



Doc. 12

05 May 1951

Principle of European Unity

Report¹

Relations with European Non-Member Countries

Rapporteur: Mr Karl Georg PFLEIDERER, Germany

1. 1951 - 3rd Session - First part



A.

1. The principle of European Unity

1. The report of the Special Committee takes as its premise the unity of Europe as laid down in the Preamble to the Statute. The Member States have (although they do not collectively make up the whole of Europe) determined upon the union of all Europe as their programme; they have deemed it necessary "to create an organisation which will bring European States into closer association". In consequence, the Signatories created the Council of Europe in a form which could embrace the whole of Europe, and have left it open for the remaining States to accede at a later date. The Consultative Assembly has, moreover, set up a Special Committee whose task is to draw attention to the full union of Europe which still remains to be achieved, and to watch over the interests of the nations not represented in the Council of Europe.

2. Through the mere fact of its existence, as called into being by the Consultative Assembly, the Special Committee is to be considered, above all, as the embodiment of the principle of European Unity, and this fact constitutes its significance.

3. It is to be regretted that certain of the free States of Europe are not yet Members of the Council of Europe, either because they refuse to join it, or because their political systems are not yet in accordance with the principles laid down in the Preamble to the Statute.

4. If, then, Europe forms a Unity, and if this Unity is considered to be a principle which deserves protection, all measures which have led to the division of Europe and especially those which are referred to collectively as the "Iron Curtain", should be held to be incompatible with the unity of Europe. The Council of Europe must never become resigned to the partition of Europe. It must constantly consider the reunion of all those parts of Europe at present separated as one of its most important aims.

5. The Council of Europe therefore should never fail to reaffirm European Unity by all available means; it should give assurance of its sympathy and support to all those who are loyal to the principle, and who devote their activities to its preservation and, where necessary, to its re-establishment. - Above all, the Special Committee should keep alive the ideal of European Unity within the Council of Europe itself. It must ensure that the interests of States not represented in the Council of Europe are taken into consideration in the work of building up a United Europe and must take care that the door is always kept open for these countries. For instance, in planning functional organisations for Europe, of whatever kind, these countries should not be disregarded, and every existing link should be strengthened between the nations not represented in the Council of Europe and those which are so represented. The integration of the O. E. E. C. and the Council of Europe, would in particular enable the links between the Council of Europe and Switzerland, Portugal and Austria to be strengthened.

2. The principle of European cultural solidarity

6. The most delicate question with which all European nations are faced is to know how to put an end to the alienation which has developed between the democratic States and the totalitarian States, especially those of central and eastern Europe. May I, as a rapporteur of German nationality, add here that this problem has already assumed an intrinsic importance in the question of a reunion of the two parts of Germany at present separated from one another. - In this respect the German problem is at the same time a European one. We know that the Council of Europe regards it as one of its main objects to further the "spiritual and moral values which are the common heritage of their peoples and the true source of individual freedom, political liberty and the rule of law, principles which form the basis of all genuine democracy" These principles are the only possible foundation for Europe. Meanwhile the nations in question which are not represented in the Council of Europe have severed themselves from the nations constituting the Council of Europe not only in a political, moral, cultural and psychological respect, but also in their economic and social make-up, both in town and country, in industry and agriculture. All indications of the way of life of these nations, therefore, and all problems arising from differences between democratic peoples and those living under a totalitarian regime, must be studied in a careful and scientific manner; and furthermore, the Special Committee should maintain contacts with competent institutions and should place the results of the latter's research at the disposal of the Council of Europe. - Europe's value and significance for the world has always lain in the wealth and variety of its national civilisations. Europe, for its own sake, cannot afford to allow distinguished and flourishing European civilisations to languish and perish, thereby impoverishing and weakening the entire continent. Europe cannot forego the principle of the cultural solidarity of its peoples.

3. The protection of European cultural solidarity

7. The Council of Europe should therefore consider it as one of its most urgent duties to preserve and to further the cultural inheritance and national civilisations of those peoples brought by force under totalitarian yoke. The only environment in which this can take place is among the exiles living in democratic countries. Although considerable attention has been paid to their problems, very little has been done to assist the exiles in preserving their national cultures. The organisations and institutions of a cultural or scientific character which exist among the national groups of refugees, these receive only such small help as the hard-pressed people themselves can spare them out of their own feeble resources, but nowhere do they receive any kind of official support or encouragement. The same is true of students, university professors and other educated persons, upon whose abilities and knowledge the intellectual standard and the future of their nations will depend. There are many ways in which the Special Committee can help in this respect, particularly by making recommendations to Governments. But even resolutions drawing attention to these problems could be of value, inasmuch as they could be used to support various private measures for helping these organisations, institutions and groups. In this respect the Special Committee will have many questions to consider, and in particular will have to work out a programme, in consultation with the Committee for Cultural and Scientific Questions, and in close liaison with the Special Committee on Refugees. The basis of this work should be a survey drawn up by the Secretary-General of the cultural and scientific organisations and institutions existing among the different national groups of refugees.

8. It is obvious that tasks such as those referred to above cannot be carried out without the co-operation of the refugees themselves. On the other hand, it is to be remarked that the exiles are themselves split up into groups of widely divergent points of view, and that they need to increase their efforts to minimize the controversies which are, it is true, an unavoidable element in public life, but which in their case are even more prevalent than is usual; and to reach useful and productive compromises by means of mutual exchange of views. The Special Committee regards as a great advantage the unification of exiles which has already come into being in the form of the Central and East European Section of the European Movement. The latter has embraced as its political creed the idea of the unity of Europe and endeavours to solve its own difficulties and differences from this point of view. In fulfilling its terms of reference the Special Committee will therefore accept with gratitude the knowledge, experience, documentary material and suggestions of the Section, and will give them careful consideration. This does not mean that the Section should have a monopoly in this respect or that other organisations should be excluded. Exiled personalities who distinguish themselves in this work and have rendered their home countries good service should receive the aid and support which they merit.

4. The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

9. To conclude this Report, and to sum up its central purpose, the Special Committee considers it to be its duty to express the fervent hope that the non-Member States may soon be in a position to adopt and to put into practice the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which the Council of Europe has made its basic qualification for membership and its moral code.

B. Draft Recommendation²

The Special Committee to watch over the interests of European nations not represented in the Council of Europe submits to the Assembly the following draft Recommendation :

The Assembly recommends :

That the Council of Europe endeavour to obtain the collaboration of all the available information services in making known, in the languages of non-Member countries, the existence, aims and achievements of the Council of Europe. This information should take the form of objective statements of fact and should draw particular attention to the importance of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which represents an expression of that moral law from which the Council of Europe draws its inspiration.

That all steps be taken to ensure that the interests of non-Member States are constantly borne in mind by the Council of Europe. To this end the Assembly recommends in particular :

- a. that the States in question should be connected as closely as possible with the activities of the Council of Europe, and that they should be invited to take part in such activities, should an appropriate occasion arise;*
- b. that the States in question be encouraged to participate in the work of the various European Organisations, whether the latter take the form of Specialised Authorities established on the initiative of the Council of Europe, or of other Organisations of a political, economic, juridical or cultural character in which European States combine to work together.*

2. Referred to the Committee. See 15th Sitting.

C. Draft Resolution³

The Special Committee to watch over the interests of European nations not represented in the Council of Europe submits to the Assembly the following draft Resolution :

The Assembly resolves :

That the Special Committee enter into relations with the organisations which are competent to study and report on the internal problems of the States cut off from the Western world, in order that the knowledge, experience, documentary material and suggestions of such organisations may be made available in connection with the activities of the Council of Europe;

That the Secretariat-General undertake a study of the cultural and scientific organisations and institutions which have been established within the various national groups among the refugees.

That a programme be drawn up in collaboration with the Committee on Cultural and Scientific Questions, with the aim of maintaining and developing the unrestricted activities of refugees in the cultural and scientific fields;

That appropriate references be included in the Recommendations and Resolutions of the Assembly.

3. Adopted. See 16th Sitting and Res. 4.