activities will consequently have to be concerted with the provision of material assistance to those countries. Action taken should include the cultural training of European technicians for African countries.

Presenting Europe to non-Europeans in Europe

29. Throughout Europe, the number of students and trainees from Asian and African countries in process of development continues to increase. Although such countries as Great Britain and France have long been aware of the problems raised by the presence of temporary residents from distant countries, the general situation has changed considerably in recent years, and responsibility towards these visitors is no longer national but European; they no longer come to France, Germany or Italy, but to Europe, and they must be given an opportunity to gain a true picture of Europe as a whole.

30. So far these students have, for the most part, been the cream of the population in lands formerly colonised by European countries or in the countries of the British Commonwealth, invited to visit the mother country so that bonds of friendship among all concerned might be established. Now, however, most of these overseas countries have acquired complete independence and they tend to hold hostile prejudices towards their former masters. Only by encouraging the peoples of the new States to consider Europe as a whole will this uneasiness be dispelled. Here, too, if Europe does not continue to attract this elite, we may be sure that determined efforts will be made to entice them to countries of Marxist ideology, and we shall see more and more African students receiving university training in communist countries.

31. The European Cultural Foundation is to be congratulated on devoting its 1959 Congress to this problem, and the reports of the meetings show clearly that systematic European co-operation in this field will have to be achieved as soon as possible. The Cultural Committee has already brought the problem to the notice of the Administrative Board of the Fund but the matter is of such importance that the Assembly intends to make it the subject of a special Recommendation to Governments.[3]

32. No Organisation has yet assumed the formidable task of making Europe known to non-Europeans, although the Council of Europe seems to be ideally suited to do so. A special department should be set up within the Cultural Secretariat to serve initially as a clearing house for the exchange of information, and proceed later to carry out a programme of action assisted by a committee of advisers and should certainly be able to avail itself of many of the facilities as a result of achievements of the Cultural Experts under their conventional programme. Here too, the closest co-operation is necessary with specialised institutions at national level.

Financial resources of the Cultural Fund

33. A problem not less vital than that of extending the programme and one to which the Assembly is fully alive is that of increasing the financial resources of the Cultural Fund. The Assembly fully agrees with the Administrative Council that it is essential to place at the disposal of the Fund far greater financial resources that it commands at present.

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3. See Recommendation 256 on the inclusion in the Council of Europe Cultural Programme of an item "Presentation of Europe to non-Europeans".

34. The Assembly therefore wholeheartedly endorses the Recommendation made by the Committee of Cultural Experts to the Committee of Ministers that compulsory contributions of member States should be increased.

Voluntary governmental contributions

35. Like the Administrative Council, the Assembly considers that, pending a revision of the Statute of the Cultural Fund and of the system of granting resources to the Fund, the attention of Governments will have to be drawn to the need to increase the voluntary governmental contributions provided for under Article IV, paragraph 1 (b), of the Statute of the Fund. To this end it is addressing a special Recommendation to the Committee of Ministers.[4]

36. In this connection, the Assembly recalls its Order No. 144, whereby it instructed its working party responsible for relations will national Parliaments to use the goodwill of its members to secure a voluntary contribution by their country to the Cultural Fund, possibly by means of a special provision in the national Budget, as has been done in the Federal Republic of Germany.

37. So far no steps have been taken to give effect to this Order -save for a speech in the House of Commons on 1st May 1959 -since it was deemed desirable that any parliamentary action in the matter should be taken with the consent of the Government departments concerned, whose representatives are members of the Administrative Board of the Fund. The time has now come for action; the Chairman of the working party on relations with national Parliaments will take the necessary steps without delay.The Assembly urges all its members to support any action taken in their respective Parliaments in this matter.

Contributions from non-governmental sources

38. It is to be hoped, moreover, that the arrangement concluded with the European Cultural Foundation and the impending formation of joint national committees will at last make it possible to raise considerable funds from private and non-governmental sources for European cultural co-operation.

39. The Assembly considers that, to encourage potential donors, gifts to the Fund should be exempt from taxation. At present legislation relating to tax relief on donations for educational and cultural purposes still varies considerably from one member State to another; the Federal Republic of Germany alone allows generous tax relief on private donations to cultural activities.

40. The Assembly accordingly proposes to recommend to the Committee of Ministers that it should :

40.1. invite member States to extend, in so far as their law permits, to donations and bequests to the joint national Committees of the Council of Europe Cultural Fund and the European Cultural Foundation, the same tax relief granted to charitable and cultural institutions in their countries :

40.2. invite those member States whose law contains no such provisions to introduce tax relief measures for the benefit of charitable and cultural institutions in their countries, and of the joint national Committees of the Council of Europe Cultural Fund and of the European Cultural Foundation.[5]

Grants to non-governmental organisations

41. The Assembly is glad to note that the Cultural Fund has taken a first step towards helping non-governmental cultural organisations in need of financial support. It would point out, however, that the assistance so far given is on an extremely modest scale. There again, much greater resources are required if the work is to be planned systematically and to make a real impact on European non-governmental cultural co-operation.

Administration of cultural affairs

42. The Assembly should like, in this Resolution, to mention one last matter. The Cultural Division of the Secretariat-General will, undoubtedly, have to be reinforced to cope with the expanding volume of the Council of Europe's cultural activities.

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4. See Recommendation 257 on voluntary governmental contributions to the Cultural Fund
5. See Recommendation 258 on tax relief for the Council of Europe Cultural Fund and the European Cultural Foundation.

43. In European affairs one seldom has the feeling that progress has been made. In the cultural sphere, however, it is clear that progress has been achieved and the Assembly welcomes this fact. While fully realising that this is a matter of internal organisation falling within the competence of the Secretary-General, the Assembly feels that the moment has come for the Cultural Division of the Council of Europe to be extended and re-organised to fit it for its new tasks.

44. The Assembly, endorsing the proposals put forward in the Administrative Board of the Cultural Fund, considers that an administrative system should be devised for cultural affairs, on a scale commensurate with European requirements and capable of the possibilities of action offered by the Cultural Convention, the Committee of Cultural Experts, the Cultural Fund, the fusion of the Cultural Departments of WEU and the various specialised committees in course of formation or envisaged.