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European Charter for Rural Areas

Reply to Recommendation[1]: Recommendation 1296 (1996)
Committee of Ministers

The Committee of Ministers has studied the proposals of the Parliamentary Assembly, in particular the one concerning the draft European Charter of Mountain Regions and the draft European Charter for Rural Areas, contained respectively in Recommendation 1274 (1995) on the European Charter of Mountain Regions and Recommendation 1296 (1996) on the European Charier for Rural Areas.

The Committee of Ministers recalls that it adopted a reply to the two Assembly recommendations mentioned above at its 583rd meeting (4 February 1997). The only question left open was the question of the draft European Charter of Mountain Regions and the draft European Charter for Rural Areas.

The Committee of Ministers confirms the importance it attaches to comprehensive spatial/regional planning strategies as an integral part of sustainable development policies. A piecemeal approach to spatial/regional planning issues should therefore be avoided.

In this respect the Committee of Ministers notes with satisfaction that considerable progress has been made in the preparation, by the relevant Committee of Senior Officials, of the guiding principles for sustainable spatial development of the European continent, a document to be submitted to the forthcoming Conference of European Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT) which will be held in Hanover in September 2000.

The Committee of Ministers has been examining the proposals for the two draft texts of the conventions with great attention over a number of years. At various stages it has consulted the Steering Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR), the Committee of Senior Officials of the CEMAT and the Parliamentary Assembly together with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE). An exchange of views between representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress and the Ministers' Deputies took place on 5 February 1999.

Following this exchange of views and at subsequent meetings of the Deputies, it was not possible to reach definitive conclusions on the matter. In these circumstances, the Committee of Ministers agreed to take a stand on the possible follow-up to these initiatives in the light of the results of the next Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (Hanover, 7-8 September 2000).

1. Joint reply to Recommendation 1274 (1995) and Recommendation 1296 (1996), adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 15 September 1999 at the 679th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.