



Recommendation 1462 (2000)¹

Council of Europe Human Rights Prize

Parliamentary Assembly

1. In 1980 the Committee of Ministers adopted Resolution (80) 1 containing regulations on a European human rights prize. Under the terms of these regulations, the purpose of the prize is to reward individual or group activities which have made an exceptional contribution to the cause of human rights. It is an honorary prize awarded, in principle, every three years.
2. The prize was awarded for the first time in 1980, then every three years until 1998. The successive winners were the following: the International Commission of Jurists in 1980, the medical section of Amnesty International in 1983, Mr Raul Alfonsín jointly with Mr Broda in 1986, Mr Lech Walesa jointly with the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights in 1989, Mr F. Ermacora jointly with Médecins sans frontières in 1992, Mr S. Kovalyov jointly with Mr R. Wallenberg in 1995, and the Turkish Human Rights Foundation jointly with Ms Chiara Lubich (Focolari Movement, Italy) and the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ, Northern Ireland) in 1998. The next prize is due to be awarded in 2001.
3. In spite of the quality of the prize-winners, the Human Rights Prize has so far failed to bring the Council of Europe any significant media fallout. This has prompted the Assembly to consider the reasons for such lack of interest and what changes might be made to the regulations on the prize to enhance its contribution to awareness of the Council of Europe's efforts in the human rights field.
4. The Assembly notes, first of all, that the very name of the prize gives no indication that it is awarded by the Council of Europe, and considers that this should be made clear.
5. It further notes that one of the prize-winners, Mr Alfonsín, is not European and that another, Mr Wallenberg, is presumed dead. Bearing in mind in particular that the Council of Europe's membership has doubled since the inception of the prize, it suggests that in future nominations should be limited to living Europeans.
6. The regulations do not specify the procedure for submitting nominations. Some have been proposed by a single person, or even by the nominee in person. The Assembly considers that provision should be made for nominations to be submitted by a certain number of people, and that some information should be given to assist in appreciating the exceptional nature of the contribution to human rights. Furthermore, a nomination form should be used giving the name of the nominee, the names of the persons nominating the candidate, the names of those supporting the candidature and details of the candidate's exceptional contribution to human rights.
7. It has become accepted practice since the third attribution of the prize to bestow it jointly on two, or even three, candidates. This prevents attention from focusing on a single prestigious prize-winner, thereby diluting interest in the prize. It would be preferable to have a single winner.
8. Finally, the Assembly considers that a prize that included a sufficiently substantial sum of money would attract more attention.

1. See [Doc. 8725](#), report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, rapporteur: Mr Jaskiernia. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 17 May 2000.



9. Accordingly, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers make the following amendments to its Resolution (80) 1 containing regulations on a European human rights prize:
- 9.1. change the name of the prize to “the Council of Europe Human Rights Prize”;
 - 9.2. restrict candidatures to living Europeans or European non-governmental organisations, and award the prize to a single winner, either an individual or a non-governmental organisation;
 - 9.3. provide for each nomination to be submitted by at least five persons or legal entities, not including the nominee in person;
 - 9.4. require a description of the exceptional nature of the candidate's contribution to human rights;
 - 9.5. couple the award with a cash prize of 20 000 euros.
10. It further recommends that the Committee of Ministers award the prize in 2002, after revision of the regulations in the light of the above.