Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 835 (1985)[1]

Situation in Latin America

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having taken note of its Political Affairs Committee's report on the situation in Latin America (Doc. 5269) and its addenda ;

2. Referring to its Resolutions 722 (1980) and 774 (1982), and to Resolution 814 (1984), on cultural relations between Europe and Latin America, and to its Recommendation 991 (1984), on economic relations between Europe and Latin America ;

3. Reaffirming its support for the democratic governments and social and political forces of Latin America which are striving to foster peace, the democratically established legal and social order, social and economic progress and to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms ;

4. Stressing once again the importance of the Andean Pact as a driving force of economic and political integration, and reaffirming its wish to deepen its relations with its Parliament to which it feels linked by shared values ;

5. Welcoming the adoption by the Andean Parliament, at its extraordinary session in December 1984, of a recommendation on the Strasbourg Conference in which it decided in favour of organising a conference on aspects of parliamentary democracy as a political system ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in America and in Europe ;

6. Welcoming the initiative of the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Ten plus Spain and Portugal, meeting in Costa Rica, demonstrating Europe's interest in the situation of crisis in Central America and her desire to play a role in favour of peace, democracy and social progress in this region ;

7. Expressing its support for the determination of the freely elected Government of Argentina to establish democracy, to set the economy to rights and to bring to trial those responsible for atrocities previously committed ;

8. Wishing that, after the overthrow of the junta in Argentina, this example may exert a beneficial influence, which has already made itself felt in Uruguay and Brazil, where political and social forces are calling for the acceleration of a process of democratisation, in Chile and Paraguay, where dictatorships are repressing a population smarting under injustice and economic disruption ;

9. Cherishing the hope that no external pressure will hold back the necessary development of the countries of Latin America, and that they will thus manage to build durable pluralist democracies on the basis of an agreement among the democratic forces in these nations, enjoying the support of the whole international democratic community ;

10. Deeply concerned by the seriousness of human rights violations in certain countries, particularly in Guatemala, due, among other things, to the number of assassinations and the scale of forced displacement of populations, and in Cuba where fundamental freedoms continue to be ignored, a situation which is not excused by certain progress in other fields ;

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1. Assembly debate on 29 and 30 January 1985 (24th, 25th and 26th Sittings) (see Doc. 5269, report of the Political Affairs Committee). Text adopted by the Assembly on 30 January 1985 (26th Sitting).

11. Condemning the systematic use by military governments and other totalitarian regimes in the sub-continent of brutal methods of repression, including torture, murder and forced disappearances ;

12. Deploring the obstructions encountered by trade union movements in many Latin American countries and by the repression to which they are sometimes subjected ;

13. Deploring the absence of full religious freedom in certain countries ;

14. Expressing its support for all the Indian movements endeavouring to assert their ethnic and cultural identity in the face of discrimination, humiliations and political and social exclusion which they suffer in certain countries ;

15. Alarmed by the worsening economic situation which condemns millions throughout Latin America to famine and destitution ;

16. Convinced that the roots of this situation often lie in unjust social structures which enable a local oligarchy to exploit the masses ;

17. Stressing that the struggle against underdevelopment is an important condition for the consolidation of democracy in these countries ;

18. Aware that the indebtedness of the Latin American countries is an obstacle to their economic recovery and a threat to the stability of the international financial system ;

19. Recalling its Resolution 799, on the situation in Central America, and noting that the situation carries the risk that conflicts might spread, but also the hope of an intensification of negotiations and peace efforts ;

20. Stressing the need for the countries of the region to seek for themselves peaceful negotiated solutions, and stressing also the negative role of foreign interventions which have aggravated tensions ;

21. Convinced, however, that no lasting solution to the problem of peace in the region can be achieved without the active contribution of the United States and of democratic Europe,

22. Urges the governments of Council of Europe member states :

a. to co-operate with the democratic states of Latin America with a view to helping them :

1. develop their political, economic and cultural relations in order to promote and consolidate pluralist democracy and respect for human rights everywhere ;

2. realise the development and economic security threatened by debt, to which they aspire, by devising and implementing a common strategy comprising short-term remedies (rescheduling of debts and fixing a ceiling to interest rates) and basic reforms in the context of North-South relations and the new world economic order ;

b. to implement, if possible with the participation of the United States and Canada, a plan drawn up in concertation with the countries concerned, for the socio-economic development of the region ;

c. to supply emergency food aid to the peoples of Latin America in great need ;

d. to make an effort, in their bilateral and multilateral relations with the dictatorial regimes of Latin America, to influence these governments with a view to promoting the democratic evolution to which their peoples aspire ;

e. to give shelter to the nationals of authoritarian states who are forced to seek asylum because of their democratic convictions, and to establish procedures ensuring that these refugees can return to their countries when a democratic regime is re-established ;

f. to support energetically efforts by the Contadora group of countries to obtain the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Central America, the application of a set of measures designed to guarantee the security of all states in the region and respect for the right of their peoples to determine their own future, and the implementation of a regional economic programme based on non-discriminatory development assistance and free of all political conditions or trade-offs ;

g. to support the negotiations already started for the establishment of peace in El Salvador in order to achieve an immediate cease-fire ;

h. to appeal to the Government of Nicaragua to make an effort, after the general elections which took place in that country on 4 November last, to keep in political life the forces which did not participate in these elections. With a view to assuring pacification and national reconciliation, the representative political forces, even if they are extra-parliamentary, should have the possibility to be associated with the drawing up of a constitution ;

23. Decides to set itself the goal, in its own external relations as well as in national parliaments, of promoting the principles contained in this resolution and to work for increased co-operation between Europe and Latin America in the political, economic and cultural fields ;

24. Invites the governments of the member states of the Council of Europe to co-operate with the Spanish Government in preparing for the five hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus, which will take place on 12 December 1992, in order that this commemoration may be of benefit to the ties uniting the two continents.