

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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# CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 5 February 1973

AS/Loc (24) 25

## CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY

COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL PLANNING AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

### THE EUROPEAN ANTHEM

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Parliamentary question tabled by Mr. RADIUS  
and reply by Mr. Anthony ROYLE,  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign and  
Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom  
representing the Chairman in Office of  
the Committee of Ministers

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Assembly sitting from 25 January 1973  
/Extract from the Official Report - AS (24) CR 25/

Mr. RADIUS (France) asked the Chairman-in-Office of the Committee of Ministers

"1. Whether the Committee of Ministers shares the point of view held by the Assembly that the European Anthem, which was recommended for adoption by the Assembly, in 1971, and approved by the Committee of Ministers in January 1972, is not restricted to the internal use of the Council of Europe but on the contrary is a European anthem for all member States of the Council of Europe, intended for use 'on all European occasions' (Resolution 492);

2. Whether the Chairman, as the representative of Her Majesty's Government, is in a position to confirm that the United Kingdom Government will make do with one European Anthem and does not intend to pursue the undertaking, recently reported in the press, to create a second anthem for use by the European Communities."

Mr. ROYLE.- I have great pleasure in replying to the question put by the honourable Representative, Mr. Radius.

With regard to the question put to me as a British Minister, it was recently suggested in a letter to my Prime Minister by a British Member of Parliament that there should be a competition for a European Anthem. Mr. Heath in his reply to the Member of Parliament pointed out that there was already a European Anthem which had been selected by the Council of Europe and was used on occasions when such an anthem was regarded as appropriate. He also pointed out that the European Commission had organised a competition to design a Community emblem. It would clearly be more appropriate for any competition for a Community anthem also to be organised by the Commission rather than by the British Government. Mr. Heath undertook to refer the Member of Parliament's suggestion to the Commission.

We believe that many people support the idea that the Community should have its own anthem. However, I wish to stress to the honourable Representative - and I do so with all the power at my command this afternoon - that we have so far taken no final view on this matter.

As to the first part of the honourable Representative's question concerning the position of the Committee of Ministers, I wish to recall the following. When the Committee of Ministers took a formal decision on the adoption of a European anthem in January 1972, following the proposal made by the Assembly, it was made plain that this was the anthem the Committee proposed to Europeans as set out in Resolution 492 adopted on 8 July 1971, that is to say, it was not just an anthem of the

Council of Europe. In fact, other European organisations, including the European Community, as the honourable Representative will be aware, were represented at the round table which recommended that the anthem should be played widely on Europe Day.

The PRESIDENT asked Mr. Radius if he was satisfied with the reply.

Mr. RADIUS (France) said that he was reassured about the answer to the first part of his question, which had been given in the last part of Mr. Royle's answer. He was, however, anxious about the answer to the second part of his question. He agreed that it was ridiculous to have another anthem beside the European Anthem and therefore to have different anthems for different purposes. He urged the Assembly to be sensible. The comment which had been made in the House of Commons was ridiculous; if a second anthem was needed he could only suggest that the Alsatian Anthem would be suitable. He would himself try to be sensible over the question of a flag and he recalled the problems which had arisen about that in the Council's early stages. He felt that the solution of the 12 stars which had finally been chosen was the right one and was suitable for all purposes.

Mr. DARLING (United Kingdom):- I hope that the Minister will take into account that many of us in the Assembly - at least I can say this for myself - think that one anthem is one too many. In any case, if we are to have an anthem we may as well have it associated with some part of Europe, as Mr. Radius says. I put forward the view at the time that it should be the Yorkshire anthem "Ilkla Moor Bah t'aat". But we never got round to that. The idea of contriving a synthetic anthem for Europe is misfiring, and we should drop it.

Mr. ROYLE:- I must congratulate my old friend, Mr. Radius on his skilful and very humorous deployment of his argument, which made his point very satisfactorily. I can only repeat - I speak now as a British Minister - that we have taken no final view on the matter.

Mr. Radius seems to have raised the question at a very good moment - namely, during the visit of a British Minister to the Assembly. I have hoisted in everything Mr. Radius has said, and have noted the reactions to his speech not only by my colleague from the British Parliament, but by other distinguished members of this honourable Assembly. I can assure you, Mr. President, that I shall report those feelings back to London.