



Recommendation 1241 (1994)¹

Application of conventions concerning the environment

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The global nature of the environmental problems confronting us demands urgent and concerted international action giving practical form to the oft-expressed political will to find solutions to the problems endangering the Earth.
2. Among the array of instruments available to the international community, conventions -universal and regional alike -are essential to such action.
3. The Assembly is convinced that the existing conventions allow the realisation of a satisfactory environment protection policy without recourse to new instruments.
4. In this connection, it stresses the particular importance of the conventions on climate change and biological diversity opened to signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 and urges member states to set up and achieve targets to ensure that there is no greater level of pollution in the year 2000 than there was in 1990, and, in particular, that a further reduction to 60% of CO₂ emissions is achieved as soon as possible.
5. Unfortunately, it has to be said that the commitments undertaken at the signing of conventions are not always followed by concrete action which would permit these undertakings to be enforced. Furthermore, it is a pity that the number and importance of the reservations often made by signatory states substantially weaken those undertakings.
6. The effectiveness of conventions is, moreover, often severely jeopardised by the weakness or lack of any supervision and enforcement machinery.
7. Accordingly the Assembly is convinced of the need to give priority to measures which would enhance the application of the existing conventions and exploit their full potential.
8. The Council of Europe's Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) is unanimously held to be an effective instrument. It can also be an appropriate tool for applying at pan-European level the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity.
9. It is unfortunate that in the present context -when it would be advisable to reinforce the means made available for the purposes of the Bern Convention in order to ensure its optimum application -its Standing Committee should be compelled to consider reducing its activities because of the limited financial and secretariat resources at its disposal.
10. The Assembly deplores this, especially as it is convinced that a situation of this kind can only jeopardise the effective protection of our environment and weaken -instead of strengthening -the role which the Council of Europe can play in the protection of natural resources.
11. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
 - 11.1. give priority to improving the application of Council of Europe conventions;

1. See [Doc. 7076](#), report of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, Rapporteur: Mr Hardy. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 18 May 1994



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- 11.2. increase the budgetary and human resources allocated to the application of the Bern Convention so as to enable the convention's Standing Committee to fulfil its role properly in the protection of the environment, in particular with regard to the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity;
- 11.3. invite member states to take all legislative, administrative and technical measures to give effect to the undertakings they have themselves entered into.