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Relations between the Consultative Assembly and national parliaments

Report[1]
Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy
Rapporteur: Mr Karl MOMMER, Germany

1. 1956 - 8th Session - Second part

A. Draft Resolution

The Assembly,

Reaffirming its determination to exercise its consultative function in the full significance of the term;

Considering that one of the surest methods of achieving this aim is to improve and develop its relations with the parliaments of member countries ;

Considering that the adoption of this method implies that those relations shall be of an organic and permanent character,

Decides :

1. There shall be set up a Permanent Working Party with the general task of maintaining close links between the Consultative Assembly and national parliaments.

2. This Working Party shall be made up of seven members freely appointed by the Bureau.

It shall elect a Chairman.

It shall meet as often as it considers appropriate.

3. The Working Party shall select texts from among those adopted by the Consultative Assembly, for transmission to the national parliaments. Where necessary, it shall decide what funds are required for the translation, printing and distribution of the selected texts.

4. It shall provide the Assembly each year with a general picture of the action taken in the national parliaments to implement the Assembly's decisions.

5. After each session of the Assembly, it shall assist the national delegations or their individual members in whatever steps they undertake to present the results of the Assembly's work to their own parliaments.

6. The Working Party shall, accordingly, establish all the necessary contacts, in particular with the Chairmen of the political groups, the Committee Chairmen and Rapporteurs, the " spokesmen " and the secretaries of the national delegations.

7. As soon as the Working Party finds it appropriate, it should report to the Assembly on how far the methods laid down in the present Resolution are proving effective for their purpose, and submit whatever further proposals are called for.

B. Draft Order to national delegations

The Assembly,

In pursuance of Resolution... (see draft Resolution above) setting up a Working Party for liaison with national parliaments,,

Invites all national delegations to appoint one or several " spokesmen " from their own number to be responsible for relations between the delegation and the Working Party. Their task will be to co-operate with the Working Party in all questions concerning the links between the Consultative Assembly and the national parliaments and thereby to facilitate the application of the Working Party's suggestions.

C. Draft Order to the Secretary-General

The Assembly instructs the Secretary-General to examine the problems involved, as far as the Secretariat-General is concerned, in the proposals given in the present report, and to submit his conclusions as soon as possible to the Bureau, which will discuss them with the Working Party.

D. Explanatory Memorandum

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1. In preparing the above draft Resolution and Orders the Committee on General Affairs has had in mind the debate which took place in the Assembly[2] on the original Report[3] presented by M. Dehousse on behalf of the Bureau.

2. The essence of the proposals in the Bureau's Report is quite clear. Some group is to select those texts adopted by the Assembly which have to be brought to the attention of national parliaments. Someone must be found to whom that group can pass on these selected texts in order to stimulate action in national parliaments. And the Secretariat-General will be required to give appropriate help at all stages of this process.

3. The debate in the Assembly on the original Report! showed that one or two members thought that the Report's proposals were perhaps a little too complicated and tended to " over-organise " the problem. And there was particular objection to the parliamentary attaches.

4. The foregoing revised texts should meet those objections. The draft Resolution on the Working Party remains untouched, for the Working Party is the core of the scheme. The draft Order to national delegations appointing "spokesmen" also remains. (The term" whip " has been dropped, as being too specialised a term of British parliamentary practice to be quite appropriate here.) In this draft Order, however, no reference is made to parliamentary attaches. It is envisaged that such help as the spokesmen of delegations and the Working Party need should be provided by the Secretariats of national delegations and the Secretariat-General of the Council of Europe.

5. The Committee on General Affairs believes that the above proposals are certainly as economical and simple as possible. They also have the virtue of being strictly experimental and provision is made (paragraph 7 of the draft Resolution) for a report to be made by the Working Party, as soon as it is found appropriate, on how far these methods prove practicable.

6. Clearly, if the Working Party is to function effectively, considerable help will be required from the Secretariat-General. Exactly what form this help will take, only experience can show. Accordingly, a draft Order has been made so that the Secretary-General can report on the problems which arise in connection with its new task.

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2. 14th Sitting, 17th October 1956.
3. Doe. 529.