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**Resolution 191 (1961)**[1]

# Reply to the Seventh Annual Report of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly thanks the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) for transmitting its Seventh Annual Report and is grateful to the Chairman of the Conference for presenting the Report in person.

2. The Assembly notes with great satisfaction the careful consideration given by the Conference to its suggestions on European transport matters. In particular it wishes to thank the Conference for having accepted the request it formulated in Resolution 174, paragraph 2, to be allowed to table written questions. It notes that the Conference would wish such questions to be tabled before the Report is presented to the Assembly and limited to matters dealt with therein. In order to give its members ample time to present written questions and the Conference time to prepare its replies, the Assembly would greatly appreciate it if, in the future, the Annual Reports of the Conference could be made available at least two months before their presentation.

3. The Assembly takes note of the information given by the Conference on the activities of the European Economic Community (EEC) Restricted Group and welcomes the fact that representatives of the Commission of EEC attended certain meetings of mission of EEC attended certain meetings of the ECMT Committee for the Co-ordination of Investments. While recognising that the EEC countries have special obligations towards each other within the framework of the common transport policy envisaged in the Rome Treaty, the Assembly believes that it is desirable to establish the closest possible collaboration between these countries and the other Members of ECMT within the Conference in all matters of transport policy. It is essential to plan transport policy on a continental basis, in matters of investment, in the expansion of the network of the European transport system and in co-ordinating the different media of transport, not only to avoid duplication of work but to ensure a rational and harmonious development in the transport sector.

4. The Assembly notes with concern that the study of the long-term trends of transport requirements for both passengers and goods, taking into account the possible impact of structural changes in the use and transport of energy, which the Conference announced in its Sixth Report, has been held up by the lack of forecasts on the general economic development of member countries as a whole for the period under consideration, and of comparable statistics in the transport sector. Reiterating the belief it has expressed in its two last Resolutions on European transport matters (Resolution 166 (1959) and 174 (1960)), namely that the projected study of the ECMT is indispensable for planning investments in the various branches of transport, the Assembly strongly urges the member Governments of the Council of Europe to improve their transport statistics and the comparability of these statistics and to facilitate the rapid conclusion of the ECMT study.

5. The Assembly is gratified to learn that, following its suggestion in paragraph 5 of Resolution 174, the Conference has established contact with the Chairman of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) on problems of technical co-operation. It remains convinced that the development of air transport cannot be ignored in studying problems of surface transport and hopes that the liaison between the ECMT and the

1. Assembly debate, on 26th April 1961 (4th Sitting) (see Docs. 1269Docs. 1269, Seventh Annual Report of ECMT, and Doc. 1283, Report of the Economic Committee). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26th April 1961 (5th Sitting)

ECAC will be developed in the future to the benefit of the work of both Organisations. The Assembly hopes that, in their next Annual Report, the Ministers of Transport will be in a position to give information about the result of these contacts.

*Railways*

6. The Assembly welcomes the progress made in the electrification of the European railways which now represents 20% of the total length of the network and also notes with interest the expansion of Diesel traction. Unfortunately, the Seventh Report records slow progress in the standardisation of rolling-stock- Thus only 6.3% of the goods wagons in the European railway park (excluding the United Kingdom) were fully or partly standardised at the end of 1959. In fact standardisation has so far been limited almost entirely to conventional type wagons and the Assembly again stresses the need of standardising other types of rolling stock, in particular coaches used in international traffic. The Assembly is looking forward with great interest to receiving in due course information regarding the outcome of the investigation to be made with the assistance of the Union Internationale des Chemins de Fer re garding the causes of the slow progress made in this field.

7. The Assembly notes that little progress has been made in improving the financial situation of the European railways; despite the increase in the volume of goods traffic in 1960 most of the railway system continue to incur considerable deficits. No real improvement is to be recorded during 1960 in the efforts to place the management of the railways on a more strictly commercial basis, nor with respect to the normalisation of the accounts of the railway administrations. The Assembly expresses its concern with this situation and urges the Ministers of Transport to re-examine these problems in connection with its renewed study on the economic situation of the railway administrations. It welcomes the decision of the Conference to deal in this study also with the many aspects of the problem of the coordination of transport which affect the financial situation of the railways.

8. In this context the Assembly notes that no action has been taken concerning the suggestions made to the ECMT in Resolution 174 (1960), paragraph 11, 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.

9. The Assembly welcomes the Fourth Annual Report of the Eurofima Company and is pleased to note that, with the ratification by the Austrian Parliament, all the signatory countries have now completed ratification of the Convention. The financing and purchase of railway rolling-stock through this company reached the remarkable total of 235 million Swiss francs by the end of 1959. It is hoped that the efforts made by the company to try to obtain access to new sources of capital, other than the Swiss market, will be successful during 1961. The Assembly wishes to express its satisfaction with the initiative taken by the ECMT to make Eurofima's bonds acceptable for the investment of the compulsory reserves of insurance companies and hopes that all member countries will take the necessary action.

10. The Assembly is interested to learn that it is planned to speed up the international carriage of goods by establishing a network of "Trans-Europ-Express-Goods" trains and hopes that action on these lines will help to remedy the long delays experienced in international goods transport, in particular for small parcels.

*Roads*

11. Noting that the number of motor vehicles continues to increase at an annual rate of more than 10%, the Assembly is concerned to find that, despite good performances in some countries, the development and improvement of the European road network is not keeping pace with the growth of road traffic. Recognising that substantial progress has been made, largely thanks to the activities of the ECMT Restricted Groups, to develop and link up the main European highways, it is clear nevertheless that greater efforts still are needed to develop the international road network but even more in the expansion and improvement of the national road systems. The Assembly supports the view expressed in the Seventh Annual Report that the main obstacle is that of securing adequate finance for road investment and in consequence urges member Governments to review the methods used by them to finance road investment to ensure an increase of such finance on a regular basis. In this connection the Assembly notes that the Seventh Report states that it would be desirable in some cases to supplement the financial efforts of individual Governments by recourse to international financing. Recalling that it proposed the creation of a European Road Investment Fund in 1955 in reply to the First Report of ECMT (Resolution 73 (1955) ), the Assembly urges the Ministers of Transport to undertake a study of this problem.

12. The Assembly has repeatedly drawn attention to the discrepancies in national regulations relating to the weight and dimensions of road vehicles. It is therefore gratified to learn that thirteen member countries of the ECMT have agreed on maximum permissible weights and dimensions for road vehicles in international transport. The Assembly hopes that the remaining ECMT countries will in the future be able to accede to this agreement. Further, it urges Governments to study the possibilities of applying the same standards on maximum permissible weights and dimensions in respect of national road transport.

13. The Assembly notes that the work of the Joint ECMT-OEEC Working Party set up to relax present international road transport regulations has been suspended and hopes that it will be resumed without any delay.

*Inland Waterways*

14. The Assembly notes that the Economic Conference on the Navigation of the Rhine has submitted its Report to the Central Commission for Navigation of the Rhine. It hopes that the ECMT will soon be in a position to undertake a detailed study of the economics of European inland water transport. The Assembly expresses the wish that the ECMT should also examine the problems connected with the linking up of the waterways of the Rhine and the Danube and that it should deal with this matter in its next Report.

*Pipelines*

15. In view of the rapid development of the European pipeline system the Assembly is pleased to note that the ECMT is giving close attention to the impact of this development on other means of transport, and that it considers it desirable that the laws and regulations governing the construction and operation of pipelines should be given some measure of uniformity and hopes that the Ministers of Transport will be able to supply detailed information on these problems in the next Annual Report.