

Reply of the Committee of Ministers to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1381 (1998) (22 October 1998)

Caption: The reply to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1381 (1998), made by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 22 October 1998, outlines the arrangements for cooperation with the OSCE and its institutions and welcomes their development.

Source: 646th meeting - 21-22 October 1998, Item 2.6, Relations between the Council of Europe and the OSCE, General Policy: Council of Europe and OSCE - Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1381 (1998). Decision. [ON-LINE]. [s.l.]: Council of Europe, [21.08.2003]. Available on <http://cm.coe.int/dec/1998/646/26b.htm>.

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Decision

The Deputies adopted the following reply to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1381 (1998) on General Policy: Council of Europe and OSCE:

"The Committee of Ministers has noted with great interest the proposals contained in Recommendation 1381 (1998) of the Parliamentary Assembly. They have been brought to the attention of the Chairman-in Office and the Secretary General of the OSCE.

Relations between the Council of Europe and the OSCE are one of the subjects examined in the follow-up to the Second Council of Europe Summit. Recommendation 1381 (1998) will be taken into account in that context by the Committee of Ministers and its subsidiary bodies. It was also in the file of the Committee of Wise Persons.

At this stage, the Committee of Ministers would like to limit its reply to the specific recommendations addressed to it by the Assembly.

(13.i) Questions of immediate political importance and urgency are already included in the agenda of the ministerial sessions of the Committee of Ministers. In the intervals between ministerial sessions, the Ministers' Deputies, acting on behalf of the Ministers, and meeting regularly in Strasbourg, are able to cope with urgent situations.

(13.ii) The Committee of Ministers fully agrees that co-ordination and exchange of information on activities of the two organisations should be improved at national level and notes with satisfaction that in several member States' governments efforts have been completed or are pursued to this effect. This question will be examined further in the light of the recommendations on the relations between the Council of Europe and the OSCE which the Committee of Wise Persons will present at the 103rd Session of the Committee of Ministers on 4 November 1998. A meeting between Permanent Representatives to the OSCE and the Council of Europe from Vienna and Strasbourg respectively, as well as experts from capitals, was held in March 1997 to exchange views on the methodology of monitoring mechanisms. Norway, the incoming OSCE Chairman-in-Office, is planning for 1999 a meeting with a broad agenda covering the full spectrum of relations and co-operation between the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

(13.iii a and b) A first "2+2" meeting between the Council of Europe and the OSCE at the level of senior officials was held on 16 July 1998 in Vienna. At this meeting, it was agreed to hold in future the traditional high-level "2+2" meetings between the Council of Europe and the OSCE (Chairmen-in-Office and Secretaries General) at the beginning of the year and a "2+2" meeting at the level of senior officials early in the second half of the year. The "2+2" meetings at the level of senior officials serve to prepare the high-level "2+2" meetings, to ensure their follow-up and to facilitate proper and timely co-operation and co-ordination throughout the year. The heads of the Secretariats of the Parliamentary Assemblies of both Organisations participate in the "2+2" meetings at the level of senior officials.

(13.iii.c) Co-operation between the Council of Europe and OSCE draws heavily on the unique expertise of the Council of Europe in the field of human rights, democratic institutions and the rule of law. It includes sharing of information with the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Missions, High Commissioner on National

Minorities, Representative for Freedom of the Media, ODIHR and the Secretariat. The option to co-operate has always been kept open; concrete modalities for co-operation are decided case by case. Examples for co-operation in the field of human rights, democratic institutions and the rule of law include co-operation with ODIHR and OSCE Missions in the organisation of seminars, joint training programmes, the provision of legal expertise, co-ordinated assistance on legislation and its implementation, the sponsoring of confidence-building measures in civil society. Similar co-operation is also promoted with the OSCE High-Commissioner on National Minorities and the OSCE Representative for Freedom of the Media. Co-operation in the field is facilitated by a permanent Council of Europe presence in Sarajevo and Tirana and by the appointment of a liaison official for Belarus. Concrete projects for the training of Heads and members of OSCE Missions on Council of Europe instruments and possibilities for the OSCE to resort more systematically to Council of Europe expertise are under consideration.

(13.iii.d) Recent crisis and emergency situations have shown the importance of mechanisms for the pooling and exchange of information, communication and co-operation in planning and action. The intensification of the exchange of information should precede passing to the stage of systematic consultation. The Committee of Ministers favours, in order to avoid overlapping and promote complementarity, such consultation taking place whenever a crisis situation arises or an important initiative is envisaged. Further developments will also depend on progress in the work on the OSCE Platform for Co-operative Security.

(13.iii.e) In addition to the concrete and pragmatic co-operation with the OSCE described above, co-operation between the Council of Europe and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media relies on the following mechanisms: Regular working visits of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media to Strasbourg, exchange of views of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media with the Ministers' Deputies Rapporteur Group on Relations between the Council of Europe and the OSCE (GR-OSCE), observer status of the OSCE in the Steering Committee on the Mass Media (CDMM) and the Committee of Experts on Issues Relating to the Protection of National Minorities (DH-MIN) and exchanges of views of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities with the Parliamentary Assembly's Monitoring Committee. Further modalities of co-operation may develop in the future.

(13.iv) At present, an informal arrangement enables the Council of Europe representatives to participate regularly in OSCE meetings in Vienna in the delegation of the country chairing the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. At the 643rd meeting of the Committee of Ministers on 6-7 October 1998, it was decided to invite the OSCE to participate in meetings of the Ministers' Deputies Rapporteur Group on Relations between the Council of Europe and the OSCE (GR-OSCE), being represented by the country holding the OSCE Chairmanship, assisted, if necessary, by a member of the OSCE Secretariat. This decision has been taken with a view to enhance reciprocity. The current arrangements could be reviewed in the light of future developments.

(14) The Committee of Ministers welcomes the Assembly's intention to further develop co-operation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, notably with regard to the observation of elections."