

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

# Working Documents

1982-1983

---

16 February 1983

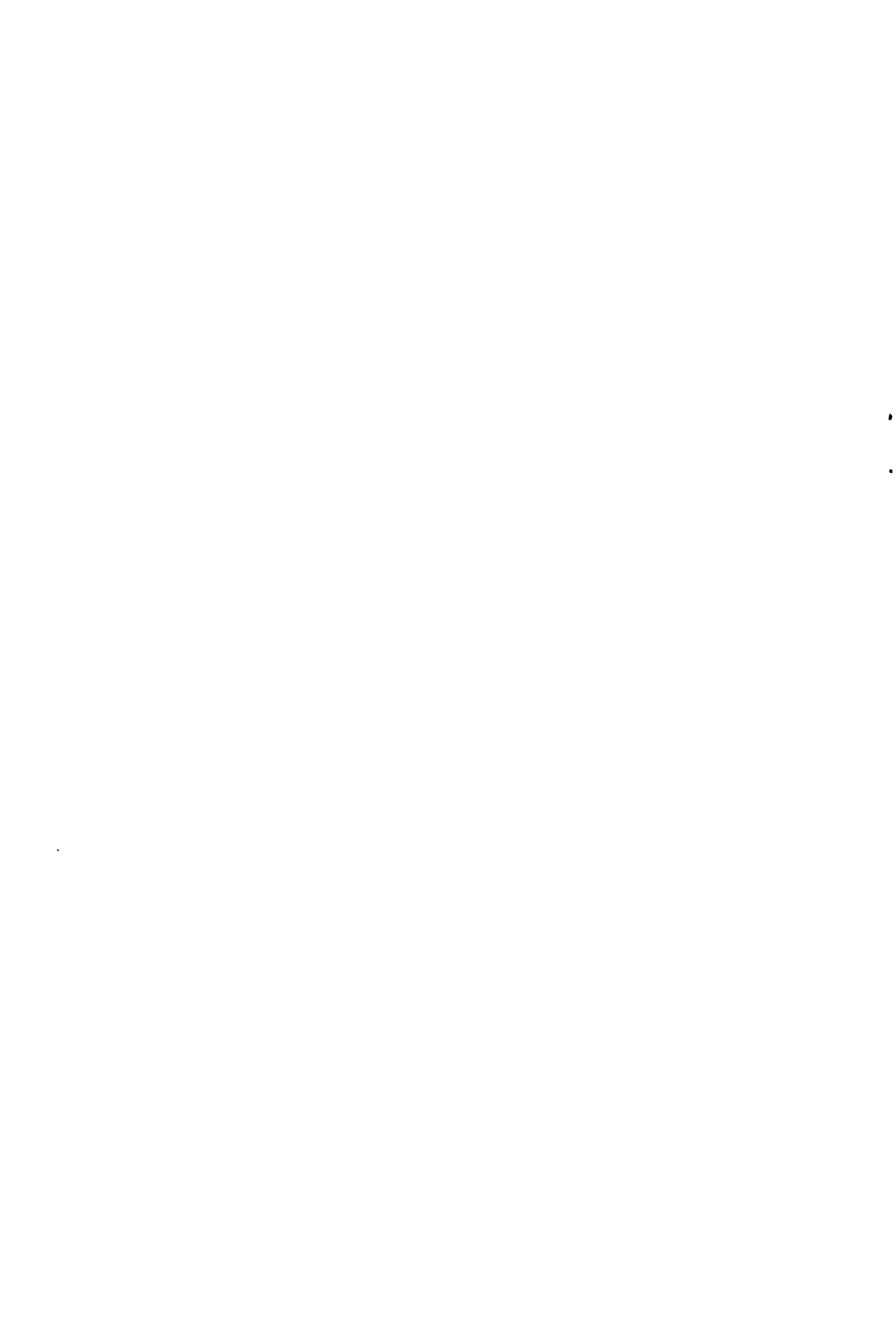
DOCUMENT 1-1205/82

REPORT

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Transport

on transfrontier transport policy in frontier regions,  
particularly in Community internal frontier regions  
such as the Rhein-Maas-Nord region and EUREGIO

Rapporteur: Mrs M. von ALEMANN



At its sitting of 7 May 1981 the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution tabled on 6 May 1981 by Mr van AERSSSEN and others on the supranational rail policy in the Rhein-Maas-Nord region (Doc. 1-212/81) to the Committee on Transport.

At its meeting of 26 June 1981 the Committee on Transport decided to draw up a report on the matters raised in the motion for a resolution and at its meeting of 25 September 1981 appointed Mrs von ALEMANN rapporteur.

At its sitting of 6 July 1981 the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution tabled on the same date by Mrs KROUWEL-VLAM and others on the Enschede-Gronau rail link (Doc. 1-342/81) to the Committee on Transport.

The Committee on Transport decided at its meeting of 2 October 1981 to deal with this motion for a resolution in the report by Mrs von ALEMANN.

At its meeting of 27 November 1981 the Committee on Transport discussed the matters raised in the two motions for resolutions.

On 3 May 1982 fact-finding talks were held in Mönchengladbach with representatives of the regional and municipal administrations and of the Rhein-Maas-Nord region, at which the rapporteur, Mr van AERSSSEN and Mr ALBERS acquainted themselves with the trans-frontier transport policy of that region.

The Committee on Transport considered the draft report at its meeting of 26 November 1982 and adopted it at its meeting of 25 January 1983. unanimously with one abstention.

The following took part in the vote: Mr Seefeld (chairman); Dame Shelagh Roberts, Mr Carossino (vice-chairmen), Mrs von Alemann (rapporteur), Mr Albers, Mr Buttafuoco, Mr Veronesi (deputizing for Mr Cardia), Mr Moreland (deputizing for Mr Cottrell), Mr Gabert, Mr Gauthier, Lord Harmar-Nicholls, Mr Arndt (deputizing for Mr Key), Mr Klinckenborg, Mr Lagakos, Mr M. Martin, Mr Janssen van Raay (deputizing for Mr Modiano), Mr Moorhouse and Mr Ripa di Meana.

## C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
A. MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION .....	5
B. EXPLANATORY STATEMENT .....	9
I. Transport problems of frontier regions .....	9
II. Opinion of the European Parliament on the transport problems of frontier regions .....	10
III. Aims and plan of the report .....	11
IV. Transport policy in the Rhein-Maas-Nord frontier region .....	11
V. Transport policy objectives of the EUREGIO .....	23
VI. General conclusions concerning the development of transport in frontier regions .....	29
 Annex I: Motion for a resolution by Mr van AERSEN and others (Doc. 1-212/81) .....	 32
 Annex II: Motion for a resolution by Mrs KROUWEL-VLAM and others (Doc. 1-342/81) .....	 33

A.

The Committee on Transport hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on trans-frontier transport policy in frontier regions, particularly in Community internal frontier regions such as the Rhein-Maas-Nord region and EUREGIO

The European Parliament,

- A. having regard to the motions for resolutions tabled by Mr van AERSSSEN and others (Doc. 1-212/81) and by Mrs KROUWEL-VLAM and others (Doc.1-342/81),
- B. having regard to the report by Mr GERLACH on the Community's regional policy as regards the regions at the Community's internal frontiers (Doc. 355/76),
- C. having regard to the report by the Committee on Transport (Doc. 1-1205/82),
  1. Takes the view that the regions at the internal frontiers of the European Community form the points of contact at which the Member States must grow together if the European Community is to be more than simply a free trade zone, and that this cannot take place without a corresponding development of the transport system;
  2. Notes that traffic in the frontier regions of the Community is unnecessarily hampered, because
    - the road, rail and internal waterway networks in the frontier regions are still incomplete,
    - the services provided, particularly by public transport undertakings in the field of trans-frontier transport are inadequate,
    - formalities at the internal frontiers frequently cause delays;
  3. Feels strongly therefore that, in the regions of the Community's internal frontiers and by means of appropriate improvements to transport infrastructure, the provision of better transport services and the removal of obstacles at the frontiers, the common transport policy should help to put an end to the peripheral status of these frontier regions so that instead

they may develop into zones of integration between the Member States of the Community;

4. Calls on the Commission to submit to the European Parliament within six months a summary of the main transport links in need of improvement in all frontier regions within the Community and to take particular account of these projects in the financing of transport infrastructure projects from Community funds, including the Regional Fund;
5. Draws attention to its opinions of 18 November 1976, 4 July 1977 and 11 July 1980 on support for transport infrastructure projects from Community funds<sup>1</sup> and its opinion of 22 April 1982 on the revision of the Regional Fund<sup>2</sup> and calls on the Council finally to take account of the decisions of the representatives of the peoples of Europe;
6. Calls on the Commission to submit proposals to create a legal framework for cooperation between Community internal frontier regions, which would also enable cooperation on transport matters to be further developed, for example by granting autonomous rights of participation and application;

Draws attention in particular to the

'European outline convention on transfrontier cooperation  
between territorial communities or authorities'

drawn up by the Council of Europe, ratification of which by all Member States and the Community would be a useful first step;

7. Believes that road construction planning must be based on the premise that trunk traffic routes in the frontier regions should not be inferior to those linking the regions within a Member State;
8. Believes that transfrontier rail traffic, like other types of rail traffic, should always use the shortest route, and that, where necessary, tracks which are unsuitable for such traffic should be improved;

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ C 293 of 13.12.1976, p.57, OJ C183 of 1.8.1977, p.15 and OJ C 197 of 4.8.1980, p.74

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 125 of 17.5.1982, p.84

9. Supports the development of an integrated public transport system in frontier regions and, as a first step towards this end, the drawing up of joint timetables;
10. Supports the opening of paths for walkers and cyclists at minor border crossing points;
11. Calls on the Member States, in the interests of the inhabitants of frontier regions, radically to reduce the formalities at the Community's internal frontiers;

with particular reference to the Rhein-Maas-Nord frontier region;

12. Calls on the Commission to make it clear to the Governments of the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany that
  - (a) the early implementation of the already finalized plans to link the Rhein-Maas-Nord frontier region to the European motorway network is very much in the European Community's interest;
  - (b) other plans to fill gaps in the motorway network should take due account of the transfrontier links in this poorly developed region;
13. Draws attention to the particular importance of the trans-frontier railway link between Mönchengladbach and Antwerp ('Iron Rhine') for the Rhein-Maas region and requests the Commission to study ways of revitalizing this line and, if necessary, to defray part of the cost of a report by an independent economic research institute; in any event, however, the Commission should include this line in the list of transfrontier transport links in the Community needing improvement;
14. Believes that the project for an artificial waterway between the Rhine and the Maas is not feasible at the moment for financial reasons, but that, should economic circumstances change, its implementation could definitely be in the Community's interest; calls therefore on the European Conference of Transport Ministers, when reviewing the list of projects of European interest in the

field of inland waterways drawn up by them in 1953<sup>1</sup>, to continue to affirm the European importance of the Rhein-Maas link, because otherwise the last remaining possible route for this project will no longer be safeguarded against alternative development;

15. Endorses the appeal by the Rhein-Maas-Nord frontier region to the Governments of the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany to open more frontier crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists;

with particular reference to EUREGIO:

16. Favours the early completion of the sections of Europastrasse 8 (The Hague - Hannover) which pass through the EUREGIO region and the accelerated construction of the A 31 motorway (Ruhr-East Friesland);
17. Supports the efforts by EUREGIO to revive rail transport; advocates in particular the establishment of a link between the Dutch and German 'Intercity' networks on the route Hengelo-Enschede-Gronau-Münster;
18. Supports the call by EUREGIO for the widening of the Dortmund-Ems Canal and the Mittelland Canal to take vessels of 1,350 tonnes and supports the preparation of a new cost-benefit analysis on the construction of a link between the Twente Canal and the Mittelland Canal; calls on the Commission to examine whether, given the value to the Community of the integration of transport systems at the border, it is possible for the Community to finance part of the cost of such a report;
19. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission of the European Communities, the parliaments of the Netherlands and of the Federal Republic of Germany and - with particular reference to paragraph 14 - to the European Conference of Transport Ministers.

---

<sup>1</sup> European Conference of Ministers of Transport, Final Act, Protocol, Rules of Procedure, Resolutions. Brussels, 17 October 1953, p.38 et seq.



EXPLANATORY STATEMENTI - Transport problems in the frontier regions

- (1) The regions at the European Community's internal frontiers occupy a key position as regards European integration. They represent the points of contact at which the Member States must grow together if the European Community is to be more than simply a free trade zone. This cannot happen, however, unless transport systems are developed accordingly, because it is essential that in an industrial economy based on the division of labour persons and goods should be able to move without difficulty.
- (2) The frontier regions have particular problems in the transport sector for historical reasons. All modern forms of transport developed in the industrial era need infrastructures and it has become the State's responsibility to provide such infrastructures. Public authorities have also assumed responsibility for providing certain services, particularly in the field of public transport. This has meant that the planning of transport infrastructures and operation of transport systems have been approached from national viewpoints. Furthermore, because of the compartmentalization of national economies in Europe until the middle of the 20th century transport users were unable to prevent frontier regions from being neglected in transport policy.
- (3) Consequently, when the EEC was established, almost all frontier regions suffered from the problem that trans-frontier links by road, rail and inland waterway were less well developed than transport links within the national territory; this made it more difficult to establish any real economic interdependence between neighbouring regions. Nor did the abolition of tariff and trade barriers at the end of the transitional period resolve the problems. It became clear that transport infrastructure planning, which had remained the responsibility of the Member States and was closely tied up with national land use and regional planning, was still dictated by national considerations and that nothing was being done to alleviate the problems of frontier regions.
- (4) On the contrary, it was only when other barriers were dismantled that the inadequacy of transport structures was fully appreciated. This inadequacy is due in part to the failure to develop transport infrastructures, that is to say road, rail and inland waterway links, with the result that the transport network in the frontier regions must still be

considered incomplete. This creates bottlenecks, not all of which are included in the Commission's report on bottlenecks (see report by Mr MOORHOUSE, Doc. 1-214/82) because it does not define the concept of bottlenecks from the point of view of common European planning. The level of services provided in the field of trans-frontier transport, in particular by public transport undertakings, is also inadequate in many cases. Unnecessary delays in customs formalities at internal frontiers are also frequently responsible for transport problems. It is to the credit of the European Parliament that it has given some thought to the problem of frontier regions and has from the outset drawn attention to their transport problems.

## II - Opinions of the European Parliament on the transport problems of frontier regions

- (5) The transport problems peculiar to the frontier regions were previously identified in the basic report on the Community's frontier regions drawn up in 1976 by Mr GERLACH on behalf of the Committee on Regional Policy, Regional Planning and Transport (Doc. 355/76), which recognized that improving the trans-frontier transport infrastructure would promote not only socio-economic development but also cooperation in all spheres of daily life.
- (6) The opinion drawn up by Lord HARMAR-NICHOLLS on behalf of the Committee on Transport for the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning on the question of extending trans-frontier cooperation in the European Community (PE 73.565/final) concluded that a number of frontier regions are at a disadvantage both in terms of transport infrastructure and of the transport service provided. Mr SEEFELD, in his report on the present state and progress of the common transport policy (Doc. 512/78, paragraph 41), argued that the task of the common transport policy should be to close the gaps in regional and local transport links at the Community's frontiers.
- (7) The transport policy for the regions at the Community's internal frontiers thus formulated by the European Parliament's Committee on Transport can be broadly summarized as follows. By improving transport infrastructures, providing better transport services and reducing delays at frontiers, the aim of the common transport policy in the regions at the Community's internal frontiers is to put an end to the peripheral status of these frontier regions to enable them to develop instead into zones of integration between the Member States of the Community.

### III - Aims and plan of this report

(8) This report intends to concentrate on the problems involved in improving transport infrastructure in the frontier regions. It will deal with questions of improving the level of services only where they are directly relevant. As far as the problem of formalities and checks at the internal frontiers between the Member States is concerned, on 16 April 1982 the Commission submitted a proposal for a directive (COM(82) 189 final) on which the European Parliament will be consulted, and so this matter will not be discussed in detail here.

(9) There is a limit to how far improvements in transport infrastructure in frontier regions can be discussed in theoretical and general terms, because it is specific local factors which largely determine requirements and actual possibilities. There is a good case, therefore, for formulating a common transport infrastructure policy for the frontier regions on the basis of specific examples.

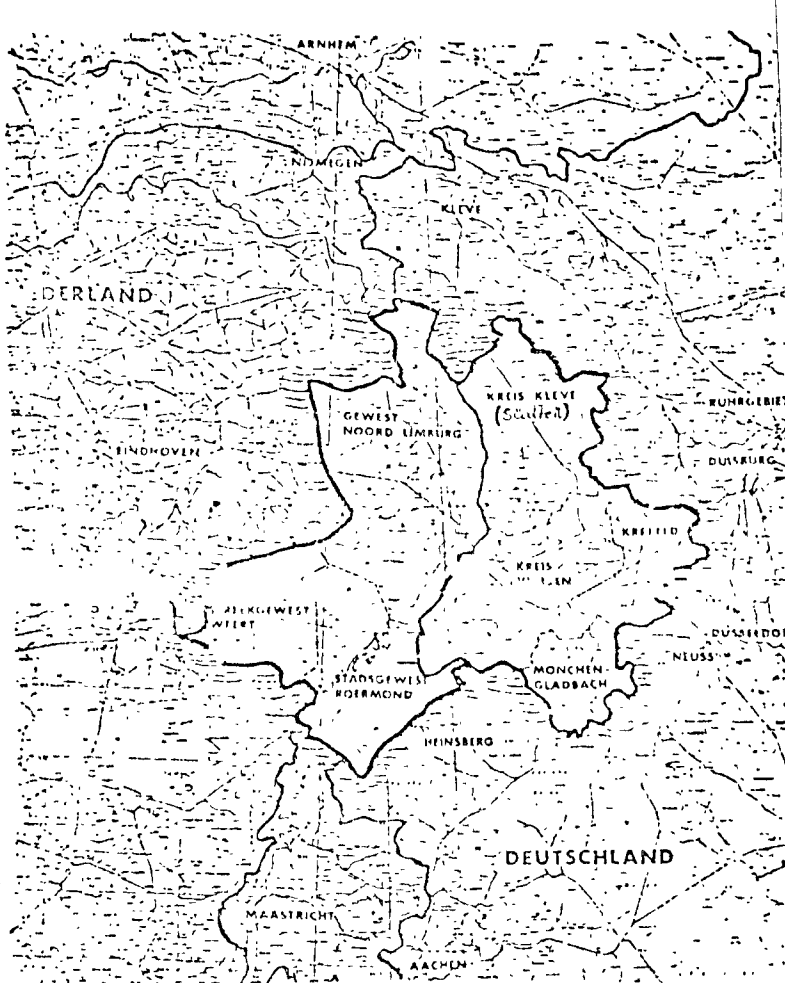
This report will therefore look at the development of transport infrastructure in the Rhein-Maas-Nord and Twente-Westliches Münsterland regions, which are the subject of the motions for resolutions by Mr van AERSSSEN (Doc. 1-212/81) and Mrs KROUWEL-VLAM (Doc. 1-342/81). On the basis of these studies the report to Parliament will make a number of proposals which relate to the development of transport systems in the frontier regions in general, plus a number of proposals specifically concerning these two frontier regions, although support for these projects should not be taken to imply a particular priority over projects in other frontier regions. It would then be the Commission's task to expand its report on bottlenecks in intra-Community transport, which is based on national criteria, by compiling a list of the main transport links in need of improvement in all the frontier regions of the Community.

### IV - Trans-frontier transport policy in the Rhein-Maas-Nord region

(10) On 13 December 1978 in Roermond, the Rhein-Maas-Nord frontier region, which spans the Netherlands/German border, was established as a trans-frontier association. The aims of this association are to promote the development of the region in the cultural, social, economic, transport and other structural fields. The association has 18 full members and 5 advisory members, including - from the Netherlands side - the provinces of Noord-Limburg, Roermond, Weert and the chambers of commerce and industry of Roermond and Venlo and - on the German side - the districts of Kleve

and Viersen, the towns of Krefeld and Mönchengladbach and the Duisburg and Krefeld chambers of commerce.

Gebiet der Grenzregio Rhein-Maar-Nord  
 - - - - -



Connection between transport and regional planning

(11) In the past the failure to improve transport infrastructure in the area lying between the Rhine and the Maas has had an effect not only on traffic patterns but also on the structural development of the whole region. The regional planning authorities of North-Rhine Westphalia have done little to counteract this trend; on the contrary the central axis of development runs parallel to the Rhine. This has led to the structural underdevelopment of the regions on either side of the Netherlands/German border, a situation which the Rhine-Maas-Nord region has tried to remedy by advocating development along an east-west axis.

(12) The underlying aim of this east-west approach to development is to establish

efficient transport links between the Rhine-Maas region and the North Sea port of Antwerp on the one hand and the Ruhr region on the other as part of a comprehensive trans-frontier transport policy, so as to exploit this hitherto neglected area and to create the structural conditions to enable it to perform its full link role between the Netherlands and the Federal Republic.

- (13) In this connection, it is clearly a serious disadvantage for planning purposes that the frontier regions are only organized as associations, which the planning authorities are not obliged to consult. The specific nature of their transport problems strengthens the case for the frontier regions to be given the status of public bodies, with independent rights as regards planning procedures affecting their region.

Trans-frontier policy for road-building

- (14) The Rhein-Maas-Nord frontier region has called for various sections of motorway to be extended, firstly to close the gaps that exist in certain motorway links at the frontier and, secondly to make the necessary improvements to the motorway network.
- (15) It should be recalled in this connection that the European Parliament, in its resolution of 7 May 1981 on the role of the Community in the development of transport infrastructure<sup>1</sup> contained in the report drawn up by Mr KLINKENBORG<sup>2</sup>, called for a larger proportion of freight to be transported by rail and boat and for this sector to be given priority in the allocation of investment funds. The need to protect the natural environment is another factor which militates against an excessive concentration of motorways.
- (16) On the other hand, the gaps in the national motorway networks caused by the Community's internal frontiers need to be closed as soon as possible. This will not involve further concentration, but simply the completion of the road network where this is necessary for the purposes of integration.
- (17) Work is currently proceeding in the area of the Belgian/Netherlands/German border on the east-west road traffic link via the E3 motorway (Duisburg-Venlo-Eindhoven-Antwerp) in the north and the E5 (Cologne-Aachen-Liège-Brussels) and the E39 (Aachen-Antwerp) in the south. The

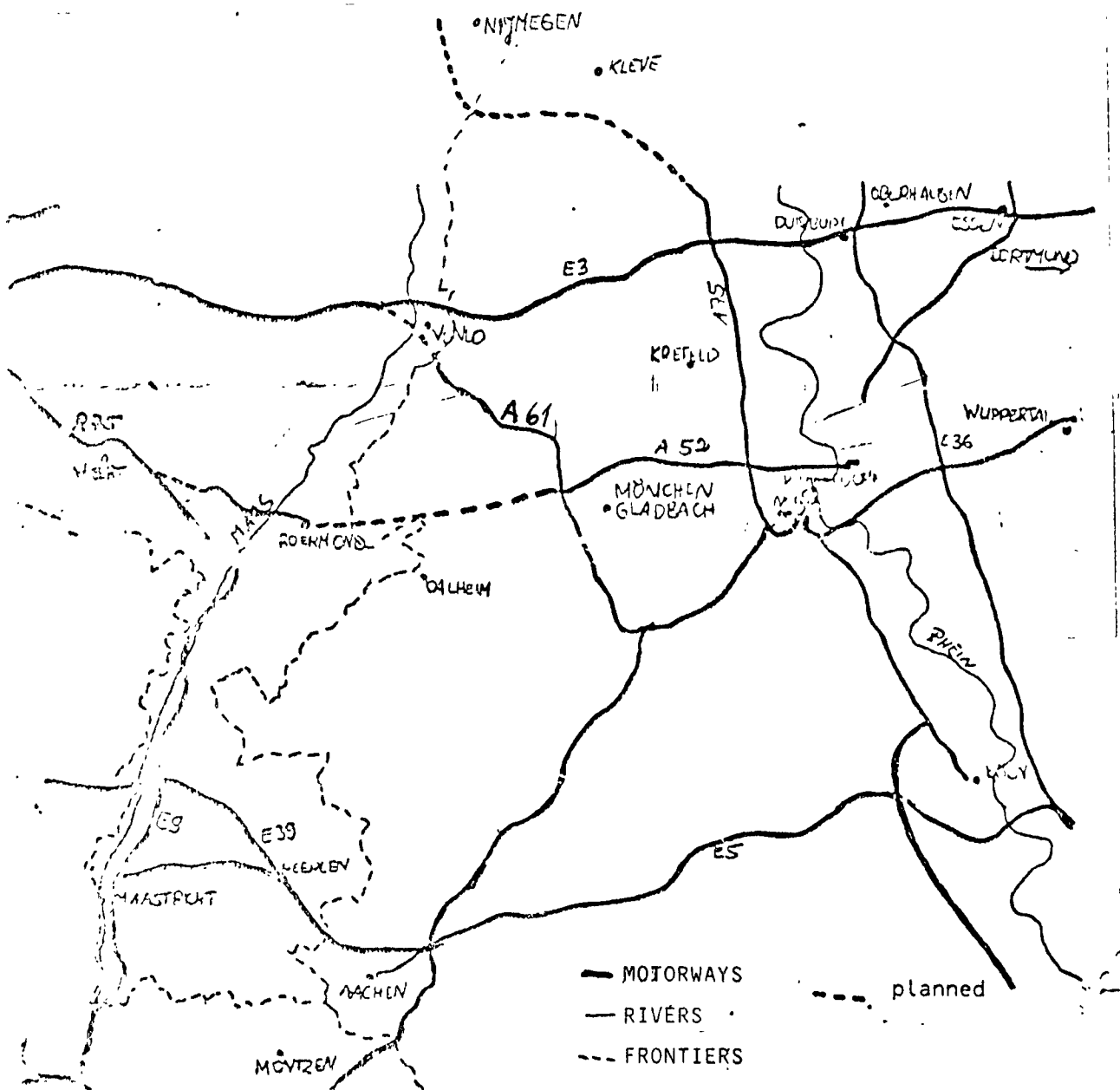
---

<sup>1</sup> OJ No. C 144 of 15.6.1981, p. 77 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Doc. 1-601/80

centre of the Rhein-Maas-Nord Euro-region, on the other hand, is not yet properly connected to the motorway network of the three Member States. This situation could be remedied by the three relatively modest measures as follows (see sketch below):

- closing the gap in the A61 motorway link between Mönchengladbach and the E3 at Venlo by building the short section between the Netherlands/German frontier and the E3;
- closing the gap in the motorway running along the left bank of the Rhine (Cologne-Krefeld-Nijmegen - A57/R77/R73)
- and in particular building a motorway link to the centre of the frontier region by continuing the A52 motorway beyond Mönchengladbach past Roermond up to Weert (Link-up with the E9).



(18) There is only a partial overlap between national road planning and the measures described in the foregoing paragraph. Only the A57/R77/R73 motorway project has reached the actual planning stage. Even in the case of measures to close these gaps there is likely to be a delay of several years because the priorities of the bodies involved are still determined by purely national interests. No specific plans have yet emerged to link the A61 and the A52 with the Dutch motorway network. This shows that national planners do not accord sufficient attention to transfrontier links in this poorly developed region. The Commission should draw the attention of the Member States concerned to the importance to the Community of these links.

#### Trans-frontier rail policy

(19) Although the Rhein-Maas-Nord frontier region is served by numerous railway lines, in many cases the tracks are not up to the standard required for a modern transport system. The lines have to be converted to double-track operation if they are to achieve the necessary capacity. It is particularly important, however, for the non-electrified sections of certain lines to be electrified so as to fully exploit the advantages of rail transport from the point of view of energy-saving.

(20) The rail traffic situation could be improved by the following measures:

- the Cologne-Mönchengladbach-Venlo-Randstad Holland Line:  
construction of a second track on the sections between Rheydt Central Station and Rheydt-Odenkirchen and between Dülken and Kaldenkirchen (the second station is classified as a bottleneck in the Commission's report of 20 June 1980<sup>1</sup>).
- the Cologne-Neuss-Krefeld-Nijmegen Line  
electrification of the section between Krefeld and Nijmegen and reintroduction of double-track operation on the Geldern to Nijmegen section (this section is needed as a high-capacity reserve line for rail traffic between the Netherlands and Germany).

---

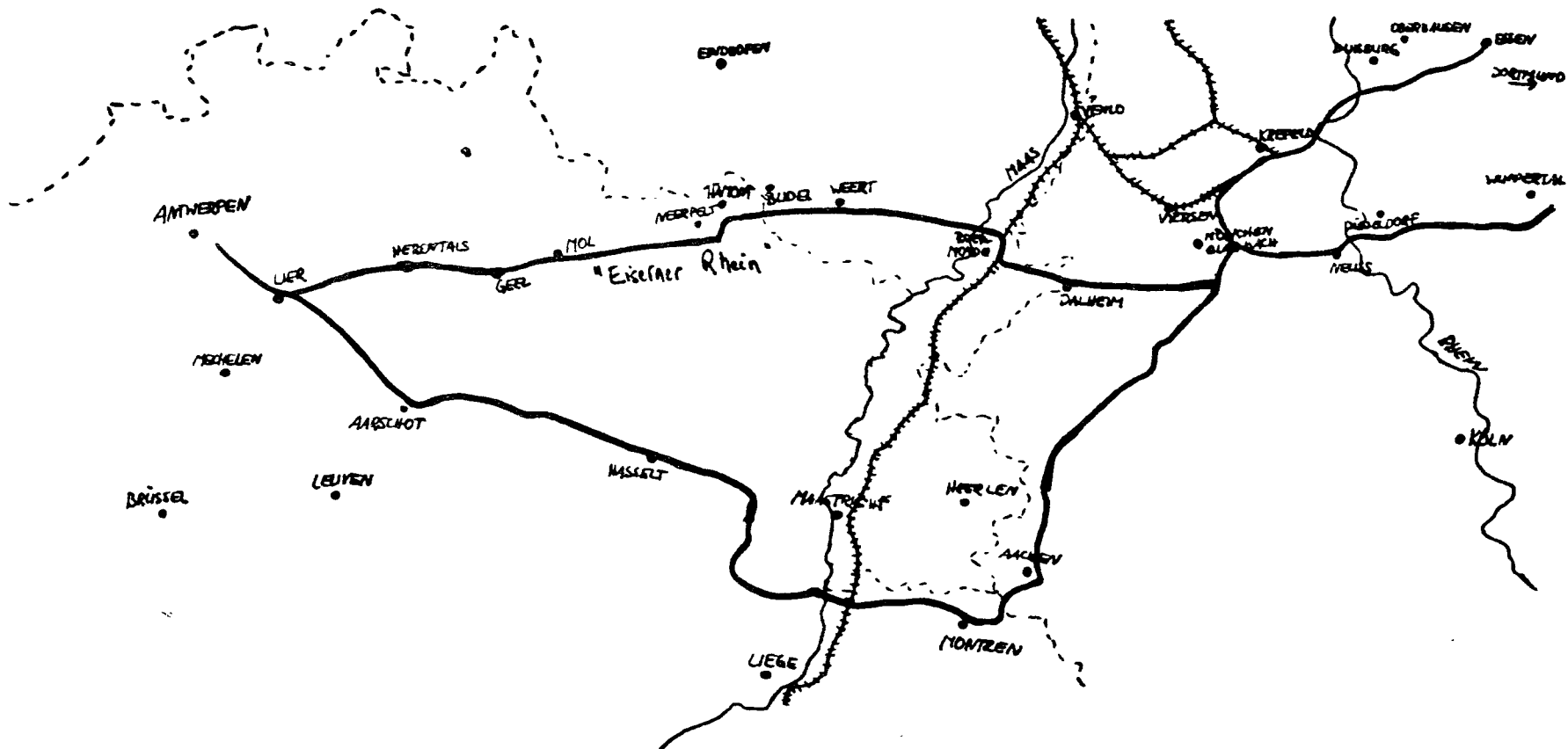
<sup>1</sup>COM(80) 323 final Annex 11;




See also report by Mr MOORHOUSE, Doc. 1-214/82

- Duisburg-Krefeld-Viersen-Venlo-Randstad Holland Line:  
construction of a roughly 800m section of connecting track at Viersen (this would cut down appreciably the time and effort still required for changing locomotives at Viersen) on the line which is the shortest rail link between the Ruhr and Rotterdam.
- Maastricht-Roermond-Venlo-Nijmegen Line:  
electrification and conversion to double-track operation of the line between Roermond and Nijmegen. In addition, this would create a continuous rail link between Maastricht and Nijmegen and improve connections from Nijmegen going north.

(21) A particularly important feature in the context of trans-frontier transport is the railway line known as the 'Iron Rhine' which connects the Ruhr with Antwerp via Krefeld/Düsseldorf, Neuss, Mönchengladbach, Dalheim, Roermond and Weert.





-  Railway lines
-  Rivers
-  Frontiers

This railway line, which is the shortest route from Antwerp to the Ruhr, was built between 1869 and 1879. It lost a good deal of traffic as a result of events during the First World War, when rail traffic between these two industrial centres was diverted on to a line via Aachen and Montzen, to avoid travelling through Netherlands territory, a move which was never reversed. At the moment, the 'Iron Rhine' between Antwerp and the Ruhr is used by only one goods train daily in each direction; Ostend, Antwerp-Schijnpoort and Cologne-Eifeltor are connected via the 'Iron Rhine' railway line by a system of piggy-back trains; parts of this line are also used for transporting salt and ore. Lastly, the 'Iron Rhine' is also used for transporting abnormally large loads which for technical reasons cannot use the line between Aachen and Montzen.

- (22) From the point of view of the common transport policy it is extremely unsatisfactory that longer transport routes are chosen for certain trans-frontier movements between two Member States in order to avoid transit through the territory of a third Member State. However, this is precisely what is happening as a result of the neglect of the 'Iron Rhine' in favour of the Aachen-Montzen line; it is especially unsatisfactory since the 'Iron Rhine' is technically the better route and the failure to develop this line is due to historical circumstances alone. Finally, it is unacceptable in the light of the European Parliament's resolution of 15 October 1981 on the possibilities of energy saving in the transport sector<sup>1</sup> that energy should be wasted by detours in freight transport.
- (23) Using the shortest route by rail between Antwerp and the Ruhr only makes commercial sense, however, if transit through the Netherlands does not entail unfavourable freight rates for the consignor. At present this is likely because the railway undertakings' system of fixing rates which become degressive with distance only applies to the distance travelled on the network of the relevant undertaking: as a result, relatively short transit distances have an adverse effect on transport charges. International through tariffs which avoid this phenomenon, only exist in the Community in the ECSC sector. The Commission put forward a proposal to extend the system of through tariffs to goods transport as a whole<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ No. C 287 of 9.11.1981, p. 66 et seq. in the report by Mr ALBERS, Doc. 1-249/81

<sup>2</sup> Proposal for a Council regulation concerning the fixing of rates for international goods transport by rail within the Community, OJ C 1 of 5.1.1976, P.37, amended by OJ C 185 of 3.8.1977, P. 10; opinion of the European Parliament of 18.11.1976, OJ No. C293 of 13.12.1976, p.51

At its meeting of 10 June 1982, however, the Council approved a decision on the fixing of rates for trans-frontier rail transport. The aim of this decision was to enable the railway undertakings of the ten Member States to fix their own rates and conditions for the international carriage of goods between the Member States according to their commercial interests and taking account of the cost price and the market situation. It remains to be seen what effect this decision will have in practice.

- (24) The German Federal and regional governments have objected to the revitalization of the 'Iron Rhine', arguing that for economic reasons trans-frontier goods transport ought to be concentrated on fewer efficient lines. They claim that the findings of the economic assessment of the 'Iron Rhine' carried out as part of the federal transport planning procedure were negative. It is clear from this kind of reasoning that the concept of a common transport policy cuts little ice with national administrations. Ideally in a common transport policy trans-frontier transport facilities should be on a par with those within the Member States.
- (25) Specific surveys are a useful means of evaluating the economic importance of trans-frontier links of this type. In the case of the 'Iron Rhine', the Deutsche Bundesbahn is cooperating with the head of the Düsseldorf government district and the town of Mönchengladbach in conducting a market survey on the potential volume of transport in the catchment area of the 'Iron Rhine'. However, this study is likely to take some time to complete. The Rhein-Maas-Nord frontier region, which has a strong interest in the 'Iron Rhine' for reasons of structural and development policy, has proposed that an independent economic research institute should report on plans to reactivate the 'Iron Rhine' from an overall economic point of view. Financial support from the Community for this survey, which is in the general interest, either in the form of support for frontier regions from the Regional Fund or under the Community consultation procedure for infrastructure projects, would be desirable. This presupposes, however, a corresponding initiative by the Member State concerned. In order to support the trans-frontier initiatives by the frontier regions, it would be necessary therefore to set up special procedures which would enable these regions to apply directly to the Community institutions for support for preparatory studies in respect of infrastructure projects of Community interest.

---

<sup>1</sup>Council Decision 82/529/EEC of 19 July 1982 on the fixing of rates for the international carriage of goods by rail, OJ L 234 of 9.8.1982, p. 5