



Resolution 1023 (1994)¹

European transport problems (reply to the 38th and 39th annual reports of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT))

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly has taken note of the 38th and 39th annual reports of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) ([Doc. 6714](#) and [Doc. 6964](#) covering 1991 and 1992 respectively), the report by its Committee on Economic Affairs and Development ([Doc. 6978](#)) and the opinion presented by its Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities ([Doc. 6995](#)).
2. The Assembly welcomes the rapidly expanding membership of the ECMT, now encompassing thirty countries. It hopes that the organisation will soon have all European countries as members, in order to be able to face the many new challenges confronting the continent.
3. Investment by ECMT member countries in transport infrastructure has for several years been insufficient to meet demand. The road traffic situation, in particular, remains precarious, with congestion threatening at a number of locations, especially along the west European north-south axis from the Netherlands through Germany to Italy, and in central and eastern Europe.
4. The Assembly deplores the insufficient progress made in instituting co-operation between national railway systems with a view to ensuring an efficient, Europe-wide passenger and freight railway network.
5. The Assembly regrets that, as a result, rail transport continues to decline when compared to other modes of transport and recalls its [Resolution 977 \(1992\)](#) in which it calls on ECMT and Council of Europe member states to "give priority to railways over roads" within an internationally co-ordinated investment programme to improve Europe's transport infrastructure.
6. The environmental problems caused by road vehicles, in particular, will make it necessary to consider ways of checking further expansion of road traffic, to devise more environmentally-friendly and energy-efficient lorries and cars, and to promote a reorientation from road to rail or combined (road/rail) transport.
7. In this context the Assembly welcomes the major efforts made by Austria and Switzerland to facilitate Alpine transit, and notably the Swiss NEAT (New Alpine Tunnels) project involving over 90 kilometres of new railway tunnels for combined transport, at a cost of US\$ 10 000 million. Such investments point the way to a harmonious and environmentally-sound integration of different modes of transport. In this regard, the Assembly expresses the hope that the agreement between the two Alpine countries and the European Union concerning Alpine transit will not be modified if there are changes, particularly in the case of the accession of Austria to the European Union, in the relations between the latter and these countries.
8. The economic development of central and eastern Europe necessarily depends on the rapid expansion and modernisation of its rail and road systems, including infrastructure. This holds not only for east-west links, but equally for north-south axes connecting the region with the Mediterranean.

1. Assembly debate on 27 January 1994 (7th Sitting) (see [Doc. 6978](#), report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, Rapporteur: Mr Efraimoglou; and [Doc. 6995](#), opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, Rapporteur: Mr Mészáros). Text adopted by the Assembly on 27 January 1994 (7th Sitting).



9. The Assembly welcomes the 4th ECMT-Council of Europe Conference on Road Safety Education for Young Children and Teenagers, to be held in Strasbourg in March 1994, hopes that it will yield concrete results for European co-operation in this field, in particular in central and eastern Europe, and resolves to report on its conclusions in due course.

10. The Assembly, in conclusion, calls on ECMT and Council of Europe member states:

10.1. to pursue vigorously the decisions of the ministerial council of the ECMT for a future European transport policy, and in particular the guide-lines adopted at its May 1993 meeting in Noordwijk, the Netherlands, for improving the accessibility of peripheral regions and for upgrading the transport network of central and eastern Europe;

10.2. to work in favour of Europe-wide solutions to the continent's transport issues - in particular avoiding any split between European Union members and other European countries - and to develop a general investment plan for a pan-European railway system;

10.3. to attach as much importance to north-south transport links as to east-west links in their co-operation with the countries of central and eastern Europe, and to seek to establish priorities on the basis of appropriate studies and simulation experiments as regards long-term demand;

10.4. in particular, to plan for modern motorways linking the Baltic states with Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey, and the Iberian peninsula with the Balkans;

10.5. to pursue the ECMT's work in "transport telematics" - that is, the use of electronic data processing to assist traffic management - and in particular to realise the ECMT's goal of ensuring "interoperability" among different national systems, while paying due attention to the need to protect the privacy of citizens;

10.6. to heed the Assembly's call, in [Resolution 938 \(1990\)](#) on European transport problems for "considering an extension of the ECMT's competence to include also maritime transport", notably the question of ship safety, and to foster the development of integrated maritime and inland-waterway transport;

10.7. to promote close co-operation between the ECMT and the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC), as well as with the European Union, on issues of interface between air and other modes of transport, such as transport to and from airports, or the development of high-speed trains;

10.8. to ensure that the end of summer time is on the same date throughout Europe, in the interest of transport efficiency;

10.9. to place environmental protection at the centre of European transport policies, in accordance with the agreements reached at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Measures should aim at counteracting "global warming" via a reduction of CO₂ emissions through improved vehicle and engine design, as well as through research into alternative fuels, and at reducing vehicle noise and emissions damaging to human health and buildings. It is also necessary that the social costs of the damages caused to the environment be reflected in the total transport costs;

10.10. to take into account the environment-friendly principles of regional planning in any projects concerning expansion and improvement of travel links, giving priority to improvement of existing travel links;

10.11. to introduce gradually co-ordinated solutions to the issue of the taxation of road transport, aiming to have vehicles pay for road costs in a first stage, and for the external costs they engender in a second stage;

10.12. to pursue consultation on the complicated issue of railway privatisation, bearing in mind the differing circumstances prevailing in each country, and paying particular attention to the problems in this regard facing the countries of central and eastern Europe;

10.13. to assist, materially and conceptually, the countries of central and eastern Europe in the modernisation of their railway systems, notably with regard to the efficiency and comfort of passenger transport;

10.14. to ensure that the Interrail Card, permitting young people to travel by rail across Europe on affordable conditions, is continued, and to include in the system all European countries;

10.15. to adopt adequate safety standards for lorry, coach and railway transport - as regards both the condition of vehicles and the alertness of drivers, especially on major holiday routes - through the speedy conclusion of a revised Europe-wide agreement concerning the work of crews engaged in international transport.

11. Finally, the Assembly warmly welcomes the recent opening of the Rhine-Main-Danube inland waterway connecting the North Sea with the Black Sea, and considers it of great importance to Europe's future economic development, bearing in mind that the Danube river represents a major axis connecting the west and east of Europe and offers an attractive alternative to the overloaded road network in the region.

12. It notes, however, that shipping on the Rhine is still governed by a convention separate from that of the Danube, and calls on the ECMT to promote harmonisation of the relevant legal provisions so as to ensure smooth passage on both waterways.

13. Notwithstanding the many promising developments which could greatly improve the transport situation in Europe, the Assembly notes rising awareness of the fact that transport and traffic cannot grow limitlessly. It therefore calls on the ECMT to intensify its work aiming to limit this growth to a level compatible with a healthy environment.