Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 704 (1979)[1]

Reply to the 24th and 25th annual reports of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering the 24th and 25th annual reports of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) (Docs. 4282 and 4379), and the report presented by its Committee on Economic Affairs and Development (Doc. 4408),

2. Recalls that 1978 marked the twenty-fifth anniversery of ECMT, and that the Ministers of Transport took this opportunity to define new working structures enabling them to adopt an inter-modal approach for tackling existing problems ;

3. Trusts that this new approach will make it easier to work out a concerted and ambitious European transport policy, which is more than a mere juxtaposition of national policies and a series of specific joint projects ;

4. Notes in this connection that, in accordance with its Protocol, ECMT is required to co-ordinate and promote the activities of international organisations concerned with European inland transport ;

5. Urges ECMT to intensify its co-operation with the European Community, more particularly in the field of rail transport and combined transport, and with other international organisations concerned, in particular the European Civil Aviation Conference, in view of the repercussions of changes in the organisation of air transport on the operational aspects of land transport ;

6. Notes with satisfaction the attention given by ECMT to the Assembly's Recommendation 826 and Resolution 668, on recent developments concerning trunk communications and regional planning in Europe ;

7. Welcomes the close relations established between ECMT and the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT) on the occasion in particular of the joint ECMT / CEMAT Seminar (Paris, November 1977) and the 4th CEMAT Conference (Vienna, October 1978), and trusts that the two conferences will continue their co-operation by means of dialogue at ministerial level ;

8. Invites the two conferences to continue their political and technical dialogue, at the level of senior officials, especially by organising joint seminars taking into account suggestions made by the Assembly and offering it the possibility to be associated with these seminars ;

9. Considers that the high rate of unemployment in Europe places greater responsibility on the Ministers of Transport, partly because of the volume of work which depends on their investment policy for rail, road and inland waterway communications, and partly because of the impact of infrastructure investment on economic activity in the most threatened regions, and hence on employment ;

10. Stresses that a co-ordinated transport policy for Europe must form a part of each general economic and social policy, while paying due regard to the interests of regional planning, environment and the quality of life ;

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1. Assembly debate on 5 October 1979 (12th Sitting) (see Doc. 4407, report of the Legal Affairs Committee). Text adopted by the Assembly on 5 October 1979 (12th Sitting).

11. Considers that the continuing energy crisis makes it imperative to promote an enlightened policy regarding the best possible contribution of the various existing modes of transport, taking account of their efficiency in terms of energy, the relevant economic and social criteria and the principles of healthy competition ;

12. Recalls its Resolution 697 (1979), in which it urged the European Conference of Ministers of Transport to work out "objective criteria for the definition of commercial operations and public service obligations of railways" ;

13. Calls upon ECMT to give priority to the development of rail and inland waterway transport, which consume less energy than other modes of transport, and in particular to encourage combined rail/road transport ;

14. Urges ECMT :

14.1. to make a cost/benefit analysis of the various modes of transport, having regard to the necessary investments, social and energy costs, and environmental impact, with the object of making informed political decision ;

14.2. to seek ways and means of establishing unbiased conditions of competition between road and rail transport, especially from the social point of view ;

14.3. to pursue actively its work on questions of transit, in order to reduce obstacles to international road transport and allow a further increase in multilateral quotas, while paying due regard to the effects of transit traffic on the populations and environment of the countries through which it passes ;

14.4. to persist in its efforts to improve the urban transport sector, particularly with a view to promoting public transport in large towns, and between rural and urban areas ;

15. Supports the efforts of ECMT in seeking a solution to the harmonisation of dates for the beginning and end of summer-time in member countries, and measures designed to improve traffic flow at the start and finish of summer holiday periods ;

16. Regrets that the Council of Europe was unable to associate with ECMT in organising the 3rd Joint Conference on Road Safety Education in Schools in 1979, the Year of the Child, and trusts that this conference will be held in 1980 ;

17. Congratulates ECMT on its initiative in defining measures to enable handicapped persons to move about more freely.