Recommendation 331 (1962)[1]

Road safety

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

Noting with concern the growing number of road casualties in Europe, with approximately 65,000 people killed and 1,500,000 injured yearly ;

Considering the need for formulating a comprehensive long-term policy covering all important aspects of road safety, for which Governments, local authorities and private organisations share responsibility ;

Considering that, within such a long-term programme, priorities should be established among the numerous problems calling for action, some of which can be easily undertaken and yield good results at low cost ;

Considering the value of scientific research in the field of road safety, and the important contribution which traffic engineering can make in road construction ;

Convinced that the greatest hope of reducing the number of road accidents lies in the education and training of the road users, since a very high percentage of all accidents are due to human faults, without neglecting action to improve the road network, ensure better vehicle inspection and traffic rule enforcement ;

Reiterating its belief in the necessity of introducing road safety as a separate subject in the curriculum of primary schools and expressing its satisfaction that, following Assembly Recommendation 276 (1961), the Council for Cultural Co-operation has recommended to the Committee of Ministers that an international meeting be arranged to compare experience of the most recent methods of instructing school children in road safety, to be organised in conjunction with the European Conference of Ministers of Transport ;

Welcoming the first set of recommendations on the co-ordination of road traffic rules adopted by the European Conference of Ministers of Transport in April 1962 as a first concrete step towards the European Highway Code which it has called for in earlier Recommendations ;

Taking into account the most valuable technical advice obtained from a number of outstanding road safety experts from intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations in the course of an ad hoc Conference organised by the Economic Committee in April 1962,

I

Recommends that the Committee of Ministers should, in accordance with Article 15 (b) of the Statute, urge member Governments :

a. to make every effort to put into operation as soon as possible the international organisation for co-operation in road safety research proposed by the OECD Committee for Scientific Research, and to locate its Secretariat at the United Kingdom Road Research Laboratory at Crowthorne ;

b. to give more attention to expanding the teaching of traffic engineering by establishing schools of traffic engineering in the various European universities, at least one in each member country ;

1. Assembly debate on 21st September 1962 (11th Sitting) (see Doc. 1465, Report of the Economic Committee). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 January 2000 (2nd Sitting).

c. to concentrate road improvement on so-called "black spots" where there has been an abnormal accumulation of accidents, and to organise action on a national scale in conjunction with local authorities and the police, since road works required to eliminate these danger spots are relatively inexpensive ;

d. to make the installation by the manufacturers of fittings for safety belts compulsory in all new cars ;

e. to establish, in the framework of the competent international organisation, maximum and minimum standards of strength for front and tail lights and indicators of vehicles with a view also to adapting them to night and day conditions ;

f. to adopt as soon as possible the standards for maximum weights and dimensions of road vehicles laid down in the ECMT Agreement of 5th October I960 ;

g. to reinforce traffic police personnel and road police patrols and to provide the police with more technical equipment for traffic control purposes, but to abolish all traffic police traps ;

h. to introduce a general speed limit in all built-up areas and to ensure that all speed limits in and outside built-up areas be indicated by signs at the commencement and end of the limited areas

i. to undertake a scientific investigation at European level to find out what is the maximum alcohol content in the blood deemed to make a person unfit to drive a vehicle, and to stiffen the penalties for drivers with more than the legal permissible content of alcohol in the blood, and to introduce such penalties where they do not exist ;

j. to ratify speedily the European Agreement on working conditions of crews of international road transport vehicles of 19th January 1962, prepared within the framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, and to ensure, by adequate supervision, the strict observance of the regulations embodied therein on maximum working hours and reasonable rest periods ;

k. to supply a larger number of mobile psycho-technical testing laboratories in order to promote voluntary testing of driver ability, and to encourage and subsidise the organisation of refresher courses for professional drivers and drivers who have been involved in accidents ;

l. to encourage the financing of road safety campaigns and road safety propaganda by local authorities, insurance companies, oil companies, car manufacturing companies, etc., and to provide private road safety organisations with financial help ;

II

Recommends that the Committee of Ministers should :

a. convene, in liaison with the European Conference of Ministers of Transport, a Group of Experts to work out rules based on the age and mileage of the vehicle for making regular vehicle inspection compulsory, and to recommend whether or not a convention would be the appropriate instrument for regulating this matter ;

b. convene a Group of Experts to draw up a standardised accident form for European police reports, so that a uniform document can be used both for legal and statistical purposes ;

c. invite the Assembly's Sub-committee on Road Safety to appear before the Joint Council of Europe ECMT Committee of Experts, which it trusts will be soon convened to discuss road safety instruction in schools ;

III

Requests the Committee of Ministers to transmit the following proposals to the European Conference of Ministers of Transport :

a. to proceed with its constructive work of formulating recommendations on the co-ordination of road traffic rules, and to consider the possibility of giving these rules binding force and incorporating them in a convention creating a comprehensive European Highway Code, which should be ready for signature before the end of 1963 ;

b. to undertake, in co-operation with the technical bodies of OECD, a study of the future development of road traffic in Europe, taking into account the relation between the growth of the gross national product and other similar indices, and the growth of the number of private and commercial vehicles in European countries ;

c. to undertake, as part of a scientific research project on causes of accidents, a thorough investigation of the relationship which may exist between a speed limitation outside built-up areas and accident occurrence, and to resume the ECMT study on speed regulations;

d. to initiate and facilitate the circulation in ECMT member countries of short television sequences prepared jointly by police authorities, road safety experts and television technicians reconstructing accidents and explaining proper road user behaviour.