



Resolution 977 (1992)¹

European transport problems

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly has taken note of the 36th and 37th annual reports of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) ([Docs. 6295](#) and [6523](#), covering 1989 and 1990 respectively), the report by its Committee on Economic Affairs and Development ([Doc. 6539](#)) and the opinion presented by its Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities ([Doc. 6551](#)).
2. The completion of the European Community's internal market, the recently concluded agreement on a European Economic Area among Community and EFTA countries, and the political reform process in Central and Eastern Europe will together contribute to a rapid increase in European trade and, hence, to additional strains on the continent's already saturated transport systems, especially its roads.
3. Investments in the transport sector have not in recent years kept up with the explosive increase in traffic volume, especially on roads, and the transport infrastructure of Central and Eastern Europe requires urgent improvements if economic progress is to be ensured.
4. The environmental problems caused by transport, in particular road vehicles, pose increasingly strict limits on continued expansion and call for the introduction of more environmentally-friendly lorries and cars, a reorientation from road traffic to rail or combined (road/rail) transport, greater consideration of the congestion and pollution caused by air traffic, and reduction of the distance between producers and consumers in different ways (in particular through development of systems of logistics and physical distribution, or decentralisation of production).
5. The expansion of transport by land will increasingly be held back by the scarcity of land which can be made available for rail and particularly for road infrastructure, on account of European society's other needs for space and of the limited surface areas and amounts of land, which cannot be increased.
6. The Assembly welcomes the conclusion in October 1991, between the European Community, on the one hand, and Austria and Switzerland, on the other, of an agreement on Alpine transit, and considers that it is an important step towards realising the goals mentioned in paragraph 4 above, especially in its measures to protect the environment and to favour rail and combined transport.
7. The Assembly also welcomes the opening, expected in 1992, of the Rhine-Main-Danube inland waterway, which will facilitate East-West trade and which, if enlarged to connect Europe's remaining waterways, could considerably relieve pressure on roads and rail.
8. In conclusion, the Assembly calls on the member states of the ECMT and of the Council of Europe :
 - 8.1. to pursue vigorously the decisions taken or planned by the Ministerial Council of the ECMT in order to improve Europe's transport structure - and in particular its intention to intensify co-ordination of activities among member states and with other European countries ;

1. Assembly debate on 6 February 1992 (25th Sitting) (see [Doc. 6539](#), report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, Rapporteur : Mr Miville); and [Doc. 6551](#), opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, Rapporteur : Mr Dimmer). Text adopted by the Assembly on 6 February 1992 (25th Sitting).



- 8.2. to realise as rapidly as possible the objectives set out in the Prague Declaration, adopted at the European Community's Pan-European Transport Conference held in that city in October 1991, and in particular those of a concerted European transport policy and increased assistance to Central and Eastern Europe for a modernisation of its transport infrastructure ;
- 8.3. more particularly, to continue to expand relations between ECMT members and countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and to enhance assistance to them for building up their transport systems and in the spheres of information technology and telecommunications ;
- 8.4. to achieve a tangible improvement of Europe's transport infrastructure through an internationally co-ordinated investment programme and, in so doing, to give priority to railways over roads ;
- 8.5. to pay special attention to the potential contribution by "piggy-back" transport (lorries on trains) and "combined" (rail/road and possibly maritime) transport - the latter presupposing, inter alia, an international harmonisation of container standards ;
- 8.6. to support the ECMT in its effort to increase road safety ;
- 8.7. to reduce the waste of resources caused by so-called "empty returns" by lorries, in particular by establishing internationally connected computerised information systems and by increasing the possibility for lorries to take on freight abroad (cabotage) ;
- 8.8. to ensure that a situation does not arise in which increased competition in the road transport sector leads to a relaxation in safety standards (such as unsafe vehicles or vehicles carrying dangerous goods, or excessive working hours of drivers) and instead to pursue their efforts to conclude a revised, ECMT-wide European agreement concerning the work of crews engaged in international road transport ;
- 8.9. to promote a high-speed train network as an alternative to road transport, provided that environmental standards are met ;
- 8.10. to encourage, in the spirit of the Assembly's [Resolution 964 \(1991\)](#) on European air transport policies, closer co-operation between the ECMT and the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC), since Europe's overall transport problems, including related environmental consequences, can only be satisfactorily resolved if approached in an overall manner ;
- 8.11. to avoid having any division of Europe arise in the transport sector as a result of the European Community's plan to complete its internal market by 1993, and for this purpose to strengthen the role of the ECMT ;
- 8.12. to place the creation of transport infrastructure in the context of comprehensive planning for Europe as a whole, and to take the European regional planning blueprint as a spatial reference, in the knowledge that care must be taken to use land sparingly and to achieve balanced and lasting development of all the regions of Europe, and, in general, to reconcile any future increase in European transport with the protection of the environment, in itself a condition for human survival.