Recommendation 800 (1977)[1]

Environment policy in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. HavinRecalling the proposals set out in its Recommendation 752 (1975), on environment policy,g taken note of the report of its Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities on environment policy in Europe 1975-76 (Doc. 3907) ;

2. Noting with satisfaction the progress made in many member countries towards the framing of an active environment protection policy ;

3. Noting, however, that the number of conferences and meetings held on environment protection is no real indication of the governments' efforts to improve the environment, and warning, in this regard, against the danger of governments being tempted, on account of economic difficulties, to scale down their environment protection programmes ;

4. Although aware that any environment policy demands efforts, and even sacrifices, nevertheless considers that such a policy could stimulate economic recovery, notably through the development and application of new technologies to combat pollution and waste, and through research in the energy sector ;

5. Concerned at the reluctance of governments to undertake new international commitments on measures to combat pollution ;

6. Welcoming the foundation, in connection with the scientific co-operation exercise sponsored by the Committee on Science and Technology, of the European Association of Remote Sensing Laboratories (EARSEL Study Group), in co-operation with the Commission of the European Communities and the European Space Agency ;

7. Recalling the proposals set out in its Recommendation 752 (1975), on environment policy,

8. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

a. endorse the conclusions adopted by the European Ministerial Conference on the Environment, held in Brussels on 23 and 24 March 1976 ;

b. include in the Council of Europe Work Programme the pooling of information and experience, and the devising of model methods for assessing the ecological effects of public measures, with a view to co-ordination in country planning, in land-use, and in the planning of infrastructures and facilities ;

c. ensure, in this connection, close co-operation among the Council of Europe intergovernmental committees concerned with nature conservation and regional planning, and propose, if need be, the convening of a joint conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning and Ministers responsible for the Environment, to discuss matters of common interest, such as the protection of and planning in rural areas ;

1. Assembly debate on 25 January 1977 (22nd Sitting) (see Doc. 3907, report of the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 January 1977 (22nd Sitting).

d. promote a proper European policy for recreation areas and protected areas, comprising a detailed inventory compiled in accordance with predetermined criteria, particular attention being paid to frontier or transfrontier recreation areas and protected areas ;

e. orient the work of the relevant intergovernmental committees towards studying possible ways and means of preserving the natural and cultural values of the rural areas as a fundamental element of man's physical environment ;

f. make known the action it intends to take on Recommendation 772 (1975), on the problems concerning Rhine Valley groundwater, and draw the attention of the relevant national authorities to the Rhine Valley groundwater quality map produced in connection with the scientific cooperation exercise sponsored by the Committee on Science and Technology ;

g. make 1 December 1977 the deadline for the completion of the work of the ad hoc committee appointed to prepare a European Convention on the Conservation of Wildlife and Natural Habitats, and provide that committee with the requisite facilities so that this important instrument may be opened for signature by member states without delay ;

h. incorporate in the draft convention the proposals contained in Recommendation 783 (1976), on the protection of birds in Europe, emphasising the need to pay particular attention to educating the public, and envisage, for this purpose, a special campaign on the protection of birds and their habitats by the European Information Centre for Nature Conservation ;

i. conclude by the end of 1977 the bilateral negotiations on the draft European Convention for the Protection of International Watercourses against Pollution, which has been pending in the Committee of Ministers since 1974, and arrange for its signature without further delay, bearing in mind that the recent adoption of Community directives and the signature of a Convention on the Protection of the Rhine against Chemical Pollution in no way detract from the importance of this Council of Europe draft convention, in view, inter alia, of the minimum standards prescribed in Appendix I thereto.