

COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Preparatory Group for the European Conservation Year - 1970

General Information concerning
the European Conservation Year - 1970
presented by Mr. Boote (Chairman)



COE044707

EUROPEAN CONSERVATION YEAR 1970

European Conservation Year (ECY) seeks to provide a new foundation to deal with the effects on the countryside of technological progress, demographic pressures and the new attitudes of a changing society. This concerns every citizen, whoever he may be and wherever he lives. It is his personal responsibility to work for an environment which is fit for human habitation and enjoyment.

ECY originated in 1963 with a report to the European Conservation Committee (1) on the success of the first National Nature Week and Countryside Conferences held in the United Kingdom. Following detailed studies, the concept of a "Conservation Year" was adopted by the European Committee of Ministers for the Council's programme of work. Detailed aims are given on page 2.

ECY should demonstrate to the European public the co-operative efforts of many nations to improve man's environment. It will open formally in Spring 1970 with a conference in Strasbourg not only of representatives of the 18 member countries of the Council, but also of many other nations, of international organisations, and of the major interests concerned with the environment. They will seek agreement on the philosophy and principles essential to maintaining and improving the quality of the environment, and these will be promulgated in a European Conservation Manifesto for consideration by member countries of the Council.

For the success of ECY two main types of activity appear essential in each member country, although these are not intended to limit the range and scale of national effort.

1. Exhibitions and related measures, central and local, to interest people more widely in environmental issues and to encourage personal involvement in them.
2. Conferences, general and specialist, to show leaders at all levels how their work and responsibilities affect the environment and how they can help to enhance it.

There are separate booklets on them and the European Conference.

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(1) Now called: The European Committee for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

Reports on the outcome of national activities in ECY will be presented in 1971 to the European Conservation Committee which will consider the scope for further measures.

AIMS OF EUROPEAN CONSERVATION YEAR 1970

To promote a wider understanding of

- the extent and importance of Europe's natural resources,
- the character, extent and effects of human impacts on these resources,
- the limited capacity of Europe's natural resources to sustain the demands upon them.

To create an awareness of

- man's propensity for destroying his environment,
- man's capacity to reshape the environment:
 - land, air, water, wild life and countryside,
 - to his highest aspirations
- the urgent need for positive and soundly-based measures for the long-term planning, management and development of the European environment,
- the contribution of the philosophy, principles and practices of conservation towards creating a healthy environment and its potential unifying influence in Europe.

To stimulate

- a sense of personal and social trusteeship for their heritage of natural resources in the peoples of Europe,
- action in each member country on the dominant problems peculiar to its environment,

co-operation between member countries in bringing to bear their knowledge and skills in the solution of common and specific problems in the conservation of natural resources,

the development of new objectives and methods for the detection, guidance and, where necessary, control of future trends and human activities bearing on the quality of the environment.

NATIONAL CONFERENCES

To implement the aims of ECY, conservation principles and policies must become part of the thinking and efforts of everyone whose work affects the environment. These include planners, road builders, producers of minerals (especially sand and gravel), agriculturalists, pesticide manufacturers, forestry bodies, recreationalists and many others. A list is given on page 7.

In some cases the level of awareness and responsibility is already high and it should be possible for the leaders concerned to reach rapid decisions on measures to maintain and improve the quality of the environment. In some countries, it should be possible for the main interest to agree on national policies and to make concerted efforts to put them into effect.

Such action is not yet possible or appropriate with every interest or in every country. It may be that communication between conservationists (1) and developers is inadequate and needs to be improved. Some industries or activities may not have a central point for contact and co-ordination of effort or the level of awareness may be low. In some cases there may be relatively few factors adversely affecting the environment and those concerned can more easily be approached in more suitable and direct ways.

Thus, in some countries it may be necessary, or more appropriate, to begin by dealing with the main interests and demands. For example, a series of separate pre-conference discussions might be held with each interest, such as Industry, Agriculture, Planning, Science and Technology, and Recreation. In such discussions conservation interest must play an active part and seek to create the attitudes and sympathy necessary to achieve the objectives of the main conferences. These preliminary discussions should also clarify some of the basic

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(1) to include natural history and amenity.

issues with the major interests and help to identify and assess national demands on the countryside, as well as the main trends and developments. Depending on particular national circumstances it may also be desirable to begin detailed studies to collate the facts on certain major aspects which will come before the main conference(s).

Whatever methods and timetable are adopted, each country should seek to command sufficient response at definitive meetings and conferences in 1970, so that its major interests concerned recognise the urgent need to formulate and to act upon agreed national policies for the long-term planning, management and development of the countryside. This would enable representatives of member countries to indicate in 1971 the main lines being pursued and the extent of support for the European Conservation Manifesto and further possible measures for maintaining and improving the quality of the environment.

SPECIFIC AIMS

Bearing in mind the aims of European Conservation Year, set out on page 2 and consideration of the European Conservation Manifesto, it is suggested that specific aims for national symposia and conferences should be:

to acquaint all the appropriate national interests with the basic aim of conservation. This is the wise long-term planning, management and development of resources of land, air, water and wildlife for all purposes. These include amenity research, education and recreation;

to secure the agreement of all organisations for the need to achieve this aim;

to obtain from each organisation a clear expression of its specific interest in, or demands on, the countryside.

To identify those aspects

on which immediate action can be taken within the national, legal and financial framework;

which require further legal and financial provisions in order that suitable action can be taken;

on which further research, survey and study are necessary before specific plans can be made.

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To consider

the main national demands and their trends on the countryside;

the conditions necessary for long-term co-operation in formulating and implementing policies for the countryside;

the consultative machinery required to achieve co-operation.

TOPICS

The organisation of the national conferences will need to be adapted to national circumstances and to the outcome of the European Conference. The following themes are therefore, suggestions only, for selection or adaptation as required. More specific details and notes of some proposals put forward by member countries are available from the Council's Secretariat.

Legislation and Administration

Review of existing legislation affecting the countryside;

Planning practice;

Preservation of natural, historic and other treasures;

Preservation of the coastline;

Implications of a national land-use policy based on multi-purpose and zoning principles.

Users and Uses of the Countryside

Outdoor recreation;

Tourism in relation to educational and recreational policies;

Living and working in the countryside;

The impact of megalopolis on land outside main built-up areas;

Traffic and its impact on the countryside;

Water conservation;

Agricultural and land management policies.

Technology

Technology in the countryside (environmental contamination; hydro-electrics; pollution of air, water and soil; noise etc.);

Reclamation of derelict land;

Industry and the countryside.

Education, Training and Information

Education;

Information;

Training and qualifications of planners;

Training and qualifications of land-linked professions;

Citizen participation in care of the countryside.

Research and Surveys

Resource economics for land-use, including cost/benefit analysis of recreational use of land;

Role of research in the natural and social sciences on human impacts on the natural environment;

Specific studies in depth on national areas which show a wide range of human impacts on vulnerable national resources.

ORGANISATION

General remarks

A national conference should constitute a major forum for all the national interests - such as official bodies (central and local government, nationalised industries), industrial and commercial organisations, the planning and allied professions, and the voluntary conservation bodies - concerned directly or indirectly with the countryside and its natural resources. Examples of these are listed on Page 7.

Responsibility for the conference management and Secretariat should preferably be vested in one central body possessing the necessary staff resources and basic contacts. This body can either be part of the machinery of central government or of one of its agencies, or an independent body of high national status.

Conferences should be self-financing and estimates of expenditure require careful consideration at an early stage to ensure that, for example, the registration fee and charges made for published papers, etc. are realistically related to the total costs of running the conference.

A special leaflet is available from the Council's Secretariat on the detailed running of a conference; this is based largely on the notes given for pages 30-37 in EXP/Nat (66) 59.

INTERESTS WHICH SHOULD BE
REPRESENTED AT NATIONAL CONFERENCES

... Government departments and agencies;

Local Authorities;

Nationalised industries (e.g. electricity, coal, transport);

Professions concerned with the planning, management and development of land and water resources (e.g. planners, landscape architects, surveyors, civil engineers, water engineers, land agents, foresters);

Industry;

Commerce;

Agriculture;

Forestry;

Recreational bodies, representing all aspects of physical recreation in the countryside;

Education (particularly the field studies aspects of school and university curricula);

Amenity organisations (e.g. conservation and preservation societies and natural history and wildlife bodies);

Science (e.g. scientific bodies concerned with the earth and life sciences);

Tourism;

Landowners;

Motoring organisations;

Youth organisations (other than those wholly concerned with recreation);

Women's organisations (i.e. those specifically concerned with the responsibilities of citizenship).

EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS

COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND LANDSCAPE

2nd Meeting; November 1963 /Exp/Nat (63) 637

"heard a statement by Mr. Boote about the National Nature Week and the Study Conference 'The Countryside in 1970' which had been held recently in the United Kingdom.....The Committee expressed interest in his proposal that a European Conservation Conference and Nature Week might be held in a few years' time, and decided to refer both these items to the Working Parties Nos. 1 and 3 for detailed study."

3rd Meeting; November 1964 /Exp/Nat (64) 347

"reiterated the view that it would be desirable to organise, perhaps in 1970, an international conference on the conservation of nature and landscape instructed the Working Party (No. 3, under the Chairmanship of Mr. R.E. Boote) to put forward more detailed suggestions . . . and also about the proposed Nature Week . . ."

4th Meeting; November 1965 /Exp/Nat (65) 357

"unanimously agreed to propose to the Ministers that a European Conservation Year held in 1970 on the basis of the plan 'put forward by Working Party No. 3' and "proposed that a Preparatory Group of five persons be appointed."

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

In March 1966 the Committee of Ministers approved in principle the proposal for a European Conservation Year in 1970 and included it in the Programme of Work in the section on Physical Environment and Resources as follows:

(1966 Programme of Work)

"Organisation of a European Nature Conservation Conference and a European Nature Year: preparation of Recommendations to Governments; holding of the Conference".

On 20th April, 1967, the Committee formally endorsed the summary report on European Conservation Year, and the Programme of Work was amended to read:

"Preparation and organisation of the European Nature Conservation Conference and European Year."

Membership of
Preparatory Group for European Conservation Year

Chairman

R.E. Boote (UK)

Members

A. Blenkinsop (UK)
E.H. Doubleday (UK)

Appointed by Consultative Assembly
Appointed by European Conference
of Local Authorities

L.E. Esping (Sweden)
A. Ferone (Italy)
T. Hunziker (Switzerland)
G. Tendron (France)

Co-ordinator

E.J.J. Kesteloot (Belgium)

Secretariat

H. Hacourt
D. Lewis

Also served during the period 1963-1966

Z. Bayer, J.P. Doets, E.P. Dottrens, G. Ghidini,
Dr. W. Strzygowski.