Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 59
02 September 1949

Methods by which the Council of Europe can develop cultural cooperation between its members

Report
Committee on Culture, Science and Education
Rapporteur: Mr Victor LAROCK, Belgium, Socialist Group

1. PREAMBLE

1.1.

European culture has its sources in the thought and work of free peoples based on centuries of tradition. It is one and varied. Its variety is derived from its origin. The differences in the structure and living conditions of nations are reflected in it, as are the many forms of free collective effort from which it comes. Generations of men and women of all social classes have left their mark on it.

It is one in its respect for the human person, for the supremacy of the spirit, for freedom of opinion and the unfettered expression of ideas; in its uncompromising opposition to every form of tyranny.

It is at the service of man, and not of any one nation or class. No national or ideological consideration may prevail against it.

No power can be allowed to prohibit or impede the individual's search for truth.

Culture cannot be regarded as an instrument of production. It cannot be measured by the technical progress which it permits, nor by the resulting increase in power. It is embodied essentially in the disinterested search for knowledge and in a flowering of personal qualities, which may assume the most elevated or the most humble form according to the individuals concerned.

Culture must not be the privilege of a minority. Every man is entitled to it, just as he is to freedom, and it is the duty of every democracy to ensure access to it for each of its citizens, irrespective of economic and social inequalities.

Those principles have been admitted unanimously by the Committee, who formulated the draft Recommendations hereunder:

2. RECOMMENDATIONS SUBMITTED TO THE ASSEMBLY

2.1. Cultural conventions. — Free circulation and free exchange of cultural works. — Co-operation in scientific research. — Aid to cultural organisations

The following Recommendation is made to the Committee of Ministers:

to establish a system of cultural conventions between the Member States of the Council of Europe, in the spirit of the agreements which have been already concluded between several of these countries.

to take appropriate measures to ensure, between Member States of the Council, the free circulation and free exchange, exempt from all Customs and similar duties, of books, periodicals, papers, works of art and documentary films, excepting, in each case, those prohibited by the laws in force relating to public morality;

to take into consideration the question Of closer collaboration in scientific research and technical development between the Member States of the Council, and the maximum pooling of material resources and technical manpower for this purpose.

to provide for practical aid, by legislation or otherwise, for private organisations which are working_to promote European culture.

2.2. Meeting of the Ministers of Education and University authorities

It is recommended that, in the near future, the Committee of Ministers should invite the Ministers of Education to meet with a view to drawing up a European plan for cultural co-operation.

The Ministers of Education will, naturally, be assisted by such experts as they may desire (for this purpose).

For questions coming under the jurisdiction of Universities, the Committee of Ministers should invite the responsible authorities (Rectors, Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors) to a meeting to consult each other on the measures to be adopted.

The plan of co-operation to be submitted to the next Session of the Assembly should relate in particular to the following points:

1. Comparative study of the teaching programmes in the different countries in order that the best features of each may be available to all;
2. The development of the teaching of the leading European languages;
3. The conditions under which University degrees and diplomas may be recognised in other countries;
4. The preparation of a series of impartial books dealing with the geography and the history of European countries which bring out the links between them;
5. The arranging of university courses and lectures on European problems and organisations;
6. The creation of as large a number as possible of scholarships and periods of study in universities and higher teaching and research institutes abroad;
7. The methods to be adopted in the interest of European unity to raise the cultural level of the population by adult education, university extension lectures, broadcasts and tho cinema, exchange of records and films between nations and by art and folklore exhibitions;
8. The collective utilisation, to the best advantage, of the works of art, and particularly, archaeological treasures, which constitute one of the fundamental elements of the common heritage of the European peoples.

The Assembly considers that the question of a European University might be discussed at the next Session.

The Assembly considers that it should bring to the attention of the Ministers of Education the plight of the professors and teachers displaced by war and its consequences, who have lost their positions, their books and work instruments and to seek means by which their knowledge and talents could be utilised for European culture and scientific purposes.

2.3. European Cultural Centre

It is recommended that the Committee of Ministers should institute a European Cultural Centre, whose principal function would be:

1. To collect the necessary documentation to enable a continuous cultural policy to be pursued;
2. To work out preparatory studies for the decision which the Council of Europe will be called upon to take;
3. To strengthen the existing links, and to ensure appropriate co-operation between the Universities and the cultural institutions of the different European countries, or of countries having the same traditions;
4. To promote the circulation and the translation of works representative of the civilising values which are common to these countries;

5. To facilitate exchanges of University professors for annual series of courses; likewise exchanges of schoolmasters, students, artists, and technicians;

6. To establish contact with organisations of the press, radio, theatre and cinema, in order to provide that co-ordination which is essential to the cause of European unity.

The Assembly considers that it should be left to the organisers of thé European Cultural Centre to decide how far it may be desirable to form branches of the Centre, working in liaison with it, in the respective countries.

The Assembly, in.so far as these recommandations relate to those for which U. N. E. S. C. 0. is responsible at a European level, expresses the hope that an effective liaison may be established with that organisation.