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European Prize

Communication

Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities
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1. I NTRODUCTION

In its Recommendation 53 (1953), the Assembly recommended to the Committee of Ministers that a European Prize be awarded annually to the municipality which had done most to promote the idea of European unity.

On 21st June 1955, in its Sixth Report, the Committee of Ministers informed the Assembly that it had approved, in the Budget for 1955, an estimate of 25, 000 francs for the institution of a European Prize to be awarded annually by the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs (Doc. 357, para. 106).

The Committee on Local Authorities has, to date, awarded the European Prize to the following municipalities :

In 1955, to Coventry, Berlin being associated in the award.

1956, to Puteaux and Offenbach.

1957, to Bordeaux and Turin.

1958, to Vienna and The Hague. In 1959 the Prize was awarded to Istanbul .

In making this decision the Committee on Local Authorities considered that the Prize should serve as a political instrument to ensure the expansion of the European idea. It should be not only a reward but also an encouragement .

Istanbul had made considerable progress. Situated between two continents it was not only, as had been said, a " bridge - head forward " but, indeed, a bridge-head for peace and world security ". With its rich past and its active population , this city had made an important and courageous contribution to the safeguard and the development of Western and European civilisation. Istanbul is, moreover, the capital of one of the most vulnerable members of the European community and was in the most difficult position of all. The award of the European Prize to the city and population of Istanbul was not only a mark of encouragement but also a token of gratitude ; a political act of some importance.

The Governor of Istanbul was informed of this decision. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman sent congratulations to the city and population.

The Committee on Local Authorities has also taken certain decisions regarding the way in which the funds allocated for the European Prize should be used and the procedure to be followed in the matter of presentation of the prize.



2. A. Utilisation of the appropriation of 230,000 French francs constituting the money value of the European Prize

1. According to Article 2 of the Regulations governing the European Prize (adopted by the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs on 8 th July 1955), the European Prize consists of a shield (which is held b y the winning municipality for six months or a year) , a replica of it (which the municipality keeps) and a grant to spent on arranging a journey abroad for young residents of the winning municipality.

2. At their 40th Meeting, held from 8 th to 16th June 1956, t h e Ministers' Deputies decided to include in the annual Budget, in addition to the sum of 250,000 francs earmarked for the Prize itself, an appropriation of 100,000 t o cover incidental expenditure such as the expenses of the Mayor of the winning municipality , cost of the diploma and medal, etc.

3. Ever since the Assembly has been expressing an opinion on the vote for its own activities, it has repeatedly urged that the amount of the European Prize should be increased to 1,000,000 francs (plus 250,000 to cover incidental expenditure)¹. The Committee of Ministers has not granted this request.

4. Experience shows that the sum of 100,000 francs, fixed in 1956 to cover incidental expenditure, has become inadequate , on accoun mainly of the increase in fares which has taken place since that time and the fact that , for several years now, the Prize has been awarded to two municipalities . The Secretary - General has , therefore, proposed that the Budget for 1960 should include an appropriation of 250,000 francs for the Prize and 250,000 for incidental expenditure.

5. In its draft Opinion ² on the 1960 Budget , the Committee on the Budget noted : " that, despite the repeated requests of the Assembly for an appropriation of 1,250,000 francs, the Committee of Ministers has never granted more than 350,000 (250,000 for the Prize and 100,000 (non-restrictive) for sundry costs). Hence the Committee on the Budget considered that the Secretary - General 's proposal for an appropriation of 500,000 francs (250,000 for t h e Prize and, in the light of experience, 250,0000 for sundry costs) may be recommended for approval ". The proposal of the Committee on the Budget was approved by the Assembly in its Opinion ? 31 of 24 t h April 1959.

6. Thus it was a question of considering how this sum of 250,000 francs should be used. Up to t h e present time, t h e money h a d been handed, in the form of a cheque, to the chief official of the winning municipality. When the Prize was shared between two municipalities , this s um was divided in t o two cheques of 125,000 francs each. As mentioned in paragraph 1 above, the Prize Regulations stipulate that this sum is intended o cover the cost of a journey abroad for young people.

7. In the Report which, on behalf of t h e Committee ; he presented at the European Conference of Local Authorities on 2 9 t h October 1958, M. Altmaier said : " The European Prize has acquired considerable symbolic value. The sum paid to the winning municipalities is negligible and carries no weight, at least so far as the l a r g e towns are concerned ; it is a mere token payment , nothing more. The Committee continue to plead for an increase in t h e money value of the. Prize, if this really cannot be granted , they would be in favour of purely a n d simply abolishing any cash payment to the winners. The Council of Europe will otherwise soon, become a laughing- stock . "

8. In these circumstances , the Committee considered that the Committee of Ministers should be informed of the impossibility of continuing to award such a meagre sum to the prize-winning city, particularly in view of the keen competition which had arisen and of the essentially political character of the award .

9. While maintaining its request that the amount of the Prize be increased to 1,000,000 francs, as urged in previous years, the Committee decided that the 250,000 francs now granted by the Committee of Ministers should be used to finance a visit to a number of the major European capitals by the successful schoolchild or student in a competition on a subject of European interest to be organised b y the Prize-winning city. The winner of the competition will receive his award from the Chairman of the Committee on the occasion of the " Europe Day " which the Regulations invite the chosen city to organise when the Prize is presented.

1. Recommendation 90 (1955), Opinion No. 19 (1956), Opinion No. 22 (1957), Opinion No. 28 (1958).

2. [Doc. 993](#).

3. B. Procedure for Presentation

The Committee also decided upon the following procedure.

1. Ceremonial presentation of the Prize and the complementary awards at a sitting of the European Conference of Local Authorities by the President of the Assembly, the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers and the Chairman of the Committee on Local Authorities. The Mayor of the Prize-winning municipality will be officially invited to attend.
2. Official presentation of the Prize to the winning municipality by the Committee on Local Authorities at the "EuropeDay" organised by the former, which might include two kinds of events :
 - a. ceremonial meeting of the Municipal Council attended by members of the Committee on Local Authorities;
 - b. public gathering during which the schoolchild or student successful in the competition organised by the Prize-winning city will receive his award.

Appendix APPENDIX

European Prize

I. Regulations

Article 1

A " European Prize offered by the Council of Europe shall be awarded each year by the Committee on Local Authorities of the Consultative Assembly to the municipality which it considers has done most to propagate the ideal of European unity.

Article 2

The Prize shall consist of a trophy to be held by the winner for one year; a reproduction of the trophy; and a cash grant to be spent on arranging a journey abroad for a young person resident in the winning municipality.

Article 3

The Committee on Local Authorities shall designate the winning municipality from among those which have submitted their candidature.

Article 4

Municipalities shall submit their candidature either through their senior official or through the association of local authorities of which the municipality is a member. Candidatures shall reach the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe at Strasbourg before 1st May each year.

Each candidature must be accompanied by a statement of the measures taken by the municipality concerned to propagate the ideal of European unity.

Municipalities which have been unsuccessful on previous occasions may maintain their candidature in succeeding years.

ARTICLE 5

Further provisions shall be made by the Committee on Local Authorities regarding the detailed application of the present regulations.

II. Further Provisions

(a) Form of Prize to be awarded

The Prize shall consist of the following :

1. A trophy in the form of a shield, made of wood or bronze with a bronze plaque decorated with allegorical figures and with a Latin inscription. This trophy shall be retained for one year by the winning municipality, after which it shall pass to the winner for the following year. The name of each municipality that has won the Prize shall be engraved or otherwise inscribed on the shield.
2. A small bronze replica of the trophy, suitable for fixing to a wall, to be retained permanently by the winning municipality.
3. A cash grant to be spent on a journey abroad for a young person resident in the winning municipality who has won a competition arranged by the municipality on a subject of European interest.
4. Any additional money grants which the Government of the country in which the winning municipality is situated, the associations of local authorities or any other body may agree, at the request of the Committee on Local Authorities to award.

(b) Manner in which the Prize shall be presented

1. The European Prize shall be handed, at a ceremonial sitting of the European Conference of Local Authorities, to the chief member of the winning municipality, whom the Council of Europe will invite for the occasion.

2. The European Prize shall be officially presented to the winning municipality by the Committee on Local Authorities during a " Europe Day arranged by that municipality. The ceremonies for that Day may include the following :

- a formal sitting of the municipal Council in the presence of the Committee on Local Authorities;*
- a public gathering of residents of the winning municipality.*

(c) Publicity to be given to the institution of the Prize and to the opening of the Competition

The necessary publicity shall be ensured in the following manner :

1. As soon as the regulations and other provisions have been agreed by the Committee on Local Authorities, a statement on the Prize will be broadcast by the Chairman of the Committee.
2. An official communique will be issued to the European press announcing the institution of the Prize and giving details of the regulations.
3. Governments will be invited to inform their local authorities of the institution of the Prize.
4. The Associations of local authorities will provide their members with any information they may require.