Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1133 (1997)[1]

Situation in Albania

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly notes the final report by the OSCE Special Co-ordinator, Catherine Lalumière, the Head of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Delegation, Lord Russell-Johnston, and the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr Javier Ruperez, declaring the parliamentary elections in Albania acceptable, given the prevailing circumstances.

2. The combined effort and close co-operation between the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the European Union generated the necessary political pressure on the Albanian political forces to hold the elections. It is indispensable that this co-operation continue also after the elections. The international response to the situation in Albania provides a useful lesson for dealing with similar crises in the future.

3. The large number of weapons still held illegally in private hands and the precarious economic and social conditions constitute a permanent threat to the stability of the country. This situation continues to encourage illegal emigration to neighbouring countries and complicates the return of those who left the country during the crisis.

4. The Assembly strongly condemns the recent shooting incident in the Albanian Parliament and believes that an inquiry should be held into the circumstances and consequences of the recent attack on a member of the Albanian Parliament. This incident demonstrates that the political situation remains highly confrontational. The Assembly therefore urges government and opposition to work together in a spirit of national reconciliation. This is the elementary pre-condition for democracy and only thus can assistance by the international community be continued and be effective.

5. The necessary new constitution will only contribute to political and institutional stability if based on a wide political consensus, both on substance and on procedure, between the main political forces. Public information and debate are equally essential. The preparatory parliamentary work thus requires genuine political dialogue. While the government should not impose deadlines, the Democratic Party should make a constructive contribution.

6. The Albanian Government should make further progress towards the fulfilling of commitments and obligations towards the Council of Europe. In particular, it should ensure :

a. proper security throughout the country, notably by reorganising the police and the armed forces, recovering illegally held weapons, and breaking up criminal gangs;

b. the normal functioning of regularly elected local and regional authorities;

c. full freedom of the media, including unimpeded distribution of the press throughout the country, non-discriminatory public advertising and promotion of pluralism of the press, including also through preferential tax rates;

d. that recruitment and appointments to the civil service, police and armed forces are based on merit, assessed on the basis of objective and transparent criteria;

---

1. Assembly debate on 24 September 1997 (28th Sitting) (see Doc. 7892, report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur : Mr Van der Linden). Text adopted by the Assembly on 24 September 1997 (28th Sitting).

e. the compatibility of new legislation, including laws recently adopted, such as that on the High Council of Justice, with the standards and principles of the Council of Europe, by seeking and implementing the opinion of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission) or other Council of Europe experts as appropriate.

7. The Democratic Party should participate fully and constructively in the work of the parliament, also by taking up the official positions it was accorded.

8. The Assembly welcomes the conclusions of the International Conference on Albania (Rome, 31 July 1997) and the priorities identified by the conference for further action by the international community. These priorities include a number of areas in which the Council of Europe has a considerable expertise and experience and in which a long-standing co-operation with Albania already exists. The Assembly considers that this concerted international action should continue in a pragmatic and flexible way, based on complementarity and most effective use of existing assistance programmes and activities. It is therefore essential that the Council of Europe be represented at the highest level at the ministerial conference scheduled to take place in Rome this autumn.

9. The Assembly welcomes the Secretary General's priority programme of action for co-operation with Albania, such as the setting-up of a school of magistrates, expert assistance with legislation, police and prison staff training and support for civil society in the human rights field. It encourages the setting-up of a new joint assistance programme with the European Commission.

10. The Assembly resolves to continue to monitor closely the situation in Albania, as requested by both government and opposition, and to pursue political dialogue with Albanian political forces, in particular with the new Albanian parliamentary delegation to the Assembly.

11. It reiterates its readiness to provide assistance to the Albanian Parliament in the framework of the interparliamentary co-operation programme. In particular, the Assembly is well placed to make a specific, political, contribution towards constitutional consensus-building.