

ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1989 (2011)¹

Final version

Granting of participatory status to the international non- governmental organisation **ANDANTE**

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Andante European Alliance of Catholic Women's Organisations applied for participatory status with the Council of Europe in 2008. In March 2010, at the end of the two-year observation period, the chairperson of the association renewed the application in a letter to the Civil Society/NGO Division of the Directorate General of Democracy and Political Affairs of the Council of Europe.

2. In her reply of 9 July 2010, while noting that the Andante association had participated in the work of the Council of Europe's Conference of International Non-governmental Organisations (INGOs), the Head of the Civil Society/NGO Division stated that she was not aware of any concrete co-operation that Andante had had with the Council of Europe during the observation period. She referred to the ongoing reform of the Council of Europe and the rationalisation of its activities. She also mentioned the evaluation of relations between the Council of Europe and INGOs and the possible changes to the criteria for granting participatory status to them. In conclusion, she indicated she was hesitant about the possibility of any concrete co-operation between Andante and the Council of Europe.

3. On 29 September 2010, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe communicated to the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe the names of the INGOs to which he had decided not to grant participatory status with the Council of Europe. The Andante European Alliance of Catholic Women's Organisations was one of those organisations.

4. Following the objections to this decision from several members of the Parliamentary Assembly, the Committee of Ministers referred the matter to the Assembly, with a view to deciding whether or not to grant participatory status to the Andante association, in accordance with paragraph 15 of the Appendix to Committee of Ministers Resolution Res(2003)8 on participatory status for international non-governmental organisations with the Council of Europe.

5. The Assembly recalls that the conditions to be met by INGOs in order to obtain participatory status are listed in paragraph 2 of the Appendix to Resolution Res(2003)8:

"2. Participatory status may be granted by the Council of Europe to INGOs:

- a. which are particularly representative in the field(s) of their competence, fields of action shared by the Council of Europe;
- b. which are represented at European level, that is to say which have members in a significant number of countries throughout greater Europe;
- c. which are able, through their work, to support the achievement of that closer unity mentioned in Article 1 of the Council of Europe's Statute;
- d. are capable of contributing to and participating actively in Council of Europe deliberations and activities;
- e. which are able to make known the work of the Council of Europe among European citizens."

6. The Assembly observes that the Andante association:

6.1. is one of the few women's associations that have applied for participatory status with the Council of Europe, and it is particularly representative of Catholic convictions in the field of promoting women's rights and the role of women in society, which are also important fields of action of the Council of Europe;

6.2. is well represented at the European level, given that it has 22 member organisations in 13 member states of the Council of Europe;

6.3. advocates the recognition of values shared by the various cultures and a commitment to the common good from a female perspective and, accordingly, supports the achievement of a greater unity as set out in Article 1 of the Statute of the Council of Europe (ETS No. 1);

6.4. has regularly and actively participated in the activities of three committees of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe – namely the Human Rights Committee, the Culture, Science and Education Committee and the Social Cohesion and Eradication of Poverty Committee – as well as the Gender Equality Transversal Group, by making a contribution, for example, in the context of the preparation of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, the 2010 questionnaire on the implementation of the revised European Social Charter (ETS No. 163) and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210);

1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 25 November 2011 (see [Doc. 12780](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, rapporteur: Ms John-Calame; and [Doc. 12781](#), opinion of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, rapporteur: Ms Gafarova).

6.5. helps, particularly through its electronic newsletter, to disseminate information on Council of Europe activities among the members of its network.

7. In these circumstances, the Assembly does not share the doubts expressed with regard to the Andante association's ability to work together in a fruitful manner with Council of Europe bodies. The Assembly also believes that the refusal to grant this association participatory status cannot reasonably be based on possible changes to the criteria for granting participatory status. This argument is both illegal, because the only applicable criteria are those in force, set out in Committee of Ministers Resolution Res(2003)8, and illogical, because it is impossible to predict the conclusions of the current debate and therefore to know how the Andante association might be affected by any change to the current criteria.

8. The Assembly therefore considers that the Andante European Alliance of Catholic Women's Organisations fully meets all the conditions listed in paragraph 2 of the Appendix to Committee of Ministers Resolution Res(2003)8 and accordingly recommends that the Committee of Ministers grant it participatory status.