Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1459 (2000)[1]

Action plan for the children of Kosovo

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its Recommendations 1376 (1998), 1397 (1999), 1400 (1999) and 1403 (1999) on the crisis in Kosovo and the situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and to its Recommendations 1385 (1998) and 1404 (1999) on the situation of Kosovo.

2. The Assembly states that the plight of children in war or in armed conflict is of priority concern and needs emergency action on the part of all member states, in co-operation with the Council of Europe and other relevant international organisations, such as Unicef, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and others.

3. The Assembly warns that prompt and efficient measures need to be taken to avoid the social exclusion of children of war, not least because socially excluded children as a rule become socially excluded adults.

4. The Assembly reiterates that all the children in the area are in an equal need of protection and assistance, regardless of their nationality or ethnicity.

5. The complicated ethnic situation in Kosovo and also in Montenegro gives rise to serious ethnic tensions, which are especially serious in Kosovo. They have a most adverse effect on children. The lives of Serb and Roma children in Kosovo are at risk, which is a matter of the utmost concern.

6. The Assembly notes with concern that humanitarian assistance has been provided unevenly and unfairly with regard to the needs of the different ethnic groups.

7. While supporting the pressure on the Yugoslav authorities to meet Council of Europe standards, the Assembly believes that modalities of humanitarian assistance should be reconsidered and reorganised in view of the current conditions.

8. The Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

8.1. urge the member states of the Council of Europe:

a. to review the system of economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the humanitarian assistance so as to secure the physical well-being of children;

b. to apply an even-handed approach in providing humanitarian aid, as well as to have special aid programmes for children;

c. to contribute to health and education programmes at all levels;

8.2. urge Unicef, the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (Unmik), the UNHCR and the ICRC:

a. to make sure that all security measures are taken to protect the lives of children in mined areas or against any acts of retribution, and to take special protection measures for Roma and Serb children in the area;

b. to make sure that children have decent housing and heating;

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1. Assembly debate on 7 April 2000 (16th Sitting) (see Doc. 8675, report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mrs Poptodorova; and Doc. 8703, opinion of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, rapporteur: Mrs Vermot-Mangold). Text adopted by the Assembly on 7 April2000 (16th Sitting).

c. to guarantee full and equal access to health services for children of all ethnic groups, and in particular to ensure medical and psychosocial care of child victims of the war; to carry out and monitor full-scale vaccinations of children;

d. to speed up the reconstruction of destroyed or damaged school facilities;

e. to provide access to educational and recreational programmes and facilities by implementing after-school programmes and developing a network of pre-school programmes;

f. to introduce programmes for children focusing on recreational activities, and in particular on sport considered as a means of integration;

g. to provide transportation to school in order to ease school access and stimulate education;

h. to provide access to health and safety information and health care facilities, which should include:

basic health screening for children with referrals as needed;

health promotion programmes on hygiene, safety and nutrition;

health education seminars for parents on children's health and the availability of health services for children;

i. to organise better pre-school and primary education; to provide teaching material and train teachers who will teach ethnic tolerance, peaceful values and democratic standards to pupils.

9. Finally, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers transmit the present recommendation to all the organisations concerned.