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Opinion of the Consultative Assembly on the report of the European Inland Transport Conference

Report[1]
Committee on Economic Affairs and Development
Rapporteur: Mr Paulus J. KAPTEIJN, Netherlands, Socialist Group

1. 1953 - 5th Session - Third part

A. Draft Resolution

1. The Assembly observes that the meeting, at regular intervals, of the Ministers of Transport is in itself an appreciable step towards the rational organisation of European transport, but it does not consider that the suggestions in the Report are adequate to secure the full co-ordination of effort that is needed in the transport field.

2. The Report of the Conference itself brings out clearly both the weight and complexity of the major transport problems (in particular, the international co-ordination of investments, the international financing of investments, the international standardisation of means of transport). The Assembly is of opinion that a permanent organisation, sufficiently articulated to study and to resolve these problems is needed..

3. It is true that provision is made in the Report for hearing the views of the various existing specialised bodies—and, particularly, of large non-governmental organisations which represent the three methods of transport. This was one of the fundamental ideas contained in Recommendation 30 of the Assembly, and the rules of procedure of the Conference should facilitate to the utmost working relations. The full co-operation of those organisations which represent the various methods of transport themselves is a sine qua non if any progress is to be made towards a satisfactory organisation of European transport.

4. The task of collating and comparing the opinions of these international organisations, let alone the need to ensure essential continuity in the work of the Conference, is, however, too heavy for it to be added to those tasks already undertaken in the various countries by the Ministers of Transport and the senior officials who deputise for them. The Assembly thus considers that the need will quickly be felt for the establishment of a Steering Committee made up of a limited number of persons chosen, not on a national basis, but purely for their competence, as recommended by certain delegations. The existence of such a Committee would, in view of its composition, ensure that all points of view were heard and considered before the submission of each project to the Ministers. The conclusions of this Committee should be published.

5. While noting with satisfaction that regular meetings among responsible representatives of transport in the various European countries are thus being organised at an international level, the Assembly, nevertheless, wishes to call attention to the fact that the field of transport cannot be taken into consideration by itself, but only within the framework of the European economy which it must serve. From this point of view, the Assembly is happy to note that the Report provides for the continual and reciprocal exchange of views between the Ministers for Transport and the Council of O. E. E. C, which is the competent body in matters of general economic interest. It fully shares the view expressed by the Council of 0. E. E. C. that, when the links between these two bodies are being forged, full account should be taken of the tasks assigned to 0. E. E. C. under the European Economic Co-operation Convention.

6. At the political level, the Assembly wishes to draw attention to Resolution (53) 13 adopted on 7th May, 1953, by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe :

7. " The Committee of Ministers,

8. 1. Considering that a common basis is desirable for all international agreements which aim at ensuring closer unity between the countries of Europe;

9. 2. Taking into account the opinion of the Consultative Assembly that the Council of Europe should constitute the general framework of European policy,

10. 3. Recommends to the Governments of Member States that any future proposals towards the creation of new organisations of a European character should at the earliest possible moment be submitted to the Council of Europe for discussion, and that these should provide for the establishment of links between such organisations and the Council. "

11. It is happy to note that, in accordance with the terms of this Resolution, provision is made under Chapter VI, paragraph 4 of the Report, for the possibility of reaching a decision, by means of an ad hoc agreement, on the relations to be established between the two organisations.

12. This agreement should allow for the submission of annual reports by the Conference to the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe and for the establishment of continuous co-operation between the Conference and the appropriate Committees of the Consultative Assembly, on the lines of that which has gradually been established with 0. E. E. C. and the E. C. S. C.

B. Draft Order

The Assembly,

Having received the Report of the Preparatory Conference on European Inland Transport from the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe;

In view of the need to communicate to the Conference of Transport Ministers in time for their meeting in Brussels in October, 1953, the Resolution which it has adopted as well as the Report of its Committee on Economic Questions (Doc. 196),

Instructs its Bureau :

a. To transmit this Resolution as soon as possible;

b. To inform the Conference of European Transport Ministers that a delegation from the Assembly is prepared to present its comments on this Resolution orally to this Conference, together with its views on the relations to be established between the Conference and the Council of Europe, as the general framework of European policy.

C. Explanatory Memorandum

1.

The Consultative Assembly has before it the Report of the European Inland Transport Conference and the Recommendation adopted by the Council of O. E. E. C. Its Committee on Economic Questions is happy to have been given the opportunity of expressing its opinion on this project before any decision is taken at the Ministerial Conference.

Its Committee has examined the report and at the same time obtained the views of M. Gallienne, President of the International Road Federation; M. Tuja, Secretary-General of the International Union of Railways; and M. Brousse, President of the International Union of Inland Waterways.

It wishes to express its thanks for the contribution made by these gentlemen, who accepted its invitation to appear before its members and present their point of view.

After having considered the matter your Committee unanimously proposed that the following draft Resolution be adopted :