



Opinion 54 (1970)¹

Draft Intergovernmental Work Programme of the Council of Europe 1971-72

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having regard to the Committee of Ministers' decision henceforth to consult the Assembly on the draft Work Programme ;
2. Having been asked for an opinion on the draft Work Programme 1971-72,

A. Procedure and presentation of the Work Programme

3. Conveys to the Committee of Ministers its keen satisfaction at the introduction of the new procedure, which reflects the desire of governments to enable the Council of Europe's parliamentary organ to play a greater part in the organisation's intergovernmental activity ;
4. Welcomes the Committee's decision to draw up the Work Programme in future on a two-yearly basis, a measure which will facilitate co-operation between the Council's two organs ;
5. Welcomes also the steps taken by the Committee of Ministers to revise the structure of the Work Programme, and to make it a more rational and effective instrument which, by defining objectives and reclassifying activities, will give a clearer sense of purpose to the work in the various sectors, achieve greater co-ordination between them and provide a more coherent overall picture ;
6. Notes the Committee of Ministers' efforts to inform the Assembly both on the general conception of the Programme and on the reasons for including the various items, placing them in the general context of European integration and thus enabling the Assembly the better to appreciate the objectives of intergovernmental action ;
7. Notes, further, that the Secretariat will draw up a progress report on the implementation of the Work Programme and on all proposals for the discontinuance of activities in progress or the addition of new activities, and that this report will be communicated to the Assembly with the Committee of Ministers' conclusions ;
8. Notes, lastly, that the present draft Work Programme constitutes a transitional formula and does not yet embody all the improvements which the Committee of Ministers intends to make in the procedure and presentation of the Programme ;
9. Expresses the hope, in this connection, that the Committee of Ministers will see fit to meet the Assembly's request to be kept informed not only of the reasons that guide the Committee of Ministers in including items in the Programme - which has already been done - but also of the reasons for which the governments, or certain amongst them, refuse to include items recommended by the Assembly ;

B. General conception of the Work Programme

1. Assembly debate on 25 September 1970 (19th Sitting) (see [Doc. 2837](#), report of the Special Committee on the Intergovernmental Work Programme). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 September 1970 (19th Sitting).



10. Notes with satisfaction that the Committee of Ministers has, to a large extent, taken into account the Assembly's suggestions regarding the major priority areas in which the Council of Europe should concentrate its activities in the coming years, and that these priorities are reflected in the four major chapters of the Work Programme ;
11. Takes note of the various objectives and priorities defined within each of these major areas ;
12. Declares its intention to undertake a detailed examination of these objectives and priorities, pointing out that this will take some time and that it will not be possible to draw up and publish conclusions until a later session ;
13. Notes that this thorough examination, all the more necessary since it will be concerned, on the basis of these objectives and priorities, with the views of governments on European integration in the areas in question, will be possible now that the Programme is to be drawn up on a two-yearly basis ;

C. Rationalisation and programming of the intergovernmental activities at European level

14. Takes note of the Committee of Ministers' intention to base this two-year Programme increasingly on longer term programming ;
15. Takes note also of the Committee of Ministers' intention to continue to improve planning methods "aiming at the maximum possible co-ordination with other intergovernmental activities and the ensuring of the optimal use of resources" ;
16. Notes in this context the rapid deterioration in the situation since the Assembly's declaration in its [Opinion No. 51](#), in September 1969, of the need to fit the rational programming of the Council of Europe's activities into "the framework of a global co-ordinated programme of European intergovernmental activities, avoiding over-lapping and ensuring better use of resources";
17. Draws the attention of governments, as an example, to the problem of the environment, which most intergovernmental organisations now include among their activities, thus excessively dispersing resources which are already inadequate ;
18. Declares that it would be pointless to impose a discipline such as that of the Work Programme, excellent in itself, on an international organisation such as the Council of Europe, if the other organisations in which intergovernmental activities are pursued were not also subject to such discipline ;
19. Declares that this state of affairs is all the more unacceptable because :
 - 19.1. the Work Programme of the Council of Europe too often tends to accumulate second-line activities, only such matters being included in it as are not being dealt with by other organisations, whereas the opposite does not apply - the fact that the Council of Europe is already dealing with a particular matter cannot be adduced as a bar to other international organisations which are not bound by a systematic procedure such as that of the Work Programme, controlled and co-ordinated by the governments ;
 - 19.2. the Council of Europe is - with the exception of the European Communities and WEU, which have very specific terms of reference - the only organisation which has a parliamentary organ and is thus able to exercise effective democratic supervision over intergovernmental activities ;
20. Considers, therefore, that member governments should take the necessary steps to :

establish within the other international governmental organisations of which they are members the Work Programme procedure inaugurated by the Council of Europe ;

organise amongst themselves, as requested by the Assembly in [Opinion No. 51](#), a new field of cooperation and a new procedure whereby a global European Intergovernmental Programme could be drawn up which would :

 - 20.1. *be drawn up on the basis of long-range forecasts worked out jointly, on a permanent, scientific and systematic basis ;*
 - 20.2. *co-ordinate and rationalise the whole of the activities of the European intergovernmental organisations of which they are members ;*
 - 20.3. *distribute tasks among these organisations, and allocate funds on the basis of this distribution of tasks, and not vice versa ;*

21. Requests the Committee of Ministers to make preparations to this end for the organisation of a conference of interested governments, who alone have the necessary authority to ensure such effective co-ordination between the international organisations as may put an end to the squandering of available resources and to the present state of anarchy ;

D. Specific sectors of the Work Programme

Chapter 1 : Man's cultural development and permanent education

22. Recalls that the Council for Cultural Co-operation is presently engaged on restructuring its programme with a view to two main objectives, permanent education and cultural development, and that it takes an active part in this operation through its representatives on the Council for Cultural Cooperation ;

23. Hopes that, at a time when the aim of the new form of Work Programme is the improvement of the planning structure of intergovernmental co-operation, consideration will be given to the possibility of applying the same conception of programming to the scientific, cultural and educational parts before the final version of the Programme is adopted ;

24. Welcomes the inclusion of a scientific study of European multilateral co-operation in science and technology, and hopes that the Committee of Ministers will transmit this study to the Assembly for an opinion ;

25. Having regard to the ever-increasing impact of the problems taised by science and technology on the functioning of democratie institutions of government, hopes that the Committee of Ministers will, in due course, give its financial support to the 3rd Parliamentary and Scientific Conference on "Parliamentary democracy in the scientific-technological age" ;

26. Endorses the view of the ad hoc Committee of Governmental Representatives concerned with cultural development that "the role of the Council of Europe is not to become a sort of international research council", but, having regard to the Statute, believes that, radier than serving merely as "mediator between researchers and consumers (administrators and educators)" (p. 85 of [Doc. 2777](#)), the Council for Cultural Co-operation, together with the Committee of Ministers, should act as a policy- and decision-making body ;

Chapter 2 : The adjustment of laws and administrative machinery to present-day living conditions

27. Welcomes this chapter's new form and the room given in the Programme as a whole to legal questions, which is in keeping with the role the Council of Europe is playing in this field ;

28. Proposes that the Committee of Ministers should integrate the biennial Programme into a longerterm planning system, and lay down "medium-term" targets between the major aims of chapters and the detailed objectives of sections, thus affording more precise guidance for Council of Europe action during a given period ;

29. Suggests that the approach in some fields, such as civil and commercial law, should be made more systematic, and that the study of wider branches of law, such as transport law and civil liability (tort and breach of contract) in general, should be substituted for the examination of isolated questions ;

30. Believes that the Council of Europe has a special mission to ensure the protection of privacy, and that this question should be given prominence in Chapter 2 ;

31. Proposes that the Committee of Ministers should, in the Work Programme, confer on the main committees of legal experts the permanent duty to undertake a periodic review of the state of ratification and application in member States of all Council of Europe Conventions and Agreements, in order, where necessary, to facilitate ratification, the withdrawal of reservations and uniform application ;

Chapter 3 : The improvement of man's physical environment in the town and in the country

32. Thanks the Commutee of Ministers for having gone so far to meet the wishes expressed by its Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authoriries ;

33. Notes, in particular, the re-arrangement of the activities falling within the province of this committee, namely activities concerning the man-made environment (development of urban and rural communities, and safeguard of immovable cultural property), and the sector of the natural environment (conservation of nature and natural resources) ;

34. Notes that the Committee of Ministers has complied with a number of the requests relating to this sector which it formulated in its [Opinion No. 51](#), for instance with the inclusion in the Work Programme of a study on "methods of co-operation between local authorities" and by establishing the Committee on Co-operation in Municipal and Regional Matters on a permanent basis ;

35. Reiterates, however, its conviction that it is proving increasingly necessary for a European convention to be drawn up, and therefore stresses the urgent need for the proposed study to be carried out forth-with, so that the result for which the Assembly ([Recommendation 470](#)) and its Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities are pressing may be achieved speedily ;

36. Wishes to be closely associated with the definition of the Council of Europe's new action programme in the field of the natural environment, and at the various stages of its implementation, particularly by the transmission for opinion of important documents drafted by the technical committees ;

37. Urges the Committee of Ministers to accord high priority to the activities of the Council of Europe in the field of improving and safeguarding the environment in Europe ;

38. Expresses certain reservations at the placing of the study concerning the planning of mountain areas under Reference 411, as it feels that this study clearly belongs to the sector of regional planning and the studies undertaken by the Committee on Co-operation in Municipal and Regional Matters (Reference 3111, "Problems of rural depopulation and rural revival in the balance between town and country") ;

Chapter 4 : Development of economic and social structures, and improvement of public health conditions

39. Expresses satisfaction at the inclusion in the Work Programme "of activities concerning the problems of mountain regions, and of technological and scientific co-operation ;

40. Proposes :

- a. that consumer protection activities be expanded ;
- b. that the study on the problems of mountainous regions be expanded to cover the economic aspects of regional development in general ;
- c. that action be taken to co-ordinate the development aid policies of the Council of Europe member States ;

41. Emphasises again the importance it attaches to the synchronisation and harmonisation of population censuses, an item which has been deleted from the Work Programme ; and hopes that :

41.1. the Committee of Ministers will promote the implementation of certain recommendations of the United Nations' Conference of Statisticians on the question of the harmonisation of population censuses and that ;

41.2. the question of the study of the synchronisation of population censuses will be included again in the 1971-72 Work Programme ;

42. Draws attention to the fact that in many cases refugees residing in the Council of Europe member States are hampered in their careers because their qualifications are not recognised, and hopes that a study of this question will be included in the 1971-72 Work Programme ;

43. Considers that the promotion of a common policy and the harmonisation of national laws and practices in the field of social welfare and employment (Objective 421 of the draft Work Programme) are of particular importance for the unification of Europe, and suggests that they be given priority ;

44. Emphasises the importance of drawing up a European declaration on the principles of environmental health administration, as proposed in [Recommendation 562](#), and requests that this matter be included in the Work Programme for 1971-72 and also referred to the European Public Health Committee ;

45. Notes that the Agreement on "Au Pair" Placement leaves many questions of detail unsettled, and hopes that the model for the written agreement to be concluded between the person placed "au pair" and the receiving family will remedy this ;

46. Considers that the disabled often encounter special difficulties when travelling abroad because they do not benefit from the privileges to which they are entitled in their country of residence, and proposes including in the Work Programme the institution of a European Identity Card for disabled persons in all Council of Europe member States ;

47. Hopes that item 422/3 of the Work Programme (Exchange of young workers) will include young independent workers, such as young craftsmen ;
48. Notes with satisfaction that the item "European Farmers' Statute" has been included in the draft Intergovernmental Work Programme ;
49. Regrets, however, that the wording "Codification of special measures" does not accurately reflect the Assembly's aims in this field ;
50. Suggests rewording item 42134/1 as follows : "Elaboration of a declaration of political intent on the general measures to be adopted at national level for the welfare of farmers and their families".