

## 1st European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT) (Bonn, Federal Republic of Germany: 9-11 September 1970) on "Foundations of a European regional planning policy"

### Resolution No. 1 on the foundations of a European regional planning policy

1. The European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning, held in Bonn from 9 to 11 September 1970, provided the ministers and representatives of the governments of 19 states – Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and, as observers, Finland, Spain and Yugoslavia – for the first time with an opportunity to discuss the main options open at the present time and the long-term objectives of national regional planning policies.

2. This discussion, by bringing out the common aims as well as the differences, has clearly indicated the need for a long-term conception of regional planning in Europe.

3. In this situation, two subjects for study, comprising complementary aspects of the same fundamental problem, particularly engaged their attention:

- urbanisation and the formation of zones of high concentration in the central part of Europe;
- the development of the predominantly rural regions, in particular those situated in the outlying areas of Europe.

4. The ministers observed the existence of a bond of functional solidarity between the various regions, whether geographically favoured or otherwise, and the need for a common European regional planning policy capable of ensuring a more balanced development of all parts of the continent.

5. The conference reached the following conclusions:

6. The economic and social expansion recorded throughout Europe has not reduced the historical imbalance between the industrial and urban centre of gravity in north-west Europe and the structurally weak and economically backward outlying regions of the continent.

7. The experience of recent years has shown that European integration, the liberalisation of trade and manpower movements and tendency towards concentration of industry may, if unaccompanied by a common conception of regional planning and development policies, aggravate geographical differences still further. This trend towards concentration may lead to serious impairment of the environment and of living conditions and cause grave losses to the community and to individuals:

- in the areas characterised by excessive concentration of activity, housing and traffic, because of the high financial and social costs involved, such as market tensions and labour costs;
- in the peripheral regions, because the local human and economic resources are not used to the full, with the result that the natural heritage deteriorates and, finally, important cultural and historical values are neglected;
- in the whole of Europe, because of the social cost of constant subsidies to peripheral regions, and even the outright loss of factors of production which may occur through emigration to countries outside Europe.

8. On the other hand, the benefits which Europe could draw from a better balance between its more highly developed central regions and the other regions, deriving mainly from a distribution of investments that is more closely related to labour market requirements, are numerous:

- it would contribute to strengthening Europe's economic and social structures, to widening its productive base and to expanding its trade;
- simplifying problems arising out of the high urban and industrial concentration of certain regions.

9. In this context, the conference is gratified by the priority given by international institutions to the balanced development of the regions of Europe. The Preamble to the Treaty of Rome, for example, emphasises the member states' intention to "strengthen the unity of their economies and to ensure their harmonious development by reducing the differences existing between the various regions and by mitigating the backwardness of the less favoured".