Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 893 (1988)[1]

Reply to the 32nd and 33rd annual reports of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT)

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having taken note of the 32nd and 33rd annual reports of ECMT (Doc. 5755), the report by its Committee on Economic Affairs and Development in reply thereto (Doc. 5827), and the opinion presented by its Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities (Doc. 5836) ;

2. Recalling its Resolutions 766 (1982), 815 (1984) and 858 (1986) on the activities of ECMT ;

3. Noting that in 1986 goods traffic by road, inland waterways and oil pipelines increased, whereas rail transport showed a further decline in respect of both goods and passenger traffic ;

4. Considering that any transport policy in Europe should be designed at the level of Western Europe as a whole, and that ECMT is the organisation best placed to involve its non-Community member countries in the completion of the internal market planned for 1 January 1993 ;

5. Welcoming the progress made towards the building of the cross-Channel fixed link and the agreement reached on 26 October 1987 between the Transport Ministers of Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom on the future North European high-speed train (TGV) network, for which it had appealed in its Resolution 876 on a European high-speed train network, adopted on 7 May 1987 ;

6. Disturbed by the two conflicting trends which have been noticeable for some ten years in the transport sector, namely a decline in investment in land transport infrastructure and, at the same time, a constant rise in the volume of traffic, which lead one to expect an increase in the number of bottlenecks and the saturation of existing infrastructures ;

7. Believing that, for environmental and energy conservation reasons in particular, more of this traffic should be absorbed by the railways, inland waterways and combined transport ;

8. Considering that ECMT should intensify its co-ordinating role in the negotiations being prepared between the European Community and Austria, Switzerland and Yugoslavia on transit traffic ;

9. Concerned at the divergent developments in policies for financing road infrastructures, in particular the introduction of motorway and other tolls ;

10. Deploring the disappointing results in most ECMT member countries of ‘‘European Road Safety Year" (1986), especially in view of the increase in the number of road accidents and casualties ;

11. Concerned about the eventual consequences of the anarchic development of urban traffic with regard to pollution, safety, regional development and population movements away from urban centres ;

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1. See Doc. 5755, 32nd and 33rd reports of ECMT, Doc. 5827, report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, and Doc. 585736, opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 23 March 1988.

12. Believing that the over-capacity of inland shipping and the inadequacy of investment in inland waterways are likely to discourage the efforts of a changing sector, implying continued co-operation with a view to harmonisation at ECMT level,

13. Invites the member states of the Council of Europe :

a. to make full use of the possibilities of ECMT for consultation and co-ordination in all aspects of transport policy which go beyond the purely national level ;

b. to involve ECMT as closely as possible in all bilateral or multilateral negotiations on transport matters ;

c. in particular, to strengthen ECMT's role and scope for action so as to ensure a coherent European policy regarding transport between member and non-member countries of the European Economic Community ;

14. Invites ECMT to address itself more resolutely to the major problems facing a real European transport policy, taking into account the following :

a. the plan for a major European network of high-speed rail links should be actively promoted ;

b. close attention should be given to branch lines so as to ensure greater regional balance as well as fuller utilisation of main lines ;

c. the taking into account of political and social profitability, as well as strict financial profitability, cannot be absent from a European policy on investment in transport infrastructure ;

d. the search for global solutions to the problems of communications across the Alps and the Pyrenees ;

e. the public authorities cannot abdicate their responsibilities and duties towards society by leaving the financing of major infrastructure to the private sector alone, at the risk of increasing a harmful fragmentation of major European projects ;

f. a united approach should be adopted to research and innovation in transport, particularly in the context of Eureka ;

g. the problems and difficulties facing sub-regional and inter-urban traffic in its complementary role with regard to the mobility of persons and goods cannot be ignored, while harmonisation of the action of the various means (taxis, automated urban transport systems, buses and transport for people with reduced mobility, pedestrian zones and parking facilities, exclusive lanes, etc.) is necessary not only at ECMT level, but also at that of national governments and local authorities ;

15. With regard to environmental problems, invites the ECMT bodies :

a. to make practical proposals in the near future regarding the provision of sales points throughout Europe for unleaded petrol ;

b. to take an active part in the investigation of ways of introducing electric vehicles for urban transport ;

c. to consider the possibility of holding a joint conference of ECMT ministers and the Council of Europe's Ministers responsible for the Environment ;

16. Appeals to ECMT and its member states to take practical and effective road safety measures concerning not only the setting of uniform traffic standards in Europe, but also vehicle security and user behaviour ;

17. Urges ECMT to adopt guidelines as soon as possible for the harmonisation of transport regulations and taxes in Europe with a view to creating conditions of competition enabling the internal market to be completed in Europe ;

18. Asks the governments of the member states of the Council of Europe and ECMT to give preference to combined transport in their policies, making the fullest possible use of the opportunities afforded by the railways and inland waterways, and, to that end, to take further initiatives to complete and modernise transport infrastructure networks in Europe :

a. where rail transport is concerned, by giving urgent priority to :

1. the creation of the following lines :

a Paris - Strasbourg - Stuttgart - Munich - Vienna high speed railway line ;

a Paris-Dijon-Lausanne-Brigue-Milan-Veniceline by first re-establishing a direct line between Paris and Milan via Dijon and Lausanne ;

lines across the Pyrenees, in keeping with the spirit of the Malaga Declaration adopted at the end of the 2nd Conference of Mediterranean Regions (16-18 September 1987), with a view to optimising North-South links ;

2. the creation of transalpine railway links, both in Switzerland and in Austria ;

b. where East-West high-speed railway links are concerned, by paying attention to the need for such links in the light of further progress towards East-West détente ;

c. where inland waterways are concerned, by completing the Rhine-Main-Danube and Rhine-Rhône links ;

d. where road infrastructure is concerned, by speeding up the development of the Central Europe-Atlantic route and a South-West Europe link ;

19. Reiterates the appeal issued to the governments of member states in Resolution 815 (1984) with regard to the establishment of regular dialogue through parliamentary debates on the implementation of the various resolutions adopted by the ECMT Council ;

20. Instructs its Committee on Economic Affairs and Development and its Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities to take all the necessary initiatives to promote the implementation of a real European transport infrastructure policy.