Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 318 (1966)[1]

Certain economic and financial aspects of housing problems facing local authorities in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering that twenty years of considerable post-war effort have not sufficed to resolve the housing problem in most member countries of the Council of Europe ;

2. Considering that local authorities are heavily committed in the housing field and are the first to have to bear the brunt of the housing shortage ;

3. Considering that the housing situation differs from country to country, that some have dealt with the problem so successfully that there has been no housing shortage, that some experienced a most severe postwar shortage but have overcome it, while others still have to contend with the aftermath of war and appear unlikely to be able to solve the problem in the near future ;

4. Considering that in the next few years large scale efforts will have to be made in order to cope with the rise in population, as well as changes in the demographic structure, and the existing scarcity in housing accommodation ;

5. Considering that a large proportion of old buildings need either to be modernised or replaced in the course of slum clearance and re-development, and that this will give rise to further demands on the building sector :

6. Considering that vast capital resources will be needed to carry out these tasks and that it will probably be insufficient to meet these requirements out of public funds ;

7. Considering that current and future needs can only be met by co-ordinating public, private and co-operative initiative and efforts in the housing field and by mobilising all available resources ;

8. Noting that, in order to achieve maximum results, certain Governments are using their available finance largely to encourage and foster private and co-operative building and to promote indirect and personal aid measures, such as rent assistance, accommodation allowance etc. ;

9. Noting that campaigns to make owner-occupation possible for small and medium wage-earners have been started in several countries to relieve the housing position and to overcome the shortage of accommodation ;

10. Considering that public bodies (State, local authorities) can facilitate accession to owner-occupation by means of appropriate building schemes ;

11. Considering that to this end private and co-operative building can be stimulated in many ways, e.g. by providing tax relief, building bonuses, a credit guarantee system, individual aid to family-home owners (e.g. by assuming liability for part of the mortgage interest) and by promoting public and private construction savings banks and building by employers for employees ;

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1. Assembly debate on 6th May 1966 (8th Sitting) (see Doc. 2033,Doc. 2033, report of the Committee on Local Authorities). Text adopted by the Assembly on 6th May 1966 (8th Sitting).

12. Considering that the utilisation of national insurance (or social security) funds for building purposes might be envisaged ;

13. Considering that large private participation in a house building drive can be expected if the general principles of a market economy are allowed to apply, thereby enabling private enterprise to derive a normal profit from its participation ;

14. Considering that the questions of rent control, protection of tenants and under-occupation of protected buildings should be reviewed in order to remove obstacles to the sound progress of housing development ;

15. Considering that steps should be taken to ensure that social housing accommodation is occupied solely by persons of moderate income, thereby easing the burden on public authorities in the social housing sector ;

16. Realising that many of the social aspects of housing have not been considered in the report of the Committee on Local Authorities (Doc. 2000) and that these social aspects should be studied by the Social Committee ;

17. Considering that the need to solve housing problems is a matter of European interest and that it is useful to promote European co-operation (research, exchange of experience and information, prefabrication and industrialisation etc.) in this field,

18. Decides :

that an ad hoc group of not more than five independent experts on housing questions be convened :

a. to examine the housing situation, in both urban and rural areas, in Council of Europe member countries, taking due account of the experience of local authorities and of the studies of other international organisations, such as the European Economic Community and the UN Economic Commission for Europe ;

b. to study the effectiveness of national housing policies and methods in Europe ;

c. to point out particularly successful and promising ways and means of dealing with the housing question and to make concrete proposals for the solution of common problems ;

d. to study the various aspects of communal housing and building by local and national authorities ;

that the members of the group of independent experts be appointed by the President of the Assembly on the proposal of the Committee on Local Authorities and of the Social Committee ;

that the conclusions of the group of experts be submitted to the competent committees in due course