

THE COMMON TRANSPORT POLICY;

AN ELEMENT IN ECONOMIC UNION?

Address

delivered by M. Victor Bodson,

Member of the Commission of the European Communities,

to the

Committee of ITF Unions in the EEC

(International Transport Workers' Federation)

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I welcome the initiative of the International Transport Workers' Federation in organizing this symposium on "Transport in Europe".

There is no need for me to tell you how much the Commission of the European Communities appreciates trade union co-operation in a task whose social, economic and political aspects are closely linked.

I am also pleased that this symposium is being held in Rotterdam. When we look at this city, where an astonishingly vigorous reconstruction has almost obliterated the scars of the last war, we can see how far our continent has come since 1945. We ought, I think, never to lose sight of the progress that has been made in this way, particularly when we are in danger of being discouraged by day-to-day problems. From this advance, we can draw the strength and the courage that we need to complete our task.

Rotterdam, the symbol of reconstruction, is at the same time - par excellence - a city that lives by transport. It was therefore a very good setting to chose for a discussion of problems connected with the common transport policy.

This morning you have already heard two speeches on this policy from the trade union point of view and as seen by the German Minister of Transport. I have been asked to contribute to your discussions by telling you what the Commission of the European Communities thinks.

It gave me great pleasure to accept this invitation, and I shall do my best to live up to your expectations.

The subject that was suggested to me - "The common transport policy: an element in economic union?" - is judiciously worded - particularly because it ends with a question mark.

From past experience, one might have been tempted to approach this problem critically - or even sceptically.

We must, however, first decide what that question mark really signifies.

It would be pointless to ask whether the common transport policy provided for in the Treaty of Rome is or is not an element in economic union. That Treaty's provisions on transport obviously go further than the corresponding provisions of the Treaty of Paris. Unlike the authors of the Treaty of Paris, those who framed the Treaty of Rome thought it necessary to provide specifically for a transport policy - that is, a set of coherent and dynamic measures that would

contribute to the establishment of a real economic union. According to the Treaty of Rome, it is absolutely essential that such a policy should be worked out and implemented.

The common transport policy is an element in economic union, firstly, because the activities of the transport industry - although it cannot be regarded as existing solely to serve the other sectors - are certainly of fundamental importance for the development of the latter. Moreover, the importance of the transport sector is shown by the fact that, in the country where we are today, its share of the national product amounts to as much as 8%, and that 58% of the services provided by Dutch carriers are exported. Thus integration of transport must go hand in hand with integration in other sectors.

Secondly, the common transport policy is an element in economic union in so far as goods and persons must be able to travel safely and rapidly within the Member States if intra-Community trade and movement are to increase. Such mobility is a feature of the Common Market we are seeking to create.

Lastly, within the framework of the Common Market, the common transport policy must ensure that competitive neutrality in trade is not distorted by discriminatory or anti-economic transport rates or conditions. This objective cannot be attained unless the transport market is so organized that this sector of the economy can function without producing effects running counter to the general objectives set out in the Treaty.

There can therefore be no question but that a common transport policy will be needed when the structure of the economic union has to be established on a permanent basis; one may, however, wonder whether the delays encountered in the elaboration of a common transport policy will not prove detrimental to the establishment of the economic union.

One can well feel some doubt about this in view of the speed at which the objectives of the Treaty are being attained - and it was ~~this doubt that suggested~~ to you this particular subject for my talk and is expressed in the question mark at the end of the title you chose.

For industrial products and for the great majority of agricultural products, the customs union will be completed 18 months before the final time-limit fixed by the Treaty. Thus 1 July 1968 is an important landmark to which those who are responsible for the common transport policy cannot remain indifferent.

I do not deny that, where the common transport policy is concerned, the practical results are still far less substantial than an achievement such as the customs union would warrant.

But although I admit that it would be advisable for the common transport policy and the customs union to be implemented at the same time - from 1 July 1968 - I would recall that, if the customs union is to become a really effective instrument with which to integrate the national markets, it will have to be accompanied by progress in a number of other fields, as provided for by the Treaty.

Work on these matters has, to be sure, already begun, but it will take a good deal of time to complete, going well beyond 1 July 1968.

Of course, quotas have already been eliminated, intra-Community customs duties have been abolished and a common external tariff has been established; these achievements are a great step forward and are bound to stimulate trade between the Member States and the growth of their national product. But before we can be justified in speaking of the "free movement of goods", there are still many obstacles other than customs duties which will have to be eliminated - starting with certain frontier formalities which affect international transport particularly.

It sometimes seems that it is harder to master small administrative details - to reduce the number of forms required, for example - than to establish broad general principles.

Who would have foreseen, for instance, that the Governments would be able to agree on the broad outlines of such a tricky matter as the added-value tax system before managing to harmonize frontier charges?

Detailed and certainly protracted work will still have to be done in order to achieve other kinds of integration, such as the approximation of legislation (particularly as regards business law, tax law, technical standards or health protection), which are essential if the customs union is to have its full effect and gradually develop into an economic union.

In addition to the free movement of goods, the economic union is to be based on the free movement of persons, free supply of services and free movement of capital. Important results have already been achieved in these various fields, and particularly in the first two, but there are still many questions outstanding.

If we are agreed as to the place and role of the common transport policy within the framework of the economic union, is there the same agreement on the instruments and basic principles that should guide this common policy?

I said just now that in the Community the transport sector ought to be organized in such a way as to help forward the achievement of the Treaty's objectives.

This does not mean that the production of transport services must necessarily obey exactly the same rules as those valid for other industrial sectors.

The authors of the Treaty were aware that what are called the "special aspects" of transport called for an approach appropriate to the factual situation of the sector in question.

I am not one of those who would seek to make everything depend on "the special aspects of transport". However, you all know that competition - particularly - is not an equally effective instrument in all sectors of the economy. Recently, the Commission again expressed this idea in the Medium-term Economic Policy Programme adopted by the Council.

Some maintain that unrestricted competition could be the best instrument making for rational use of the factors of production; in the case of transport, that is, that free competition would lead to the optimum distribution of traffic between the various modes of transport and between the different enterprises.

However, the various modes of transport have structural peculiarities which oblige the authorities to set appropriate limits to the free play of competition and keep a constant watch on the working of competition within those limits.

The instrument on which the common transport policy should be based might best be described as "organized competition".

Some very able studies of the special aspects have been made. As you are familiar with them, I shall not deal with them here. But I should like to draw your attention to three points that seem to me to have been rather neglected hitherto.

- (1) The State has traditionally exerted an influence on the transport sector. In my view, the justification for this lies much less in the need to safeguard the interests of the railway enterprises than in the fact

that the transport infrastructure is created, maintained and improved by the community according to criteria which must normally be economic but often call for a long-term social assessment. Thus the policy pursued with regard to infrastructure inevitably has many repercussions on the organization of the transport market.

- (2) Another reason why we shall have to adjust the instrument of competition is that most transport services can be replaced by do-it-yourself methods - such as transport on own account, in the case of goods, or by using private cars, for passenger transport. In both these cases, we are confronted with a type of competition which even the most enthusiastic supporters of unrestricted competition cannot but describe as imperfect. This means that measures must be taken to ensure that the professional transport sector can function normally.
- (3) The degree of competition desirable for the transport of goods is not necessarily the same as for passenger transport.

The market in passenger transport will play an increasing part in our policy, not only because of railway problems (the complexity of which is largely due to the fact that the railways transport both goods and passengers), but also because the movement of persons is becoming increasingly important within the Common Market.

You must be wondering whether the new single Executive will or will not endorse the basic principles of the common transport policy which were previously outlined by the EEC Commission alone.

The previous Commission had laid down the following principles:

- Equality of treatment;
- Financial autonomy for enterprises;
- Freedom of action for enterprises;
- Freedom of choice for users;
- Co-ordination of infrastructure investment.

The first four principles (equality of treatment, financial autonomy for enterprises, freedom of action for enterprises and freedom of choice for users) constitute the very foundations of any competition, even if organized, and are therefore the objectives that harmonization of the conditions of competition is designed to attain, within a system in which the various kinds of enterprises engaged in transport must be able to act on terms that are basically similar.

Lastly, with regard to the co-ordination of infrastructure investment (the fifth principle), the Commission submitted a report to the Council in April 1964, together with a proposal for a decision. The adoption of the proposed decision in its entirety would have been a great step forward towards establishing a Community infrastructure designed to meet the needs of the medium-term economic programme and of the economic union. For political reasons which it is not for me to go into here, the Council did not feel able to adopt all the Commission's ideas. The agreement which it reached in February 1966

entailed only the adoption of a procedure for consultations on infrastructure investment. Implementation of this Council decision has already produced very encouraging results - particularly, in the frontier areas, as regards technical improvements to communications and harmonization of the pace at which they are to be realized. These achievements are, however, not such that the Commission can give up its efforts to attain the objectives indicated in its initial proposal. It considers it essential that infrastructure investment should be co-ordinated in order to promote both integration and the Community's regional policy.

The proposals that have so far been submitted by the Commission to the Council, with a view to the establishment of the common transport policy, embody the principles I have just mentioned.

I do not wish to try your patience by listing all the precise initiatives taken by the Commission since 1961. I shall simply indicate what it has done, in broad outline.

The principal measures envisaged in the 1962 Action Programme were, in 1963, embodied in proposals concerning bracket rates, the Community quota, harmonization of the conditions of competition and the survey of infrastructure costs.

Despite two years of discussions, it has not been possible to reach agreement on transport rates.

On the other hand, agreement has been reached on the framework and time-table for the harmonization measures and, in principle, on a survey of infrastructure costs.

With regard to the Community quota, the Commission's idea was that bilateralism should progressively give way to multilateralism. This idea was not accepted, but an agreement in principle was reached on the rest of the Commission's proposal.

Had the four main proposals made in 1963 been adopted, particularly the initial proposal on rates, the Council and the Member States would probably have been spared some of the problems that face them today where national and international transport are concerned.

On 22 June 1965, in order to overcome the deadlock on rates, the Council agreed in principle on a system of rates more flexible than the bracket-rate system originally proposed by the Commission, and on an appropriate articulation of the various measures to be introduced in fields other than rates.

During the political crisis which you will remember, the Commission submitted amendments to its proposal on transport rates. Among other things, these provide for the new measures to be introduced in two stages and for a system of reference bracket rates.

Unfortunately, the ensuing discussion in the Council produced only a negative result: it became clear that the Council would not be able to reach agreement on the rate system in the near future.

The resolution of 20 October 1966 therefore reflects the tendency not to try any longer to remedy anti-economic competition principally by means of the rate system but, rather, to do this by regulating access to the markets in road transport and inland water transport simultaneously.

If the Council has again stressed the importance of measures to regulate access to the market, this does not mean that it attaches any less importance to regulating transport rates. This is a point that should be made perfectly clear.

In my opinion, if the emphasis is placed on the close interdependence between the various measures, this may result in creating preconditions which make it extremely difficult to implement them progressively. Nevertheless, I think that some cases of interdependence cannot be ignored, particularly between price formation measures and measures governing access to the market.

I also think I should underline the importance that the Council attached, at its last meeting, to the rules of competition and to the implementation of harmonization measures.

We are glad that the Council has accepted the idea of an interim and provisional solution to the problem of allocating infrastructure costs. The Commission had arrived at this idea because of the very large number of studies on infrastructure costs and ways of allocating them. The Council has chosen rapid and pragmatic action in preference to a high degree of perfectionism.

The Commission has made a special effort in the fields indicated by the Council.

It has not, however, confined itself to what might be called "implementation". Conscious of its role, the Commission has once again taken the initiative to help the Council overcome the deadlock over the common transport policy. On 10 February 1967, it submitted a memorandum to the Council.

The memorandum begins by analysing the difficulties that lie behind the Council's disagreement, and suggests certain possible ways of achieving in other fields the balance it has not been possible to achieve where prices were concerned.

The Commission had, however, devised a programme that would be spaced out over a period of time in such a way as to take into account the date of 1 July 1968 fixed for the completion of the customs union. While pointing out that no sharp division can be made between national and international traffic, it placed the emphasis on certain urgent needs in international transport.

Let us now turn to the present position.

The Council of Ministers of Transport is to meet again very shortly - for the first time since 19 and 20 October 1966.

I fully share the European Parliament's regret that a fresh meeting has not been held sooner.

In my opinion, the Ministers of Transport ought to meet much more often, so that a permanent and constructive dialogue can begin between the Council and the Commission.

.../...

Nevertheless, the Commission has not been inactive during the year between the two Council meetings. It has added three proposals to the large number already before the Council:

- (i) The proposal for a regulation concerning action by Member States with regard to public service obligations in transport;
- (ii) The proposal for a regulation concerning the introduction of common rules for access to the occupation of road haulier;
- (iii) Very recently, the proposal for a regulation on access to the market in goods transport by inland waterway.

I would add that I am hoping soon to submit a new proposal on normalization of railway accounts. There is no need to remind you of the importance of such a proposal and the part that it will play in the implementation of the common transport policy.

While the Economic and Social Committee and the European Parliament have already made considerable progress in examining these proposals (except the most recent one on access to the market in inland waterway goods transport), the Council has not yet begun to study them in detail. The Commission is, however, sure that the Council will see in its proposals an appropriate instrument for achieving an organized market.

The Commission's initial proposal on the rules of competition might be improved by the inclusion of new exceptions which would, among other things, make it possible to create enterprises of a more economic size in both road and inland water transport.

Nevertheless, it seems unlikely at present that the Council will agree on this proposal. We therefore have to ~~envisage~~ - much against our will - another extension of the period during which the Treaty's rules on competition need not be applied to transport.

I hope that this will be the last extension that we shall have to propose, and that the Council - whose resolution of 20 October 1967 emphasized the importance of the rules of competition and the urgent need for them to be worked out - will take a decision without further delay.

With regard to the proposals concerning harmonization of the conditions of competition, I wish to state very clearly that I consider such harmonization to be fundamental to the organization of the transport market - particularly where harmonization of social conditions and harmonization of taxation are concerned.

When we have harmonized fiscal provisions, we shall have made a substantial contribution to the organization of the market and to the establishment of realistic prices - and this will make it possible to solve the problems of transport rates much more easily and much more effectively.

Harmonization of taxation will, among other things, involve some adjustment of the specific taxes relating to road transport and, to a great extent, to inland water transport. The action to be taken can be summed up under four main headings:

- (1) Harmonization of the structure of taxes on vehicles, followed by harmonization of the level of these taxes;
- (2) Alignment of fuel taxes;

- (3) Measures to eliminate double taxation in international traffic, which will therefore also eliminate the distortions of competition arising from it;
- (4) Standardization of provisions concerning duty-free entry for fuel.

In some of these fields, proposals have already been submitted. Others are being considered in connection with the interim solution to the problem of the allocation of infrastructure costs.

I would assure you that, in order to speed up the work on harmonization of taxation, the Commission will not hesitate, if necessary, to amend certain of the proposals already submitted - in view of the parallelism between the various measures. As you know, there are two main principles that can be applied in the harmonization of taxation: the nationality principle, and the territoriality principle. But let us not, for heavens sake, make this a question of dogma! It is the results that count.

With regard to the harmonization of social conditions (which concerns you particularly), you know that the field of application and the scope of the Commission's first proposal on working conditions in road transport go far beyond the agreements reached by other bodies - both as regards the economic implications and as regards the social aspects.

I should, however, have thought that the trade unions would not have shown themselves completely satisfied with this proposal and that they would even have asked us to go still further.

.../...

But it was the opposite that happened.

I must tell you that I was frankly surprised by the position which the workers' representatives adopted in the Economic and Social Committee.

Be that as it may, the new Commission stands by the original proposals.

It considers that working conditions in road transport must be harmonized at a level that will not only satisfy the social interests of road transport workers and the community's safety requirements but also meet the economic needs of the enterprises concerned. If we take a long-term view, it is clear that these needs broadly coincide with the social requirements.

The Commission has always considered the harmonization of social conditions in any given mode of transport from the angle of co-ordination between the various modes of transport.

The flagrant disparities that still exist at the present time must be progressively eliminated and equal social conditions established for all transport workers.

Obviously, equalization must take place at a level consistent with social progress within the economy at large - that is, in an upward direction.

.../...

It is from this angle that we are going to establish two new Joint Advisory Committees alongside the existing Joint Advisory ~~Committee~~ on social matters in road transport: one for inland waterways and one for railways.

I am pleased to be able to tell you that the Commission will shortly take the decision to set up the Joint Advisory Committee on social matters in inland water transport.

I hope that this Committee will do good work, in a sector whose economic and social situation calls for the utmost effort.

Although this has been a very rapid outline, I hope I have shown you that the Commission's conception is a coherent one and that the many proposals already submitted to the Council or still in preparation are in line with it.

If I consider all the Commission proposals at present before the Council, I am led to conclude that the next meeting of Ministers of Transport should produce concrete results.

By this I mean that the Governments should at last be able to give the common transport policy the "go-ahead", so that it may proceed in step with the customs union.

.../...

The Italian delegation has put forward a proposal which provides partial solutions concerning, among other things, the Community quota and the price system for international road transport; if this proposal is able to get the common transport policy off the ground, it will be welcome, even though it does not go very far. The welcome we give it will reflect our hope that it may trigger off progressive action. But we shall have to give up trying to link measures that are not necessarily interdependent.

I cannot finish my talk without saying something about the prospects beyond the Council's next meeting and even beyond anything so far proposed by the Commission.

The questions on which we are working are the very ones to which this morning's speakers quite rightly drew your attention.

The problems they concern probably seem to you to be more concrete than those I have mentioned so far.

.../...

This is the case, for example, with the "Leber Plan".

I should like to say that, for Germany, this plan gives an excellent overall view of the problems and offers a number of solutions which are in line with the Commission's thinking.

In my view, the problems that the "Leber Plan" is designed to solve are also to be found - in more or less acute form - in all the Member States. For this reason, I am glad that the forthcoming consultations on this plan will provide an opportunity to review all the measures that will have to be taken in order to implement a common transport policy.

The problems posed by transport in all the Community countries are many and various.

Foremost amongst them is the alarming situation of the railways.

Then there is the unfavourable economic position of many road transport enterprises (especially the short-distance hauliers) and of inland water transport undertakings, many of which are family businesses or very small.

In addition, there is the overloading of the road infrastructure in the big conurbations and on certain trunk roads, and the large number of road accidents.

Lastly, there are the structural problems facing the seaports and the less developed regions of the Community, and problems connected with the introduction of oil transport by pipelines, with the development of container transport, and with sea and air transport.

All these problems are becoming more acute at a time when economic growth is slackening perceptibly and when those responsible for public budgets are finding it very hard to maintain financial stability in their countries.

You must not think that the Commission is not aware of these problems or that it is doing nothing about them.

On the contrary, the whole range of proposals that have been submitted to the Council or are at present being prepared by the Commission is likely to do a great deal to help solve these problems.

This is true both as regards the problems of the railways - which the measures provided for by the decision on harmonization are designed to solve - and as regards the problems facing road and inland water transport.

The economic position of the road and inland waterway sectors could be much improved if the proposed measures concerning access to the market were implemented.

If the Council adopted the Commission's first proposal on social conditions in road transport, this would be a considerable advance for the workers and would do much to improve road safety.

For certain dangerous kinds of transport, the arrangements proposed are, however, not enough. The terrible accidents at Martelange, on the frontier between Belgium and Luxembourg, and at Beek, here in the Netherlands, have shown the need for strict rules to be imposed on those who carry inflammable or explosive materials. It is a matter of life and death. As I promised the European Parliament, the Commission is at present working out a proposal on the subject.

The solution for the structural problems, particularly those concerning seaports (on which an excellent report has been prepared by M. Seifriz), involve not only transport policy but also regional policy. The single Commission has shown the importance it attaches to regional policy by deciding to make one of its members specially responsible for it and setting up a new, specialized Directorate-General. The questions that involve transport will be given due consideration in the setting of regional policy.

With regard to the possibility of the Commission extending its work to include transport by sea and air, our hands are still tied. But if four new countries joined the Community, the field of action of the institutions would have to be extended to cover transport by sea.

Wherever new developments necessitate other measures additional to those I have just mentioned, the Commission will propose these in the light of the particular situations involved.

The Commission reserves its right to decide the order in which the various measures should be tackled, depending on which problems turn out to be most urgent.

This brings me to my conclusion.

.../...

In order to enable the Council to reach agreement in good time on the measures necessary if the customs union is gradually to develop into an economic union, the Commission will first try to complete the work it has begun on the organization of the transport market.

To this end, it will do all it can to develop a genuine atmosphere of mutual confidence with the Council and the Member States.

It will also take care not to lose the initiative given it by the Treaty.

At the same time, the Commission will work for the progressive integration of the transport sector into the future economic union.

Following the forthcoming Council meeting on transport scheduled for 13 and 14 December, the Commission will review the present position as regards the common transport policy.

Should the Italian proposals lead to a satisfactory agreement in the Council, this would provide the necessary basis for progress on other aspects of the common policy.

If, at its next meeting, the Council were not able to reach agreement even on proposals that represent the lowest common denominator, the Commission would have to make a general reassessment of the situation.

But in any review of the situation, the idea that the six national transport policies can provide an adequate substitute for the implementation of a common transport policy will have to be firmly ruled out.

In any case, the Commission cannot allow the present deadlock to continue.

At every stage, the Commission will bear in mind the special importance of social matters.

In this connection, I should like to quote some words - with which I entirely agree - from President Rey's statement, on behalf of the Commission, to the European Parliament on 20 September: "We are convinced that, in the years that have passed - and despite the quite remarkable work done in Luxembourg - our Communities have not made enough progress in the social field. We are impatient for a fresh impetus to be given as regards social progress in our Community."

It is perfectly possible to give a "fresh impetus" to social policy and to transport policy; it is perfectly possible to develop the "social" side of the common transport policy.

But, if this is to be done, it is essential that you should help the Commission and, in particular, the member of the Commission with special responsibility for social affairs (M. Levi-Sandri) and the one with special responsibility for transport - myself.

M. Levi-Sandri and I need the vigilant and unwavering support of the trade unions.

Today I have tried to start off a dialogue which will, I am sure, develop from day to day in complete frankness.

Your criticisms will be just as useful to me as your suggestions.

COMMISSION
of the
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Spokesman's Group
(EEC)

Brussels, 29 November 1967
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! 15:00 hrs !

PRESS RELEASE

The Common Transport Policy: An Element in Economic
Union?

On 30 November 1967 M. Victor Bodson, a member of the Commission of the European Communities, addressed the third European Transport Symposium convened in Rotterdam by the ITF (committee of transport workers' unions in the Community).

A summary of his address, which was entitled "The Common Transport Policy: an element in economic union?", is given below.

In his introductory remarks, M. Bodson analysed the transport provisions in the Treaty of Paris establishing the Coal and Steel Community and of the Rome Treaty establishing EEC. He also examined the economic and social factors involved and was able to give an affirmative answer to the question which was the subject of his talks: economic union between the member countries of the Economic Community is inconceivable without a common transport policy.

M. Bodson then painted a picture of what had been done, since 1952 in Luxembourg and 1958 in Brussels, to work out and implement the common transport policy.

Starting from the ideas and data on which the Commission based its 1961 Memorandum and its 1962 Action Programme, M. Bodson reviewed the many proposals which the Commission had submitted to the Council since 1963.

Like the European Parliament, M. Bodson greatly regretted that the Council of Transport Ministers had not met more often. Their last meeting went back to October 1966.

More than ten proposals for regulations were pending before the Council, although the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee had rendered their opinions on most of them.

Despite the time-lag of the common transport policy in relation to the other policies, M. Bodson was optimistic as regards the future. He based this optimism, first on the economic necessities that would be imposed on the Community institutions by the establishment of the customs union on 1 July 1968 and, secondly, on the political will animating the Transport Ministers;

this he had been able to observe at his first meetings with them after taking up his duties as the Commission member with special responsibilities for transport.

M. Bodson attached great importance to the coming meeting of the Council of Transport Ministers on 13 and 14 December 1967. He would do everything in his power to ensure that "a permanent and constructive dialogue can begin between the Council and the Commission."

The problems posed by transport in all the Community countries were many and serious. Community solutions had to be found for them.

M. Bodson said that the Commission would endeavour to complete the work it had undertaken on organization of the transport market so as to enable the Council to reach an agreement in good time on all measures essential to bring about the economic union.

Finally, M. Bodson emphasized that "the Commission will not lose sight of the special importance of social questions." He hoped that the Community would be able to give a fresh impetus to transport policy, in particular to its social aspects.

Bruxelles, le 29 novembre 1967
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CEE

! EMBARGO !
! !
! 30 novembre 1967 !
! à 15 heures !
! !

INFORMATION A LA PRESSE

**RESUME DU DISCOURS DE M. Victor BODSON,
MEMBRE DE LA COMMISSION DES COMMUNAUTÉS EUROPÉENNES,
PRONONCE LE 30 NOVEMBRE 1967 A ROTTERDAM DEVANT LE
"COMITE SYNDICAL DES TRANSPORTS DE LA COMMUNAUTE (ITF)
SUR LE THEME:**

**LA POLITIQUE COMMUNE DES TRANSPORTS:
ELEMENT DE L'UNION ECONOMIQUE ?**

Lors du troisième Colloque européen sur les transports, organisé à Rotterdam, le jeudi 30 novembre 1967, par le Bureau du Comité Syndical des Transports de la Communauté (ITF), M. Victor BODSON, Membre de la Commission des Communautés Européennes, a fait un exposé sur le thème "La politique commune des transports, élément de l'union économique ?"

Dans l'introduction de son exposé, M. BODSON a analysé les dispositions consacrées aux transports dans le Traité de Paris instituant la CECA et le Traité de Rome instituant la CEE. M. BODSON a procédé également à un examen des facteurs économiques et sociaux qui lui permettent de répondre par l'affirmative au thème de sa conférence: l'union économique entre les pays membres des Communautés européennes est inconcevable sans politique commune des transports.

M. BODSON a présenté ensuite un tableau des efforts entrepris depuis 1952 à Luxembourg et depuis 1958 à Bruxelles, pour arriver à la politique commune des transports.

Partant des idées et des données dont la Commission s'était inspirée lors de l'élaboration de son Mémoire de 1961 et de son Programme d'action de 1962, M. BODSON a procédé à un examen des nombreuses propositions que la Commission a transmises au Conseil depuis 1963.

M. BODSON, tout comme le Parlement européen, a vivement regretté que le Conseil des Ministres des transports ne se soit pas réuni plus souvent.

La dernière réunion du Conseil remonte en effet au mois d'octobre 1966.

Plus de dix propositions de règlements de la Commission se trouvent en instance devant le Conseil, alors que le Parlement européen et le Comité économique et social ont rendu leur avis sur la plupart de ces propositions.

Malgré le retard que la politique commune des transports accuse par rapport à d'autres politiques, M. BODSON s'est déclaré optimiste quant à l'avenir.

Il fonde son optimisme, d'une part sur les nécessités économiques inéluctables que la réalisation de l'union douanière au 1er juillet 1968 impose aux instances communautaires et, d'autre part, sur la volonté politique qui anime les Ministres des Transports, constatation qu'il a pu faire lors des premiers contacts avec les ministres responsables depuis son entrée en fonction comme ~~Membre de la Commission chargé des questions de transports.~~

M. BODSON a souligné l'importance qu'il attache à la prochaine réunion du Conseil des Ministres des Transports, le 13 et 14 décembre 1967. Il fera tout ce qui est en son pouvoir afin "qu'un dialogue permanent et constructif puisse s'engager entre le Conseil et la Commission".

Les problèmes que posent les transports dans tous les pays de la Communauté sont nombreux et graves. Il s'agit d'y apporter des réponses communautaires.

En conclusion, M. BODSON a déclaré que la Commission s'efforcera de mener à bien l'oeuvre qu'elle a entreprise dans le domaine de l'organisation du marché des transports, afin de permettre au Conseil de parvenir en temps utile à un accord sur toutes les mesures indispensables à la réalisation de l'union économique.

Finalement, M. BODSON a souligné que "La Commission ne perdra pas de vue l'importance particulière que revêtent les questions sociales". Il a exprimé l'espoir que la Communauté puisse donner un "nouvel élan" à la politique des transports et notamment à ses aspects sociaux.
