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Renewable energies and the environment

Reply to Recommendation[1]: Recommendation 1879 (2009)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has taken note of Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1879 (2009) on "Renewable energies and the environment" and has brought the recommendation to the attention of the governments.

2. The Committee of Ministers considers it important that all states pursue energy policies with a view to ensuring secure, safe, sustainable, clean, accessible and affordable supplies of energy for the future. The development and promotion of renewable energies is an essential component of such policies and the list of specific suggestions outlined by the Assembly to this end are a useful contribution for member states to bear in mind.

3. The Committee of Ministers has transmitted the recommendation in question to the Committee of Senior Officials of the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning (CEMAT), particularly in view of its preparations for its 15th Session to be held in Moscow, Russian Federation in 2010. The comments received from the CEMAT are appended below.

1. adopted at the 1080th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (24 March 2010)

Appendix to the reply

Comments from the Committee of Senior Officials of the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning (CEMAT)

The Committee of Senior Officials of the CEMAT:

– thanks the Committee of Ministers for consulting it on Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1879 (2009) of 25 June 2009 on "Renewable energies and the environment";

– shares the concern of the Parliamentary Assembly concerning the need to implement effective and urgent measures in order to promote renewable energies;

– points out that Recommendation Rec(2002)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the CEMAT Guiding principles for sustainable spatial development of the European continent has a section on "Reducing environmental damage", according to which "Environmental problems that may result from inadequate co-ordination of sectoral policies or local decisions have to be prevented. To this end, spatial planning policy must give support to […] encouraging more environment-friendly forms of transport and energy systems […]" (Para. 37). Another section on "Developing energy resources while maintaining safety" mentions: "Spatial development policy supports the promotion of renewable energy sources as coherent, environment-friendly systems and the completion of energy transport networks at pan-European level. Particular attention should be paid to developing the transport of oil and gas from the North Sea, the Caspian Sea region and the Russian Federation. In view of the high levels of energy consumption in some economies, priority must be given to more efficient use of the energy and facilities already available. The energy efficiency of conventional power stations should be improved and air pollution reduced. This also contributes to reducing global warming. The security of older nuclear power plants should be increased. In addition, there are on the European continent numerous nuclear power plants whose service life will come to an end in the coming decades. The sites where they are located will have to be rehabilitated. This will result in new tasks for spatial development policy." (Para. 43-45);

– recalls that the Ljubljana Declaration on "The territorial dimension of sustainable development" adopted by the Ministers responsible for Regional Planning at the 13th Session of the CEMAT (Ljubljana, 17 September 2003), points out that "The Territory is a complex system, comprising not only urbanised, rural and other spaces, e.g. industrial land, but nature as a whole and the environment surrounding mankind. It is the bearing ground and indispensable framework of human dwelling and activity, and therefore the basis of sustainable development";

– notes that the CEMAT's work programme for 2006-2010, aimed at preparing its 15th Session, draws attention to the role of spatial development policies for a sustainable environment;

– proposes that the draft Moscow Declaration on "Future challenges: sustainable development of the European continent in a changing world", which will be put forward at the 15th Session of the CEMAT (Moscow, Russian Federation, 2010), should recognise the need to promote renewable energies and include this issue in its next work programme (2010-2013).