Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 978 (1984)[1]

Forestry in Europe and the world

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Alarmed by the massive destruction of forests - between 15 and 20 million hectares per year - which at present takes place in large parts of the developing world and which may lead, unless corrective action is taken, to complete depletion in forty years' time ;

2. Aware that this destruction is the result of many factors, such as short-sighted profit motives, population pressure leading to over-grazing by cattle and excessive use of wood as domestic fuel, and the lack of clear forestry policies in many countries ;

3. Convinced that this development has seriously disturbed the ecological balance in the countries concerned, leading to increasing numbers of droughts, "dust bowls", floods and landslides, as well as to the spread of deserts in sub-tropical areas ;

4. Concerned also over the large deficit in the wood trade within the Council of Europe area, the loss of forests near urban and industrial centres, and the fact that so much of Europe's long-term production potential, estimated at 80 % over present production, is still not utilised,

5. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers invite the governments of member states to shape their forestry assistance to developing countries in such a way that it favours genuine economic development in rural areas, the establishment of an effective forestry administration and forestry educational system, and the protection of the environment through the introduction of cutting plans and the preservation of forests in sensitive areas such as water-catchment basins and desert-bordering regions ;

6. Calls on the governments of member states to seek to ensure that they - as well as multinational companies and organisations connected with forestry activity and especially those with a European origin or connection - conduct their business in such a way as to confer priority upon long-terme economic and environmental considerations ;

7. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers urge the governments of member states to take measures to increase European self-sufficiency in wood, and in particular :

7.1. to make low-yield forest areas more productive by better planting schemes and more intensive management ;

7.2. to undertake new afforestation programmes, for example on land less suited for agriculture, thereby also providing employment in rural areas ;

7.3. to make more economic use of residue wood products, such as stumps, branches, roots, saw-mill residue and the recycling of waste paper ;

7.4. to encourage rational management of smaller holdings, for example through the formation of forest management associations and cooperatives, and by providing technical and commercial advice ;

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1. Assembly debate on 31 January and 1 February 1984 (24th, 25th and 2bth Sittings) (see Doc. 5148, report of the Committee on Agriculture). Text adopted by the Assembly on 1 February 1984 (26th Sitting).

7.5. to introduce "zoning policies" by which forests can be protected from urban and industrial encroachment and continue to serve as a source of recreation for the general public ;

7.6. to help the European forest industry by preventing dumping of wood from certain third countries, and by allowing forest owners and industry to predict with greater certainty the future value of their investments ;

7.7. to take stringent measures to control the two main dangers which now threaten European forests : acid pollution and fires.