

1st European Meeting of National Human Rights Institutions Strasbourg 7, 8, 9 November 1994

Final Recommendations

The purpose of this European Meeting of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights was to put forward practical proposals in order both to intensify co-operation among national institutions and to identify priorities and strategies for harmonising European efforts to combat racism and xenophobia.

The two recommendations which follow were adopted at the final session of the Meeting held in Strasbourg on 9 November 1994.

Resolution no 1

On Combating racism and Xenophobia priorities and strategies for European harmonisation

Wishing to make a practical contribution to the plan of action launched by the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in Vienna on 8-9 October 1993, the participants in the First European Meeting of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, on the theme "*combating racism and xenophobia : priorities and strategies for European harmonisation*",

- 1) urge the United Nations to create on a permanent basis an International Criminal Court, competent in particular to judge the crime of genocide and crimes against humanity.
- 2) recommend that States ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and ensure the full application of its provisions, which in particular implies accepting the procedure for individual communications provided for in Article 14 of the Convention and the withdrawal of any reservations they have formulated which limit the scope of the Convention.
- 3) remind the member States of the Council of Europe of importance of drawing up a Protocol to revise Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights so that the principle of non-discrimination is fully established in the European legal order.
- 4) emphasise the need to facilitate the access of foreigners and stateless persons to naturalisation and fully implement the Council of Europe Convention on Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level.
- 5) express the wish that the National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights contribute actively to combating racism and xenophobia, if necessary extending their domestic competence to these issues.
- 6) recommend that statistics and information be brought together at European level, according to homogenous structures and references, to allow a comparative assessment of racist movements and acts, in time and space.
- 7) express the wish that periodic European surveys be conducted on a large scale in order to monitor developments in public opinion.
- 8) encourage the pooling of existing documentation, in particular by establishing databases on legislation and case-law on the subject of combating racism and xenophobia.
- 9) suggest that national institutions be given specific powers to prosecute racist offences both by the authorities and in relations between private individuals.

- 10) strongly recommend that national institutions take the initiative, in consultation with the professional groups concerned, to draw up codes of conduct on the subject of non-discrimination in the public services and in private relations.
- 11) recommend that States exercise the greatest possible vigilance with regard to the gaps in European harmonisation which give an opening to relocations and transfrontier activities designed to circumvent national legislation on combating racism and xenophobia.
- 12) ask that study be made of the use of new technologies (video games, computer networks) for the propagation of racial hatred and that a set of domestic and international measures be urgently put forward to end such abuses.
- 13) call on the forces of democracy to become aware of the risks represented by any alliance, electoral, parliamentary or governmental, with political forces whose programme or action is based on racism and xenophobia.
- 14) emphasise the importance of positive measures, both nationally and locally, to combat all forms of exclusion and promote genuine equality of rights and opportunity.
- 15) wish to contribute actively to the youth campaign launched by the Council of Europe and strongly recommend a genuine training for European citizenship respecting universal values.

Resolution no 2

On national institutions for the protection and promotion of Human Rights

The National Institutions for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights, holding their first European Meeting in Strasbourg,

- recalling the fundamental principles laid down at the first International Meeting of the National Institutions for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights held in Paris from 7-9 October 1991 (referred to hereafter as "*the Paris Principles*");
 - bearing in mind the guidelines laid down at their subsequent meetings, at the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993 and at the second International Meeting held in Tunis from 13 to 17 December 1993;
 - welcoming Resolution 48/134 adopted on 20 December 1993 by the United Nations General Assembly, which represented international recognition of their major role in the service of human rights, and welcoming Resolution 1994/54 adopted on 4 March 1994 by the Commission on Human rights;
 - emphasising the importance of regional co-operation between international institutions to foster respect for human Rights and the full application of the Paris principles
 - welcoming the Council of Europe's contribution to these efforts in line with the work carried out by the Steering Committee for Human Rights in October 1985 on "*aspects relating to national commissions on human rights*";
- 1) strongly encourage the various European States to create national institutions for the promotion and protection of human Rights, taking care in particular to guarantee their internal pluralism and their independence;
 - 2) express the wish that the existing national institutions will comply increasingly closely with the Paris principles "*relating to the status of national institutions*" appended to the aforementioned Resolution 48/134 of the UN General Assembly;
 - 3) are willing to foster the creation and development of national institutions through various forms of bilateral, regional and international co-operation between national institutions,
 - 4) recommend regular consultations between all the international organisations concerned, particularly at European level, and the national institutions in order to contribute to these co-

operation efforts, on matters relating to information exchanges, the drawing up of model statutes and training courses for the officers of the new institutions,

- 5) thank the Council of Europe for its contribution to the success of the first European Meeting and hope that it will be able to host such meetings every two years, alternating with the International Meetings held under the auspices of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights;
- 6) take due note of the work done in the course of their first European Meeting on “*the fight against racism and xenophobia*”, which they will forward to the Co-ordinating Committee for National Institutions and present to the next International Meeting in Manila in April 1995;
- 7) recommend that the second European Meeting, to be convened in 1996, should take stock of the efforts made to implement this resolution and the other decisions of the first European Meeting.