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Simplification of frontier formalities

Communication
Committee of Ministers

1. I - Letter from the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers to the President of the Assembly dated 18th May, 1955

Sir,

1. The Committee of Ministers has' asked mc to inform you of its views on Recommendation 51 relating to the simplification of frontier formalities for travellers, which was adopted by the Consultative Assembly on 23rd September, 1953, and on Recommendation 59 on the simplification of frontier formalities for private motor vehicles, adopted on 24th May, 1954. These views are based on examination of the comments submitted by Member Governments. Their comments on Recommendation 51 have already been forwarded to members of the competent subcommittee of the Assembly's Committee on Legal and Administrative Questions. The comments on Recommendation 59 have also been forwarded to them.

2. The Committee wholeheartedly agrees with the Opinion expressed by the Assembly, in the preamble to its Recommendation 51, that it is in the interest of all Member States of the Council to facilitate the movement of their nationals from member country to member country in order to promote greater understanding and good will between them. It has noted with pleasure the very considerable increase in such travel since 1945 and it agrees that frontier formalities should be carefully watched to ensure that they impose upon travellers the minimum of inconvenience, trouble and delay compatible with an effective control.

3. The Committee also agrees with the Assembly on the importance- of simplifying frontier formalities for private motor vehicles. A reduction in such formalities would greatly assist travel by nationals of Member States and thus help to achieve the aims mentioned in paragraph 2 above.

4. The Committee would like to call attention to the very considerable efforts already made by Member Governments within the framework of other international organisations in an endeavour to reduce and simplify frontier formalities, in particular in 0. E. E. C. and in a number of United Nations Agencies. Although much of the field has already been examined by Member Governments in this way, the Committee has once again studied the whole complex of formalities in the light of the Assembly's recommendations. The attached Memorandum contains the Committee's detailed views on each paragraph of the relevant Recommendation.

5. You will observe that the Committee of Ministers has accepted certain proposals in their entirety and has incorporated them in its Resolution (55) 8 which is attached. Others it has only accepted in part; while it has felt obliged, for various reasons, to reject some proposals altogether. Article 15 of its Rules of Procedure authorises the Committee of Ministers to refer back to the President of the Assembly for further consideration any recommendations which it finds only partially acceptable. In virtue of this Article, I am instructed by the Committee to refer back to you Recommendation 51 (1953) and Recommendation 59 (1954).

6. The representatives of Belgium, Greece, Iceland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands reserved the position of their Governments in respect of the application of the provisions contained in Article 3 of Resolution (55) 8. The representative of Greece made a reservation with regard to Article 4.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your obedient Servant,

For the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers,

N. HADJI VASSILIOU, Permanent Representative of Greece

2. II - COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS Resolution (55) 8

The Committee of Ministers,

Having regard to Recommendation 51 (1953) of the Consultative Assembly on the simplification of passport formalities and customs and exchange control;

Having regard to Recommendation 59 (1954) of the Assembly relating to the simplification of frontier formalities for private motor vehicles ;

Considering that it is in the interest of all Member States of the Council of Europe to facilitate the movement of their nationals from one member country to another in order to promote greater understanding and good will among them ;

Considering that frontier formalities should impose upon travellers the minimum of inconvenience, trouble and delay compatible with an effective control;

Considering the importance of simplifying frontier formalities for private motor vehicles ;

Taking due account of the efforts already made by Member Governments within the framework of other international organisations, in particular in O. E. E. C. and in a number of United Nations Agencies, to reduce and simplify frontier formalities,

Resolves :

1. to recommend to member countries, in so far as they have not already done so, tha t they should consider abolishing visa formalities for travel between themselves and certain other European non-member countries ;

2. to approve in principle the extension to all member countries of the Council of Europe of the Brussels Treaty Organisation arrangements considering collective passports; and to set up a Committee of Experts whose function it shall be to elaborate the details of a Council of Europe collective passport arrangement and at the same time to propose, should it consider it desirable, a revision of the terms of the present arrangements ;

3. to recommend that Member Governments should ensure that their national regulations allow all visitors to import and re-export, and their own nationals to export and re-import, the following articles free of customs and other duties and without special import or export permits, if such articles are part of the personal effects of the traveller and are intended solely for his personal use :

   Articles of clothing, bedding and other articles for personal use, such as watches, jewellery, toilet articles, etc. ;

   Other small belongings, such as binoculars, cameras, including small cine-cameras, together with developed and undeveloped films and plates, portable musical instruments, gramophones (including a reasonable number of records) wireless receiving sets, and portable typewriters ;

   Bicycles, camping equipment and sport articles (for example, sporting guns and other shooting equipment, fishing tackle, skis, tennis racquets, canoes and similar small craft without engines, including collapsible boats) ;

   Perambulators and invalid chairs;

4. to recommend that Member Governments should be as liberal as possible in their allocations of foreign currency for travel in member countries of the Council of Europe;

5. to draw the attention of Member Governments to the paragraph 5 (c) of Recommendation 51 of the Consultative Assembly concerning the need for effecting improvement in currency control arrangements ;

6. to invite those Members of the Council of Europe which did not take part in the Conference of Experts on passports and frontier formalities held at Geneva between 14th and 25th April, 1947, under the auspices of the ECOSOC, to comply with the recommendations put forward by that Conference;

7. to recommend that those Member Governments which have not yet done so should forthwith recognise the validity of driving licences issued by other Member States to persons principally resident in the territories of these latter States;

8. to recommend that member cotintries where insurance against third-party risks is not at present compulsory should give consideration to the possibility of making such insurance compulsory;

9. to instruct the Secretary-General to forward this Resolution to Member Governments and to request them to inform the Council of Europe in due course of such measures as they may have taken to implement it.

3. III - Detailed Opinion of the Committee of Ministers on Recommendation 51 relating to the simplification of frontier formalities for travellers, adopted by the Consultative Assembly on 23rd September, 1953

(N. B. — For convenience the relevant part of the text of the Recommendation is reproduced at the head of each section.)

3.1. SECTION A

3.1.1. Paragraph 1 (a)

"that, wherever they are still required, visas should be completely abolished as soon as possible for travel between all member countries of the Council of Europe."

Comment

So long ago as 1952 the Committee of Ministers agreed that visas should be abolished as soon as possible for normal tourist and business travel between member countries of the Council. In its Third Report it informed the Assembly of a recommendation which had been made to member Governments in this sense. Nine member Governments (namely Belgium, Denmark, the German Federal Republic, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, France and the United Kingdom) have so far abolished the visa requirement for such travel in respect of nationals of all member countries. The remainder (Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Saar and Turkey) have undertaken to do so by 1st January, 1956.

3.1.2. Paragraph 1 (b)

" that , in cases where special circumstances make it particularly difficult for visas to be completely abolished on a reciprocal basis, the possibility should be envisaged of action being taken on a unilateral basis and that, in any case, transit visas should be dispensed with and entry visas should be issued without charge. "

Comment

In view of the action being taken on paragraph 1 (a), this would appear to require no further consideration.

3.1.3. Paragraph 1 (c)

" that immediate consideration be given to the possibility of abolishing the visa requirement for travel as between Member States of the Council of Europe and certain non-Member States, namely Austria, Finland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and Yugoslavia. "

Comment

The Committee has recommended member Governments to give immediate consideration to this possibility. Some progress has indeed been made already in the direction suggested by this paragraph. Almost all member countries have abolished the visa requirement for normal tourist and business travel in respect of Switzerland; the great majority in the case of Austria; and several in the case of Finland and Portugal.

3.2. SECTION B

3.2.1. General Note on Paragraph 2

Paragraph 2 has a preamble which welcomes the arrangements obtaining as between the Scandinavian States[1], whereby persons travelling from one country to another | are no longer required to give proof of their identity on crossing the borders between these countries; and as between Ireland and the United Kingdom, whereby, in addition, aliens reaching the United Kingdom from abroad through Ireland are not interviewed again by Immigration Officers on arrival in the United Kingdom, and aliens travelling to Ireland da the United Kingdom are seen by gration Officers and not on arrival in Ireland.

3.2.2. Paragraph 2 (a)

" that similar arrangements should be made among other groups of States, for example the members of Uniscan (Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom) to which Iceland, Ireland and possibly Finland might be added, and the members of the Euro-pean Coal and Steel Community (Belgium, France, the German Federal Republic, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) to which the United Kingdom and possibly other Member States of the Council of Europe might be added, it being understood that there are other possible combinations and that it is intended that the creation of these regional passport unions should, in view of their interlocking element, ! eventually lead to the abolition of the passport requirement for travel in all Member States of the Council of Europe."

Comment

The Committee likewise welcomes the arrangements referred to by the Assembly, and has considered the proposals made for their extension to other groups of countries. In the Committee's view such arrangements are only feasible when nationals of each country in the group may, without serious restriction, enter, reside and work in any of the other countries which form it; and when the immigration systems of the countries forming the group are so closely co-ordinated as to ensure that nationals of countries outside the group admitted into one of the countries of the group will normally be acceptable to the others. The Committee has not been able to find any new groups to which these conditions apply; They do not apply in the case of either of the groupings suggested by the Assembly.

3.2.3. Paragraph 2 (b)

" that , as an intermediate step towards the achievement of this purpose, groups of neighbouring countries, as for example those named above, should waive the passport requirement for nationals of Members of the groups, and that identity cards at present issued by the competent national administra-tive authorities of Member States for domestic purposes bearing a photograph (for example national identity cards, certificates of nationality valid as travel documents, electoral cards, driving licences, national health cards, social security cards, passes entitling to free railway travel, etc.) should be recognised by other Member States as documents providing a satisfactory means of identification. "

Comment

Some member countries already accept the kind of documents mentioned above as sufficient proof of identity for nationals of certain other countries. But by no means all member Governments (nor even all those Governments which have already given it a trial) consider it desirable to extend this proposal. Various objections are seen. First, the passport is the most satisfactory means of identification in general use. The Committee understands that the passport is not unduly expensive or at all difficult to obtain in any member country; the traveller who is unfortunate enough to get into trouble in a foreign country may well be glad to have a means of identifying himself quickly and beyond question. Secondly, relatively few people possess alternative documents of the kind mentioned, and the number who would be spared the trouble of obtaining a passport would thus in any case be small. Thirdly, the increase in the number of kinds of documents with which immigration officers would be obliged to deal would slow down their work and cause delay to all travellers.

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1. 1. At the time when the Assembly's Recommendation was adopted, the arrangements applied to Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. They have since been extended to Iceland.

The Committee does not therefore consider that any recommendation should be addressed to member Governments on this point.

3.3. SECTION C

3.3.1. Paragraph 3

" (a) that Members of the Council of Europe which are not Members of the Brussels Treaty Organisation should be invited to adhere to tho arrangement concerning collective passports for young persons which came into force on 1st April, 1952;

(b) that consideration be given to the possibility of extending the use of collective travel documents to persons over the age of 18 or 21, as the case may be, and that, so far as possible, there should be no limitation to the kind of visits for which collective travel documents are issued. "

Comment

The Committee approves in principle the extension to all members of the Council of Europe of the Brussels Treaty Organisation arrangement concerning collective passports. It has set up a Committee of Experts to elaborate the details of this extension and has given it authority to propose a revision of the terms of the arrangement at the same time. The Committee took note of the views of several Governments that the individual passport is, nevertheless, the most satisfactory means of identification and the best instrument for avoiding delays at the frontier.

3.4. SECTION D

3.4.1. Paragraph 4 (a)

" that all Member States of the Council of Europe should adopt regulations enabling all travellers, including their nationals, to import and export the following articles free of customs and other duties without special import and export permits, if they are part of the personal effects of the traveller and if they arc intended solely for his personal use :

articles of clothing, bedding, and other articles for personal use, such as watches, jewellery, toilet articles, etc. ;

other small belongings, such as binoculars, cameras, together with developed and undeveloped films and plates, portable musical instruments, gramophones (including a reasonable number of records) wireless receiving sots and portable typewriters ;

bicycles, camping equipment and sport articles (for example, sporting guns and other shooting equipment, fishing tackle, skis, tennis rackets, canoes and similar small crafts without engines, including collapsible boats);

perambulators and invalid chairs ;

articles of clothing for personal use acquired abroad which, having regard to their quantity and value and to the traveller's length of stay abroad, can be regarded as personal effects. "

Comment

The Committee has recommended member Governments to ensure that their regulations enable all visitors to import and re-export, and their nationals to export and re-import, free of customs and other duties, and without special import or export permits, any objects listed in sub-paragraphs (i) to (iv) of the Recommendation which are part of the personal effects of the traveller and are intended solely for his personal use.[2]

The Committee considers that the articles listed in sub-paragraph (v) fall within the purview of paragraph 4 (b), which is discussed below.

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2. 1. The representatives of Belgium, Greece, Iceland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands reserved the position of their Governments in respect of the application of these provisions.

3.4.2. Paragraph 4 (b)

" that persons travelling as tourists should be allowed to import into all Member States, including their countries of origin, free of customs and other duties and without import licence, apart from personal effects, articles purchased abroad of a total value of not less than the equivalent of 20 U. S. dollars (this amount to be raised as soon as circumstances permit to 50 dollars) calculated on the basis of retail prices of such goods in the country of purchase, on condition that they are carried on the traveller's person or in the luggage accompanying the traveller at the point of entry, provided that from their volume and composition it is clear that the goods so imported are not intended for sale but solely for personal use or consumption, and provided also that the import of these goods does not. contravene existing national regulations. "

Comment

In the view of the Committee a clear distinction must be drawn between foreign tourists visiting a member country and the nationals of a member country returning from a trip abroad.

So far as the former are concerned all member countries apply the OEEC decision of 30th April, 1954 (C (53) 320 final— a copy of which is appended) which provides for greater facilities than those recommended by the Assembly. Inter alia it allows duly-free entry to souvenirs imported in transit in tourists' luggage up to it value of 400 U. S. dollars in the case of nationals of non-European countries, and of 50 U. S. dollars in the case of nationals of European countries.

As regards nationals of a member country returning from abroad, the concessions made vary greatly and arc often of a discretionary rather than a statutory nature. The Committee considers thai, the Assembly has under-estimated the economic difficulties involved in raising these concessions to the general level of 50 U. S. dollars or even 20 U. S. dollars. The difficulties arc particularly acute in the case of small countries. The Administrative Council for Customs Regulations of the Benelux Customs Union, which was asked to consider the application of the proposal in the case of the three Benelux countries made this statement :

" restricte d frontiers, cheap, rapid and easy communication with neighbouring countries, virtually make of each citizen a frontier inhabitant. In such circumstances the entry of large quantities of duty-free " souvenirs " to a value in each case of 20 or even 50 dollars would soon make matters difficult for distillers, perfumers, hatters and other traders in such goods sold at appreciably lower prices in other countries. "

The Benelux countries, obviously, represent an extreme case, and the Committee does not protend that all member countries would be up against quite such acute difficulties. Nevertheless, there would be difficulties in all cases, and the daily increase in the volume of tourist travel is tending to augment rather than dissipate them. The example of the Scandinavian countries, referred to by the Assembly's Committee on Legal and Administrative Questions in its report (paragraph 12 of Doc. 210) is at the other end of the scale and gives too rosy an impression. Although certain Governments were prepared to envisage concessions in this field it was felt that so long as European economic integration has not advanced a good deal further than at present, very real obstacles to acceptance, as a general rule, of the Assembly's proposed level of concessions for nationals of member countries, will remain.

3.4.3. Paragraph 4 (c)

" that the following quantities should become minimum standards in all Member States :

200 cigarettes or 250 grammes of tobacco, or 25 cigars or lesser quantities of each in relative proportions;

2 litre s of wines and spirits, of which not more than one litre may be spirits ;

1/2 litre (one pint) of toilet water, of which not more than one-eighth of a litre (a quarter of a pint) may be perfumed spirits. "

Comment

Similar considerations apply as in the case of paragraph 4 (b), the difficulties in the way of granting such concessions being greater by reason of the high rates of duty applicable to these goods.

So far as foreigners are concerned, member Governments already grant, in accordance with the OEEC decision mentioned above, concessions which are almost as generous as those suggested. So far as their own nationals are concerned member Governments apply widely differing standards according to local circumstances. The Committee does not consider agreement on minimum concessions for nationals of member countries possible in this field.

3.4.4. Paragraph 4 (d)

" that the present system of customs control should be modified and replaced by a system of occasional checks, if possible at the point of entry. "

Comment

Several member countries have pointed out that the present system of control operated by most national authorities is a form of occasional check. Although, generally speaking, all travellers are asked whether they have anything to declare, only a small minority of them are subjected to actual inspection of their baggage at the point of entry; and an even smaller number at the point of exit. The Committee does not feel able to recommend to member countries any immediate change in the system of customs control exercised by national administrations, ft is noted, in this connection, that the Assembly's Committee on Legal and Administrative Questions itself, in paragraph 86 of its report, made paragraph 4 (d) conditional on adoption of paragraph 4 (a), (b) and (c). fn the event the Committee of Ministers has not adopted the latter.

3.5. SECTION E

3.5.1. Paragraph 5 (a)

" that all Member States of the Council of Europe should make the most generous possible allocation of currency for travel between the member countries of the Council of Europe. "

Comment

The Committee has made a recommendation in this sense to member Governments.

The representative of Greece made a reservation with regard to this recommendation.

3.5.2. Paragraph 5 (b)

" that they should authorise the import and export by all travellers of banknotes up to the value of at least 10 pounds sterling in their own currency. "

Comment

Travellers are able, as things are at present, to import into all member countries banknotes up to this value in their own currency. So far as export is concerned, it is pointed out that the purpose for which most Governments authorise export is to ensure that their nationals are not embarrassed through lack of ready cash on their return. Several member countries consider that this condition is met by a sum of less than £10 (none allow less than £5). They feel that to raise the sum above this point would be an invitation to abuse. Travellers would simply use the concession as a means of securing more than their official entitlement of foreign currency. Granted that member countries have agreed that this should be the " most generous possible " (see comment on paragraph 5 (a) above) they can scarcely agree to its immediate further increase. Moreover, to do so would be to give an unfair advantage to persons living near a frontier.

3.5.3. Paragraph 5 (c)

" that the currency control, insofar as it is considered necessary by Member States, should be exercised by the simplest means and least inconvenient to travellers, for example through their banks. "

Comment

It is clear from paragraph 90 of the report of the Committee on Legal and Administrative Questions that this paragraph is really consequential on paragraphs 4 (a) and (b); and that its object was to ensure that the abolition of the passport requirement in any particular case should not prevent the traveller receiving his full

currency allowance. The Committee envisaged that each country should work out its own system to ensure this. The Committee of Ministers has therefore simply drawn this recommendation to the attention of member Governments.

3.5.4. Paragraph 5 (d)

" that regular currency control at frontiers should be discontinued and replaced by occasional checks similar to those suggested in the case of customs control. "

Comment

The Committee considers that the same considerations apply as in regard to paragraph 4 (d) and has reached the same conclusions.

3.6. SECTION F

3.6.1. Paragraph 6 (a)

" that steps should be taken to ensure that those Members of the Council of Europe which did not take part in the 1947 Conference (of experts on passports and frontier formalities) are, nevertheless, invited to comply with its recommendations. "

Comment

The Committee has invited the countries concerned to comply with these recommendations.

3.6.2. Paragraph 6 (b)

" that the Members of the Council of Europe who have signed but not ratified the 1952 Convention (to facilitate the crossing of frontiers for passengers and baggage carried by rail) should deposit their instruments of ratification as soon as possible and that those who have not signed this Convention but are able to do so should be invited to accede to it forthwith. "

Comment

The Convention has already been ratified by Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Norway.

Greece, Italy and Sweden are expected to complete the ratification procedure shortly.

The general principles laid down in the Convention have invariably been applied in the German Federal Republic.

The Governments of Ireland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland do not intend to subscribe to the Convention, as they consider it does not apply to them.

4. IV - Detailed Opinion of the Committee of Ministers on Recommendation 59 relating to the simplification of frontier formalities for private motor vehicles, adopted by the Consultative Assembly on 24th May, 1954

Part of the information contained in the comments below has already been communicated to the Consultative Assembly — in the Supplementary Report to the Fifth Report of the Committee of Ministers (paras. 53 to 57) in September, 1954. It has, nevertheless, been reproduced here in order to provide a complete picture of the problem.

(N. B. — For the sake of convenience, the passages of Recommendation 59 to which the opinion of the Committee of Ministers refers are quoted at the head of each paragraph.)

4.1. SECTION A

4.1.1. Paragraph 1

" that those Members of the Coxmcil of Europe which have signed but not ratified the Convention on Road Traffic signed at Geneva on 19th September, 1949, namely Denmark, Norway and the United Kingdom, should deposit their instruments of ratification without further delay, and that other Member States which are not at present bound by that Convention, namely Iceland, Ireland, the German Federal Republic and Turkey, should accede to it as soon as possible. "

Comment

The Geneva Convention on Road Traffic of 1949 will shortly he ratified by Norway; it will also be ratified by Denmark as soon as various international arrangements have been made, and by the United Kingdom, subject to parliamentary approval for which Her Majesty's Government will shortly be asking.

With regard to accession to this Convention by the countries mentioned in Section À, para. 1, the situation is as follows : —The Government of the German Federal Republic has tabled a bill to this end, and Ireland will accede to the Convention as soon as certain implementing legislation has been enacted.

4.1.2. Paragraph 2

" that those Member States which have not yet done so should forthwith recognise without reservation the validity of driving licences issued by other Member States to persons principally resident in the territories of these latter States ".

Comment

This Recommendation has already been put into effect by several Members of the Council, namely Belgium, France, the German Federal Republic, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the Saar. The Committee of Ministers is ready to send a recommendation on the lines desired by the Assembly to the Governments of Member States. It is unable however to accept the phrase " without reservation " contained in the text proposed by the Assembly, since the United Kingdom has stated that it can only recognise the validity of driving licences issued by other Member States subject to certain conditions, of which the most important is reciprocity.

The Irish legislation referred to in the comment on paragraph 1 of Section A will also give effect to this recommendation, subject to a stipulation similar to that of the United Kingdom.

4.2. SECTION B

" Recommend s to the Committee of Ministers that those Members of the Council of Europe which have signed but not yet ratified the Agreement of 16th June, 1949, providing, inter alia, for the provisional applica-' tion of the draft International Customs Convention on Touring, namely Belgium and Luxembourg, should deposit their instruments of ratification, and that other Member States which are not at present bound by the agreement, namely Iceland, Ireland, Greece and Turkey, should accede to it as soon as possible ".

Comment

The Geneva Agreement of 16th June, 1949, was signed by Belgium on behalf of the Belgo-Luxembourg Economic Union. The Belgian Government is now considering the adoption of technical measures to facilitate the implementation of this Agreement, most of whose provisions are already in force in this country. The Agreement will shortly be ratified by the Belgian and Luxembourg Parliaments.

The Irish Government would be prepared in principle to amend its existing regulations to enable it to accede to the Geneva Agreement of 16th June, 1949. It points out, however, that as two of the world-wide Conventions contemplated in the second paragraph of the preamble to this Agreement (dealing with customs facilities for touring and the temporary importation of private road motor vehicles) were already concluded on 4th June, 1954, at the United Nations Customs Conference held in New York, there would be little advantage in acceding to the former Agreement. It proposes to consider the question further and expresses a preference for the Conventions concluded under the auspices of the United Nations.

The Assembly could usefully study the question raised by the Irish Government and give its opinion thereon.

4.3. SECTION C

4.3.1. Paragraphs 1 to 4

7. " that Member States of the Council of Europe should dispense with their present requirement of a financial guarantee in the case of the temporary importation of private motor vehicles by tourists principally resident in other member countries;

8. that they should adopt as the ultimate objective of the Members of the Council of Europe, to be achieved as soon as possible, the complete abolition of customs documents in the case of the temporary importation of private motor vehicles by tourists from other Member States, and that formalities at frontiers should eventually be limited to an occasional check of the motor vehicle's national registration papers and of the driver's domestic driving licence, to be carried out as far as possible only at the point of entry unto a Member State;

9. that, as an intermediate step towards the achievement of this purpose, Member States which feel unable at present to abolish completely the customs documents mentioned in the preceding paragraph should introduce, for the use of visiting motorists principally resident in other Member States, a European temporary importation paper similar to the Scandinavian temporary importation paper, that is to say not requiring a financial guarantee, issued free of charge through customs offices and motoring organisations and at frontier posts, valid for one or for several journeys and for at least three months, renewable up to one year (see description of the Scandinavian temporary importation paper in paragraph 53-59 of the Report of the Committee on Legal and Administrative Questions);

10. that, after the introduction of the European temporary importation paper, any check carried out on return to a motorist's country of principal residence in respect of a temporarily exported motor vehicle, should be based solely on the national registration papers of the motor vehicle. "

Comment

In para. 71 of its Report of 20th May, 1954 (Doc. 240) the Assembly's Committee on Legal and Administrative Questions recognised the revolutionary nature of this proposal. Several Member States consider that its general implementation woidd be incompatible with the fundamental principles of their fiscal system and likely to occasion seriotis fraud, The Committee on Legal and Administrative Questions pointed out that its operation in Scandinavian countries had not, in fact, had this result; but it must be borne in mind that these countries form a particularly homogeneous group fiscally, economically and geographically. The Committee of Ministers hopes that other groups of countries may be able to implement the Assembly's proposal on a regional basis. The Benelux countries are already considering this possibility and the German Federal Government has declared its particular interest. The Committee does not, however, feel able to recommend to Member Governments that the Assembly's proposal should be generally accepted by all of them.

4.3.2. Paragraph 5

" that a conference to discuss the above-mentioned measures be convened as soon as possible within the framework of the Council of. Europe and that, in addition to the Members of the Council of Europe and a delegation from the Consultative Assembly, the following countries should be invited to participate in it, subject to their having previously indicated that they are in sympathy with these recommendations : Austria, Finland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and Yugoslavia ".

Comment

The reply given by the Committee of Ministers to the proposal to convene a conference within the framework of the Council of Europe is implicit in the comments on C, 1-4. These show that the chances of achieving any radical simplification of the present regulations governing the import of motor vehicles, on a fifteen-Power basis are so slight that it would be pointless to call a meeting of experts. As already stated, in reference to earlier paragraphs, the Committee of Ministers is of opinion that some real progress is, nevertheless, possible, either on a regional basis or by means of bilateral agreements. It is permissible to hope that, by these means, a situation may be created in which the question could be brought up again, with greater hope of success, within the wider European framework represented by the Council of Europe.

4.4. SECTION D

4.4.1. Paragraph 1

" that Iceland, which is one of the countries where insurance against third-party risks is compulsory, should accept the international motor insurance card (green card), and that the Governments of Greece and Turkey should take appropriate steps to ensure that motor insurance companies can issue international motor insurance cards to policy-holders for foreign travel. "

Comment

The Icelandic Government has under consideration the necessary measures which would enable it to accept the international motor insurance card.

4.4.2. Paragraph 2

" that Member States where insurance against third-party risks is not at present compulsory should give consideration to the possibility of making such insurance compulsory. "

Comment

The Committee of Ministers approves the introduction of compulsory insurance against third-party risks in all Member States where it is not yet in force. It has made a recommendation to the countries concerned accordingly.