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## **Bureau and Standing Committee (5th July, 1955-15th April, 1956)**

**Progress report**

Rapporteur: Mr Hermann SMITT-INGEBRETSEN, Norway



**A.**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1.**

On 11th February, 1955 the Bureau of the Assembly decided to submit to the Assembly a report on its activities from the opening of the Sixth Ordinary Session to the opening of the Seventh Session. A similar decision was taken by the Bureau at a meeting on 26th January, 1956

The Standing Committee, in accordance with the Resolution adopted by the Assembly on 6th September, 1949, also regularly submits a progress report to the latter.

This document contains the reports of the Bureau and of the Standing Committee. They cover the period from the beginning of the Seventh Ordinary Session to the opening of the Eighth Session.

**2. Progress report of the Bureau**

Since the beginning of the Seventh Ordinary Session, the Bureau has held 12 meetings, namely on the 5th, 7th, 9th and 22nd July, 26th September, 14th, 17th, 19th, 20th, 21st and 22nd October, 1955 and 26th January, 1956.

**2.1. Dates of the opening of sessions or part-sessions**

At its meetings of 5th and 9th July, 1955, the Bureau discussed the question of the opening date of the second part of the Seventh Ordinary Session and proposed to the Standing Committee the 14th October as the most suitable date.

On 26th January, 1956 the Bureau also proposed to the Standing Committee that the first part of the Eighth Session should be held from 16th to 21st April.

The Bureau has had a preliminary exchange of views on a proposal by M. Guy Mollet that the ordinary Sessions should be divided into three parts (see [Doc. 355](#)) and has referred the question to the Standing Committee.

**2.2. Agenda and Time-table**

At its meetings of 22nd July, 26th September, 23rd October, 1955 and 26th January, 1956, the Bureau drew up draft agendas and time-tables for the second part of the Seventh Session and the first part of the Eighth Session. The draft agendas have been duly submitted to the Standing Committee.

The Bureau has also agreed in principle that the Assembly will not normally meet before 11 a.m., in order to allow the committees and political groups to meet from 9 to 11 a.m.

**2.3. Participation of Ministers in certain debates**

During the preparation of the two parts of the Seventh Session, the Bureau invited a number of Ministers to participate in the debates of the Assembly. Fourteen Ministers took part in debates during the Seventh Ordinary Session.

M. Gudmundsson, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iceland and Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, presented the Sixth Report of the Committee of Ministers.

The Foreign Ministers of the Netherlands (M. Beyen), the Federal Republic of Germany (M. von Brentano), Norway (M. Lange) France (M. Pinay), and the United Kingdom (Mr. Harold Macmillan) spoke during the debate on general policy during the first part of the Session.

M. Spaak, Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs and M. Hallstein, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, spoke during the debate on general policy held during the second part of the Session.

M. Lange, Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, took part on 7th July, 1955 in the debate on the report of the Special Representative of the Council of Europe for National Refugees and Over-population.

M. Larock, Belgian Minister for Foreign Trade, presented the Sixth Annual Report of O. E. E. C. during the Seventh Session, on 8th July, 1955 and spoke during the debate on European economic integration.

M. Corniglion-Molinier, French Minister of Public Works, Transport and Tourism and Chairman of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport, opened the debate in the course of which the Assembly adopted an opinion on the first Report of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (9th July, 1955).

The same day, M. Bonnefous, French Postmaster-General, made a statement on the proposed European conference of Postmasters-General. He again took part in the debate when this subject was discussed during the second part of the Session.

M. Teitgen, Minister for Overseas France, spoke on behalf of his Government in the debate on 17th October about the development of African territories.

M. Harlem, Norwegian Minister of Social Affairs, M. Suurhof, Netherlands Minister of Social Affairs, and M. Corish, Irish Minister for Social Welfare, took part in the debate on the European Social Charter and the Economic and Social Council on 18th October, 1955.

The Bureau has invited the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of all the Member States and the Italian, Turkish and Greek Ministers of Economic Affairs to participate in the debates of the first part of the Eighth Session.

#### **2.4. Liaison with the North American Parliaments**

At a meeting on 5th July, 1955, the Bureau decided to propose the inclusion in the Agenda of the Assembly of a draft Order (Document. 348, on the holding of a conference with North American parliamentarians, which would follow up the Strasbourg Conference of 1951.

Under the draft Order (No. 70) adopted by the Assembly on 7th July, 1955 the President of the Assembly was instructed to approach the Chairman of the Houses of the United States Congress and of the Canadian Parliament with a view to holding such a meeting. M. Guy Mollet has reported to the Bureau the result of the steps he took in that connection in September, 1955 during his visit to the United States. It emerges from the conversations which he had that the proposed conference cannot be held until after the American elections in 1956. The Bureau decided to follow up this question and to consider the possibility of holding a restricted meeting between a delegation of the Assembly and the delegations from the United States Congress and the Canadian Parliament which will attend the forthcoming meetings of Members of Parliament from NATO countries.

In the meantime the Bureau has decided to postpone any decision on Mr. Smithers' proposal (Doc. 389) to invite the Parliaments of North America to send observers to the sessions of the Assembly.

#### **2.5. Exercise of the Assembly's functions between meetings of the Standing Committee**

1. At its meeting of 22nd July, 1955 the Bureau referred :

1. to the Committee on Economic Questions the item " Assistance to member countries of the Council of Europe stricken by a national disaster ", which proposes the establishment of a permanent relief fund (Reference 82);
2. to the Committee on Economic Questions M. Bonnefous' memorandum on the creation of a European Conference of Ministers of Postal and Telecommunications Services (Reference 83);
3. to the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges Resolution (55) 12 of the Committee of Ministers amending Article 18 of the Rules of Procedure of that Committee (Reference 84).

2. The Bureau has submitted to the Standing Committee proposals for the appointment of members of the Assembly to the Joint Committee and to the joint Working Party set up to examine the respective functions of the Deputy Secretary-General and Clerk of the Assembly and the procedure for appointments of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and the Clerk of the Assembly.

3. In accordance with paragraph 3 of Article 7 of the Rules of Procedure the Bureau has provisionally appointed M. Schmid as member of the Standing Committee in place of the late M. Lutkens.

## **2.6. Administrative activities**

1. Following the death of M. Struycken, the Bureau, at a meeting on 14th October, 1955 approved the appointment by the Secretary-General, after consultation with the President of the Assembly, of Mr. Dunstan Curtis, Deputy Secretary-General, in his capacity as an official elected by the Assembly, to exercise the functions of Acting Clerk of the Assembly. The Bureau also approved the appointment of M. Humblet as Deputy Clerk during sessions and of M. Huntzbuchler as Deputy Clerk between sessions.
2. At its meetings of 22nd July, 1955 and 26th January, 1956, the Bureau examined requests from a number of committees wishing to hold meetings in places other than Strasbourg or Paris.

In the light of the criteria set forth in paragraph 3 of the Resolution adopted by the Standing Committee on the 12th February, 1955, the Bureau agreed that the following meetings might be held : Sub-Committee on Cultural Questions at Brussels; Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs at Rome; Committee on General Affairs at Brussels; Sub-Committee on Southern Europe at Rome; Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs at Coventry.

3. At the request of the President of the Assembly of W.E.U. the Bureau has agreed that, to meet the convenience of Representatives, the sessions of the Assembly of W. E. U. should be held during or immediately after the sessions of the Assembly of the Council of Europe. The Bureau has preferred the second alternative.
4. As regards certain questions which were raised in the last progress report, [Doc. 355](#), the Bureau is following the implementation of Resolution 70 on relations with national adjoint liaments. It will also examine the results of the hearing of the chairmen and rapporteurs of committees by the Ministers' Deputies.

## **3. Progress Report of the Standing Committee**

Since the beginning of the Seventh Ordinary Session the Standing Committee has held four meetings : on 9th July, 1955 at the end of the first part of the Session; on 26th September, 1955, 26th January, 1956 and 14th April, 1956, immediately before the opening of the Eighth Session.

### **3.1. Participation of non-member countries in certain of the Council's activities**

At its meeting of 26th January, the Standing Committee considered whether and how European non-member countries might participate in certain activities of the Council of Europe. The Committee felt that it was not appropriate, at this stage, to place this question on the agenda of the first part of the Eighth Session. This decision was communicated to the Joint Committee when it met at the request of the Committee of Ministers.

### **3.2. Invitation to Austria to become a full Member of the Council of Europe**

The Austrian Government having expressed the desire that Austria should become a full member of the Council of Europe, the Committee of Ministers unanimously agreed to this proposal but, in accordance with its statutory resolution of May, 1951, decided, before sending out an official invitation, to ask the Assembly for its opinion. On the instructions of the President of the Assembly, the Secretary-General, in a letter of 1st March, 1956, asked the members of the Standing Committee to express an opinion on this subject and stated that the Committee of Ministers proposed to give Austria six seats in the Assembly. Twenty-two members gave their full agreement, and four members gave their agreement subject to various comments and reservations. The Standing Committee thus unanimously accepted, on behalf of the Assembly, the proposal to invite Austria. This decision was communicated to the Committee of Ministers, which, on 8th March, 1956, officially invited Austria to become a member of the Council of Europe.

### **3.3. Dates of sessions**

At its meeting of 9th July, 1955, the Standing Committee, on the proposal of the Bureau, decided that the Seventh Ordinary Session should be resumed on 14th October, 1955.

At its meeting of 26th January, 1956, it decided that the first part of the Eighth Ordinary Session of the Assembly would last from 16th to 21st April, 1956. The Standing Committee now proposes that the Session should be resumed on 15th October. The Assembly will be consulted on this proposal during the first part of the Session.

The Standing Committee was asked by the Bureau to study the possibility of dividing ordinary sessions into three parts. No decision was reached for the future, but the existing system of two part-sessions will be retained in 1956. The Assembly will be consulted on this proposal during the first part of the 8th Session.

### **3.4. Exercise by the Standing Committee of the functions of the Assembly between Sessions**

1. The Standing Committee has been asked by the Assembly to examine draft Resolution (Doc. 376) on the founding of a European prize under the auspices of the F.V.S. Foundation. On behalf of the Assembly it adopted this draft in the form of Resolution 74, on 9th July, 1955.

2. At the same meeting, the Standing Committee adopted the following motions for Orders of the Assembly :

1. Order 75 : to the Committee on General Affairs and the Committee on Economic Questions, on the use of economics effected as the result of disarmament for the benefit of under-developed areas (Doc. 372);
2. Order 76. : to the Secretariat- General on the collaboration of the Consultative Assembly with the Committee of Governmental Delegates, set up by the Messina Conference (Doc.374);
3. Order 77 : to the Secretariat with a view to the setting up of a group of experts to examine problems of Eurafrikan co-operation

At its meeting of 26th January, 1956, the Standing Committee adopted, after deleting the final provision, the motion for an Order of the Assembly to the Committee on Economic Questions (Order 86) contained in Document 461, relating to European organisation in the field of atomic energy.

4. On the proposal of the Bureau, the Standing Committee referred :

1. to the Committee on Legal and Administrative Questions : the motion for a Recommendation submitted by M. Rolin Document 394) on action to be taken in regard to individual petitions : Reference 85.
2. to the Committee on Social Questions : the motion for a Recommendation and Order submitted by Miss Burton (Document 401) on measures to be taken for the protection of consumers : Reference 86.
3. to the Special Committee on Agriculture and, for an opinion, to the Committee on Economic Questions : the motion for a Recommendation submitted by Mr. Esmonde concerning the price of fertilisers (Doc. 402) : Reference 87;
4. to the Committee on Social Questions : the report of W. H. O. (Doc. 399) : Reference 88;
5. to the Committee on Social Questions : the report of I. L. O. (Doc. 400) : Reference 89.

So far only the questions under (b) and (c) have not yet been the subject of reports; the other questions have been discussed in the Assembly and resolutions or recommendations have been adopted thereon.

### **3.5. Appointment of Representatives to the Joint Committee and to the Joint Working Party appointed to examine the respective functions of the Deputy Secretary-General and Clerk of the Assembly and the procedure for appointments of the Secretary- General, the Deputy Secretary-General and the Clerk of the Assembly**

1. At its meeting of 9th July, 1955 the Standing Committee, in accordance with paragraph 2 of Rule 46 of the Rules of Procedure, appointed from among its members in addition to M. Guy Mollet, Chairman of the Joint Committee, the six representatives of the Assembly on the Joint Committee, namely, MM. Lutkens, Margue, Mercouris, Montini, Noel-Baker and Wistrand.

2. At the same meeting the Standing Committee appointed M. Kiesinger, Lord Layton and M. Smitt Ingebretsen as members of the Joint Working Party to examine the respective functions of the Deputy Secretary- General and the Clerk of the Assembly and the procedure for the appointments of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and the Clerk of the Assembly.

On 26th January, 1956, the Standing Committee approved the conclusions of the Working Party on the first question and took note of Resolution (55) 29 adopted by the Committee of Ministers (see Appendix).

As regards the second question, the conclusions of the Joint Working Party will be studied by the Joint Committee on 16th April, 1956.

### **3.6. Transmission of Assembly Resolutions to international organisations**

In view of the comments made by the Committee of Ministers regarding the direct transmission by the President of the Assembly of texts adopted by the latter, the President of the Assembly and the Committee of Ministers have agreed that the following reminder shall in future be included in covering letters accompanying the texts :

" I feel it appropriate to draw your attention to the fact that this Resolution expresses only the views of the Assembly as the consultative organ of the Council of Europe. It does not commit the Member Governments, since the only body which can act in the name of the Governments is the Committee of Ministers, on which they are represented. Should the Governments be desirous of expressing a collective opinion on the Reports transmitted by your organisation, it would be for the Committee of Ministers to formulate and notify you of this opinion. "

The Standing Committee took note of this procedure at a meeting on 26th January, 1956.

## **4. Work of Committees**

### **4.1. Committee on General Affairs**

Since the opening of the Seventh Session, the Committee on General Affairs has held seven meetings : one at Paris, one at Brussels and five at Strasbourg.

The Committee has submitted reports on the new drive for European integration and on the formulation of a common European policy towards the East. During the October Session, three draft Resolutions were adopted on the basis of reports by the Committee (Resolution 87 on a common European policy at future East-West Conferences, Resolution 88 on the appointment of European Commissioners and Resolution 89 on a European Atomic Energy Organisation).

Moreover, the Committee prepared the draft reply to the First and Second Reports of the Common Assembly, which was adopted by the Assembly, in October, 1955 (Resolution 92).

### **4.2. Committee on Economic Questions**

Since the opening of the Seventh Session, the Committee has held five meetings : two in Strasbourg and two in Paris and one, with the participation of the members of the High Authority of the E. C. S. C., in Luxembourg. It has also attended three meetings of the Council of Europe and the OEEC Liaison Committees.

The Committee has prepared various reports and recommendations on the economic integration of Western Europe; it has drafted replies to the Sixth Annual Report of the O. E. E. C. and the Third General Report of the High Authority of the E. C. S. C., and expressed Opinions on the First Report of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport and on the Report of the Conference on the Co-ordination of Air Transport in Europe. It has taken up the question of European organisation in the field of atomic energy, pursued its study of the economic development of Southern Europe, and has discussed the lowering of tariff barriers and the institution of a European Conference of Ministers of Posts and Telecommunications Services.

The Committee has also given its opinion on certain proposals of other Committees, including the draft European Social Charter and the appointment of European Commissioners.

### **4.3. Committee on Legal and Administrative Questions**

The Committee held four meetings in Strasbourg during the Seventh Ordinary Session. Its four Sub-committees continued their work on the draft European Convention on Extradition, the simplification of frontier formalities for travellers, compulsory motor insurance, the liability of innkeepers and private arbitration. Five draft recommendations were put forward : three dealt with frontier formalities, one with statelessness and one with individual petitions under the European Convention on Human Rights. All these draft recommendations were adopted by the Assembly on 25th October, 1955. The Committee also considered the question of Icelandic fisheries and it was asked for a legal opinion by the Bureau of the Assembly on the privileges and immunities of a Representative.

#### **4.4. Committee on Social Questions**

The Committee met at Paris on 9th and 10th September, 1955. It presented to the Assembly at its October Session a draft recommendation on a European Social Charter and an European Economic and Social Council ([Doc. 403](#)). The Assembly did not give a decision on this draft but instructed the Committee on Social Questions and the Committee on Economic Questions to examine it together. A joint sub-committee met at Paris on 23rd January, 1956, and the Committee on Social Questions met on 9th March, also in Paris, to consider proposed amendments to [Doc. 403](#). The revised draft Social Charter will be put before the Assembly at its Session in April, 1956.

#### **4.5. Committee on Population and Refugees**

The Committee met on 7th July and 24th October, 1955, in Strasbourg. It considered the question of the moral re-adaptation of young refugees, on which it had been consulted by the Committee on Cultural Questions and also prepared replies to the Reports of the I. C. E. M. and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

#### **4.6. Committee on Cultural and Scientific Questions**

The Committee held seven meetings. It has set up a sub-committee on information, which has met twice, and a sub-committee on European universities, which has met eight times. The Joint Cultural Committee has held two meetings.

The work of the Committee has been concerned with the following questions :

*Reply to the Second Progress Report of UNESCO (Resolution 77).*

*Reply to the cultural section of the Fourth Report on the activities of the Brussels Treaty Organisation (Resolution 78).*

*Resolution lending the moral support of the Consultative Assembly to the work : Europe in the XIXth and XXth Centuries (Resolution 81).*

*Opinion on Recommendation 88 relating to the emblem of the Council of Europe.*

*Report on ways and means of promoting the European idea in member countries.*

*Report on the moral re-adaptation of young refugees from behind the Iron Curtain [Doc. 474](#).*

*Opinion on the cultural section of the First Report of the Council of W.E.U.*

#### **4.7. Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges**

The Committee has met four times since the opening of the Seventh Session, namely on 5th July, 1955, 18th and 19th October, 1955, and 23rd March, 1956. It has considered the amendment of some of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure, and its Report ([Doc. 397](#)) was debated and adopted by the Assembly on 25th October, 1955 (Resolution 80).

Two new designs for the emblem of the Council of Europe were referred to the Committee, which proposed that the Assembly recommend to the Committee of Ministers the adoption of the flag bearing a circle of twelve stars or (Recommendation 88).

As regards the rationalisation of the system of Assembly Committees, the Committee on Rules of Procedure is not yet in a position to submit a report to the Assembly.

#### **4.8. Special Committee to watch over the interests of European nations not represented in the Council of Europe**

The Special Committee for non-represented nations continued to examine the situation of the satellite States of Central and Eastern Europe in the light of the present international situation. It held seven meetings. Among the other questions considered were : East-West contacts, the participation of European non-Member States in certain of the Council's activities, forced labour and religious persecution in the satellite countries.

#### **4.9. Special Committee on Agriculture**

The Special Committee held meetings on 8th July, 1955, 25th and 27th October, 1955 and 15th February, 1956, and studied inter alia the following questions :

1. Relations with international organisations. A draft agreement with the F. A. O. was proposed to the Assembly and adopted. In addition, regular contacts have been established with the OEEC Directorate of Food and Agriculture and, on 15th February, the Special Committee took part in a meeting of the C.E./O.E.E.C. Liaison Committees devoted to the agricultural situation in Europe.
2. Relations with national professional organisations : arrangements have been considered for a meeting between the Special Committee and representatives of professional organisations, its purpose being to study present agricultural conditions in Europe, the problems facing agriculture and possible solutions.

#### **4.10. Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs**

The Committee considered the award of the first European Prize, which went to the City of Coventry.

It submitted to the Assembly a draft recommendation on various measures to be taken by the Member Governments of the European Coal and Steel Community to enable local authorities to meet the new responsibilities arising from the establishment of E. C. S. C. This was adopted as Recommendation 76.

The Committee also put before the Assembly two draft resolutions, one on the convening of a European Conference of Local Authorities to be attended by representatives of national associations of local authorities, and the other introducing a plan for exchanges of visit among members of European local authorities. These were adopted as Resolutions 76 and 75 respectively. With regard to the latter, the Committee has worked out a European plan for inter-municipal exchanges.

#### **4.11. Special Committee for the co-ordination of European assistance in cases of natural disaster**

The Committee devoted further study to a plan of action, in consultation with the Committee on Economic Questions.

#### **4.12. Committee on Budgetary Affairs and Administration**

Since the beginning of the Seventh Ordinary Session the Committee has held three meetings. It examined the preliminary draft of Vote II of the 1956 Budget (Expenditure relating to the Assembly) and adopted a draft opinion, which was approved by the Assembly. It also submitted to the Assembly a draft opinion on the 1956 Budget as a whole.

#### **4.13. Committee for the examination of requests for consultative status**

In the course of the Seventh Session the Committee examined five requests for Consultative Status. Three of these were submitted to the Assembly, which recommended the grant of Status " A " to one organisation and Status " B " to the other two.

**B. RESOLUTION (55) 29 (adopted by the Ministers' Deputies on 19th November, 19SS)**

The Committee of Ministers, Having regard to Resolution (49) 20, Resolves that, pending the amendment of Article 36 (a) of the Statute, the Secretariat shall consist of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, the Clerk of the Assembly and such other staff as may be required.

The Deputy Secretary-General and the Clerk of the Assembly are of equal rank, and the provisions of Article 16 of the General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities apply also to the Clerk of the Assembly. However, the Deputy Secretary-General shall act as the permanent assistant of the Secretary-General in the supervision of all departments of the Secretariat except the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly : when the Secretary-General is absent, or for other reasons, not available, the Deputy Secretary-General shall replace him and exercise all his duties and responsibilities.

The Clerk of the Assembly shall be directly responsible to the Secretary-General (or, in his absence, to the Deputy Secretary-General, who replaces him in the discharge of his duties).

The Deputy Secretary-General and the Clerk of the Assembly shall replace each other, if either one is absent or otherwise unavailable for a prolonged period. Each shall therefore keep the other fully informed of his activities.

**Appendix APPENDIX**

**Status and Functions of the Deputy Secretary-General and Clerk of the Consultative Assembly**