Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**Resolution 228 (1962)**[1]

# Reply to the 8th Annual Report of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly thanks the European Conference of Ministers of Transport for transmitting its 8th Annual Report, and expresses its appreciation to the Chairman of the Conference for presenting the report in person and replying to the debate.

2. The Assembly appreciates the careful consideration given by the Conference to its suggestions on European transport matters and expresses its satisfaction with the way the relations between the European Conference of Ministers of Transport and the Council of Europe have continued to develop during 1961, which enables it to exercise a consultative parliamentary function in regard to the Conference.

3. The Assembly welcomes the plan for a study of the principles for a general transport policy. It hopes that the largest possible number of ECMT member States will agree on a set of principles designed to reduce and gradually to eliminate national divergences in European transport policy. It feels that, in implementing a comprehensive transport policy, the decisions of the public authorities on infrastructure investment in different means of transport should be guided by long-term considerations of general interest.

4. The Assembly hopes that, in this connection, comparative studies will be prepared in the near future by the Conference on how the various countries are dealing with the problem of rail-road competition, and what is their experience in regard to this problem which is of considerable international concern.

5. Convinced of the usefulness of co-operation with national and international professional organisations, the Assembly hopes that, in working out the general principles for a transport policy, the ECMT will take into consideration the opinions of these organisations. Railways

6. The Assembly notes the progress made in the electrification of main European lines in relation to the previous years, in spite of the fact that in 1961 the number of kilometres electrified did not reach the record of 1960 and 1959. It is concerned, however, with the insufficient progress made in the standardisation of rolling stock and urges the railways administrations to intensify their collaboration in regard to technical matters in general.

7. The Assembly notes with concern the increase of railway accidents in Europe. It strongly urges Governments to review and improve the safety standards they apply, and, especially, to investigate the need of modernising the lines in the light of the greatly increased speeds at which the trains travel, and to extend the use of electronics in signalling, telecommunications and remote control.

8. Once again the Assembly is concerned at the financial situation of the railways,which it considers a subject of primary importance because of the capital involved and the human problems which have arisen. The Assembly welcomes the memorandum of the International Railway Union on the economic problems of the railways of member countries of the ECMT, and the resolution adopted by the ECMT Council in November 1961 to the effect that each of the Members will keep the ECMT Council informed of any measures and remedies taken (and their effect) to solve the economic problems of the railways. It feels that the public should be supplied with correct information on the financial situation of the railways.

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1. Assembly debate on 21st September 1962 (11th Sitting) (see Docs. 1427Docs. 1427, 8th Annual Report of ECMT, and 1496, Report of the Economic Committee). Text adopted by the Assembly on 21st September 1962 (11th Sitting).

9. While welcoming the closing of numerous uneconomic lines as a great advance towards the management of the railways on a more commercial basis, the Assembly notes with concern that only a few European countries have introduced measures for the elimination of abnormal financial burdens falling on the railway administration and for the inclusion of others in public budgets (normalisation of accounts).

10. Noting that the situation of most of the European railways remains less than satisfactory as regards the best possible use of available facilities and the provision of maximum standards of service to the user, the Assembly regrets that a certain proportion of the systems in western Europe are over-equipped and used in a costly manner, while certain international connections remain inadequate.

11. The Assembly welcomes the 5th Annual Report of the Eurofina Company. It regrets that, among all European countries, only Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland have authorised insurance companies to include the Eurofina's bonds in their compulsory reserves. Noting the small number of locomotives and wagons purchased through the Eurofina Company, the Assembly resolves, through action in national Parliaments, to urge member Governments which are Members of Eurofina, to place more orders through this institution. The Assembly also hopes that more funds will be made available for the Company to be devoted to financing orders for rolling stock. Roads

12. The Assembly, while welcoming the spectacular plans for motorway construction in certain countries such as Italy, notes, however, with concern that, owing to chronic insufficiency of investments in road infrastructure, European motorway networks still lag far behind the increasing number of vehicles and the needs of the economy. It urges Governments to give high priority to the improvement and equipment of roads, to keep up with the spectacular increase of traffic. Furthermore, it welcomes the progress made towards the completion of the projects for road tunnels, especially at Alpine crossings, and hopes that the projects will be continued and implemented as soon as possible.

13. The Assembly, recognising the importance of the introduction of goods stations for road traffic to facilitate a smooth traffic flow and for a rational organisation of road transport, hopes that such goods stations be put into operation soon, on as large a scale as possible. In this context the Assembly wishes to underline the need of increasing parking facilities for vehicles in urban areas.

14. The Assembly notes with concern that the work of the joint working group consisting of experts of ECMT and OEEC instructed to study the possibility of relaxing international road traffic régulations, suspended in 1960 as a result of the reorganisation of the OEEC, have not yet been resumed. The Assembly urges the Conference to take the initiative to have this work resumed as soon as possible. Cross-Channel Link

15. The Assembly, recalling Recommandation 260 (1960), once again wishes to stress the importance of the construction of a means of communication between France and Great Britain, and asks the European Conference of Ministers of Transport to follow this question very closely and, in due course, to inform the Assembly of its views thereon. Inland Waterways

16. The Assembly is convinced that the creation of a unified network of European inland waterways capable of meeting present and future needs is necessary, and that the modernisation of the existing network and the standardisation of the material are the most important factors in improving the competitivity of inland waterway transport. The Assembly welcomes the laying down of general standards for the infrastructure, and the dimensions of boats and ancillary installations. Noting that the introduction of new technical methods will undoubtedly make the building and exploitation of boats a more profitable business, it hopes that a larger number of motorised barges will be put into service in European waterways in the near future.

17. The Assembly regards the completion of the Rhine-Main-Danube link as economically and politically very important. It therefore urges the speeding up of the technical and financial planning for the connection of the Rhine-Main-Regnitz Canal via Bamberg and Nuremberg with the Danube.

18. The Assembly notes with concern that many of the twelve projects which the ECMT Council of Ministers recognised already in 1953 as being of European interest, are still at the planning stage. It urges Governments to take steps to improve this situation and hopes, in particular, that a decision will soon be reached on the Rhone-Rhine link. Pipelines

19. The Assembly thanks the Conference for the information contained in the report on the development of the European pipeline system. In view of the problems created for railways, roads and inland waterway transport by the development of pipeline transport, the Assembly hopes that, in their next Annual Report, the Ministers of Transport will be in a position to give fuller information and more detailed figures concerning the economic aspects of the matter, and, especially, on the cost of transporting oil by pipeline. The Assembly is

convinced of the need of paying the closest attention to this latter question, because it largely determines the competitive advantages of pipeline transport as compared with the classical methods of transport, i.e. railways, roads and, in particular, inland waterways.