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Simplification of frontier formalities

Report[1]
Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights
Rapporteur: Mr Hermod LANNUNG, Denmark

1. 1958 - 10th Session - Third part

Draft Recommendation submitted by the Legal Committee

The Assembly,

Noting the information contained in paragraphs 119 to 126 of the Supplementary Report of the Committee of Ministers (Doc. 863) relating to the simplification of frontier formalities;

Congratulating the Special Committee presided over by M. Pinton on the results which it has so far achieved;

Emphasising, however, that its task is by no means completed so long as the present antiquated system of controls remains in force in a considerable number of Member States,

Recommends to the Committee of Ministers:

1. As regards the requirement of passports, to consider the complete abolition of identity documents for travel between Member States as the main objective; in the meantime not to rest content until the largest possible number of Member States have ratified the European Agreement on Regulations governing the Movement of Persons, thus permitting the nationals of other Member States to enter their territory if they are the bearers of identity documents other than passports. In particular, a Member State should not refuse admission to the nationals of other Member States who are the bearers of identity documents other than passports merely on the ground that its own nationals do not carry identity cards; the object of the exercise is to facilitate travel between Member States, not to bargain for reciprocal advantages;

2. As regards customs documents for the temporary importation of private motor vehicles, to insist that the five Member States which have not yet done so (with the possible exception, of Iceland) should abolish the system set up by the International Convention on Motor Traffic in 1926, which has now become out of date. The fact that ten Member States (that is to say Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden) have abolished it without detrimental effects and indeed with positive advantage to themselves in increased revenue from the tourist trade shows that the fears initially expressed in the Government departments of certain Member States were ill-founded.

3. As regards customs papers for the temporary importation of tourist coaches, to come to an early decision on their abolition;

4. As regards:

   a. customs papers for the temporary importation of commercial vehicles;

   b. the standardisation of national motor registration papers;

   c. the improvement of facilities at airports: to reconsider its instructions to the Special Committee. The fact that these problems are being considered in other international organisations is no reason for the Council of Europe to disinterest itself. The function of the Special Committee is not merely to find new solutions for old problems which have escaped the attention of other organisations; it is also to remove the obstacles which prevent the implementation of the recommendations they have made. Concerted action and political direction are necessary. As the Committee of Ministers itself stated in its Special Message of May 1954, it is right that the Council of Europe should interest itself in matters which are under examination by other organisaux ations if this will result in useful intergovernmental action which would not otherwise be possible;

5. Generally, to support and encourage the work of the Special Committee by putting adequate funds at its disposal and ensuring that all Member Governments participate fully and effectively in its work, in accordance with the principle laid down in Article 3 of the Statute.