



Resolution 244 (1963)¹

Reply to the 9th 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 9th annual report and is grateful to the Chairman of the Conference for presenting the report in person and attending the debate.
2. The Assembly appreciates the careful consideration given by the Conference to its suggestions in European transport matters.
3. The Assembly is gratified to learn that the Council of Ministers of Transport has stated its interest in the preparation of long-term forecasts of both passenger and goods traffic demand - indispensable for planning and co-ordinating investments in the various branches of transport. The Assembly considers that it would be valuable if future reports included more detailed and comparable statistics illustrating the development of European inland transport.
4. The Assembly notes with interest that the Conference is engaged in working out principles for a general transport policy, as suggested by the Assembly in previous Resolutions. It thinks that an effort should be made by every country to establish a coherent long-term transport policy within the framework of agreed principles for a general transport policy ; it attaches the greatest importance to this matter and requests the ECMT to inform it in detail of progress made or of any difficulties encountered. Railways

Railways

6. The Assembly welcomes the development made in electrifying and "dieseling" railways systems and, while regretting the slow progress in the standardisation of rolling-stock, is gratified to learn that steps are being taken in various countries for the doubling of the track and for the modernisation of rolling-stock and of traffic signalling. It still feels anxiety, however, with regard to the great number of railway accidents, and hopes that statistics on those accidents will appear in the next ECMT report.

7. The Assembly welcomes the statement in the report referring to some of the reasons for the bad financial situation of European railways and fully shares the concern of the Conference over the constant increase in operating expenses. The Assembly hopes that Governments will pursue their examination of this situation and seek effective remedies. To this end, in the opinion of the Assembly, the railways should not only take action to close uneconomic lines but should make a greater effort principally to increase general freight and passenger traffic, to improve long-distance goods traffic services and services between the principal industrial centres. It is of great importance, in this connection, to re-examine thoroughly the basis of railroad competition and to define to what extent railways should take part in road transport as a commercial activity. However, the Assembly remains convinced that the normalisation of the accounts of the railways administration, i.e. the suppression, or else assumption by States, of the abnormal liabilities of the railways, is a prerequisite for restoring their finances to a sound basis. It welcomes the fact that a few countries have taken steps toward a normalisation of accounts, but regrets that their number is still small.

1. Assembly debate on 8th May 1963 (5th Sitting) (see [Docs. 1568](#), Docs. 1568, 9th Report of ECMT, and [Doc. 1589](#), draft Resolution presented by the Economic Committee). Text adopted by the Assembly on 8th May 1963 (5th Sitting).



8. The Assembly welcomes the 6th annual report of the Eurofima Company and expresses its satisfaction at the progress made in financing the purchase of rolling-stock orders through the Company, and is gratified to learn that Eurofima was able to develop its activities by obtaining bank loans in Germany and, for the first time, in the United States. It also notes with satisfaction that, in conformity with its previous suggestions, the Federal Republic of Germany has joined the countries in which insurance companies have been authorised to include Eurofima's bonds in their compulsory reserve and it hopes that other countries will follow this example.

Roads

9. The Assembly, noting that the average annual growth of the number of motor vehicles in the ECMT countries has been in the last ten years of almost 13 per cent, is once again concerned to see that the European road system has not been developed at a rate sufficient to keep pace with this rise in traffic, and that, failing a sharp increase in almost all European countries in funds available for highway development, most serious consequences could result. While complimenting the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and Italy for the development of an adequate motorway network, the Assembly hopes that the infrastructure of the Swiss highway system will be improved so that traffic may run more smoothly along the important artery of international tourism which links the North of Europe with the South.

10. The Assembly welcomes the information given in the report on the methods used by member countries of the ECMT for financing their road development, and is gratified to learn that a recourse to international financing may be contemplated for the motorway connecting the German and Italian motorway network across Austria, via the Brenner Pass.

11. The Assembly welcomes the completion of the drilling of the Mont Blanc and Great Saint Bernard tunnels and hopes that the other projects for tunnels, especially at Alpine crossings, will be implemented as soon as possible. Further, it welcomes the information in the report on the plans for a road and rail link between Denmark and Sweden across the Oresund, and looks forward to receiving further information on this subject.

12. The Assembly notes that new standards for maximum permissible weights and dimensions of road vehicles appear to have been prepared by the Commission of the European Economic Community. Recalling that the standards set in The Hague ECMT Agreement of 5th October 1960 had been accepted by thirteen ECMT member countries, among which there were four member countries of the EEC, the Assembly urges the <ENCOURS>Ministers of Transport to abide by the principles previously adopted, which constitutes a larger European framework. It hopes that this question will be considered and carefully discussed in the Restricted Group No. 2, which prepares information for communication to the ECMT on transport problems dealt with in the EEC.

Road Safety

13. The Assembly is pleased to note the action of the ECMT on road safety problems. It is particularly grateful for the information supplied by the Chairman of the Conference concerning the new standard provisions designed for incorporation in national highway codes which were approved by the Ministers in early April this year, and it hopes that the thirteen European countries pursuing this work together will rapidly put the ECMT standard provisions into application in their national legislations. The Assembly hopes to be informed in the next report of the Conference on the action taken in this respect and with regard to the other suggestions made in its [Recommendation 331 \(1962\)](#). It compliments the ECMT on the initiative it has taken to convene a meeting on road safety instruction in schools in liaison with the Council of Europe, as recommended by the Assembly. It also welcomes the Resolution adopted by the Council of Ministers of Transport in May 1962 concerning the use of safety belts and crash helmets by passengers in road vehicles.

Inland Waterways

14. The Assembly is very concerned over the financial situation of the inland waterway transport undertakings - a situation which has been principally brought about by the keen competition from other heavily subsidised means of transport, such as railways and, in some places, pipe-lines. It notes, moreover, that the traffic was unfavourably affected during the end of 1962 by a period of low water on the major rivers and by the freezing of the waterways during the exceptionally cold winter in Europe. Being concerned about the future of inland waterways transport, the Assembly requests the ECMT carefully to investigate the future prospects of this sector of transport, in conjunction with the elaboration of the principles for a general transport policy and the co-ordination of different means of transport.

Pipe-lines

15. The Assembly notes with pleasure the progress made in developing the European pipe-line network. It regrets, however, that only three European countries have special legislative and statutory provisions concerning pipe-lines. The Assembly resolves to urge member Governments, by means of action in national parliaments, to adopt as soon as possible the principles which shall direct their pipe-line policy, particularly as regards the regulation of the laying of pipe-lines and administrative provisions on the subject of security.