



Distr.  
GENERAL

E/2933/Add.6  
2 April 1957

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Twenty-third session  
Item 8

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL, ITS PRESENT  
INCREASING VOLUME AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Further communication from the Netherlands

Since the issuance of document E/2933, the Secretary-General has received a communication from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations transmitting additional information on the subject of the development of international travel with regard to the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles.<sup>1/</sup>

The Netherlands

The question may justly be asked if, in the past, the development of transportation in view of the development of international travel, has always received the attention it deserves. The greater part of the international discussions on international travel were dominated by the conflicting opinions on the relative importance of railway and road transport rather than by the wish to create a transport system adapted to present-day requirements.

The necessity of such a transport system has been repeatedly urged by the Netherlands, particularly in the Inland Transport Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). Two of the most important symptoms of post-war travel, namely the strong growth of so-called "social tourism" and the greatly increased significance of the motor-coach for international transport, have been too much neglected in the post-war international discussions on government level.

<sup>1/</sup> See E/2933, page 89.



It is not surprising that especially in the Netherlands there is a great interest in this matter.

The ever increasing density of population with its consequent lack of recreational space on the one hand, and the increasing prosperity on the other - resulting, for instance, in longer holidays (with pay) for ever larger sections of the population - have led to the number of travellers in search for recreation becoming larger each year. No figures exist on tourist traffic in its more limited sense, namely the movement of persons for mainly recreational purposes. Nevertheless, the total number of the persons crossing the frontier in 1954 speaks for itself: the railways carried 3,387,000 persons across the frontiers and the Netherlands motor-coaches 839,000 (these figures do not include frontier crossings of persons living near the frontier) and the Royal Dutch Air Lines carried 561,100 persons. No figures on seaborne travellers are available.

New initiatives have enabled various transport companies to open up fresh possibilities for international travel. Tourist classes and flights at reduced fares were introduced by the air companies, and the railways put on special trains to a number of tourist centres. Group travel was introduced as well as the so-called "all-in tours". On the roads it was the motor-coach which, owing to its being able to get practically everywhere where there are roads and to its relatively low operating costs, offered excellent possibilities to a certain extent. It cannot be denied, however, that precisely the development of road transport is attended with serious difficulties. A distinction should be made, however, between continental and inter-continental tourism.

Inter-continental tourism is of great significance for road transport because the travel agents can, by making use of motor-coaches for their tours, meet the special wishes of overseas tourists. In many cases such tourists do not only want to be freed from the difficulties presented by the many frontiers, currencies and languages in Europe; they also want, in most cases, to travel as quickly as possible along the most interesting route. Road transport offers many possibilities in this respect.

There is the difficulty, however, that the port of arrival varies from case to case so that the motor-coaches often have to meet their travellers at foreign ports. In some countries this is attended with difficulties.



Within the framework of ECE certain regulations were made with the object of allowing more freedom to the so-called "closed tours", i.e. those tours on which the same party is conveyed by the same vehicle throughout the tour and the tour ends at the place where it began.

Consequently, a limited freedom of passenger road transport was the result. The same applies to the transport of a group of travellers from a sea- or airport of the home country to a sea- or airport in another country. Not all members of ECE grant this permission, however. This limited freedom is also important for continental transport. In 1954 a total number of 175,400 travellers were transported from the Netherlands on these closed tours of more than one day; on one-day trips 590,000 people were transported.

Apart from these tours the so-called "shuttle services" were also introduced during the last few years. This form of transport is so called because the travellers are transported to and from the holiday resorts, etc. in such way that by the same motor-coach a group of travellers is brought and another group is taken back again.

In this way the vehicle is used as intensively as possible, so that fares can be kept low. That is why these shuttle services have developed into a highly suitable form of transport for social tourism.

In 1954, 55,500 persons travelled from the Netherlands in this way. The hesitancy about this form of transport which existed at first in a number of countries has not yet been overcome, but the more this transport is made subject to official regulations (for instance the stipulation that the price to be paid should include the hotel expenses at the holiday resort), the more it is officially recognized.

A definition of shuttle transport will probably be included, in an Annex to the General Agreement on Economic Regulations for International Road Transport, signed at Geneva on 17 March 1954.<sup>2/</sup>

In this connexion a brief reference may be made to the international tourist motor-coach services.

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<sup>2/</sup> See document E/ECE 186 - E/ECE/TRANS/460.



In most countries regular motor-coach services are subject to a rigid system of licensing. In order to deal with the applications as efficiently as possible, consultations are held each year on the new applications within the framework of ECE. It then appears that some centrally situated countries hardly tolerate such services on their territory, irrespective of the question whether it is intended to collect passengers there or not. Under these circumstances it is well-nigh impossible for the countries on the periphery, as for instance the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries, to get new regular services. The very fact that these services are regular and that, consequently, the passengers are able to stop en route and to continue their journey by the next coach (which is impossible in the case of closed tours, which are collective tours) means that this manner of travelling has great significance for international travel.

A brief reference may also be made here to the combinations which are possible of the services of the various transport companies. The Royal Dutch Airlines, for instance, has understandings with two international motor-coach companies to the effect that tickets issued by one company are also accepted by the other companies. It stands to reason that such an understanding - in itself a good example of a measure aimed at promoting the development of international travel - can only be really effective if road transport is given sufficient opportunities for development.

Efforts are also made to develop another combination of air and road transport. The intention is to have a group of travellers perform the journey to the holiday resort by coach and journey back by plane. Plane and coach then carry another group on the outward and return journey respectively. Also in this case the coach or aeroplane travels empty only on the first and last journey; for the other journeys it is possible on these organized trips to carry as a rule considerably more passengers than would ordinarily be the case, resulting in reduced fares.

These examples from actual practice emphasize the necessity of the governments - if they really want to stimulate international travel effectively - having to be guided more than heretofore by the desires of the tourists and will have to afford opportunities for new initiatives.

In addition it may be observed that, especially in the case of road transport, the lack of complete freedom of international road transport for passengers impedes the development of international travel.



Netherlands Antilles

(a) For many years the Government of the Netherlands Antilles have been aware of the highly beneficial effect which increased tourism could have on the internal economy of their country and of its importance to international trade. Indeed, tourism is one of the chief sources of income in the islands of Curacao and Aruba.

(b) The tourist facilities of Curacao and St. Martin have been surveyed several times and in general the conclusion has been arrived at that a further development of tourism is only possible after more modern hotel facilities have become available. Meanwhile a limited liability company has been created through private initiative and with financial assistance from the Island Territory of Curacao, the Bank of Curacao and the Post-Office Savings-Bank, which has started the construction of a modern air-conditioned 95-room hotel at Willemstad, which will be opened about the middle of 1957.

In addition, there are plans to develop various tourist attractions, as, for instance, the restoration of ancient forts, conducted tours of Willemstad harbour, excursions in glass-bottomed boats over the magnificent underwater coral formations, cleaning and further improving the beautiful beaches, etc.

The plans for a modern tourist hotel in Aruba are in an advanced stage and the modern "Little Bay Hotel" in St. Martin is already much frequented by tourists.

(c) The travel agencies in the islands, which all come under the travel agencies in Aruba and Curacao, enjoy the full support of the local authorities in their endeavours to develop tourism in the two islands. Recently, an Antillean travel agency, receiving support from the Government, was opened at Caracas in order to attract more tourists from the South American Continent. The Netherlands West Indian Tourist Bureau in New York, set up by the Government of the Netherlands Antilles, gives valuable co-operation in publicizing these islands in the United States of America and Canada.

(d) The matter of the entry and exit procedures and of the formalities applicable to tourists is the responsibility of the Central Authorities. No visas are required in the Netherlands Antilles: a valid passport will suffice and



American citizens may even enter the Netherlands Antilles on other official identity papers. At the Conference of the Caribbean Tourist Association, which was held at Paramaribo, Surinam, in May 1955, the following resolution was adopted:

"WHEREAS existing immigration and emigration requirements in certain areas of the Caribbean create undue delay and are a deterrent to the tourist, and

WHEREAS it is desirable that these be simplified, and every facility for quick despatch of the tourist be afforded, and

WHEREAS uniformity of procedure is desirable,

BE IT RESOLVED the Governments of the territories which are affected by this Resolution be requested to adopt a simplified International Civil Aviation Organization embarkation and disembarkation card either single or double version, and discontinue the passenger manifest."

In order to ensure an unhampered development of international travel it is essential that the entry procedures for foreign visitors should be as simple and flexible as possible.

A simplification of the formalities required in connexion with air travel between the islands is being studied.

(e) Curacao and Aruba are at all times prepared to exchange technical advice with other countries.

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