

## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

# Working Documents

1983 - 1984

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26 March 1984

DOCUMENT 1-1521/83/ANNEX

### ANNEX

to the report drawn up by Mr GABERT  
on behalf of the Committee on Transport

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### OPINION

of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

on the proposal from the Commission of the European  
Communities to the Council (COM(83) 490 final - Doc. 1-946/83)  
for a recommendation to the national railway undertakings  
on technical matters concerning operation and internal  
barriers to the crossing of frontiers affecting the  
international carriage of goods

Draftsman: Mr K. DE GUCHT

## OPINION

(Rule 101 of the Rules of Procedure)  
of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

Draftsman: Mr K. De Gucht

On 28 November 1983, the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs appointed Mr K. De Gucht draftsman of the opinion.

The Committee considered the draft opinion at its meeting of 21/22 March 1984 and unanimously adopted the conclusions contained therein on 22 March 1984.

The following took part in the vote: Mr Moreau, chairman, Mr Hopper, vice-chairman, Mr Delorozoy (deputizing for the draftsman, Mr De Gucht), Mr Beazley, Mr Bonaccini, Mrs Desouches, Mr Giavazzi, Mr Müller-Hermann, Mr Nyborg, Mr Purvis (deputizing for Mr de Ferranti), Mr Schinzel and Mr Welsh.

The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs,

1. Takes note of this proposal, which is intended to improve the technical operating conditions of international freight transport by rail, in order to improve the quality of service and reduce costs by inter alia concentrating traffic on a number of routes that are best suited to customers' potential requirements; the proposal also recommends the introduction of a number of measures and bilateral and multilateral agreements between the national railway undertakings concerned to reduce the waiting time at frontiers;
2. Is of the opinion that the proposed measures could lead to a more efficient organization of international freight transport by rail and thus could make a contribution to the creation of a common market in this area, and consequently approves the proposed measures;
3. Emphasizes at the same time that everything must be done to simplify customs procedures and remove other barriers to intra-Community freight transport, and thus the measures should not be confined to rail transport but should be extended to all forms of transport.

European Communities

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

# Working Documents

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12 March 1984

DOCUMENT 1-1522/83

## Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture,  
Education, Information and Sport

on education for children whose parents have no fixed  
abode

Rapporteur: Mr J. VANDEMEULEBROUCKE

PE 87.789/fin.  
Or. Ne.



At its sitting of 16 November 1982, the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution tabled by Mrs Hoff and others on the educational problems of circus and fair children to the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment for their opinions.

At its meeting of 26 April 1983, the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport appointed Mr Vandemeulebroucke rapporteur.

It considered the draft report at its meetings of 26 February and 1 March 1984 and adopted the motion for a resolution by 6 votes to nil with 1 abstention.

The following took part in the vote: Mr Beumer, chairman; Mr Hahn, vice-chairman; Mr Vandemeulebroucke, rapporteur; Mr Alexiadis, Mrs Buchan, Mr Simmonds and Mrs Viehoff.

The Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment have decided not to deliver an opinion.

The report was tabled on 2 March 1984.

The deadline for tabling amendments to this report will be indicated in the draft agenda for the part-session at which it will be debated.

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- I) Bibliography
  
- II) Motion for a resolution tabled by Mrs Hoff and others  
on the educational problems of circus and fair children  
(Doc. 1-841/62)

The Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution, together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on education for children whose parents have no fixed abode

The European Parliament,

- A. having regard to the motion for a resolution on the educational problems of circus and fair children, (Doc. 1-841/82),
- B. recognizing that every child has the inalienable right to an education that will allow him or her later to play a full part in social, economic and cultural life,
- C. having regard to statutory provisions on compulsory education in the Member States of the Community,
- D. concerned also that a number of these children may be obliged to work, even though they may be below the minimum working age,
- E. having regard to the considerable number of children in the Community who belong to families with no fixed abode,
- F. concerned at the lack of suitable educational facilities for the majority of these children and at the lack of information as to the numbers involved and the educational arrangements for them,
- G. having regard to the work already being carried out by the Council of Europe, the ILO and the UN in the area of children's welfare,
- H. (i) whereas fair children receive virtually no education throughout the summer period on account of the intensive travelling done by their parents,

(ii) whereas circus people often tend to give priority to artistic training at the expense of 'normal' education,

(iii) whereas educational backwardness in barge children is chiefly limited to the early years of primary education,

(iv) whereas the education of the children of caravan dwellers represents a major problem, with educational backwardness being very high as a result,

I. having regard to the various experiments in the Member States, for example, the mobile schools in the Netherlands, the allocation of supplementary nursery school teachers in Flanders and the provision of packages of written teaching material for children of nursery school age - although it is not possible to form an overall picture of the success of these approaches owing to the lack of a global review of the various experiments in the Member States,

J. whereas the preparation of an educational policy for children whose parents have no fixed abode has to take into account in all cases the differences between the three sub-groups and also the differences between the children involved,

K. noting that the policy to be pursued must be based on the following four points:

(i) the continuity of the learning process must be encouraged,

(ii) the children involved must be integrated into normal education wherever possible,

(iii) backwardness and learning difficulties must be remedied as early as possible,

(iv) education must be geared to the individual as far as possible to ensure that differences in ability, learning speed, interest and background are handled in an optimum fashion,



- L. having regard to the possibly useful application of new technological facilities with respect to audio-visual media, and whereas these facilities must be applied and used as much as possible for providing education for children whose parents have no fixed abode,
- M. whereas the following working methods should be used as guidelines for fair and circus children:
- (i) establishment of a network of mobile schools that collaborate closely with the traditional schools during the winter months,
  - (ii) encouragement of placements with foster parents and/or boarding schools during the travelling season or throughout the year,
- N. whereas the following working methods should serve as guidelines for barge children:
- (i) encouragement of placements with foster parents and/or boarding school,
  - (ii) encouragement of the merging of existing barge schools with the traditional schools, whereby schools attended by barge children should be allocated additional staff and resources to ensure proper attention for these children during the period in which learning difficulties occur,
  - (iii) contacts between schools, boarding schools and parents have to be as close as possible, particularly during the transition from nursery schooling to primary education,
- O. (i) believes that educational measures for the children of caravan dwellers have been unsuccessful because no account has been taken of the cultural background of caravan dwellers and, hence, that the issue of caravan dwellers should be dealt with by a global approach,
- (ii) calls for an intensive approach to the issue of educational facilities for caravan dwellers, where the guiding principle should be 'a gradual transition from no schooling to normal schooling' and

where separate education must be avoided, since this perpetuates the relationship to sedentary society,

(iii) believes that attention must also be given in this context to eliminating illiteracy among adult caravan dwellers,

P. having regard to the report of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport (Doc. 1-1522/83),

1. Calls on the Commission to determine the exact numbers involved in each category and to list the measures that have been taken to aid these categories;
2. Urges the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States and in consultation with the organizations representing the parents of these children, to take steps to ensure that these children receive an appropriate education, regardless of the Community country they happen to be in, so that they may meet compulsory education requirements;
3. Calls on the Commission to investigate ways of providing audio-visual education and of establishing a lending service for audiovisual teaching material linked to the cultural infrastructure of central towns;
4. Urges the Commission, through the Social Fund and other Community policies as appropriate, to make resources available for the measures required, including pilot projects, to determine the most suitable multicultural and multilingual models for education and training;
5. Calls on the Commission, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, to initiate a study concerning the educational facilities for children whose parents have no fixed abode and to inform the European Parliament of its findings within a year;
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the Member States and the Council of Europe.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. Partly in response to the motion for a resolution on the educational problems of circus and fair children (Doc. 1-841/82), the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport decided to devote a report to this issue. However, the educational problems confronting circus and fair children affect all children whose parents have no fixed abode. We can distinguish three categories within this group: children of caravan dwellers, fair and circus children and barge children.

Socio-cultural analysis

2. Children of itinerant parents grow up in circumstances different from those of most children in the Community. The educational situation of such children is often described in extremely negative terms. This is typical of the standpoint from which the child and the issue are approached. The basis, and also standard of values, underlying this view of educational problems is the current dominant culture, with its own values and norms. Often, too little attention is paid to the child itself and its social environment. A brief description follows below of the lifestyle of, respectively, caravan dwellers, fair and circus operators, and barge people.

3. 'Nomadism' is a key element in the lifestyle of caravan dwellers. It determines not just the conditions in which they live but also their way of thinking and way of life. Caravan dwellers have a relatively casual attitude towards space and time. They live in the present and give little or no thought to the future. They do not live according to a fixed scheme of hours, days and weeks etc. Work is integrated into the normal rhythm of the day so that there is no difference between work and leisure as such.

Group solidarity is the dominant factor in the cultural makeup of caravan dwellers. Family ties are all-important, and relations with outside society are characterized by a great reserve and a deep mistrust. The influence of the group on the behaviour of the individual ensures personal and collective security and maintains behaviour norms with respect to outside society. The family is not a closed nuclear unit, it is in constant interaction with close

relatives and other members of the extended family or group. Adults work as equals and share expenditure and income from work. Neither concentration of power nor formal organization is possible or necessary in this form of cooperation. Caravan dwellers are subject to the institutions and laws of sedentary society. They observe them to an extent and use them, but do not adopt them as their own. In general, they are extremely reserved. Rejection by society, which in effect means being persecuted constantly, obliged to camp on unpleasant sites, being subject to police control in a variety of forms etc., perpetuates this protective reflex.

4. Travelling fairs are generally family businesses, in which not infrequently three generations are actively involved at the same time. From an early age, the children learn to regard the trade of their parents or family as their own future. They are often warned of the dangers of the outside society. They frequently receive inadequate information as to opportunities outside the fair world. Older children fairly quickly gain a place of their own in the business.

The fair trade is seasonal and lasts from the middle of March to the end of November. In the winter months, most fair people lead a settled existence. Nevertheless, this section of the population is regarded by society at large as 'foreign'. Most fair people are therefore drawn to their own group and have little or no contact with the rest of society.

Circus children find themselves in a similar situation. They, too, live apart from sedentary society, perhaps to an even greater extent than fair children, if only because travel is more frequent and more extensive and because a circus is self-supporting to a great extent (e.g. own power supply). There is, however, a special relationship with the public.

5. Barge children have the most favourable prospects. Although they also live within a restricted environment and have little contact with society at large, barge people constitute a more open group, are often financially more well-off and are more aware of the importance of a proper education for their children.

## Educational position

6. All countries of the Community have compulsory education until the age of about 15-16. This is justified in order to ensure equality of opportunity for all young people. Children of parents with no fixed abode normally do not comply with the requirements of compulsory education. The situation varies depending on the category, which therefore means that a different approach will be required for each of these categories. Barge children will from the outset be more easily integrated than fair or circus children, who in turn will have less difficulty than the children of caravan dwellers.

7. Barge children aged from 4-6 are unable to attend nursery school for nearly all of the year. Regular contact with school is often an enormous problem for barge parents. Educational backwardness is limited to the first years of primary education and is mainly due to the lack of nursery education and to the transition from the secure family atmosphere of the infant years to the unfamiliar atmosphere of the boarding school. During their period of compulsory education ashore, barge children are often lodged at a boarding school or with relations, on rare occasions even with a foster family. Integration into normal education is easier with barge children than with the other categories of the travelling population.

8. The situation of fair and circus children differs considerably from that of barge children. The year can be divided into two distinct periods: a summer period and a winter period. Throughout the entire summer period, children receive practically no education, which means they fall behind in school terms. The result is a very limited attendance at post-primary educational establishments. Moreover, many parents think it necessary for the 12-16-year olds to be gradually trained in the family business. Finally, the limited post-primary education attendance may be explained by the following factors:

- post-primary education is not compatible with six-month absences;
- financial reasons oblige parents to take their children with them on fair tours;
- the young people themselves have little or no motivation on account of the large gap between the curricula offered and their own way of life.

Furthermore, circus people tend to emphasize artistic training at the expense of 'normal' education.

9. The education of children of caravan dwellers is seen as an extremely problematical issue. Many children attend school very irregularly or not at all. The results of those that do attend school are below average. There is little or no post-primary school attendance. The educational backwardness of these children is, accordingly, extremely high.

#### Some experiments

10. It should be noted at the outset that very little information is available on how the problems are approached within the various Member States. A limited survey is given below of a number of experiments carried out in Member States.

#### Fair and circus children

11. In the Netherlands, a system of 'mobile schools' was introduced in the fifties. The first school was opened in Groningen in 1953. Over the years, the number of schools has gradually expanded. At present, three 2-man schools and five 1-man schools travel from fair to fair. Responsible for the schools (trailers) and their staff is the 'Stichting rijdende school' (Mobile School Foundation) funded by the Ministry of Education. The trailers visit about 150 fairs every year. A route is planned annually on the basis of site-rental lists requested from municipalities and fair organizers. From the names contained in these lists, the planners are able to determine the number of children at each fair.

12. During the winter period, the mobile schools are often stationed near conventional schools. In 1961 therefore, a project for integrating a mobile school with a conventional school was launched in Bergen op Zoom. The project started successfully and expanded into a primary school development project. There is intensive cooperation in the winter months; in the summer, the mobile school continues to provide education, while the conventional school takes children temporarily staying in Bergen op Zoom in the summer months.

13. Also in 1981, nursery education consultants were appointed in the Netherlands for a period of two years. Their job is to examine the possibilities for improving nursery school education for fair children. An evaluative report may be expected in the near future.

14. Furthermore, in 1980 a new activity was launched involving the 'Kleutercarrousel' work group. Since then, two nursery consultants have been working in the regions of North Holland and Limburg, supported by an education expert appointed by the Ministry of Education. The project is run by the 'Kleutercarrousel' work group, on which the 'Stichting rijdende school', the 'broeder Everardus Wittestichting' and fair parents are represented. The task of the nursery consultants is to:

- coordinate the content and organization of the teaching offered to fair children at conventional nursery schools in summer and in winter,
- provide support for parents with the aid of suitable materials and media, with the aim of reducing the backwardness of nursery-age fair children,
- provide nursery teaching in a mobile school.

15. As regards the education of circus children, a number of circuses have attempted to provide facilities on a private or semi-private basis. The results have varied: some experiments have succeeded, others have had to be discontinued owing (mainly) to lack of funds.

16. In France, such an attempt was made by Bouglione. It did not succeed and no other circus has tried to follow Bouglione's example. In smaller circuses (such as Diano Moreno), the children are sent in the winter months to the local state school of the place where the circus is wintering. The children then do correspondence courses in the summer.

17. In Germany, Kron and busch-roland have set up schools. In 1976, Kron's school had 21 pupils. A special timetable is arranged to take account of performances. Busch-Roland halted its experiment in 1977 (lack of pupils, negative experience with the teacher, financially unviable).

18. In the United Kingdom, the Gerry Cottle circus is the only one that has a school, installed in a converted bus. For three years, the teacher's salary was paid by the circus itself, then responsibility for these costs was assumed by the state.

19. In Italy, the circus of Liana and Rinalde Orfei possesses a trailer providing facilities for children from 6 to 10 years old. The circus receives a state subsidy corresponding to one-fifth of the total cost of the school. Four other Italian circuses also have travelling schools, whose teachers are state employees: the Medrano de Casartelli circus, the American circus of Enis Togni, the Darix Togni circus and the Moira Orfei circus.

#### Barge children

20. The Flanders work group 'schipperskinderen en onderwijs' launched a nursery education project for barge children in 1981. In the course of the 1981-1982 school year, information evenings were held in three barge schools (Bruges, Wijnegem, Ghent). Sixty-five barge couples took part. In addition, the work group distributed two folders containing a list of nursery schools in Flanders and the Netherlands. When compiling this list, particular account was taken of the accessibility of these schools from the major barge mooring centres. Our information indicates that school attendance of barge infants is higher than in the previous school year, as regards both numbers of pupils and frequency of attendance. The results were especially positive in the two schools most actively involved in the project.

21. Thanks to a decision by the Minister of Education, these two schools (Wijnegem and Ghent) were able to call upon the services of two supplementary nursery teachers. These two teachers were supported by the work group in carrying out their functions.

22. In the Netherlands, it was announced in the draft paper 'Education and Accommodation of Children of the Itinerant Population' (May 1981) that waterside classes, linked to existing schools or attached to a special foundation, were to be set up at waterway junctions to provide educational facilities for infants.

23. Furthermore, supplementary teachers may be requested for the first and second primary school years. Approval is given on the basis of one period of schooling per four pupils above the normal number.



24. In the Netherlands, the aim of policy since 1961 has been to complete the integration process for all barge schools within five years. Schools that have not been integrated by then will be eligible for state subsidies for a maximum of two further years.

#### Children of caravan dwellers

25. In Belgium, education projects have been set up around a number of caravan sites (Genk, Mortsel, Maaseik and Wilrijk). An adult literacy project has also been launched in Wilrijk and Mortsel.

26. In the Netherlands, nursery and primary schools with children from caravan families are allowed (on request) to engage supplementary teaching staff on the basis of one period of schooling per four children above the normal number. The existing caravan centre schools have to be integrated into the normal education system by 1986.

27. The French Ministry of National Education has taken a number of measures to provide educational facilities for caravan dwellers:

- establishment of schools near caravan sites, which may be attended by other children as well;
- seven boarding schools for primary education and one for secondary education;
- tutors for correspondence courses under the auspices of the 'National Centre for Television Education';
- travelling schools.

28. There are two trends in the United Kingdom:

- firstly, since 1971, more special classes and facilities have been created, mainly as a result of increased school attendance, which in turn is due to the increase in the number of official sites;
- secondly, there appears to be a trend towards the phasing out of separate classes in favour of normal teaching. This is the case where children have already had experience of teaching for some time and where integration, at the local level as well, has reached a more advanced stage.

29. In Italy a policy has been developed since 1974 with the aim of integrating caravan children into normal education. To cope with integration difficulties, assignment teachers have been appointed to assist children with reading difficulties and also to maintain a link between parents and school in order to encourage mutual respect and understanding. In addition, a number of special classes have been retained for, amongst others, children who are educationally very backward. 'Opera Nomadi', an association for caravan dwellers, has the task of training teachers and providing them with information with the aim of ensuring problem-free transition to normal education for such children.

#### Major outlines of future policy

30. Future policy must be based on the following points:

- the continuity of the learning process must be encouraged;
- the integration of children into normal education should be encouraged wherever possible;
- backwardness and learning difficulties must be remedied as early as possible by optimizing nursery schooling,
- education must be geared to the individual to enable children to follow a course which takes into account differences in ability, learning speed, interest and background. Here in fact, a special schedule can be developed giving a pedagogic brief description of the child.

In all cases, account has to be taken of the differences between the various groups (see 'Socio-cultural analysis' and 'Educational position') and the individual differences between children within each group.

31. Where integration with normal education is possible, the necessary steps need to be taken to ensure that this proceeds as smoothly as possible. The measures involved will also differ from group to group. In some cases, separate facilities may continue to be necessary because full integration at an early stage will present too many difficulties.

### Children of fair and circus operators

32. Infants must be allowed to remain as much as possible with their families, since both parents and educationalists object to children being removed from the home at too early an age. A study should be commissioned to investigate the facilities needed to organize nursery education in an optimum fashion. It should also examine which form of nursery education is the most suitable for such children:

- mobile school (cf. the Netherlands)
- conventional nursery schooling (with or without the assistance of supplementary nursery teachers)
- written teaching material with support for parents (with the aid of audio-visual media).

33. The primary school attendance of children over 6 years of age can be encouraged in two ways:

- encouragement of placements with foster parents and/or boarding schools during the travelling season or throughout the year;
- establishment of a network of mobile schools that collaborate closely with the conventional schools during the winter period.

34. Education for children of circus artists who wish to follow the trade of their parents requires a separate study. The aim of such an education will be twofold: conventional education on the one hand and circus training on the other.

### Barge children

35. For barge children as well, it is educationally wrong to remove them from their families so that they can receive nursery schooling. Steps should therefore be taken to enable barge children to attend nursery school while living on board the barges. The following solutions may be envisaged:

- waterside classes with supplementary nursery teachers
- written teaching material for children of nursery-school age
- information and support for conventional nursery schools
- information and support for parents

36. The problem of education for large children of primary school age can virtually only be solved by encouraging placements with foster parents and/or boarding schools. The aim here must not be to establish special schools for large children but to merge existing large schools with schools in the conventional education system.

Contacts between schools, boarding schools and parents have to be as close as possible, especially during the transition from nursery schooling to primary education. Schools attended by large children must be able to call upon additional staff and resources to ensure proper attention for the children during the period in which educational problems need to be resolved (often the first and second school years).

#### Children of caravan dwellers

37. As regards the caravan population, a large number of educational measures have failed because they took no account of the cultural background of caravan dwellers. Education is regarded as foreign and inappropriate, and motivation to attend school remains limited. This failure is, however, only a symptom of the relationship between sedentary society and caravan dwellers. A comprehensive approach to the problem is therefore required: an educational policy for itinerant children forms a fundamental part of a global policy embracing the problem of sites, social provisions, recognition of caravan dwelling as a fully accepted way of life, etc.

38. An intensive approach to the complex of education issues is needed and calls for a number of measures and facilities (additional staff etc.). The organizational framework within which these measures can be taken will vary depending on circumstances. The following examples may be envisaged:

- reception classes: for children who have not yet received any schooling;
- remedial classes: for children who have fallen behind educationally;
- additional support: individual help.

At all events, the guiding principle will have to be: 'a gradual transition from no schooling to proper schooling', where separate education must be avoided since this perpetuates the existing relationship to sedentary society.

39. A separate problem is the elimination of illiteracy among adults. At the same time as giving assistance to the children, it will be necessary to provide facilities on a large scale to enable the parents to acquire basic skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic. This will also offer an opportunity to increase the motivation for children to attend school regularly.



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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOCUMENT 1-841/62)  
tabled by Mrs HOFF, Mrs VIEHOFF and Mr MALANGRE  
pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure  
on the education problems of circus and fair children

The European Parliament,

- A - recognizing the inalienable right of each child to an education which allows him or her to play a full part in social, economic and cultural life,
  - B - aware of the considerable number of children in the Community who belong to families involved in circuses and fairs, which travel throughout the Community,
  - C - concerned at the lack of suitable educational facilities for most of these children, and the lack of information relating to the numbers involved and the extent of their education,
  - D - equally concerned that some of these children may be obliged to work, although below the minimum age,
  - E - recognizing that some Member States already have some facilities for their education,
  - F - bearing in mind the work in the area of children's welfare done, and in progress, by the Council of Europe, the ILO and the UN (1),
1. Calls on the Commission:
    - to establish as soon as possible the exact number of children concerned, and what facilities already exist;
    - to initiate, in conjunction with the Member States and in consultation with organizations which represent the parents of these children, measures which will ensure adequate and appropriate education for these children, regardless of whichever Community country in which they find themselves;
    - to make resources available through the Social Fund, and other Community policies as appropriate, for the provision of the necessary measures, including pilot projects to establish the most suitable models of multicultural, multilingual models of education and training;
  2. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, Council and the Member States.

(1) In particular, the Council of Europe's recommendation 874 on a European Charter on the Rights of the Child, on the ILO's Convention 138 concerning the minimum age of admission to employment, and the preparation by the ESC of the UN of a Draft Convention on the Rights of the Child.

