

2nd European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning (CEMAT) (La Grande Motte, France: 25-27 September 1973) on "Objectives of a European regional planning policy"

Resolution No. 1 on Regional planning policies and communications policies

The ministers,

1. Having acknowledged at their 1st Conference (Bonn, 1970) the importance of a fast and well-balanced transport and communications network to the harmonious development of Europe (Final Resolution, paragraphs 39-41);
2. Having at their 2nd Conference considered the report on Regional planning policies and communications policies, and other documents prepared by the Committee of Senior Officials and its specialised working party;
3. Recognising that regional planning presents many complex problems which fall within the responsibility of ministers for transport in member countries and of various international bodies, in particular the European Conference of Ministers of Transport, and recognising that their recommendations should be considered in the context of the need to ensure that the regional planning aspects of transport problems should be taken into account by the responsible transport authorities;
4. Again emphasising the need for a transport policy which takes into account the overall regional planning context and which is designed to conserve the natural environment and improve the quality of life;

Adopt the following recommendations:

5. Having regard to the reciprocal relationship between transport and regional planning, general guidelines for European transport infrastructure should be established for the purposes of economic development and regional planning policy, with special reference to the importance of providing transport infrastructure for the economic development of backward regions.

I. Surface transport

6. The important part played by rail networks as a whole underlines the need for adapting these networks to economic developments in the various regions of Europe. Restrictions on services, or closure of secondary lines, should not be decided solely according to criteria of profitability but also by taking into consideration infrastructure and transport services capable of replacing them as well as foreseeable consequences of such measures on the economic activity of the regions concerned; railway lines may in reality help maintain or create decentralised activities and thus stabilise the population of these regions.

7. Progress made in developing convoy propelling techniques supports the plan for the broad extension of certain European waterways, provided that investments are justified from the viewpoint of saving transport costs. These developments should be co-ordinated in recognition of the effects which they can have on the siting of activities and on the structure of other transport networks at European level.

8. The development of seaports, whether principal or secondary, underlines the need to make a special effort to improve roads, railways and in certain countries waterways serving the respective hinterlands.

9. Europe's petroleum and gas supplies, originating in the main from outside Europe, call for the creation of a coherent European network of oil and gas pipelines. Such a network could help lessen the strain on other modes of transport and promote the maintenance or creation of industries in regions far from the coast.

10. Public passenger transport should be given preferential treatment in large conurbations and cities in order to provide an acceptable alternative and necessary supplement to private transport. To this end the better part of existing public transport networks should be maintained with a view to protecting town centres; where necessary there should be additional urban rapid transit systems. In order to reduce congestion caused by private vehicles, the introduction of these public transport systems should be co-ordinated with the development of residential space and places of employment.

11. Adaptation of road infrastructures to the growing traffic volume demands that highways should be graded according to their special functions. The basic network, which consists of high-capacity roads (motorways or expressways), promoting inter-regional and international communication, must be planned as part of the existing and envisaged axes of development. Generally speaking, a coherent transport network must be planned not only in transport economy terms but also in the light of regional planning considerations and social factors and criteria. Especially in the case of regions which lag or are liable to lag behind general economic development, the motorway network must contribute to the promotion of economic activity and consolidate the effects of other more specific measures.

12. Since the chief function of motorways is to form high-speed links between the main European economic and urban centres, increased effort must be made to remove the most serious disparities existing today between national motorway systems, and to develop their frontier links more rapidly; special attention must be paid to the development of trans-Alpine and trans-Pyrenean communications as part of a concerted European programme.

13. Some European countries, furthermore, concerned with problems of congestion in the most densely populated areas, are currently examining the possibilities offered by new technological methods of rapid transit systems, with a view to improving, in particular, passenger transport and reducing any adverse effect on the environment. It should be borne in mind, however, that by reason of their high-speed performance, these new modes of transport only make sense if developed on a European scale. In planning the basic layout of any such transport system, prior consideration must be given to the positive and negative effect on the areas both affected and not affected by it.

II. Sea transport

14. Expansion of trade between Europe and other continents on the one hand, and the natural tendency towards concentration of industries on the other, lead to an increased role for seaports in the economic development of the regions of Europe. Owing to the greater specialisation of seaports and the development of certain coastal regions currently of only marginal importance economically, these conditions underline the need for harmonisation of ports policies pursued by the countries of Europe. Such an orientation might imply a long-term redistribution of traffic flows in inland Europe.

15. For the same reason it would for example be opportune to strengthen economic ties and shipping towards and within the Mediterranean basin as a whole, thus facilitating links with developing countries on the southern and eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean.

16. Owing to the growing tendency of European industry to obtain its energy and raw materials from outside Europe, and the increasingly heavy tonnage of ships thereby needed for transport, there is a concentration of specialised harbour amenities in a small number of port areas possessing the requisite technical facilities.

17. Certain of these locations could be designated as industrial zones for heavy industries. Such industrial port zones should be reserved essentially for industries demanding proximity to ports. Industries which are less dependent on port amenities should preferably be set up in the hinterland.

18. The planning of industrial port areas and industries selected should be developed with the utmost concern for reducing pollution and for environmental protection, and for working and living conditions in these areas.

19. Besides the large port complexes and industrial ports, other ports should be developed by being made the focus of a specialised national or regional interest (fisheries, leisure etc.). The European-scale development of modern coastal traffic promoting more regular and frequent high-speed cargo and passenger – including tourist – communications over medium distances could be an important factor of expansion for some of these ports.

III. Air transport

20. In organising passenger transport on the basis of international and inter-regional communication, consideration must be given to the growing role of air links and their relevance to decisions governing the location of industrial and tertiary activities.

21. The rapid evolution of air traffic demands that airports should be evenly spaced over the territory and should be adapted to the various categories of traffic for which they must cater. It is equally desirable that any necessary expropriation of land for expanding and modernising existing airports or for constructing new airports should be made well ahead; the choice of site for the airports and restriction on building in the vicinity of airfields should be determined on the basis of the need for air traffic safety and the protection of the public against noise.

IV. Work programme

22. The ministers stress the importance of national transport plans and policies that take into account an overall regional planning strategy and are based on similar or, at least, comparable methods such as to permit harmonisation on a European scale. Such plans could be harmonised by means of concerted action by this conference and the European Conference of Ministers of Transport.

23. They instruct the Committee of Senior Officials accordingly to examine what studies should be undertaken to harmonise transport and regional planning policies at both national and European level.