

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE

## COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

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### RESOLUTION (74) 4

#### ON THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 24 January 1974,  
at its 53rd Session)*

The Committee of Ministers,

1. Considering that the evolution in Europe calls for a study of the future role of the Council of Europe and consequently of its fields of activity;
2. Recalling its decision of 14 May 1973 for such a study to be undertaken within the framework of the Statute;
3. Having taken into consideration Recommendation 704 of the Consultative Assembly and the report submitted to the Ministers' Deputies on 31 October 1973 by a working party composed of six Permanent Representatives, set up by their decision of 14 May 1973;
4. Appreciating the contribution which the Council of Europe has made since its creation in promoting greater unity in Europe between democratic countries with parliamentary systems;
5. Convinced that the aims and principles expressed in the Statute retain their validity and that the Council of Europe will remain a cornerstone of European co-operation;
6. Emphasising that the Council of Europe's approach to the practical problems in its fields of activities, characterised as it is by a particular regard for the rights of the individual and the dignity of man, is a distinctive feature of the organisation which it is in the interest of the member states to further promote;
7. Convinced that the Council of Europe will be better able to play its specific role and fulfil its mission if full use is made of its political potential;
8. Conscious that a more intensive utilisation as well as a considerable improvement of the existing mechanisms in the Council would allow it to pursue its aims and principles and carry out its tasks with greater efficiency;
9. Considering that the present state of co-operation in Europe makes it particularly desirable to develop contacts between the Council of Europe and the other European and international organisations and institutions;

10. Noting that it would be unrealistic to share out tasks among these organisations and institutions, and that it is therefore necessary to co-ordinate their activities and to increase the amount of information exchanged and the regularity of such interchanges, so that these organisations and institutions may in practice complement one another,

**I. With regard to the fields of activity, structures and working methods**

*a.* decides to concentrate for the near future the intergovernmental activities of the Council of Europe in the following fields :

- safeguard and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- social and socio-economic problems, such as those concerning migrant workers;
- educational and cultural co-operation;
- questions relating to youth;
- protection and promotion of public health;
- protection of nature and the management of natural resources; the man-made environment and regional planning;
- local authorities; matters relating to regional and municipal co-operation;
- co-operation in the legal field, including the harmonisation of national legislation and practice in specific legal sectors; the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders;

*b.* instructs the Ministers' Deputies and the Secretary General to define within these fields precise sectors and objectives to be periodically reviewed in the light of new developments and requirements;

*c.* instructs the Ministers' Deputies to examine to what extent account can be taken, in the various fields of activity in the Work Programme listed above, of the concern of the Consultative Assembly with problems confronting democratic societies as a result of scientific and technological progress;

*d.* instructs the Ministers' Deputies to consider what items of work at present being undertaken could with benefit to the organisation be brought to an early conclusion;

*e.* instructs the Ministers' Deputies to define general criteria for the selection of the various activities in each sector of the draft Work Programme and for the attribution of priority degrees to each of these activities;

*f.* decides

- to continue to meet twice a year, on the understanding that when the new building is completed, the meetings will normally be held in Strasbourg;
- to plan for those meetings extensive exchanges of views on international political questions of common interest to all the Members of the Council of Europe;

g. takes note of a majority opinion that • in order to increase the efficiency of the Ministers' Deputies' work and of the organisation as a whole • member governments should, as far as possible, appoint Permanent Representatives resident in Strasbourg;

h. instructs the Ministers' Deputies to examine the possibilities of strengthening the current co-operation between the Committee of Ministers and the Consultative Assembly;

i. notes with satisfaction the extreme usefulness of the European Conferences of specialised Ministers with which the Council is called upon to establish or to continue a special working relationship;

• notes that the principles stated in Resolution (71) 44 retain their significance;

• instructs the Ministers' Deputies, in the framework of their ongoing study, to examine how the preparation and follow-up to these conferences might be integrated in the most efficient way possible into the Council of Europe procedures so as to give them their full effect;

j. instructs the Ministers' Deputies to consider ways and means of giving the European Conference of Local Authorities a more important function in the European context;

k. instructs the Ministers' Deputies to examine the structures, terms of reference and working methods of committees, working parties etc. with a view to rationalising them and improving their efficiency in relation to their work programmes;

l. instructs the Ministers' Deputies

• to study the advisability of replacing in certain cases the elaboration of conventions by a more efficient machinery;

• to study the desirability of a selective policy regarding the detailed follow-up to resolutions;

m. instructs the Ministers' Deputies to examine the staff recruitment policy with a view to achieving the greatest possible efficiency;

## II. With regard to the external relations of the Council of Europe

### 1. With the European Communities

a. instructs the Secretary General:

• to organise an adequate exchange of information between the Council of Europe and the Communities;

• to organise in this context regular meetings and contacts at appropriate levels in order inter alia to find areas of common interest by periodically examining current programmes and by identifying projects which lend themselves to co-operation;

b. decides to give full effect to the provisions of the arrangement concluded in 1959 between the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and the Commission of the European Communities;

c. instructs the Ministers' Deputies to examine means of reinforcing co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Communities;

d. instructs the Secretary General, and in particular the Directorate of Legal Affairs, to investigate with the competent departments of the Communities the possibilities of extending individual Community achievements to all the member states of the Council of Europe;

e. emphasises the value of the Joint Meetings of the Consultative Assembly and the European Parliamentary Assembly for debates on relations between member states of the Communities and those Council of Europe member states that are not Members of the Communities, particularly in fields where the two organisations are pursuing activities necessitating mutual consultation;

f. favours the setting up of a Council of Europe office in Brussels for liaison with the Communities in order to facilitate contacts and the exchange of information and instructs the Deputies to study without delay the practical arrangements and the expense involved;

## 2. With the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

instructs the Secretary General to ensure that close regular contact is maintained between the Secretariats of the Council of Europe and OECD, particularly in order that account may be taken of the respective activities of the two organisations when their work programmes are being drawn up;

## 3. With the United Nations Office in Geneva

recommends that relations and regular contacts be maintained between the two Secretariats within the framework of the exchange of letters as brought up to date in November 1971;

## 4. With the Secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe

instructs the Secretary General to see that more frequent and systematic contacts are maintained between the Secretariats of the Council of Europe and of the Economic Commission for Europe, particularly in matters of common concern such as demography, the environment and statistics;

## 5. With other international organisations

instructs the Secretary General to bear the above decisions in mind in his regular relations with organisations such as UNESCO and EFTA, and in his contacts with other organisations, such as ILO and WHO, whose activities lend themselves to co-operation with the Council of Europe;

## 6. With non-member states

instructs the Ministers' Deputies to examine the possibilities the Council of Europe provides for developing useful co-operation in technical fields of general interest with European non-member states;

## 7. General recommendation

agrees that the individual members of the Committee of Ministers, each in respect of the international organisations to which his country belongs, should give the appropriate instructions, within the limits of their competence, to ensure that the various points in Section II are acted on;'

## 8. Report to the Committee of Ministers

instructs the Secretary General to report regularly on any developments that have occurred or are envisaged by the Secretariats in the field under review, in pursuance of the above provisions;'

## III. With regard to the procedure to be followed

*a.* instructs the Ministers' Deputies to report to it at its 54th Session on their findings according to their mandate given them in paragraph *j* of Section I and 1. *f* of Section II and at its 55th Session on paragraph *m* of Section I;'

*b.* instructs the Ministers' Deputies to propose for its 54th Session a precise schedule for the implementation of the other paragraphs of the operative part of the present resolution.