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Reply to the Report on the third Session of the European Civil Aviation Conference

Report

Committee on Economic Affairs and Development

Rapporteur: Mr Hendrik VOS, Netherlands, Socialist Group



A. I . Draft Recommendation

The Assembly,

1. Having considered the Report on the third Session of the European Civil Aviation Conference;
2. Congratulating the Conference on its work during its Third Session;
3. Expressing its thanks for the speedy transmission of the Report and the care with which the Assembly's earlier suggestions have been dealt with;
4. Expressing the hope that the fruitful co-operation which has been established with E. C. A. C. will be further developed;
5. Welcoming the new facilitation Recommendations adopted by the Conference, particularly those on health control, identity documents, embarkation / disembarkation cards, the services of public authorities in airports, and the simplification of import / export licences -
6. Welcoming also the Recommendation on passenger service charges, which it hopes will be reviewed at the next session of the Conference ;
7. Welcoming the Conference's proposals on co-operation in training matters, such as the exchange of instructors, the opening up of pilot schools to foreign students, and the standardisation of training curricula and training methods;
8. Welcoming the adoption of a draft multilateral agreement on the issue or validation of airworthiness certificates on aircraft constructed in one country and exported to another ;
9. Stressing the need to complete, sign and ratify the ICAO draft Convention on certain legal aspects of charter hire and interchange so that this instrument, together with the Recommendations of the Conference on the technical aspects of interchange, can bring about a rapid improvement in conditions for interchange of aircraft and crews between European operators;
10. Having regard to recent organisational developments in European civil aviation;
11. Regretting that attempts to arrive at a multilateral agreement for scheduled services have so far proved fruitless, and considering that such an agreement is of the utmost importance
12. Coming together by the Conference of a Committee on Co-ordination and Liberalisation and expressing the hope that it will prove possible after some years of work by this Committee to prepare a multilateral agreement on scheduled services, covering jet air services as well,
13. Recommends to the Committee of Ministers that member Governments :
 - a. Should implement the various Recommendations of the European Civil Aviation Conference adopted at the third Session or at earlier Sessions and especially those mentioned in paras . 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 above;
 - b. Should make the best possible use of the new institutional machinery set up by the Conference to promote the co-ordination and liberalisation of their civil aviation policies with a view to arriving at a multilateral agreement on liberalisation;
 - c. Should examine the possibility of expanding the Agreement on the control of the upper air space (Eurocontrol) to embrace all member countries of the Council of Europe;
 - d. Should report to the Assembly or to the E. C. A. C. as soon as possible on the action that each member Government has taken on this Recommendation.

B. I I . Explanatory Memorandum by M. VOS

1.

1. The third Session of E.C.A.C. took place in Strasbourg from 9th to 20th March 1959, at the invitation of the Assembly. Among the numerous subjects on the Agenda was Resolution 141 adopted by the Assembly in October 1957. The various matters raised in the Resolution were referred to the appropriate commissions, which carefully considered the Assembly's proposals.

2. While recognising the Council of Europe's competence in general questions of facilitation (abolition of frontier formalities), E. C. A. C. asserted its claim to be the only intergovernmental organisation competent in the particular field of airport facilitation. This claim had been upheld, inasmuch as the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has instructed its Committee of Senior Officials on Frontier Formalities to drop airport formalities from its Agenda. At the same time, E. C. A. C. appealed to other organisations for support in securing implementation of its recommendations on airport facilitation, and a paragraph to this effect is therefore included in the draft Recommendation.

3. Thanks to Resolution 141, the problem of passenger service charges appeared on the Agenda of the Economic Sub-committee of the Conference. As the levy of passenger service charges has been approved by the Council of I. C. A. O., the Conference felt that it could do no more at the present time than recommend that member Governments ensure that the collection of these charges should create as little inconvenience as possible to passengers. The implementation by member countries of ECAC recommendations on facilitation are in principle reviewed every second year, and, since passenger service charges are in effect a matter of facilitation, the effects of this recommendation should in due course be the subject of a report.

4. Resolution 141 reflected the Assembly's interest in the proposals made at E. C. A. C.'s second Session on closer co-operation in training. We felt that to instruct trainees of different nationalities in the same schools was an excellent means of promoting the European idea. Above all, however, it was felt that this could lead to a more rational use of the very expensive training equipment needed. There is therefore every reason to welcome the Conference's new proposals for the standardisation of training curricula and training material and the exchange of instructors — particularly for pilots and radar-controller.

5. Up to now, interchange of aircraft and crews has only been in use to a limited extent in Europe. With the move-over to the use of jet aircraft, however, and closer co-operation between airlines, this aspect of rationalisation is likely to become increasingly important. I. C. A. O. recognises this, and in a recent report on the economic implications of the introduction into service of long-range jet aircraft it states that "the problem of maintaining satisfactory utilisation figures for both aircraft and crews on routes of low density, and the relatively high price of long-range jet aircraft, may accentuate the desirability of arrangements between airlines for the interchange of aircraft and crews".

6. Fruitful co-operation among airlines through the pooling of resources and interchange of services, etc., will also require a harmonisation of rules and regulations in civil aviation. Although the annexes to the Chicago Convention provide a framework for such rules and regulations, there still exist differences as between one country to another, for example, as regards airworthiness codes. In view of the very great importance which international trade in aircraft is bound to acquire over the next five years or so, as European operators build up their jet-fleets and the air combines try to standardise their equipment, a paragraph has been included in the Recommendation on the adoption of a draft multilateral agreement on the issue of the validation of airworthiness certificates for aircraft constructed in one country and exported to another. This agreement is designed to simplify intra-European trade in aircraft. While Governments should be urged to put the agreement into application as soon as possible, it must be recognised that its scope will be relatively limited so long as the United States have not become a party to it. Moreover, while it is true that the Conference decided that the agreement might be open for adherence to all ICAO member countries at the end of two years, it may be questioned whether this period is not too long or, indeed, whether it was wise at all to restrict it to ECAO countries.

7. On the most important issue of all, the liberalisation of scheduled air services for passengers, cargo and mail, the work of the third Session was, naturally, affected by the preparations for Air-Union. Although to judge by the support given to a new Dutch proposal tabled at the third Session, the number of countries in favour of a multilateral agreement had grown since previous sessions, the Conference ended by recognising that this method of tackling the problem had to be abandoned for the time being. A different approach, based on the institution of intergovernmental machinery for continuous consultation, was therefore advocated by the British delegation and agreed by the Conference. As a result, E. C. A. C. has now instituted a

Committee on Co-ordination and Liberalisation which will meet according to need between ECAC Sessions. The institution of the Standing Committee on Co-ordination and Liberalisation no doubt reflects the realisation that the role of the Conference in this situation will be increasingly important, and every effort should be made by Governments and parliaments to ensure that this intergovernmental machinery is effectively used

8. The creation of the maintenance pool between S. A. S.-Swissair and the setting up of Air-Union do not, of course, make it less necessary to follow closely the policies of all Governments in the field of civil aviation, and of promoting the gradual liberalisation of air services. While Air-Union involves a sharing of traffic rights and hence amounts to a liberalisation of scheduled services between the participating countries — and this should lead to an improved service to the public — Assembly Representatives will no doubt wish to watch closely that the increased power of such international combines is not abused. There is a crying need to reduce the cost of air travel, and, although the problem is a complex one, it is by reference to that overriding need that the creation of such combines should be judged.

9. There are two further problems in connection with European civil aviation which have not been dealt with by the Conference but which the Economic Committee feels deserve the closest examination. The first of these is the situation of the European aircraft industry. There is every appearance that this industry is heading for grave difficulties at the present moment. In the United Kingdom, where a few years ago the aircraft construction industry appeared to be in a healthy position, the situation has deteriorated very seriously. The difficulties of the aircraft industry are connected with the great cost of building modern passenger aeroplanes, particularly jet airliners, of procuring sufficiently large orders to permit economic production runs and the recent decline in the production of manned military aircraft.

10. The other problem is that of air fares. There is no need to stress the advantage to the public at large of reducing the cost of air travel. The remarkable success of the new economy class tourist fares on trans-Atlantic services is evidence of how fares affect traffic growth. The Economic Committee therefore proposes to examine, as far as it can within the limits of obtainable data, the present operation of I. A. T. A., which is the body through which international rates are at present fixed by the world's major airlines. In this case, too, the Committee hopes to put forward its views to the Assembly when its examination of the problem is completed.

11. Finally, a procedural problem arises because E. C. A. C. is responsible neither to the Assembly, to the Committee of Ministers, nor even directly to the European Governments which are members of the Conference, but to the International Civil Aviation Organisation in Montreal. Moreover, some Governments which are not Members of the Council of Europe are represented on E. C. A. C. In order to ensure therefore, that our own Governments which are Members both of the Council of Europe and the E. C. A. C. take action on ECAC recommendations, we should insist either that our Governments report back to us through the only direct channel of communication which exists, i. e. the report the Committee of Ministers sends to us at the beginning of each part-session, or that they report back to E. C. A. C. so that the action they have taken may be included in the Report of the Conference.