

Recommendation 631 (1971)¹

Organisation of a European network of trunk road communications as a part of European regional planning

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having examined the report on the organisation of a European network of trunk road communications as a part of European regional planning, presented by the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities ([Doc. 2903](#)) ;
2. Recalling also the interim report ([Doc. 2709](#)), [Resolution 430](#) adopted in January 1970 on the organisation of a network of trunk road communications as a part of European regional planning, and [Recommendation 525](#) on regional planning in Europe, which underline the importance of the communications infrastructure in such a policy ;
3. Noting with satisfaction that the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning confirmed the Assembly's views in its Final Resolution, stressing that "a really fast and well-balanced transport and communications network is one of the essential conditions for the harmonious development of Europe, its human institutions and its trade" ;
4. Reiterating its observation that the main communications network now existing in Europe is still largely dependent on purely national considerations and inadequately adapted to the present and foreseeable needs of a Europe in process of unification ;
5. Endorsing, in this connection, another wish expressed by the Bonn Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning, according to which, "when extending and co-ordinating national communications networks, governments should take into account the future requirements of Europe as a whole, the potential of less highly developed and peripheral regions, and new possibilities opened up by modern means of communication" ;
6. Convinced that communications and transport policy must be based to a greater extent than in the past on the guidelines of harmonious regional planning, and particularly the decisive influence of plans relating to infrastructures and transport techniques :
 - to ensure more equitable living conditions for the entire population of a country ;*
 - to link up the various regions of the national territory ;*
 - to open up economically backward areas to social progress and development ;*
 - to link up peripheral regions to the centre and to each other ;*
 - to link up natural regions extending across national frontiers ;*
 - to ensure easy and fast communications between all parts of the continent of Europe ;*

1. Assembly debate on 22 January 1971 (24th Sitting) (see [Doc. 2903](#), report of the Committee on Regional Planning and Local Authorities). Text adopted by the Assembly on 22 January 1971 (24th Sitting).



7. Convinced that, in the field of communications, traditional economic considerations - particularly those relating to short-term profitability - must be supplemented by considerations of immediate social advantages and longer-term economic benefits ;

8. Considering that current techniques make available new means of land transport and communication enabling rapid, comfortable communications to be provided which are almost entirely freed from subservience to timetables and weather conditions, while at the same time doing away with the disadvantages such as noise and pollution of the traditional systems,

9. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

a. invite member governments to bear in mind the following considerations and principles when working out and putting into effect their national communications policy :

the essential role played by communications in implementing a national regional planning policy ;

the special importance of the principles of rational long-term development over considerations of short-term profitability or immediate needs ;

the special need to assure adequate communications between all regions of a country, and in particular between peripheral or backward zones and the centres of economic activity ;

the need to take into consideration all means of communication and the possible effects of each on the others, regardless of division of ministerial responsibility ;

the advisability of giving priority in the coming years to fast land communications (motorways, railways, new techniques) ;

the need to benefit from all the advantages of new techniques, e.g. the method of transport based on air cushion ;

the need to define all communications networks in terms of both the geographical position of the country and Europe's overall needs ;

the need to establish large intercontinental airports away from inhabited areas and to site new intercontinental airports on the seacoast ;

to take particular care in coordinating communications networks in frontier regions with similar networks in the adjacent country ;

the need gradually to entrust the co-ordination of the communications policy to the competent European bodies such as the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning and the European Conference of Ministers of Transport, by making the former responsible for defining the networks in terms of a European regional planning policy and the latter responsible for technical co-ordination of such a programme ;

b. to draw member governments' attention to the danger that new systems of communication based on different techniques may be brought into service in Europe in a random manner and may thus create an obstacle to the formation of a single coherent European network and, consequently, to the need for close co-operation in research and development, and the definition of common European standards for the new transport techniques ;

c. to transmit this recommendation together with the report ([Doc. 2903](#)) to the Committee of Senior Officials in charge of preparations for the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning, and invite this committee to consider the suitability of including this subject in the agenda for the next meeting of the Ministerial Conference ;

d. to communicate the report and recommendation to the European Conference of Ministers of Transport.