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

Doc. 9
07 August 1950

Committee of Ministers' Message to the Consultative Assembly

Communication
Committee of Ministers

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Mr. President,

I have the honour to inform you that the Committee of Ministers, in the course of its present session, decided to supplement the Report which it had addressed to the Consultative Assembly by the observations set forth in the message, of which a copy is attached hereto.

I am, Mr. President,

Your humble and obedient servant,

Signed : SEAN MACBRIDE.

Committee of Ministers' Message to the Consultative Assembly

The Council of Europe has been in existence for barely a year. In the space of a few months, it has had to organise itself and make comprehensive studies of the many problems with which it was inevitably faced—problems which will be all the more difficult to solve in that they have existed for generations, and that they have been complicated by the war. Not only this, but this is the first time that Governments have sought to break with traditional habits of thought, free themselves of the trammels of nationality, and attempt to settle their difficulties jointly in a truly European spirit. Their efforts have not been in vain, and the hard work which has been done, and the contacts which have been made, over the past year, will not fail to show results.

A climate of co-operation has already been created. The Recommendations adopted in 1949 by your Assembly have indubitably had a bénéficial—perhaps even a decisive—influence on thé attitude of the Governments of the Member States of the Council of Europe in the course of recent months, as witness the action recently taken by the O. E. E. C., which reflects the feeling which found expression in the Assembly and its desire for reconciliation and unity. Thanks to the adoption of successive measures for liberalising trade and for establishing the European Payments Union, an important step forward has been taken towards the return to freedom of trade and of currencies. The O. E. E. C. 's activities will not, however, stop short here. It is even now examining new proposals which all have the purpose of hastening the creation of a European economic system in accordance with the spirit of the Statute.

Similarly, the Governments of the Member States of the Council of Europe have exerted their influence in the Economic Commission for Europe to facilitate the harmonious development of economic relations between the countries of Europe.

For their part, the French Government, desiring to make a substantial contribution to closer unity between the Members of the Council of Europe, on 9th May laid before a certain number of Member States a plan intended to coordinate the production of coal and steel and to foster the development of a European community. In the view of the authors of this plan, the problem is not so much one of achieving a degree of co-operation between the various national interests concerned as of bringing about a partial merger of sovereignty in a field

which, limited though it may be, is nevertheless of fundamental importance in the economic life of our peoples. It will be for the participating countries, in co-operation with your Assembly, to work for the common good.

Again, your Committee on Economic Affairs proposes to submit to the Consultative Assembly a plan for the creation of European Companies. The Committee of Ministers can only welcome the discussion of such a project. It would also welcome a debate in the Assembly on the French proposals.

At the same time, the Assembly will have before it proposals demonstrating the supreme importance which the Governments of the Member States of the Council attach to the preservation of human rights and the improvement of living conditions. One of these is a draft Convention for the preservation of the fundamental freedoms of the individual, inspired by the wishes which you yourselves expressed; the other is a draft Convention on the reciprocal treatment of nationals, on which your opinion is requested.

There is good ground for hope. We are confident that in its Debates this year the Assembly will once again open up new prospects for our consideration. Co-ordination between it and the Committee should, moreover, be much closer than hitherto since the Joint Committee, if you approve its establishment, will enable the two main organs of the Council to work in complete harmony.

Serious though the international situation may be to-day, it is nevertheless a good omen that, thanks to the participation in your work of new Members, Europe is able to make a greater contribution than before to the cause it seeks to defend.

As is stated in the Preamble of the Statute, our main concern is the pursuit of peace based upon justice and international co-operation. The Committee of Ministers, meeting a few weeks after the violation of international law by Northern Korea, is anxious to restate this vital principle.

The Committee suggests that the Assembly should in its turn express its devotion to the cause of peace by affirming even more categorically, in accordance with a vital provision of the Statute, its complete solidarity with the action of the Security Council of the United Nations for the defence of peace-loving peoples against aggression.