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## **Pan-European environmental co-operation: the Council of Europe's role after the Kyiv Ministerial Conference and the Johannesburg Summit**

Recommendation 1637 (2003)

Reply from the Committee of Ministers  
adopted at the 898<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (30 September 2004)

1. The Committee of Ministers has considered with much interest Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1637 (2003) on Pan-European environmental cooperation: the Council of Europe's role after the Kyiv Ministerial Conference and the Johannesburg Summit and considers that this Recommendation is a positive stimulus to continue further and more integrated work in the field of sustainable development. It has forwarded it to the governments of the member states.
2. It welcomes the recognition by the Parliamentary Assembly of the work that the Council of Europe intergovernmental sector has been carrying out over the last thirty-five years for the environment and of the need for this work to be further adapted to the new challenges identified at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.
3. The Committee of Ministers recalls that at the Kyiv Ministerial Conference "An Environment for Europe", the Ministers adopted a Resolution on biodiversity which reinforced the emerging role of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy as an important instrument for the regional implementation of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and they also set up a number of precise key targets in the field of forest and biodiversity, agriculture and biodiversity, ecological networks, invasive alien species, financing biodiversity, biodiversity monitoring and indicators and public awareness and participation.
4. It should be noted that the realisation of these objectives, in addition to the fulfilment of the specific work programme of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention), is aimed at planning precise action which may result in achieving the ambitious goals of the Johannesburg Summit, and in particular the target of achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity.
5. The Committee of Ministers supports the proposal of the Parliamentary Assembly to see future activities of the Council of Europe aimed at the fulfilment of the objectives of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in relevant sectors of the Organisation (for example, social, health, education, culture and environment).
6. Furthermore, the Committee of Ministers takes note of the wish of the Parliamentary Assembly to see the Council of Europe's intergovernmental sector on the environment organised in such a way as to enable the Organisation to play a fundamental role in contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the Johannesburg Summit and the Kyiv Declaration, and expresses its support for more integrated work on all the issues concerned, improved synergy of programmes and more transversal action in the sustainable development field.

7. The Committee of Ministers encourages its member states to sign and ratify relevant Council of Europe and international legal instruments in the field of conservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage, including the European Landscape Convention, which entered into force on 1 March 2004, and welcomes the political input of the Parliamentary Assembly towards this end.

*Appendix to the reply*

**Comments by the CEMAT on Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1637 (2003)**

“The Committee of Senior Officials of CEMAT would like to thank the Committee of Ministers for consulting it in order to have possible comments on Recommendation 1637 (2003) of the Parliamentary Assembly on Pan-European environmental cooperation: the Council of Europe’s role after the Kyiv Ministerial Conference and the Johannesburg Summit, thus recognising the important contribution and commitment of CEMAT to sustainable development.

The Committee of Senior Officials of CEMAT, in line with the decisions of CEMAT Ministers, has a long commitment of contributing and promoting sustainable development, as demonstrated by the CEMAT Ministers adoption of, to name but a few, the Torremolinos Charter (European Regional /Spatial Planning Charter) (1983)<sup>1</sup>, the Guiding Principles for sustainable territorial development of the European continent (GPSSDEC-CEMAT) (2000)<sup>2</sup>, and the Ljubljana Declaration on the territorial dimension of sustainable development (2003), as well as their implementation through the work programmes of the Committee; for this reason the Committee of Senior Officials of CEMAT regrets that the Parliamentary Assembly has not mentioned the Guiding Principles and the Ljubljana Declaration as tools contributing to sustainable development.

In relation to Recommendation 1637 (2003), the Committee welcomes the proposal of the Parliamentary Assembly, although would mention that the concept of sustainable development traditionally involves considering its three pillars, economic, social and environmental; to these, a fourth pillar, cultural, was added by the Guiding Principles for sustainable spatial development of the European continent and the Ljubljana Declaration on the territorial dimension of sustainable development. For this reason the Committee of Senior Officials of CEMAT proposes instead the elaboration of a European Charter of general principles for sustainable development, that includes environment protection.

Considering that sustainable territorial development cannot be overlooked as the basis of, or an important contribution to sustainable development, the Committee of Senior Officials proposes to the Committee of Ministers that it be considered a partner in case the elaboration of an European Charter of general principles for sustainable development is decided upon.”

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Recommendation (84) 2 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the Regional/Spatial Planning Charter.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Recommendation Rec(2002)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent.