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INFORMATION MEMO

APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 50

The Commission of the European Economic Community has approved and submitted to the Council a two-point proposal on the application of Article 50 of the Treaty of Rome, aimed at encouraging the exchange of young workers within the Community under a joint programme. It is suggested that the Council adopt an initial joint programme to promote the exchange of trainees within the Community, and that a Community agreement be concluded, co-ordinating and superseding existing bilateral agreements and arrangements between Member States.

The aims of the Commission's proposal are:

- (a) to improve the quality and effectiveness of traineeships;
- (b) to encourage an increase in the number of traineeships by setting annual Community targets to be reached by the Member States;
- (c) to promote the formation of national advisory committees to assist the authorities concerned with exchanges of young workers;
- (d) to instigate Community financial contributions supplementary to those of the Member States so as to provide more scholarships for unpaid training periods or for training periods on reduced pay, to help organizations concerned with the material and moral welfare of trainees, and to facilitate the necessary dissemination of information.

It should be noted that up to now, despite the efforts of the Member States in this field, results have not been satisfactory. For instance, bilateral agreements in force in the Member States, with a working population of just over 72 000 000, provide for a total of 6 700 traineeships; but even this modest figure is far from having ever been reached in practice.

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Numerous factors have prevented Governments, in spite of their good intentions, from obtaining better results: the general lack of employers' interest in trainees, due to practical and psychological reasons, the absence in some Community countries of organizations to assist trainees and, last but not least, financial difficulties.

Financial problems arise both for trainees who are not normally paid by their employers and for the welfare bodies.

If anything effective is to be done to widen the exchange of trainees, action must be taken to spread information in industrial and business circles, more scholarships must be granted to unpaid trainees, and help must be given to welfare organizations which are active at Community level.

Lastly, there are difficulties resulting from the complexity of the procedures applied in the various countries with respect to entry formalities, labour permits, etc. Pending the final abolition of these formalities with the institution of free movement of workers, measures must be taken to simplify them.

The Commission's proposal will apply for the time being only to trainees, i.e. young workers spending periods abroad to improve their professional training and widen their cultural and human experience. Later the Commission intends to work out schemes for other categories of young workers.