Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1359 (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. In particular it is under its aegis, and in co-operation with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, that the conferences of Mediterranean regions are periodically held, the most recent of which, the fourth, took place in Cyprus in September 1995. These conferences have enabled priority areas for the development of the Mediterranean region to be identified, areas in which Council of Europe activity would be both welcome and beneficial.

2. Following the third conference, held in Taormina in April 1993, the Assembly adopted Recommendation 1249 on co-operation in the Mediterranean basin, in which it put forward several proposals as to the role which the Council of Europe might play in this region.

3. While wishing that the Committee of Ministers would show a stronger commitment in favour of a Council of Europe policy for the Mediterranean, the Assembly is gratified to note that a rapporteur group was set up in 1995 which – within that very Committee – is responsible for issues relating to co-operation in the Mediterranean area.

4. Furthermore, the Assembly welcomes the fact that the CLRAE has already taken practical action to follow up the conclusions of the fourth conference, holding a conference in Bari (Italy) entitled Local and Regional Authorities in the face of Mediterranean Migration: from Intolerance to Development, and takes note of the proposal of the Apulia region to host an inter-regional observatory of Mediterranean migration.

5. For its part, the European Union has decided to intensify co-operation in the Mediterranean area. Through the Euro-Mediterranean Conference, held in Barcelona in November 1995, it has initiated a very large-scale partnership with those Mediterranean countries which are not members of the Union.

6. 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. 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 Organisation is a significant new element. As a result, the Council of Europe is in an ideal position to deal with the problems, particularly those of a political nature, affecting both basins, by adopting a comprehensive approach to them.

7. As the Black Sea suffers from severe pollution, its vitality is in grave jeopardy. The proceedings of the 1st Interparliamentary Conference on the Environmental Protection of the Black Sea (Istanbul, 10-12 July 1996), jointly organised by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly for Black Sea Economic Co-operation (PABSEC), showed that the pollution generated upstream

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)

along the rivers which flow into the Black Sea affect – to some extent, at least – the Mediterranean basin. Hence the benefits of adopting a comprehensive approach to the issue, highlighting co-ordinated parliamentary activities intended to guarantee the sustainable development of both basins.

8. What is more, the Parliamentary Assembly has always supported and encouraged the aim of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to hold Conferences on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean (the CSCM process), and takes the view that joint activities in this field would make it possible to turn to advantage the complementary nature of the activity of both parliamentary bodies, and, in this same spirit, it also considers that co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly for Black Sea Economic Co-operation can make a useful contribution to furthering and deriving benefit from the interparliamentary dialogue in the region.

9. It expresses its wish that existing international instruments on protecting this region's environment, such as the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (Bucharest, 1992), the ministerial Declaration on the Protection of the Black Sea (Odessa, 1993) and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL, 1973 and 1978), be more widely ratified and effectively respected.

10. Consequently, concurring with the Final Declarations of the 4th Conference of Mediterranean Regions (Limassol, 16 and 17 October 1995) and the Interparliamentary Conference on the Environmental Protection of the Black Sea (Istanbul, 10-12 July 1996), the Assembly requests that the Committee of Ministers take follow-up action on the proposals therein, and, in particular:

10.1. promote the Organisation's values in the Mediterranean, in particular as regards sustainable development;

10.2. contribute, within the context of this programme, to the promotion of the co-operation programmes set up among local and regional authorities around the Mediterranean, particularly in respect of migratory movements;

10.3. strengthen the Mediterranean dimension of the dialogue under way within the framework of the Lisbon North-South Centre, particularly by opening, in Limassol (Cyprus), an office responsible for liaison with the countries of the southern shore of the Mediterranean and of the Middle East;

10.4. encourage and support bilateral and multilateral exchanges, in the sphere of water management, particularly at the level of local and regional authorities, relating to:

a. transfer of knowledge and pooling of experience;

b. training programmes for decision makers and managers;

c. the provision of information to, and raising of awareness among, those who hold elective office and representatives of users;

d. the raising of users' awareness and their education so as to enable them to participate in the management of their own resources, especially through non-governmental organisations;

e. the desalination of sea water for use in industry, agriculture and everyday life;

10.5. organise a "Mediterranean and Black Sea Protection Year", modelled on European Nature Conservation Year, in order to make people at every level aware of both seas' problems and to bring into play the ecological awareness of the peoples of every European country and of the countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean;

10.6. develop activities with a view to encouraging the Mediterranean countries which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern, 1979);

10.7. encourage the Mediterranean states which are not members of the Organisation to accede to the Convention for the Protection of Animals during International Transport and to the Partial Agreement on Major Disasters;

10.8. promote the signature and ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Civil Liability for Damage resulting from Activities Dangerous to the Environment (Lugano, 1993).