

Resolution 1870 (2012)¹

Final version

The need for independent and credible expert assessments

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Recent events have highlighted the vital need for independent, impartial expert assessments in fields such as the environment, health, energy, finance or civil protection.
2. Too many expert assessments are based on causal hypotheses, the implications of which are sometimes unknown. Experts therefore often lack the requisite distance to gauge the medium- and long-term impact on the environment and human health.
3. In this context, the Parliamentary Assembly notes that the findings of these assessments vary according to the source of funding, and that an expert's approach can be different when assessments are made after incidents, when the implications are economic, financial and possibly political.
4. The Assembly regrets that economic interests and the lack of full, transparent information have led to many health care scandals (contaminated blood and growth hormones, asbestos, etc.), which have had serious repercussions on human health.
5. The Assembly considers that a legal framework could help reinforce the credibility of expert assessments by preventing external pressure.
6. The Assembly considers that if expert assessments are to be transparent and independent, they must be the subject of a debate in which all the different points of view can be expressed, and it would strongly recommend involving representatives of universities, scientific and technological research circles and non-governmental organisations, either as experts or as observers.
7. The Assembly also stresses the need to ensure the traceability of expert assessments as a means of guaranteeing their independence.
8. The Assembly consequently invites the governments of member and non-member States of the Council of Europe to:
 - 8.1. call on the services of independent experts, particularly in fields requiring in-depth scientific and technical expertise;
 - 8.2. set up a public fund to finance "sensitive" expert assessments;
 - 8.3. draw up a handbook of good practice and set up a high-level multidisciplinary committee responsible for ensuring compliance with ethical rules;
 - 8.4. establish a system of consultation with representatives of civil society;
 - 8.5. prevent conflicts of interests, particularly vis-à-vis "sensitive" expert assessments, by means of a declaration;
 - 8.6. introduce an assessment traceability system in order to enhance transparency and independence;

1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 9 March 2012 (see [Doc. 12873](#), report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Mr Preda).



- 8.7. ensure proper follow-up of the consequences of expert assessment conclusions;
- 8.8. systematically disseminate expert assessment conclusions;
- 8.9. set up joint committees for transfrontier expert assessments;
- 8.10. adopt procedures for ensuring transparency and public information.