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COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES  
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

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PRESS RELEASE

10063/88 (Presse 199)

1282nd Council meeting

- Transport -

Brussels, 8 December 1988

President: Mr Yannis HARALAMBOUS

Minister for Transport and  
Communications of the  
Hellenic Republic

The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Marc LEPOIVRE Deputy Permanent Representative

Denmark:

Mr Hans-Peter CLAUSEN Minister for Transport and Communications

Mr Joergen HALCK State Secretary,  
Ministry of Public Works

Germany:

Mr Jürgen WARNKE Federal Minister for Transport

Greece:

Mr Yannis HARALAMBOUS Minister for Transport and Communications

Mr Kosmas SPHIRIOU Deputy Minister for Transport and  
Communications

Spain:

Mr José BARRIONUEVO PENA Minister for Transport, Tourism and  
Communications

France:

Mr Jean CADET Deputy Permanent Representative

Ireland:

Mr John WILSON Minister for Tourism and Transport

Italy:

Mr Giorgio SANTUZ Minister for Transport

Luxembourg:

Mr Marcel SCHLECHTER Minister for Transport, Minister for Public  
Works and Minister for Energy

Netherlands:

Mrs N. SMIT-KROES

Minister for Transport and Public Works

Portugal:

Mr Joao de OLIVEIRA MARTINS

Minister for Public Works,  
Transport and Communications

Mr Carlos COSTA

State Secretary, Inland Transport

United Kingdom:

Mr Paul CHANNON

Minister for Transport

Mr Michael PORTILLO

State Secretary, Ministry of Transport

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For the Commission:

Mr Stanley CLINTON DAVIS

Member



- PROJECT 6 - High-speed railway line,  
London-Paris-Brussels-Amsterdam-Cologne  
  
London-Folkestone  
Brussels-Aachen
- PROJECT 7 - Improvement of the North-South transit route in Ireland  
Dublin ring road - Northern Cross Route
- PROJECT 8 - Scanlink  
  
Ringsted-Odense electrification
- PROJECT 9 - Modernization of transit routes to Greece  
  
Evzoni-Athens-Corinth motorway, sections:  
= Elefsina-Corinth  
= Malakassa-Inofita  
  
Thessalonika-Idomeni line
- PROJECT 10 - International links in frontier regions  
  
Boxmeer-Venlo-Germany motorway  
Luxembourg Eastern Ring Road
- PROJECT 11 - Transalpine routes to Italy  
  
Brenner line - second track for Verona-Bologna line

The financial support could not exceed 25% of the total cost or 50% in the case of preparatory studies. Contributions from all Community budget sources could not normally exceed 50% of the total cost.

This Regulation should not prejudice any follow-up to the Commission proposals for developing a Community transport infrastructure policy.

The Council said it would resume examination of this topic as soon as it received the Opinion of the European Parliament, with a view to taking a final decision.

## WEIGHTS AND DIMENSIONS

The Council agreed by a large majority on three proposals concerning the weights and dimensions of commercial road vehicles. The text adds the following points to Annex I to Directive 85/3/EEC:

1. Maximum authorized weight (MAW) of the tandem axles of motor vehicles where the distance between axles is 1,3 m or greater but less than 1,8 m: 18 tonnes; 19 tonnes where the driving axle is equipped with double tyres and pneumatic suspension or its equivalent.
2. Maximum authorized weight of 2-axle motor vehicles: 18 tonnes.
3. Maximum authorized weight of road trains consisting of a 2-axle motor vehicle and a 2-axle trailer: 36 tonnes.
4. Maximum authorized weight of articulated vehicles with 4 axles consisting of a 2-axle motor vehicle and a 2-axle semi-trailer: where the distance between the axles of the semi-trailer is
  - 1,3 m or greater but not more than 1,8 m: 36 tonnes
  - greater than 1,8 m : 36 tonnes + 2 tonnes tolerance where the MAW of the motor vehicle (18 t) and the MAW of the tandem axle of the semi-trailer (20 t) are complied with and the driving axle is equipped with double tyres and pneumatic suspension or its equivalent.
5. 3-axle articulated buses
  - maximum authorized weight: 28 tonnes
  - maximum authorized length: 18 m.
6. Maximum authorized weight of 3-axle motor vehicles: 25 tonnes; 26 tonnes when the driving axle is equipped with double tyres and pneumatic suspension or its equivalent.
7. Maximum authorized weight of 4-axle motor vehicles with two steering axles: 32 tonnes, although the maximum authorized weight in tonnes of this vehicle may not exceed 5 times the distance in metres between the axes of the foremost and rearmost axles of the vehicle (calculation of the MAW on the basis of the wheelbase).
8. Maximum authorized weight for the driving axle of 4-axle vehicles and combined vehicles: 11,5 tonnes.

The following temporary derogations are allowed for the United Kingdom and Irish:  
point 2: 17 tonnes; point 3: 35 tonnes; point 4: 35 tonnes; point 5: 27 tonnes;  
point 7: 30 tonnes; point 8: 10,5 tonnes.

However, since there are still major reservations on points 4 and 8, the Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue discussing the issue.

#### NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE EEC AND TRANSIT THIRD COUNTRIES

The Council adopted a Decision instructing the Commission to open the second phase of negotiations with Austria, Switzerland and Yugoslavia in the transport sphere in order to resolve the problems arising in connection with transit traffic through these countries, in particular in the run-up to the 1992 internal market. The Commission will endeavour to complete the negotiations by the end of 1989.

#### ADMISSION TO THE OCCUPATION OF HAULAGE OPERATOR

The Council discussed three proposals for Directives on admission to the occupation of road haulage operator and the recognition of diplomas. The aim of these proposals is to harmonize the essential features of admission to this occupation, including:

- the good repute requirement
- the financial standing requirement
- the professional competence requirement.

Having noted that there were still differences of opinion, the Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue its discussions on this matter so that the Council could reach a decision.



INTERNATIONAL CARRIAGE OF PASSENGERS BY COACH AND BUS

The Council took note of the current state of discussions on a proposal for a Regulation designed to establish freedom to provide passenger transport services in the Community and at the same time to improve road safety monitoring systems.

The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue its proceedings on this file.

STRUCTURAL IMPROVEMENTS IN INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT

The Council had a discussion on a proposal for a Regulation on structural improvements in inland waterway transport. It examined in particular the question of the non-repayable Community contribution to the scrapping scheme.

At the close of the discussions the Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue its proceedings in the light of that day's discussions so that it could take a decision as soon as possible.

### CHARGING OF INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS

The Council had a thorough discussion on a proposal for a Directive on the charging of transport infrastructure costs to heavy goods vehicles. The Council based its discussions in particular on the recent Commission communication presented in the meeting concerning the technical procedures which should make it possible to apply the principle of territoriality, i.e. charging on the basis of the use of the road infrastructure.

At the close of the discussions the Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue its deliberations so that the Council could work out guidelines as soon as possible. The Council took note of the Commission's wish that these guidelines be forwarded to the ECOFIN Council by 30 June 1989 so that the latter could decide on the measures needed to eliminate fiscal distortions of competition.

### AIDS FOR COMBINED TRANSPORT

The Council discussed a proposal for a Regulation on the granting of aids for transport by rail, road and inland waterway: aids for combined transport.

The main points at issue were the extension of the existing aid system - covering investments - to aids intended to cover part of the costs of operating combined transport services and the setting of a deadline - 31 December 1992 - for the whole system.

NATIONAL ROAD HAULAGE SERVICES (CABOTAGE)

The Council resumed its examination of a proposal for a Regulation providing essentially for the possibility for any road haulage operator established in a Member state and entitled to provide international road haulage services to be allowed to provide national road haulage services in another Member State.

At the close of the discussion, during which it was possible to make some progress on this file, the Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to expedite its proceedings so that the Council could reach agreement as soon as possible at least on the establishment of a transitional system with a view to the completion of the single market.

AIR TRAFFIC SYSTEM CAPACITY

On the basis of an oral communication from the Commissioner, Mr CLINTON DAVIS, the Council had an initial exchange of views on the problems connected with the capacity of the air traffic system and the solutions the Commission was contemplating in this respect.

Mr CLINTON DAVIS referred in particular to the possibilities for improving air traffic control and better utilization of European air space.

### FURTHER TRANSPORT DECISION

The Council adopted the Resolution on the extension, until 31 December 1990, of the system for observing the markets for the carriage of goods by rail, road and inland waterway between the Member States, as laid down by the Resolution of 18 June 1986.

The Resolution states that, before 31 December 1990, the Council, acting on a Commission proposal submitted by 1 July 1990, and following an in-depth review of the existing system, will take a decision on the permanent establishment of a system adapted to the final arrangements for organization of the inland transport market, taking into account the needs of users and the need to reduce running costs to a minimum.

The Resolution also stipulates that the Member States and the Commission will ensure close co-operation between their relevant departments as regards the compilation and analysis of the data forming part of the market observation system.

### MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

#### Iron and steel products

The Representatives of the Governments of the Member States of the ECSC, meeting within the Council, adopted Decisions on certain measures to be applied, in respect of State-trading countries, to trade in iron and steel products covered by the ECSC Treaty, i.e. Decisions on the opening of three zero-duty tariff

quotas for flat-rolled products of silicon-electrical steel: 400 tonnes for Spain, 300 tonnes for Benelux and 1 500 tonnes for Germany.

Customs union

The Council adopted the Regulation suspending wholly or in part the duties applicable to imports of certain silk products (1989) (raw silk at 0 duty, silk yarn at 2,5% duty and noil at 0 duty).

EEC-Malta relations

The Council adopted Decisions on the conclusion of:

- a supplementary protocol to the Agreement establishing an Association between the European Economic Community and Malta;
- the Protocol to the Agreement establishing an Association between the European Economic Community and Malta consequent on the accession of the Kingdom of Spain and the Portuguese Republic to the Community.

The Protocols are to be signed in the next few days.

Fisheries imports into Spain

The Council adopted the Regulation opening tariff quotas for the importation into Spain of certain fisheries products originating in the Canary Islands or Ceuta and Melilla (1989).

Manioc - import arrangements

The Council adopted the Regulation amending Regulation (EEC) No 430/87 concerning the import arrangements applicable to products falling within subheading 07.06 A of the Common Customs Tariff and coming from third countries - collection of a levy of not more than 6% ad valorem:

- Thailand for the quantities arranged in the agreement as renewed for 1988, 1989 and 1990;
- Indonesia: 825 000 tonnes per year for 1988 and 1989;
- other countries which are at present Contracting Parties to the GATT, with the exception of Thailand and Indonesia: 145 590 tonnes per year for 1988 and 1989;
- China: 350 000 tonnes per year for 1988 and 1989;
- third countries which are not members of the GATT, other than China: for 1989 the quantities are to be fixed by the Council, acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission.

Relations with Norway - cheese

The Council authorized the Commission to begin negotiations with Norway in order to determine certain provisions of the 1986 Agreement on cheese and in particular the level of tariff quotas for the years to come.

Research

The Council adopted the Decision concerning the conclusion of a Community COST Concertation Agreement on seven concerted action projects in the field of the environment:

- Physico-chemical behaviour of atmospheric pollutants (COST 611/2)
- Air-pollution effects on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems (COST 612/2)
- Organic micropollutants in the aquatic environment (COST 641/2)
- Treatment and use of organic sludges and liquid agricultural wastes (COST 681/2)
- Coastal benthic ecology (COST 647/2)
- Indoor-air quality and its impact on man (COST 613/1)
- Protection of species (COST 691/1).

Campaign against drug abuse

The Council adopted the common position to be adopted by the Community in the negotiations on a new International Convention on Illicit Trafficking in Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

Appointments

The Council adopted the Decision appointing members and alternate members of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training.

The Council also adopted the Decision appointing members and alternate members of the Advisory Committee on Social Security for Migrant Workers.

The Council also appointed members to replace several members of the European Social Fund Committee who have resigned as well as a member and an alternate member of the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work.





Brussels, 7 december 1988

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**NOTE BIO (88) 391 AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX**  
**cc. aux Membres du Service du Porte-Parole**

TRANSPORT COUNCIL December 8-9 1988 (M. Berendt)

Virtually all points on the Council agenda concern surface transport. There will be no discussion of maritime transport issues.

The Council will seek to finalise the negotiating mandate so that the Commission can begin formal talks with Austria, Switzerland and Yugoslavia on problems of transit. The Commission would hope to see the bilateral negotiations concluded by the end of 1989 and is supported by Germany and Italy in wishing to include all forms of surface transport - not just road transport - in the scope of the talks.

The Commission proposals for a five-year action programme for transport infrastructure are again on the agenda; some member countries will be pressing to know whether the Commission will be proposing a series of projects to use funds voted by the European Parliament for transport infrastructure projects in 1988 and 1989. In the Commission's view such funding should only be provided in the context of a medium-term programme. The conclusions of the European Council went some way to supporting this position.

Road transport issues will include the weights and dimensions of vehicles, where there is a possibility of a package agreement on a range of vehicle types, access to the profession of road haulage operator and the encouragement of combined road/rail transport.

There will also be a presentation by Commissioner Clinton Davis of the Commission's ideas for a Community vignette for lorries. The Commission has not made a formal proposal, but has suggested a system under which the costs would be calculated which each type of goods vehicle from each member state imposes on the Community road transport infrastructure. An assessment would then be made of the charges paid by such a typical lorry: lorry taxes, fuel taxes and tolls. These would be deducted from the estimated infrastructure costs, so giving a net figure which would represent the cost of the vignette for the particular type of vehicle in the country concerned. Vehicles not travelling outside their home country would not need to buy the vignette and would pay the normal national taxes.

Regards,   
C.D. Ehfermann

Bruxelles, le 9 décembre 1988

NOTE BIO(88) 391 (suite 1 et fin) AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX  
CC. AUX MEMBRES DU SERVICE DU PORTE-PAROLE

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Transport Council, December 8 1988 (Michael BERENDT)

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The Council of transport ministers has adopted a mandate on transit questions so that the Commission can begin negotiations with Austria, Switzerland and Yugoslavia. The mandate was agreed after a brief Council discussion. The Commission made a declaration for the minutes indicating that road transport questions would include combined transport; railways are also covered in the mandate.

A political agreement was reached in the Council on the weights and dimensions of lorries and articulated buses. The decision completes the original package, some elements of which go back as far as 1971. Taken together with decisions for five and six axle vehicles adopted four years ago, last night's agreement is an important one in the creation of the single market. The transport working group will now finalise the text of the agreement and resolve a couple of technical problems so the package can go for adoption to the next transport council.

The Council also approved a two-year programme of expenditure on transport infrastructure projects amounting to 65m ecu from the 1988 budget and 65m ecu from 1989. The high speed train network in the UK, Belgium and Germany will be a major beneficiary, as will the combined transport network from the UK through France to Italy and links with Spain and Portugal. The opinions of the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee must be secured before the Council can formally adopt the measure and the Commission can allocate the funds. This process must be completed by the end of this year.

Ministers gave their first reaction to the Commission's recently proposed ideas for a vignette for lorries travelling outside their own country. Discussion was dominated by announcement of German government plans, to take effect from 1990, for taxes on lorries entering Germany. Mr Clinton Davis introduced the debate by explaining the Commission's ideas and making clear our strong reservations about the German plans. He told the Council that we would set our face against varying national measures which disrupted the internal market for road haulage; the Commission insisted on a Community response to the problem.

However, the Commissioner pointed out to those member countries which were resisting discussion of the Commission's proposals that it was not coherent to block progress in the Community framework while at the same time complaining against the Federal Republic. Germany should do nothing which would fragment the Community road haulage market, but at the same time other member states must take a more open approach in Council discussions.

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German government plans were explained by German minister Dr Warnke and were then strongly criticised by ministers. The Dutch minister called for a more wide-ranging harmonisation of taxes in road transport. The Danish minister also attacked the German proposals, as did the French representative. The French and British welcomed the Commission's ideas as a starting point for further negotiation and the German minister spoke of a temporary national tax until a Community system was in place.

This and all other points on the agenda were referred to COREPER for further work to be done.

Amitiés,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C.D. Ehlermann', followed by a horizontal line.

C.D. EHLERMANN