



Recommendation 760 (1975)¹

Limits to growth and social values

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering that a slowing-down or halting of economic growth tends to lead to a reduction in the growth of government expenditure ;
2. Noting that the impulse to social justice in the countries of Western Europe has found considerable satisfaction in developing programmes of government expenditure on social provision ;
3. Believing that the internal stability and security of society depends ultimately upon the extent to which it is seen to be just, and thus rests upon a consensus of the majority of its members ;
4. Recalling that all governments admit the necessity of increasing government action - at least in the form of planning and centralised coordination - even at the expense of purely private initiative, at times of critical shortage ;
5. Emphasising that any general cut-back in the development of social programmes will cause the greatest hardship to those who have the greatest need of them ;
6. Considering that governments should in the future concentrate more explicitly on the social objectives to be achieved by their activities, and adjust their priorities accordingly within the limitations imposed by the economic situation ;
7. Considering that numerous possible means of improving the quality of life without additional expenditure have up till now been neglected ;
8. Recalling its [Recommendation 685 \(1972\)](#), on the institution of social reports by the governments of the Council of Europe member states, and [Resolution 565 \(1974\)](#), on the humanisation of working conditions in industrial society,
9. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

instruct its Committee of Experts on Social Security to examine the ways in which in each member state social security and taxation systems may be co-ordinated with each other and used as an instrument of social progress, in particular the redistribution of income in favour of the poorest members of society ;

instruct its Social Committee to evaluate the work done so far by the Council of Europe and other international organisations, notably OECD, in working out a blueprint for an internationally comparable report on the social situation in each member state, and to make proposals for the establishment of such reports in practice and for their submission at regular intervals which should not be shorter than three years ;

invite member governments in framing their policies to give a proper prominence to social objectives as the overall aims to be pursued, and to adopt the measures set out in the appendix.

1. Assembly debate on 24 April 1975 (6th and 7th Sitzings) (see [Doc. 3591](#), report of the Committee on Social and Health Questions). Text adopted by the Assembly on 24 April 1975 (7th Sitting).



Appendix APPENDIX

I. 1. To devote greater government resources to the aims :

of increasing substantially the incomes of the poorest members of society, in particular those who are not in employment ;

of ensuring that public provision in respect of health, housing and education reaches an acceptable level, especially where it is subsidised or provided free of charge to certain members of the community.

I. 2. To raise the funds necessary for the programme sketched in I.1 above, if limited economic growth restricts any natural increase of government revenue, not by external borrowing nor by increasing the money supply, but by either reducing government expenditure in other respects or by taking a greater proportion of gross national product for government revenue.

I. 3. To establish an obligatory national minimum wage at a sufficient level, applicable to both sexes and indexed on variations in the cost of living.

I. 4. To direct limited investment resources, so far as possible, into those sectors of the economy which most directly and essentially serve the needs of society.

I. 5. To encourage and direct enterprises, by means of taxation, grants and any other appropriate means, to adopt policies which would establish a better balance between the pursuit of profit and their responsibilities to society, particularly with respect to working conditions, use of resources and pollution.

II. 1. To concentrate public expenditure on scientific and technological development on projects designed to achieve some socially useful objective.

II. 2. To establish machinery for the co-ordination of different areas of technological development and application in such a way as to avoid waste and unnecessary duplication.

III. 1. To adapt employment structures in such a way as to ensure that improvements in productivity do not, in the absence of economic growth, lead to an increase in the number of persons unemployed.

III. 2. To improve the balance of the labour market through adequate provision of appropriate vocational retraining facilities.

III. 3. To ensure that those persons who are unemployed receive unemployment benefit adequate for the maintenance of a reasonable standard of living.

IV. 1. To submit to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, at regular intervals, which should not be shorter than three years, reports on the social situation in their respective countries, drawn up according to a blueprint to be established.