Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1149 (1998)[1]

Sustainable development in the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly has long given attention to the problems of co-operation and sustainable development in the Mediterranean, particularly through the conferences of Mediterranean regions held in co-operation with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, the most recent of which, the fourth, took place in Cyprus in October 1995.

2. It is gratifying to note that, through the Euro-Mediterranean Conference, held in Barcelona in November 1995, the European Union decided to intensify co-operation in the Mediterranean area and initiated a very large-scale partnership with those Mediterranean countries which are not members of the Union.

3. Where the Council of Europe is concerned, the enlargement which began after 1989 resulted in the accession to the Organisation of five countries from the Mediterranean basin: Bulgaria in 1992, Slovenia in 1993, Albania and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" in 1995, and Croatia in 1996.

4. Furthermore, bearing in mind the close relationship which exists between the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins, especially where the environment is concerned, the fact that all the states of the Black Sea basin are either members or special guests of the Assembly is a significant new element. As a result, the Council of Europe is in an ideal position to deal with the problems affecting both basins.

5. What is more, the political importance of co-operation among local and regional authorities in recent times clearly shows the contribution which local and regional authorities can make to sustainable development, stability and peace. It nevertheless has to be said that the, sometimes enormous, differences between the structures of local and regional authorities are an obstacle to effective dialogue and co-operation.

6. In this context, in line with the views put forward in Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1359 (1998) on the same subject, the Assembly expresses its conviction that interparliamentary dialogue and co-operation help to make available, not only to the countries adjacent to the Black Sea, but also to those on the southern shore of the Mediterranean basin, the Council of Europe's treaties and co-operation mechanisms which can help to solve the region's problems.

7. The Parliamentary Assembly, which has always supported and encouraged the activity of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in this field, takes the view that joint activities would make it possible to turn to advantage the complementary nature of the activity of both parliamentary bodies.

8. In addition, it is sure that a strategy of interparliamentary dialogue encompassing all the countries of both basins, with which various local and regional authorities from the area would be associated, would enable those responsible for legislation and those who hold elective office in both basins to pool their experience and to introduce common strategies.

1. Assembly debate on 30 January 1998 (8th Sitting) (see Doc. 7977, report of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, rapporteur: Mr Recoder). Text adopted by the Assembly on 30 January 1998 (8th Sitting).

9. The Assembly welcomes the fact that one of the aims of the 5th Conference of Mediterranean Regions, to be held in Montpellier in October 1998, will be precisely that of strengthening the machinery, and going into more detail about the subjects, which would enable this interparliamentary and inter-authority dialogue to be set up in the field of sustainable development.

10. Consequently, the Parliamentary Assembly:

10.1. believes that it would be useful for consideration to be given, in respect of the subjects which most lend themselves thereto, such as the environment, regional policy, culture, migration, and so on, to opening certain committee meetings to participation by the equivalent committees of the parliaments of non-member states from the Mediterranean basin;

10.2. decides to request the Inter-Parliamentary Union to study, in co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the scope for co-operation between the two assemblies, and, in particular, to consider associating representatives of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe and of the local authorities of the countries on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean with certain activities which are part of the CSCM process (Conferences on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean);

10.3. in the same spirit, wishes to develop its co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly for Black Sea Economic Co-operation (PABSEC);

10.4. supports the Rhodes Declaration, adopted on 15 April 1997, by young parliamentarians of the eastern Mediterranean region, calls for a continuous dialogue between parliamentarians of the whole Mediterranean and Black Sea basins and decides to pursue its active involvement in this process through its competent committees;

10.5. shares the views expressed by the joint Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe and Parliamentary Assembly group in charge of organising the forthcoming Conference of Mediterranean Regions, that it would be useful to change the title of these conferences to Conferences on Interparliamentary and Inter-regional Co-operation in the Mediterranean and Black Sea Basins;

10.6. asks the 5th Conference of Mediterranean Regions to adopt a charter on the management of the Mediterranean-Black Sea area in the form of a socio-economic and environmental development plan;

11. The Assembly invites the member states of the Council of Europe and of the European Union:

11.1. to encourage research into more efficient shipping systems in terms of energy consumption, environmental protection, speed, and operational reliability, while supporting the renewal of the port infrastructure and of related installations in the region;

11.2. to encourage research into renewable forms of marine energy (wind, currents, tides) which are important for the sustainable development of the basin countries, and to support the implementation of practical applications thereof;

11.3. to support the drawing up and implementation of measures and plans as part of a global approach in close collaboration with the programme for the protection of the Danube, which is the biggest polluter of the Black Sea;

11.4. to support environmental education programmes in the countries of the Mediterranean-Black Sea area because the guarantee of a favourable evolution regarding the protection of the environment depends on the relevant training of the younger generations;

11.5. to demand that international experts assess the environmental impact of all projects for transporting oil and gas (using pipelines or oil tankers) across the Black Sea;

11.6. to support the collaboration of all member states of the Council of Europe forming part of the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins with the European Union in the development of institutions, infrastructures and tourism.