

Resolution 576 (1974)¹

Computer-based aids to parliamentary work

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Taking into account the report of its Committee on Science and Technology on computer-based aids to parliamentary work ([Doc. 3475](#)) ;
2. Recalling [Recommendation 557 \(1969\)](#), on the use of computers in local government, [Resolution 513 \(1972\)](#), on the use of computers in national parliaments, and [Recommendation 678 \(1972\)](#) on the results of the 3rd Parliamentary and Scientific Conference ;
3. Noting past experience to the effect that it is not possible at present to introduce comprehensive or total electronic data processing (EDP) systems in parliaments ;
4. Believing that, as an alternative to the total or comprehensive system, one should aim in the first instance at introducing information systems in isolated applications ;
5. Considering that the phased implementation of projects enables the user to obtain a clear idea of the possibilities and limitations of EDP, and gives the data processing specialist a better insight into the problems of the user ;
6. Convinced that the experience gained through the phased implementation of projects in one parliament can be put to good use in introducing EDP projects in other parliaments ;
7. Believing that the steadily increasing range of commercial information services in the sciences, technologies, social sciences and law, can provide one means by which parliaments can add to the range of material available to them without any concomitant need for more space and manpower ;
8. Noting with regret that in reply to the questionnaire from its Committee on Science and Technology concerning cooperation between parliaments and other bodies, one finds relatively little awareness in parliaments of this possibility ;
9. Wishing to encourage the setting-up of an exchange of information on a continuing basis in the various areas of application of EDP in parliaments, in order inter alia to avoid overlapping, and wishing to establish a mechanism whereby experience accumulated in one parliament can be shared between parliaments,
10. Resolves :
 - to organise a Round Table consisting of data processing and documentation experts from national parliaments and, where appropriate, governmental agencies and ministries, and international organisations concerned, with the purpose of drawing up the guidelines (common macro-thesaurus and format, conversion keys etc.) for a clearing house within the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the function of which would be :*
 - a. *the collection, evaluation and transmission of reports and project descriptions ;*

1. Assembly debate on 26 September 1974 (10th Sitting) (see [Doc. 3475](#), report of the Committee on Science and Technology). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26 September 1974 (10th Sitting).



- b. *to make a survey of existing and planned EDP legislation information systems in member states, and to draw up proposals for a comprehensive EDP information system in this field to serve the Assembly, in particular with a view to assessing the effect of Assembly recommendations on national legislation ;*

to follow up the Round Table periodically with colloquia within the framework of the Assembly among the above-mentioned experts for the purpose of holding a mutual exchange of views ;

to call on national parliaments to initiate the necessary procedural and budgetary changes required to provide their members with modern information systems, bearing in mind that these systems should be made available for national and international use, as well as that of individual parliaments, to ensure wide use in order to offset the high cost of setting up systems separately, it being understood that these systems be incorporated in due course within a European network comprising :

- a. *specialised information systems organised by expert parliamentary staff to provide members with information required for parliamentary purposes ;*
- b. *access to the data banks of departments of state under conditions which provide proper security both for the individual and the state ;*
- c. *access to specialised private data banks organised by industrial, commercial or academic institutions, where appropriate terms and conditions can be negotiated ;*
- d. *use of computerised tape type-setting of all official documents prepared by national printing offices ;*

to follow developments with respect to the availability of facilities in the new House of Europe which would make possible the installation in due course of EDP terminals linked to outside computer networks, and to report back.