

## **Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education**

### **1st session - The Hague, Netherlands, 12-13 November 1959**

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#### **Resolution on the future of the Committee of European Universities (N°1)**

The Conference of Ministers, after having examined the conclusions of the Conference of Rectors of the European universities and of the governmental officials held in Dijon, recommends the setting up, within the Council of Europe, of a consultative European council for university problems.

The European council should be composed of two representatives from each country, to be designated by governments, one of them on the recommendation of the national universities. The president should be elected by a majority of two thirds of the council members.

The European consultative council should be the sole consultative body in the field of university education and university research, available to governments and intergovernmental organisations. This body should facilitate cooperation among the European nations in this field.

On the other hand, the Conference of Ministers notes with satisfaction the decision of rectors and vice-chancellors to set up a standing conference of rectors and vice-chancellors to be autonomous, and to meet at least every five years, to communicate its view to the European consultative council on European university problems.

#### **Resolution on primary, secondary and technical education (N°2)**

The Conference, appreciating the outstanding importance of problems of education and of the need to establish regular cooperation in this field decides:

A. to instruct the delegations of the seven countries to submit precise suggestions to the Committee of Cultural Experts of the Council of Europe with a view to putting into force the recommendations of those concerned with primary, secondary and technical education who met in Paris on 4, 5 and 6 November. It is assumed that the other signatory countries of the Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe will be invited by the Secretariat General to submit their suggestions;

B. to request the inclusion of the report of the Paris meeting in the agenda of the next meeting of the Committee of Cultural Experts. The delegations of the seven countries will do their best to ensure immediate action. In particular the Committee might appoint a restricted working party

with the task of establishing short term co-operation such as seminars, exchange of personnel etc., starting in 1960 and mainly concerned with:

- (1) recruitment, training and improvement as well as exchange of teachers;
- (2) guidance of pupils;
- (3) co-ordination of education plans and increase in each country of the teaching of foreign languages;
- (4) the adaptation to the requirements of our modern life of methods and programmes of education.

The task entrusted to the restricted working party might also include the examination of problems which would be raised by the setting up of a special and standing body.

The restricted working party, after its creation, would be invited to take into account the experience acquired within the frame of activities of WEU.

### **Resolution on the activities of international organisations in the fields of education and science (N°3)**

1. In addition to specialised world international organisations such as UNESCO, several European international organisations are, or have been, dealing with problems concerning pure- or applied scientific research, training of highly qualified manpower and problems of scientific and technical education. These organisations have included WEU, OEEC, NATO, Euratom, EEC and the Council of Europe.

It has been as a result of very varied interests that these organisations have become concerned with problems which relate closely to education in each country and to science. These interests include economic affairs, industrial productivity, shortage of expert personnel, defence problems etc.

The present Conference would like to pay a tribute to the varied activities which have been undertaken. It recognises the high standard of work and the scope of the results so far achieved.

2. The ever increasing activities of these organisations make it necessary for more and more frequent consultations to take place, both nationally and internationally, between all those who are concerned with these problems. This process of consultation is becoming more and more complex. Efforts have been taking place to effect co-ordination both on the national and the international level, but these efforts have nevertheless, at times, seemed insufficient. There is a risk that, if co-ordination only takes place a posteriori in certain cases, the responsible authorities will be placed in positions which it is difficult to modify.

In addition to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, of Defence and of Economic Affairs, it is therefore necessary that right from the outset, the responsible authorities at ministerial level dealing in each country with the problems of education and of science should be actively associated with the determination of the policies and the working out of the programmes of these different organisations, including any proposals affecting the structure of the relevant committees.

3. On the national plane, it is clear that it must be the concern of each country to seek to resolve any co-ordination problems arising within its own national organisation.

On the international plane, it is equally necessary to ensure homogeneity between the national delegations which are sent to the different bodies of the international institutions. In this connection it is important to distinguish clearly between three different degrees of competence and responsibility: namely (A) administrative-bodies, (1) Ministries of Foreign Affairs, (2) specialised Ministries and

(B) technical bodies, (3) scientific and educational experts.

4. Without wishing to intervene in the objectives which the European Communities are seeking to pursue in the field of universities and of science, the Conference wishes to express the hope that forms of collaboration in this field may be established between the Communities and other European organisations. The Conference would like to underline that this field seems eminently suited for European coverage and collaboration on the largest scale.

5. In general, as regards the working out of the policy to be followed in all fields concerning education and science, the Conference recommends that the responsible authorities in the different countries be called upon to participate actively in these activities from the preparatory phase.

#### **Resolution on future meetings of the Ministers of Education (N°4)**

The Conference of Ministers of Education has considered ways and means to come to a co-operation between the Ministers concerned and in the framework of the Council of Europe.

The Conference has restricted its discussion to the problems arising with regard to meetings to be held in the near future.

The Conference has taken into account the internal situation in certain countries that has led to the creation of a variety of ministries responsible, according to the different concepts prevailing in these countries, for the problems in the field of teaching, education, scientific research, arts, literature and cultural problems in general. In order to ensure that on the European level the concept of synthesis shall be expressed, which will as far as possible be based on the requirements of an educational policy, it is the wish of the Conference that, in any case, the representation of the various Ministers at every forthcoming meeting shall be determined by the competence of the Ministers in the field of teaching and education.

The Conference has expressed the wish that the future meetings be held at regular intervals in order to ensure the continuation of the activities undertaken at The Hague Conference. The organisation initiated by the Ministers of Education, Arts and Sciences of the Netherlands has in this respect been mentioned as an appropriate model. The Conference has noted with satisfaction the invitation extended by the Secretary of State for Public Instruction in Italy to hold the next meeting in Italy within a period of six to twelve months at the utmost.

The Conference decides that without waiting for the results of future meetings, the matter be taken up in each country with the Council of Europe, with the consent or through the intermediary of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, with a view to extending as much as possible the Conference of the Ministers to the sixteen countries of the Council of Europe or to countries adhering to the Cultural Convention.

The Conference wishes to include the following item in the agenda of its forthcoming meetings:

- (1) arrangements for standing co-operation between the Ministers of Education and Science, on a long-term basis;
- (2) training of increased numbers of scientific and technical personnel to the standards of qualification corresponding to the needs of the national economies and the demands of European and international organisations;
- (3) methods of ensuring more active progress towards agreeing equivalences of degrees and diplomas, particularly at the university level, between the different member countries of the Council of Europe;
- (4) co-ordination of educational plans and expansion of foreign language teaching in each country;
- (5) adaptation of educational methods and programmes to the requirements of modern life.

The Conference has invited a working party to elaborate, within the framework of the present resolution, the agenda of the next meeting.