

Report on the establishment of a European Transport Council (24 September 1952)

Caption: Report and draft Recommendation on the establishment of a European Internal Transport Council put forward on 24 September 1952 by Maurice Lemaire, former Head of the French State Railways (SNCF), to the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe.

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Fourth Ordinary Session

24th September, 1952

Co-Ordination of European Transport

Report on the establishment of a European Transport Council,

presented, on behalf of the Committee on Economic Questions, by M. LEMAIRE

Explanatory Memorandum

In the Report which he presented on behalf of the Committee on Economic Questions on 26th November, 1951, M. van de Kieft explained the reasons which had led the Council of Europe to consider the establishment of an effective organisation for the co-ordination of internal transport by rail, road and waterway.

After re-considering the initial draft presented by M. Bonnefous, the Committee on Economic Questions agreed to recommend the establishment of a European Transport Office, and defined the latter's competence, task, duties and structure.

The Committee has not changed its attitude. It wishes, however, to take into account political and economic developments in Europe within the past year. The European Coal and Steel Community has been constituted, and within the next few days the machinery provided for in its Treaty in respect of transport will go into operation (Article 70 of the Treaty, and Paragraph 10 of Chapter I of the Transitional Provisions). A specialised Committee, appointed for the purpose, is to meet at the beginning of October, 1952, to handle this assignment, which is thus shown to be of the greatest importance for the inauguration of the common market.

While it is gratified to note that this question is recognised to be of the greatest importance, the Committee on Economic Questions feels constrained to point out that the framework in which the Committee in question will pursue its studies will inevitably be that provided by the six member countries, whereas it would have been better if the transport problem had been considered as a whole.

The Committee further wishes to call the attention of the Assembly to the serious difficulties which might arise if, in the sphere of transport rates, for instance, a method were applied which led to a splitting-up of the problem of internal transport in terms of various economic sectors and within artificial geographical limits.

Bearing in mind the prominent place occupied by coal and steel transport rates in the general system of rail and waterway transport, it is hard to imagine how they could be altered without seriously upsetting the whole system of tariffs.

The problem of transport must be considered as a whole; and the requirements of the European economy, together with the problems resulting from such measures of integration as may be contemplated, make it clear that steps should be taken without delay to set up a general organisation suitably adapted to the European situation.

This is the solution proposed by the Committee on Economic Questions.

While endorsing the aims already set forth in M. van de Kieft's Report, the Committee suggests the establishment of a European Council for Internal Transport, to be set up with due regard to future improvements in the operation of existing specialised organisations, and designed to carry out only such tasks as appear to be of vital importance.

The machinery described in the following Recommendation would present, among other advantages, that of

lending itself to direct integration, in due course, into a European organisation of a more all-embracing character.

Draft Recommendation

The Assembly,

Having regard to the Recommendation adopted on 26th August, 1950, on the co-ordination of European communications;

Having regard to Article 70 of the Treaty instituting the European Coal and Steel Community and Paragraph 10 of Chapter I of the Transitional Provisions;

Recommends to the Committee of Ministers, the establishment of a European Council for Internal Transport in accordance with the following principles:

The European Organisation for Internal Transport shall take the form of a two-tier structure.

1. The basic structure shall be composed of the major organisations representing the various modes of transport: rail, inland waterways, and road, such as:

The International Union of Railways,
The International Union of River Navigation,
The International Road Federation, and,
The International Road Transport Union.

The basic organs should aim to secure the necessary degree of activity and efficiency in each branch as rapidly as possible, for the following purposes:

(a) Studying and achieving internal co-operation and co-ordination in the following fields:

- operation of transport services;
- joint utilisation of installations;
- loans, exchanges and pooling of equipment;
- standardisation of equipment;
- equipment and utilisation of the most economical routes in order to reduce charges;
- transport rules.

(b) Drawing up plans for the replacement of equipment and for large-scale investments commensurate with the needs of the European economy.

2. A European Council for Internal Transport shall be established, which, having as its basis the work of the abovementioned specialised organisations and able to avail itself of the studies carried out by such existing inter-governmental organisations as the Inland Transport Committees of the Economic Commission for Europe and O.E.E.C., shall:

(a) formulate recommendations for the requisite co-ordination of the three modes of transport;

(b) establish an order of priority for investments;

(c) formulate recommendations for maintaining the financial equilibrium of the three modes of transport and financing the development schemes of the European transport services.

Countries not Members of the Council of Europe may be permitted to take part in the activities of the European Transport Council with the approval of the Council of Europe.

The European Council for Internal Transport shall be composed of members appointed by:

- the Governments;
- the three major organisations representing the three modes of transport;
- the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe;
- the High Authority of the Coal and Steel Community;
- the International Chamber of Commerce;
- the Trade Unions.

The Council shall meet at regular intervals and have a permanent technical secretariat which shall, for administrative purposes, be incorporated into the Secretariat-General of the Council of Europe.

The Council shall forward to the Council of Europe an annual Report on its activities. This Report shall be submitted to the Consultative Assembly at each Ordinary Session.