

Not to be published before
12 noon, 8 November

COMMISSION
of the
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Spokesman's Group

Brussels, 7 November 1968

IP(68)179

PRESS RELEASE

Common transport policy

Summary of the address by M. Bodson, member of the Commission, to the annual meeting of the Bundesverband des deutschen Güterfernverkehrs (Federal Union of German Road hauliers), Munich, 8 November 1968

Speaking to the annual meeting of the BDF in Munich on 8 November, M. Bodson said that an efficient road haulage system was absolutely essential for trade in the Community.

After years of preparatory work and discussions on matters of principle, the common transport policy had got off the ground this year. So that transport undertakings in the Member States could operate on an equal footing both nationally and internationally, the conditions of competition had to be gradually aligned. In trying to harmonize social conditions in road transport, the Commission had been guided not only by considerations of cost but also by the aims of social progress and road safety.

In M. Bodson's opinion, the objections raised against the introduction of special contracts were not justified since the field of application of such contracts had from the beginning been strictly limited. Nor should the obligation to publish transport rates and conditions necessarily bring prices down. In addition, the obligation to put in prior application for a permit in the event of market disturbances largely ruled out the possibility of ill effects arising from free price formation. The regulation on the Community quota was designed to take account of increasing traffic requirements in the customs union and to promote greater international co-operation and interpenetration in road haulage. Since the individual permit was no longer linked with a particular vehicle, fluctuating traffic conditions could be better coped with and replacement of vehicles taken out of operation made much easier. As far as the bilateral quotas were concerned, the Commission's aim in the transition period pending the introduction of general rules for international road transport of goods was to adapt capacities to transport requirements in keeping with the trend of trade in the individual countries. In the matter of the regulation of capacity,

the Commission considered that access to road haulage for hire or reward should continue to be subject to official licences and the fulfilment of certain conditions as to character and qualifications. Conditions of access should be framed in accordance with categories of vehicle and, in particular, length of itineraries. State supervision of capacity should operate both individually at the level of the particular firm and comprehensively for each transport area.

M. Bodson considered that settling the question of infrastructure costs was an important factor in attaining harmonization. The first essential was that expenditure on transport infrastructure should be recorded according to uniform principles. The Commission would publish the results of the infrastructure costs survey by the end of this year. The Commission's proposals on the reorganization of motor vehicle taxation made it clear that tax rates should reflect the individual vehicle's share in costs.

In conclusion M. Bodson remarked that a beginning had been made with a common transport policy for Europe. The Commission would not stop half way but would do everything to push forward with the work of European unification in transport, as in other fields, for the greater benefit of all those involved and of the community at large.

EE/500/68-E