Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 969
06 April 1959

Action taken in accordance with Order No. 128 of the Assembly on the institutional reform of the Council of Europe

Report
Bureau of the Assembly
Rapporteur: Mr John LYNCH, Ireland

1.

On 16th October 1958, after discussing the report of the Bureau, Doc. 845, on the institutional reform of the Council of Europe, the Assembly adopted Order No. 128, as follows:

" The Assembly instructs its Bureau to undertake negotiations with 0 . E. E. C. with a view to ascertaining the point of view and suggestions of the latter on the draft Basic Agreement at present under consideration by the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe."

Accordingly, on 15th December 1958, the Bureau instructed the President of the Assembly to send a letter to the Rt. Hon. Heathcoat Amory, Chairman of the Council of 0. E. E. C. This letter reads as follows :

Paris, 15th December 1958.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that at its Sitting on the 16th October 1958 the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted an Order, No. 128, which instructed the Bureau " to undertake negotiations with the 0 . E. E. C. with a view to ascertaining the point of view and suggestions of the latter on the draft Basic Agreement at present under consideration in the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe."

This was at the end of a debate on the institutional reform of the Council of Europe in the course of which M. Bichet, of France, introduced a report proposing a " basic Draft Agreement " for merging the Council of Europe and 0. E. E. C. I enclose a copy of this report, Doc. 845.

The Assembly decided, however, that, before adopting the draft Resolution to be found on page 1 of the report, it would be valuable for members of the Bureau to have an exchange of views with the Council of 0 . E. E. C.and it was in these circumstances that Order No. 128 was adopted.

On behalf of the Bureau of the Assembly, I should now like to ask whether the Council of 0. E. E. C. would be prepared to receive the Bureau of the Consultative Assembly in order that this exchange of views could take place.

Perhaps I may recall that we have recently had the privilege of being received by the Intergovernmental Committee negotiating the Free Trade Area, and we have also, in the past, had meetings with the Interim Committee on the Common Market and Euratom, at both ministerial and official level, at Brussels. These meetings were valuable, and I very much hope in this case also the delegation could have the opportunity to put its views before the ministerial organ principally concerned.

We should be very grateful if this meeting could take place at the end of January or at the beginning of February 1959.

I have the honour to be...

Signed : Fernand DEIIOUSSE

During the January session, the acting Chairman of the Committee of Ministers drew the attention of the Bureau to difficulties in the way of negotiations between the Bureau and the Council of 0. E. E. C. The following correspondence was brought to the notice of the Assembly at the Sitting of 21st January 1959.

19th January 1959.

My dear President,

The attention of the Committee of Ministers has been drawn to Order No. 128 of the Consultative Assembly, instructing the Bureau of the Assembly to undertake certain negotiations with 0 . E. E. C.

The Committee of Ministers have asked me, as their Chairman, to draw your attention to Article 13 of the Statute which says that the Committee of Ministers is the organ which acts on behalf of the Council of Europe.

While recognising the value of contacts between the Consultative Assembly and the 0. E. E. C, the Committee of Ministers nevertheless consider that, in view of Article 13 of the Statute, it would not be appropriate for the Bureau to undertake actual negotiations with 0. E. E. C.

Yours sincerely,

Signed : L A N S D O W N E .

As the incident could accordingly be regarded as closed, M. Fernand Dehousse, President of the Assembly, addressed another letter to Mr. Heathcoat Amory.

Liège, 4th February 1959.

Dear Mr. Heathcoat Amory,

I should like to refer to my letter of 15th December 1958, in which I had the honour to propose to you, on behalf of the Assembly of the Council of Europe, that we should have an exchange of views between the Council of 0. E. E. C. and the Bureau of the Assembly on the possibility of merging the Council of Europe and the 0. E. E. C. I sent you a paper, Document 845, which sets out certain ideas that have been discussed extensively over the last few months in the Assembly of the Council of Europe in an effort to introduce a measure of rationalisation in the Fifteen or Seventeen- Power organisations of Europe.

I was able to discuss this matter during the recent session of the Consultative Assembly with Lord Lansdowne who, in view of Mr. Sclwyn Lloyd's illness, was acting on his behalf as Chairman of the Committee of Ministers. I explained to Lord Lansdowne that the Assembly had not adopted the resolution contained in Document 845, believing that the OEEC's views should first be ascertained, and it is for that reason that we should like to have the opportunity of a meeting with the Council of 0. E. E. C. Depending on the results of this exchange of views, the Assembly of the Council of Europe would, in accordance with the Statute, address a recommendation to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

I should like to add that I explained the situation in this way in a public statement to the Assembly on 21st January 1959 and I am glad that any misunderstanding that may, unfortunately, have occurred has now disappeared. Lord Lansdowne told me that he now accepted the position.

In view of this I hope that there are no further obstacles standing in the way of our proposed meeting, and I very much look forward to hearing from you in the near future about the views of the OEEC Council on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Signed: Fernand D E H O U S S E

To this letter, the Chairman of the Council of 0 . E. E. C. sent the following reply :

London, 12th March 1959, Treasury Chambers

Dear Monsieur Dehousse,

Thank you very much for your letter of 4th February proposing an exchange of views between the Bureau of your Assembly and the Council of 0 . E. E. C.

As you know, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe last December decided that they would consider again in April what steps we might take to rationalise the present working of the European organisations. The whole question is now being actively discussed by the Ministers' Deputies at Strasbourg; and while these discussions continue, I do not think the Council of 0 . E. E. C. will be in a position to give you any very positive views on the substance of the question. I should therefore prefer to postpone this meeting with your Bureau until our Governments have had the opportunity to develop their ideas further in discussions at Strasbourg.

Yours sincerely,

SSigned : D. Heathcoat A M O R Y .

President Dehousse acknowledged receipt of this letter as follows :

Liège, 22nd March 1959.

Dear Mr. Heathcoat Amory,

Thank you for your letter of 12th March in reply to mine of 4th February.

I have noted its contents and shall bring them to the knowledge of bhe Members of the Consultative Assembly.

I hope, however, that we shall be able to meet before the conclusion of the studies concerning the rationalisation of European institutions. It would certainly be of interest both to 0. E. E. C. and to the Council of Europe if we could arrive at a common point of view. I am sure, too, that this would be a useful contribution to present deliberations

Yours sincerely,

Signed : Fernand D E H O U S S E.