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Integration of the O.E.E.C. and the Council of Europe

Report¹

Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

Rapporteur: Mr Georges BOHY, Belgium, Socialist Group

1. 1953 - 5th Session - Second part



A. Draft Recommendation

The Assembly,

Considering that the general aims of the O. E. E. C. and those of the Council of Europe are fundamentally identical, and that, accordingly, a close co-ordination of their activities would be of advantage to both organisations and contribute materially to the realisation of their general aims and of the policies which they advocate in pursuit thereof;

Welcoming the provisions for collaboration between the O. E. E. C. and the Council of Europe contained in the Agreement adopted in July, 1952 by the Council of Ministers of the O. E. E. C., and the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe;

Considering, however, that the establishment and entry into operation of the European Coal and Steel Community and the progress realised in the negotiations for the establishment of other Communities with restricted membership, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the implementation of a policy which would result in the Council of Europe constituting " the general framework of European policy " , make it imperative that more radical steps be taken to bring about the consolidation of the organisations whose purpose is to achieve a greater unity of action among all the Member States of the Council of Europe;

Considering, moreover, that the Council of Europe can, more effectively than any other organisation, provide a forum through which public opinion can be informed of the technical proposals made by the O. E. E. C. ;

Convinced that any progress towards this greater unity will be of advantage not only to the Member States of the Council of Europe as a whole, but, equally, to the Communities with restricted membership referred to above;

Re-affirming therefore its earlier Recommendations on the subject of relations between the O. E. E. C. and the Council of Europe and, in particular, the proposals contained in Recommendation 25 of May, 1952;

Recommends to the Committee of Ministers :

- a. That the above-mentioned Recommendations be taken into consideration in order to solve the problem of the relations between the O. E. E. C. and the Council of Europe, when this issue is discussed by the Liaison Committees of the two organisations in accordance with the decision of the Committee of Ministers;
- b. That the Assembly be kept informed of the development of these discussions and that it be called upon to express its opinion on any proposals for a solution of the question before a decision is taken thereon by the Committee of Ministers.

B. Explanatory Memorandum

1.

1. The Assembly has made four separate Recommendations concerning the integration of the Council of Europe and the O. E. E. C. These were Recommendation 18, adopted 18th August, 1950, by 94 votes to 0, with 12 abstentions; Recommendation 55, adopted unanimously 23rd November, 1950, with 4 abstentions, and renewed in the Reply to the Report and Message of the Committee of Ministers in May, 1951; Recommendation 23, adopted unanimously 11th December, 1951, with 1 abstention; and Recommendation 25, adopted 30th May, 1952, by 100 votes to 0, with 3 abstentions.

2. The preoccupation of the Assembly has been two-fold. On the one hand, it is considered that the Assembly and its Committees should be able to make use of the admirable technical facilities which have been built up by the O. E. E. C. since 1948. On the other hand, the Assembly is anxious that at a time when six Powers are considering the creation of a European Community the Council of Europe should itself be strengthened. To this latter consideration is added apprehension concerning the possibility of duplication of effort between the two organisations, with the waste of public money which would be involved.

3. Concerning the first and technical consideration, it is satisfactory to note the improvement which has taken place as a result of the Agreement between the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and the Council of Ministers of O. E. E. C. It will be recalled that by the provisions of paragraphs 22 and 26 of that Agreement Committees of the Consultative Assembly are now empowered to call upon the aid of the O. E. E. C. Secretariat for assistance in the preparation of Recommendations, Resolutions, and, if the need arises, of European Conventions on economic subjects. By these means, as the Committee of Ministers stated in its Supplementary Report to the Assembly in September, 1952, "the Council of Europe will henceforth have at its disposal suitable machinery for ensuring that the economic problems with which it may have to deal are studied in collaboration with O. E. E. C, thereby to a large extent avoiding duplication of effort"². The development of these contacts between Representatives to the Assembly and the O. E. E. C. Secretariat is again referred to in paragraphs 66 and 69 of the document before us.³

4. It would appear, therefore, that a satisfactory solution to the problem of making available to the Assembly and its Committees the technical knowledge of the Secretariat-General of the O. E. E. C. is in process of being worked out. In its Recommendations already referred to, however, the Assembly raised a larger question which remains unanswered, namely whether it is in the best interests of European co-operation and of the efforts to achieve a greater unity between the Members of the Council of Europe that the O. E. E. C. and the Council of Europe should continue to exist as separate and independent organisations. That the Assembly was not alone in its preoccupations can be seen from the text of paragraph 55 of the Supplementary Report of the Committee of Ministers communicated to the Assembly on 15th September, 1952⁴: "The Committee of Ministers made an initial examination of Recommendation 25 on the integration of the O. E. E. C. and the Council of Europe; it appeared to the Committee that this Recommendation was inspired by the same general considerations as the Memorandum submitted to O. E. E. C. by the Swedish Government in January, 1951. The Ministers considered that it would be premature to take a decision on this Recommendation until the lines on which the Council of Europe should develop in the future had been more clearly defined. Apart from this, the different membership of the two organisations represented a major difficulty."

5. From every point of view, and not least from the point of view of the European public, whose support is essential if any real progress is to be made in uniting Europe but which has such understandable difficulty in appreciating the need for the existence of so many apparently overlapping organisations, it does not seem reasonable or efficient that Recommendations and Resolutions on economic subjects adopted by the Assembly, should be forwarded, after study by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, to themselves sitting as the Council of Ministers of the O. E. E. C.

6. There is, admittedly, the question of the differing membership of the two organisations, the O. E. E. C. having as Members Austria, Portugal and Switzerland which are not Members of the Council of Europe. But it would not seem impossible to adapt to this situation a variation of the idea underlying the policy which in a different context found expression in the decision of the Committee of Ministers to accept what are called "partial agreements"⁵. The purpose of that policy was, of course, to preserve the general unity of all the

2. See 4th Session, 1952 : [Doe. 42](#), Supplementary- Report of the Committee of Ministers, paragraph 57.

3. See 5th Session, 1953 : [Doo. 122](#) (Fourth Report of the Committee of Ministers).

4. See 4th Session, 1952 : [Doc. 42](#).

Member States of the Council while leaving it open to those who were so inclined to establish, within the general framework of the Council, closer forms of co-operation for certain specific purposes. Your Committee recalls that in its Recommendation 25 (1952) the Assembly made proposals in the same general sense, that is to say that the Committee of Ministers should sit with eighteen Members (the Fifteen together with Austria, Portugal and Switzerland) when discussing economic matters, but that its membership should remain limited to the Fifteen when other means of achieving the aims of the Council of Europe were under consideration. A solution of the problem on these lines is indeed adumbrated in Resolution (53) 16 of the Committee of Ministers, which reads " T h e Committee of Ministers,

6.1. Considering t h a t it is desirable to facilitate participation of those European countries, which are not Members of the Council of Europe, in certain of the Council's activities,

6.2. Declares its readiness to conclude with European countries, which are not Members of the Council and would like to be associated with certain of the Council's activities, agreements governing ways and means of such association ".

7. Your Committee considers that the Assembly should emphasise t h a t it is not ungrateful for the progress that has been made in improving the collaboration at the technical level between the two organisations, but that this progress does not in its opinion represent a sufficient answer, if the wish of the Assembly, which appears to be shared by the Committee of Ministers, is to be realised, namely that the Council of Europe should " constitute the general framework of European policy "⁶. If the Council of Europe is to provide this general framework for the policy of the growing Community of the Six, it must follow that every opportunity be taken to strengthen it and to increase its efficiency.

8. In the Supplementary Report of the Committee of Ministers of September, 1952 quoted above, it was argued that it would be " premature " at that time to take a decision on the proposals contained in the Assembly's Recommendation 25. It can no longer be considered to be premature, now that the European Coal and Steel Community has opened the Common Market of the Six in coal and steel, that the Treaty instituting the European Defence Community has been tabled in the Parliaments of the six Powers, and that a draft Treaty instituting a Political Authority is being formally considered by the Governments of those Powers. If any reality is to be given to the intention to provide within the Council of Europe a framework for these and other similar developments which may take place—in connection, for example, with the organisation of the European Agricultural Market—corresponding progress must be made in rationalising and consolidating the efforts to achieve unity among the Fifteen. At the moment, in their attempts to work out the principles of a common European policy, the Fifteen suffer from an important—and unnecessary— handicap, in the sense that, although the political and economic aspects of that policy are no more than two facets of the one problem, they are, nevertheless, considered at the European level in two different and separ a t e organisations. The removal of this handicap is a preliminary and essential step if the network of collaboration between the Fifteen is to have the minimum cohesion and solidity which it must have before it can pretend to serve as the framework for the policy of Communities which have, or will have, far-reaching powers in their own right.

9. Your Committee therefore recommends that the Assembly should maintain its earlier Recommendations on the question of the relations between the Council of Europe and the O. E. E. C , and should make it clear to the Committee of Ministers that it assumes that they will be taken as the basis of the discussions contemplated in Resolution (53) 15 of the Committee of Ministers..

10. Your Committee further recommends t h a t the Committee of Ministers should be urged to make every effort to reach an early decision in this matter and that the Assembly should be kept fully informed of the relevant discussions, both in the O. E. E. C. Council of Europe Liaison Committees, and in the Committee of Ministers. To t h a t end, it submits to the Assembly the following draft Recommendation, which was adopted unanimously in Committee :

5. Recommendations 1 to 3 (1950) and 3rd Session, 1951 : [Doc. 18](#), § 20.

6. of. The speech of the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, M. van Zeeland, before the Assembly on 8th May, 1953, and Resolution (53) 13 of the Committee of Ministers.