Resolution 929 (1989)[1]

Future of whaling

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Aware of the importance of healthy whale stocks in the marine ecosystem, and convinced that Council of Europe member states have an essential contribution to make in ensuring their future ;

2. Recalling Assembly Recommendation 798 (1977) on the conservation of the living resources of the seas, and Resolution 674 (1978) on the conservation of the living resources in the North-East Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea, in which the need for a ‘‘multi-species" approach in this area was particularly stressed ;

3. Anxious that whale stocks be given sufficient attention - alongside fish and other living marine resources - as policies affecting the understanding, management and exploitation of marine resources are being shaped, particularly now that many countries are increasing their marine and offshore activities ;

4. Recognising that the International Whaling Commission (IWC) has played an important role in furthering international agreement on the proper management and conservation of whales, and in favour of an increased understanding of whale species and their role in the marine ecosystem ;

5. Urging all the governments concerned to strictly adhere to the decisions of the IWC and to adopt such conservation policies as are necessary ;

6. Recognising that research whaling should only be undertaken if the Scientific Committee of the IWC can be satisfied that it would not endanger the relevant whale stocks and that it would provide information of major value ;

7. Aware, however, that it may become necessary at some time in the future to reconsider the position in order to secure the maintenance of a balanced marine ecosystem,

8. Calls on the governments of the Council of Europe member states :

8.1. to increase their support in favour of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), in order to allow it most clearly to fulfil the functions statutorily attributed to it ;

8.2. to emphasise and strengthen the work of the Scientific Committee of the IWC, in order to improve its basis for recommendations and enhance its role in decision-making ;

8.3. to initiate or, as the case may be, strengthen research programmes that do not involve the slaughter of whales, but which are aimed at gaining better knowledge about different whale populations and their role in the marine ecosystem, based on co-operation between member states and in collaboration with the IWC ;

8.4. to respect the 1982 decision of the IWC on a moratorium on all quotas in commercial whaling from 1986 to 1990, to seek a continued moratorium after 1990 if recommended by the Scientific Committee of the IWC, and in particular to use their influence in convincing all other nations, members or not of the IWC, to do the same ;

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1. Assembly debate on 27 September 1989 (19th Sitting) (see Doc. 6093, report of the Committee on Agriculture, Rapporteurs : Mr Kjartan Johannsson and Lord Kinnoull). Text adopted by the Assembly on 27 September 1989 (19th Sitting).

8.5. to draw up policies, under the auspices of the IWC, as regards possible future catches of certain non-threatened whale species - on the understanding that these are based on a sound assessment of essential characteristics of stocks, that they do not endanger the marine ecosystem equilibrium, that they take the needs and interests of aboriginal whaling populations into due account, that catches for scientific purposes which involve the killing of whales are minimised, and that sanctions are imposed on those countries which flagrantly violate these policies ;

8.6. to press for the powers of the IWC to be extended to small cetaceans (dolphin and porpoise species), with the objective of prohibiting their killing.