

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY



COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Selection of texts for action by national parliaments

Texts adopted by the Standing Committee in Stockholm (28 June 1979)

(General Rapporteur: Mr STOFFELEN)

1. The Standing Committee, acting in the name of the Assembly, adopted on 28 June 1979:

- 3 Opinions (Nos. 93-95)
- 7 Recommendations (866-873)
- 6 Resolutions (696-701)
- 4 Orders (380-383)

2. During its meeting held in Stockholm on 29 June 1979, the Committee on Parliamentary and Public Relations selected for urgent action at parliamentary level Resolution 698 on the situation of refugees from South-East Asia. The President of the Assembly has sent Resolution 698 to the speakers of the national parliaments. To date, the Secretariat has not received any information about action taken by national parliaments on Resolution 698.

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3. There follows a review of all the texts adopted by the Standing Committee.

i. Recommendation 866 (1979) on data protection

4. This recommendation results from the Round Table on the Use of Data Processing for Parliamentary Work held in Strasbourg in May 1978. It comprises two objectives:

- data protection both at European level (rapid completion of the Council of Europe Convention on Data Protection) and at national level (legislation on data protection on the basis of the principles defined in the Council of Europe);
- the presentation by the Secretary General of budgetary proposals on the experimental use of data-processing facilities by the Council of Europe.

5. Seeing that the recommendation should not encounter serious difficulties with the Committee of Ministers, its selection is not necessary.

ii. Recommendation 867 (1979) and Order 380 on long-range transboundary air pollution

6. In this recommendation, the Assembly has expressed, inter alia, the wish that governments sign and ratify as soon as possible the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Pollution, drawn up by the Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva. The convention will probably be opened for signature in November 1979.

7. Given the committee's heavy work programme it would be inadvisable, for the present, to select this text.

iii. Recommendation 868 (1979) and Order 381 on missing political prisoners in Chile

8. The recommendation asks the Committee of Ministers to request governments to take a number of steps in favour of missing political prisoners in Chile.

9. Bearing in mind the traditional prudence of the Committee of Ministers where political texts are concerned, it would without doubt be helpful to have this recommendation supported by parliamentary action at national level. However, desirous of limiting the number of texts selected, your Rapporteur does not propose to include it.

iv. Recommendation 869 (1979) on payment by the state of advances on child maintenance

10. The recommendation could be examined together with the other texts on children, which the Assembly will adopt in October 1979.

v. Recommendation 870 (1979) and Order No. 382 on ratification of Council of Europe conventions and agreements

11. Recommendation 870 takes up several suggestions by Mr Bonnel, Rapporteur of the Committee on Parliamentary and Public Relations. Order No. 378 requires this committee to take all necessary measures to speed up the deposit by member states of further ratifications of Council of Europe conventions. The committee could examine Order No. 378 at its meeting in Rome (November 1979) and decide then whether parliamentary action for the ratification of the three conventions mentioned in paragraph 9 (d) of Recommendation 870 should be suggested. The other suggestions contained in the recommendation require no action by the committee.

vi. Recommendation 871 (1979) and Order No. 383 on action taken on Assembly recommendations and on relations with the Committee of Ministers

12. Recommendation 871 contains practical and technical suggestions which hardly lend themselves to action by national parliaments with the possible exception of the following suggestions:

- paragraph 6 (x) (invitation to governments to communicate to national parliaments certain selected recommendations of the Committee of Ministers);
- paragraph 6 (xi) (greater consultation with the Assembly by the Committee of Ministers);
- paragraph 6 (xii) (occasional meetings of the Committee of Ministers elsewhere than in Strasbourg or Paris).

13. Your Rapporteur hopes to be able personally to present to the Committee of Ministers the views of the Assembly before that committee completes its examination of Recommendation 871. The committee may later be able to reconsider this text.

14. Order No. 383 calls upon the President of the Assembly, the Secretary General, the Clerk of the Assembly, and the Assembly committees to take certain action, the effect of which may be reviewed early in 1980.

vii. Recommendation 872 (1979) on industrial archaeology

15. The terms of this text are set out partly as a recommendation to the Committee of Ministers and partly as an invitation to member governments. The Committee of Ministers will probably refer this recommendation to the Steering Committee for Regional Planning for its opinion, and support from the national parliaments seems at present unnecessary.

viii. Recommendation 873 (1979) on the application and revision of the European Code of Social Security and its Protocol

16. Recommendation 873 concerns the work of the Steering Committee for Social Security on the revision of the European Code of Social Security. Your Rapporteur does not think it necessary for our committee to take any action at present.

ix. Opinion No. 93 (1979) on the Council of Europe budgets for the years 1977, 1979 and 1980

x. Opinion No. 94 on draft regulations for a Council of Europe Human Rights Prize

xi. Opinion No. 95 on the 5th period of supervision (1974-75) of the application of the European Social Charter

17. By their nature, the opinions of the Committee of Ministers do not lend themselves to parliamentary action in member states. The committee could, however, note that, in its Opinion No. 93, the Assembly:

- regretted that the appropriations available in 1979 for the reception of visiting groups had not been increased;
- asked the Committee of Ministers to increase the appropriations to the Directorate of the Press and Information Services, so that it could extend its network of press correspondents and publish the review "Forum" in a 5th language;
- requested the Committee of Ministers to increase the appropriations for the reception of groups visiting the Council of Europe headquarters and expressed the wish that the Paris and the Brussels offices play a more prominent role in the information field.

xii. Resolution 696 on the use of data-processing for parliamentary work

18. This resolution is addressed particularly to those responsible for data-processing in national parliaments and to the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation.

xiii. Resolution 697 on the introduction of automatic coupling on the railways of Europe

19. Your Rapporteur does not think it necessary for the moment to draw attention to this text.

xiv. Resolution 698 on the situation of South-East Asian refugees

20. This text has already been selected. Members of the committee may be invited once more to take action on Resolution 698. Model questions are given in the Appendix.

xv. Resolution 699 on the organisation of a colloquy on international tax avoidance and evasion

21. The resolution, which establishes the objectives for the colloquy to be held in Strasbourg at the beginning of March 1980, does not lend itself to selection.

xvi. Resolution 700 on the situation of forestry in Europe

22. This text is addressed to the governments of member states and contains 11 different proposals. Unless a specific proposal is considered, Resolution 700 does not lend itself to action in national parliaments because of its complexity and technicality.

xvii. Resolution 701 on the Council of Europe Human Rights Prize

23. Your Rapporteur does not suggest selecting this text which concerns only the procedure for the Council of Europe Human Rights Prize.

CONCLUSIONS

24. In conclusion it is suggested that the committee select no text additional to those adopted at the mini-session in Stockholm, Resolution 698 (South-East Asian refugees) having already been recommended for consideration.

A P P E N D I X

Model question on Resolution 698
(situation of South-East Asian refugees)

Mr.....
asks the Minister of

1. What is his attitude towards Resolution 698 (1979) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, on the situation of South-East Asian refugees;
2. How many South-East Asian refugees has the government agreed to accept;
3. What steps have been taken to send food supplies and material assistance to those countries which first accepted South-East Asian refugees;
4. Whether the government intends to accept an additional quota of these refugees and to increase its contributions to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.