Resolution 723 (1980)[1]

Public access to meetings and documents of Assembly committees

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having regard to its Recommendation 854 (1979), on access by the public to government records and freedom of information ;

2. Considering that some committee documents are already available to the public and to research workers, and that, by the Standing Committee's decision of 18 March 1977, the ban on the circulation of and quotation from all documents of the committees and Bureau is lifted after a period of twenty-five years (Doc. 3968) ;

3. Considering it desirable that the public should have the opportunity to be informed about the work of the committees, particularly at the enquiry and information stage ;

4. Noting that the committees are now, from time to time, open to the press and the public, especially when their meetings take the form of hearings, colloquies, etc., as well as for certain meetings held elsewhere than in Strasbourg or Paris ;

5. Believing, however, that when texts are to be adopted for submission to the Assembly they need to be discussed discreetly and confidentially if the committees are to work effectively ;

6. Recalling, further, the opportunities for disseminating information presented by the issue of statements and the holding of press conferences,

7. Considers that, where public access to meetings and documents of Assembly committees is concerned, the provisions laid down in the Rules of Procedure and their interpretative texts are satisfactory ;

8. Decides, however, to add at the end of the first sentence of paragraph 8 of Rule 45 of the Rules of Procedure, "Committee meetings shall be held in private", the words "unless a committee decides otherwise in a particular case" ;

9. Instructs the Standing Committee to reconsider its decision of 18 March 1977 with a view to reducing the period of twenty-five years mentioned in paragraph 2 above.

1. Assembly debate on 1 February 1980 (27th Sitting) (see Doc. 4457, report of the Committee on Rules of Procedure). Text adopted by the Assembly on 1 February 1980 (27th Sitting).