Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1536 (2001)[1]

Progress of the Assembly's Monitoring Procedure (2000-2001)

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly, referring to its Resolution 1260 (2001), welcomes the Council of Europe's efforts to ensure that the obligations and commitments arising from states' membership of the Organisation are fully honoured at every level by all member states, and encourages initiatives aimed at bringing the Organisation's various monitoring procedures more closely into line.

2. The Assembly notes, however, that monitoring procedures have expanded rapidly in the Organisation, which could eventually pose a threat to the visibility, and thus the effectiveness of the work of the Organisation in the field of monitoring.

3. In this respect, it regrets in particular the decisions taken by the Committee of Ministers to undertake an ad hoc monitoring of democratic developments in certain countries on the basis of commitments expressly accepted by these states vis-à-vis the Council of Europe, and denounces the fact that this new mechanism duplicates the monitoring procedure of the Assembly.

4. The Assembly warns against the real risk of diverging assessments of states' honouring of their obligations and commitments by the Assembly on the one hand and the Committee of Ministers on the other hand, and against the real risk of creating confusion in the states concerned by a duplication of procedures.

5. The Assembly is convinced that more value should be attached and priority should be given to its monitoring procedure which has proved in most cases its effectiveness and efficiency. It welcomes the fact that the Committee of Ministers has taken into account in its programmes of activities and assistance the different proposals contained in the recommendations which the Assembly has adopted on the monitoring of obligations and commitments entered into by some member states.

6. It believes that consideration should be given to ways of increasing the impact on the activities of the Committee of Ministers of Assembly recommendations on the monitoring of obligations and commitments.

7. The Assembly notes that monitored countries cannot comply fully with the Council of Europe's principles and standards, and with the commitments they have subscribed to without long-term assistance from the Organisation.

8. However, by themselves the legal advice and assistance in carrying out constitutional, legislative or administrative reforms provided by the Organisation are clearly insufficient and are sometimes impeded by the slow pace of change of practices and attitudes.

9. The Assembly considers that nothing can be achieved in the long term without a policy of encouraging freedom of information and debate based on democratic principles in countries whose obligations and commitments are monitored, and that above all internal democracy must be developed in these countries.

1. Assembly debate on 26 September 2001 (29thSitting) (see Doc. 9198, report of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe, rapporteur: Mr Mota Amaral). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26 September 2001 (29th Sitting).

10. If countries are to make progress towards European democratic standards, the public must be aware of the existence of these standards, have a real understanding of the Council of Europe's work and activities to promote democracy and the respect for human rights, and be capable of understanding the problems existing in their countries and supporting the reform proposals that the Oranisation deems essential. Only better informed citizens could be genuine participants in the democratic debate.

11. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

11.1. avoid duplication, in its ad hoc monitoring of democratic developments in certain countries since their accession, with the monitoring procedure of the Parliamentary Assembly;

11.2. implement a policy of encouraging freedom of information and debate based on democratic principles in countries that are being monitored;

11.3. organise, in close liaison with all member states, the dissemination of information, particularly using modern communication methods such as radio, television and the Internet, setting out the obligations and commitments that stem from Council of Europe membership, and the reforms that remain to be completed if the Organisation's standards are to be met;

11.4. organise, in close liaison with all member states, broadcasts of information and political discussions to encourage democratic debate inside those countries; such programmes could also report on the activities of the Council of Europe and its Assembly in this field;

11.5. intensify its co-operation activities in the preparation and conduct of population censuses carried out by those states with a specific demographic situation, in view of the political importance of these operations.