Recommendation 1420 (1999)[1]

Unesco

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly has pleasure in noting that Unesco, at the end of the second term in office of the current Director General, has achieved to a large extent the objectives he had fixed: improving Unesco's effectiveness, increasing the visibility of its activities and improving the organisation's credibility and operational capability. It has thus successfully survived the crisis of the 1980s.

2. As a consequence of its enlargement to central and eastern Europe, the Council of Europe now covers almost exactly the same geographical area as Unesco's European Region. The Assembly believes that it is time to update the 1952 co-operation agreement between the two organisations in order to better seize the increased opportunities for co-operation.

3. The aims of the two organisations are different but complementary and the Assembly believes that co-operation between them should be increased.

4. In this connection, the Assembly welcomes Unesco's decision to discontinue its Conference of European Ministers of Education and to contribute actively to the work of the Council of Europe's Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education. It also welcomes the decision not to draw up an international legal instrument on doping in sport since the Council of Europe's Anti-Doping Convention meets the requirements in this field and is open to signature by non-member states.

5. The Assembly is pleased that co-operation between the two organisations in the field of culture has led to the European contribution to Unesco's world report on culture and development being presented by the Council of Europe at the Stockholm Conference in 1996. It hopes that such co-operation will continue in the follow-up to the conference.

6. It also welcomes the signature in April 1997 of the Joint Council of Europe-Unesco Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, which will replace the two institutions' previous conventions in this field, and the merging of the Council of Europe's and Unesco's networks of national information centres on academic recognition and mobility.

7. The close co-operation between the Council of Europe and Unesco on reconstruction of the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be pursued as a matter of priority, also in other areas of Southeastern Europe and in particular in Kosovo.

8. The Assembly recognises Unesco's important role in the conduct and co-ordination of major international scientific research programmes.

9. It stresses the importance of the "World Conference on Science for the Twenty-First Century: a New Commitment" co-organised by Unesco and the International Council of Science in Budapest from 26 Juneto 1 July 1999, and it gives its full support to the documents adopted by the conference.

---

1. Assembly debate on 21 September 1999 (26th Sitting) (see Doc. 8501, report of the Committee on Culture and Education, rapporteur: Mr Varela i Serra; and Doc. 8530, opinion of the Committee on Science and Technology, rapporteur: Mr Lotz). Text adopted by the Assembly on 21 September 1999 (26th Sitting).

10. It recalls numerous examples of fruitful co-operation between Unesco and the Council of Europe in the field of science and technology, including notably the issues of science ethics and bioethics, as well as the achievement of gender equality, where the activities of the two organisations have been complementary and based upon shared values. In this context, it hopes to involve Unesco in the preparation of the Assembly conference on European science and technology (Conference 2000) to be held in Gdansk (Poland) in October 2000.

11. The Assembly stresses the need to ensure that parliamentarians participate more in Unesco's work at both national and European levels and encourages its members to contact national committees for Unesco in their respective countries.

12. It recalls and reasserts Order No. 276 (1968) according to which the Assembly should hold a debate before each Unesco General Conference.

13. It welcomes the United Kingdom's re-entry into Unesco and hopes that the United States will also rejoin the organisation as soon as possible.

14. Finally the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

14.1. agree to the setting up of a joint Council of Europe/Unesco task force to draft a new co-operation agreement between the two organisations to replace that of 1952;

14.2. consider how best the Council of Europe could be associated with Unesco's initiatives for an International Year of Culture of Peace (2000) and for an International Decade of Culture of Peace (2001-2010);

14.3. encourage co-operation at national level between Council of Europe governmental experts and national committees for Unesco;

14.4. develop co-operation with Unesco in the field of communication, in particular on the issues of intellectual property and public access to information.