



Resolution 1178 (1999)¹

European political project

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) notes that, since the end of the cold war, both co-operation and integration between European states have continuously increased in scope and geographic range. The Council of Europe and the European Union are the main institutions to carry forward this European political project.
2. The Parliamentary Assembly has consistently stressed the importance of people's participation in the European political project as an essential element of its democratic legitimacy.
3. Public support for the European political project cannot be automatically assumed. It should be considered as an objective to be achieved through the proper identification of citizens' genuine needs and interests, through regular, accessible and comprehensible information on all aspects of European co-operation and integration, and through consultations of citizens before major decisions on political and economic integration are taken.
4. Recognising the essential role of governments and international civil servants in the European political project, the Parliamentary Assembly calls for a greater involvement of elected people's representatives in the decision-making processes within this project, as an essential element of its transparency. Such involvement should be twofold, both on the European and on the national level.
5. The Parliamentary Assembly, bringing together parliamentarians from forty countries and representing over 850 million Europeans, is making a major contribution to the accountability of the European political project. Therefore, its role within the Council of Europe and in its relations with other European organisations should be further enhanced.
6. The Parliamentary Assembly stresses that, in spite of a growing transfer of competence to European level, national parliaments continue to serve as the principal setting for the exercise of democratic rights by citizens. Their role in the European political project should not be limited to formal approval of finalised agreements. Without regular, concrete and meaningful debate on European issues in national parliaments, the European political project risks being perceived by the public as alien to them, undemocratic and bureaucratised.
7. The Parliamentary Assembly calls on the parliaments of Council of Europe member states to:
 - 7.1. establish committees responsible for European affairs, where this has not yet been done, to follow, among other issues, the work of all European institutions;
 - 7.2. ensure that the chairman of their national delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) regularly reports to the aforementioned committee on the activities of the delegation and on the work of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Council of Europe as a whole;
 - 7.3. conduct regular debates on all relevant aspects of the European political project, with a view to producing policy guidelines for their governments;

1. Assembly debate on 26 January 1999 (2nd and 3rd Sittings) (see [Doc. 8285](#), report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mrs Ojuland). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26 January 1999 (3rd Sitting).



7.4. provide regular and comprehensive information to citizens on their activities concerning pan-European co-operation and integration;

7.5. encourage co-operation between the political parties represented in their parliament and their sister political groups in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and other European parliamentary bodies.

8. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) calls on all European states to recognise the importance of the parliamentary dimension of the European political project, and to provide the European parliamentary bodies with sufficient means and powers to ensure their efficient functioning.

9. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), concerned that a democratic deficit exists in the lack of direct involvement of national parliaments in the work of the European Parliament, urges the Bureau to consider how this can be remedied by the Assembly in the future architecture of Europe.