Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 650 (1977)[1]

Development of democratic institutions in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Recalling the Conference on the Development of Democratic Institutions in Europe, held in Strasbourg from 21 to 23 April 1976 ;

2. Reaffirming that any true democracy is based on respect for individual freedom, political freedom and the rule of law, and social progress ;

3. Emphasising that the conception of democracy shared by the member countries of the Council of Europe includes plurality of opinions, freedom of opposition, and the existence of a parliament based on freely contested elections, to which the government is responsible ;

4. Noting that parliamentary democracies are in a minority among the nations of the world, and that the majority of the democratically governed nations are Members of the Council of Europe ;

5. Bearing in mind the debate which took place in the Assembly on the proceedings of the conference in September 1976 on the basis of the report (Doc. 3851) presented by its Legal Affairs Committee ;

6. Aware of the fact that in most member states of the Council of Europe the parliaments are encountering increasing difficulties in the exercise of their legislative powers and their control over the executive, and considering the need to adapt democratic institutions to meet the requirements of contemporary society ;

7. Considering that the problems of parliamentary democracy in Europe are too complex for solution solely at national level, and that, having regard to the European responsibilities of national parliaments, governments and political parties, these problems should be reviewed in a European context ;

8. Convinced, nonetheless, that it would be exaggerated to speak of a crisis in parliamentary government, and affirming its faith in parliamentary democracy ;

9. Having regard to the diversity of the organisation of democratic institutions in Europe ;

10. Attaching the greatest importance to continued study by the Council of Europe of the problems of parliamentary democracy, and desiring to pursue the examination of the structures, characteristics and influence of political parties,

11. Decides to hold a symposium on the role of political parties in the development of parliamentary democracy ;

12. Instructs its Political Affairs Committee to organise this symposium, in consultation with the Legal Affairs Committee and other committees concerned, and to report to it on the results and conclusions thereof.

1. Assembly debate on 27 January 1977 (26th Sitting) (see Doc. 3911, report of the Legal Affairs Committee). Text adopted by the Assembly on 27 January 1977 (26th Sitting).