

10.

THE CRISIS IN THE SOVIET UNION  
Assembly Recommendation 1161 (1991)  
(Concl(91)467/9)

Decisions

The Deputies

1. decided to send Assembly Recommendation 1161 (1991) on the crisis in the Soviet Union to the Governments of the member States;

2. adopted the following reply:

"i. The Committee of Ministers has examined Assembly Recommendation 1161 (1991) on the crisis in the Soviet Union with great interest. After the events of 18-21 August 1991, the Ministers' Deputies devoted several special meetings to this question and prepared for discussion of it at ministerial level.

ii. An agenda item at the Committee of Ministers' 89th Session (26 November 1991) was accordingly devoted to the events in the Soviet Union. The Ministers resolved:

"to expand the Council of Europe's contacts and co-operation with the central authorities of the Soviet Union and, as appropriate, and within the limits of the powers of each, with the Republics embarking upon the road to democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights, the basic principles of the Council of Europe, within the political and security equilibrium in Europe".

The Ministers also observed:

"that recent events, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, have engendered very positive aspects despite the existence of a climate of uncertainty and tension. They emphasise the need to develop further the role of the Council of Europe as a rallying point and forum for co-operation in today's Europe.

The Ministers pointed out that the Council of Europe was conceived to gather together the peoples of Europe on the basis of values - pluralist democracy, human rights, the rule of law - whose observance is the prime guarantee of stability and peace on this continent. It constitutes a directly available structure for reception and co-operation of which the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have an immediate need and in which they show a strong interest.

Bearing in mind these various factors, the Ministers wished to give a clear political signal and to set a precise course as regards the Council of Europe's readiness to face up to the new political tasks which fall to it. They considered several initiatives in this respect suggested in a memorandum by the Secretary General. The Ministers instructed their Deputies, among other things, to consider in more detail the proposals for a development plan for law in Central and Eastern European countries, as well as a programme for local democracy. They also decided to go more deeply into certain suggestions made in the fundamental area of the protection of national minorities."

iii. With regard to the Organisation's resources, the Ministers noted that:

"The geographical enlargement and recent development of the Council of Europe, as well as the need to contribute usefully and effectively to the process of democratic reform under way in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, implied the provision of appropriate increased resources and in particular of those devoted to assistance and co-operation programmes for these countries, subject to strict budgetary control, as well as greater flexibility in its working methods."

Since then, the Ministers' Deputies have adopted the 1992 budget, which marks an increase of 14.64% in nominal terms, and 9.57% in real terms.

Vote IX, which covers co-operation and assistance programmes for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, has been raised to 34.8 million francs, an increase of 100% on the amount allocated in the 1991 budget.

iv. Concerning the question of minorities, the Committee of Ministers has instructed the CDDH to consider the legal and political aspects of the conditions in which the Council of Europe might take action to protect national minorities.

Finally, the Austrian delegation included in the file for the Committee of Ministers' 89th Session a draft Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights guaranteeing the protection of ethnic groups. This draft has been added to the documentary material at the CDDH's disposal."