Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**Resolution 909 (1988)**[1]

# East-West relations (General policy of the Council of Europe)

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Recalling its past work on East-West relations, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), and its Resolution 886 which noted, in October 1987, that the Council of Europe was ‘‘for the first time, accepted as an interlocutor by all participants in the CSCE" ;

2. Welcoming the fact that the dialogue has been intensified by a second meeting in Vienna with the delegations to the ongoing CSCE review meeting of all non-member states (March), talks in Strasbourg between the enlarged Bureau and delegations from the Supreme Soviet (April) and the Romanian Grand National Assembly (June), and the visit to Strasbourg of Mr Horn, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Hungary (May), and noting that the President of the Assembly, who visited Yugoslavia with an Assembly delegation in April, will be going to Warsaw in November at the invitation of the Speaker of the Sejm (Parliament) after an official visit to that country by the Secretary General last March ;

3. Welcoming Mr Gorbachev's evident desire to carry out reforms in the Soviet system, which arouses hope that the long process commenced at the19th General Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union may overcome all obstacles and lead to the full achievement of the goals pursued ;

4. Noting the reply by the Committee of Ministers to Assembly Recommendation 1050 to the effect ‘‘that co-operation with East European countries should make it possible to advance the implementation of the commitments subscribed to in the framework of the CSCE and that the Council of Europe should seek to promote awareness of Europe's identity while respecting its own statutory principles" ;

5. Recalling that the interparliamentary contacts established by the Assembly have given rise :

   5.1. as far as the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union is concerned, to indicative long-term proposals for co-operation, listed under six headings (general, political, environment, culture and education, health and legal) ;

   5.2. as far as Romania is concerned, to a press communiqué, issued by the Political Affairs Committee on 27 June in Athens, expressing deep concern at the restructuring of villages in that country and the hope that, after the visit of the Romanian delegation to Strasbourg, ‘‘the situation of the cohabiting nationalities in Romania will steadily improve in conformity with the ideals of the Council of Europe" ;

6. Recognising that the four summit meetings between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev in Geneva, Washington, Reykjavik and Moscow have greatly helped to ease the East-West climate, notably by facilitating the agreement of December 1987 on intermediate-range nuclear forces and that of April 1988 on the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan ;

7. Convinced of the need to urge the United States and the Soviet Union to be much more determined to take advantage of the CSCE machinery in order to make asymmetrical, but substantial, cut-backs in their conventional forces ;

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1. Assembly debate on 6 October 1988 (14th Sitting) (see Doc. 5937Doc. 5937, report of the Political Affairs Committee, Rapporteur : Mrs Lalumière; and Doc. 5958, opinion of the Committee on Relations with European Non-Member Countries, Rapporteur :Mrs Palacio). Text adopted by the Assembly on 6 October 1988 (14th Sitting).

8. Taking note of the fact that, following the normalisation of relations between the European Community and Comecon (CMEA), the European Parliament debated a resolution on political relations between the European Community and the Soviet Union, on 14 September 1988 (Rapporteur :Mr Hänsch), where it ‘‘recognises a number of positive signs of a willingness to effect a substantial improvement in relations with the Community and to overcome the Soviet Union's self-imposed isolation from the world economy" ;

9. Recalling that the report of the Colombo Commission of June l986 stressed ‘‘the wider functions of the Council of Europe" (except defence) as distinct from the specific power of other European organisations and the need for ‘‘establishing closer working relations between all the organisations active in Europe" and ‘‘ensuring better co-ordination of their programmes of activities" ;

10. Convinced that the Council of Europe's contribution to the CSCE should give priority to the fields dealt with in the third basket of the Helsinki Final Act (culture, education, youth, human rights), not forgetting the chapter on co-operation in the Mediterranean ;

11. Concurring with the European Parliament that, particularly in the light of the special Soviet Communist Party Conference held at the end of June in Moscow, the aim of the incipient political reforms is ‘‘to overcome the ossification of the system by opening up society, promoting private initiatives and individual responsibility, greater democratic participation in the appointment of leaders in the party (...) and greater transparency and openness in public life and greater scope for freedom of opinion", although this new departure does not call into question Marxist-Leninist objectives and principles,

12. Refers again to its Resolution 836 (1985) on relations between Europe and the United States of America (General policy of the Council of Europe), in which the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe decided to deepen the dialogue with the United States Congress and Administration on questions of mutual interest, especially East-West relations ;

13. Welcomes current developments in Hungary, especially in the field of the free movement of persons, in that it has abolished compulsory visas for several Council of Europe states, including Austria and Sweden ;

14. Is still concerned about the fate of minorities in certain countries, in particular the minorities in Romania, of great topicality today, which is in flagrant breach of human rights and the principles of the Helsinki Act, Chapter VII ;

15. Congratulates Austria, the country hosting the CSCE review meeting, and the other neutral andnon-aligned countries for their efforts to secure the adoption of a substantial, balanced closing document, in particular the tabling of a draft compromise on 13 May 1988 ;

16. Considers it essential that the control mechanism accepted in the autumn of 1986 at the Stockholm Conference on security and confidence-building measures and disarmament in Europe (CDE) be matched by similar machinery to ensure the respect of undertakings relating to human rights ;

17. Regrets that the Vienna review meeting is being frustrated by the Romanian delegation which has stated its opposition to any such machinery ;

18. Notes with satisfaction that the joint working party (Council of Europe/European Community), established on a proposal from the European Parliament, approved on 10 March 1988 a draft charter for a European foundation for East European studies, the implementation of which is currently being examined by the European Commission ;

19. Resolves to pursue and intensify its existing contacts with the European non-member countries, in order to establish effective structures and machinery for dialogue aimed at better mutual knowledge and co-operation towards détente and European unification in the broadest sense ;

20. Invites the Committee of Ministers to maintain the new momentum of pan-European relations :

20.1. by examining favourably (subject to the principles referred to in paragraph 4 above) any request from a non-member state to accede to a European convention open to external participation ;

20.2. by considering the possibility of sending an official of the Council of Europe Secretariat to any CSCE meeting dealing with culture, because of the Council of Europe's vocation to promote Europe's cultural identity ;

21. Calls upon the governments of member states to give practical expression to their solidarity with Austria by helping it to cope with the influx of refugees from Eastern Europe ;

22. Expresses its great satisfaction at the holding of the first meeting of youth leaders from East and West with parliamentarians from Western Europe and representatives of the Assemblies of Eastern Europe, and its desire to maintain regular contacts of this kind with a view to promoting relations in all fields ;

23. Decides to seek the necessary financial provision for intensified co-operation with Eastern Europe in the light of the new requirements and priorities which it will specify as a matter of urgency.