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Reply to the First Report form UNESCO to the Consultative Assembly

Report
Committee on Culture, Science and Education
Rapporteur: Mr Christopher HOLLIS, United Kingdom

Draft Resolution

The Assembly, having taken note of the first report communicated to the Council of Europe by UNESCO, wishes to assure that organisation how sincerely it appreciates the great importance of the work which it has undertaken. The Assembly is veiy conscious of the need to avoid duplication between the cultural work of the Council of Europe and the great number of initiatives which UNESCO has taken in the same field, and, moreover, is fully aware of the fact that by its nature the Assembly is not itself qualified to act as an executive organ. The Assembly proposes to hold a general debate in the course of the first part of its Seventh Session in 1955 for the purpose of defining its attitude to the general cultural role of the Council, and, in the meantime, in replying to the Report UNESCO, will confine itself to stating its belief that, on the one hand, the Council of Europe, as compared to UNESCO with its world-wide responsibilities, has the special duty of defending and developing the European cultural heritage as such, and that, on the other hand, it is in a position, in collaboration with UNESCO, to assist in achieving, at the specifically European level, higher standards in the general propagation of knowledge and culture than can be expected in the world framework of UNESCO's activities.

I n the light of this general statement, the Assembly welcomes the opportunity of making the following comments on certain of the specific questions mentioned in the Report, with particular reference to its own activities in the cultural field. In doing so, it assumes tlmt UNESCO, which •— so it understands •— collaborated in the preparation of the cultural and scientific chapters of the draft programme of .work of the Committee of Ministers, has had or will have an opportunity of making known its observations on those chapters of the programme in the form in which they have been presented, and that its observations will in due course be communicated also to the Assembly. During the general cultural debate to be held in its Seventh Session, the Assembly will examine to what extent UNESCO, could be asked to collaborate with or assist the Council of Europe in the implementation of that programme.

Education

(i) The Assembly trusts that no duplication is taking place between the work of UNESCO and that of the Council of Europe with regard to the problem of the equivalence of diplomas in the field of higher education. In that connection, the Assembly would remind UNESCO that, on December 12th, 1953, the Committee of Ministers of the Council signed a Convention dealing with the recognition of examinations qualifying for admission to universities. This Convention has duly come into force after ratification by three Member States. Hitherto six ratifications have been deposited, namely those of Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Saar and the United Kingdom. I n addition, the Committee of Cultural Experts of ' the Committee of Ministers of the Council is at the moment considering the possibility of submitting two further draft Conventions dealing respectively with the recognition of periods of study spent, and examinations passed, in foreign universities and with the equivalence of professional degrees.

(ii) Another educational problem which has been examined by the Council of Europe is that of training in European civics. The problems involved in publishing a Handbook of European Civics are being studied on the basis of the work undertaken during courses held under the auspices of the Committee of Cultural Experts in Bruges, Nancy and Cahv, and at the Round Table meeting in Rome. Another course was held in Oslo during August, 1954.

(iii) With regard to the improvement of textbooks, the Council of Europe has devoted particular attention to the revision of history textbooks. During the last course held in Oslo, the possibility was considered of co-ordinating the efforts made by Member States in this respect with a view to introducing the European idea into the teaching of history.

(iv) Both the Assembly, through its Committee on Cultural Questions, and the Committee of Cultural Experts are at the moment considering the manner in which collaboration can be assured beween the Council of Europe and the various European youth organisations.

Natural sciences

The Assembly has noted with interest the account of the work which UNESCO has undertaken in the field of natural sciences. The Assembly believes that it could be of assistance to UNESCO in pressing for the ratification by the Member States of the Council of conventions such as the Convention establishing a European Organisation for Nuclear Research and the Convention establishing an International Computation Centre. The Assembly recalls that it has already been able to provide assistance of this kind to UNESCO in the case of the General Convention on the international circulation of books, objects of art and media of

information and education1[1]. If this suggestion recommends itself to UNESCO, the Assembly would welcome the opportunity of examining any conventions whose ratification is still in suspense, which UNESCO may decide to table in the Assembly.

Social sciences

The Assembly has also noted with interest the creation, under the auspices of the International Council of Social Science, of an International Research Office on the Social Implications of Technological Change, as well as the research undertaken by the UNESCO Institute for Social Science of Cologne on the subject of social integration and differentiation, and, more particularly, how the individual is absorbed into society.

The Assembly, which has already placed on its Agenda such questions as: "Coordination among the national institutions of the member countries of the Council of Europe concerned with social research, and of the application of such research to backward areas" and "Preliminary study of measures which might be recommended to enable local authorities to meet the new responsibilities likely to arise from the establishment of the European Communities", is particularly interested in the problems of protecting the individual from and adjusting him to the ever-growing urbanisation and industrialisation of our society. The Assembly accordingly considers that the research undertaken by these two organisations will be of valuable assistance to it in its future work.

Cultural activities

(i) At the request of the Council of Europe, M. Piovene kindly agreed to represent the Council at the Conference held at Sao Paulo on 16th August on the following theme : " The European contribution to cultural life and humanism among the Peoples of the Americas ' '. The Assembly wishes to express its sincere gratitude to UNESCO for having invited it to be represented at this conference.

(ii) The Assembly would like to recall in this context the ceremony which took place in London on 16th June to mark the presentation to the Secretary-General of the publication The European Inheritance. The choice of the Council of Europe as the repository of this important contribution to the history of European civilisation testifies to the importance of its vocation as a champion of Western civilisation.

(iii) One of the most recent cultural archievements of the Council of Europe has been the issue of the European Cultural Identity Card. This card is now in circulation, and the Council of Europe hopes to have some precise information on the results achieved towards the end of the year.

Mass communication

(i) The Assembly wishes to call the attention of UNESCO to its Recommendation 54, adopted in September, 1953, on the use of television as a medium for securing support among the general public for the European idea. This Recommendation was adopted by the Committee of Ministers in July, 1954.

(ii) Once again the Council of Europe is glad to note the substantial results obtained by UNESCO with regard to the free circulation of books. The decision of the International Air Transport Association to reduce the air freight rates for books in the European region to 50 % of normal cargo rates as from 1st April, 1954 affords an example of the important results which can be achieved in this direction.

Exchange of persons

(i) In implementation of a Recommendation adopted by the Assembly1[2], the Committee of Ministers approved the allocation in the annual cultural budget of the Council of Europe of a sum to be employed in promoting exchanges between workers of the various Member States. As the result of this decision, the sum of one million French francs was made available to the Governments of Norway, the United Kingdom and Belgium in the cultural budget of 1953/54, and in the budget of 1954/55 the sum of two million French francs has been similarly made available to the Governments of Denmark, Italy and Sweden.

(ii) The Council of Europe has subsidised the award of fellowships for the purpose of encouraging research in the following fields

a. European economic integration

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1. See Recommendation 33, adopted by the Assembly in September, 1952.
2. See Recommendation 18 (1951).

b. European political integration

c. European history and philosophy.

Sixteen fellowships of the value of 300,000 French francs each were awarded in 1954 by a selection board composed of M. van Kleffens, M. Robert Sclmman and Professor Arnold Toynbee. The board also awarded two additional fellowships of the value of 300,000 French francs, offered by the European Coal and Steel Community, for research into subjects chosen by that organisation.

(iii) The Committee on Social Questions is at the moment studying the means of giving effect to a Motion referred to it by the Assembly calling for an "Examination of the possibilities of promoting foreign travel by citizens of Member States, on an exchange basis or otherwise, in order to improve mutual understanding and a knowledge of each other's way of life".

This question will, of course, be examined in the light of what is being done on the same lines elsewhere, and in particular by UNESCO.