RESOLUTION No. 54 REGARDING TRANSPORT FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

[CM(85)19]

The Council of Ministers of Transport meeting in Paris on 22nd November 1985,

HAVING REGARD TO:

-- The present report on Transport for Disabled People [CM(85)19];

-- Resolution No. 38 of 1978, which stressed the need to ‘pursue the design and introduction of improvements intended to give handicapped people easiest access to existing transport services including long distance services’;

-- Resolution No. 45 of 1981, which emphasised the importance of ‘adapting existing transport installations wherever possible to facilitate wheelchair access’.

RECOGNISING THAT:

-- One of the objectives of transport policy is to provide a free choice of means of transport (within national and international regulatory frameworks and economic constraints) to meet the need for safe low-cost mobility for all people, including those with disabilities;

-- The wider socio-economic cross-sector benefits from transport provision for disabled people should be taken into account by Member governments, both within and between government departments and that, where appropriate, measures should be taken positively to identify these benefits;

MAKES THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

Statistics and Definitions

Although the data on the number and nature of disabled people are now more comprehensive than at the time of earlier ECMT resolutions, it is still difficult to make realistic comparisons between countries. It is therefore recommended that statistics be established in relation to mobility handicap/transport disability. Towards this end, available data should be collated with a view eventually to drawing up a set of unified definitions. Recognising that statistics will be required in the first place for national use but also for international purposes, these definitions should be consistent between countries and within countries, so that comparisons can be made without difficulty and duplication of data collection is avoided. Definitions should be related to degree of disability as it affects mobility, rather than to cause. The definitions and associated data and/or statistics would be used, inter alia, for:
i) Compilation of comparable statistics between countries as a basis for planning; and

ii) Introduction of reciprocal benefits and concessions.

**Coordination, Research and Information**

It is recommended, that more efforts be channelled into coordinated research and exchange of information on all measures to assist with the problems of people with different types and degrees of mobility handicap. This would include:

i) Regular international exchanges of information about proposed areas of research as well as published research reports;

ii) Exchange visits at technical and administrative levels;

iii) Possibility of joint projects and publications; this may be arranged either directly between two or more countries at government or other levels, or under the auspices of ECMT.

**Coordination and Standardisation of Measures**

It would be highly desirable to strive for the coordination and standardisation or reciprocal recognition of measures to help disabled people travel between Member states, as to encourage similar coordination between different schemes within each member country.

There is already reciprocal recognition between Member states of parking concessions for disabled people. This concept could be extended to other areas, for example concessions and tariffs for train travel, standardisation of a distress sign for disabled drivers, harmonisation or mutual recognition of legal requirements like seat belt wearing exemptions for car users; the need to standardise wheelchair anchoring methods should also be discussed.

There should also be recognition of the need to monitor developments in all policy areas affecting transport, in order to ensure that the interests of mobility-handicapped people are not inadvertently adversely affected (relative to the population as a whole) for example by tax changes (fuel, VAT), new fare collection systems, measures to combat vandalism, etc.

**Guidelines and Standards of Transport Provision**

It would also be highly desirable to draw up guidelines on standards of provision for disabled people in vehicles and in all transport-related facilities, taking account of ISO standards as appropriate. These would take the form in some instances of specifying minimum acceptable standards (e.g. of physical adaptation of vehicles and transport related buildings), whereas in other instances it would be more appropriate to express levels of access as an objective, to be interpreted according to local needs and conditions.

**Measures for Implementation**

It is recommended that to facilitate better use of all means of public transport by mobility-handicapped people, each Member country should strive to meet the objective that ultimately all transport systems, and their support services such as toilets, catering and telephones, should be usable by mobility-handicapped people, recognising that:
a) It is in general much more expensive, and often less effective, to modify existing infrastructure and vehicles than to make new infrastructure and vehicles usable by mobility-handicapped people.

b) It is also often possible to introduce measures to improve transport systems for the majority of mobility-handicapped people but which are not sufficient for those who need lifts or ramps for access. In some cases, the provision of lifts or ramps in existing systems is physically impossible due to lack of space.

In particular, it is suggested that measures be taken by Member countries to meet:

-- The need for long-distance main line trains and main line railway stations to be made accessible to mobility-handicapped people unless an alternative form of accessible long distance transport is available;

-- The need to make new rolling stock and stations on light railway and metro networks accessible to mobility-handicapped people, while bearing in mind that it is usually a less efficient use of resources to modify existing rail rolling stock and stations, especially for disabled people in wheelchairs;

-- In those countries which have separate buses for long-distance transport, the need to improve the accessibility for mobility handicapped people to new long-distance buses and coaches on scheduled services, and to bus stations used by them;

-- The need to design local buses to be as easy as possible for people of reduced mobility to use, although not necessarily to make them accessible to people in wheelchairs;

-- Where existing public transport is not accessible to disabled people in wheelchairs, the need for other local transport services to be made available, using accessible taxis, dial-a-ride services with accessible vehicles, or other special transport services, depending on what is the most appropriate in local conditions, at reasonable fares;

-- The desirability of providing assistance to disabled people for whom the purchase and operation of a car is deemed to be essential for their work or to enable them to live in the community;

-- The need to make easily available to disabled people, their relatives and friends, people working in the field of disability, and transport operators, information on all aspects of independent mobility, including transport services, financial assistance and any other services. This includes the provision of guidelines on the establishment and operation of transport services and facilities for disabled people;

-- The need to provide associations representing disabled people with the opportunity to play a part in the planning of major transport projects.

INVITES Transport Ministers in Member countries to encourage Ministers in other departments (e.g. public works, health, social services and finance) to recognise and work towards the objectives suggested by these recommendations.
INSTRUCTS the Committee of Deputies:

-- to keep them informed of the action taken to implement this resolution and to report back in due course;

-- to undertake further work in this field and to report on developments within two years.

Where the word “Accessible” is used in the text, this is intended to imply the provision of fully accessible facilities, such as toilets, telephones and restaurants.