Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1480 (2000)[1]

Protection and management of the Danube basin

Parliamentary Assembly

1. In order to contribute to the introduction of a comprehensive and integrated approach to the various sectoral policies pursued to ensure the sustainable development of the Danube basin, the Parliamentary Assembly in 1997 adopted Recommendation 1330 on the draft European charter of the Danube basin.

2. This initiative was based on the fact that, given the new opportunities stemming from the opening up of the countries of central and eastern Europe, many decisions have been taken in respect of the Danube basin such as conventions, agreements and projects which generally relate to environmental protection, navigation issues, transfrontier water management, tourism, and so on.

3. The Assembly was convinced of the need to ensure that a comprehensive and integrated approach be taken with regard to all these activities and proposed a charter which, without competing with any existing initiatives, was intended solely to provide the appropriate framework for ongoing co-operation at all levels in the Danube region and to ensure the best possible co-ordination of any forms of specific co-operation that already exist.

4. It is regrettable that the Committee of Ministers took the view that it was not the Council of Europe's task to play a part in the search for solutions to problems concerning part of Europe, but that it was a task essentially for the countries concerned, and did not take this proposal any further.

5. Unfortunately, the already serious ecological situation of the Danube, combined with the difficulties involved in coping with the consequences of the recent disasters which have struck the river – whether it be the accidental discharges of dangerous substances resulting from bombings during the recent conflict in the former Yugoslavia, or the after-effects of the discharge of cyanide into a tributary of the Danube – have shown how useful the adoption of such a charter would have been and how its application would have been able to contribute to stability in the region.

6. The Assembly consequently recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

6.1. resume examination of the draft European charter of the Danube basin, with a view to giving consideration to its adoption in the near future;

6.2. ask a committee of experts, on which both the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe would be represented, to do any work needed to finalise the text;

6.3. be as open as possible to new environmental arguments and proposals by environmental NGOs with regard to sustainable development of the Danube basin region.

1. Assembly debate on 29 September 2000 (32nd Sitting) (see Doc. 8812, report of the Committee on Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, rapporteur: Mr Zierer). Text adopted by the Assembly on 29 September 2000 (32ndSitting).