Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parliamentaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 305
21 September 1954

Provision of assistance whenever a disaster of nature afflicts a member country of the Council of Europe

Report[1]
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1. 1954 - 6th Session - Second part

A. Draft Recommendation

The Assembly,

Having taken note of paragraph 63 of the Special Message of the Committee of Ministers (Doc. 238);

Noting with great concern that the recent disasters in Algeria render it all the more urgent that the Council of Europe should set up machinery to co-ordinate European action and solidarity ;

Having regard also to the Resolutions already adopted by the Assembly in favour of victims of the earthquake in the Ionian Islands,

I s surprised to observe that this Message appears to ignore the Island of Ithaca, adopted by the Council;

Recommends that the Committee of Ministers should :

1. make eveiy effort, in the case of Ithaca to continue, and in the ease of Algeria to set on foot, appropriate measures to bring the necessary assistance and relief ;
2. take steps to ensure that assistance to any member country of the Council of Europe stricken by disaster shall in future be systematically organised and designed to take effect automatically ;
3. ensure that the necessary arrangements are completed with the utmost speed ;
4. offer without delay some specific form of material aid to the Island of Ithaca, the adoption of which was unanimously decided upon by the Consultative Assembly ;
5. inform the Assembly of any arrangements that have been or may hereafter be made to this end.

B. Draft Order of the Assembly

The Assembly.

(a) Instructs the Special Committee on the problem of the Greek earthquake victims to follow the efforts initiated by the Council of Europe on behalf of these victims ;

(b) Instructs the Committee closely to follow developments in the Island of Ithaca, adopted by the Council of Europe, to report upon them and to submit proposals to the Assembly.

C. Explanatory Memorandum

1.

A. In the Special Message of the Committee of Ministers (Doc. 238), transmitting to the Consultative Assembly the Programme of Work of the Council of Europe, paragraph 63 deals with assistance in the event of disasters of nature.

This paragraph states that the Committee of Ministers has decided to submit to a Working Party certain proposals to establish organised and automatic co-operation and assistance in the event of a disaster of nature.

The Working Party would prepare a preliminary study of the problem and make suggestions for its solution.

The Message adds that the results of this study will be submitted to the Consultative Assembly.

The disasters at present besetting Algeria render such measures more necessary than ever.

B. Similarly, the Assembly on 25th September, 1953 unanimously adopted the Island of Ithaca. The question arises as to the practical implications of this decision.

The cost of reconstructing the Island has been estimated at 300 million French francs. Will the Member States be willing to contribute this sum or its equivalent in kind to the Island of Ithaca ? If not, what have they to offer f These questions must be answered, and the sooner the better. The adoption of this Island has already caused some uncertainty, the Greek authorities not knowing what they may expect from the Council of Europe.

The Special Committee on the problem of the Greek earthquake victims accordingly has the. honour to propose the attached draft Recommendation :