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DOCUMENT 1-295/82

REPORT

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Regional Policy
and Regional Planning

~~on~~ measures to combat excessive urban concentration
and to promote institutional polycentrism through
regional planning at European level and the use of
modern means of transport and communication

Rapporteur: Mr E. FAURE

On 15 January 1981, Mr CAILLAVET and Mr PFLIMLIN tabled a motion for a resolution in the European Parliament, pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure, on measures to combat excessive urban concentration and to promote institutional polycentrism through regional planning at European level and the use of modern means of transport and communications (Doc. 1-804/80).

On 16 January 1981 the European Parliament referred this motion for a resolution to the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning as the committee responsible and on 6 July 1981 to the Committee on Transport for its opinion.

On 13 May 1981 the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning appointed Mr E. FAURE rapporteur.

The committee considered this motion for a resolution at its meetings of 22/23 June 1981 and 25/26 May 1982.

At its meeting of 25/26 May 1982 the committee adopted the motion for a resolution and explanatory statement by 13 votes in favour with 2 abstentions.

The following took part in the vote: Mr De Pasquale, chairman; Mrs Fullet, vice-chairman; Mr Costanzo, vice-chairman; Mr E. Faure, vice-chairman and rapporteur, Mr Chanterie (deputizing for Mrs Boot), Mr Cronin, Mr Gendebien, Mr Griffiths, Mr Harris, Mr Kazazis, Mrs Kellett-Bowman, Mr Pöttering, Mr Travaglini, Mr Treacy and Mr von der Vring.

The opinion of the Committee on Transport is attached.

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The Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on measures to combat excessive urban concentration and to promote institutional polycentrism through regional planning at European level and the use of modern means of transport and communication

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Caillavet and Mr Pflimlin (Doc. 1-804/80),
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning and the opinion of the Committee on Transport (Doc.1-295/82),

A recalling that in several Member States excessive administrative and political concentration - a survival of the 19th century - has accentuated urban and industrial concentration in the capitals and large conurbations to the detriment of other urban areas and regions, and finding that these processes have resulted in imbalances that are harmful to the country as a whole,

B whereas in some States efforts are already being made to combat this dangerous trend by decentralization, whereby top decision-making centres and tertiary activities are dispersed towards new areas, away from the capital or large conurbations in which they were concentrated hitherto,

1. Points out that in a Europe striving for unification, it is important not to increase the deleterious effects of over-concentration in order to avoid reproducing at European level structures which have become outdated at national level;
2. Considers that the European Community must be protected against gigantism and that it consequently seems essential to provide it with a decentralized economic, political and administrative structure;
3. Remains convinced that initially, improvement of existing transport and communications networks and then the introduction of new techniques in this sector will facilitate the coherent development of this polycentric structure;

4. Calls on the Commission therefore to make approaches to the Group of Ten railway undertakings with a view to their improving rail traffic from Brussels to Strasbourg via Luxembourg by establishing more appropriate timetables and faster cruising speeds for trains and by introducing modern high-speed trains without, however, losing sight of the financial implications for the railway undertakings concerned;
5. Recalls that in the second paragraph of the resolution it adopted on 7 May 1981¹, the European Parliament stressed 'the prime importance of a well-run transport system for the integration of all the regions of the Community';
6. Stresses that quite apart from the problems relating to transport and communications between the working places of the European Institutions, Europe should establish its own fast and modern means of transport and communication which are not geared solely to the capitals of the Member States. This decentralized transport network would create prospects for regional planning at European level by making it possible to combat excessive concentration of activities in capital cities and major conurbations;
7. Believes, therefore, that as part of a common transport infrastructure policy it is essential for the Commission to examine and support high-technology transport and communications projects, such as the Europole project² which was the subject of a Council of Europe study (October 1973) and of preliminary studies, particularly in France, carried out under the aegis of the Ministry of Works (1977)³;

¹OJ N° C 144, 15.6.1981, KLINKENBORG report on the Memorandum of the Commission on the role of the Community in the development of transport infrastructure (Doc. 1-601/80)

²This project should make it possible to link Brussels and Geneva via Liège-Luxembourg-Metz-Nancy-Strasbourg-Basle. The mayors of the towns on the route have formed a 'Europole Committee' (see Annex II). See also Mr A. CHENARD's report on the European network of major trunk routes drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Regional Problems and Regional Planning and adopted in October 1981 at the XVith meeting of the Conference of European Local and Regional Authorities (CPL(16) 4 I and II)

³These studies have made it possible to analyse the socio-economic and technological data and to determine the levels of supply and demand in the field of transport.

8. Recommends that this regionalized communications network be integrated into a system of major European trunk routes linking the peripheral areas with the major centres and including main routes to the South of France, Italy, Germany, the Paris area, the Netherlands, Ireland, Greece, the states which have applied for accession, Spain and Portugal, and, above all, an extension to London via the Channel Tunnel;
9. Points out that the Europole project, with which cruising speeds of 360 km/h can be attained, remains a faster means of transport in real terms than the train or aircraft for distances under 600 km and is thus suitable for inter-city connections that aircraft cannot provide over short distances or in foggy weather;
10. Considers, however, that the final choice of transport techniques (generation of lift and propulsion) and the compatibility of different techniques should be determined on the basis of a detailed study of the advantages and disadvantages of the different technologies, particularly the air cushion (hovertrain), electro-magnetic lift and the high-speed train (HST);
11. Notes that the Europole line will set in motion a process of dispersion away from the central areas, directing the development flow towards the peripheral regions;
12. Stresses further the structuring effect that the Europole link will have on the frontier regions it crosses, by helping to open them up and promote their complementary development;
13. Considers that the Europole link thus becomes symbolic of the political will to advance towards a united Europe through participation of all its elements on the one hand, and through the mastery of new communications techniques on the other;
14. Recalls that in 1978¹ and in 1979² the European Parliament adopted amendments to the draft general budget of the European Communities proposing that appropriations of 20 m ECU and 50 m ECU respectively be entered for 'financial operations in transport infrastructure projects' (Article 378), referring to 'the plan for a high-speed link between Brussels and Strasbourg extending into Switzerland - a project studied by the Council of Europe under the title of Europole';

¹ Mrs KELLETT-BOWMAN's opinion, PE 53.542/fin.

² Lord HARMAR NICHOLLS' opinion, PE 59.074/fin.

15. Calls on the Council to approve as quickly as possible the draft regulation proposed by the Commission in 1976 on support for projects of Community interest in transport infrastructure, on which it has not yet taken a decision;
16. Emphasizes that the implementation of this Europole project, which is of Community interest, would lead to the creation of a large number of jobs, specifically in those regions which are particularly affected by the crisis, and would also play a part in promoting investment;
17. Recommends further that the Commission should examine the present state of technology in communications media which already makes it possible to hold 'teleconferences', i.e. meetings between groups of people separated by hundreds of kilometres who are able to see each other, converse and transmit documentation, mainly by the use of cable television and large-screen video, as well as teletex and telematics equipment etc.;
18. Emphasizes that the conclusions of the Galway Conference¹ pointed out the environmental impact and the encroachment on open spaces and on their function in maintaining an 'eco-spatial' balance resulting from present trends towards urban concentration in North-West Europe and pleaded for a more equitable distribution of activity throughout the Community, if only from considerations of economic logic;
19. Stresses also the need to bear in mind that in areas of high concentration² the 'marginal social cost of infrastructures may exceed their marginal social benefit, especially if the costs of congestion imposed on the population and the harmful effects on the environment are included', because highly urbanized zones create a number of problems, such as continually rising prices for land and for civil engineering projects (tunnels, viaducts, underground railways, etc.), overloading of transport systems and of welfare infrastructures (hospitals, old people's homes, nurseries and crèches, etc.), together with environmental problems (noise, air and water pollution, absence of green belts and leisure areas) with harmful consequences for the health and comfort of the population;

¹First Convention of the Authorities of European Peripheral Regions, Galway, October 1975: the process of concentration in North-West Europe's highly urbanized regions, and its impact on the environment, in the light of obstacles to the development of peripheral regions.

²See the conclusions of the rapporteur's study on 'Economic and monetary union and regional imbalances', Common Market Review, No. 231, Nov. 1979

20. Recognizes, moreover, that a judicious geographic distribution of the Community's decision-making centres according to functional criteria would promote awareness of the reality of Europe and help spread the European ideal among the peoples of Europe;
21. Is convinced that, at a time when information is the direct source of our knowledge, it must be disseminated to all European centres; this is possible with the aid of new communications and transport technology;
22. Recalls, in conclusion, that the European Parliament, which has always called for the implementation of a global regional planning policy, must, if it is to be consistent, recommend greater economic, political and administrative decentralization, bearing in mind the new possibilities offered by modern transport and communications technologies (media);
23. Invites the Commission, therefore, to submit to the European Parliament a study on the Europole project and new facilities in the field of transport and communications;
24. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission of the European Communities and, for information, to the governments and the parliaments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. The second and third indents of paragraph 3(c) of the resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 7 July 1981¹ on the seat of the institutions of the European Community and in particular of the European Parliament state:

- '- that, with that end in view, the fullest possible use should be made of the latest means of telecommunication both for personal contacts and for document transmission,
- that the most advanced techniques must also be used to facilitate cooperation between the institutions, while road, rail and air links between the main centres of activity of the Community must be improved'.

2. For more than ten years Members of the European Parliament² have been asking the Commission to investigate the Europole project drawn up by the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe.

In 1971, in its answer to Mr Califice's written question, the Commission acknowledged its keen interest in the application of new technology to meet the transport needs of the Community and of Europe in general. In particular it hoped that the progress currently being made in Europe in the field of new overland transport technology would go beyond the stage of unexploited inventions.

In 1979, in its answer to Mr Messmer's written question, the Commission said it firmly believed that the possibility of improving transport facilities on the Strasbourg-Luxembourg-Brussels link should be studied at the Community level and that it had included a study of this link in the budget for 1980.

It is high time that the Commission published a study on these projects.

¹OJ No. C 234, 14.9.1981, ZAGARI report, Doc. 1-333/81

²Questions Nos. 158/71 by Mr CALIFICE (OJ No. C 82, 16.8.1971, p.4)
 508/73 by Mr SEEFELD (OJ No. C 29, 18.3.1974, p.9)
 553/73 by Mr BOURGES (OJ No. C 22, 7.3.1974, p.47)
 192/74 by Mr GIRAUD (OJ No. C 113, 25.9.1974, p.15)
 1501/79 by Mr ANSQUER (OJ No. C 116, 12.5.1980, p.18)
 H-362/79 by Mr MESSMER (OJ Annex No. 250, January 1980)

3. Quite apart from the problems relating to transport and communications between the working places of the European Institutions, Europe should establish its own fast and modern means of transport and communications, which are not based solely on the capitals of the Member States.

4. This decentralized transport network would create prospects for regional planning at European level by making it possible to combat excessive concentration of activities in capital cities and major conurbations.

5. The Europole project, which has been considered by the Council of Europe¹ and by the 'Europole Committee' formed by the mayors of the towns on the route, has already been examined in preliminary studies, particularly in France, carried out under the aegis of the Ministry of Works². These studies have provided an analysis of the socio-economic and technological data and enabled the levels of supply and demand in the field of transport to be determined.

This project should make it possible to link Brussels and Geneva via Liège-Luxembourg-Metz-Nancy-Strasbourg-Basle.

6. This decentralized communications network should be integrated into a system of major European trunk routes with main routes to the South of France, Italy, Germany, the Paris area, the Netherlands and above all an extension as far as London via the Channel Tunnel. One main route might link Basle with the South of France via Belfort, Besançon and Lyon.

7. The choice of transport techniques (generation of lift and propulsion) and the compatibility of different techniques should be determined on the basis of a detailed study of the advantages and disadvantages of the different technologies, particularly the air cushion (hovertrain), electro-magnetic lift, and the high-speed train (HST).

8. Subject to these details, we may endorse the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr CAILLAVET and Mr PFLIMLIN and recommend that the Commission submit a study of the Europole project to the European Parliament.

In its study the Commission should take specific account of the matters raised in the opinion drawn up by the Committee on Transport³, in particular in points 15 and 18-22 thereof.

¹Europole project - (73)1 - Strasbourg, 23 October 1973 - Ann.II

²Europole-French Section - preliminary study - 14 November 1977
Ministry of Works - CETE de l'Est - Société de l'Aérotrain

³Annexed to this report

9. The Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning has incorporated in its motion for a resolution the recommendations made by the Committee on Transport in point 23 of the opinion it adopted on 2 October 1981.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

(Doc. 1-804/80)

tabled by Mr CAILLAVET and Mr PFLIMLIN

pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure

on measures to combat excessive urban concentration and to promote institutional polycentrism through regional planning at European level and the use of modern means of transport and communication

The European Parliament,

- recalling that, in several Member States, excessive administrative and political concentration - a survival of the 19th century - has enhanced urban and industrial concentration in the capitals and large conurbations to the detriment of other regions and urban areas, and finding that these processes have resulted in imbalances that are harmful to the country as a whole
- having regard to the fact that in some States efforts are already being made to combat this dangerous trend by decentralization, whereby top decision-making, and even tertiary activities are dispersed towards new centres, away from the capital or large conurbations in which they were concentrated,
- 1. Points out that in a Europe that is striving for unification, it is important to avoid increasing the deleterious effects of over-concentration in order not to reproduce on a European scale structures which have become outdated at the national level;
- 2. Considers that the European Community must be protected from gigantism and that it consequently seems essential to provide it with a multipolar political and administrative structure;
- 3. Remains convinced that, first, improvement of existing transport and communications networks, and then the introduction of new technologies will facilitate the preservation and the coherent development of this polycentric structure of European institutions and of Europe itself;
- 4. Believes, therefore, that it would be advisable for the Commission to examine and support high-technology transport and communications projects, and notably the Europole project which was studied by the Council of Europe in October 1973;

5. Points out that the Europole, with which cruising speeds of 360 km/h can be attained, remains in real terms a faster means of transport than the train or aircraft for distances under 600 km, and can thus assure inter-city links that aircraft cannot provide over short distances or in bad weather;
6. Points out also the structuring effect that the Europole link will have on the frontier regions it crosses, by opening them up and promoting their complementary development;
7. Notes that the Europole line, at a cost lower than that of the Roissy airport in France, or of the proposed Channel Tunnel, can begin a process of dispersion away from the central areas, directing the developmental flow towards the peripheral regions;
8. Considers that the Europole link thus becomes symbolic of the political will to advance towards a united Europe through participation of all its components on the one hand, and through the mastery of new communications techniques on the other;
9. Recalls that the European Parliament adopted in 1978¹ and in 1972² amendments to the draft general budget of the European Communities proposing that appropriations of, respectively, 20 m EUA and 50 m EUA be entered for 'financial operations in transport infrastructure projects' (Article 378), when it referred to 'the plan for a high-speed link between Brussels and Strasbourg extending into Switzerland (a project studied by the Council of Europe under the title of 'Europole')';
10. Emphasizes that the implementation of this Europole project, which is of Community interest, would lead to the creation of a large number of jobs in just those regions which are particularly affected by the crisis, and would also play a part in promoting investment;
11. Recommends therefore that the Commission examine the present state of technology in communications which already makes it possible to hold 'teleconferences', i.e. meetings of groups of people separated by hundreds of kilometres who are able to see each other, converse and transmit documentation by the use, notably, of cable television together with large-screen video, as well as teletext and various telematics applications;
12. Is of the opinion that such a decentralizing approach to the problem of the location of the European institutions would help reduce the dangers and the social and human costs which excessive concentration of the European institutions must inevitably entail;

¹ Mrs KELLETT-BOWMAN's opinion, PE 53.542/fin.

² Lord HARMAR NICHOLLS' opinion, PE 59.074/fin.

13. Draws attention to the conclusions of the Galway Conference¹ which pointed out the 'environmental impact' and the encroachment on open spaces and their function in maintaining an 'eco-spatial' balance, resulting from present trends towards urban concentration in North-West Europe, and pleaded for a more equitable distribution of activity throughout the Community if only from considerations of economic rationale;
14. Notes also the conclusions of a recent study by Mr Edgar FAURE² showing that the 'marginal social cost of infrastructures may exceed the marginal social benefit', especially if the costs of congestion imposed on the population and the harmful effects on the environment are included', because in highly urbanized zones there arise special problems, such as continually rising prices for land and for civil engineering projects (tunnels, viaducts, underground railways, etc.), overloading of transport systems and of welfare infrastructures (hospitals, old people's homes, nurseries and crèches, etc.), together with environmental problems (noise, pollution of air and water, shortage of green zones and leisure areas with its obvious harmful consequences for the health and comfort of the population);
15. Considers, in any event, that concentration of political decision-making centres in one place, while aggravating the problems due to urban concentration, would detract from the popular impact and the independence of the European Parliament;
16. Recognizes, moreover, that a judicious geographic distribution of its institutions according to functional criteria will more effectively promote awareness of the reality of Europe and will help spread the European ideal among the peoples;

¹First Convention of the Authorities of European Peripheral Regions, Galway, October 1975: the process of concentration in North-West Europe's highly urbanized regions, and its impact on the environment, in the light of obstacles to the development of peripheral regions.

²'L'Union Économique et Monétaire et les déséquilibres régionaux', Revue du Marché Commun, No. 231, Nov. 1979

17. Stresses that the European Parliament, which has always called for the implementation of an overall policy of regional planning must, if it is to be consistent, oppose the concentration of European institutions in a single place, precisely because of the new possibilities offered by modern transport and communications technologies, and invites its appropriate committees (on Transport, on Regional Policy and Regional Planning, on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection, as well as the Political Affairs Committee) to draw up a report on this question;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission of the European Communities and, for information, to the governments and the parliaments of the Member States.

EUROPOLE PROJECT FOR A HIGH SPEED INTER-CITY LINK BETWEEN THE SEATS OF
EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS: BRUSSELS - LUXEMBOURG - STRASBOURG - GENEVA

On 1 January 1971, by Resolution 471, the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe, on the basis of a report by Mr René Radius, unanimously approved the proposal for a first air cushion line linking the seats of European institutions, from Brussels to Geneva via Luxembourg, Strasbourg and Basle.

In its traditional respect for the principle of participation by local and regional authorities in regional planning, the Assembly submitted the 'Europole project' to the European Conference of Local Authorities of the Council of Europe.

At its meeting in September 1972, the Conference welcomed the project in principle and agreed in its turn to submit it to the representatives of the towns concerned.

A meeting of the representatives of the towns was held on 27 September 1972, in Strasbourg, in the presence of the representatives of the European Conference of Local Authorities. It was on this occasion that the representatives of the towns decided to set up a working party. This 'Europole Working Party' held its first meeting on 5 June 1973, in Luxembourg. The meeting was chaired by Miss Colette Flesch, Mayor of Luxembourg, and was attended by representatives of the towns of Basle, Brussels, Colmar, Geneva, Lausanne, Liège, Luxembourg, Metz, Mulhouse, Nancy and Strasbourg.

Confirming its agreement of principle to the project, the working party agreed to put the agreement on paper by drawing up a basic document defining the main features of the project, intended for the competent authorities and bodies, and in particular the four governments concerned.

That is the purpose of the present document, adopted at the meeting of the working party in Orléans, on 23 October 1973, under the chairmanship of Mr Pierre Pflimlin, Mayor of Strasbourg, at which the following resolution was adopted unanimously,

'The representatives of the towns of Basle, Brussels, Geneva, Lausanne, Liège, Luxembourg, Metz, Mulhouse, Nancy and Strasbourg, meeting in the town hall of Orléans, on Tuesday, 23 October 1973,

Having examined the Bertin-system hovertrain operating near the town,

Once more unanimously call for the creation of a high speed line of this kind which, under the name **EUROPOLE**, would link the towns which they represent, in accordance with the resolutions adopted by the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe and by the European Conference of Local Authorities.

Request the governments of the four countries concerned to undertake a joint study of this project so that it may be put into effect quickly.'

ROUTE AND PERFORMANCE OF THE EUROPOLE LINE

This is principally a passenger transport line, with light goods, mail for example, as an additional service.

This line would cross areas of fairly high population density and mountain areas which are difficult to negotiate for ground lines. But the raised track used in the case of the air cushion technique, as envisaged by the Assembly of the Council of Europe, permits the crossing of densely inhabited areas without site interruptions, thus reducing the cost of compensation for right of passage. Moreover, the air cushion technique allows far steeper gradients than traditional techniques, and this should simplify (by making them shorter and therefore cheaper) routes through hilly terrain.

The route of this line, especially in the geographical conditions it will encounter, will therefore differ from that of the railways or motorways, although they may coincide in places.

The originality of this system lies partly in the siting of its stations and its urban routes. The raised track should make it less expensive to cross obstacles around towns and even make it possible to use existing (or future) passage rights without needing extra land, for example, on motorway embankments or along canals or above railways; besides resulting in a real limitation of expropriations in towns, this arrangement also has the advantage of not spreading nuisances to new areas.

It should also be noted that in the open country the crossing of farm land on a raised track does not raise any problems of re-allocating land or cause any disturbance by interrupting local transport routes or economic patterns. Moreover, expropriation is rarely necessary, being replaced by compensation equivalent to the purchase price of a very thin strip of land;

for the Chevilly line, passage rights represented an additional cost of approximately two to three percent over the construction costs, in spite of the high cost of land in Beauce.

Both the definitive route of the track and the siting of stations must be studied in greater detail, as the latter aspect has an increasing socio-economic dimension. The choice of station sites must correspond both to the foreseeable development of the towns served and with the requirement to ensure that travellers have access to urban transport lines and car parking facilities; the old concept of the 'central station' is therefore not necessarily the best choice.

Although this is a very brief study, it is nevertheless possible to give some indication of the distances and travelling times likely over the various sections of the route:

	<u>Distances in km</u>	<u>Time</u>
Brussels		
Liège	90	19'
Luxembourg	125	29'
Strasbourg	200	45'
Basle (airport)	130	25'
Berne	85	20'
Geneva	150	33'
	<u>780 km</u>	171 minutes or, with stops at seven intermediate stations: 3 hours

These times correspond to a cruising speed of 350 km/h which seems a reasonable choice for the first stage of operations; they take account of time lost approaching stations and other slowdowns.

It was noted that studies by the hovertrain company showed that an increase in cruising speed to 400 km/h brought a gain of only 12 minutes over the whole journey from terminus to terminus, while operating costs and also infrastructure costs are much higher, since the horizontal and vertical radius of curves increases as the square of the cruising speed.

2. POTENTIAL TRAFFIC

The advantages of this line have already been demonstrated. Mention should be made first of all of its importance for the cities which are seats of European institutions.

No less important would be its role in starting up a true European very-high-speed land transport network, which could be achieved progressively by the creation of other identical or similar technological links, using for example magnetic levitation. Studies by the Ministry of Transport of the Federal Republic of Germany already point to the possibility of setting up such links in Germany, following the C-shaped line of the 'Hochleistungsschnellbahn' (Hamburg-Frankfurt-Stuttgart-Munich), branching out towards Denmark, Switzerland and Italy and the Balkans. The same studies also mention the possibility of another North-South axis going from the north of England to Marseilles and Barcelona through Paris and Lyon.

But special stress should be laid on the exceptional structural role of the Europole line in the regions it crosses. Although these regions are situated in a central area of Europe, they have historically been something of a backwater and geographical and climatic conditions contribute still further to isolating them from one another. The towns served are for the most part situated in areas of average population density in relation to other regions of Europe. The completion of the line would lead to the development of these border regions by opening them up and at the same time ensuring a better balance between them and the strong neighbouring areas such as the Ruhr, the Rhineland and the Randstad (these developmental effects on border regions and eventually on an area as large as the whole of Lorraine would appear to justify the intervention of the European Investment Bank). There would be a new axis parallel to the Rhine, which would have to some extent the effect of reducing congestion on the area of east Lorraine. Congestion would be even further reduced with the introduction of the link planned in the report of the Assembly of the Council of Europe between the Europole line and the Hague and Amsterdam, via Brussels and Antwerp.

Various similar developments are possible, and the results would be of prime importance for the future of the project. It is clear, for example, that transverse links should be established between the Europole line and the two North-South axes envisaged in the German studies:

at Brussels, to
Liège, to
Luxembourg, to
Metz, to
Nancy, to
Strasbourg, to
Basle, to
Berne, to
Geneva, to

Lille, Calais, London, Paris
The Ruhr and Bonn,
Frankfurt,
Saarbrücken,
Paris,
Karlsruhe, Stuttgart and Frankfurt,
Zurich,
Milan,
Lyon.

Through these interconnections - which could be based on different technologies - the network envisaged in the Assembly's report would be further extended.

Finally, it would be easy to establish on the Europole route, intermediate stations off the main lines for local traffic with a slower commercial speed, without interfering with the express traffic. Towns like Louvain, Thionville, Sarrebourg, Colmar, Mulhouse, Fribourg could be served in this way.

A town with a 'hoverstation' would be certain to become the focus for the surrounding area over a radius of 30 to 100 km.

This disparity between the present situation of the towns and areas concerned and the considerable development which this line would bring, means that the present level of traffic can in no way serve as a basis for projecting future traffic.

Direct methods must therefore be used in making these estimates:

(a) Qualitatively

A distinction must be made between intra-regional and inter-regional movements.

Intra-regional movements

These concern in particular

- Brussels-Liège
- Metz-Strasbourg-Mulhouse
- Basle-Berne-Geneva

They consist in

- business journeys at present restricted by the limitations of motor vehicles (speed limits, congestion) or the low frequency of rail services;
- trips related to intra-regional structures and relations between neighbouring towns (technicians, customers, trade representatives);
- personal trips, usually made by train, which for a similar fare would benefit from a far superior service.

Inter-regional movements

The development of inter-regional trade of an international nature

is easy to envisage: movement of officials, technicians, businessmen, between the large industrial and administrative towns would increase substantially, but above all the greatly reduced travelling time and the very high frequency offered by the new line would encourage potential users of all social or professional categories including the less well off, as is happening nowadays in the growth of air transport, to increase the number of journeys, which would be less tiring and could be made in the same day or the same half day.

This line will highlight the complementary nature of the airports along its length and increase their use. Moreover, it will develop the diversity of supply of leisure areas. Finally, it will provide a direct link between the large conurbations of North West Europe and the Rhone valley and the Mediterranean coast. The Brussels-Antwerp-Hague-Amsterdam axis on the one hand and the Liège-Ruhr, Geneva-Lyon axis on the other have a decisive importance in this connection, but the value of other axes like Brussels-Lille-Calais or Strasbourg-Karlsruhe-Frankfurt, or Basle-Zurich, and even Berne-Milan, is also appreciable.

(b) Quantitatively

The above two kinds of traffic overlap on each section of the route; account must also be taken of the final stages of journeys by travellers from extensions of the Europole line, and those who will be transferred from other communicating lines, to be built progressively in the wider framework of European communications.

An attempt can be made to define the probable limits of future traffic, by analogy with routes between towns of similar size, although it must be understood that a detailed study should use direct estimates based on traffic attracted, hand in hand with a comparative analysis.

For the most important connections:

	<u>upper estimate</u>	<u>lower estimate</u>
	(per day, two-way traffic)	
Brussels-Liège	14,000	6,000
Metz/Nancy-Strasbourg	8,000	4,000
Strasbourg-Mulhouse/Basle	10,000	5,000
Basle-Berne-Lausanne-Geneva	14,000	6,000

N.B. Traffic is estimated per average day on the basis of 320 days per year.

Next, as regards traffic over longer distances, it will be noted that for all the areas crossed the total population is more than 20 million, and five to seven million (at the upper limit of this study) will be able to communicate almost directly.

Estimates place eventual traffic at between 5,000 and 9,000 per day (both ways) on central stretches and approximately 3,000 to 6,000 on terminal stretches.

Adding together these two figures for the busy stretches, the Hovertrain Company has reached the following estimates:

	<u>Max.</u>	<u>Min.</u>
Brussels-Liège	(14,000 + 6,000) 20,000	(6,000 + 3,000) 9,000
Metz/Nancy-Strasbourg	(8,000 + 9,000) 17,000	(4,000 + 5,000) 9,000
Strasbourg-Mulhouse/Basle	(10,000 + 9,000) 19,000	(5,000 + 5,000) 10,000
Basle-Berne-Lausanne-Geneva	(14,000 + 6,000) 20,000	(6,000 + 3,000) 9,000

This table leads us to estimate the system's capacity at 20,000 passengers per day, both ways. Peaks are relatively low because of the variations in the motives for trips, with very few journeys from work to home. A peak of 13% seems a reasonable hypothesis, i.e. 1,300 passengers per hour in each direction. An 80-seat vehicle, every three minutes, according to the plan envisaged by the Assembly of the Council of Europe, gives a sufficient capacity: 1,600 places/hour/direction, while preserving a wide margin for doubling or tripling of capacity if this became necessary in the longer term.

The estimate for total annual traffic, an essential figure for calculating return on investment, distinguishes between short distance trips (average 150 km) and long distance (average 500 km). This produces the two following projections:

- upper projection: 4.8 thousand million p.km/year (passenger x km, per annum)
- lower projection: 2.4 thousand million p.km/year

These rates of occupation, relatively high in view of the lack of similarity of consecutive stretches, are justified by the exceptional

frequency and flexibility in adapting to variations in traffic, obtained with the technique used. There are no timetables, but frequent departures: 100 per day in each direction for central stretches, according to an average projection.

A maximum delay between departures is guaranteed at off-peak times, for example 15 minutes; during busier periods the frequency is increased to produce a service every 5 minutes and even every 2 minutes to cope with the very high peaks at the limits of the upper projection. This traffic management will allow users to arrive at a station without a reservation and at the time which suits them, without having to wait more than 5 minutes at peak hours and possibly 15 minutes at off-peak hours: when a certain speed is reached, frequency can be considered as being as important as increases in speed.

3. ECONOMIC ESTIMATES

Studies carried out by the Hovertrain Company for several similar projects, some of which have led to offers at firm prices, and the trials on vehicle 1-80 used in Orleans, have served as the basis for projecting the following estimates:

(a) Infrastructure

On the basis of the Orleans (Chevilly) line - with the same features as this project, and built by the Hovertrain Company for commercial operation at a speed of 400 km an hour, estimates per stretch of route have produced the following approximate figures for track, including passage rights and line equipment:

	<u>In million French Francs (MF), excluding tax, 1971 figures</u>	
Brussels-Liège	290 to	330
Liège-Luxembourg	670 to	760
Luxembourg-Strasbourg	850 to	1,000
Strasbourg-Basle	410 to	480
Basle-Berne	370 to	440
Berne-Geneva	610 to	690
	<hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/> 3,200 to 3,800 million Francs	
<u>Stations and workshops</u>		
Civil engineering 10 x 7 MF =	70	
to		
10 x 10 MF =		100
Extra costs for town stretches		
10 x 25 MF =	250	
to		
10 x 35 MF =		350
Total infrastructure	<hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/> 3,520 to 4,250	

To the above figures should be added interim interest (advance financing during construction): 15% for civil engineering and 10% for equipment, to obtain the amount of the loan to be amortized over each year of operations.

(b) Running costs

In the following calculations the vehicles considered are similar to the 1-80 'Orleans' vehicle, and propulsion costs have been adapted to a speed of 350 km an hour. The initial fleet of vehicles has been fixed at 50 for a total cost of approximately 350 million Francs.

Running costs include:

- depreciation of vehicles which is practically constant since the fleet is progressively increased in relation to needs, depreciation is calculated on the basis of the service life of separate parts of the vehicle, ten years on average;
- variable running expenses (broken down into the costs of operating the vehicles); these are in practice independent of the level of traffic;
- fixed running costs (concerning the operation of stations, management expenses and general expenses).

On this basis, the Hovertrain Company estimates the total running cost at 9.2 centimes/seat x km for the average projection of traffic and for 80-seat vehicles at a cruising speed of 350 km an hour. For upper and lower projections, the cost would be respectively 9 and 9.5 centimes/seat x km. These costs are quoted exclusive of tax on a 1971 basis.

It is stressed that, if traffic estimates so justified, articulated vehicles of 160 seats could be used, reducing the cost of the seat per km by more than 2 centimes, an advantage which is however offset by a slight drop in occupation rates. Detailed studies could determine the optimum size of the vehicle, which is a function of various factors.

(c) Overall cost price

This is the sum, given in p.km (passenger x km) of the total running costs and amortization of the infrastructure.

This last figure has been calculated on the basis of a total of 4,200 million francs, including interim interest, and therefore tending towards a lower projection: this gives a constant annual cost of 350 million francs (35,000 million centimes) with 30-year amortization for the civil engineering and 15 years for track and station equipment.

For the average projection:

- total running costs (cost per seat/km divided by the average rate of occupation) 9.2 : 0.64	14.4
- depreciation of infrastructure 35,000 million centimes : 3,600 million passengers/km	9.7
Cost price per p.km	24.1 (excluding tax)

To pay off the infrastructure completely, the fare would have to be approximately 28 centimes per km, taking account of the collection of VAT on income. The three projections give, in 1971 centimes:

	Total running cost (per p.km)	Amortization of infrastructure (per p.km)	Cost price excluding tax (per p.km)	Theoretical fare per unit to break even (per p.km)
Lower projection	15.8	14.5	30.3	35
Average projection	14.4	9.7	24.1	28
Upper projection	13.4	7.3	20.7	24

(d) Analysis of these figures

Even with the lower projection, the fare can cover the running costs, including depreciation of vehicles at rates which mean that the fleet can be financed by the operator on the financial market. It remains to be considered in a detailed study whether the accounts of the very first years would make an initial subsidy necessary or not.

However, amortization of the infrastructure, only seems fully possible assuming the upper projection, for a fare of approximately 22 to 25 centimes/km. (1971 prices) compares favourably with average prices of express trains, while remaining far lower than air fares over short distances.

On the average projection, the Hovertrain Company suggests a possible temporary exemption from VAT or an initial subsidy from the local communities concerned, perhaps through a contribution to the construction of the infrastructure (for example urban stretches and stations).

For the rest of the infrastructure the financial body providing the loan should permit an interest-free period. This period could be specified after a detailed study of traffic. The upper projection will be

reached one day; in reality the uncertainty concerns basically how long it will take to reach that level, i.e. the length of the interest-free period.

If the linear electric motor became available for high speeds in the near future, it would require a much more expensive electrified track. For speeds of 180 to 200 km an hour with present technology, the additional cost per kilometre is approximately 2.5 million francs (on the basis of the commercial project Paris to Cergy-Pontoise). However, this line uses vehicles which only consume 2,000 kilowatts at cruising speeds: for speeds of the order of 350 km per hour, the power used exceeds 5,000 kilowatts; granted that the problem of collecting such power can be solved, electrification would certainly entail an additional cost of more than 3.5 to 4 million francs per kilometre. For the Europole line, this would mean therefore an extra investment of 70-80%, or almost 3,000 million francs. Apart from the considerable absolute size of this figure, it should be pointed out that the theoretical fares to break strictly even would become respectively:

- average projection 34 to 38 centimes/km instead of 28
- upper projection 29 to 31 centimes/km instead of 24.

Even under the upper projection, a breakeven fare would not be practicable; this means that the interest-free period would have to be extended beyond the foreseeable limits, or else the infrastructure would have to be written off as an investment which could not be recovered from passenger fares.

It is worth investigating whether the solution might not be to plan subsequent electrification of the track for use by linear motors, when the breakeven point has been reached, after approximately 15 years; this moreover is the likely date when the production of nuclear electricity will begin to take over from thermal energy to a significant extent.

(c) Pollution

As far as pollution is concerned, it should be noted that the turbine and air cushion version is still, in overall noise level, quieter than the best electric trains running on welded track, at lower speeds of course. Moreover, in town stretches the turbine is stopped, and an auxiliary motor used. As for exhaust pollution, the turbine is the least polluting of known power generators when used at its normal operating level. This use of the turbine is in no way comparable to its use in aeroplanes where the high power necessary for take-off leads to a less complete combustion. Moreover, specialists have pointed out that the level of pollution of the turbine is lower in quantity and in concentration than that of an electric power station producing the same quantity of usable energy, by the combustion of hydrocarbons.

Of course the above figures, especially as regards traffic, are not based on sufficiently detailed studies.

A real feasibility study would have to be carried out covering:

- study of potential traffic
- study of route
- technical-economic data
- economic and financial factors.

This study could be carried out in two stages. An initial pre-feasibility study could indicate the main options and give a general estimate of construction costs and the scale of operations, since all these elements interact with one another.

In a second stage, a feasibility study would be made of these various elements, to allow a definitive decision to be made and the necessary finance obtained.

4. EUROPEAN NETWORK OR SYSTEM OF LAND COMMUNICATIONS VARIOUS TECHNICAL OPTIONS

The need to build certain links with new technology is based on two considerations:

- The extension of passenger air traffic in inter-regional links faces several obstacles: it would increase the size of airports which would very soon have to be re-sited further from towns; moreover, this process lengthens the final stage of journeys thus heavily penalizing door-to-door performance for short trips and average trips, and is a disincentive to travel; finally, the operating costs of short-distance plane travel remain high, if a reasonable frequency is to be provided, which is just as important for the traveller as reducing journey time since he is better able to choose the time of departure and return. It is therefore desirable for the traveller and more economic overall to bring back to ground level journeys of less than 500 to 700 km. as the case may be.
- The existing railway network is approaching saturation point on the busiest stretches. A reasonable frequency and a simultaneous increase in speed of passenger trains quickly become incompatible with goods traffic which is the main role of the rail network; the separation of passenger traffic is in fact a prerequisite for improving the goods service on the busiest stretches, which are those under consideration.

The construction of a new railway line on the Europole route, besides being expensive, would meet almost insurmountable difficulties in the mountain

regions, because of the limitations of gradient inherent in the wheel/rail system.

The introduction of new lines reserved for passengers does not present, for the same stretches, the same degree of urgency and the same level of potential traffic. Examining the various European connections sketched out in the report of the Consultative Assembly of January 1971, it becomes clear that they are composed of very heterogeneous sections: in certain situations the present and future traffic potential is very high, in other cases it is at present low but the link should contribute to the harmonious development of the areas and the likely future potential is significant; finally on many stretches, in spite of the necessity for opening up the more distant regions, no substantial traffic can be expected in the reasonable future.

Consequently, attempting to adopt uniform systems over these various connections is far from being the obvious solution since it would lead to a network for the most part on far too large a scale and hence to considerable economic waste. But there is a more serious obstacle, that is that such an integrated network could only be constructed over several decades and it seems quite pointless to attempt to fix now the techniques to be used for lines to be constructed over 25 and 30 years. Moreover, it is certain that if such an integrated network were constructed it would be incapable of expansion over the 50 ensuing years and it is likely that faced with such a gamble, governments would not be able to decide on the adoption of a given technology, expecting always that a few years further delay would broaden the options. It seems therefore much more reasonable and realistic to consider that the network of European communications should be built up bit by bit, providing rapid transfers from platform to platform and using for each line the most appropriate techniques as and when they become operational.

Today's passenger basically wants to travel fast and to travel light. What he wants is to get from one point to another and back in the same day. He does not care if he has to change the method of transport or change carriages, provided his journey is rapid and not tiring, and the journey will be made easier if services are frequent on the two lines used; the net result of speed and overall frequency is what counts most of all.

It is therefore quite probable that the European network of high speed land transport thus begun will use differing technologies: air cushion or magnetic levitation, linear motor or jet propulsion, turbo-train etc.

The question arises whether for this first link the choice of the Consultative Assembly's working party, namely the air cushion, is justifiable. The problem should be considered from two aspects: is the technology ready

to meet the construction programme of this first line, and can it be economically adapted to projected traffic levels.

As regards the linear electric motor, it seems that a few more years are needed for technological development to guarantee precise technical and economic evaluations of the problems of collecting current at high speed and to define the cooling system and weight of the motor. The linear electric motor technique requires an electrified track and, according to the above analysis, involves much higher investment than non-electrified track. The additional cost of electrification has been calculated at approximately 70 to 80%. Although such a choice may seem justifiable for areas of very high population density - such as Japan - it does not seem that the traffic levels of the Europole line would permit the recouping of such an additional investment.

Magnetic levitation systems can be divided into two groups and since they are still at the preliminary development stage it is difficult to discern at present whether one type will be preferred exclusively or whether they will specialize in different applications. The electromagnetic systems operate by attraction, corrected by an electronic device to overcome instability. Only small-scale models have been built on this principle. Full-scale experiments at high speed still seem necessary to judge the degree of precision necessary for the track and the final shape of vehicles. Electrodynamic systems use image currents which are produced when a certain speed is reached. This technology uses superconductivity and requires extremely low temperatures, near absolute zero. It is likely that this technology will not be available for another 15 years; it seems better adapted to high speeds than the electromagnetic system. The United States has decided to explore this option but only in studies, because of the rather long-term nature of its applications. Japan has taken a more active interest with a view to a specific application doubling the new Tokaido line with a potential of 500,000 passengers per day. But to date the use of this procedure for this line seems to have been postponed because of delays in completion which seem to be upsetting the planned time table. These two kinds of magnetic levitation system use electricity as a source of energy for levitation. As regards energy for propulsion, electrical energy is used too since this is a linear electric motor. It should be noted that it represents at high speeds approximately 90% of the total energy used and is therefore the crux of the problem. It will be very interesting to follow experimental developments in magnetic technology. In the planned European communications system or network, there are stretches which would justify a more expensive infrastructure, because of the high flow of traffic.

For a short-term project, like Europole, covering zones of fairly low population density, the twin features of availability of technology and infrastructure costs must be the primary considerations. The feasibility

study which should be carried out will have the advantage of being able to refer to the Chevilly-Orléans hovertrain line, thus making it possible to draw certain very detailed technical and economic conclusions. It should also be noted that the air cushion line being built at Cergy-Pontoise, decided in November 1971, will provide all the detailed technology of a complete line: vehicle equipment, station machinery, traffic control etc. ...

5. LEGAL STATUS

The building and operation of the line could be entrusted to one or several mixed economy companies. Three types of status could be envisaged:

- a company under European law; unfortunately the legal basis of such a company has not yet been drawn up by the European Community.
- a company under national law, set up in each of the countries concerned, but having the same board of management as the other companies and overlapping shares.
- a system of the 'Eurofima' type, a company combining six European railway companies but which remains a single company, with its seat in a single country subject to the law of that country.

Four mixed economy companies could be envisaged, one per country, in which the state and regional and local authorities would be represented, with overlapping shares and identical boards of management. This scheme would perhaps avoid the problem of an international agreement between the four countries concerned, or at least the drawing up and ratification of a convention. Each company would receive a concession from the state in its own country for operating the line on its territory.

CONCLUSIONS

The construction of the Europole line, as envisaged by the Assembly of the Council of Europe appears technically possible, and its political and economic advantages seem considerable.

The scale of the investments required does not seem exorbitant in view of the size of the project and its repercussions on the development of the regions concerned, on the regional planning of our continent and on European society.

It is for governments to take the necessary measures to check its feasibility and to undertake its construction in liaison with the local authorities concerned.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT

Draftsman: Mr H. SEEFELD

During the plenary sitting of 6 July 1981 the Committee on Transport was asked to deliver its opinion on the motion for a resolution by Mr Caillavet and Mr Pflimlin on measures to combat excessive urban concentration and to promote institutional polycentrism through regional planning at European level and the use of modern means of transport and communication.

On 1 October 1981 the Committee on Transport appointed Mr Seefeld draftsman of the opinion.

The draft opinion was considered at its meeting of 2 October 1981 and was adopted by 11 votes to 1.

Present: Mr Seefeld, chairman and draftsman; Mr Baudis, Mr Buttafuoco, Mr Cariiglia (deputizing for Mr Loo), Mr Gendebien, Lord Harmar-Nicholls, Mr Junot, Mr Klinkenborg, Mr M. Martin, Mr Moorhouse, Mr Morenland and Mr Veronesi (deputizing for Mr Cardia).

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Following an initial exchange of views - during the meeting of the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning on 23 June 1981 - on Mr E. Faure's draft report (PE 73.258) on the motion for a resolution by Mr Caillavet and Mr Pflimlin (Doc. 1-804/80) on measures to combat excessive urban concentration and to promote institutional polycentrism through regional planning at European level and the use of modern means of transport and communication, its chairman requested authorization from the President of Parliament by letter of 26 June 1981 for the Committee on Transport to deliver an opinion on this motion for a resolution.
2. During the plenary sitting on 6 July 1981 the Committee on Transport was consequently asked to deliver its opinion on the motion for a resolution by Mr Caillavet and Mr Pflimlin.
3. Pursuant to Rule 101(4), in his letter to the President Mr De Pasquale asked that the Committee on Transport deliver its opinion before the end of October.

II. THE MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION BY MR CAILLAVET AND MR PFLIMLIN (Doc. 1-804/80)

4. In their motion for a resolution tabled on 15 January 1981 Mr Caillavet and Mr Pflimlin were concerned to combat the detrimental effects for the Community, the Member States and the regions of excessive concentration, by moving towards the decentralization of political and administrative structures.
5. The authors of the motion for a resolution consider the following measures desirable:
 - a) transport:
 - (i) firstly, improvement of existing transport and communications networks;
 - (ii) then, the introduction of new transport and communications techniques (para. 3)
 - (iii) study and support by the Commission of high-technology transport and communications projects, in particular the 'Europole project' (para. 4);

b) telecommunications:

- study by the Commission of new telecommunications techniques, in particular teleconferences, cable television, teletext and telematics applications (para. 11);

6. The motion for a resolution also points out that, in highly urbanized zones, transport systems are overloaded and the costs of civil engineering projects (tunnels, viaducts, underground railways, etc.) are rising continually (para. 14).

III. OBSERVATIONS ON THE TRANSPORT POLICY ASPECTS OF THE MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

7. The Committee on Transport attaches great importance to the creation of a coherent Community transport infrastructure.

To this end:

- i) it has repeatedly urged the Council to adopt without delay the Commission proposal of 1976 for a regulation on support for projects of Community interest in transport infrastructure;
- ii) it has attempted each year, in its opinions on the Community budget, to increase the meagre Community appropriations for transport infrastructure purposes;
- iii) it has taken a number of initiatives in this area, including the production of a report on the Channel tunnel and on the construction of the Pyhrn motorway¹;
- iv) in its report concerning priorities and the timetable for decisions to be taken by the Council in the transport sector by the end of 1983, it has stressed the prime importance of the creation of a comprehensive transport infrastructure network².

8. In the report by Mr Klinkenborg on the Commission's Memorandum on the role of the Community in the development of transport infrastructure (Doc. 1-601/80), the Committee on Transport clearly set out the basic principles of a Community policy.

9. The significance of the regional dimension of a Community transport infrastructure policy was stressed in both the resolution and the explanatory statement.

¹ De Keersmaecker report, Doc. 1-93/81, OJ C 144, 15.6.1981 and Helms report, Doc. 1-186/81, OJ C 172, 13.7.1981

² Hoffmann report, Doc. 1-951/80, OJ C 77, 6.4.1981

Paragraph 2 of the resolution¹ adopted on 7 May 1981 reads, '(The European Parliament) stresses the prime importance of a well-run transport system for the integration of all regions of the Community ...' and paragraph 10 reads, '(The European Parliament) calls for coordination between measures to rationalize the transport network and regional policy measures in the development of the transport infrastructure' and, in paragraph 13, the Commission is called on to draw up a list of priorities for European projects, covering inter alia the following categories:

'- Internal Community projects with considerable importance for Community regional policy' and 'regional links to third countries at the external frontiers'.

In the explanatory statement a special chapter is devoted to regional policy and paragraph 55 states explicitly that a European regional policy worthy of the name will acknowledge the significance of a consistent transport infrastructure policy.

10. This demonstrates that the Committee on Transport is fully aware of the interaction between adequate transport infrastructure planning and the balanced development of the Community's regions.

11. It therefore shares the view of the authors of the motion for a resolution that the improvement of existing transport infrastructures and the creation of new structures could promote decentralization, to the advantage of the regions, the Member States and the Community as an entity.

12. However, given on the one hand the large number of transport infrastructure projects considered desirable² and for which Community support is often advocated and, on the other, the paucity of Community funds available, it is obviously necessary to operate well-defined and consistent criteria when considering allocation of Community assistance.

13. In his report referred to above Mr Klinkenborg therefore very properly asked the Commission to draw up a list of priorities for European projects and to work out a system guaranteeing a balanced assessment of individual projects.

¹ OJ C 144, 15.6.1981, page 77

² 14 motions for resolutions on transport infrastructure alone have already been referred to the Committee on Transport since direct elections.

14. Regarding the Europole project for a rapid connection between towns where European institutions are based, as recommended in the motion for a resolution, the Committee on Transport believes that the Commission should consider this project as represented by Mr Klinkenborg's proposal set out in the paragraph above.

15. The Committee on Transport also considers that, in evaluating the project, the Commission should bear in mind inter alia the following aspects:

- (i) The Europole project, as approved by the Council of Europe and the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, involves the use of the Bertin-system air-cushion trains (hovertrain) and thus the creation of a totally new infrastructure for the Geneva-Strasbourg-Luxembourg-Brussels route;
- (ii) This project dates from a time when the effects of the economic crisis were not as conspicuous as they are now and there were considerably more funds available for infrastructure projects;
- (iii) The average demand for transport in this sector is not particularly high;
- (iv) In the present difficult economic circumstances major investment on a route of minor importance for an ultrarapid link between the Community's places of work could be detrimental to the standing of the Community and, in particular, its Parliament.

16. However, the Committee on Transport is convinced that the means of travel between Strasbourg, Luxembourg and Brussels can and must be improved, which is also in line with paragraph 3(c) indent 3 of the Zagari resolution adopted on 7 July 1981 on the seat of the institutions of the European Community and, in particular, of the European Parliament, which reads as follows:

'that the most advanced techniques must also be used to facilitate cooperation between the institutions, while road, rail and air links between the main centres of activity of the Community must be improved'.

17. The Committee on Transport notes with satisfaction that since 1 July 1981 an independent consultancy office has been conducting a thorough study for the Commission on the various options for improving road, rail and air links between the towns named above and European capitals.

18. Without wishing to anticipate the results of the study, the Committee on Transport would nevertheless like to make the following observations on the subject.

(i) road links:

19. Since the opening of the motorway link between Thionville and Luxembourg on 15 July 1981 there is now a modern motorway between Strasbourg and Luxembourg, which is interrupted for only 2.8km. at Thionville. According to reports this bottleneck is to be eliminated in the near future, but no precise date is known.

The motorway link between Luxembourg and Arlon, parts of which are ready (in Luxembourg), will probably be open to traffic during the coming year.

In Belgium there is a modern motorway from Brussels to just beyond Namur and a dual carriageway of about 130km. to Arlon. A motorway is planned between Namur and Arlon but there is no definite date for its completion as there is fairly strong opposition to the project on the grounds that the present dual carriageway is adequate for requirements.

(ii) rail links:

20. In this area it would definitely be appropriate to consider:

- improvements to the timetables
- faster cruising speeds on this route
- introduction of modern high-speed trains

so as to expand possibilities of making a return journey in a single day. However, the financial implications for the railway companies cannot be disregarded. It would after all be illogical to require the railway companies to improve these links, which are very costly for them, and at the same time to require them to put their finances on a healthy footing as quickly as possible.

(iii) air transport:

21. In this sector consideration must be given to ways of improving existing air links and introducing new flights between the cities where the Community has its places of work and from these cities to the main European airports.

22. Lastly, the Comité on Transport endorses the recommendation of the authors of the motion for a resolution for better utilization of modern methods of telecommunication. It would point out that it adopted a similar position in Mr Albers' report on ways and means of effecting energy savings in the transport sector (Doc. 1-249/81).

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

23. On the basis of the observations made in this opinion, the Comité on Transport asks the Comité on Regional Policy and Regional Planning in its resolution:

- (i) to refer explicitly to the resolution and the basic report by Mr Klinkenborg on the Commission's Memorandum on the role of the Community in the development of transport infrastructure (Doc. 1-601/80)¹ on which it delivered an opinion;
- (ii) to ask the Commission to make definite proposals as quickly as possible, on the basis of the results of the study now completed by experts, to improve road, rail and air links between the various places of work of the Community;
- (iii) at the same time to urge the Belgian, French and Luxembourg Governments to eliminate existing bottlenecks in the motorway links between Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg as quickly as possible.
- (iv) to ask the Commission to make approaches to the Group of Ten railway systems with a view to the improvement of rail traffic from Brussels to Strasbourg via Luxembourg, by means of improved timetables, faster cruising speeds for trains and the introduction of modern high-speed trains; at the same time, however, the financial implications for the railway companies concerned should not be disregarded.

¹ OJ No. C 144, 15.6.1981