Resolution 781 (1982)[1]

Urban policies

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Taking note of the reports of its Committee on Culture and Education on urban cultural policies (Doc.4944) and of its Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities on a number of recent experiments in urban policy (Doc. 4957);

2. Wishing to respond to the appeal launched by the International Review Conference of Berlin (8-12 March 1982) on the European Campaign for Urban Renaissance ;

3. Observing that the profound changes which have occurred in the economic and social structures of European countries have affected the structure of towns, giving rise to serious social tension within them, and convinced that every European town, besides fulfilling an economic and social function, should be a centre of cultural development ;

4. Considering that it is more than ever essential, while preserving the environment, to provide a wide range of facilities, services and employment possibilities near residential areas ;

5. Convinced that the urban environment and way of life should be preserved or improved by such means as providing suitable education, communal and cultural facilities, decentralising activities to a neighbourhood level, encouraging the continuation of existing enterprises, and assisting the introduction of small enterprises and the establishment of specialised traders and craftsmen ;

6. Believing that experiments in building new towns have on the whole been positive and may be viewed as one of the answers to the problem of excessive urban concentration and as a model of town planning on a human scale ;

7. Considering that the urban heritage represents an inestimable asset for society, which it is essential to protect and expand through a policy of rehabilitating not only historic buildings and sites, but also town centres ;

8. Aware of the fact that the economic recession and population standstill should encourage those responsible, at all levels, to re-examine the conditions of life in the city in qualitative terms and to seek a fresh approach in such fields as planning, legislation, allocation of funds, administrative procedures, organisation of enterprises, vocational training, etc. ;

9. Considering that co-operation should constitute the key to the implementation of renewed urban policies ;

10. Believing therefore :

10.1. that steps should be taken to ensure that towns once again become places of encounter and exchange, and that their inhabitants recover the feeling of belonging to a community ;

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1. Assembly debate on 29 September 1982 (9th Sitting) (see Doc. 4944, report of the Committee on Culture and Education, and Doc.4957, report of the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities). Text adopted by the Assembly on 29 September 1982 (9th Sitting).

10.2. that the town should provide the setting for political, administrative, commercial and cultural activities ;

10.3. that an effort should be made to manage existing resources more effectively, to preserve and rehabilitate old buildings, and to harmonise the urban fabric by ensuring greater equality of living conditions in qualitative terms ;

10.4. that efforts to devise the best ways of controlling private vehicle traffic in town centres should continue, especially by judiciously extending pedestrian precincts and at the same time improving public transport, but that the aim should also be to reduce traffic in residential areas by diverting through traffic and fixing systematic speed limits ;

10.5. that a greater effort should be made than in the past to re-use old or abandoned industrial sites for development or recreational purposes rather than to launch new projects on the outskirts of large towns, in order to reduce the land consumption generated by urban growth ;

10.6. that it is advisable to decentralise decision-making by delegating financial powers where necessary or by concluding agreements with regional and local authorities that will guarantee the implementation and operation of schemes, so that locally elected representatives may assume their responsibility for urban renewal and the improvement of living conditions in the city ;

10.7. that local inhabitants should be encouraged to assist in the preparation of projects, the management of socio-cultural facilities and the revitalisation of neighbourhoods, so that due account may be taken of the contradictory requirements which arise from the improvement of urban life and so that conflict may be avoided ;

10.8. that the educational system should incorporate the means of preparing future citizens for active participation in the life of the city and the exercise of their responsibilities ;

11. Aware of the significance of the Council for Cultural Co-operation project concerning cultural development policies in towns, aimed at dealing with concrete problems and meeting local needs ;

12. Considering that this project is related and complementary to the European Campaign for Urban Renaissance, since a policy of cultural development should :

12.1. create suitable conditions for decentralised and pluralistic cultural democracy ;

12.2. appeal to all citizens and all social strata including the most disadvantaged ;

12.3. encourage the active, regular participation of associations and individuals ;

12.4. integrate the cultural policy of local authorities within a comprehensive regional or national cultural development policy ;

12.5. endeavour to improve the quality of life for everyone ;

13. Taking the view that it is essential to relate cultural development in towns, in the same way as economic and social activities, to planning and evaluation ;

14. Noting that cultural budgets are generally given secondary consideration in the general budget of towns more concerned with economic and social problems, and convinced that this imbalance must be remedied ;

15. Being of the opinion that the European Campaign for Urban Renaissance should constitute the starting-point of a broader project, and that political support should be given to the Council for Cultural Co-operation project concerning cultural development in towns,

16. Calls upon the governments and parliaments of member states :

16.1. to put into practice the principles enunciated by the European Campaign for Urban Renaissance in the framework of their new policies at national, regional or local level ;

16.2. to take due account of Recommendation No. R (81) 18 of the Committee of Ministers to member states, concerning participation at municipal level ;

17. Intends to follow attentively the progress of the project on "Cultural development policies in towns" and to give its full support to the closing conference to be held in Bremen in 1983.