Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 7
05 May 1951

Report on the activity of the Standing Committee

Progress report
Standing Committee

1. Composition of the Committee

The Standing Committee comprises the Bureau, the Chairmen of the six ordinary Committees and fifteen Representatives distributed among the various nationalities in accordance with the system adopted for the ordinary Committees of 23 members.

On 28th August, 1950 the Standing Committee was established for the period 1950/51 with the following composition :

1. Bureau

   MM. SPAAK, Chairman

   Vice-Chairmen

   1. DE MENTHON

   2. JACINI

   3. Lord LAYTON

   4. GJÔRES

   5. von BRENTANO

   6. URGUPLU

2. Chairmen of Committees

   1. MM. BIDAULT
   2. CASATI
   3. van CAUWELAERT
   4. Sir David MAXWELL
   5. FYFE
   6. MM. REYNAUD
   7. SERRARENS

3. Elected Members :

   1. MM.B A B A N
   2. B E N V E N U TI
   3. B R A U N
   4. E D E L M A N

5. J A K O B S E N
6. J O S E F S S O N
7. van D E K I E F T
8. L O E S C H
9. MM. LUTKENS
10. MERCOURIS
11. MOE
12. MOLLET
13. NORTON
14. SCHAFER
15. WISTRAND

2. Meetings

On 18th November, 1950 the Committee thus composed submitted a report on its activity for the period 28th August to 18th November.

Since that date the Committee has met on three occasions : on 24th November, 1950 and on 7th April and 5th May, 1951.

3. Questions referred to the Committee

During the second part of its 1950 Session the Assembly referred the following matters to the Standing Committee : — the proposals of M. Maccas and of the Committee on General Affairs relating to security; the proposal of M. Mercouris relating to the creation of a European Ministry of Defence (Doc. 140, 1950)the proposal of M. Mommer relating to the establishment of a European passport (Doc. 150, 1950).

On 24th November the Standing Committee decided to forward the first group of proposals to the Committee of Ministers, to refer the proposal of M. Mercouris to the Committee on General Affairs and the proposal of M-Mommer to the Committee on Legal and Administrative Questions.

4. Organisation of the 1951 Session of the Assembly

The Standing Committee considered that the procedure inaugurated in 1950 of splitting the Session into two parts separated by a reasonably long interval had given good results. It therefore decided to repeat the procedure in 1951.

Date of the Session

With regard to the date of the 195.1 Session' the Committee endeavoured to reconcile the sometimes conflicting requirements of the political situation in the different Member States.

On 7th April, the Committee decided that 5th May should be the date of the opening of the Session, as proposed by the Bureau. At the same time it instructed the latter to take such steps as might be rendered necessary by the international situation. In face of the conflicting requests by several Representatives of different nationalities, and after consultations which resulted in no majority for any one opinion, the Bureau did not avail itself of the powers conferred on it by the Committee, and the dates for the first part of the Session, from 5th to 19th May, were maintained.

The Standing Committee decided that in principle the second part of the Session would be held during the second fortnight of September or the first fortnight of October.

Agenda of the Session

4.1. Procedure

At the end of the first part of the 1950 Session, the Standing Committee was asked to examine ways and means of limiting the number of Recommendations submitted by the Assembly to the Committee of Ministers. Various suggestions were made by Members of the Committee with this object in view, but no decision was reached.

It emerged from an examination of the question made by the Secretariat at the request of the Bureau that one of the principal reasons for the excessive number of Recommendations was a certain confusion in the procedure at present in force with regard to the work of the Assembly. On the proposal of the Bureau the Committee therefore defined the procedure governing the establishment of the Agenda of the Sessions as follows

1. The Standing Committee shall make a selection from among the questions eligible for inclusion in the Agenda.
2. The questions so selected shall then be listed in order of priority. The draft Agenda of the Session shall in this manner be established.
3. The draft shall be submitted to the Assembly together with a report from the Bureau giving the grounds on which the Committee based its choice of questions and the order of priority.
4. Once voted by the Assembly, the Agenda thus adopted may no longer be changed unless a decision to the contrary be taken by a two-thirds majority of the Bureau and by a simple majority of the Assembly.
5. In the course of its work the Assembly shall strictly observe the order in which questions are listed on the Agenda and shall continue to deal with that Agenda as long as time permits.
6. At the end of the Session questions with which the Assembly has had no time to deal shall be referred to a later Session.
7. The Agenda and the order of priority so established shall only be valid for the first part of the Session. For the second part of the Session another Agenda shall be established following the same procedure and without reference to the choice of questions or to the order of priority adopted for the first part of the Session.

Having defined these principles, the Standing Committee decided to instruct the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges to amend the Rules in accordance with them.

4.2. Draft Agenda

In accordance with this procedure the Committee established the draft Agenda of the forthcoming Session (Doc. 2)

Twelve questions were included in addition to the Reports of the Committee of Ministers and of 0. E. E. C.

The La Malfa proposal (Doc. 152, 1950),was given absolute priority, on the understanding that it would immediately be referred to Committee without prior debate. The same decision was taken in respect of the von Campe proposal (Doc. 153, 1950).

The Edelman proposal Doc. 144, 1950),relating to the creation of at Joint Atlantic Resources and Purchasing Board was included at item 6 as a priority question in the group of economic subjects.

The Standing Committee was informed that the 0. E. E. C. had agreed that a Minister who was a Member of the Council of Europe and of the Council of the O. E. E. C. should submit the Report of 0. E. E. C. to the Assembly. The Committee proposed that the Debate on this Report should be related to that on economic questions dealt with in proposals of the Assembly (Full Employment, European Man-Power Board, Edelman proposal) and grouped them together in the Agenda (Items 5, 6 and 7 of the draft).

With regard to Specialised Authorities (Items 8, 9, 10 and 11 of the draft) the Committee held a lengthy discussion as to whether it was preferable that the Assembly should first debate the nature and general characteristics of such Authorities and then proceed to discuss each Authority individually (Schuman Plan, Transport, Co-ordination of Air Transport, Agriculture) or whether this order should be reversed. The Committee chose the second alternative. It considered that the general and theoretical debate would gain considerably in precision and clarity if it were preceded by the examination of concrete and specific examples which had already been studied by competent bodies.

In accordance with Article 14, paras. 4 and 5 of .the Rules of Procedure the Committee examined a German proposal on the abolition of visas (Doc. 1) which had been received during the interval between Sessions. The Committee decided, by a two-thirds majority, to include it in the Agenda of the Session (Item 16).

Finally, having been informed that a draft Convention on the Reciprocal Treatment of Nationals had been prepared by a Working Party of the Committee on Legal and Administrative Questions meeting in Rome, in collaboration with the Institute for the Unification of Private Law, the Committee decided to include this draft Convention as Item 17 on the Agenda of the Session.

M. Serrarens requested that, in view of the establishment of the Special Committee on Refugees, the number of members of the Committee on Social Questions should be increased. The Standing Committee considered that it was for the Assembly to take a decision on this question.

Mr. Edelman requested that, with regard to the Special Committee to watch over the interests of Countries not represented in the Council of Europe, the minority view apparent in the Assembly should be represented on the Committee. The Standing Committee considered that the only way of giving satisfaction to this request was by increasing the number of Members of the special Committee from seven to nine. The Standing Committee instructed the Bureau to appoint the two additional Members.

5. Invitations to Overseas Parliaments

After being informed of the replies of overseas Parliaments the Committee considered that the Assembly should take, or instruct one of its organs to take, the necessary steps to ensure that the Assembly might receive more favourable replies before the second part of the Session in September or October, 1951.

6. Netherlands proposal that the Assembly should observe a minute of silent meditation

Having been acquainted with the proposal, the Committee considered that its Members should ensure, by personal contacts, that unaniihity be achieved on the matter. Should this not be so, the Committee considered it would be preferable to avoid any discussion of the subject in the Assembly.

7. European Youth Conference

The Committee confirmed the decision taken by the Bureau instructing the Committee organised by MM. Jousselin ànd Montagne to arrange this conference.

8. Ratification of the Convention on Human Rights

After noting that the British Government alone had ratified the Convention, the Committee decided to request the Joint Committee to study methods by which the ratification of this Convention by all the Governments might be expedited.

9. Invitation to Representatives of the Congress of the United States

A proposal having been received from M. Paul Reynaud that the Council of Europe should invite representatives of the Congress of the United States to attend the next Session of the Assembly as observers, the Committee decided that it would be advisable to hear M. Paul Reynaud before taking any decision in the matter.

10. Committees

In accordance with the task assigned to it by the Assembly, the Standing Committee took steps to supervise the co-ordination of the work of Committees.

11. Joint Committee

Having been informed that Sir David Maxwell Fyf e had resigned from the Joint Committee, the Standing Committee appointed Mr. Duncan Sandys to replace him at the Meeting at Paris on 16th April, 1951. M. Bidault having indicated that it would be impossible for him to attend this Meeting, and having expressed the wish to. be replaced by MHe. Klompé, Rapporteur of the Committee on General Affairs, the Standing Committee, after consulting the Ministers! for Foreign Affairs,'requested Mlle.Klompé to attend the Meeting.

12. Activity of the Committees of the Consultative Assembly since the close of the Second Ordinary Session - (Report prepared on May 3rd)

12.1. Committee on General Affairs

Meetings of the Committee on General Affairs were held from March 13th-Mareh 16th, and on April 23rd, 1951. At these meetings the following questions were considered by the Committee :

12.1.1. Revision of the Statute

The Report of the Committee of Senior Officials appointed by the Committee of Ministers to examine the Recommendations of the Assembly on the Revision of the Statute, was communicated to the Committee on General Affairs, which, at its March meeting, adopted a document (AS/AG (2) 93) containing its Observations on that Report. These Observations were considered, together with the provisional decisions of the Committee of Ministers on the Revision of the Statute, at a meeting of the Joint Committee held on April 16th.

The Rapporteur subsequently prepared, in the name of the Committee, a Report (Doc. 10) which will be submitted to the Assembly, containing an appreciation of the present situation in connection with the Revision of the Statute, having regard to the relevant passages of the Report to be presented to the Assembly at the forthcoming Session by the Committee of Ministers.

12.1.2. The Schuman Plan

At its meeting in March the Committee adopted a Recommendation for submission to the Assembly, which contained detailed proposals for the drafting of a Protocol to be appended to the Schuman Plan Treaty, dealing with the relations between the Schuman Plan and the Council of Europe. This Draft Recommendation, with the approval of the President of the Consultative Assembly, was communicated forthwith to the Committee of Ministers and in particular to the representatives of the Foreign Ministers, then present in Paris, of the Signatory States of the Schuman Plan Treaty; it was thus brought to the notice of the latter before the signature of the Treaty. The text of the Draft Recommendation is contained in a Report of the Committee submitted to the Assembly dealing with the Nature, Characteristics and Structure of Specialised Authorities (Doc. 13)

12.1.3. Specialised Authorities

The Committee considered at length the question of the Nature, Characteristics and Structure of Specialised Authorities and their relations with the Council of Europe, and has submitted to the Assembly a Report thereon. (Doc. 13)

12.1.4. Political Aspects of Defence

The Committee discussed and has submitted to the Assembly a Report on the Political Aspects of Defence (Doc. 8)

12.1.5. Relations with the Parliaments of North America.

The Committee considered and has submitted to the Assembly a Report on the organisation of debates in the Assembly concerning problems connected with world politics and in particular the relations between the Council of Europe and the Parliaments of North America (Doc. 9)

12.2. Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges

A meeting of the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges will be held on May 4th, at which the Committee will consider certain proposals designed to limit the number of recommendations adopted by the Assembly during any one Session, with a view to submitting a Report thereon during the Session.

12.3. Committee on Economic Questions

A meeting of the Sub-Committee on Communications and Public Works was held on March 12th, 1951, and a Report on the Co-ordination of Air Transport was adopted for submission to the full Committee on Economic Questions.

Meetings of the Sub-Committee on Finance and Trade and on Full Employment will be held on May 2nd, and of the full Committee on May 3rd.

The subjects under discussion at these meetings will include :

a. The Co-ordination of Air Transport

b. A Common Policy of Full Employment for Europe

c. A European Postage Stamp

d. General problems of the liberalisation of trade.

Reports on the first three of the subjects mentioned will be submitted to the Assembly, and the working papers on which these Reports will be based have already, on the instructions of the Chairman of the Committee, been communicated to all Representatives, so that they may be informed of the manner in which the Committee is dealing with the questions involved.

The Committee will also consider the Reports submitted to the Assembly by the Special Committee on Agriculture and the Special Committee on Transport, which have been communicated to it for information and opinion.

12.4. Committee on Social Questions

A meeting of the full Committee on Social Questions will be held on May 4th. Meetings of the following Sub-Committees of the Committee have been held on the dates indicated.

1. Sub-Committee and a Common Policy in the Social Field - 4th and 5th April, 1951
2. Sub-Committee on Migrant Workers - 3rd and 4th April and 3rd May, 1951.
3. Sub-Committee on Housing - 16th and 17th February, and 2nd May, 1951.

1. The Sub-Committee on a Common Policy in the Social Field has considered the following questions, on which it will not submit a formal Report to the Assembly, but with regard to which it adopted the following observations and conclusions :

a. European Code of Social Security The opinion was expressed that every effort should be made to hold, in collaboration with the I. L. 0. and at a date during 1951, a preparatory conference for the purpose of elaborating a European Code of Social Security.

b. Housing It was emphasised that the Committee on Social Questions can make no progress in connection with this question until the Committee of Ministers has made known its decision, with regard to the Recommendation adopted by the Assembly in August 1950 (Doc. 113, 1950).

c. Ratification of Labour Conventions Emphasis was placed on the importance of common action being taken within the framework of the Council of Europe in support of the general ratification of the Labour Conventions adopted by the I. L. O.

2.The Sub-Committee on Migrant Workers has adopted a draft Recommendation proposing the creation of a European Manpower Board, which will be considered by the full Committee at its meeting on May 4th, with a view to submitting it, amended as may be found necessary, to the Assembly.

3. The Sub-Committee on Housing is engaged on the examination of the financial aspects of the Housing problem.

12.5. The Sub-Committee on Housing is engaged on the examination of the financial aspects of the Housing problem.

The Committee on Legal and Administrative Questions has been concerned with the question of a Draft Multilateral Convention for the Reciprocal Treatment of Nationals. A Working Party formed by the Committee to examine this problem met in Rome from March 22nd-26th and, in collaboration with the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, prepared a Draft Convention which, with the title " Draft Convention on Establishment, " will be submitted to the meeting of the full Committee to be held on May 4th. It is expected that the Committee will be in a position to submit the Draft Convention, revised as necessary, to the Assembly during the forthcoming Session, in accordance with the Assembly's instructions (Doc. 105, 1950).

12.6. Committee on Cultural and Scientific Questions

As no questions referred to the Committee by the Assembly were outstanding at the close of the second part of the Second Ordinary Session, no meeting of the Committee has been held since that date.

12.7. Special Committee on Refugee Questions

The Special Committee held meetings on 2nd and 3rd February, and on 27th April, 1951. The Special Committee has adopted a Draft Convention establishing a European Office for Refugees and requests that consideration of this Convention be included in the Agenda of the forthcoming Session. (Note : this question has its place on the Agenda of the current meeting of the Standing Committee). It also adopted two Motions for submission to the Assembly recommending in the first place that a preparatory conference be convened by the Council of Europe before the forthcoming conference organised by the I. L. 0. for the purpose of examining the general problems of migration; and, secondly, the creation within the Secretariat-General of the Council of Europe of a special Refugees Section entrusted with certain practical and clearly defined duties.

12.8. Special Committee to watch over the interests European Nations not represented in the Council of Europe

Meetings of the Special Committee were held on 27th January and 17th March, 1951.

The Special Committee has submitted to the Assembly a Report (Doc. 12), in which it recommends certain measures to be taken with a view to fulfilling the terms of reference given to the Committee by the Assembly (Doc. 127 1950).

12.9. Special Committee on the Statute

Meetings of the Special Committee on the Statute were held on 24th November and 21st-23rd December, 1950.

In accordance witb its terms of reference (see Minutes of Proceedings of the Second Part of the Second Session, Part II, page 58), the Special Committee examined and adopted a Protocol for the Amendment of the Statute (AS/SS (2) 17). The Protocol was communicated to all Representatives and to the Committee of Ministers; and was considered at a meeting held on February 10th, 1951, between representatives of the Consultative Assembly and representatives of the Committee of Senior Officials appointed by the Committee of Ministers to examine the question of revision of the Statute.

12.10. Special Committee on Agriculture

Meetings of the Special Committee on Agriculture were held on January 11th and 12th, and on February 26th and 27th.

The Special Committee, in accordance with the instructions of the Assembly (Doc. 154, 1950), has prepared a Report on the subject of a European Authority for Agriculture which has been submitted to the Assembly (Doc. 4). In accordance with the instructions of the Standing Committee, the Report has also been communicated for information and opinion to the Committee on Economic Questions and will be considered by that Committee at its meeting on May 3rd.

12.11. Special Committee on Transport

Meetings of the Special Committee on Transport were held on 9th February and 22nd and 23rd March, 1951.

The Special Committee, in accordance with instructions of the Assembly (Doc. 154, 1950), has prepared a Report on the subject of a European Authority for Transport, in the form of a Draft Convention for the establishment of such an authority, which has been submitted to the Assembly (Doc. 11). In accordance with the instructions of the Standing Committee the Report has also been communicated for information and opinion to the Committee on Economic Questions and will be considered by that Committee at its meeting on May 3rd.