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Draft Reply of the General Affairs Committee of the WEU Assembly to the cultural and social chapters of the Second Annual Report of the Council of W.E.U. to the W.E.U. Assembly

Report¹

Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee

Co-rapporteurs: Mr Henri C. J. HEYMAN, Belgium, and Mrs Luise REHLING, Germany

1. 1957 - 9th Session - First part



A. Draft Resolution - presented, with a request for urgent procedure, by the Social Committee

1. In accordance with the Joint Resolution adopted on 12th February 1957, by the Bureaux of the Consultative Assembly and the WEU Assembly concerning collaboration between the two Assemblies in cultural and social matters, the Consultative Assembly has considered the draft Reply of the General Affairs Committee of the WEU Assembly to the Social Chapter of the Annual Report which the Council of that Organisation is to submit to the WEU Assembly.

2. With regard to social questions, the Assembly notes that the following are among the items placed on the WEU Agenda :

- a. Public health;
- b. Drafting of a European Convention on Social Security;
- c. Manpower mobility;
- d. Vocational training;
- e. Application of ILO Conventions, Recommendations and Resolutions;
- f. Problem of a European Social Charter;
- g. Harmonisation of legislation concerning atomic protection.

The Assembly draws the attention of the competent organs of W. E. U. to the fact that Items (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f) have already been the subject of careful study, and indeed of decisions, not only by the Council of Europe itself, but also by other organisations, such as O. E. E. C, the I. L. O., the E. C. S. C, etc. As for item (g), it is likely, of course, to come within the scope of Euratom.

3. The Assembly therefore feels bound to express concern that several organisations should be devoting their energies to the study of the same questions. This concern is increased by the fact that the Common Market Organisation will shortly be required, in its turn, to deal with the same social questions. In these circumstances it is to be feared that there will be an increasing degree of overlapping among these organisations in the social field. This duplication, even on a multilateral scale, will gradually lead to a state of confusion and thus not merely impede progress but bar the way to European unification, the purpose for which all these organisations were created.

4. With special reference to social security questions, the Consultative Assembly agrees with the WEU Assembly that such questions will assume increasing importance on the establishment of the Common Market. It believes it would be most regrettable, however, if the work done by the Council of Europe in this field, with which 15 member countries are associated, should lapse owing to poor coordination among the various international bodies, following upon the inauguration of the Common Market which it is the natural task of the Council of Europe to supplement and extend.

5. As for manpower mobility problems, they could more easily be solved within the framework of the fifteen Council of Europe countries than on a narrower scale. Here again, therefore, the Assembly would be sorry if the work of the Council of Europe were unable to go forward smoothly and in harmony with that of the other organisations.

6. On these grounds, and in view of the vital importance to the future of Europe of ensuring co-ordination between the various international and intergovernmental organisations, the Assembly :

- a. Stresses the gravity and urgency of this problem and trust that the Ministers will give it their full attention;
- b. Appeals to all parliamentarians to seek ways and means of solving it;
- c. Considers that measures for improving the present situation should include :
 - 1. arrangements whereby observers from the secretariats of each of the two organisations may attend meetings of the social organs of the other;
 - 2. the holding, whenever deemed appropriate, of joint meetings of the Social Committees of the two organisations;
 - 3. the organisation of such a meeting with the minimum of delay, for the purpose of joint examination of this Resolution;

- d.* Hopes that, in accordance with the spirit of co-operation shown by the adoption, on 12th January 1957, of the joint Resolution of the Bureaux of the two organisations, this serious problem may be solved in a manner consonant with the interests of European unity.

B. Draft Resolution - présenté, presented, with a request for urgent procedure, by the Cultural Committee²

1. In accordance with the terms of the Resolution adopted by the Bureaux of the Consultative Assembly and of the WEU Assembly on 12th January 1957, relating to collaboration between the two Assemblies in cultural and social matters, the Consultative Assembly has examined the text of the draft reply prepared by the General Affairs Committee of the WEU Assembly to the Cultural Chapter of the Annual Report of the Council of WEU to the W E U Assembly.
2. The Assembly is interested to learn of the varied activities of W. E. U. in the cultural field.
3. One subject of particular interest is the work of the Public Administration Committee. The Assembly considers that this work of making civil servants better acquainted with the activities and working methods of their colleagues in other member countries is very useful, and the Assembly wishes it every success. Believing in its value the Assembly would welcome the receipt of more detailed information about the work that is being done in this field and wonders whether W. E. U. would not be willing to send invitations to the Governments of countries which are members of the Council of Europe but not of W. E. U. to participate in some of these activities.
4. The Assembly was interested to learn more about the work of the Universities Committee following up the Conference held at Cambridge in July 1955. The fact that representatives of universities in all Member States of the Council of Europe attended the Cambridge Conference organised by W. E. U. and also participate in the work of the Universities Committee is, in a certain sense, a good example of co-operation between the two organisations. The Assembly is glad to learn that representatives of universities in all fifteen countries will be invited to the next Conference at Dijon in 1959. At the same time, it is hoped that the Council of Europe will be in some way associated with the preparation of this Conference in order to emphasise the fact that its importance extends beyond that of the seven countries which are Members of W. E. U.
5. The Assembly is glad to note that certain cultural activities originally undertaken by the Brussels Treaty Organisation have been transferred to the Council of Europe and thus extended to the wider basis of the fifteen countries. It hopes that this precedent will be followed in other appropriate cases.
6. Nevertheless, as in the case of the social activities of W. E. U., the Assembly cannot refrain from drawing attention once more to the overlapping of competence and the danger of duplication of work between the two organisations. In its Recommendation 73 of July 1955, it called upon the Governments to investigate the different aspects of this question and it continues to believe in the necessity of such action. It hopes therefore that the dangers of duplication of work in the cultural field, which are particularly glaring, will be borne in mind in the current discussions about the rationalisation of European institutions which are now being undertaken in various organisations both at the governmental and parliamentary level. In the meantime, so long as the present situation remains unchanged, the possibility might be explored of holding joint meetings between the Cultural Committee of the Consultative Assembly and the General Affairs Committee of the WEU Assembly with a view to discussing these questions together.

2. Adopted unanimously by the Committee - See 10th Sitting, 4th May 1957 (draft Resolution adopted) and Resolution 128.