Resolution 983 (1992)[1]

Concerted European preparation of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Brazil, June 1992)

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly refers to the motion for a resolution tabled in September 1991 on the need fora concerted European preparation of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Doc. 6509).

2. The scope of this conference covers a field far wider than its title may indicate. In fact, it is looked upon as a world summit where a diversity of problems, ranging from climate change to sustainable development and technology transfer will be discussed, taking a global approach with a view to finding answers to the problems of the planet into the next century.

3. It must be recognised, however, that at the time of tabling that motion the preparatory process was almost in its final stages and very few elements were left for a possible concerted European preparation of this conference.

4. On the other hand a common European position will be greatly needed in the process of follow-up to be given to the recommendations which will be adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) next June.

5. It is obvious that an important part of the Action Programme (‘‘Agenda 21", etc.) will fall under the responsibility of individual national governments, but another important portion will, no doubt, be entrusted to regional organisations for implementation.

6. In this respect the role of the Council of Europe, as a regional organisation in the spirit of the United Nations Charter, will have to be underlined and its representation at the Rio de Janeiro Conference ensured on the intergovernmental as well as the parliamentary level.

7. The long-lasting experience of the Council of Europe in the field of environmental protection, going back to the early 1960s, the multiple levelsof approach (ministerial, parliamentarian, local and regional authorities) and the very flexible methods of work (consensus finding, recommendations, charters, conventions) grant this organisation a unique position in the European context for formulating and implementing a comprehensive environment policy.

8. The Parliamentary Assembly in particular can play a truly pan-European role in formulating such a policy thanks to its very flexible system of special guest status.

9. The outcome of the 1st pan-European Parliamentary Conference on the Protection of East-West Environment held in Vienna in October 1990 has shown the common concern, the community of views and the positive feedback into the national decision-making process of such discussions.

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1. Assembly debate on 7 May 1992 (7th Sitting) (seeDoc. 6600, report of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, Rapporteur : Mr Bondevik ;Doc. 6608, opinion of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, Rapporteur : Mrs Verspaget ; andDoc. 6611, opinion of the Committee on Science and Technology, Rapporteur : Mr Tiuri). Text adopted by the Assembly on 7 May 1992 (7th Sitting).

10. The regular holding of debates on specific environmental matters and on general policy trends at national and international levels offers members of the Parliamentary Assembly and its special guests the unique opportunity to monitor the actual state of the environment and the political trends in these matters, facilitating furthermore the formulation of common solutions which may be implemented at national levels.

11. Part of these solutions and action plans elaborated by the Assembly are integrated in the intergovernmental work of the Council of Europe ; other proposals are directed at other international organisations such as OECD, ECMT and the European Community.

12. The Assembly underlines the dramatic ecological consequences of uncontrolled population growth, namely degradation of land, deforestation and water shortages. It is therefore necessary to integrate population programmes in environmental policies.

13. For these reasons the Assembly invites all European organisations, including those from the United Nations family having special responsibilities in the European area, to pay close attention to the outcome of the Rio Conference and to consider any possible follow-up in close concertation with the other regional organisations interested in these matters.

14. The Assembly also invites the intergovernmental side of the Council of Europe to give an active follow-up to the Rio Conference in the areas where its work has proved to be effective, such as nature and wildlife protection, but also in the field of information and creating awareness, and in that of preparing environmental laws.

15. The Assembly is conscious of the need for close co-operation and concertation with other European organisations active in this field, such as the Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva), the CSCE, OECD, the Nordic Council and the European Community, and is willing to serve as a platform for such co-operation.

16. The Assembly invites all member states to give their full support to the signing of the international Convention on Climate Change.

17. The Assembly is deeply convinced that the Rio Conference will have an important impact on the future of the North-South dialogue, and it therefore appeals to all industrialised countries to approach in a constructive way all questions related to funding of national and global environmental projects, in particular through the mechanism of the Green Funds (Global Environmental Facilities).

18. The Assembly furthermore calls on its member states, as well as other industrialised countries, to adhere to the following principles when assisting developing countries in the protection of their environment :

18.1. to form international information networks for the spread of environmentally sound technologies in all economic sectors to developing countries, and to assist them in their research efforts ;

18.2. in particular, to facilitate the acquisition by developing countries of patents and licences aiding their economic development, while taking full account of the need to protect intellectual property ;

18.3. to set an example for the rest of the world by curbing pollution by their major industries, in particular carbon dioxide pollution ;

18.4. to strengthen the competence of the United Nations in the environmental field, so as to enable it to take a leading role in the implementation of the decisions reached by the Rio de Janeiro Conference ;

18.5. to achieve full integration of economic and environmental policies, so that economic growth objectives are not only compatible with environmental goals but may actively contribute to their realisation ;

18.6. to investigate all possibilities, as indicated above, to find new and additional financial resources for the protection of the global environment, to implement the ‘‘Agenda 21" to be concluded at the Rio Conference.