Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 119
28 August 1950

In reply to the Report and the Message of the Committee of Ministers

Conclusions[1]
Parliamentary Assembly

1. Resolution adopted 28th August 1950 at the conclusion of the Debate on the Second Report from the Committee on General Affairs

1. The Assembly, having before it the Report and the Message of the Committee of Ministers, has noted with satisfaction that the Committee of Ministers has supplemented its Report with the political considerations contained in the Message. It has taken note of the decisions taken during recent months with a view to the Unification of. Europe, as set forth in the Message. It hopes that they will be the forerunners of further specific measures. In particular, it warmly welcomes the initiative of the French Government.

2. The Assembly has recognised readily that account must be taken of these results in judging the actions of the Committee of Ministers, which is the representative organ of the Governments. But it emphasises that this very fact bears witness to the imperative necessity of effecting a closer co-ordination between the existing inter-Governmental organisations. In particular draws the attention of the Committee of Ministers to the Recommendations which it has adopted on this matter.

3. The Assembly has welcomed the statements made by the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers and M. Schuman. It has requested me warmly to thank them. It regrets however, that the Representative of the Committee of Ministers should not have been in a position to reply to the questions asked by the various speakers. The Assembly, indeed, considers it essential for the progress of its work and for the development of the Council of Europe as a whole, that both Representatives of the Committee of Ministers and Ministers of the Member States should take an active part in its Debates.

4. The Assembly thanks the Committee of Ministers for giving it the opportunity of proclaiming its agreement with the action taken by the Security Council of the United Nations and for thus enabling European public opinion to express itself on the gravest problems which are now causing such deep anxiety in our countries. The Assembly declares that it is only by the closest liaison between the governments of democratic Europe whose mouthpiece is the Committee of Ministers and the European Parliaments of which the Assembly is the most qualified representative that it will become possible for the people to be fully associated with the grave measures which have now to be taken by the free States of Europe.

5. It is these very considerations that have caused the Assembly to regard the conclusions of the Statutory Report of the Committee of Ministers as extremely disappointing. The main part of the decisions taken by the Committee has only been concerned with questions of internal organisation or of procedure. With the exception of the Convention on Human Rights, the few Recommendations adopted by the Committee have only been concerned with secondary questions.

6. It would appear that this lack of effective liaison between the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly has prevented the Committee from grasping the immense importance that the Assembly attaches to consideration being given to its Recommendations. Whatever may have been said, the Assembly is

1. See Doc. 107, Report.

composed of politicians who fully recognise the gravity of their responsibilities. Consequently, the Assembly regrets that the Committee of Ministers should not have seen its way to make fitting use of an organisation that came into being as it undoubtedly did under the pressure of public opinion in the Member States, and which has received the approbation of the Parliaments of those countries.

7. Faced with the hesitancy of the Committee, the Assembly has endeavoured to propose modifications or interpretations of the Statute which, in its opinion, would be calculated to improve the functioning of that instrument. But the Assembly did not seek to substitute itself for the executive power. Its role with regard to questions affecting European union is to formulate proposals of a general character and to define the principles of the political action which it recommends to the Governments. It will then appertain to those Governments to work out detailed plans of action capable of being put into effect. On the other hand, the Assembly, which is the expression of European public opinion, is justified in asking that the Committee of Ministers should provide them with definite plans, largely taking into account the Recommendations passed by the Assembly. The Assembly is ready to give its complete support to such plans, in conformity with its mission, and with the hopes that the peoples have placed in it.

8. It is in this spirit that the Assembly has sought, during the present Session, to confirm and supplement its previous Recommendations. It expresses the firm hope that the Committee of Ministers will acquaint it, before the opening of the second period of its present Session, of its first positive decisions on these Recommendations, decisions which, it hopes, will be of a favourable nature.