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COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS



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THE NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT IN TURKEY

How National Parliaments can contribute to increasing the knowledge and improving the image of the Council of Europe : What is being done already and what more could be done

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1. The purpose of the Directorate of Press and Information is to impart knowledge and to improve the image of the Council of Europe; this function is fulfilled within the existing programmes of the DPI. Since the Committee on Parliamentary and Public Relations is meeting in Turkey, this report will specifically take up the question in relation to Turkey.
2. The Council of Europe has maintained a press correspondent in Turkey since 1977 whose main function is to help DPI in disseminating information and knowledge on the activities of the Council.
3. Since 1980 the Council of Europe has published a quarterly periodical "Avrupa Konseyi Dergisi" in Turkish in addition to many other brochures and booklets in Turkish on aspects of the activities of the Council, translations of documents such as the Convention on Human Rights, and articles translated and published in provincial papers.
4. Because of the special events that took place in Turkey since 1980 the Council of Europe has been receiving large press coverage as far as its relations with Turkey are concerned. However, as in many other member countries neither the activities of the Council of Europe nor those of the members of the Parliamentary Assembly have been receiving the coverage they deserve. Even though part of the blame for the lack of coverage may be attributed to insufficient co-operation and co-ordination between members of the Parliament on the one hand and those responsible for Council of Europe press coverage on the other; and secondly to the reluctance of national governments to publicize the activities of the Council of Europe.
5. To improve the coverage of the activities of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly and those of its members, the following proposals may be advanced :

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5.1 Members of the Parliamentary Assembly should establish greater contact on the local level with the Press Correspondents of the DPI and provide them with information on the following :

- the activities of the Committees in which they participate.
- their views on and contribution to the activities of the Council.

This information, to be used in the "Newsletters" and "Avrupa Konseyi Dergisi", will certainly help to increase knowledge about the activities of the Parliamentarians in general and will provide evidence, in Turkish, of activities of the individual parliamentarians.

5.2 Because of the lack of adequate funds and "infrastructure" DPI activities at national level are but limited in the following fields :

- Publications of special feature pamphlets and brochures which might have a broad appeal.
- Organisation of seminars and colloquies on national level on subjects of interest both to the Council of Europe and the nations concerned.
- Dissemination of news and comments on the activities of the Council of Europe and of Parliamentarians on national radio and television networks.

In all these fields the contribution of national parliamentarians, could provide a source of great support for the Council. The Press Correspondents of the Council of Europe will be at the disposal of the national Parliamentary Delegations to develop coordinated programmes so as to better promote both knowledge on the Council of Europe and of the activities of national Parliamentarians.