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INFORMATION MEMOCOMMON VOCATIONAL TRAINING POLICY

The Advisory Committee on Vocational Training held its first meeting on 29 June 1964. With the establishment of this tripartite committee, composed of representatives of the governments, employers' associations and trade unions, the Community's activity in this field enters a more concrete phase leading to the implementation of a common policy.

The Commission's intention is to act as a catalyst, to stimulate the Member States and public and private national bodies to study the problems at Community level and to seek and apply solutions in common.

The fact that the Treaty of Rome provides for a common vocational training policy does not mean **any** form of regimentation for the member countries. That would be contrary to the spirit of the Treaty. Each Member State will be able to retain patterns and organizations which have proved their worth. The important thing is that the countries, despite these different structures, should work towards common objectives; and their independence will obviously not prevent them - thanks to permanent exchange of information and experience - from spontaneously carrying out studies and projects together and from gradually harmonizing structures, programmes and methods so as to raise the level of vocational training throughout the Community.

The Commission will refer to the Advisory Committee at its next session two training programmes, one general, the other for agriculture. The programmes are geared to the present and foreseeable needs arising from the establishment of the Common Market, and take account of scientific and technical progress and of social and cultural demands. They are to implement a common vocational training policy capable of contributing to the harmonious development both of the national economies and of the Community, promoting a more rapid rise in the standard of living, and improving possibilities of employment for both wage-earning and self-employed workers.

In outlining these programmes at the Committee's opening session, M. Levi Sandri, member of the Commission and President of the Social Affairs Group, stressed the desirability of executing a number of short- and long-term Community projects.

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It will be necessary to relate the short-term forecasts of supply and demand for labour, made each year in examining labour market trends, to the whole complex of manpower problems throughout the EEC (which implies close co-operation between the Advisory Committees of the European Social Fund, for the Free Movement of Workers, and on Vocational Training). On this basis schemes must be put in hand for rapid training and for retraining, to remedy shortages of skilled workers and to cater for sectors of activity in course of conversion and occupations or regions whose needs are urgent.

The longer-term action is aimed at adjusting training structures, schemes and methods, both generally, and by sectors of activity and regions. It will be based on long-term forecasts of labour requirements and accompanied by the generalization and improvement of vocational guidance. Special attention will be given to raising the standard of instructors, to approximating levels of training, and to refresher courses, general education and social advancement.

In agriculture the programme aims at making farm workers more highly skilled and more mobile, at helping workers who leave the land to learn other jobs, and at giving children from rural environments opportunities for general and vocational training equivalent to those available to other children.

These Community projects call for close collaboration between vocational training authorities in the six countries. The Commission will arrange conferences, seminars and symposia and facilitate the requisite continuous exchange of information and experience.
