

1st European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT) (Bonn, Federal Republic of Germany: 9-11 September 1970) on "Foundations of a European regional planning policy"

Resolution No. 2 on The factors to be taken into account in promoting balanced regional development in Europe

10. The conference considers that in the pursuit of this objective the following essential factors should be taken into account:

The quality of the environment

11. Economic development and preservation of the environment are two complementary aspects of a single aspiration.

12. At a time when, in the age of the industrial society, the natural environment is being impaired by uncontrolled and indiscriminate use of space and by irrational exploitation of resources, governments should give high priority to the rational management of the environment and to effective conservation of natural resources.

13. Regional planning can make an important contribution to the creation or preservation of a proper environment. It makes it possible to control the various factors which can make or mar the quality of the environment. It has a special advantage of being able to do away with or mitigate the consequences of certain forms of pollution and to prevent any deterioration in the environment. Finally, it enables the community to draw greater benefit from the limited natural resources that are at its disposal.

14. In this connection, governments should give most careful attention to the proposals contained in the Declaration on the Management of the Natural Environment of Europe, adopted by the European Conservation Conference (Strasbourg, February 1970).

15. The present variety and size of recreational areas should be safeguarded and further developed. In particular, it should be made impossible for open spaces and undeveloped land available for recreation to be split up, as may happen as a result of uncontrolled urbanisation or a dispersal of individual facilities such as secondary dwellings.

16. Special importance should be attached to improving the quality of the environment in urban and suburban areas. The provision of open spaces and green belts remains one of the essential means of action.

17. Long-term plans for rational and restrictive land development should be drawn up to enable a land policy to be implemented in rural and suburban areas.

18. As has been emphasised by the Conference of European Ministers responsible for the Preservation and Rehabilitation of the Cultural Heritage of Monuments and Sites, held in Brussels from 25 to 27 November 1969, the rehabilitation of historical and artistic monuments and sites can, if integrated with a general regional planning policy, make an important contribution to the improvement of the environment.

19. The improvement of the environment should not be restricted to piecemeal efforts outside the main stream of the trends towards industrialisation and urbanisation. It should be one of the main conditions of government policies in the fields of economic, social and physical planning.

20. Pollution in all its forms is today attaining such distressing proportions that it is becoming a serious social danger and is hampering technical and economic development. The campaign against pollution therefore must not be regarded as negative and sterilising in its influence, but as a factor for progress. It must be conducted on the European scale not only because the consequences of pollution may spread beyond frontiers, but above all with a view to general effective action.

Urbanisation and the balance between town and country

21. There are grounds for thinking that the trend towards urbanisation will continue in Europe, as the corollary to economic development, and will jeopardise the necessary balance between town and country, the development of which must remain complementary, unless governed by a rational plan.

22. The disorderly concentrations liable to appear in particular urban areas or on certain central trunk routes must be avoided. Any policy for the creation or preservation of an urbanisation pattern should be included in a general policy for the balanced development of urban and rural areas with a view to reducing the prosperity differentials between regions, encouraging decentralisation of the population and protecting the quality of the environment.

23. Similarly, for the highly industrialised regions a programme is required which will promote their equilibrium and the quality of their environment. In particular, many town centres should be adapted to future needs and the harmonious development of outlying districts should be assured.

24. As requested, for example, by the Consultative Assembly in Recommendation 556 on land-use problems in town planning, governments should promote a series of effective land-policy measures.

Problems of rural areas

25. Agriculture, forestry and fisheries will continue to be essential and important branches of production in the economy as a whole. An attempt must be made to strike a proper balance between local possibilities and the economic prospects for productive crops, with due heed to the requirements of soil protection and to the restoration of forestry and pasturage.

26. In rural regions, where a part of the labour force is freed as a result of structural changes in agriculture and handicrafts, new employment opportunities and standards of living comparable to those of city dwellers should be afforded to the local population:

- by stimulating the growth of well-situated regional centres suited for that purpose,
- by establishing new concerns carefully selected and sited in order to attract the further development desired,
- by improving the standard and quality of services provided for the population,
- and by developing tourism.

27. To secure an adequate population basis for public and private service facilities, transport systems should be developed in such a way as to offer the population easy access to the service facilities of the centres.

Special problems of particular regions

28. In frontier regions divergent population and economic trends often form obstacles to the process of harmonisation. The conference requests governments to co-ordinate their planning policies and measures in these regions with the participation of those directly concerned, in particular by creating regional committees to hold periodic meetings in order to co-ordinate the preparation and timing of regional plans. Such concertation could also deal with the tracing of sources of pollution whose effects extend beyond the frontier, and the means to control and eliminate these, and also air and road infrastructures, hospital and health facilities, and urban structures.

29. In mountain regions more than elsewhere, the development of tourist centres should harness local initiative and make use of the manpower available on the spot, while also taking advantage of public financial aid and infrastructure development.

30. In remote rural areas where at present no prospect of economic development can be foreseen, governments should be aware of the need for the conservation of nature but for which these regions would be liable to be reduced to a state of desolation having due regard to the part that the local population can play in appropriate cases.

31. In industrial redevelopment areas, new industries and services must be attracted which can afford employment opportunities by replacing the declining industries, while at the same time avoiding further excessive concentration and restoring an acceptable environment.

32. In the peripheral regions within national states, the conference considers that governmental action should take account of the approach indicated in the section below concerning the European peripheral regions.

33. Regions characterised by a balanced economic and population structure should be developed in an orderly way, so as to maintain their equilibrium.

Problems of European peripheral regions

34. The conference feels that special attention must be given to a number of outlying areas whose development suffers from their geographical remoteness and from the considerable employment and standard of living problems which result from it.

35. These comprise certain areas situated around the Mediterranean basin where a large reserve of labour is available on the Atlantic shore, in the Nordic countries, and in areas along the border of eastern Europe, a border which should not however represent an insuperable obstacle to future regional planning in Europe.

36. Governments' action in these relatively backward regions should include:

a. a series of financial measures aimed at influencing the machinery of accumulation and distribution of capital and the location of industry which will take special account of the need to make incentives fully effective according to circumstances;

b. a national policy which as a whole does not conflict with the development of these regions;

c. the formulation of transport and telecommunications infrastructure programmes which take full advantage of technical progress;

d. the co-ordination of measures for industrial development, for the transformation of agriculture and for tourist amenities;

- e. the development of new sources of energy, permitting more opportunities for regional industrialisation;
- f. the rational exploitation of the seaboard;
- g. the development of facilities for socio-cultural activities, general education and vocational training;
- h. the establishment of scientific and research centres for the purpose of calling a halt to the habitual drain on these regions' intellectual resources;
- i. the creation of an urban structure focused on a number of growth centres.

37. The conference wishes to emphasise that one of the best ways of accelerating economic development in these areas is the use of the latest technological discoveries; new techniques must be applied particularly in the field of transport and communications, as urged by the Brest Symposium of peripheral regions and municipalities of Europe (May 1970), which regarded distance as no longer constituting an insurmountable obstacle, while it is increasingly urgent to restructure transport systems particularly as regards relations with non-European countries.

38. However, despite the considerable efforts made at national level to help these areas, the fact that there is still a gap between the more highly developed and the less favoured regions demonstrates that a European approach is needed to narrow this gap.

The transport and communications network

39. A really fast and well-balanced transport and communications network is one of the essential conditions for the harmonious development of Europe, its human institutions and its trade.

40. When extending and co-ordinating national communications networks, governments should take into account the future requirements of Europe as a whole, the potential of less highly developed and peripheral regions and new possibilities opened up by modern means of communication.

41. In urban areas special attention should be paid to the advantages of public transport so as to limit the use of private vehicles.

The participation of the public through local and regional authorities

42. Since the region is the framework best suited to the preparation and implementation of overall regional planning projects, as observed by the European Conference of Local Authorities, governments should encourage effective regional structures to enable the population to play a part in the preparation and implementation of regional programmes.