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

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1381 (1998)[1]

General policy: Council of Europe and OSCE

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly stresses that the OSCE and the Council of Europe share the same principles and objectives: stability and security in Europe, based on democracy and respect for human rights.

2. In addition to this close functional and geographical proximity and these shared objectives, all member states of the Council of Europe are also members of the OSCE.

3. The Assembly notes that, although sharing many of their objectives, the two organisations have different responsibilities as well as distinct structures, working methods and tools.

4. These differences stem from the mandates entrusted to the two organisations, as well as from their membership, with the Council of Europe being a true pan-European organisation and the OSCE a transatlantic one with membership that also includes central Asian nations.

5. The Assembly recognises the role played by the OSCE in the field of preventive diplomacy and crisis management. Its ability to respond rapidly, as well as the means put at its disposal by the participating countries to ensure a long-term presence in the country in question have been crucial in dealing with several recent regional crises in Europe.

6. The Council of Europe has a unique expertise in the field of human rights, democratic institutions and the rule of law. In recent years it has increasingly contributed to the structural prevention of conflict and to long-term political and institutional post-conflict rehabilitation.

7. The examples of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania show that a concerted and complementary effort of the two organisations, acting on an equal footing and in co-operation with other institutions of the international community, is most likely to guarantee that available resources will be used in the most efficient manner.

8. The Assembly welcomes the fact that, in carrying out its work in the field, the OSCE relies increasingly on the Council of Europe's instruments and expertise. Such practice should be encouraged and further developed, with due reference to the work done by the Council of Europe.

9. The Assembly considers that, while preserving their distinctive features, the two organisations should strengthen their co-operation and the co-ordination of their activities with a view to reinforcing their respective efficiency in the field. Consequently, the Assembly is opposed to proposals to merge the two organisations or their parliamentary assemblies, whose statutory roles, membership, structures and working methods reflect the differences existing between the Council of Europe and the OSCE as a whole.

10. The Assembly also considers that, in the light of their respective comparative advantages and specific accumulated expertise, a clearer allocation of tasks between the Council of Europe and the OSCE is necessary to avoid duplication. This is particularly important in the field of human rights, where duplicated efforts not only represent a waste of resources, but may also undermine the respect for existing human rights standards as laid down in the European Convention on Human Rights and the efficiency of mechanisms for their legal protection, in particular the European Court of Human Rights.

---

1. Assembly debate on 22 September 1998 (27th Sitting) (see Doc. 8187, report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Schieder). Text adopted by the Assembly on 22 September 1998 (27th Sitting).

11. The Assembly stresses the particular responsibility of the governments of the OSCE participating states (which are also members of the Council of Europe) to ensure, through better co-ordination at both national and international level, that each organisation is able to use its potential, resources and comparative advantages in the most efficient manner.

12. The Assembly stresses the particular responsibility of the governments of the OSCE participating states (which are also members of the Council of Europe) to ensure, through better co-ordination at both national and international level, that each organisation is able to use its potential, resources and comparative advantages in the most efficient manner.

13. The Assembly welcomes the existing contacts between the two organisations at all levels, and in particular the "2+2" meetings between the chairmen-in-office and the secretaries general of the two organisations. It considers that these meetings should be complemented by regular meetings at high official level, in order to better prepare the ministerial meetings and ensure their follow-up. The Assembly also reiterates its demand to be involved, together with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, in these meetings.

14. Consequently, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

14.1. include any question of immediate political importance and urgency in its meetings at ministerial level and increase the frequency of these meetings if necessary;

14.2. call on member states to improve co-ordination and exchange of information on Council of Europe and OSCE activities, at both national and international level, with a view to ensuring an optimal distribution of tasks and a more efficient allocation of resources between the two organisations;

14.3. implement the proposals on future relations between the Council of Europe and the OSCE put forward at the seminar held in The Hague on 5 June 1998 and in particular to:

a. establish regular contacts between the two organisations at high official level to prepare the "2+2" meetings and ensure their follow-up;

b. propose that the presidents of the two parliamentary assemblies be invited to these meetings;

c. enable the OSCE to make a better and more efficient use of the Council of Europe’s unique expertise in the field of human rights, democratic institutions and the rule of law;

d. establish a mechanism for the pooling and exchange of information, communication in emergency situations, and co-operation in planning and action;

e. establish a mechanism for co-operation between the relevant structures of the Council of Europe and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the OSCE Special Representative on the Freedom of the Media;

14.4. explore, on the basis of reciprocity, the possibility of a continuous Council of Europe presence at OSCE meetings, in the person of the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers.

15. The Assembly resolves to further develop co-operation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, notably with regard to the observation of elections, on the basis of a memorandum of understanding to be concluded between the two bodies.