Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1773 (2010)[1]
Final version

Promoting parliamentary diplomacy

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly considers parliamentary diplomacy as a complementary tool to traditional diplomacy. Participation of parliamentarians in external affairs is today a crucial aspect of international co-operation and of the development of democracy, both in Europe and worldwide.

2. National parliaments are entitled to approve international treaties before their formal ratification. But the power of parliaments and parliamentarians should not be limited to that formal phase of international relations. To be effective, the involvement of parliamentarians needs a greater exchange of information and clearer co-ordination with national governments.

3. Recent experience shows that parliamentarians are being asked to monitor and participate in the activity of international institutions, thus reinvigorating the strength of their democratic action and enhancing public support.

4. Parliamentary diplomacy and its methods often achieve results that are hard to achieve through other conventional channels. Constant contacts with parliaments abroad help to share experience between members of parliament and, furthermore, foster understanding between political elites in the countries concerned. They also help to establish and build up trusting relationships between individuals.

5. The Assembly recognises that dialogue and co-operation among parliamentarians, which are the very essence of parliamentary diplomacy, make a positive contribution to easing inter-state tensions and finding feasible solutions to complex problems, namely those in the field of human rights, parliamentary democracy and the rule of law.

6. Without becoming diplomats themselves, parliamentarians should play a greater role in order to:

   6.1. promote political pluralism and democratic parliamentary standards at home and around the world;

   6.2. familiarise themselves with transnational issues and the work of international organisations;

   6.3. contribute, in synergy with other actors, to the achievement of results in various situations, such as the prevention and/or resolution of conflicts, the improvement of human rights standards in a certain region or country, the reduction of poverty and the prevention of climate change through ecological balance.

7. The Assembly therefore invites:

   7.1. national parliaments to:

      7.1.1. encourage the role of speakers of parliament in foreign relations, in particular as regards the promotion or the consolidation of democratic parliamentary standards;

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee,* acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 12 November 2010 (see Doc. 12428, report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Mota Amaral).

7.1.2. encourage the establishment of parliamentary friendship and similar groups among national parliaments, in order to promote the exchange of good practice, in particular in the parliamentary and political field;

7.2. the parliaments of the member states of the Council of Europe to ensure the pluralistic composition, in political and gender terms, of friendship groups, parliamentary delegations carrying out official visits abroad and delegations taking part in international fora, assemblies or networks;

7.3. other parliamentary assemblies or networks to:

7.3.1. promote the establishment or the further consolidation of international networks or associations of parliamentarians;

7.3.2. promote themselves as models for other regional or international parliamentary assemblies, in particular by recommending that membership is made dependent on the pluralistic composition of delegations and that the possibility of challenging credentials be introduced;

7.3.3. advocate a stronger position for parliamentary bodies in the institutional framework of the organisation to which they belong;

7.3.4. promote joint initiatives.

8. As regards its own work, the Assembly decides to:

8.1. ask the national delegations to the Assembly to commit themselves to working for the implementation of, and the follow-up to Assembly resolutions;

8.2. put more emphasis on activities aimed at following up and implementing its resolutions and recommendations;

8.3. demonstrate increased determination in addressing sensitive issues, such as potential conflictual situations between member states or within member states;

8.4. propose its good offices as a facilitator of dialogue or a mediator in specific conflict situations.

9. Furthermore, the Assembly recommends that national governments involve parliamentary representatives more extensively in their relations with the United Nations and other international institutions, and more generally in the international decision-making process.