



Resolution 174 (1960)¹

Reply to the Sixth Annual Report of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

I. General relations of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport

1. The Assembly appreciates the courtesy of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (E C M T) in transmitting its Sixth Annual Report and values the co-operation which enables it to exercise a consultative parliamentary function in regard to the Conference. It is grateful to the Chairman of the Conference for presenting the report in person and replying to the debate.

2. The Assembly earnestly hopes that the activities of the Conference as one of the intergovernmental organisations of wider Europe will continue to be pursued with vigour. It is anxious to support this work and would welcome an even closer relationship with the Conference, if it were possible to develop informally or otherwise additional means of co-operation. Could, for instance, the Conference request the opinion of the Assembly from time to time on some of its projects and would the Council of the Conference be prepared, like the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and the Council of OEEC, to answer written parliamentary questions on its activities put down by members of the Assembly ?

3. As regards ratification of conventions and agreements concluded under the auspices of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport, the Assembly asks the Council of the Conference to supply details of ratifications outstanding so that its members can press for early action in the national Parliaments concerned.

4. The existence of the EEC Restricted Group is welcomed, but the Assembly would like to have more information about the activities of this group and it would like to be assured that there is completely adequate co-operation between the European Conference and the European Economic Community on transport matters. If discussions on trade matters are opened between the "Six" and the "Seven", the Assembly would like the E C M T to play a part in them because of the extensive impact of trade relations on the transport situation.

5. Taking the view that the long-term prospects of surface transport and the problem of financing investments cannot be dissociated from the development of air transport, the Assembly urges the Ministers of Transport to establish suitable contacts with the European Civil Aviation Conference and, in particular, with its Co-ordination Committee, so that the studies mentioned below may-achieve the best results.

II. Investments

6. The Assembly notes with satisfaction the decision of the Conference to study the effect on transport of changes in the power situation. It is also glad that, in response to its suggestion in [Resolution 166](#), this study is to include a survey of long-term prospects for planning investments in the various transport sectors. It hopes

1. Assembly debate on 27th April 1960 (5th Sitting) (see [Docs. 1105](#) Docs. 1105, Sixth Report of ECMT, and [Doc. 1125](#), Report of the Economic Committee). Text adopted by the Assembly on 27th April 1960 (5th Sitting).



that the Committee of Deputies will be particularly active in carrying out new studies on the problem of financing transport investments and the extent to which investments affect the economic situation of the various forms of transport mentioned in paragraphs 96 and 97.

III. Railways

7. The Assembly welcomes the progress made in electrifying, dieselising and modernising railway systems, closing down uneconomic lines and developing combined transport systems, and trusts that the Ministers will continue to take further steps. It thanks the Conference for having drawn the attention of the Governments concerned to the advantages of electrifying the German and Belgian sections of the Cologne-Paris line.

8. The Assembly notes that some progress has been made with regard to the standardisation of rolling-stock but also that certain member countries appear to lag behind others in this respect. In particular, it hopes that the present efforts to standardise special usage wagons will prove successful. It requests the Conference to make renewed efforts to overcome the difficulties standing in the way of further progress in standardising rolling-stock.

9. The Assembly has read with interest the Third Annual Report of the Eurofima Company, and is glad to learn that the European Convention was recently accepted by Belgium. It earnestly hopes that Austria will soon be able to do likewise. It also welcomes the fact that, in accordance with the suggestion made in [Resolution 166](#), the Belgian, Spanish and Portuguese railways have agreed to combine their orders with those of Eurofima and expresses the hope that other national railways will follow this example, with a view to achieving widespread standardisation and hence saving expenditure for European railways. The Assembly also suggests that the Conference of Ministers of Transport should consider the problems which are likely to arise in the future with regard to financing Eurofima, mentioned in paragraph 114 of their Report.

10. The Assembly notes with pleasure that progress has been made as regards standardisation of accounting. It considers that the efforts being made to manage the railways on a more strictly commercial basis should be pursued. Would it be possible to get information on what has been achieved in the various countries on the questions of equality of obligations and of treatment with other means of transport referred to in paragraph 104 ?

11. The Assembly would like the European Conference of Ministers of Transport to study whether, as a means of increasing revenue, the railways of member States could not issue international week-end or extended week-end tickets at reduced rates, between neighbouring member States thereby encouraging at the same time foreign travel among all sections of the population.

IV. Roads

12. The Assembly is pleased to note that in some member countries of the E C M T investments in roads forming part of the international network increased in 1958, and congratulates the Ministers of Transport on the achievements of the Restricted Groups in co-ordinating work on the great international highways as well as on the setting up of two new Restricted Groups for roads on the eastern side of the Alps. It notes with satisfaction the information given in the Report regarding the progress made in the work on the Mont Blanc and Grand St. Bernard tunnels. The Assembly stresses once more the need for a major effort to improve road networks in view of the ever-increasing amount of motor traffic.

13. The Assembly is most interested in the action being taken by Benelux to standardise certain traffic regulations. This might constitute a first step towards a "European Highway Code" for which the Assembly has several times underlined the need. Such a code would only be effective, however, if adopted by as many member countries of the E C M T as possible. Consequently, it is to be hoped that the E C M T will be informed of what is being done by the Benelux countries before any final decision has been reached, so that the problem may be discussed within the framework of E C M T.

14. The Assembly is glad to note that efforts to reduce discrepancies in national regulations relating to the weight, dimensions and load of road vehicles are meeting with more encouraging results. It hopes that co-operation between the E C M T and the Transport Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe will lead to rapid progress and, similarly, that co-operation between the ECMT and the OEEC to make international road transport regulations more flexible will produce good results. In the Assembly's opinion, it is most important to give road transport greater freedom in view of present efforts to bring about the economic integration of Europe.

15. The Assembly welcomes the steps taken by the Conference to improve the collection of road transport statistics. It has stressed the need for this on several occasions, and would like to know the results of the investigations referred to in paragraph 118.

16. The Assembly is glad to know that an ad hoc group on road safety has been created by the European Conference of Ministers of Transport and that close co-operation has been established with the Council of Europe in this field.

V. Waterways

17. The Assembly feels that the chapter of the Report dealing with waterways transport justifies the recommendation made in paragraph 21 of its [Resolution 166 \(1959\)](#). It hopes that the Ministers of Transport will undertake a detailed study of the economics of water transport as soon as the results of the Economic Conference of the Rhineland are known.

VI. Communications with large seaports

18. The Assembly notes with satisfaction the effort being made to improve communications between the large European seaports and their hinterland, as described in paragraphs 84-89 of the Report. Believing that these problems can no longer be looked at from a purely national standpoint and that the long-term prospects of European transport as a whole must be taken into account, it expresses the hope that the Conference of Ministers of Transport will make regular efforts to compare and co-ordinate national projects of this kind.