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INFORMATION MEMO

Colloquium on vocational training

(Brussels, 13, Avenue de Cortenberg, November 16-20, 1964)

A colloquium on vocational training organized by the EEC Commission will be held in Brussels from November 16 to 20.

The EEC Council of Ministers laid down in April 1963 under Article 128 of the Treaty of Rome, the general principles of a common vocational training policy, thus providing the Commission with an instrument for pursuing its work in this field. After making a preliminary survey of the present vocational training situation in the member countries, the Commission has decided to supplement the information available, bringing together experts from the member countries .

The work of the colloquium will be centred on two main subjects :

1. the training and upgrading of teaching personnel and instructors,
2. the adaptation of vocational training to economic developments, technical changes and social progress.

The meeting is intended to provide a forum where the most interesting experiences obtained in the different countries in the field of vocational training can be confronted and compared. The Commission will then draw the necessary lessons for the implementation of the common vocational training policy.

In addition to members of the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee and the rapporteurs appointed by the Commission, the 150 or so participants include prominent figures in this field invited in their personal capacity, representatives of the Governments of the six Member States, of the other European Communities and of interested international organizations (Council of Europe, ILO, OECD and UNESCO). The associated countries will also be represented.

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1. The Training and upgrading of teaching personnel and instructors.

It is obvious that the quality of vocational training depends on the capacities of those dispensing it. However, in most Community countries this teaching does not produce all the results which could be expected of it on the one hand for lack of teachers and on the other because their standard of training is often inadequate to meet present and future needs.

As things stand at present the quest for temporary remedies to the shortage of teachers and instructors is a source of some confusion in the training of such personnel. Furthermore, some instructors and demonstrators are only trained "on the job" in the firm, and this results in an absence of uniformity in their training and often an inadequate standard.

For all these reasons it seemed indicated to include in this colloquium an examination of measures designed to develop and improve the training of instructors and teachers, who are so scarce in the Community, and in particular to bring their knowledge of their subjects up to date.

2. The adaptation of vocational training to economic developments, technical changes and social progress.

This is a wide subject, which may take the discussion too far; nevertheless it has been chosen because it is so fundamental that it impinges on almost all the general principles of the common vocational training policy and is highly relevant to our age of rapid change.

The aim here is the appraisal of measures calculated to adapt structures, programmes and methods of vocational training to requirements which the establishment of the Common Market has but increased and broadened.

The problem will be tackled on the general plane of training, whether in schools or in industry, and also with special reference to the agricultural and transport sectors. Account will be taken of the requirements arising from a long-term structural evolution which is inescapable, but can only be accomplished without sacrificing either the exigencies of economic efficiency or social justice by the effective implementation of the common policies for agriculture and transport. The problem of the adaptation of vocational training will also be studied from the angle of the training requirements implied by the harmonious development of the regions in EEC.

The adaptation of vocational training must be understood as an adaptation (a) of the general teaching which develops mental alertness in the child and the adolescent thus enabling them to cope with changing circumstances and to adapt and fit themselves for different types of jobs, and (b) of vocational teaching in the light of technological progress (new techniques and new working methods) which finally

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must involve a generalized system of permanent education because of the renewal and the modernization of the skills it requires.

The rapid advance of trades and techniques is making it frequently necessary for workers at all levels to learn fresh skills in order to adapt themselves to new conditions in their trade, or to move into other branches of industry sometimes differing greatly from that in which they started work. This explains why the establishment of a genuine framework of permanent education and training is coming more and more to be considered a prime necessity.

The colloquium will set up two working parties corresponding to the two subjects mentioned above. They will base their discussions on reports drawn up by experts who have been asked to express themselves with complete independence and whose opinion therefore cannot in any way commit the administrations, organizations or bodies to which they may belong.

From these discussions between experts there should emerge possible Community solutions for the problems laid before the colloquium, and it will be the Commission's task to draw from them the guiding lines for the action it intends to take, in close co-operation with the Member States, for the gradual implementation of a common vocational training policy.

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