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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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Measures to be taken by Member States to encourgae contacts among young people

Motion for a recommendation[1]
Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee
Ms Elaine BURTON, United Kingdom, Socialist Group

1. 1956 - 8th Session - First part

A. Draft Recommendation

The Assembly,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe of achieving greater unity between its Members would be facilitated by more frequent contacts among the young people of member countries;

Considering that sporting events would furnish one of the most appropriate means of developing such contacts,

Recommends to the Committee of Ministers :

1. that it should invite Member Governments to help the appropriate bodies in member countries to organise every year, in turn, a European Junior Athletics Festival in which young people of all member countries would be invited to participate ;

2. that it should suggest to the French Government that the first of such festivals be held in Strasbourg, as the seat of the Council of Europe, and that the French Athletic Federation be asked to extend invitations to all other member countries in order that their school athletic associations or equivalent organisations should take part in the proposed Junior Athletics Festival;

3. that it should authorise the Council of Europe to award prizes to be presented at these festivals.

B. Explanatory Memorandum

1. The proposals contained in the above draft Recommendation come essentially within the scope of the activities of the Council of Europe, as their purpose is to make the Council of Europe and its aims more widely known through increasing the contacts among the young people of Member States.

2. The events proposed in the draft Recommendation are exclusively sporting in character : those connected with culture, art or folklore are not included, at least at the present stage, so that plans may not be too ambitious and therefore difficult to carry out. A list of suggested events is given, purely as a guide, in paragraph 8 below. It has been drawn up after discussion with various sporting bodies and would therefore receive their official approval.

3. It is essential for the success of this plan that the sporting bodies in the Member States be willing to co-operate. The United Kingdom—the only country where the Rapporteur has had discussions as yet—seems prepared to do so. The relevant sporting bodies there are the British Amateur Athletic Board and the Schools Athletic Association.

4. The European Junior Athletics Festival will be both an educational and a sporting event. Competitors must be under 17 years of age on 1st January in the year of the Festival and must still be at school. These two conditions are imposed by the need to avoid the participation of the International Amateur Athletic Federation. Without these conditions, this Festival, like all other international sporting events, would have to come under the control of the Federation, but, actually, the Federation may not organise or give its financial support to any event that is limited to some only of its European member countries. For the above reasons, the Festival would have to be organised by the various Schools Associations (or their equivalents) in member countries.

5. The Festival would have to be financed in one of the three following ways :

a. by the Council of Europe;

b. by the Ministry of Education in each country;

c. by the local education authorities, each of whom would be responsible for the expenses of one local competitor under the auspices of an organisation such as the School Journeys Association.

It may be mentioned that the question of financing such a Festival is at present being studied by the Ministry of Education in the United Kingdom.

6. The first of these Festivals should be held at Strasbourg, as being the seat of the Council of Europe. The period covered by the second part-Session of the Assembly, i. e. September, would seem to be the most suitable time to hold the first Festival. A covering period of five or six days should suffice, as the athletic events envisaged should be terminated in two full days of athletics. Approximate costs have been worked out for sending a team of about 50 boys and girls from the United Kingdom, for instance, to Strasbourg.

7. A small general committee would have to be set up to deal with the Festival each year, or however frequently it might be decided to hold such an event.

8. The Festival would include the following events :

a. Boys : 100 m.; 200 m.; 400 m.; 800 m.; 1,500 m.; hurdles; high jump; long jump; putting-the-weight; throwing-the-javelin; throwing-the-discus; pole vault; hop, step and jump; relay race (total, 14 events) ;

b. Girls : 100 m. ; 200 m. ; hurdles ; high jump ; long jump ; throwing - the - javelin; throwing - the - discus; relay race (total, 8 events).

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