

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 10 February 1970

Confidential  
AS/PR (21) PV 6

## CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY

### COMMITTEE ON POPULATION AND REFUGEES

#### MINUTES

of the meeting held on 28 January 1970  
in Strasbourg



PACECOM036351

#### Members present:

MM. MARGUE, Chairman	Luxembourg
PÖHLER, Vice-Chairman	Fed. Rep. of Germany
BEGHIN	Belgium
DESTREMAU (for Mrs. Ploux)	France
FANELLI (for Mr. Spadola)	Italy
FRANZONI	Switzerland
KOCAS	Turkey
KRANZLMAYR (for Mrs. Firnberg)	Austria
Mrs. MUNKEBYE	Norway
ROSS	Denmark
MM. SILKIN (for Mrs. Jeger)	United Kingdom
VAN DER STOEL (for Mr. Goedhart)	Netherlands
WIKLUND	Sweden

#### Also present:

MM. DE KEULENEIR	Belgium
WÄG	Sweden

Observers:

MM. Walter BESTERMAN	Deputy Director of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration
SCHNEITER	Special Representative of the Council of Europe for National Refugees and Over-population
RODIE	Counsellor, Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration
GRANVILLE FLETCHER	Office of the United Nations in Geneva
Mrs. BOUEE	International Union of Family Organisations
Miss des GACHONS	World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations
Mrs. van MIERLO-MUTSAERS	European Union of Women

Apologised for absence:

MM. BRENNAN	Ireland
KRISTJANSSON	Iceland

The Chairman opened the meeting at 9 a.m.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr. Besterman, Deputy Director of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration and Mr. Schneider, Special Representative of the Council of Europe for National Refugees and Over-population.

1. Agenda

AS/PR (21) OJ 67

The Chairman informed the Committee that following the cease-fire in Nigeria of 11 January 1970 he and 10 other members of the Assembly had requested, in accordance with the Assembly's rule on urgent procedure, that the question of the victims of the civil war be placed on the agenda of the Assembly's January part-session. The Assembly had conceded to this request and had asked the Committee to submit a report on the question of the victims of the civil war in Nigeria on Friday 30 January 1970. The Chairman said he had prepared a draft report on this matter and proposed that the Committee examine his report under item 3 on the agenda.

This was agreed.

Thus amended the agenda was adopted.

2. Minutes

AS/PR (21) PV 57

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 1969 in Paris were approved.

3. Position of the victims of the Nigerian civil war

AS/PR (21) 14, 15 and 16

Doc. 2721

Doc. 26027

Mr. Franzoni made a short statement on the visit he recently made to the areas ravaged by the Nigerian civil war, at the invitation of Caritas Internationalis. On that occasion he had a discussion with Mr. Ojukwu and his Ministers and also with the Special Representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross. He said that in a very small territory, i.e. 2,000 km<sup>2</sup>, about 6 - 8 million people were living in very precarious circumstances. The International Red Cross and the voluntary relief organisations had to meet a growing number of difficulties in the fulfilment of their humanitarian tasks. The voluntary agencies had even worked in these areas against the wish of the Nigerian Government. Mr. Franzoni said that the suffering was particularly serious among old people and children, of whom many risked dying of starvation.

Mr. Franzoni thought that food and medical supplies for these victims of the civil war would arrive too late if these supplies could not be transported directly to the disaster areas. He had the impression that aid supplies destined to the victims of the civil war and shipped to Nigeria had been used for political purposes or sold on the black market.

The Chairman, Rapporteur, introduced with a brief comment his draft report on relief measures for victims of the civil war in Nigeria. He said that in his report he had taken into consideration the fact that no relief action could be undertaken without the consent and collaboration of the Nigerian Government. The report had been written in a

spirit of objectivity in order not to provoke the susceptibilities of the Nigerian Government. The Chairman said that it had proved to be very difficult to get accurate information on the situation in Nigeria. He would therefore like to hear the opinion of the Committee on this matter with a view to improving the report where necessary.

Mr. Silkin said he appreciated the principle of objectivity underlying the Chairman's statement. He emphasised that the purpose of the report should be to offer assistance to the victims of the civil war. Therefore the report should not contain formulae or sources of misunderstanding which would incite the Nigerian Government to reject this offer. Mr. Silkin thought that as Nigeria was a former colony, the Committee should, in its report, spare this country's sensibilities even more than if it were a European country and avoid any appearance of telling the Nigerian Government what it should do. With this idea in mind he had drafted the alternative draft recommendation and alternative draft resolution.

Mr. Silkin said that unfortunately there was a good deal of controversy in reports from journalists and official observers. However, he had the impression that the Nigerian Government, which had shown an unprecedented spirit of reconciliation, was making a serious effort to relieve the situation of the victims of the civil war. In this connection he quoted an article in the Times of Monday 26 January 1970, containing a report on Lord Hunt's mission to Nigeria. Mr. Silkin expressed the hope that the Committee could agree unanimously on a revised text of the Rapporteur's report.

Mrs. Ross wondered whether it would be wise for the Assembly to adopt a recommendation on relief measures for the victims of the civil war. It might stir up irritation in Nigeria which in consequence would refuse to accept aid from the Council of Europe member states which were already sending aid to Nigeria on a large scale. In this connection she mentioned that Danish planes loaded with relief supplies had already been refused to land in Nigeria.

Mr. van der Stoep agreed that also without an Assembly recommendation the Council of Europe member governments would continue to offer aid for the victims of the civil war. He thought that a decision of the Committee not to submit a report on relief measures for the victims of the civil war might be misunderstood, given the fact that the Rapporteur and other members of the Committee had already requested, under the Assembly's rule on urgent procedure, to put this question on the agenda for the Assembly's January part-session.

Mr. van der Steel agreed with Mr. Silkin that the Assembly should not adopt a text which would provoke the susceptibilities of the Nigerian Government. He thought that paragraph 6 of the draft recommendation contained points which were likely to do so. Therefore he was more in favour of Mr. Silkin's alternative text. However, he thought that it would be better to delete paragraph 4 in the latter text.

Mr. Beghin thought also that it would be better to delete paragraph 4 of Mr. Silkin's alternative draft recommendation. The report should not contain favourable comments on any party involved in the conflict and deal only with the humanitarian aspects of the situation in Nigeria.

Mr. Destremau thought that paragraph 4 of the alternative draft recommendation and also paragraph 4 of the alternative draft resolution should be deleted.

Mr. Pöhler thought the Committee should submit a report to the Assembly and expressed his preference for Mr. Silkin's alternative texts. He said the report should only deal with the humanitarian aspects of aid measures and invite the Council of Europe member governments to co-operate with the Nigerian Government as well as the voluntary agencies in the carrying out of the aid operations. He suggested that the Chairman and Mr. Silkin draft together a new recommendation on the basis of the draft texts submitted by them. This new recommendation should not contain any of the points included in the original draft texts on which objections had been raised.

Mr. Schneider recalled that in the past the Assembly had on various occasions made appeals to governments of non-member states. However, it had not yet occurred that such an appeal was made to a sister-organisation as proposed in paragraph 4 of the draft resolution.

Mr. de Keulencir thought that given the frequent accusations of the Nigerian Government expressed in press articles, the Assembly recommendation would probably be misunderstood by this government. He suggested that the Assembly appeal to the United Nations and the OAU to organise with the help of voluntary agencies as well as the Council of Europe Special Representative an extensive aid programme.

Mr. Wiklund thought it was very difficult for the Committee to come to precise proposals. An Assembly document might have a negative influence on the negotiations which were at present conducted between the various relief organisations and the Nigerian Government. He agreed with Mrs. Ross that the Assembly should not adopt a report on relief measures for the victims of the civil war. If the Committee insisted on presenting a report to the Assembly, he preferred that this be Mr. Silkin's alternative draft recommendation and resolution. However, in that case he proposed that in Mr. Silkin's alternative draft recommendation paragraph 4 and in his alternative draft resolution the first part of paragraph 4 be deleted.

Mr. Franzoni observed that according to an article in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* General Gowon had not allowed observers to enter the areas stricken by the civil war. Although the airstrip of Uli was again in good condition the Nigerian Government had not yet authorised any relief flights to this airport. He thought that the Nigerian Government's aid activities had only been carried out because of public pressure. He had no hope for any action by the United Nations.

Mrs. Ross said she preferred that the report should not contain more than an appeal to the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity to help the victims of the civil war as much as possible. She added that she could not agree with paragraph 5 in Mr. Silkin's alternative draft recommendation.

Mr. Silkin said the Nigerian Government had allowed observers to go to the distress areas. He emphasised that in these areas there was a great need for means of transportation as he had indicated in paragraph 3 of the alternative draft recommendation. Mr. Silkin said he agreed with Mrs. Ross that there was no need for the Assembly to appeal to the Committee of Ministers to assist the victims of the Nigerian civil war as the Council of Europe member governments were already doing their best to help as much as possible. He suggested that the Committee submit to the Assembly only a draft resolution.

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Mr. Silkin was of the opinion that the explanatory memorandum contained a number of controversial statements and therefore should not accompany the draft recommendation or resolution to be adopted by the Committee.

The Chairman summarised briefly the various opinions expressed at the meeting and concluded that the majority of the Committee's members was in favour of submitting a report to the Assembly. He noted that the differences in the points of view expressed by the Committee's members concerned only the precise wording of the report. However, there did not appear to be a difference of opinion on the substance of the report.

The Chairman suggested that the Committee examine the draft recommendation and draft resolution paragraph by paragraph taking also into consideration Mr. Silkin's alternative draft recommendation and draft resolution.

I. Draft recommendation

Paragraphs 1 and 2 were adopted.

Paragraph 3:

The Chairman proposed that paragraph 3 of Mr. Silkin's alternative draft recommendation become the new paragraph 3.

This was agreed.

Paragraph 4:

The Chairman proposed to replace paragraph 4 by paragraph 5 of Mr. Silkin's alternative draft recommendation.

This was agreed.

Paragraph 5:

The Chairman suggested that in this paragraph no reference be made to the assistance of voluntary organisations.

Mr. Beghin and Mr. Destremau were in favour of maintaining the text of paragraph 5 as it stood.

The Chairman put paragraph 5 to the vote.

For 8

Against 4

Abstentions 1

Paragraph 6:

The Chairman proposed the following new text for paragraph 6 (a):

"to continue to make available the financial assistance, transport, food, medical supplies and equipment needed for those operations on behalf of persons in need in Nigeria".

This was agreed.

The Chairman proposed to delete paragraph 6 (b).

This was agreed.

After a short discussion in which the Chairman, Mr. Silkin, Mrs. Ross, Mr. Pöhler, Mr. Destremau and Mr. van der Stoel took part the Committee adopted the following new paragraph 6 (b).

"to discuss ~~with~~ the Nigerian Government the best ways in which they and the voluntary organisations wishing to help can assist the Nigerian Government in its relief and reconstruction operations".

At the proposal of the Chairman the Committee decided to delete paragraphs 6 (c), (d) and 7.

Following this the Committee adopted unanimously, as amended, the draft recommendation on relief measures for victims of the civil war in Nigeria, following the cease-fire of 11 January 1970.



## II. Draft resolution

Paragraphs 1 and 2 were adopted.

Paragraph 3:

The Chairman proposed replacing paragraph 3 by the following text:

"Anxious that all possible relief should continue to be granted to persons in need with the agreement of the Nigerian Government, in accordance with the proposals contained in its Recommendation .... (1970)".

This was agreed.

Paragraph 4:

The Chairman proposed deleting the words "to guarantee a return to normal life for all the peoples of this country who have been so cruelly stricken".

This was agreed.

Paragraph 5:

The Chairman proposed replacing paragraph 5 by paragraph 7 of the draft recommendation and adding at the end of this paragraph the following words:

"and in Recommendation ..... (1970)".

This was agreed.

Following this the Committee adopted unanimously, as amended, the draft resolution on relief measures for victims of the civil war in Nigeria, following the ceasefire of 11 January 1970.

Mr. Silkin made a few critical remarks on certain passages in the explanatory memorandum.

The Chairman explained that - according to the Assembly's Rules of Procedure - an explanatory memorandum expressed the Rapporteur's personal opinion, which did not need to be voted upon. Nevertheless he was prepared to revise certain parts of the text taking into account Mr. Silkin's remarks.

#### 4. Position of the Greek refugees

Mr. Pöhler, Rapporteur, informed the Committee that he intended to go to Vienna in June 1970 with a view to collecting information on the position of Greek refugees living in Austria. Mr. Pöhler added that in March 1970 he would submit to the Committee a preliminary draft report on the position of the Greek refugees. The information to be collected in Vienna would be included in his report at a later stage. This report was scheduled to be examined by the Assembly in September 1970.

Mr. van der Stoep enquired whether it would be possible for the Committee to submit to the Assembly a preliminary report containing a draft recommendation on the position of the Greek refugees in April 1970. He thought the matter had become very urgent as many Greek refugees lived in great distress.

The Chairman replied that on the basis of the information collected by the Rapporteur in the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland, Italy and the United Kingdom it seemed that the position of the Greek refugees was less alarming than Mr. van der Stoep thought. He suggested that Mr. van der Stoep, as Rapporteur on the situation in Greece for both the Political Affairs Committee and the Legal Affairs Committee, and Mr. Pöhler exchange information on the question of the Greek refugees.

#### 5. Position of the refugees from Czechoslovakia

Mr. Bosterman informed the Committee that in the last three months of 1969 two important events affecting the Czechoslovak refugees had taken place. One was that the amnesty for Czechoslovak refugees returning to their country after an illicit stay abroad expired on 15 September 1969. According to information received from voluntary agencies and border police only a very small number of Czechoslovak refugees availed themselves of this amnesty, i.e. between 500 and 1,500. The total number of Czechoslovak refugees still residing in different legal status in Western European countries was estimated at 54,000. The second important event was that the governments in the countries of first asylum had granted important facilities to the Czechoslovak refugees involving considerable expenses. Following an appeal by the Director of ICEM admission procedures in overseas countries willing to receive Czechoslovak refugees had been shortened. ICEM arranged between 10 October and 31 December 1969 the transport of 3,107 Czechoslovak refugees to these overseas countries and also to certain Western European countries which had accorded permanent settlement to these refugees. There were at present still 10,000 Czechoslovak refugees staying in Austria who had applied for emigration.

Mr. Besterman said that the Italian Government had offered hospitality to a considerable number of Czechoslovak refugees residing in Austria, in order to relieve the situation in the latter country. Therefore ICEM was directing at present its aid efforts to Italy.

Mr. Besterman informed the Committee that in 1969 ICEM had arranged for the emigration of about 90,000 persons of various nationalities. Since 1 September 1968 his organisation had moved 16,154 Czechoslovak refugees of which 13,654 from Austria alone. He said that in Switzerland 11,000 Czechoslovak refugees had found permanent resettlement and in Sweden 2,000. Australia and the United States had admitted over 5,000 Czechoslovak refugees each. Smaller numbers of them had settled-down in other countries.

Mr. Besterman expected that ICEM would have to assist in 1970 about 10,000 Czechoslovaks in their emigration to countries where they could find permanent settlement. The total number of refugees from Eastern European countries that ICEM expected to move in 1970 was 55,000. Mr. Besterman emphasised that the countries which granted first asylum to refugees should be relieved as much as possible by other countries through the admission of these refugees for permanent settlement. The aid programmes for the Czechoslovak refugees risked being curtailed if the cost of these programmes would become too high for the countries of first asylum. Therefore it seemed important that other countries would take such measures as to facilitate admission of Czechoslovak refugees with a view to relieving the situation in the countries of first asylum. Mr. Besterman concluded by saying that ICEM was ready to help the refugees as much as possible in 1970. However, it could only do so if ICEM received sufficient financial contributions from member states. He expressed the hope that the Committee would be willing to examine the possibility of launching an appeal to the Council of Europe member governments to facilitate admission of Czechoslovak refugees in their countries.

6. Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe's Special Representative for National Refugees and Over-population

Deferred.

[Concl/RS 23 (69)]

7. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

The Chairman informed the Committee that the date of the fourth special session of the Council of Europe-OECD liaison committees concerned with manpower and social questions would be held on 17 March 1970 at the headquarters of OECD,

Château de la Muette in Paris. He said that it had been suggested that the fourth special session be devoted to the following themes: adult retraining, confrontation of migration policies, and recent developments in manpower policies.

Mr. Sand informed the Committee that OECD had proposed examining at the fourth special session also Assembly Recommendation 565 in reply to the 13th Progress Report of the Special Representative of the Council of Europe for National Refugees and Over-population.

8. Development Co-operation

This item could not be discussed owing to lack of time.

9. Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration

Deferred.

10. Intergovernmental activities of the Council of Europe

[Doc. 2695 and addendum]

Deferred.

11. Any other business

None.

12. Time and place of next meeting

The Committee decided to hold its next meeting on Tuesday morning, 17 March 1970 in Paris.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

List of decisions taken

The Committee,

- approved the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 1969 in Paris;
- adopted unanimously as amended the draft recommendation and draft resolution on relief measures for victims of the civil war in Nigeria following the cease-fire of 11 January 1970, presented by the Chairman, Rapporteur;
- heard a statement by Mr. Besterman, Deputy Director of the intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, on the work of his Organisation on behalf of the Czechoslovak refugees;
- decided to hold its next meeting on Tuesday morning, 17 March 1970 in Paris and to attend the 4th special session of the Council of Europe-OECD liaison committees concerned with manpower and social questions in the afternoon of the same day.