Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 612 (1976)[1]

Situation in Northern Ireland

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Recalling its Order No. 319 (1971), by which two Sub-Committees (of the Political Affairs Committee and the Legal Affairs Committee) on Northern Ireland were established, and having considered the report of the Political Affairs Committee on the situation in Northern Ireland and the activities of the Sub-Committees on Northern Ireland (Doc. 3696) ;

2. Affirming that there is a "European dimension" to the problems of Northern Ireland, in so far as they primarily concern two countries which belong to the Council of Europe and to the European Economic Community, and have ratified the European Convention on Human Rights ;

3. Believing, therefore, that Europe cannot remain silent when the people in one of her provinces have yet to find an agreed way to live in peace and co-operation,

4. Recognises the realities of a divided community and divided national heritages, which have in the past resulted in the consolidation of a permanent majority and a permanent minority ;

5. Condemns with the utmost vigour all acts of violence and terrorism, by whomsoever they are perpetrated, which insult human dignity, cannot be conducive to any long-lasting settlement, and tragically waste badly needed human energies and material resources ;

6. Welcomes with satisfaction the close co-operation which exists between the British and Irish Governments in matters affecting the restoration of a just peace in Northern Ireland ;

7. Urges all the people of Northern Ireland to put aside past hatreds and misconceptions, to reject the misleading propaganda of terrorist extremists, and to give wholehearted support to all those who are trying to find a permanent settlement through peaceful political discussion, taking into account that this permanent settlement cannot be achieved without a recognition of an Irish dimension ;

8. Notes the positive spirit of reconciliation in the agreement arrived at in Sunningdale, England, in December 1973, in line with the principles of the Council of Europe, the signatories to which agreement were the Irish and British Governments and the parties involved in the Northern Ireland Executive (designate) ;

9. Calls upon the political parties of Northern Ireland and their elected representatives to respond to the wish of the community to live in peaceful co-existence, and to make all possible efforts, with good will and mutual understanding, with a view to reaching an agreed permanent settlement ;

10. Believes that the only political settlement which is both democratic in substance and likely to lead Northern Ireland out of the present economic and social crisis is the one whereby majority and minority, each respecting the aspirations of the other, effectively share the power and the burdens of government in a strong coalition government dedicated to the moral and material reconstruction of the province, and support the development of the social, cultural and economic links between North and South ;

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1. Assembly debate on 29 January 1976 (24th Sitting) (see Doc. 3696, report of the Political Affairs Committee). Text adopted by the Assembly on 29 January 1976 (24th Sitting).

11. While recognising that a final solution to the problems of Northern Ireland rests eventually on the political will of the men and women of Northern Ireland themselves, gives full support to all action of the Governments of the United Kingdom and of Ireland which has the broad support of the political parties in both countries, directed to the establishment of security in the province and a political settlement including the development of political institutions which will ensure civil rights and equality for all the people of Northern Ireland, and is consistent with the Statute of the Council of Europe and the European Convention on Human Rights ;

12. Believes that increased intergovernmental co-operation between Ireland and the United Kingdom within the Council of Europe can have beneficial indirect effects for a political settlement in a "European dimension" ;

13. As a matter of urgency, instructs its Political Affairs Committee and its Legal Affairs Committee to follow the development of the situation in Northern Ireland.