Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 173 (1960)[1]

Reply to UNESCO's Fifth Report to the Consultative Assembly of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

The Assembly has studied with considerable interest the fifth report sent to it by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. The Assembly particularly appreciated the succinct yet comprehensive nature of this document, which gives a clear picture of UNESCO's recent activities.

It is not within the scope of the present document to consider in detail the schemes described in the UNESCO report. In the first place, however, the Assembly wishes to congratulate UNESCO on its achievements, all of which are directed to promoting those ideals of peace and harmony among mankind which it is the most earnest endeavour of the Assembly, likewise, to further. The Assembly therefore expresses the fervent hope that UNESCO may attain the aims it has set itself for this purpose.

The Assembly's intention in this reply is to show that at the European level the Council of Europe has been concerned with the promotion of peace and culture in a manner similar to that of UNESCO on the world-wide plane. In the interests of clarity the reply is divided into two sections :

1. Structural changes made in the Council of Europe, since the Assembly's last message to UNESCO, with a view to more effective action in the sphere of multilateral cultural co-operation;
2. Items in the cultural programme of the Council of Europe which are of immediate interest to UNESCO.

I. Multilateral European Cultural co-operation

The establishment of the Cultural Fund of the Council of Europe, on 1st January 1959, supplied the Council with a new instrument which may be expected considerably to enhance its efficiency in the sphere of multilateral co-operation by strengthening its administrative and financial potentialities. Like the Cultural Convention, which it is intended to serve, the Fund is open to the participation of countries which are not Members of the Council of Europe. It supplements the two existing cultural bodies, with whose terms of reference and activities UNESCO is already acquainted -the Committee of Cultural Experts and the Cultural Committee of the Assembly.

The purposes of the Fund include the provision of assistance to European institutions which already exist, or which may later be established to promote European cultural co-operation in the educational, scientific and cultural fields; the provision of aid to individual or collective activities of European interest in the same fields; and the encouragement of educational, cultural and scientific projects extending beyond the national framework.

The cultural budget of the Council of Europe has now been cancelled and is replaced by an annual grant of 400,000 new French francs, made to the Fund by the Committee of Ministers and guaranteed for three years.

1. (see Docs. 1010Docs. 1010, UNESCO's Fifth Report, and Doc. 1099, Report of the Cultural Committee). Text adopted by the Standing Committee, on behalf of the Assembly, on 4th March 1960

This sum is augmented by :

1. subscriptions from countries such as Spain which, though not Members of the Council of Europe, have acceded to the Cultural Convention;
2. voluntary contributions from member countries of the Council of Europe;
3. private contributions, gifts or legacies.

The Cultural Fund is responsible for establishing its own connections in member countries. The Fund is not merely an instrument of intergovernmental co-operation, but is intended to develop extensive connections with the non-governmental section, both public and private. It was with this view that Assembly Resolution 163 called for the establishment of National Committees in member countries.

These National Committees have the twofold purpose of arousing public interest in the cultural activities of the Council of Europe -and thus in the general activities of the Council -and of giving moral and financial support to the work of the Fund by raising as much money as possible in their respective countries.

With the creation of the Cultural Fund, the cultural work of the Council of Europe entered a new phase -and will henceforth take three different forms :

1. MAJOR PROJECTS

The "Major Projects", following the method so successfully applied by UNESCO, are intended to facilitate concentration of effort in a specific field. Three of these "Major Projects" have been decided upon, and are likely to be of outstanding interest to UNESCO.

(a) Universities

The European Universities Committee already acts as an official advisory body to the Committee of Cultural Experts. With its transfer from WEU to the wider field of the Council of Europe this Committee's programme will probably become one of the Fund's major projects.

(b) Youth

On the initiative of the Committee of Cultural Experts, a meeting of senior civil servants responsible for youth questions will be held in Paris in the spring of 1960; it will draw up a programme whose execution will depend largely upon resources provided by the Cultural Fund.

(c) Education

A meeting of senior officials of departments of education (primary, secondary and technical) was held in Paris from 4th to 6th November 1959. The meeting suggested a programme for the Committee of Cultural Experts in this field and recommended that they set up a body to study educational problems.

2. PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY ACTIVITIES

The traditional cultural activities of the Council of Europe, which are known to UNESCO through the attendance of its observer at meetings of the Committee of Cultural Experts, are being fully maintained and even expanded.

3. SUBSIDIES

The most novel aspect of the future work of the Cultural Fund is the part it is intended to play in the non - governmental sphere. Article 2 of the Statute of the Fund describes this role as being to :

a. support existing European institutions working in the educational, scientific and cultural fields, or such institutions of this nature as may be set up within the framework of European co-operation ;

b. support individual or collective activities of European interest in the same fields;

c. support projects of an educational, cultural and scientific nature extending beyond the national framework.

In practice, this will take the form of granting subsidies to the organisations concerned, and will in effect improve the co-ordination of non -governmental cultural activities. The importance of this last activity of the Fund deserves to be emphasised, for it is likely to establish the Council of Europe as the focal point of the activity of those non -governmental organisations which have so far been conducting their cultural work in Europe in isolation. The Assembly has constantly advocated this intensification of collaboration with the non-governmental organisations. It is aware that UNESCO has had considerable experience in this field and hopes that it will be possible to draw upon that experience for the future benefit of the Fund.

II. Specific activities of the Council of Europe which are of immediate interest to UNESCO

PARTICIPATION IN THE EAST-WEST MAJOR PROJECT

The Assembly notes with satisfaction that the Council of Europe has now embarked upon active collaboration in the East-West Major Project. The Committee of Cultural Experts, at its 15th Session, recommended that the Administrative Board of the Fund should make an appropriation for this purpose in the budget during forthcoming years. In 1960 the first instalment of this appropriation will make available to UNESCO copies of the following publications :

a. the volume The Europe We Live In;

b. the catalogue of the European Exhibition of "The Romantic Movement", held in London in 1959;

c. the catalogue of the European exhibition of "Les sources du vingtième siècle: les arts en Europe de 1884 a 1914", to be held in Paris in 1960;

d. the volume now being published summarising the proceedings of the conferences on the revision of history text books; The following will also be provided :

e. a visual record of the London exhibition;

f. a visual record of the Paris exhibition;

The Assembly also considers that the member countries of the Council of Europe might make a considerable contribution to the major project by helping to establish a museum of European art in an Asian country. It is glad to be able to announce that this question is now being studied by the Committee of Cultural Experts.

RATIFICATION OF UNESCO CONVENTIONS

UNESCO is aware of the interest taken in its Conventions by the Assembly, which was gratified to learn that the UNESCO General Conference adopted two Conventions on the expansion of exchanges of publications - a Convention concerning the International Exchange of Publications, and a Convention concerning the Exchange of Official Publications and Government Documents between States.

Mention should be made here of the action taken by the Assembly's Working Party on relations with national Parliaments, with a view to following up the recommendations adopted by the Assembly in May 1958, calling upon member countries of the Council of Europe to ratify the conventions previously concluded.

(a) Recommendation 162, concerning the Convention on the Preservation of Cultural Property in the event of Armed Conflict

This Recommendation has on four occasions been referred to the Working Party's spokesmen in the national parliaments; as a result, questions have been put to Governments on three occasions -to the Austrian Parliament on 29th October 1959, and to the House of Commons of the United Kingdom on 24th November 1958 and 30th October 1959.

Replying to a question asked in the Assembly itself during the Session of April 1959, the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers said that the Committee intended to call the attention of the various Governments to the desirability of ratifying this Convention, so that as many countries as possible might be able to attend the meeting to be held in 1961.

(b) Recommendation 163, on the international agreement on the importation of objects of an educational, scientific or cultural character

This document has twice been transmitted to its spokesmen by the Working Party on relations with national Parliaments ; as a result, a question was put in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom on 24th November 1958.

CONCLUSION OF CULTURAL CONVENTIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Finally, the Assembly wishes to draw UNESCO's attention to the signature by the Committee of Ministers, on 14th December 1959, of the Convention on the Academic Recognition of University Qualifications. This is the third in the series of Conventions on the equivalence of university degrees and diplomas.