



Resolution 1136 (1997)¹

European partnership of national parliaments within the Parliamentary Assembly

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Representative democracy is facing enormous challenges from globalisation and the development of new technologies, and national parliaments will have to adapt if they wish to remain at the heart of political debate and thus ensure greater citizen involvement in public affairs.
2. Representative democracy is also suffering from a weakening of national sovereignty, due both to the reduction of state powers as a result of the integration of the member countries of the European Union and, more generally, to the constraints arising from international agreements, such as those produced by the World Trade Organisation.
3. Among the possible solutions to the imbalances affecting the functioning of pluralist democracies, the restoration of the powers of national parliaments is plainly essential.
4. However, if they are to be successful, efforts at national level to counter the effects of the challenges facing representative democracy must be integrated into a process of European co-operation that will create tangible solidarity between national parliaments.
5. The most suitable framework for such co-operation is quite obviously the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which is part of an institution founded fifty years ago to foster the political integration of the European continent, based on European civil society and a new European democracy. The framework for this political project was to have been a European constitution drafted by the Parliamentary Assembly.
6. This task of political integration is all the more crucial today, now that the Council of Europe includes almost all of the countries in our continent and the European Union is focusing its efforts on economic and monetary union, while the Western European Union is stepping up its work in the field of defence.
7. In order to be effective, however, co-operation demands vigorous efforts from the national delegations in support of the work of the Council of Europe in general, and of the Assembly in particular.
8. In this connection, it must be pointed out that the texts adopted by the Assembly are not receiving satisfactory follow-up at present. There are various reasons for this, including, for instance, the difficulties involved in establishing the actual relevance of the issues of European significance dealt with by the Assembly to issues of topical interest in the forty member countries, as well as those involved in devising texts for adoption by the Assembly, whose form and content can be transposed into national contexts.
9. Alongside follow-up to the Assembly's work, the efforts by the Committee on Parliamentary and Public Relations to involve parliamentarians who are not members of national delegations in its activities concerning the functioning of democratic institutions do much to strengthen the links between national parliaments.

1. Assembly debate on 26 September 1997 (32nd Sitting) (see [Doc. 7903](#), report of the Committee on Parliamentary and Public Relations, rapporteur: Mr Speroni). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26 September 1997 (32nd Sitting).



10. The Assembly therefore invites :

a. the Committee on Parliamentary and Public Relations :

1. to review periodically, in conjunction with the national delegations, the latest developments in national parliamentary activities, and to select texts not only according to the importance of the European issues covered but also according to their relevance to national situations;
2. to reconsider the present format of the texts submitted to the Assembly for adoption so that they can be more easily adapted to national situations;
3. to develop, on the basis of its studies concerning the operation of democratic institutions, interparliamentary co-operation that will consolidate representative democracy in the member states and meet the technical assistance requirements of the new democracies in central and eastern Europe;
4. to consider ways of setting up, between the Assembly's committees and the committees of the national parliaments, co-operation enabling, in particular, the committees of those national parliaments to express their opinions;

b. the national delegations :

1. to submit the resolutions and recommendations adopted by the Assembly to the appropriate national parliamentary committees, except, of course, for texts deemed to have been dated by events occurring shortly after their adoption;
2. to put regular written or oral questions to their governments about follow-up to the activities of the Council of Europe;
3. to take steps to ensure that the conventions adopted by the Committee of Ministers are submitted to the appropriate national parliamentary committee by a member of the relevant Assembly committee before they are ratified in plenary sittings;
4. if necessary, to draft parliamentary bills to speed up the signing or ratification of Council of Europe conventions;
5. to promote plenary debates on reports concerning the Council of Europe's activities prepared either by the appropriate parliamentary committee or by their country's ministry for foreign affairs;
6. to prepare an annual report for the Committee on Parliamentary and Public Relations on the follow-up given in national parliaments to the work of the Council of Europe;
7. to take steps in their respective parliaments aimed at establishing the aforementioned co-operation;
8. to contribute to the celebrations commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Council of Europe (5 May 1999) by implementing a programme of initiatives at national level to be co-ordinated by the Committee on Parliamentary and Public Relations.