Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 210
23 September 1953

Inquiry into the national or international bodies connected with local government and examination of the best means whereby these bodies and the local authorities themselves may help in the propagation of the European idea

Report[1]
Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities
Rapporteur: Mr Ziyad EBUZZIYA, Turkey

1. 1953 - 5th Session - Third part

A. Explanatory Memorandum

1. The new Europe can only be based effectively on the soundest of its existing elements. There can be no far-reaching renovation without recourse to that most vital and consistent element in the body social : the local authority, and that most vital of local authorities : the municipal unit or Commune.

2. The idea of a united Europe is now marking time, but it should gain new momentum when it can harness the vitality of the local authorities in villages, townships, cities or cantons, and win the support of the local representatives—mayors, deputy mayors, municipal and provincial councillors—who justly enjoy the esteem and confidence of the population.

3. The powerful support of the local authorities and their associations must be enlisted to reinforce the Council of Europe in its efforts towards unification.

4. It is this question which the Assembly referred for examination to the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs on 30th September, 1952. The object of the present Report is to supply an answer.

5. The first problem is how to influence this host of local authorities into which the fifteen Member States are divided.

6. Direct contact, in any methodical form, though not to be rejected out of hand, appears difficult to envisage. Fortunately, the local authorities are linked by a network of well-organised, active and efficient associations, which provide a natural channel of communication between ourselves and the municipalities, providing a limited number of contacts on a scale commensurate with our limited resources but at the same time of great potential value.

7. One of the first tasks of the Committee was therefore to collect information about these associations of local authorities, of which the following list, based on information given by the members of the Committee, is now submitted to the Assembly :

1.

1.1. International Associations

1. International Union of Local Authorities.
2. Council of European Municipalities.
3. Foreningen Norden.

1.1.1. The International Union of Local Authorities

History

The International Union of Local Authorities was founded in 1913, at Ghent, Belgium, at the International Congress of Towns. Its headquarters moved from Brussels to The Hague in 1949. Congresses have been held at Amsterdam (1924); Paris (1925 and 1947); Seville and Barcelona (1929); London (1932); Berlin and Munich (1936); Geneva (1949); Brighton, U. K. (1951). International conferences on special subjects were held at Berne (1927), at Liège and Antwerp (1930) and at Lyons (1934). The Union had close relations with the League of Nations Secretariat.

Purposes

The principal aims of the International Union of Local Authorities are :

1. to organise congresses and conferences to which are invited representatives of local authorities for the purpose of discussing matters of common interest;
2. to provide a centre of information on the activities of local authorities in the countries of subscribing members;
3. to study various problems which are the responsibility of local authorities;
4. to encourage intercourse between local authorities on the international plane;

5. to encourage the setting up of national unions of towns and local authorities.

Members

Active members (unions of towns and other local authorities, individual towns or local authorities) : Adherent members (associations and other groups concerned with local government and private individuals); and Extraordinary members (higher authorities). There are members in Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America and Yugoslavia.

Structure

The General Council, which meets every two years, draws up a general programme of activities. The executive Committee is responsible for carrying out the decision of the General Council and for the organisation of conferences and congres

Officers

President : Dr. P. J. Oud (Netherlands) ; General Secretary : Monsieur N. Arkema (Netherlands) ; Deputy General Secretary : Miss H. J. D. Revers (Netherlands).

Finance

Membership dues; special subsidies granted by countries or cities where congresses are held. Annual expenditure : 63,000 Dutch Guilders.

Relations with International organisations

1.1.1.1. Inter-governmental organisations

The I. U. L. A. enjoys consultative status, category B, with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. It maintains permanent contact with UNESCO and W.H.O.

1.1.1.2. Non-governmental organisations

The I. U. L. A. exchanges information with the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning and the International Institute of Administrative Sciences. It is also in touch with the Inter-American Municipal Organisation and the International Statistical Institute.

Activities

Organisation of international congresses or conferences ; establishment and development of international intermunicipal relations; and study and distribution of information of municipal interest. Exchange of information and library facilities. Among the subjects studied by congresses and conferences of the Union are the following : land policy and local authorities; communal autonomy; 'financial organisation, of local authorities; trading undertakings of local authorities; compulsory acquisition of land for public purposes; practical administration of local authorities; training and recruitment of local government officials; education in local government administration; the cultural and artistic spheres; food hygiene; smoke abatement (atmospheric pollution); district heating; treatment and disposal of sewage; housing shortage and the municipalities; civic education; cultural exchanges; prevention of road accidents; administrative and financial aspects of reconstruction; urban reconstruction.

Publications

International Union of Local Authorities Bulletin (quarterly) in English, French and German; Proceedings of Congresses and Conferences (Actes des Sessions) ; Special studies and reports on subject studied at Congress and Conferences; The International Union of Local Authorities (pamphlet); Periodicals published in the past : " L'Administration locale " , " Local Government Administration ".

The last Congress and General Council Meeting were held in the summer of 1953 at Vienna. One of the main subjects discussed was : " The large city and the small municipality, their strength and their weakness. "

1.1.2. The Council of European Municipalities

History

The Council of European Municipalities was founded on 29th January, 1951, at Geneva, at a Constituent Conference which was attended by representatives of local bodies in nine countries. Preliminary meetings had been held at Seelisberg (Switzerland) and at Strasbourg (France) in 1950.

Purposes

The aims of the Council of European Municipalities are :

1. to achieve and to strengthen municipal autonomy;
2. to facilitate the work of local authorities, ensure freedom of municipal action and contribute to their prosperity, more especially by encouraging inter-communal enterprises and bodies;
3. to develop a European outlook within the municipalities and local communities with a view to promoting a Federation of European States, based on the autonomy of those communities ;
4. to ensure that municipalities and local communities are represented in European and International organisations ;
5. to incorporate the representative Assembly of municipalities and local communities in the future European institutions.

Membres

Municipalities, local communities and their corporations in nine countries—Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Saar, Switzerland. Groups or individuals can be corresponding members.

Structure

General Assembly, which elects an Executive Committee, which in turn elects the Governing Body.

Officers

President : M. Fernand Cottier (Switzerland).

Secretary-General : Mme. A. de Jager (Switzerland).

International Action Secretary : M. J. Bareth (France).

Finance

Members' dues, in proportion to population.

Activities

Special: committees are studying the problems of equilibrium between town and country, autonomy in relation to local finance, intercommunal enterprises, European affairs.

1.1.3. Foreningen Norden

History

Founded 1919 in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. In 1923 it acquired Hindsgavl Castle, Denmark, for use as a residential college where courses on Scandinavian problems are held.

Purposes

8. To strengthen the feeling of community between the Scandinavian people and extend their cultural and economic relations.

9. To develop comprehensive educational work in regard to the economic, social and cultural life of the member countries.

10. To strengthen in all possible ways Scandinavian co-operation both as regards internal and external affairs.

Membres

National Associations and local branches in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden.

Structure

Annual meeting of delegates.

Officers

Presidents :

M. C. V. Bramsnaes (Denmark),

M. A. Gjôres (Sweden),

M. H. Grief (Norway),

M. S. J. Stefanson (Iceland),

Prof. B. Suviranta (Finland).

Finance

Members' dues and donations.

Activities

Assists co-operation between schools and colleges in the member countries; organises courses and relief work.

Publications

Periodicals are published by the national branches.

2. National Association

Austria

Oesterreichischer Gemeindebund (The Association of Austrian Parishes).

President : Dr. Alois Lugger.

Secretary-General : Dr. Albert Hammer,

Graz Keplerstrasse 92, Ankunft.

Oesterreichischer Stadtebund (Association of Austrian Towns). Neues Rathaus, Wien 1.

Belgium

Belgian Section of the Council of European Municipalities.

Walloon Secretary : M. Merlot, Burgomaster of Seraing, 221, rue du Chêne, Seraing.

Flemish Secretary : M. Ronse, Senator, Mairie de Melsen, 24, rue Haute, Gand.

L'Union des Villes et Commîmes Belges, rue de la Régence, 5, Brussels.

Denmark

Amtsrâdsforeningen i Danmark (The Association of County Councils in Denmark).

Blegdamsvej 6, Copenhagen N.

President : Director Jens Dalsgaard.

Den danske Kobstadforening (The Danish Towns Association).

Gyldenlovesgade 11, Copenhagen V.

President : Burgomaster Woldhardt Madsen.

De samvirkende Sogneradsforeninger i Danmark (The Co-operative Parish Council Unions, in Denmark).

Ny Kongensgade 15, Copenhagen, K.

President : Edvard Sorensen, Member of Parliament.

" Bymaessig Kommuner " (Municipalities consisting of built-up areas).

Hegnsvej 3, Birkerod.

President : Kai Jensen, Member of Parliament.

Faellosorganisationene of Landkommuner med bymaessig (Union of rural districts with built-up areas), Copenhagen.

France

Association des Maires de France. President : M. Tremintin, Mayor of Plouescat (Finistère).

Association des Présidents des Conseils Généraux.

Honorary President : M. Lasalarie, Senator of Bouches-du-Rhône..

Executive President : M. Abel Durand, President of the General Council, Lower Loire region.

French Association for the Council of European Municipalities, 9, rue Auber, Paris, 9.

President : M. Edouard Herriot.

Secretary-General : M. Berrurier, Mayor of Menil-St. Denis.

Union Internationale des Maires pour la compréhension franco-allemande et le rapprochement des peuples d'Europe. Autorité Internationale de la Ruhr, 24, rue Greuze, Paris.

German Federal Republic

Bundesvereinigung der Kommunalen Spitzenverbände

This is the federal organ of the four following bodies :

Deutscher Städtetag

President : M. Ernst Reuter, Mayor of Berlin.

Secretariat : Lindenallee 11, Köln-Marienburg. The members of this organisation are large towns which are directly responsible to the Land Governments.

Deutscher Städtebund

President : M. Joseph Breuer, Mayor of Essen-Werden.

Secretariat : Friedrichstrasse 100, Düsseldorf. The members of this organisation are towns which ore not responsible to the " Landkreise ". Bavarian towns are not members of this organisation.

Deutscher Landkreistag

1. President : M. August Dresbach, Mayor of Gummersbach.

2. *Secretariat : Bolongarostrasse 109, Frankfurt- Höchst, or Kreishaus, Siegburg. This is perhaps the most important national organisation of local authorities in the Federal Republic. The members are the Landkreise. A Landkreis usually includes two or three small towns and about 80 rural communes.*

Deutscher Gemeindetag

President : M. Wilhelm Mellies, Deputy of the Bundestag.

Secretariat : Koblenzerstrasse 40, Bad Godesberg.

Membership of this organisation is open to regional organisations and to individual rural communes.

German Association for the Council of European Municipalities.

Secretary-General : M. Ladebeck, Rathaus, Bielefeld.

Ireland

Irish Association of Municipal Authorities.

Italy

Lega nazionale dei Comuni democratici provincie e enti minori, Via Palestro 68, Rome.

Unione delle procincie d'Italia, Via G. Nicotera 4, Rome.

Federazione nazionale dipendenti enti locali, Via Boncompagni 19, Rome.

Federazione italiana dipendenti enti locale, Via Po, Rome.

Associazione nazionale dei Comuni Italiani, Campidoglio, Rome.

Italian Association for the Council of European Municipalities. Secretary-General : Professor Umberto Serafini, 6, via di Porta Princiana, Rome.

Luxembourg

Luxembourg Section of the Council of European Municipalities. Secretary-General : M. Clément, 30, rue du Canal, Esch s/Alzette, Luxembourg.

Netherlands

Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten (Netherland Union of Municipalities) 5, Paleisstraat, La Haye.

Netherlands Section of the Council of European Municipalities Secretary-General : M. van Rij, City Councillor of Amsterdam, Saxen Weimarlaan, Amsterdam.

Norway

Norges by-og herredsforbund (Norwegian Municipal Association) Kronprinsensg. 5, Oslo, or c/o Postboks 2442, Oslo.

Saar

Association des maires sarrois The Saar Section of the Council of European Municipalities President : M. Brokmeier, Burgomaster of Neunkirchen, Saar.

Sweden

Svenska Stadsförbundet (Swedish Towns Association) Gustav Adolfs torg 14, Stockholm.

Svenska Landstingsförbundet (Swedish Association for " County " Questions) Slussplan 9, Stockholm.

Svenska Landskommunernas Förbund (Local Government Association) Hornsgaten 68, Stockholm.

Turkey

Türk Belediyecilik Dernegi (Ankara) (Turkish Association of Municipalities) Yenischir Ismetpasa, Caddesi 38, Ankara.

United Kingdom

Local Authorities Associations :

The County Councils' Association 84, Eccleston Square, London, S. W. 1.

President : Sir Arthur Hobhouse.

Secretary : W. L. Dacey.

The Association of Municipal Corporations Palace Chambers, Bridge Street, London, S. W. 1.

President : Rt. Hon. Lord Kennet.

Secretary : G. H. Banwell.

The Urban District Councils' Association 28, Victoria Street, London, S. W. 1.

President : Sir Robert Grimston, Bart, M. P.

Secretary : Harold S. Haslam.

The Rural District Councils' Association 191/7, St. Stephens House, Victoria Embankment, London, S. W. 1.

President : Arthur Colegate, M. P.

Secretary : John McIntyre, O. B. E.

The National Association of Parish Councils 26 Bedford Square, London, W. C. 1.Secretary : C. Arnold-Baker, Esq.

The Metropolitan Boroughs' Standing Joint Committee c/o the Hon. Clerk, Westminster City Hall, London, W. C. 2.

The Non-County Boroughs Association. Committee for Great Britain of the International Union of Local Authorities (London)

President : Sir Bertram Galer, J. P., The Speaker's House, Henley-on-Thames.

Honorary Secretary of the Committee :Alderman A. T. Pike, 55, Templers Crescent, Finchley, London, N. 3.

Head Office : 28, Durand Gardens, London, S. W. 9.

11. Relations were quickly established between the Committee Secretariat and these Associations and, in particular, with the two principal international associations : the Council of European Municipalities and the International Union of Local Authorities, with which agreements have been signed providing, chiefly, for exchange of documents, joint examination of certain problems and reciprocal invitations to certain meetings. One result is that these organisations have been invited to send observers to the forthcoming meetings of the Committee.

12. By means of these contacts, the Secretariat-General has been able to provide the Committee with a wealth of documentary material on such subjects as. :

the "pairing" of towns and villages in Europe;

the powers of local authorities to participate, when required, in the propagation of the European idea, or to solve certain problems arising from measures of integration taken by the European Coal and Steel Community.

2.1. The « pairing » of town and villages in Europe*

13. Information received has enabled the Committee to establish how important and effective this system can be in spreading the European idea. This: is undoubtedly the most powerful and effective instrument which the municipalities possess for making it known among thé general public and gradually forming the true fabric of a united Europe.

14. Just as municipal and regional institutions permit of direct contact between the citizen and national institutions, so meetings and permanent links between the centres of population of two or more countries give rise to a new spirit based on a better understanding of other peoples and on a consciousness of the struggle for European integration.

15. Although such meetings find their natural focus in the great cities, they embrace whenever possible the adjacent townships and the rural areas within their radius, so that they may reach a wider population and especially the country people.

16. Invitations are usually sent out by mayor and corporation of the municipality and the natural venue is the Town Hall; but, if such official meetings are to fulfil their aim, they should be followed up by others between the leaders of the various local organisations : Chambers of Commerce, agricultural associations, handicraft guilds, trade unions, professional bodies, universities and schools, educational, sports and folklore associations, youth movements, etc. Here the material, intellectual, moral and civic life of the two cities can be studied and compared.

17. There is no space to discuss these meetings in detail. They vary considerably with the resources of the towns and the importance and character of the delegations sent. They include, however, besides official receptions, such events as festivals, comparative art exhibitions, sports meetings and trade fairs. Discussions can also be held on the respective local institutions, and on the prospects of introducing or strengthening international trade and on the impact of a growing Europe on the areas concerned.

18. Last of all, such meetings usually lead to the establishment of permanent links and the appointment of a Committee to follow up the first initiative, which organises such activities as the exchange of schoolchildren and students, training courses for young apprentices, etc., and which thus virtually becomes a centre for the exchange of information on cultural, economic and social matters.

19. The Committee has established that more than a hundred towns and villages in Europe are already linked in varying degrees, exclusive of the three or four hundred paired municipalities of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland and of the municipalities which have recently been paired for relief purposes following the floods in the Netherlands, Belgium and the United Kingdom.

20. It should be possible for the Council of Europe to assist in this work. The Committee hopes that its Secretariat will be in a position to use all means at its disposal to bring about further " pairings" between municipalities in the various Member States. As.a result of its prompt action after the floods of 31st January, 1953 and the appeal launched by its Chairman on hehalf of all the European municipalities, the Committee secured the adoption of some thirty devastated localities, thus associating the Council of Europe with a noteworthy act of solidarity[2]

21. The Secretariat has since then received more and more frequent requests for information about " pairing ". The Committee would like, in reply, to publish a document on " pairing " which could be distributed by the Secretariat to municipalities wishing to adopt the system or to those approached on the subject by the Committee in addition to associations of local authorities who could circulate it among their members. The Committee Secretariat should become a sort of central telephone exchange or " central office for pairing ", bringing into contact European municipalities wishing to be associated or even promoting the desire to be so. The Council of Europe would find this a particularly effective means of focussing upon itself the attention of the tens of thousands of municipalities of which the fifteen Member States are constituted. A letter of congratulation to any municipality " pairing " with another oi" the award of an annual " European Prize " to the municipality which has done most to propagate the idea of European unity would be a sure means of strengthening the influence of the Council, while spurring on the municipalities to further efforts.

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2. See the Communication on action taken on behalf of the devastated areas of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Belgium and Turkey, presented to the Assembly by M.Altmaier (Doc. 171).

2.2. Other means available to local authorities of propagating the European idea

22. At the request of the Committee the Secretariat-General issued a questionnaire to all associations of local authorities comprising the following questions :

22.1. Is it within the powers of local authorities, and if so under what conditions, to launch a campaign by means of posters, proclamations, official appeals, etc. in favour of a certain policy which is in accordance with the official policy of the Government, such as the idea of European union?

22.2. Can local authorities in your country furnish assistance to an association with a large public following, whose aims are in the general interest and conform to the official Government policy, such as the European Movement? What form can such assistance take? Is there any possibility of financial assistance?

22.3. Do local authorities in your country organise cultural activities? If so, of what nature? Do they organise evening classes, further education schemes for adults, peoples' Universities, etc.? Could they bring into the curriculum of these centres new subjects aiming, for example, at a greater and wider knowledge of Europe? Is it possible for local authorities in your country to establish cultural centres, for example centres of European studies? Can they provide assistance in the case of already existing centres of this kind, and if so can this assistance be of a financial nature? Have local authorities in your country any responsibility in connection with the curriculum of primary and secondary schools, or do they have any influence in this field?

23. Replies received would seem to indicate that the powers of local authorities are substantially the same in all Member countries but that, in practice, their scope of action varies according to the spirit in which the legal or constitutional texts are interpreted.

24. National laws are unanimous in demanding that any action taken by the local authorities in respect of direct propaganda for the European Idea should serve local interests and be justified by local aims.

25. It may be assumed that those local authorities which genuinely desire to further the idea of European union will have little difficulty in pointing out how it will affect the local community, whilst any Member Government adhering to the spirit of a Statute can hardly fail to recognise the justification for their case.

26. It will clearly be quite another matter if local authorities or Governments show no great enthusiasm for the idea of European union.

27. Here again, the point at issue is not the letter of the law but the spirit in which it is interpreted : in other words a mere question of determination.

28. Support for certain private bodies promoting the idea of European union, such as the local branches of the European Movement, the European Youth Campaign, etc., raises no obstacles, insofar as it involves no financial contribution. Financial support would clearly be subject to the limitations governing loca financial policy, but such support seems possible in most countries and is in fact practised to a limited degree.

29. The support of local authorities can, however, take many other forms. For instance, the reply of the Union of Netherlands Communes points out that, when an experimental ballot was recently held on the question " are you for or against a united Europe ", the municipalities provided ballot boxes and other equipment.

30. Again, the reply of the Saar[3] seems to sum up this question very pertinently : " Under the Saar Finance Equalisation Act of 25th May, 1951, local authorities may use the funds allocated to-them only for their own purposes. The influence wielded by local authorities is remarkable for its universality, and they will themselves indirectly benefit from European integration; we therefore feel that they cannot be restrained from giving suitable support, within their budget facilities, to any organisations which promote the political objectives of the Government. "

31. So far as the infusion of a more European spirit into local cultural activities is concerned, it would appear that the local authorities have a wide range of means at their disposal including : the establishment of, or grants-in-aid to, centres for European studies, the foundation of University Chairs for European studies (European history, civilisation and institutions), the organisation of extension courses in similar subjects in colleges or grammar and secondary schools, organisation of European cultural demonstrations (exhibitions, festivals, etc.).

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3. Reply of the Union of Saar Municipalities (Verbahd Saarldndischer Gemeinden).

32. It may in fact be said that the various factors determining the powers of local authorities (contributions, laws and customs) allow local authorities wide scope for propagating the European idea, so long as the central authorities are prepared so to interpret the texts.

33. It is also essential, however, that the local authorities themselves should be determined to make full use of their powers and go a head. This is the final point which should be emphasised in this Report.

34. Once the enquiry into the available means has been completed, it remains to be determined how the local authorities can be induced to use them. That, we consider, is where the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs has a decisive rôle to play, in familiarising local authorities and their national Associations with the idea of European unity and the work of the Council of Europe, and demonstrating to them all the advantages that the local communities can expect from European integration.

35. This is the course on which the Committee has embarked. It has been mentioned that its first concern was to establish as widely as possible ever closer contact with the associations of local authorities in order to acquaint them with the work of the Committee and as far as possible to associate them with that work. But these links must now be so systematically developed as to become organic. The Committee proposes to set up a permanent Working Party composed not only of its own members but also of representatives from the national and international local government associations. If such a Working Party were consulted upon all important questions referred to the Committee, it could establish semi-permanent contacts with these associations and could effectively support the steps taken by them, without trespassing upon the territory of the international associations, by organising common action to improve their prospects of acceptance by the Governments.

36. Following the floods of 31st January, 1953, and the earthquake in Turkey, the Committee was given the opportunity of showing how the active concern of the Council of Europe could make it possible for the local communities of Europe to manifest their solidarity. Thanks to the action of the Committee, the Council of Europe was able to prove that it could act as a particularly effective centre of co-ordination for the European local authorities, and in any case give powerful support to the vast number of dispersed gestures by the local communities of Member countries[4].

37. Soon the communes of Europe will find that the Council of Europe, through its Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs, is particularly interested in the problems with which all responsible members of local communities are concerned. With regard to abuse of centralisation, the Committee has undertaken to study ways and means of probtecting and furthering local autonomy in Europe[5]and proposes in particular to obtain recognition of the right of association for the local communities of Europe, a right refused them by certain States which are, however, very meticulous in regard to their own autonomy. With respect to the question of local finance, the Committee is drawing up a plan for a European Fund for inter-Municipal Assistance, virtually a European communal bank, the particular function of which would be to underwrite the borrowing power of local authorities[6]. With regard to the participation of local authorities in the formulation of the general policy of States or of the supranational communities, the Committee is carrying out a study of the representation of local communities in the European institutions and of the question of a European Assembly of Mayors, within the orbit of the Council of Europe, in which, through duly authorised delegates, they may periodically study together the problems common to the communes of Europe [7]. And, finally, with regard to the local effects of the policy of European integration, the Committee is considering measures to be recommended for enabling municipalities to face the local problems raised by the policy of the European Coal and Steel Community [8]

38. Through the work of the Special Committee, the Council of Europe is likely to become the main support of the local European communities in achieving their common aspirations. In the view of the European municipalities, there is no other organisation which possesses such great facilities.

39. The Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs already enjoys a naturally privileged position as compared with other Committees. It is unique in having direct contact with public authorities themselves, which are no less important for being local. In addition to the normal procedure of recommendations to Governments, it can bring more or less direct influence to bear upon the municipalities. Through its members,

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4. See the Communication on assistance to the devastated areas of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Belgium and Turkey, presented by M. Altmaier on behalf of the Committee.
5. See Order No. 33.
6. See Order No. 37.
7. See Order No. 34.
8. Question included in Agenda of tho Assembly and referred to the Committee on 30th September, 1952.

most of whom hold important local government positions, and through the channel of the local government associations, in which other members play a leading part, the Committee is able to play a decisive rôle in prevailing upon the local authorities to act.

40. All that is needed, therefore, is that the value of the potential rôle of this Committee shall be recognised by the Council of Europe itself, and that the services of the Secretariat- General placed at its disposal shall be commensurate with the magnitude of its task.

41. For these reasons the Committee unanimously proposes that the Assembly take the following steps.

B. Draft Recommendation

The Assembly,

Considering it to be of the highest importance that local communities and their representatives should be associated with the establishment of European unity and, in particular, with the propagation of the cause of European Union,

Recommends that the Committee of Ministers take the necessary steps to ensure :

a. that the conception of " communal interest ", the legal basis for the intervention of local authorities in political matters, should be interpreted broadly by the Ministries concerned and, more specifically, that these Ministries should not oppose any action taken by the municipalities whenever it conforms with the declared principles of the policy of their Governments, such as laid down in the Preamble and in Article 1 of the Statute of the Council of Europe;

b. that the Ministries concerned should in no way obstruct but should on the contrary encourage the local authorities to give material and financial assistance to pro-European activities and, whenever possible, support local action, in particular by subsidising such activities as the establishment or maintenance of centres of European Studies or the organisation of European Days ;

c. that they should authorise and facilitate the establishment of permanent relations and, if need be, organic links between municipalities of different Member countries;

d. that the Secretariat-General be empowered to extend all possible assistance to the national and international associations of local authorities and to the communities themselves in connection with " pairings ", inter-municipal meetings and, in general, all schemes for closer relations between the local authorities of member countries; and, in particular, that it be provided with the necessary funds for :

1. the preparation of a document on the " pairing " of municipalities and its distribution to European municipalities seeking to or in a position to pair with another;

2. the annual award of a European Prize to the municipality which has done most to propagate the ideal of European unity;

3. the holding of periodical meetings of a permanent Working Party, composed of members of the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs, and representatives of the national associations of local authorities.

C. First Draft Resolution

The Assembly

1. Congratulates the various International Associations of Local Authorities which have undertaken the task of increasing the number of inter-communal meetings in Europe and of spreading among the masses of the people, through the local authorities, the idea of European unity;

2. Expresses the hope that the day may come when the municipalities of Member countries, duly represented, may meet regularly in the Assembly Hall of the House of Europe, placed at their disposal for the purpose, in order jointly to examine the problems that concern them;

3. Undertakes that all those of its representatives who in any capacity whatsoever perform municipal duties should, through the example set by their communities and through their activities in the associations of local authorities, aim at developing as far as possible the participation of the commune in the political and spiritual unification of Europe.

D. Second Draft Resolution

The Assembly,

Considering the essential importance to the achievement of the aims of the Council of Europe of the work of the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs, and the lasting value of the work of that Special Committee ;

Having, moreover, regard to the constant development of the work of that Committee and the new requirements entailed thereby,

Believes it necessary that the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs should be given the status of a general Committee, and

Therefore resolves :

1. to add to paragraph 1 of Rule 40 of the Rules of Procedure the following subparagraph : " (h) Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs " ;
2. that the Committee shall consist of 23 members.
3.

E. Draft Order

The Assembly, instructs its Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs to continue the work it has undertaken of ensuring the constant presence of the Council of Europe in inter-communal European life, by demonstrating to local authorities the extent of the assistance which the Council of Europe is able to furnish in the attainment of their common aims with the hope of obtaining, in return, the effective aid of the local authorities in the propagation of the European idea.