

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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Brussels, 28 March 1984.

BUSINESS COOPERATION CENTRE

EIGHTH PROGRESS REPORT

(Years 1980 - 1983)

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Introduction

The Business Cooperation Centre (B.C.C.) which was set up in 1973 (1) and whose mandate was confirmed by Commission decision in 1976 (1a), has the following tasks :

1. Introducing those business, in Community countries, wishing to cooperate or form links.
Point 2 of the 1976 decision and the decision of 20 July 1977 (1b) extended the Centre's purview to cover a number of non-Community countries (Canada, the scandinavian countries and Austria) and, from 1 April 1983, Yugoslavia. Additionally, the 1977 Commission decision allows the Centre to be selective and to approach firms itself.
2. Supplying certain general information to firms.
3. Informing the Community institutions on barriers to cooperation between businesses (Commission decision of 21 June 1973).
4. Performing certain coordination tasks in the field of sub-contracting (Commission decision of 16 December 1976).
5. Giving priority treatment to requests for transnational cooperation from the three applicant countries : Greece, Spain and Portugal (1c) - Greece was not yet a member of the Community when the Centre was set up - to help them adapt to the Community market (see Annex I)

(1) Commission decision of 21.6.1973 (Written Procedure C/1721/73 of 2.7.73)
(1a) Commission decision of 16.12.1976 (COM(76) Min. 410, 23.12.1976)
(1b) COM(77) Min. 439, 25.7.1977
(1c) COM(80) 448 final of 24 July 1980, '6th and 7th Progress Report of Business Cooperation Centre (1978 and 1979)'.

A. REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES OVER THE FOUR YEARS

a. Individual contacts

When the Commission approved the Centre's Sixth and Seventh Progress Reports (1), it set the B.C.C. two objectives, in order of priority :

- to support as broadly as possible the small and medium-sized enterprises of the three candidate countries in their efforts to adapt to the market conditions of the European Community;
- to maintain a certain contact structure for the small and medium-sized enterprises of the Community to assist them in their search for transfrontier links.

Of the three countries waiting to join the Community at the time, Greece made greatest use of the Centre's services. Between 1980 and 1983, some 155 requests for information and 44 requests for partners were received from Greece; the Centre made 74 replies and contacts in response.

Only 55 requests for information and 41 for partners were received from Spain, with 58 replies and contacts made in return.

The figures for Portugal were 33, 21 and 70 respectively.

Over the same four-year period the B.C.C. received a total of 1.598 requests for information plus 334 requests for partners and made 3.930 replies and contacts.

Annex II gives detailed statistics on the B.C.C.'s information and partner search activities between 1973 - 1979 and in 1980, 1981, 1982 and 1983.

(1) COM(80)448 Final of 24 July 1980, 'Sixth and Seventh Progress Report of the Business Cooperation Centre (1978 and 1979)'.

Past experience, combined with the imbalance between supply demand for business partners, have forced the Centre to think about its future, and in particular about how to achieve the two above mentioned objectives. A few ideas on this point are set out in Section B on the 'Programme for 1984 and 1985'.

b. Conferences, seminars and missions

Naturally, the collective contacts - in this case seminars and conferences - serve the same aims, i.e. give priority to Greece, Portugal, Spain and the peripheral and border areas of the Community, whilst at the same time making every effort to maintain a Community-wide liaison service.

The aim of such collective events is to enable industrialists and businessmen in the country concerned, be it a new member or an applicant country, to acquaint themselves with the Community market and to alert industrialists in other Member States to the scope for cooperation on the local market. The symposia also enable individual industrialists to forge useful contacts with their counterparts.

As instructed in the Sixth and Seventh Progress Report, the Centre has been focusing its efforts on Greece and the two applicant countries. A symposium on industrial investment and cooperation in Greece was held in Brussels on 19 March 1981, followed by a second, more specialized, symposium on the agri-foodstuffs industry on 24 and 25 June 1982 in Athens and a seminar on industrial cooperation between the Community and Portugal in the textiles/clothing and ceramics industries on 15 and 16 November 1982 in Brussels.

The enormous success of these three events, from the point of view of both attendance and practical results, has enhanced the Centre's prestige in trade circles in the Community in general and in the countries directly concerned in particular.

At the same time, the Centre has helped to arrange information and sectoral training missions for Greek and Portuguese entrepreneurs and officials (see Annex III A).

In the course of 1983, the Centre contributed in a wide range of meetings held to mark the European Year of the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and the Craft Industry (see Annex III B).

c. Promotion of sub-contracting

The Centre's efforts to promote sub-contracting, initiated at the behest of the industry and subsequently provided for in the 1976 Commission decision (1), are intended to bring about closer integration of economic activities throughout the European Community and, in particular, to enable small firms to blend into the economy.

Several steps have been taken in furtherance of these aims :

- The B.C.C. has compiled and circulated two multilingual nomenclatures (2) - one for the metals sector, the other for the plastics and rubber sectors - which are widely used by the companies concerned, both inside Europe and beyond, and are available from the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. Electronic engineering, electrical engineering, industrial services and, finally, wood and wood derivatives will be the next industries covered. A preliminary study on the electronic engineering industry has already explored how far all or part of the existing nomenclatures could be used.

(1) Commission decision of 16 December 1976

(2) In Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek and Italian plus Portuguese and Spanish.

- The Centre has compiled a register of sub-contracting exhibitions and fairs with a view to publishing a European fairs calendar to encourage small firms to plan to attend such events.
- The B.C.C. has organized periodic meetings of government sub-contracting experts.
- Finally, the Centre has compiled a register of sub-contractors' exchanges and plans to coordinate their services by arranging exchanges of information or by interconnecting them through the national and Community networks.

B. PROGRAMME FOR 1984 AND 1985

a. Individual contacts

Two interesting phenomena have emerged over recent years - traditional 'matchmakers' (such as banks, chambers of commerce, trade organizations, consultants, lawyers, accountants and so on) have witnessed a boom in their partner search activities, which has been matched by a boom in the number of firms requesting information or seeking partners for ventures of all kinds. It has also become clear that the traditional matchmakers encounter much the same problems as the firms themselves when they attempt to build up a market extending beyond the Member States' national frontiers.

Experience has also shown that the requests for partners and the offers circulated fall into four general categories :

- 1) requests for specialized (e.g. legal) information;
- 2) requests for business partners, including, for example, sub-contractors;
- 3) requests for partners with a view to restructuring firms, including, for example, mergers (a typical B.C.C. activity);
- 4) requests for new manufacturing processes and technologies, i.e. for transfers of technologies and of new techniques (a typical DG XIII activity).

The B.C.C. has been thinking about its future. It must increase its resources, whilst at the same time ensuring that they are used effectively to further the Community's, and in particular the Centre's, objectives.

More specifically, it must respond faster and handle more requests, perhaps even giving an immediate response, drawing on the outstanding stock of offers circulated. Thought must also be given to the methods of sifting, i.e. of pinpointing and matching requests and offers. In the process the B.C.C. must attempt to ensure that firms from all parts of the Community are on the same wavelength. Technical requirements must also be clearly defined to provide a basis for meaningful talks between firms in different countries. Finally, the B.C.C. must be given the resources which it needs if it is to formulate proposals to encourage, respecting the competition regulations, cooperation between firms in the areas given priority.

b. Conferences, seminars and missions

In October 1984 the Centre, aided by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, will be holding a seminar as part of the first Tecno-Alimentaria fair in Barcelona.

During the informal preparatory talks, the Spanish representatives suggested that the seminar should focus on the agri-foodstuffs sector, indisputably one of the central elements in relations between the Commission and Spain.

The Centre will also continue to participate actively in the work of the COPEF (Permanent Conference of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in South-West France and North-East Spain), which is an ideal forum for developing and promoting links between Spanish and French companies.

As far as its resources permit, the Centre will continue to organize information and sector-by-sector training visits for industrialists and officials from Greece and the two applicant countries.

c. Promotion of sub-contracting

The Centre's programme on sub-contracting will continue along the lines approved by the group of government experts on small businesses on 23 March 1982. This programme sets out to achieve the following objectives :

- to continue and speed up work on the harmonized multilingual nomenclatures, starting with the volume for the electronic engineering industry. Talks with the International Electrotechnical Commission (I.E.C.) have already started. Approaches will also be made to the leading customers, many of whom have produced nomenclatures on products and services for their own use;
- to compile a register of existing sub-contracting exchanges and endeavour to coordinate their activities by arranging extensive and frequent exchanges of notes between the organizers.

In this context, the Centre took a fresh initiative at the end of 1982, which was endorsed by the government experts on sub-contracting on March 1983 : a feasibility study on a Centre for short-term analysis of the sub-contracting market, a need often articulated by those responsible for sub-contracting exchanges. The aim is to afford small businesses easier access to information and enable

them to react more quickly to changes in the market. The results of the feasibility study could be turned to good account from 1985 onwards in the form of closer cooperation (computerized if possible) between existing exchanges in Europe. They will be submitted to the group of experts in October.

Finally, the B.C.C. will explore the prospects for using the Community business cooperation network to build up a 'European stock exchange' for sub-contractors' services.

C. CONCLUSIONS

In 1984 and 1985 the Centre plans :

- to support firms as broadly as possible, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises in the countries applying to join the Community and in the less-developed, peripheral and border regions of the Community;
- to continue to act as a liaison body between the national sub-contracting experts and the circles concerned;
- to press ahead with its work on a computerized system to match requests for business partners with the offers circulated and to explore the prospects for setting up a Europe-wide network for exchanging data on business cooperation and sub-contracting.

- . Set up (1) initially for three years, the Business Cooperation Centre of the Commission of the European Communities (B.C.C.) had its mandate confirmed in 1976 (2).
- . The Commission's initiative was also consolidated by a special heading in section III of the general budget entitled 'subsidy for the operation of the Community Business Cooperation Centre' (3).
- . Administratively, the Centre is still attached to DG III, but it lost its autonomy with the Commission decision of 2 July 1980 on the restructuring of the Directorate-General for the Internal Market and Industrial Affairs (4).
- . The Centre's tasks have been modified by the Commission on a number of occasions. Its initial remit (1) was extended in 1976 (2) and amended in 1977 (5). In 1980, the Commission laid down priority tasks for the Centre in adopting the Sixth and Seventh Progress Report (6).
- . The various annual reports have stressed the difficulty of achieving a satisfactory level of efficiency in view of the discrepancy between the scale of the tasks assigned to the Centre and its lack of personnel (7).

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- (1) Commission decision of 21.6.73. Written procedure C/1721/73 of 2.7.73 following approval by the Council at its meeting of 16 and 17.4.1973
 - (2) Commission decision of 16.12.1976 (COM(76) Min 410, 23.12.1976, after opinion of COREPER at its 851st meeting of 26.5.1976).
 - (3) Article 422 (from 1973 to 1976), now Article 281.
 - (4) COM(80) Min 566, 8.7.1980
 - (5) Commission decision of 20.7.1977 (COM(77) Min 439, 25.7.1977).
 - (6) COM(80) 448 final adopted by the Commission on 23.7.1980 (COM(80) Min 570).
 - (7) See in particular Fifth Progress Report, page 3, paragraphs 4 and 5 (COM(78) 328 final of 19.7.1978) (COM(78) Min 438, 27.7.1978).

- . At the end of March 1982, the Centre moved from its offices in rue Archimède to rejoin Division III/F/4 under whose administration it has been since 1980.

Its new address is :

6, Rond-Point Schuman (2nd floor)

B-1040 Brussels

Telephone : 230.40.91 : 230.39.49

Telex : 61655 burap.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE INFORMATION AND
PARTNER SEARCH ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE BUSINESS COOPERATION CENTRE
OVER THE PERIOD 1973 - 1979
AND IN 1980, 1981, 1982 AND 1983

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STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE INFORMATION AND PARTNER SEARCH ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE BUSINESS COOPERATION CENTRE OVER THE PERIOD

1973 - 1979 AND IN 1980, 1981, 1982 AND 1983

	YEAR	B	D	DK	F	UK	I	IRL	L	NL	GR	SP	PORT	OTHER NON-COM- MUNITY	TOTAL	GRAND TOTAL	
INFORMATION	1973-1979	254	775	119	603	1269	515	120	11	155	40	15	10	488	4374	4374	
	. number of requests	1980	58	27	6	58	163	117	9	2	18	49	12	12	38	569	4943
		1981	66	33	10	54	183	57	7	2	20	85	22	9	47	595	5538
		1982	35	29	6	44	77	40	5	1	11	18	17	13	25	321	5859
		1983	12	10	1	13	25	28	2	-	8	3	4	4	3	113	5972
PARTNER SEARCH	1973-1979	53	107	18	145	175	92	29	2	51	2	4	-	18	696	696	
	. number of requests circulated	1980	8	3	1	14	21	8	4	-	3	19	8	6	7	102	798
		1981	10	7	2	12	26	12	1	-	5	21	6	8	4	114	912
		1982	11	4	1	6	15	3	-	-	1	2	8	7	1	59	971
		1983	5	4	-	3	8	14	1	-	1	2	19	-	2	59	1030
. number of replies	1973-1979	845	1982	179	1191	1661	498	124	24	547	9	1	-	40	7101	7101	
		1980	247	215	9	235	269	155	11	1	104	-	3	1	40	1290	8391
		1981	262	191	4	197	168	126	13	1	88	15	1	18	56	1140	9531
		1982	116	186	1	86	103	118	6	2	41	17	16	11	27	730	10261
		1983	131	73	2	14	107	93	14	1	5	1	14	20	11	486	10747
. number of contacts made	1973-1979	40	72	17	102	136	69	30	4	24	-	-	-	15	509	509	
		1980	8	6	2	13	22	9	3	-	5	13	11	5	5	102	611
		1981	13	6	1	12	26	9	2	-	4	23	7	9	6	118	729
		1982	6	5	1	4	19	10	-	-	-	5	6	6	2	64	793
		1983	5	5	1	5	9	6	-	-	1	2	3	3	1	41	834

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ACTIVITIES OF THE BUSINESS COOPERATION CENTRE

1 January 1980 - 31 December 1980

COUNTRIES

	B	D	DK	F	UK	I	IRL	L	NL	GR	SP	PORT	OTHER NON.COM	TOTAL
1. <u>Requests for information</u>	58	27	6	58	163	117	9	2	18	49	12	12	38	569

2. <u>Offers circulated</u> Mineral-extracting industries										2				2
Chemical				1	2	2	1		1	4	3		1	15
Structural engineering	2			5	4		1			3	1	3	1	20
Mechanical engineering	2	2		2	5	1				2	2	1	3	20
Electrical engineering		1			3		2						1	7
Foodstuffs					1									1
Textiles										3				3
Clothing														
Timber				2	1	2				3	1			9
Paper				1						1		1	1	3
Various														
Construction & civil engin.				1	1	1					1			4
Commerce	2			1	1				1			1		6
Transport	2			1										3
Services			1		3	2			1	1				8
TOTAL	8	3	1	14	21	8	4	-	3	19	8	6	7	102

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B.C.C. activities (1.1.80 - 31.12.80)

	B	D	DK	F	UK	I	IRL	L	NL	GR	SP	PORT	OTHER NON-COM MUNITY	TOTAL
3. <u>Number of replies received</u>														
Mineral-extracting industries	2	4		3	3	1								13
Chemical	65	24	2	28	36	14	5		19				7	200
Structural engineering	42	30	1	43	37	9	3		11		1		5	182
Mechanical engineering	49	47	1	55	50	22	2	1	24				4	155
Electrical engineering	15	13	1	16	16	5	1		4				6	77
Foodstuffs	2		1	4	3	3			2					15
Textiles	5	4		7	4	4					1			26
Clothing	1	5			5	4							1	16
Timber	6	6		16	19	4			8				4	63
Paper	3	7		12	8	6			6				1	43
Various				1	1									2
Construction & civil engin.	14	12	1	7	13	3			4					54
Commerce	13	32	1	22	36	28			14				7	153
Transport	11	5		1	12	6			1					36
Services	19	26	1	20	26	46			10		1	1	5	155
T O T A L	247	215	9	235	269	155	11	1	104	-	3	1	40	1290

4. Contacts made

8	6	2	13	22	9	3	-	5	13	11	5	5	5	102
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ACTIVITIES OF THE BUSINESS COOPERATION CENTRE

1 January 1981 - 31 December 1981

COUNTRIES

	B	D	DK	F	UK	I	IRL	L	NL	GR	SP	PORT	OTHER NON-COM	TOTAL
1. <u>Requests for information</u>	66	33	10	54	183	57	7	2	20	85	22	9	47	595
2. <u>Offers circulated</u>														
Mineral-extracting industries										1			1	2
Chemical				2	1	1			1	3	2	3		13
Structural engineering	2			2	3	2			3	3		1		16
Mechanical engineering		2	1	3	9	3				2	1	2	1	24
Electrical engineering		2		1	4					2		1	1	11
Foodstuffs				2		4	1			5	1	1		14
Textiles					1					2				3
Clothing					1	1						1	1	4
Timber	1		1							1				3
Paper									1					1
Various														
Construction & civil engin.	1			1	1									3
Commerce														
Transport	4	2												6
Services	2	1		1	6	1				2	1			14
TOTAL	10	7	2	12	26	12	1	-	5	21	6	8	4	114

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B.C.C. activities (1.1.81 - 31.12.81)

	B	D	DK	F	UK	I	IRL	L	NL	GR	SP	PORT	OTHER NON- COMMUN- ITY	TOTAL
3. Number of replies received														
Mineral-extracting industries	3	1		2	15	5							1	27
Chemical	38	23		22	20	9			8			6	4	130
Structural engineering	64	34		28	38	41	3	1	14	4		2	12	241
Mechanical engineering	47	34	1	60	29	32	4		21	2	1	4	15	252
Electrical engineering	18	12		13	13	7	2		9	1		1	4	80
Foodstuffs	19	5		8	14	1	2		8				1	58
Textiles	1	10			2	6			6	1				26
Clothing	4			6	3									13
Timber	13	22	2	3	5	6			3	1		1	3	59
Paper	8	3		3	3	7			1					25
Various														
Construction & civil engin.	3	9		3	2				3					20
Commerce	7	1		5	1				1	2		1	2	20
Transport	5	15		11	2	3			7	2				45
Services	32	22	1	33	21	9	2		7	2		3	12	144
T O T A L	262	191	4	197	168	126	13	1	88	15	1	18	56	1140

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4. Contacts made

	13	6	1	12	26	9	2	-	4	23	7	9	6	118
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ACTIVITIES OF THE BUSINESS COOPERATION CENTRE

1 January 1982 - 31 December 1982

COUNTRIES

	B	D	DK	F	UK	I	IRL	L	NL	GR	SP	PORT	OTHER NON.COM.	TOTAL
1. <u>Requests for information</u>	35	29	6	44	77	40	5	1	11	18	17	13	25	321

2. <u>Offers circulated</u>														
Mineral-extracting industries												1		1
Chemical	2	1		2		1					2	1		9
Structural engineering	2				2								1	5
Mechanical engineering	1	1	1	1	7	1			1		3	2		18
Electrical engineering		2		1		1					2			6
Foodstuffs												1		1
Textiles														
Clothing														
Timber	2			1								1		4
Paper	1				1						1			3
Various														
Construction & civil engin.	1													1
Commerce				1										1
Transport	1													1
Services	1				5					2		1		9
TOTAL	11	4	1	6	15	3	-	-	1	2	8	7	1	59

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B.C.C. activities (1.1.82 - 31.12.82)

	B	D	DK	F	UK.	I	IRL	L	NL	GR	ESP	PORT	OTHER NON- COMMUN- ITY	TOTAL
3. <u>Number of replies received</u>														
Mineral-extracting industries					1	1			1					3
Chemical	18	22	1	18	17	19	1		8		3	2	2	111
Structural engineering	13	31		15	19	8	1		5	3	3	2	5	105
Mechanical engineering	52	59		15	13	18			9	1	5	7	8	187
Electrical engineering	11	14		3	9	7	3		2	1			1	51
Foodstuffs		18		4	11	11				2			2	48
Textiles	3	5		1	1	5				2				17
Clothing	3	9		3	4	4			3	1				27
Timber	7	4			6	3		1	3					24
Paper	4	1		4	10	1			2		1			23
Various														
Construction & civil engin.	1					2			1					4
Commerce						4								4
Transport				7	7	3			3	2				22
Services	4	23		16	5	32	1	1	4	5	4		9	104
T O T A L	116	186	1	86	103	118	6	2	41	17	16	11	27	730

4. Contacts made

6	5	1	4	19	10	-	-	-	5	6	6	2	64
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ACTIVITIES OF THE BUSINESS COOPERATION CENTRE

1 January 1983 - 31 December 1983

COUNTRIES

	B	D	DK	F	UK	I	IRL	L	NL	GR	SP	PORT	OTHER NON-COM	TOTAL
<u>1. Requests for information</u>	12	10	1	13	25	28	2	-	8	3	4	4	3	113

<u>2. Offers circulated</u>														
<u>Mineral-extracting industries</u>														
Chemical				1		4				1	3			9
Structural engineering	1					1	1							3
Mechanical engineering	2	2			1	3					3			11
Electrical engineering				1	1	2							1	5
Foodstuffs						1					4			5
Textiles				1	1									2
Clothing											1			1
Timber														
Paper											1			1
Various		1									1			2
Construction & civil engin.											3			3
Commerce						1								1
Transport									1					1
Services	2		1		6	3				1	1		1	15
TOTAL	5	3	1	3	9	15	1	-	1	2	17	-	2	59

b1

B.C.C. activities (1.1.83 - 31.12.83)

	B	D	DK	F	UK	I	IRL	L	NL	GR	SP	PORT	OTHER NON- COMMUN- ITY	TOTAL
3. <u>Number of replies received</u>														
Mineral-extracting industries										1				1
Chemical	32	11		6	25	11		1			9	5	3	103
Structural engineering	11	8		3	10	8						1		41
Mechanical engineering	27	20	2	3	18	27	8		1			3	1	110
Electrical engineering	34	9		2	18	2	1							66
Foodstuffs		2			5	2						2	1	12
Textiles	1										1			2
Clothing	2				1				1					4
Timber	1	5			2	2			1			1		12
Paper														
Various														
Construction & civil engin.	10	10			15	17	2		1		1	6	2	64
Commerce		2			5	5	1				2	1		16
Transport														
Services	13	6			8	19	2		1		1	1	4	55
T O T A L	131	73	2	14	107	93	14	1	5	1	14	20	11	486

4. Contacts made

	5	5	1	5	9	6	-	-	1	2	3	3	1	41
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Organization of trade missions in individual sectors

a. Trade missions by EOMMEX (1)

The Business Cooperation Centre has established useful contacts with the Greek Ministry for Coordination, the Athens Chamber of Commerce and EOMMEX.

The Centre and EOMMEX have agreed to organize trade missions to various Member States with a view to facilitating contacts between Greek and Community industrialists sector by sector. On average these missions last one week and involve groups of around ten small-business leaders; they are often timed to coincide with trade fairs and exhibitions. The Centre facilitates contacts between EOMMEX and the relevant national federations and prepares a detailed programme of visits in advance with among other things, round-table discussions between industrialists in the host country and members of the visiting mission.

Visits to factories, vocational training institutes and research centres also form a useful part of these trade missions.

The missions are part-funded by the ESF and comprise four stages :

- management courses held in Greece;
- selection by the Greek trade organization of businessmen to undertake a mission abroad in the company of an EOMMEX official;
- all the businessmen who have been on a visit or mission abroad are asked to talk to fellow businessmen about their experiences at the meetings organized by EOMMEX;
- finally, conferences are held on topics of relevance to the sector; these are attended by Greek lecturers and foreign specialists.

(1) EOMMEX : Hellenic Office for Small and Medium-sized Businesses and Crafts

16, Xenies Street
ATHENS 611, Greece

The Centre has organized the following missions in conjunction with EOMMEX :

1 9 8 1

<u>Sector</u>	<u>Country visited</u>	<u>Date</u>
Leather goods	Italy	1 - 7 February 1981
Knitwear	France	21 - 26 May 1981
Aluminium window frames	Germany	22 - 26 June 1981
Marble	Italy	11 - 19 September 1981
Ceramics	Italy	3 - 8 October 1981
Ceramics	Ireland	4 - 10 October 1981
Cabinet-making	France	26 - 31 October 1981

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<u>Sector</u>	<u>Country visited</u>	<u>Date</u>
Furniture	Italy	31 Jan. - 7 Feb. 1982
Repair of agricultural machinery	Belgium	13 - 16 February 1982
Dressmaking	United Kingdom	23 March - 3 April 1982
Tanning	Italy	2 - 8 May 1982
Furniture	Italy	19 - 26 September 1982

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<u>Sector</u>	<u>Country Visited</u>	<u>Date</u>
Jewellery	Italy	22 - 29 January 1983
Furniture	Germany	16 - 20 May 1983
Furniture	Italy	25 May - 5 June 1983
Marble	Italy	3 - 9 June 1983
Aluminium window frames	Germany	5 - 8 September 1983
Marble	Italy	20 -25 September 1983
Textile machinery	Italy	17 - 22 October 1983

b. Trade missions by the IAPMEI in Portugal (1)

The Centre has also organized collective contacts, sector by sector, between Community industrialists and their counterparts in the applicant countries in close cooperation with IAPMEI and its department dealing with assistance towards international cooperation.

Five different missions covering four sectors were arranged at the end of 1981 :

<u>Sector</u>	<u>Country visited</u>	<u>Date</u>
Footwear (6 IAPMEI officials)	Italy	30 Nov. - 4 Dec. 1981
Footwear (group of 14 industrialists)	Italy	13 - 19 December 1981
Furniture (group of 5 IAPMEI officials)	Italy	23 Nov. - 4 December 1981
Machine tools (group of 6 IAPMEI officials)	Italy	23 Nov. - 4 December 1981
Visit to the Commission in Brussels by a group of 18 IAPMEI officials	Belgium	7 - 9 December 1981

By and large, the initial results of these visits have been encouraging. The missions usually consist of visits to production units of varying sizes, meetings with heads of research centres and vocational training colleges and round-table discussions with trade organizations.

All the Portuguese officials who have been on these missions are urged to pass on their training and information to managers and foremen in their own country (programmes A and D in the pre-accession aid plan for Portugal).

(1) IAPMEI : Institute for Assistance to Small and Medium-Sized Industrial Firms
Rua Rodrigo da Fonseca, 73
1297 LISBOA-CODEX (Portugal).

In order to make faster progress in dealing with partner search requests and to stimulate wider interest in this activity, direct contacts have been established, with the collaboration of IAPMEI officials, in the industrial areas of Guimaraes (textiles), Fermentelos (mechanical engineering) and Bucaco (ceramics).

In 1982, IAPMEI widened its interest in this kind of contact to other fields and organized trade missions to countries and industries not previously visited :

<u>Sector</u>	<u>Country visited</u>	<u>Date</u>
Energy conservation (Energy Bus)	Italy	March - April 1982
Sub-contracting	United Kingdom	March - April 1982
Timber - Metals - Electronics	Netherlands	March 1982
Technology Centre	Ireland	May 1982
Footwear	France	November - December 1982
Furniture	Italy	November - December 1982

The footwear mission to France in November and December 1982 bore its first fruit in December 1983, when a party of French businessmen made the return visit to Porto.

European Year of the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and the Craft Industry

- The Greek National Committee set up at the start of 1983 to sponsor a series of events in Greece in the course of the Year decided on 'prospects opened up for small businesses by the development of sub-contracting' as its topic of interest to all members of the Community. With the help of EOMMEX (the Hellenic Office for Small and Medium-sized Business and Crafts), the Centre successfully staged the conference on this issue in Athens on 6 and 7 October 1983, attracting a large audience of experts and businessmen from all over Europe, most of them from the buyers' side. The conference gave small Greek sub-contracting firms an opportunity to voice their views and to display their export potential.

- The seminar on cross-frontier cooperation between firms in Europe - held in Brussels on 27 and 28 October 1983 - was the first meeting of its kind between representatives of the Permanent Conference of Chambers of commerce and Industry from all the border regions in the Community and from the countries which have applied to join the Community or are simply associated with it.

One proposal which emerged was to set up a standing liaison committee to ensure a continuous exchange of information and notes between the organizations concerned. The Committee would also provide a bridge to the Commission of the European Communities and to the Council in Europe.

The B.C.C. was active on the committee dealing with ways of establishing closer economic ties.

- On 11 and 12 November 1983 the Centre contributed in the First European Convention for Company Founding in Strasbourg, where it played an active part on the Commission on company founding through expansion and the role of the companies.

- After that, on 23, 24 and 25 November 1983, B.C.C. representatives went to Barcelona for the seminar on S.M.E.s in the E.E.C. arranged by the E.S.A.D.E. (Escuela Superior de Administracion y Direccion de Empresas, the Business Administration and Management School).
- Then at the conference closing the Year in Strasbourg on 8 and 9 December 1983, the Centre joined in the work of the Committee on the Administrative Environment of S.M.E.s : Information, Advice and Assistance.
- Finally, the Centre was represented at the conference on 'small business coming to terms with its environment', held by the Netherlands National Committee in Tilburg on 9 and 10 November 1983.