

Decision (71) 187 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (12 January 1972)

Caption: On 12 January 1972, in accordance with the proposal submitted by the Consultative Assembly dated 8 July 1971, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopts as the European anthem the prelude to the 'Ode to Joy', the fourth movement of Ludwig van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

Source: Conclusions of the 206th meeting of the Deputies. 11 to 18 January 1972. [s.l.]: Council of Europe. European anthem. Documents. [EN LIGNE]. [s.l.]: Council of Europe, Library and Archives, [19.09.2005]. Disponible sur <http://info.coe.int/archives/hist/hymn/default.asp>.

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Decision (71) 187 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe: organisation of Europe Day (12 January 1972)

The Deputies considered the conclusions of the Round Table for Europe Day held in Paris on 16 September 1971. To the extent that these conclusions required action by the Committee, they are enumerated under (a) - (e) below.

(a) European anthem

The *Chairman* recalled that the Consultative Assembly had adopted on 8 July 1971 Resolution 492, proposing "the acceptance by the member countries as a European anthem of the Prelude to the Ode to Joy in the fourth movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony". At their 201st meeting in September 1971, the Deputies had simply taken note of this resolution. The question now arose whether the Committee of Ministers should not take a formal decision on the adoption of a European anthem.

In the exchange of views which followed, all delegations expressed agreement, in principle, with the proposal of the Assembly. Some delegations however raised the question of whether the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe was alone competent to take such a decision, given the fact that there were also other European organisations in the field and that the Council did not comprise the whole of Europe.

In reply, the *Chairman* pointed out that other European organisations and notably the European Communities had been represented at the meeting of the Round Table, which welcomed the resolution of the Consultative Assembly and requested governments to ensure that the European anthem would be played "in as many municipalities and schools and at as many events as possible on 5 May 1972". The meaning of the decision by the Committee of Ministers on the European anthem was the following : the Committee of Ministers had chosen an anthem which it proposed to Europeans.

Decisions

The Deputies

- (i) adopted as a European anthem the Prelude to the Ode to Joy in the fourth movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony;
- (ii) agreed to recommend to their governments that steps should be taken to ensure that the European anthem is played in as many municipalities, schools and at as many events as possible on 5 May 1972, if possible alongside national anthems;
- (iii) instructed the Secretary General to make known their decision by sending the following letter :
 - to the Presidents or Secretaries General of the Communities and European intergovernmental organisations;
 - to the Presidents or Secretaries General of organisations having consultative status with the Council of Europe.

"The Committee of Ministers, meeting at Deputy level, examined at their 206th meeting in Strasbourg, from 11 to 18 January, the Assembly's proposal concerning acceptance by member countries as a European anthem of the Prelude to the Ode to Joy in the fourth movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony' (Resolution 492 of the Consultative Assembly).

I have the honour to inform you that the Committee of Ministers unanimously approved the Assembly's suggestion, thus proposing that anthem to Europeans.

It should be added that the Consultative Assembly recommended the use of this anthem on all European occasions, if desired in conjunction with the national anthem."

With regard to decision (ii), the Representative of *Switzerland* said that, in his country, this matter came within the sphere of competence of the cantons; the Confederation was nevertheless prepared to recommend that they have this anthem played in municipalities and schools on 5 May next.

The Representative of the *United Kingdom* said that it was not customary in his country to play national or other anthems in schools; for this reason, his authorities would probably have to limit themselves to drawing the attention of schools and municipalities to the existence of the anthem.

The Representative of the *Federal Republic of Germany* said that his government welcomed the proposals made by the Secretariat as an initiative to further the idea of European unity. As to points (b) and (c) of the notes for the meeting, his government could, however, not take a definite position before knowing the financial implications for the budget of the Council of Europe.

(b) Recording and official scores for the anthem

The *Director of Press and Information* informed the Committee that the Secretary General had approached Mr. Herbert von Karajan who had agreed to prepare the official scores and to conduct the recording. Mr. von Karajan would not accept a fee and the recording would be on a commercial basis. The duration of the anthem in the Karajan version would be exactly fifty-eight seconds.

The Committee having expressed the wish to consider the official scores before publication, the Director informed the Committee that now that the decision on the adoption of an anthem had been taken, the scores to be prepared by Mr. von Karajan could be available in a few weeks' time. He also suggested that if the Committee decided that words should be put to the anthem, an international competition might be organised by the Council of Europe.

The Committee then listened to a recorded version of the music adopted for the anthem.

Decisions

The Deputies

- (i) agreed to return to the question of the scores for the anthem at their 208th meeting in March;
- (ii) asked the Chairman to address a letter to Mr. von Karajan expressing the Committee's appreciation of his services in this matter;
- (iii) decided to postpone for the time being the question of words for the anthem.

(c) Europe Day poster

The Deputies considered the proposal by the Round Table that the Council of Europe publish a poster for use by public authorities and private organisations to mark Europe Day on 5 May 1972.

The *Director of Press and Information* suggested that in this case, too, a competition might be organised.

The exchange of views which followed did not lead to a conclusion; a majority of delegations felt that time was too short to produce a suitable poster in time for distribution with a view to Europe Day 1972.

The *Director of Environment and Local Authorities* suggested that the Secretariat might prepare a memorandum on a poster which could be produced within present budgetary limits.

(d) European flag

In the light of the Round Table's request that governments should see to it that national law does not prevent the European flags being flown from public buildings to mark the celebration of Europe Day, most delegations stated that there was nothing in their national law to prevent this. Some delegations were not in a position to state clearly the situation without examining the matter first.

(e) Special budgetary appropriations

On the request by the Round Table that specific appropriations should be made within national budgets for the celebration of Europe Day, the majority of delegations felt that no additional appropriations could be made and that this kind of expenditure would normally be met at the level of local authorities.

(f) Action by parliamentarians

The Representative of *Italy*, supported by the *Chairman*, suggested that members of the Consultative Assembly should be requested to promote the organisation of events in their respective constituencies on the occasion of Europe Day and, if possible, take part in them in person.