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Peril of using energy supply as an instrument of political pressure

Recommendation 1779 (2007)

Reply from the Committee of Ministers
adopted at the 1002nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (12 July 2007)

1. The Committee of Ministers has taken note with great interest of the work done by the Parliamentary Assembly on the peril of using energy supply as an instrument of political pressure.
2. Security of supplies, freedom of transactions and transit and compliance with the law are clearly important to global security founded on the principles of democracy and the rule of law.
3. The Committee of Ministers considers that the debate and the documents adopted constitute a valuable contribution on these very topical issues. It deems particularly appropriate and relays the call made in Recommendation 1779 (2007) on member states to honour their international commitments in the field of energy, not to use energy supply as an instrument of political pressure. In this connection, the Committee of Ministers notes that the participants in the G8 Summit held in St Petersburg on 16 July 2006 indicated in the Action Plan on Global Energy Security adopted on this occasion: "We support the principles of the Energy Charter and the efforts of participating countries to improve international energy cooperation". The Committee of Ministers believes that the Energy Charter Treaty should obtain the largest possible number of ratifications.
4. The Committee of Ministers notes that the Assembly has situated these pressing requests in a broader policy framework, namely an invitation to devise and implement a genuine pan-European energy strategy based on solidarity and respect for market economy principles, the rule of law and the interests of all parties concerned.
5. Recommendation 1779 (2007) is timely and the proposals it contains will undoubtedly be considered with all due care and attention by the member states. However, the Committee of Ministers is not convinced at this stage that the Council of Europe, in its intergovernmental dimension, would today, two years after its action priorities were refocused at the Warsaw Summit, be the most appropriate body to take the initiative of formulating the founding principles of a European strategy in this field, with the proposed assistance of a think tank, and then sounding out reactions to them at a pan-European conference, as proposed by the Parliamentary Assembly.
6. Other institutions, not least the European Union, the International Energy Agency and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, would seem to constitute more appropriate forums for negotiating common policies in this sphere, also bearing in mind the guiding principles issued by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. The documents adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly will be transmitted to them, while drawing particular attention to the aspects linked to enhanced global security founded on the principles of democracy and the rule of law, areas in which the Council of Europe makes a specific contribution.