Resolution 36 (1953)[1]

Opinion on the report of the European Inland Transport Conference

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly observes that the meeting, at regular intervals, of the Ministers of Transport is in itself an appreciable step towards the rational organisation of European transport, but it does not consider that the suggestions in the Report are adequate to secure the full co-ordination of effort that is needed in the transport field.

2. The Report of the Conference itself brings out clearly both the weight and complexity of the major transport problems, (in particular, the international co-ordination of investments, the international financing of investments, the international standardisation of means of transport). The Assembly is of opinion that a permanent organisation sufficiently articulated to study and to resolve these problems is needed.

3. It is true that provision is made in the Report for hearing the views of the various existing specialised bodies and particularly of large non-governmental organisations which represent the three methods of transport. This was one of the fundamental ideas contained in Recommendation 30 of the Assembly, and the rules of procedure of the Conference should facilitate to the utmost such working relations. The full co-operation of those organisations which represent the various methods of transport themselves is a sine qua non if any progress is to be made towards a satisfactory organisation of European transport,

4. The task of collating and comparing the opinions of these international organisations, let alone the need to ensure essential continuity in the work of the Conference, is, however, too heavy for it to be added to those tasks already undertaken in the various countries by the Ministers of Transport and the senior officials who deputise for them.

The Assembly thus considers that the need will quickly be felt for the establishment of a Steering Committee made up of a limited number of persons chosen, not on a national basis, but purely for their competence, as recommended by certain delegations.

The existence of such a Committee would, in view of its composition, ensure that all points of view were heard and considered before the submission of each project to the Ministers. The conclusions of this Committee should be published.

5. While noting with satisfaction that regular meetings between responsible representatives of transport in the various European countries are thus being organised at an international level, the Assembly, nevertheless, wishes to call attention to the fact that the field of transport cannot be taken into consideration by itself, but only within the framework of the European economy which it must serve. From this point of view, the Assembly is happy to note that the Report provides for the continual and reciprocal exchange of views between the Ministers for Transport and the Council of O. E. E. C., which is the competent body in matters of general economic interest. It fully shares the view expressed by the Council of O. E. E. C. that, when forging the links between these bodies, full account should be taken of the tasks assigned to O. E. E. C. under the European Economic Co-operation Convention.

1. This Resolution was adopted by the Assembly at its twenty-firt Sitting, in 23rd September, 1953 (see Doc. 196, Report of the Committee on Economic Questions).

6. At the political level, the Assembly wishes to draw attention to Resolution (53) 13 adopted on 7th May, 1953, by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe :

"The Committee of Ministers,

1. Considering that a common basis is desirable for all international agreements which aim at ensuring closer unity between the countries of Europe ;

2. Taking into account the opinion of the Consultative Assembly, that the Council of Europe should constitute the general framework of European policy,

3. Recommends to the Governments of Member States that any future proposals towards the creation of new organisations of a European character should at the earliest possible moment be submitted to the Council of Europe for discussion, and that these should provide for the establishment of links between such organisations and the Council."

It is happy to note that, in accordance with the terms of this Resolution, provision is made under Chapter VI, paragraph 4, of the Report, for the possibility of reaching a decision, by means of an ad hoc agreement, on the relations to be established between the two organisations.

This agreement should allow for the submission of annual reports by the Conference to the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe and for the establishment of continuous co-operation between the Conference and the appropriate Committees of the Consultative Assembly on the lines of that which has gradually been established with O. E. E. C. and the E. C. S. C.