Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1609 (2003)[1]

Positive experiences of autonomous regions as a source of inspiration for conflict resolution in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly considers that autonomous status must always provide the autonomous region concerned with a legislative body and an executive body democratically elected at local level. These bodies should have appropriate powers to pass laws and enforce them in the autonomous territory, while remaining subject to the law and prerogatives of central government, as defined in the draft European charter of regional self-government elaborated by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE).

2. The Assembly believes that the adoption of a European convention on this subject would enable states facing internal conflicts to find constitutional or legislative solutions which would allow them to preserve the state's sovereignty and territorial integrity, while respecting the rights of minorities.

3. This convention must stipulate that the exercise of powers devolved to autonomous entities shall comply with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, particularly the principles of equality, non-discrimination and secularism.

4. In this context, the proposals contained in the Helsinki Declaration on Regional Self-government (28 June 2002), which recognises the possibility of formulating basic concepts and principles applying to all systems of regional autonomy, merit the attention of the Council of Europe's member states.

5. The Assembly accordingly recommends that the Committee of Ministers prepare a European convention (Article 11 of the Helsinki Declaration), based on the principles laid down in the draft European charter of regional self-government, taking account of the member states' experience, and also making it possible to recognise and promote the common principles of regional and cultural autonomy, with due respect for the European Convention on Human Rights and its principles of equality and non-discrimination.

1. Assembly debate on 24 June 2003 (19th Sitting) (see Doc. 9824, report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Gross; andDoc. 9837,Doc. 9837,opinion of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, rapporteur: Mr Jurgens). Text adopted by the Assembly on 24 June 2003 (19th Sitting).