Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Appointment of a Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr Jacques CHABAN-DELMAS and other members of the Assembly

Explanatory Memorandum

When the President of the Consultative Assembly, M. P.-H. Spaak, received a delegation from the Council of European Municipalities on 7th May, 1951, he said :

" The action of the Mayors is of profound importance; they are more frequently and intimately in touch with the public than the central government and Members of Parliament. They are, therefore, capable of making a substantial contribution, particularly at a time when great efforts will be required if Europe is to be united.

" This action may be exerted, in the present, by spreading the European idea among the great mass of the people and, in the future, by bringing into play, at the levels of immediate action, all the European organisations in process of formation.

In the present, no action can be more tenacious, continuous, and far-reaching than that which can be exerted by the Mayors and the many local Magistrates, and also, all the elected local Representatives of any administrative area (districts, provinces, departments, cantons, etc. according to country).

Very useful action can be exerted on public opinion, especially in rural areas, but also in small and medium-sized towns and, under certain publicity conditions, even in the largest cities.

An organisation was set up in Geneva on 30th January, 1951, the Council of European Municipalities, with the aim of grouping elected local Representatives throughout Europe. This Council already includes several thousand municipal officers from eight countries; Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Saar and Switzerland, and observers from most of the other European countries, including Britain. It has close contacts with the International Union of Local Authorities; its President is M. Cotier, Member of the Administrative Council of Geneva and one of the Vice-Presidents of the above Union.

But it is not enough for such an organisation to work in isolation for the preparation of a United Europe; its action will be fully effective only insofar as it can be linked to genuine and ever fresh sources of inspiration, in the forefront of which stands the Council of Europe, and, especially, its Consultative Assembly.

The same applies to the future action which is bound to be exerted by local Magistrates. Whenever the implementation of a plan of European co-ordination has direct repercussions on sections of the population, particularly with reference to their transfer, housing and social protection, it is the local authorities which will be made directly responsible for action. They must be prepared without further delay for this work, which we hope will soon be carried out, by strengthening their desire for a fully-grown Europe finally emerging into the light of day.

These brief considerations justify the establishment of a special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs b y the Consultative Assembly. This Committee can be kept informed of all action undertaken throughout Europe; conversely it may, with the direct support of existing official organisations such as the Council of European Municipalities, make a full and well-founded contribution to the continuance and intensification of such action.

The Assembly might with advantage fix the number of members of this Committee at about twenty, and it may reasonably, be hoped that, by applying proportional representation, it would be easy to find an equal number of Representatives who, convinced by personal experience or by the strength of the arguments in its favour, would consider it their duty to set up this new agency for information, investigation, and instigation.

Motion for Resolution

The Assembly,

Decides, in accordance with paragraph 2 of Rule 38 of the Rules of Procedure, to set up a Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs.

Fixes the number of seats on the Committee at 19, two each for the British, French, German and Italian groups respectively, and one each for the other groups of Representatives.

Instructs the said Committee to establish all necessary contacts with the organisations, governmental or non-governmental concerned, to proceed to study European problems at the municipal and regional level, to supply these organisations with all information in its possession likely to provide a basis of assessment or action, and to report to the Assembly on any questions referred to it.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed:

CHABAN-DELMAS Jacques, France