

Recommendation 1717 (2005)¹

Education for leisure activities

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The amount of time people spend working has been steadily diminishing, alongside an equally steady increase in life expectancy with the result that people find themselves with more free time and are not always able to use it in the best way. The Parliamentary Assembly believes that governments are responsible for providing their citizens with conditions for the best possible quality of life. This is related to quality of leisure in its different forms (intellectual, social, physical and mental). Active involvement, for instance in music or sport, is better than passive attendance.

2. An average person, in his/her entire life, spends more time on leisure than on anything else. Research indicates that a higher level of teenager involvement in delinquency is significantly associated with increased participation in unsupervised socialisation with friends and less frequent participation in organised leisure, sports activities and activities at home. Education for leisure activities can therefore promote social cohesion and help prevent anti-social behaviour and crime.

3. The implementation of leisure policies calls for a combined effort of all sectors: the public sector on a central, regional and local level, as well as the private and the non-governmental sectors. Leisure policy, as an indispensable element of state social policy, should define the objectives, tasks, means and methods of meeting the leisure needs of the population, taking into consideration demographic and cultural differences and the varying socioeconomic status of their inhabitants.

4. The effective implementation of leisure policy requires appropriate action programmes, appropriate and generally available infrastructure and properly prepared professional and voluntary staff. The success of leisure policies requires that they be monitored and systematically adjusted, that new priorities be identified and that action programmes be adapted and evaluated. All this should be done with the active participation of representatives of different sciences such as sociology, psychology, pedagogy, economics and philosophy.

5. Education for leisure should aim at enriching the knowledge and skills of those to whom it is addressed and at enabling them to use their leisure time in order to improve their quality of life. Culture, sport and social and recreational activities are concerned. One of the priorities of state social policy should be to enable individuals to utilise the full potential of leisure, improve their quality of life during free time and learn values important for their own intellectual, psychological, physical and social development.

6. Therefore, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers draw up guidelines for education for leisure time, including such principles as :

6.1. education for leisure and the animation of leisure activities and attitudes should include all the stages of life, from early childhood to old age, and should be an element in programmes of formal and informal systems of social influence ;

6.2. the role and objectives of leisure education, as well as the related need for staff training should be pursued in school and in the local community along the lines of the International Charter for Leisure Education, adopted in 1993 by the World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA) ;

1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee acting on behalf of the Assembly on 1 September 2005 (see [Doc. 10647](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, rapporteur: Mr Smorawinski).



- 6.3. the role of non-governmental organisations should be recognised and encouraged. Potential animateurs should be qualified but this should not act as a deterrent to initiatives by NGOs ;
- 6.4. leisure education programmes should support the implementation of this process in families through properly organised counselling, in special management and in the distribution of appropriate leisure institutions in residential areas ;
- 6.5. leisure education programmes should take into consideration the adult community, which should be offered a wide range of leisure activities, both after work and on non-working days as well as during holidays ;
- 6.6. special attention should be given to programmes and possibilities for leisure activities for particular groups such as the disabled, people who work in difficult conditions or who do monotonous work, housewives, temporary workers and minority groups, the unemployed and the retired ;
- 6.7. care for the quality of life of elderly people should, in addition to other benefits for this age group, be expressed in terms of possibilities for making use of a diversified offer of services that stimulate this age group to pursue activities corresponding to their needs; in pre-retirement, counselling should be encouraged in order to demonstrate the importance of varying activities in old age ;
- 6.8. provision should be made for effective programmes for the training and in-service training of specialists, professionals and voluntary workers to guarantee high quality leisure education.