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

Recommendation 2050 (2014)[1]
Final version

Europe's public administrations in flux: public service under threat?

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls its Resolution 2008 (2014) on Europe's public administrations in flux: public service under threat?, in which it advocates for the need to properly re-evaluate reform measures taken in the field of public administration and public services in Council of Europe member States, and to consider if these reforms are in line with the political concept of social cohesion.

2. In accordance with the Statute of the Council of Europe (ETS No. 1), the Assembly reaffirms that the concept of social cohesion is at the heart of the Organisation's mission. It is therefore essential to place it at the top of the political agenda, especially in times of crisis.

3. According to the Committee of Ministers, the emerging pattern of a fragmented society – with an increasing number of people facing obstacles to the full enjoyment of their rights, or dependent on benefits and other public services, together with rising inequalities between rich and poor – poses one of the greatest challenges to social cohesion in Europe.

4. The Assembly therefore recognises the New Strategy and Council of Europe Action Plan for Social Cohesion, approved by the Committee of Ministers on 7 July 2010, as an essential means for the fulfilment of the three core values of the Council of Europe: human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The Council of Europe's social cohesion policy is there to ensure the well-being of all the citizens of its member States, whilst minimising disparities and avoiding marginalisation, to manage differences and divisions and to ensure the means of achieving welfare for all citizens.

5. The Assembly welcomes the creation of the European Committee for Social Cohesion, Human Dignity and Equality, which will oversee, promote and review the implementation of the New Strategy and Council of Europe Action Plan for Social Cohesion, and develop appropriate tools to promote social cohesion. The Assembly expects the Committee of Ministers to carefully review the current strategy and to adopt guidelines for future social cohesion policies. This review should take into account all lessons learnt from the evaluation of public administration reforms in recent years and reconsider whether they are in line with the political concept of social cohesion, which is essential for the fulfilment of the core values of the Council of Europe.

6. Therefore, the Assembly:

6.1. supports the New Strategy and Council of Europe Action Plan for Social Cohesion, in the expectation that the Committee of Ministers will regularly update the Assembly on the progress made in the implementation of the action plan;

6.2. invites the Committee of Ministers, within the framework of the review of the current strategy on social cohesion, to consider an innovative approach to the issue, capable of making the Council of Europe more adaptable to new developments;

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1. *Assembly debate* on 26 June 2014 (26th Sitting) (see Doc. 13529, report of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, rapporteur: Mr Tiny Kox). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 26 June 2014 (26th Sitting).

6.3. expects the Committee of Ministers to organise in 2015 a 3rd Conference of Ministers responsible for Social Cohesion to review the new strategy and action plan, and to adopt guidelines for future social cohesion policies;

6.4. welcomes the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)1 on the Council of Europe Charter on shared social responsibilities, which represents a step forward in safeguarding the social and political achievements of Europe, and in ensuring their sustainability; it invites the Committee of Ministers to find ways to ensure appropriate participation of the Assembly in future activities associated with the charter;

6.5. welcomes the initiative of the Azerbaijani chairmanship to organise an informal seminar on social cohesion in September 2014, and invites the chairmanship to include the Assembly's recommendations in these discussions.