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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**Doc. 335**
30 April 1955

# Duplication of work between European Organisations

**Motion for a recommendation**
Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

## A. Draft Recommendation [1]

The Assembly,

Considering that the present relationships between European organisations require to be considered as a whole, with a view, on the one hand, to preventing wasted effort, and, on the other hand, to providing a parliamentary forum for these organisations,

Recommends to tlic Committee of Ministers that a Select Committee, consisting of the heads of certain national civil services, of the Secretaries-General of certain of the organisations concerned, and of independent members with special qualifications—the whole Committee meeting under the chairmanship of a Member of Parliament with international experience-—be set up to investigate the different aspects of this question.

1. See 6th Session, 1951 : Doc. 238 (Special Message); Doc. 264 (Preliminary Report).

**B. Explanatory Memorandum (presented by M. MOMMER, Rapporteur)**

## 1. I. DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

1. The problem of overlapping of effort between European organisations is neither new nor simple. The overlapping may occur with regard to :

*a.* competence,

*b.* work.

Even within the second category, however, work on the same problem does not necessarily constitute a duplication of effort, if two organisations are studying the same problem from different angles or at " different levels ".

2. In this respect the Assembly has taken favourable note of the passage which occurs in the Special Message of the Committee of Ministers :

" It will usually be undesirable for our Committee to study the same problem at the same time as the Ministerial body of another international organisation, but it may have been helpful for the Assembly to do so, because it looks upon the issues from a different angle[2]. "

This implies that the Consultative Assembly, as is the case with any parliamentary body, is not guilty of duplication of work if it considers proposals which are already under consideration by an intergovernmental organ. In order to play its rôle properly the Consultative Assembly will be required to consider all important proposals being examined by European intergovernmental organisations, or which those organisations wish to examine.

3. No responsible decision can be taken in this matter unless the earlier positions adopted by the Assembly are borne in mind [3]. As a matter of practical politics the early hopes that the Council of Europe would develop into a European Government, with all other organisations fitting in as the basis of the appropriate Government departments, have so far proved visionary. For the moment, therefore, it is necessary :

*a.* to accept that a number of separate organisations will continue to exist;

*b.* to analyse the overlapping which exists between them in terms of competence and of work;

*c.* to make proposals with a view to obviating such overlapping;

*d.* to propose more effective means of co-operation between the intergovernmental organisations.

## 2. II. OVERLAPPING IN TERMS OF WORK

4. At the present moment the following examples may be given of two or more organisations dealing with the same problem :

(i) Refugees and Manpower

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, I. L. O., 0. E. E. C, and the Council of Europe.

(ii) Social Security

I. L. O., Brussels Treaty Organisation, and the Council of Europe.

(iii) Employment of the older worker

I. L. 0., and the Council of Europe.

(iv) Equalisation of Social Charges

I. L. 0. and the Council of Europe.

(v) Development of under-developed areas in Southern Europe

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2. Doc. 238, para. 16.
3. See Doc. AS/AG (6) 89.

Economic Commission for Europe, 0. E. E. C, and the Council of Europe.

(vi) Full employment

ECOSOC and the Council of Europe.

(vii) Economic development of overseas territories

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

(viii) Reduction of Tariffs

G. A. T. T. and the Council of Europe.

(ix) International Cartels

ECOSOC and the Council of Europe.

(x) Co-operation in the field of public health

World Health Organisation and the Council of Europe.

(xi) The position of European agriculture

Food and Agriculture Organisation, the Conference of Ministers on Agriculture, and the Council of Europe.

(xii) Statelessness and multiple nationality

The United Nations and the Council of Europe.

(xiii) Problems of authors' and ancillary rights in relation to television

The Berne Bureau, UNESCO, f. L. 0. and the Council of Europe.

5. This list is by no means exhaustive, and refers, moreover, only to the activities of the Council of Europe and of certain intergovernmental organisations. It does not include the activities of supranational organisations, in particular of the European Coal and Steel Community, which is directly concerned, for instance, with items (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (vi), (viii), (ix) of those listed above.

### 3. III. THE NEED FOR INVESTIGATION OF THE SITUATION

6. Even if the basic argument be accepted that the position of the Assembly with regard to duplication of work must be clearly differentiated from that of the Committee of Ministers ; and that what would constitute overlapping between two organisations on the Ministerial level may well represent a complementary effort between the intergovernmental and the parliamentary, the fact remains that the situation revealed by the above list is unsatisfactory. All these organisations, known by the initials of their titles — the meaning, purpose and inter-relationship of which leave the man in the street bewildered and indifferent — were created in response to different stimuli; their inter-relationship has never been investigated from the point of view of the paramount interest of Europe. The problems of coordination to which their existence gives rise have at the best been only incidentally examined. Even if it may be claimed with some justice that the existence of a number of separate organisations best corresponds to the degree of European unity at present acceptable to the majority of European public opinion, it is clear that it is time some qualified body reviewed the position as a whole.

7. The idea of an " investigation " is so often connected with the idea of economy for economy's sake that it is necessary to enter a firm caveat on this subject at the beginning. The aim of the investigation proposed in the Recommendation is not financial economy, though this may well be one of the results, but to achieve a concentration and economy of effort. Thus the annual cost of the Council of Europe[4] is less than that of a coastal minesweeper, and it represents only about 4 pfennigs per head per year of the population of, for instance, the German Federal Republic. Indeed, the total expenditure of the taxpayers' money on all European organisations, in which perhaps our chief hope of avoiding war resides, is very small indeed in comparison with the millions allocated in each national budget to the manufacture of weapons of destruction. It follows, therefore, that the basic preoccupation of the members of the Select Committee, the establishment

4. Financial year 1954 : £882,000.

of Avhich is now proposed, must not be a concern with the purely financial aspects of the question, nor have in any sense a negative character, but must take the positive form of a resolve to build up the strongest and most efficient European organisation possible in present political circumstances.

The will of the Consultative Assembly, approved by the Committee of Ministers, to make the Council of Europe the general framework of European activities will no doubt be one of the basic political factors with which the enquiry will be concerned [5].

## 4. IV. THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AS THE PARLIAMENTARY FORUM OF ALL EUROPEAN INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

8. In the recent debate on the Council of Europe which took place in the British House of Commons the question of overlapping was considered in some detail. Our colleague from the Committee on Economic Questions, Mr. Smithers, expressed this view :

" I believe that it'is-quite misleading to read out a long list of initials of organisations and to say 'cannot we roll them all into one and make them a single organisation'? My reason for saying so is quite simple and fundamental. If we had a world State, or even a European State, we could set up authorities with all-embracing qualities in the economic, social or any other field. But, so long as we have a world or a Europe divided up into many different political spheres, it is inevitable that we must have quite a variety of organisations to tackle the various problems which arise. »[6]

From what has been said it will be clear that the Committee on General Affairs, in making the present proposals, does not believe it to be practical politics at the present juncture to

" roll them all into one and make them a single organisation ".

But the situation is one that demands investigation. This will reveal whether or not, and where, some simplification is desirable and possible. The Committee on General Affairs therefore considered what body would be most suitable to conduct such an investigation, and what its terms of reference should be.

## 5. V. A SELECT COMMITTEE

9. The terms of the Recommendation are precise and require little further comment. In the discussion in Committee two points were stressed :

*a.* With regard to the composition of the Committee it should be at the highest level possible. This should especially be true of the Chairman, who would, moreover, need to regard his work in this capacity as full-time for a certain period, for instance, four months. Among the independent members with special qualifications should be included some Members of Parliament with experience as Representatives to the Consultative Assembly. Equally, however, the aim should be to keep the Committee as small as possible for the purpose of efficient investigation.

*b.* The terms of reference of the Committee should be to investigate the whole question of duplication of work between European organisations, and the connected question of providing a parliamentary forum for those organisations, with a view to the ultimate rationalisation of the relationships of European organisations as a whole. The Committee should be charged with making a comprehensive report and submitting proposals ; it should have full power to hear evidence from national and international civil servants.

It was considered that a Commission of Enquiry, with the widest possible terms of reference in the specific sphere involved, with extensive powers of investigation and with top-level members, could produce a report upon which, as one of the members of the Committee expressed it " we could safely build for a decade to come ". In the Committee's view the present situation, which has grown up over a number of years, cannot be transformed in an instant by some fiat from on high. What is important is that the Commission of Enquiry should make proposals now, for action over a period of time; and that, in the meantime, there should be a ban on the creation of further independent organisations.

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5. See Doc. 334.
6. Official Report, 21st February, 1955 Col. 972.

## 6. VI. CONCLUSION

10. The organisations concerned with European unification have developed without any overall plan. Any observer must note a certain duplication and waste of effort. A concentration of this effort by means of a better coordination of European activities has become a necessity at the present stage of evolution in Europe. But before any action can be taken it is necessary to be fully cognisant with the facts of the situation. An independent Commission of Enquiry must examine these facts, and outline different possible solutions. The political bodies will then be able usefully to consider the situation. The aims of the enquiry should be to provide them with the necessary information at the earliest possible opportunity.