



**Opinion 246 (2003)<sup>1</sup>**

## **Relations between the Council of Europe and non-governmental organisations**

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly notes with satisfaction the decision by the Committee of Ministers to update and complete Resolution (93) 38 on relations between the Council of Europe and international non-governmental organisations, and it welcomes the Committee of Ministers' decision to seek its opinion on the two new preliminary draft resolutions respectively on participatory status for international non-governmental organisations and on the partnership between the Council of Europe and national non-governmental organisations.
2. The Assembly supports the principle of changing the consultative status to a participatory one and encourages intensified co-operation between the Council of Europe and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). It intends to consider in the future the possibility of creating a specific status based upon appropriate criteria for the NGOs with the Parliamentary Assembly in order to enhance direct contact and co-operation with them.
3. The Assembly encourages those member states that have not yet done so to facilitate the activities of the NGOs at international level by ratifying the European Convention on the Recognition of the Legal Personality of International Non-Governmental Organisations (ETS No. 124).
4. The Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers:
  - 4.1. to consider why some of the major NGOs with whom the Council of Europe has long-standing and fruitful co-operation have not applied for consultative status, and ensure that the new resolutions remove any possible obstacles that may exist to discourage them from doing so;
  - 4.2. to subsequently adopt the two preliminary draft resolutions;
  - 4.3. to invite a group of experts to examine why only nine member states have ratified the European Convention on the Recognition of the Legal Personality of International Non-Governmental Organisations since its opening for signature in 1986 and, if need be, adapt this convention through an amending protocol;
  - 4.4. to promote harmonisation of the principles for granting NGO status at national level by calling on member states to apply the fundamental principles on the status of non-governmental organisations in Europe approved in July 2002 by a Council of Europe group of experts and to consider transforming this text into a Council of Europe legal instrument;
  - 4.5. to ensure that no participatory status is granted or partnership agreement concluded with those NGOs whose activities are incompatible with the principles of the Council of Europe, in such areas as the fight against racism and xenophobia.

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1. Assembly debate on 29 September 2003 (27th Sitting) (see [Doc. 9909](#), report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Elo). Text adopted by the Assembly on 29 September 2003 (27th Sitting).

