

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(82) 637 final

Brussels, 21 October 1982

DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL

concerning

Vocational training policies in the European Communities in the 1980's

(submitted by the Commission to the Council)

COM(82) 637 final

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I. THE COMMUNITY CONTEXT

1. Vocational training is one of a number of policy areas to which special attention needs to be given in the overall effort to alleviate the current unacceptably high levels of unemployment among the active population. The objective of this Communication is to propose common policy guidelines to the Council in the training field which take into account in particular the economic, social and demographic changes which are likely to affect the situation in Member States during the 1980s, and to make a number of specific proposals for action at Community level.
2. The training needs of young people have been a particular focus of political concern since the beginning of the economic recession. Most recently, at the European Council held on 29 and 30 March 1982, the President, in drawing the conclusions, stated that "in order to contribute to the progressive definition of a European social policy, the Member States would take measures concerning more particular the vocational training of young people, striving to ensure over the next five years that all young persons entering the labour market for the first time would receive vocational training or initial work experience"⁽¹⁾.
3. The need to improve vocational training more generally has been constantly reiterated at Council level. Most significantly, the conclusions of the Presidency on the occasion of the joint Council of Ministers of Economic Affairs, Finance and Social Affairs held in June 1981⁽²⁾ included a call for steps to be taken to improve vocational training, and for greater attention to be paid to better adaptation of education and vocational training to the requirements of the labour market. In its Resolution on Community action against unemployment adopted on 27 May 1982⁽³⁾, the Council emphasised that training policies must be conceived as an integral part of a comprehensive strategy to attack unemployment and therefore designed to be coherent with other sectoral policy initiatives.

(1) Bull EC 3-1982, point 1.3.5.

(2) Bull EC 6-1981, point 1.3.3.

(3) OJ C No 186 of 21 July 1982

4. Moreover, the European Parliament has also repeatedly emphasised the need for vigorous action at Community level in the field of vocational training, including the wider use of training leave for both young people and adults, as well as by promoting active ways of bridging the gap between school and working life⁽¹⁾.

5. The Commission for its part, both in its preamble to the draft Fifth Medium term Economic Policy Programme⁽²⁾ and in its communication on job creation, stressed the urgent need to develop vocational training and to improve its quality and relevance - particularly by ensuring that over the next five years all young people under the age of 18 are guaranteed an alternative to unemployment, in the form of education, training or job experience. In this context too, the Commission underlined the contribution of training to growth in terms of productivity, innovation and investment, as well as to job security. This approach has moreover to be seen against the background of the conclusions of the Standing Committee for Employment⁽³⁾ of 9 October 1979, as well as of the Council of 27 June 1980⁽⁴⁾ establishing guidelines for a Community labour market policy, which noted both a geographical and a quantitative mismatch in training, qualifications and working conditions.

6. The important contribution of vocational training policies is explicitly recognised in Article 128 of the Treaty of Rome which requires the Council to lay down general principles for the development of a common vocational training policy. By virtue of its decision taken on 1 April 1963⁽⁵⁾, the Council established an initial framework of general principles for the development of a common policy in this field. The ten principles adopted on that occasion have served subsequently as an invaluable frame of reference on a Community-wide basis for policy development in the field of vocational training. The wide range of measures taken in Member States and by the European Community to counter the effects of massive unemployment, in particular the measures and initiatives introduced since the mid-1970s in respect of vocational

(1) EP 74.712, 17 September 1981
(2) COM(81)344 Final, 22 July 1981
(3) Bull EC 10-1979, point 2.1.44-46
(4) OJ C 168, 8 July 1980
(5) OJ No 63, 30 April 1963

preparation and linked work and training schemes, have added to the original frame of reference.

7. The Commission's proposals presented in this Communication take into account the opinion of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training, at its meeting held on 12 and 13 May 1982, and also the completed work to date of CEDEFOP, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. They have also been formulated in parallel with the proposals concerning the review of the European Social Fund, the Community's main financial instrument in the field of vocational training.

II. THE EMPLOYMENT CONTEXT

8. Around 11 million people throughout the European Community are out of work at present. This represents about 9.7% of the active population. Above all, this provides the context in which the Commission's present proposals must be set especially in view of the likelihood of a further increase in the number of unemployed, given both the growth of the labour force and the relatively low level in employment-creating investments.
9. Young people are particularly hard hit by unemployment. Those aged 25 years or under constitute overall nearly 40% of all those out of work - more than 4 million in all - with young women experiencing even greater difficulty than young men in securing jobs. The depressing impact too of increased numbers - especially of young and older workers - experiencing long periods of unemployment is another striking feature of the present situation. By September 1982 in the Community as a whole (not including Greece) the overall proportion of unemployed persons who had been out of work for over 12 months reached 37.2%. Such a grim situation provides inevitably the seeds of social disorder and discontent in the years ahead, apart from the massive failure to mobilise the potential contribution of so many to social and economic development.
10. Apart from the effects of the economic recession, a number of qualitative and structural changes have taken place over the last decade which have profoundly affected the labour market in particular:

- (i) the restructuring of the economy resulting in a decline of employment opportunities in the primary and also in the traditional manufacturing sectors, as well for non-market services which, in relative terms, places young people very much at risk;
 - (ii) the greater rigidity and segmentation of the labour market and the increasing competition for places in the labour market, reducing considerably the opportunities for the less able and less qualified groups of workers - especially the young people who leave the education-training system without basic skills or qualifications;
 - (iii) the increase in the number of women in work or looking for work or re-entering employment;
 - (iv) the development of various forms of precarious, unstable, short-term employment opportunities offering little chance of training and career development.
11. The demographic trends in the Member States must also be taken into account, particularly the projected number of young people who will be entering the labour market over the next decade. Three major trends should be mentioned in this respect:
- (i) a decline - especially after 1985 - in the proportion of young workers aged under 19 years;
 - (ii) an increase - especially after 1985 - in the proportion of those aged between 20 and 25 years;
 - (iii) the fact that the proportion of young female workers (under 25) to the total number of women in the active population will be significantly greater than is the case in respect of male young workers.

III. POLICY CHALLENGES FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING

12. Although training should not be regarded in any way as a panacea for resolving the social and unemployment problems facing the Community, the Commission considers that training policies have a vital role to play in improving the future prospects for both individuals and society generally. A high investment in training will have both medium and long-term returns

and for this reason, it is necessary to re-emphasize the vital place of training within public policies generally, especially in the current context of economic stridency and the competition for scarce resources. The following factors in particular present complex challenges to the design of training systems for the future.

- (a) The pace and scale of economic and technological change are now so swift and far-reaching that training needs to be designed as a continuing process for up-dating skills, which is increasingly necessary more than once in the life of an individual, thus developing adaptability, flexibility and an innovative capacity both in the individual person and in industry generally. The impact of the new information technologies in particular present both challenges and opportunities to the education and training systems. The co-operative endeavours of governments, social partners and other groups in society, including voluntary bodies, are essential to respond to these challenges.
- (b) The creation of new activities and jobs needs further encouragement relying more than before on entrepreneurial initiatives and locally based activities (e.g. small and medium size enterprises, cooperatives, etc.) to exploit and develop local economic potential rather than on new industrial investments from external sources. Training and guidance services in support of such entrepreneurial activities are very limited to date and need to be encouraged on a much larger scale.
- (c) Social trends and economic pressures have given rise to demands for greater flexibility in working hours and career structures. It is widely recognised that there is a mismatch between traditional patterns of work and the aspirations of individuals, exacerbated by the rigid structures dividing the population into employed and unemployed. Training should be used as an instrument to assist individuals in managing their own working lives with greater flexibility, accompanying other changes in organisation of work and working hours, with a move away from the classic 'manpower' approach where the individual was in effect often viewed in narrow terms as a factor of production.
- (d) The economic recession and high levels of unemployment are leading to an increasing polarisation of society. Increasing numbers of people of all ages and levels of qualification are being pushed by unemployment into poverty. In regions and localities where longterm economic and social problems have resulted in areas of multiple deprivation any prospect of a return to a high level of secure and rewarding employment is receding still further as economic conditions worsen. Training can no longer be seen purely as an investment to be made where job prospects are promising.

Training and retraining must be considered as an individual right and as a reflection of society's commitment to the importance of human investment in resources for economic regeneration and an essential component of progress towards equal opportunities for all. It must also be more firmly recognised as a sine qua non to improve the competitive capacity of the Community for the medium and long term.

- (e) The economic recession has weakened the traditional system for initiating recruits to the labour market. The whole process of transition for young people from education to adult and working life has to be re-thought, avoiding ad hoc solutions and taking account of the earlier maturing of young people as well as the factors mentioned earlier. This recasting of the arrangements for young people is an urgent necessity since the prosperity of the European Community in the decades ahead will largely depend on the capacities of its future work force - today's younger generation.
- (f) Budgetary austerity and accompanying pressures resulting from the economic recession have increased public concern about the allocation of resources and the need to improve the efficiency of public expenditure. There is nevertheless growing recognition of the need for intersectoral approaches, for pooling of resources between public authorities (education, labour, industry, agriculture, etc.), whilst taking into account also the contribution of private and voluntary bodies. Equally, there is growing awareness of the need to improve the quality of diagnosis about the labour market situation and to organise a more transparent flow of information about present and future job prospects and related training opportunities. There should be more emphasis on the need to exploit non-traditional learning resources, especially combinations of mass media with home-based forms of study, and to develop ways of designing and administering training programmes more related to local needs and local populations, breaking down barriers which have grown up with the traditional training structures.
- (g) Moreover, at Community level further attention will be required to design systems of support to meet the needs of both urban and rural areas where training infra-structures are still weak. Irrespective of the relative size of Member States, concern with the delivery of training services at local and regional levels, combined often with locally based employment initiatives, has given rise to a new

debate about training strategy and the quality of training provisions. There is increasing concern in several Member States to modify the location of responsibility for decision making in the training field by new arrangements at national, regional and local levels.

- (h) Evidence of this need is now widely apparent from the difficulties being faced in designing and delivering appropriate training and development resources to inner-cities and other areas where traditional employment has collapsed leaving behind populations either largely unskilled and untrained, or with specific, but no longer relevant skills and working traditions. As in rural areas, the concern to reverse the tendency of young people to leave to seek employment elsewhere, has to be matched by specific measures in the field of housing and social services as well as with education and training facilities. In all such areas which have tended to become increasingly isolated from the main centres of employment, urgent attention should be given to the potential, by full use of new information technologies, for re-distributing certain kinds of jobs away from large centralised offices, and for creating new small units of work.

IV. COMMUNITY POLICY GUIDELINES AND SPHERES OF ACTION

13. With these various factors in view, the Commission considers that it is necessary for the Council to build on its original guidelines laid down in 1963 (see Annex 1) for the pursuit of vocational training policies during the 1980s, so as to provide a new impetus for common action within the European Community in response to the social and economic challenges of the decade. The Commission envisages that the guidelines and priority actions proposed in this communication should serve as a point of reference for the future application of the European Social Fund.
14. The Commission considers that a new commitment is required to develop convergent policies throughout the Community which place a much higher premium on the importance of investment in human resources. The Community's most important natural resource is its people; for this reason, training policy must be linked closely with the Community's overall policy for social and economic development. The Commission fully

appreciates the need to avoid the introduction of temporary and ad hoc structures and to lay the foundations for the development for the long-term of systems of training of high quality and flexibility. In this perspective, the Commission emphasises the need to develop a new framework of policy guidelines for vocational training to be pursued at Community level during the 1980s.

The basic functions of vocational training may be briefly summarised as follows :

- as an instrument of active employment policy, particularly in a period of rapid economic, social and technological change, by giving new emphasis to investment in human resources and thus stimulating and supporting job creation and entrepreneurial initiatives, of improving productivity, and of meeting the challenges posed by international competition;
- as an instrument for assisting economic adjustment, by facilitating the restructuring of economic sectors in difficulty through the development of retraining programmes designed, inter alia, to exploit the potential of technological innovation, and to develop the innovative skills of all members of the active population to enable them to play a creative part in this process;
- as an instrument for ensuring that all young people have access to the necessary social and vocational preparation for adult and working life which takes into account both trends in the labour market and the aspirations of young people themselves;
- an instrument of a broadly-based social policy designed to enable each individual to develop his or her potential by providing continuing education and training opportunities throughout life, and thus enabling individuals to compensate for and overcome social and economic disadvantages which may have marked their early preparation for adult life;
- as an instrument for the promotion of equal opportunities for men and women and their participation in social, economic and political life.

15. Policies for young people need to be set firmly as an integral part of a training policy for all adults; present political concern with the employment and training needs of young people runs the risk of giving such high priority to these needs at the expense of the training needs of older adults, implying a second-class status and less priority for the resources required for their needs.

16. The Commission has taken into account the specific characteristics and variety of training systems in the different Member States. The actions proposed by the Commission in this communication have been designed to encourage innovation and the qualitative improvement of training systems in Member States, by complementing and supporting national policies and initiatives on a Community-wide basis, in the following ways:
 - (a) by setting certain common goals or guidelines in order to respond to the need for greater convergence of policies in this field whilst at the same recognising the diversity of training situations in the Member States, and the need for flexible Community action;
 - (b) by contributing to raising the quality of training provisions by setting a framework which could serve as a point of reference for relevant activities of the European Social Fund;
 - (c) by fostering experimentation which can help illuminate national policies and practices through a more organised process for exchanging and analysing experience at Community level;
 - (d) by extending the arrangements for the dissemination of information and experience between Member States for the benefit of both policy-makers and practitioners, as a means of drawing attention to the quality of promising training initiatives for wider application.

17. In the light of these overall guidelines, the Commission proposes that the Council should adopt a five-year programme of action which focuses on the following three broad priority spheres of common concern, designed to complement and strengthen the efforts of individual Member States:
 - (a) the social and vocational preparation of young people for adult life and for entry into the labour market in the period following the end of full-time compulsory education (which in most Member States occurs at 16 years of age) up to the age of 18, coupled with the intensification of training measures for young people up to 25 years of age as an integral part of an overall social and employment policy;

- (b) training aspects of strategies for greater equality of opportunity, with particular reference to the improvement of basic skills and to the desegregation of the labour market through positive action to promote the participation of women in training programmes; and
- (c) the planning and harnessing of training measures to support social and economic development, and in particular the process of job creation, at local and regional levels, and the improvement of guidance and support for all workers facing the problems of change and transition including those approaching the period of retirement.

18. It should, moreover, be emphasised that the Commission has already transmitted to the Council⁽¹⁾ a communication regarding the implications and potential of new information technologies on vocational training systems, incorporating a set of action proposals for the period 1983-1987. The Commission recognises the need for close coordination of these initiatives with the action proposals set out in this communication, and for training in relation to new information technologies to be treated as a high priority within this overall framework of training policy. The need to adjust training to technological change and their impact on employment and qualifications should not be limited to these technologies - as powerful and pervasive as they may be - but also take into account other emerging technologies such as bio-technology, raw materials which can have significant impact in the future on production procedures, job design and skill requirements. In this respect the Commission stresses that strategies of continuing education and training should be designed to facilitate and reinforce industrial innovation and restructuring policies rather than being limited to short term adjustments related to the immediate needs of the labour market.

A. TRAINING POLICIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

19. The economic recession today has served to highlight the problems facing young people attempting to find a foothold in the adult world, but the depth of the recession has weakened the capacity of Member States to find satisfactory solutions which can be adopted for the long term. Young people are subject to the inherent weakness of social systems which assume an abrupt, immediate transition from the child's state of dependence to the adult position of responsibility signified by the successful entry of the school-leaver into the labour market. The official school-leaving age, whether 16 or earlier, should not be regarded as the single point of transition for young people into working life. As the unemployment situation has degenerated, not only has there been a disproportionate increase in youth unemployment, but more and more young people are being forced into accepting a range of precarious unskilled jobs which do little to encourage their capacity

(1) COM(82) 296 Final, 3 June 1982

to integrate into the labour market. They experience long or repeated spells of unemployment which lead them into a spiral of dependence on social security if not into a marginal existence beyond the reach of the welfare systems. Young people now face several years of bewildering uncertainty about the future prospects of securing a job.

20. The more fundamental economic causes of youth unemployment should, quite clearly, be tackled within the context of an overall strategy to stimulate job creation and to redistribute employment opportunities more equitably. This is a first priority for the Community, as confirmed in May 1982 by the Council. Within this strategy an active policy of support and guidance is required to assist all young people preparing to enter employment, including those, usually with minimal school-leaving qualifications, who cannot secure entry into the labour market, and those who have managed to find a job, the prospects of which are precarious and the content of which gives no opportunity for training or personal development. Every effort must continue to be made to support those who wish to find work to do so, irrespective of their age. A Commission memorandum will be presented to the Council before the end of the year, complementing this communication with an appreciation of the specific measures needed to promote the creation of stable employment opportunities for young people.

21. It is widely accepted in all Member States that the basis for an effective training policy for young people must be prepared within the final period of full-time compulsory education, with the main responsibility falling on education authorities. With the spectre of unemployment facing so many school-leavers, increasingly even those who have obtained reasonable school-leaving qualifications, the educational systems have become progressively more aware of the need to place as much emphasis on the development of personal and social competences, especially basic language and communication skills. Efforts to provide a more balanced relationship between general academic and vocational or technical education in schools have developed in recent years into a broader concern to ensure that schools

provide more organised opportunities for young people to develop contact and experience with life and work in the communities in which they are located.

22. This growing emphasis on the idea of a partnership between school systems and parents, involving as well employers and trade unions and social, youth and voluntary agencies will have repercussions in the longer term on the patterns of training on offer after the end of full-time compulsory education by encouraging such cooperation in the delivery of training in the post-compulsory period. In adopting their Resolution on 24 May 1982, the Council and Ministers of Education meeting in Council⁽¹⁾ made a collective commitment to explore ways of improving the quality of the policies of Member States in this perspective, so far as the final period of full-time compulsory education is concerned. They also agreed to strengthen their collaboration with other policy sectors, especially employment, in attacking the problems of youth unemployment, and welcomed the Commission's intention to arrange an inter-sectoral meeting of high officials to explore ways of intensifying cooperation, and to prepare the ground for a joint meeting of Labour and Education and Training Ministers on this subject.
23. Given the number of young people who attempt to enter the labour market equipped with practically no qualifications or knowledge of working life, there has been increasing interest in the need to provide a further stage of preparation and transition, both social and vocational in character, for a minimum period after the point of legal departure from full-time education. This idea has been referred to as the Social Guarantee for young people. Until now, however, this concept has been developed essentially within the context of short-term labour market measures to combat youth unemployment. It has been confused with the many ad hoc and emergency training or work experience measures introduced in most Member States since the mid-1970s, more often than not in parallel with rather than integrated within existing post-compulsory vocational training provisions. Whilst such measures may have stimulated many worthwhile innovations as regards the organisation, structure and content of training for young people, they have frequently attacked the symptoms of youth unemployment rather than the underlying problems: they have frequently sought to make young people more

(1) OJ C 193, 28 July 1982

employable in the eyes of industry, without contributing either to an increase in actual job vacancies, or to a real improvement in the social skills and vocational qualifications of young people. Focusing, therefore, specifically on the problem of inadequacies in training provisions, the Commission proposes that a social guarantee for young people should be developed on a Community-wide basis as an integral part of a more equitable and rational policy of vocational training. The essential characteristics of this guarantee are described in the next paragraphs.

24. The social guarantee

The general aim of the social guarantee should be to provide all young people with the opportunity to pass through a stage of transition, between the end of full-time compulsory schooling and entry into the labour market, during which time they should be able to choose how to develop their social and vocational skills and prepare themselves for adult working life. The immediate aim of the social guarantee should be to ensure that all young people leaving full-time compulsory education should be presented with some alternative to unemployment. As a general principle all young people should be entitled to at least two years' further education, training or work experience after leaving full-time compulsory schooling. For those young people who for any reason cannot or do not wish to continue their studies within the existing framework of the formal education and training system or through existing provisions for apprenticeships, a variety of additional opportunities should be made available designed to take account of the diverse needs and aspirations of young people. An adequate volume of training and work experience opportunities of this kind should be developed to ensure that by a given target date, for instance within a period of five years, all young people who so wish have unconditional access to:

- (a) a full-time programme of social and vocational preparation for working life during an initial one-year period immediately after the end of compulsory schooling, and
- (b) an entitlement to the equivalent of a further one-year period of vocational training to be used on a full-time or part-time basis before reaching the age of 25.

25. These provisions should represent the minimum training entitlement available to all young people. The social guarantee would nevertheless carry with it no notion of compulsion. By combining two types of provision, it would be designed to offer a degree of protection especially to the more vulnerable or disadvantaged young people in the two year period following the end of full-time compulsory education, and at the same time to develop a sense of initiative on the part of young people themselves, to promote an awareness of their responsibility to complete their initial vocational training and to encourage a taste for life-long learning.

26. The provisions to be made will depend both on the extension of the existing training capacity of Member States to meet the needs of all young people in the age group and a special effort to raise the quality of the training. This should imply not only a simple extension of the existing supply of training places, especially apprenticeships. Young people in this age range are not one homogeneous group; a wide range of different types of training programmes is required to meet their various needs. Such a variety of programmes should be designed to motivate the participation of those who cannot find work, who are ill-equipped with little or poor school-leaving qualifications, who are not initially motivated to the idea of continuing education and training, and who thus are likely to find serious bars to their flexible participation in community life in general during adult life. Irrespective of immediate labour market needs, the training provisions therefore should be organised as flexibly as possible so as to build up the widest range of possible openings for young people to acquire the skills on which to build in later life. The germs of this commitment are already contained in the Resolution adopted by the Council in 1979⁽¹⁾ which promoted the idea of "alternance", or linked work and training to which Member States have been responding with considerable enthusiasm. This investment in training for young people is vital as they will be the muscle of the work force in the Community over the next 40 years; without it the Community's capacity to compete effectively in the international market will be seriously handicapped.

27. Content

As regards the content of the training and work experience opportunities

(1) OJ C 1, 3 January 1980

to be provided, a basic frame of reference is contained in the Council Resolution on linked work and training⁽¹⁾ adopted in 1979. A whole variety of combinations of practical experience and more formal learning should be developed to take account of the various types of qualification and motivation of the young people concerned on the one hand and the particular resources for training and work experience in the locality on the other. Programmes of social and vocational preparation may, for instance, be established through new courses provided by the education and training authorities, on the basis of extra traineeships with public or private enterprise, in the context of special employment projects of utility to the local community or in the form of training/production workshops designed to develop into self-supporting small enterprises or cooperatives. All programmes should aim to enable young people to gain some understanding of working life, and to learn about the impact of technical progress and the implications of new technologies. Special care needs to be taken to ensure that girls and young women do not automatically get channelled into stereotyped sectors of training and work experience. Young people should be encouraged to develop their own creative capacities and management skills, to shape the various opportunities open to them and, where possible, to learn about the techniques of setting up in business and running a small enterprise.

28. The training/production workshops referred to above would appear to offer a most promising form of training which can be designed to meet a whole range of different needs and objectives including the more general objective of enabling an investment in training to make a direct contribution to local economic development. This type of initiative, already taken in some Member States, could take the form of production laboratories combined with training workshops, involving the full partnership of local authorities and social partners, and offering within the same location combinations of work experience and training. These locations could also serve as focal points for experimentation and for training the trainers in the locality or region, as well as for the exchange of experience with neighbouring training centres in the mainstream of the system. These production-training initiatives could be established to respond to priority areas selected within the strategic effort to promote innovation and economic growth, e.g. the development of applications related to the exploitation

(1) OJ C 1, 3 January 1980

of the widest range of new information technologies. They could also be set up with a view to responding to the special difficulties encountered by young women, particularly in non-traditional areas of female work. Where possible, therefore, further experimentation and exchange of information and experience needs to be developed in this area, both within and between Member States.

29. Certification

It is essential for the various programmes offered to be conceived as an integral part of a comprehensive training plan for the age group as a whole. It will then be easier to ensure that the introduction of new types of assessment are built into the overall system of certification for educational and training qualifications. This would permit progressively the accumulation of experience and credits by young people as well as their recognition as the building blocks for access to and participation in further training later in life. This should not be allowed to develop as a parallel or extraneous system exclusively reserved for young unemployed or it will be doomed to second-class status and failure. Without such a system linked into the mainstream system of certification, there can be little guarantee of the quality of the programmes offered or of the willingness of employers to accept the value of the periods of training in determining recruitment or career policies. As regards the development of broader based qualifications, important progress is being made in some Member States to establish new families or groups of skills, particularly in relation to apprenticeships. Moreover, the introduction of training components involving new technologies is also occurring gradually but unevenly. It will be important to maintain the momentum of such developments throughout the Community and to take advantage of such changes to promote greater comparability of qualifications at Community level.

30. Trainers and supporting personnel

A major investment is also required in the training of those who will have responsibility for the design and content of new programmes of social and vocational preparation. Greater cooperation is required between teachers concerned with the final period of compulsory schooling, post-compulsory training for youth and those concerned with adult

vocational training, so as to multiply the bridges between different stages of training and to improve the element of continuity in training provisions. Since constant renewal of the content of training is essential, with a broad spread of appealing options available for choice by young people, special encouragement for the training of trainers and other key supporting personnel is required.

31. Coordination, guidance and information

The proliferation of different provisions for education, training, work experience, employment and voluntary service has already given rise to the need for more coordinated information and guidance services for the young people who are intended to benefit from the provisions in question. Moreover, as more and more training and work experience schemes are being developed at the level of local communities by mobilising the resources of individual employers, local government services and voluntary organisations, there is also an increasing need to provide for special coordinating machinery at local level which can act as a focal point and a catalyst for all those able to offer services to young people. Little attention has until now been given to the types of skills and experience required of the specialised staff called upon to provide this new form of local animation and coordination which will be crucial to the success of any attempt to put the social guarantee fully into operation. The arrangements for the administrative and financial accountability of training policy for young people will also need to be reconsidered in order to encourage a collective commitment on the part of all those at local level to expand training and work experience opportunities for young people, within the framework of broad guidelines set out at national level. Although precise arrangements may vary between different localities, according to their particular traditions and existing structures, it would be useful to monitor and evaluate the comparative experience of Member States in this area of administrative innovation at local level during the next five-year period.

32. Social and material status of young people

As access to a period of social and vocational preparation becomes an automatic right for school leavers, rather than a last resort to be

reserved for those unable to find employment, it will become increasingly necessary to review the social and material status of the young people concerned in the light of provisions made for young people undertaking other types of training, whether as apprentices or within the more formal education sector. Young people should be encouraged to make their choice between different types of training on the basis of training content and its relevance to their interests and capacities rather than be influenced by the relative material advantages or the prestige commonly attached to certain types of training. For this reason serious consideration will need to be given to the possibility of establishing within each Member State a comparable status for those young people, in principle the vast majority within the age group, who choose to continue with their studies and preparation for working life after the end of compulsory schooling, interspersed as appropriate with spells of full-time employment. An integrated strategy on this issue could be based on the idea of a transition period during which young people would be encouraged to assume progressively the rights and responsibilities associated with adult working life.

33. The precise social and material status of such young people will have to be defined progressively over the next five year period, allowing for varying formulae between Member States in accordance with their distinctive social security systems. In particular, more attention will have to be paid to the effect of such provisions on the hiring practices of employers so far as young people are concerned. This will require a collective commitment to re-examine the scope for reallocating existing budgetary headings, such as unemployment benefits, with a view to making possible a number of income transfers which can correspond to the policy objective of providing a greater incentive to young people to take up training opportunities. It would be possible for Member States to re-direct resources to achieve more long-term objectives on more equitable basis if Member States can move in this direction.

34. Actions to be developed

- (a) The Commission proposes that Member States undertake a progressive expansion and improvement of the range of training opportunities in order to ensure the delivery of a social guarantee for young persons as described in paragraph 24 above. The Commission considers that the European Social Fund has a special responsibility to promote developments in this perspective.⁽¹⁾
- (b) The guidelines indicated above particularly in paragraphs 25-29 will be used by the Commission as a reference point in establishing priorities for intervention by the Community in support of measures to improve and expand vocational training provisions for young people. Estimates regarding the shortfall in relevant training provisions will be requested from all Member States on a regular basis and will be taken into account in drawing up plans and guidelines for Community support.
- (c) Moreover, in order to encourage a variety of imaginative responses to the design of programmes on offer to young people, the Commission proposes the extension of its demonstration projects on linked work and training so as to provide a systematic Community-wide capacity to learn from each other's experiences over the next five-year period. These projects would be designed to focus in particular on the following priority aspects of common concern:
- the extension of guidance and support systems to provide continuity of contact with the young people involved and to stimulate the coordinated and active provision of information and advice on job and further training opportunities, especially at local level;
 - inter-professional cooperation between teachers, guidance specialists and other agencies, both public and private, concerned with youth questions at local/regional level to extend the range of options available to young people;
 - training of trainers involved in re-designing the programmes

(1) See the Commission's Opinion on the review of the European Social Fund (COM (82) 485)

on offer and in equipping teachers and other specialists personnel for these new tasks;

- the design of assessment systems for these programmes based on training modules which may be linked with the overall systems of certification and thereby recognised as a basis for entry into employment and further training.
- (d) To assist in the development of training/production workshops, referred to in paragraph 25, the Commission proposes the establishment of a second group of projects, which should serve as points of reference within each Member State and for comparative evaluation at Community level. Special attention should be paid to the training and management skills and expertise required of the staff involved in such projects, with the aim of producing a practical guide or manual for training instructors.
- (e) The Commission considers that the progressive implementation of the social guarantee, and in particular the implications for new administrative and coordination arrangements at local level, as described in paragraph 30 above, merits continuous monitoring at Community level. To this end, the Commission suggests that with effect from 1984 Member States be invited to designate a particular region of locality on which the Commission should focus its attention and offer the technical and/or advisory service of an external evaluation unit. A report should also be produced jointly by the Member States and the Commission on progress achieved in reaching the objectives set out in paragraphs 23-29 and including an assessment of further requirements in relation to the allocation of resources. Special attention should be paid to the participation of young women in the progressive build-up of the capacity of training systems in Member States to cater for all young people.
- (f) To assist in improving the comparability of qualifications, the Commission considers that there is scope for a framework policy to be established between Member States which will enable agreements to be reached in relation to specific groups or families of skills. Proposals to this end will be produced in 1983.
- (g) The Commission proposes that a programme of exchange visits by training specialists should be established for the next five-year

period, building on the initial experience in 1981 and 1982 for those involved in new schemes of linked work and training ("alternance"). This programme should be underpinned by the further development of comparative documentation on training systems and innovations in Member States.

B. TRAINING AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

35. The economic recession has led most Member States to intensify their efforts to diversify and extend their existing training provisions to help those groups most at risk.

The different training needs of the various groups need to be met within the framework of an overall strategy which avoids new forms of differentiation in the labour market. The special training programmes to help these groups should be coordinated with the wider social policy measures taken in Member States and at Community level to facilitate their social and economic integration. Hence, in relation to disabled people for instance, a special report on training will be produced by the Commission in the context of the implementation of the recently approved action programme ⁽¹⁾. As regards migrant workers, training requirements will be included in the review being undertaken by the Commission of the Community's first action programme in favour of migrant workers and their families ⁽²⁾.

36. In this communication the Commission has focused attention on two main priority areas of general concern: firstly, the need to pursue vigorously efforts to develop the basic skills of a large number of adults, who are unable to read, write or perform other basic skills necessary for adult and working life; and secondly, the special training needs of women, which are of course also considered in other sections of this communication, especially under measures for young people.

37. Basic skills for all adults

The unemployment crisis has drawn increasing attention to the very basic difficulties experienced by many adults who left school not

(1) OJ C No 347 of 31 December 1981

(2) Bull EC 3-76

only without vocational qualifications, but also unable to read, write or perform the simplest mathematical exercises. Their difficulties in these respects render them unable to cope with the multiplying and progressively more complex demands of documentation in relation both to employment and to most other aspects of their lives. Whilst individuals may leave school with no worse (and perhaps better) levels of literacy than formerly, the demands upon them have so increased that the numbers of adults who are functionally illiterate may well be increasing.

38. With the alarming rise in long-term unemployment, there is a new danger that those who may have managed to cope in better times will lose their self-confidence and motivation so necessary to maintain the basic skills required for effective participation in economic and social life. The cycle of deprivation and the prevalence of illiteracy among the long-term unemployed has been described already in the Commission's final report on the programme of action against poverty⁽¹⁾. The European Parliament too has recently called for special measures on a Community-wide basis to combat illiteracy⁽²⁾.
39. Lack of basic skills constitute a main handicap in adult life and a serious barrier to access to work and further training. Functional illiteracy virtually precludes progression into vocational training, and therefore into most skilled work. Training in basic skills should be recognised as a high priority and be seen as one of the most important activities to be associated with training and re-training many older workers. Some new approaches to provide training for adults with inadequate skills have already been developed with the support of the European Social Fund. A massive effort is still required to eradicate these deficiencies which condemn such adults to a cycle of continuing deprivation.
40. In this field, the Commission also considers that multimedia systems coupled with the potential of the new information technologies should be exploited to the full so as to develop remedial and crash courses

(1) COM(81)769 Final, 15 December 1981
(2) OJ No C 149 of 14 June 1982

and materials prepared specially to meet these needs. The link-up of national provisions via broadcasting with local agencies, both public and voluntary, working in their own communities, offers considerable scope for achieving promising results. Open University and other experimental schemes which combine the possibility of study at home with local support by tutors and other social service and training personnel need further encouragement. Counselling specialists who often cannot reach the adults most in difficulty also need to be linked in closely with such schemes to provide continuing advice. Given the difficult problems of contact between the target groups and the training services available, it is essential that training resources be allocated for use in the most flexible fashion at local level where specific needs and appropriate responses can be best identified.

41. Actions to be developed

The Commission proposes that Member States make sustained efforts to expand the measures required to improve the basic skills of adults, to strengthen their capacity to benefit from vocational training and thus find more rewarding employment. To support the development of appropriate new initiatives by Member States, and to continue the exchange of experience based upon the existing activities of the European Social Fund, the Commission proposes that a set of demonstration projects be established with particular reference to the difficulties faced by the long-term unemployed. Full account will also be taken of the potential for collaboration with Member States' broadcasting organisations, both at national and local levels, many of which already have or are actively developing, educational programmes aimed at increasing basic skills. The Commission also proposes that the initiators of such schemes should have the opportunity to meet and compare experience. Constant monitoring of the progress achieved by Member States in this whole area will be important as well as a comparative evaluation of the specific projects supported at Community level.

42. Training of women

The adoption by the Council on 27 May 1982 of a new Community action programme⁽¹⁾ on the promotion of equal opportunities for women has

(1) OJ C No 186 of 21 July 1982

given a fresh impetus to the common efforts in this field. In so far as this concerns full access to and participation in vocational training, these actions will be designed by the Commission to complement the terms of the directive adopted in 1976 on equal access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions⁽¹⁾.

43. The special needs of women will also be given particular attention in the Commission's developing work regarding training in relation to the introduction of new information technologies⁽²⁾. In this context, special attention will be given by the Commission to the need to promote the integration of women in the new areas and sectors opened up by the new technologies, as well as to the retraining of those whose jobs are threatened by the introduction of new technologies. This will also require continuing attention to the technical pre-training necessary to enable women to benefit on an equal footing from training linked to the introduction of new technologies.
44. It has to be recognised that despite the high proportion of young women among the unemployed and unqualified, and despite considerable efforts to provide vocational preparation and training for them, there has only been modest and disappointing progress in developing new courses to serve their needs. The vast majority of courses for young women still concentrate heavily on training them in traditional female, and often low-paid, low-status activities.
45. Training can help to break down the traditional concentration of women in certain sectors which tend to be those most at risk, as well as requiring little training, and also to correct the low participation of women in training for skilled jobs, especially those involving high qualifications in technological fields. It is necessary to take steps to diversify the types of training which women undertake if they are to be able to secure access to those areas of employment where they are traditionally under-represented. Special attention needs to be given to encouraging and supporting the entrepreneurial initiatives of women especially at the local level.
46. Particular attention also needs to be given to providing appropriate training opportunities for women who wish, during certain periods of

(1) OJ No L 39 of 14 January 1982

(2) COM(82)296, 3 June 1982

their life to receive training on a part-time basis, including women who have interrupted their professional activities or wish to improve their qualifications during the period when they have temporarily stopped working. Pilot training initiatives have been set up in various Member States over the last few years which should be pursued and intensified with even greater commitment by Member States.

47. Various research studies have now been completed and these too have helped stimulate greater awareness amongst governments and the social partners about the character of innovative training measures on behalf of women. However, this work needs to be developed further and the Commission intends to intensify its own work programme to build up good documentation and experience as the basis for encouraging the necessary discussions at all levels, and especially those in policy-making positions, which can progressively lead not just to better adjusted training facilities but also to changes of attitude amongst the population generally.
48. The introduction of a greater variety of training opportunities for women is essential so as to eliminate progressively the traditional notion that certain jobs are intended almost exclusively for men and so that women may fashion their own lives according to their own capabilities and requirements. In this perspective, more support needs to be given within Member States to the work of educating parents, above all for socially disadvantaged groups, where girls have a twofold disadvantage in society, and for those groups where training is more strongly governed by tradition (e.g. families in rural communities, foreign families).
49. Actions to be developed
 - (a) Without prejudice to the responsibility of each Member State to implement the directive on equal access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions, the Commission considers that it will be essential to support the further development of positive programmes of vocational training for women under the terms of Article 2(4) of the directive. The Commission therefore proposes that, building on the experience of the European Social Fund, a substantial investment be made by Member States in

training programmes for women which can help change attitudes and expectations in the medium and longer term.

- (b) In addition to the whole range of training initiatives for women for occupations where they are traditionally under represented - initiatives which should increasingly come within the mainstream of the training provisions of Member States - the Commission proposes to support a set of small scale innovatory projects particularly designed to provide further insights into the way training resources may be organised at local level to cater for particular groups of women, for instance, those who are home bound or isolated in rural areas.
- (c) The Commission considers that every advantage should be taken to disseminate widely the results of the various experiences and to offer information on examples of promising initiatives. This material can then be drawn upon in the training of trainers and counsellors to enable them to be better equipped to cater for the specific and career needs of women. The Commission proposes to intensify the exchange of information and experience in this respect.

C. CONCEPTION AND ORGANISATION OF TRAINING AT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS

- 50. The idea of an integrated approach to development for the regions and local areas, including the training dimension, is gaining ground rapidly throughout the Community. Over the last few years, moreover, there has been a marked trend in some Member States to decentralise vocational training to the regional level of decision-making, so that it takes place closer to the point of need. This trend, though not common to all Member States, must be viewed alongside the growing concern to link training policies with wider social and economic strategy to regenerate disadvantaged regions. However, since generally education, training, employment and economic structures still tend to be organised on a compartmentalised basis, at national level in particular, the effective delivery of integrated operations still remains the ideal rather than practical reality in most cases.
- 51. Increasingly, as the unemployment situation has deteriorated there has been a growing commitment in Member States to find ways of releasing and underpinning the creative energies of those who wish

to contribute to social and economic development in their own localities. Some Member States have begun to support training initiatives of various types at local and regional level specifically designed to stimulate the creation of new economic activity, in particular by mobilising local economic and commercial potential. It has been shown, for example through the "training for development" activities of the European Social Fund, that such training initiatives most often owe their origin to the activities of special counsellors whose role is to act as a development agent, animating, coordinating and supporting local initiatives designed to promote small scale employment creation.

52. The activities of such development agents fall between the traditional areas of responsibility of training and employment authorities. Their role is likely to grow in importance in future, and to impinge increasingly on the responsibilities for instance of vocational guidance advisors and officials of local employment agencies. The training requirements of all such officials will need to be reviewed in order to ensure some common elements, so that they can be prepared to work in teams, irrespective of their location, at the service of those in need and also of those who are involved in initiating job creation schemes. An emphasis on inter-professional training may also help avoid the creation of overlapping, wasteful or even conflicting systems of advice, and encourage some degree of mobility and interchange between the education, training and employment services without prejudice to the promotion and career prospects of the specialists involved. It will be equally important for Member States to ensure that the trainers are equipped to take account of these new developments, and be fully aware of the range of job creation initiatives and changing qualifications, and have some direct experience of inter-professional developments affecting the specialised personnel involved in their training programmes.
53. The more the demand grows for local employment initiatives, the greater will be the need to design a system of training which can provide the necessary support. In the framework of these local initiatives, there is also a unique opportunity to link training with job creation, counteracting the current dilemma that a high percentage of participants in temporary training schemes do not find a job after the training period. This raises in turn the question of

the allocation of resources from vocational training and job creation budgets of each Member State, and the importance of locating those resources where they can produce the greatest effect within an overall strategy. In promoting local employment initiatives, further and higher education institutions - particularly business schools, design and technology departments - can also play a key role in developing training for entrepreneurial initiatives - as part of a strategy for continuing education - thus reinforcing the capacity of individuals - especially managers - to engage in the process of setting up new enterprises. By providing training and other services (e.g. feasibility consultancy, market surveys, product design/assessment) these institutions could contribute significantly to the strengthening of the economic infrastructure and thus contribute to an increased cooperation between training and employment institutions.

54. Many of these local initiatives involve relatively small numbers of people. These groups require guidance and training support at the various stages involved in the launching and consolidation of their schemes. The support they require needs to be tailored to their specific objectives, entailing new content of training to be made available in the right place at the right time from specifically conceived new training structures which improve the quality of existing training provisions on offer. Traditional training systems are not generally geared to provide a service which responds to the specific needs emerging from grass-root level initiatives. This mismatch between training needs and provisions is accentuated in rural areas, particularly those in decline, where often one added problem is the location of the training services far away from the communities in which the new initiatives may originate.

55. Careful consideration also needs to be given to the question of re-training and updating of skills within existing small enterprises, especially those where an appropriate response to a threat of closure may involve re-financing and re-structuring measures, also leading to a broadening of management participation and control, as well as introduction of new products or services. Research conducted at Community level and in certain Member States has revealed the following training needs of people interested in setting up a cooperative or already working in one: training should be available at the pre-formation and the operating stage of a cooperative, with training content such as job skills, financing, marketing and management. In setting up training programmes, special provision should be made for the needs of individual target groups, especially women; the participation of

other risk groups, such as migrants and the disabled, should also be given careful attention.

56. These local initiatives also provide a useful framework within which to consider the problems faced by an increasing number of adult workers in mid-career and nearing the end of their careers who have had to be laid off in recent years because of the fall in employment especially in sectors such as steel-making, shipbuilding, automobile production, textile and clothing. The personal shock of unemployment and the economic and psychological impact on their families often increase the difficulty for these older workers of matching their needs with effective re-training opportunities, which can lead to viable new roles in local community life as well as securing openings to new jobs. The content and pedagogical methods of traditional training programmes are generally ill-suited for these purposes and there appears to be much uncertainty among trainers as to the types of re-training to offer to respond genuinely to the social and economic needs of these adults. A continuing effort is needed throughout the Community to help retain the accumulated experience of these older workers and enable them, with appropriate re-training, to find new opportunities for employment. This dimension in training programmes should receive positive encouragement, and experience and information exchanged systematically at Community level so as to give further impetus to promising initiatives.
57. The provision of continuing access to guidance and counselling is widely recognised in the Member States as an essential service, to be available at different stages of life, linked both to the education and employment systems. The functions of guidance systems have become more complex and demanding in recent years because of the continuing uncertainties of the labour market. Varying patterns of collaboration and of allocations of responsibility for the organisation and financing of counselling exist in the Member States, involving normally both national Ministries of Education and Labour as well as local and regional authorities. It is clear, however, that, irrespective of the different structures in Member States, insufficient attention has been paid to the provision of guidance and support for workers facing the problems of change and transition, and in particular those approaching the period of retirement.

58. Irrespective of the various improvements to training provisions suggested throughout this communication, it will be necessary to take further steps to remove the barriers to participation in training by individual workers and to increase the volume of training actually undertaken by the active population as a whole. In the last ten years, some Member States have made progress with the delivery of systems of paid leave for workers to participate in training programmes. There is however little evidence as yet that the development of training leave has been considered adequately in the context of policies for the re-organisation of working time.

The ILO convention on paid training leave, to which four Member States are signatories, could usefully serve as a point of departure for establishing minimum standards in the Community.

Given the increasing numbers of people who cannot benefit from existing training leave provisions, consideration should also be given in the broader problem of ensuring an equitable distribution of training opportunities. The training entitlement and participation rates of young people particularly between 18 and 25 years of age is especially important, since this is the critical period for motivating adults to return to training.

59. Actions to be developed

In assisting the re-orientation of training policies in Member States towards the needs of economic and social development at local and regional levels, the Commission underlines the important link between these policy guidelines and the future application of the European Social Fund. The policy developments envisaged in Member States should be considered with the Commission on an annual basis in liaison with the discussion to take place with the national authorities in relation to the European Social Fund. The results of these exchanges could provide the basis for a more comprehensive presentation of developing vocational training policies which the Commission could review periodically with the assistance of the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training.

60. The Commission proposes that technical assistance to Member States be provided for the evaluation and planning of training provisions with a particular focus on those regions, especially in rural areas, where the training infra-structure is weakened by the lack of industrial development. As a priority, this activity should be developed particularly in Greece as part of the Commission's response to the Greek memorandum as well as in Portugal and Spain in the context of the further enlargement of the European Community.
61. The Commission intends that the European Social Fund should continue its action in support of experimental and pilot schemes of training for development which help those responsible in a local community to design and carry out projects introducing new economic activities or revitalising existing activities⁽¹⁾. Particular attention should be paid to the comparative evaluation of such schemes and the exchange of experience within Member States and at Community level.
62. Drawing on the experience of the schemes mentioned in paragraph 61 above, the Commission will analyse the emerging training requirements of development agents, and other training specialists. The Commission will also draw up guidelines for the future regarding the status and responsibilities of vocational guidance specialists, their conditions of service and prospects of career mobility.
63. The Commission proposes that special attention should be given to the counselling needs of older workers. In this context, the Commission will also review current trends in this area paying particular attention to provisions designed to encourage older workers to play an active role in their community following retirement. The Commission proposes that it would be valuable to improve the availability of comparative material on this subject.
64. The Commission proposes a review, in cooperation with the social partners, of the training entitlements for adults in Member States, including the present and planned provisions for paid training leave.

(1) Opinion of the Commission on the Review of the ESF page 6

D. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCE

65. At Community level, in the period ahead, and in addition to the various proposals for action set out earlier for each of the three priority spheres of common concern, the Commission underlines the importance of fostering continuing exchange of ideas and information between both policy-makers throughout the Community. To this effect, the Commission proposes that a special unit be set up by each Member State, based as appropriate on existing structures and involving inter-ministerial cooperation as necessary, to operate within a Community-wide network for the pooling and dissemination of information on training developments to policy-makers. These units would in particular be responsible for ensuring the linkage with regional centres, which often simply do not get access to information about promising developments elsewhere in the Community.

These units should be linked with existing national machinery for policy coordination in the training field ; they should be equipped to ensure that the information acquired from this Community-wide effort be effectively exploited for the benefit of policy-makers in the Member States at local, regional and national levels.

66. This Community-wide network of units, in cooperation with the Commission should concentrate on handling the priority objectives set out in this communication, viz.:

- (a) the social and vocational insertion and integration of young people;
- (b) training aspects of strategies for greater equality of opportunity;
- (c) training in support of locally-based job creation initiatives.
- (d) The training implication arising from the introduction of new information technologies.

The Commission proposes that a modest programme of short study visits be set up for vocational training specialists to examine experience in other Member States, so as to promote closer relations and better mutual understanding between the vocational training systems of Member States.

67. CONCLUSION

The Council is hereby invited to adopt the proposals set out in this Communication and to take note of their financial implications within the framework of the annual budgetary rules and procedures of the Community.

DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL

concerning

Vocational training policies in the European Communities in the 1980's

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community;

Having regard to the Draft Resolution from the Commission;

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament (1);

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee (2);

Whereas Council Decision 63/266/EEC laid down general principles for the implementation of a common vocational training policy (3), and the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training has expressed its views on the further development of that policy;

Whereas the European Council, at its meeting in March 1982, indicated in its conclusions that in order to contribute to the progressive definition of a European social policy the Member States would take measures concerning more particularly the vocational training of young people and, as a first step, would strive to ensure over the next 5 years that all young persons entering the labour market for the first time would receive vocational training or initial work experience within the framework of special youth schemes or contracts of employment (4);

Whereas the European Council, at its meeting in June 1982, asked the Joint Council (Ministers of Finance, Economic Affairs and Social Affairs) to adopt firm decisions on a proposal from the Commission regarding specific Community measures to combat unemployment, particularly in the case of young people (5);

(1) OJ 1963, 20.4.1964, p. 1338/63

(2)

(3) OJ No 63, 30 April 1963

(4) Bull EC 3-1982, point 1.3.5.

(5) Bull EC 6-1982, point 1.5.3

Whereas the Council, at the end of its meeting of 27 May 1982, adopted a Resolution on Community action to combat unemployment underlining the priority which the Community should give to the vocational training and integration of young people (1), and approved a further Community action programme on the promotion of equal opportunity for women, 1982-1985 (2);

Whereas the European Parliament on 22 April 1982 adopted a Resolution on youth unemployment (3), with particular emphasis on the need to bring training into line with technological development and on greater involvement of Community financial instruments in job creation programmes; whereas ^{this} Resolution reinforces the Resolution on Social Policy Priorities adopted by the European Parliament (4) and other Resolutions, notably those relating to a Community programme in the field of education (5), on linking work and training for young persons in the Community (6), on the economic, social and vocational integration of disabled people in the European Community (7) and on measures to combat illiteracy (8);

Reaffirming that vocational training is a basic element of a social policy designed to permit each individual to develop and to realise his or her potential throughout adult life and in particular to promote equal opportunities for men and women;

Emphasising the importance of vocational training policies in order to master and exploit the potential of the new information technologies⁽⁹⁾, particularly with a view to supporting policies designed to promote job creation, industrial restructuring and innovation, and the revitalisation of depressed areas.

(1) OJ N° C 186, 21.7.1982, p. 1
(2) OJ N° C 186, 21.7.1982, p. 3
(3) OJ C 125, 17.5.1982, p. 74
(4) PE 74.858
(5) OJ N° C 87, 5.4.1982, p. 90
(6) OJ N° C 77, 6.4.1981, p. 71
(7) OJ N° C 77, 6.4.1981, p. 29
(8) OJ N° C 149, 14.6.1982, p. 149
(9) COM 82 (296) final

Confirming therefore that further steps should be taken in liaison with both sides of industry at national and Community level to strengthen the implementation of a common policy on vocational training, welcoming in this context the Commission's Communication "The development of vocational training policies in the European Communities in the 1980" and the guidelines contained therein.

HEREBY ADOPTS THIS RESOLUTION:

- I. Further to the principles already adopted in Decision 63/266/EEC, Member States are invited to develop their vocational training policies, in particular
 - as an instrument of an active employment policy designed to promote economic and social development,
 - as a means of ensuring for young people a full social and vocational preparation for adult responsibilities and working life,
 - as a means of promoting equality of opportunity.

- II. In order to achieve these objectives, an increased effort is required by Member States taking account of the responsibilities of both sides of industry:
 - (i) to improve both the quality and the scope of vocational training for workers of all ages. Whilst immediate priority may be given to young people and the long-term unemployed, continuing attention should be given to the training and retraining needs of other workers, especially those at most risk from changes in the labour market.

- (ii) To develop training programmes which are increasingly broad-based, enabling the recipients to acquire a wide range of practical skills designed to assist their adaptability to technological change, to improve their social and professional mobility, and to encourage them to play an active and independent role in society.
- (iii) To ensure that training programmes lead to recognised qualifications. Systems of certification should provide maximum flexibility to facilitate the development of modular approaches to training and to make allowance, for instance, for training programmes based essentially on practical work experience.
- (iv) To establish an effective right to continuing vocational training and retraining to be available to all throughout their working life, in particular by encouraging training leave. Particular attention should be paid to the problems faced by workers lacking the basic skills and qualifications usually required for admission to training programmes.
- (v) To expand the number of training provisions specifically designed to facilitate the access of women to occupations where they are traditionally under-represented and to skilled jobs with a high technical content.
- (vi) To ensure that training resources can be utilised in the development of local initiatives to stimulate new economic activity and job creation. Training in business and management skills and for launching entrepreneurial initiatives should be made more generally available to facilitate the creation of small enterprises including cooperatives.
- (vii) To improve the quality and scope of the training of instructors and vocational guidance counsellors, and to pay particular attention to the training needs of local development agents and advisers.

(viii) To develop further the active cooperation at national and local level of all parties concerned in the field of vocational training including public authorities, both sides of industry and voluntary agencies. Progress should be made towards a more integrated conception of training provisions at regional and local level, taking special account of the particular needs of depressed areas.

III. Member States are invited specifically to take the necessary measures to ensure that, over the next five years, all young people who so wish may receive, as a minimum :

- (a) a full-time programme of social and vocational preparation for working life during an initial one-year period immediately after the end of full-time compulsory schooling;
- (b) an entitlement to the equivalent of a further one-year period of vocational training to be used on a full-time or part-time basis before reaching the age of 25.

In the implementation of these objectives, Member States will follow the guidelines regarding the Social Guarantee for young people as set out by the Commission in its Communication. The Commission is invited to prepare a comparative review of the progress achieved by Member States in time for presentation during the International Youth Year in 1985, and a further report at the end of a five year period.

IV. The Council invites the Commission to pursue its action designed to encourage innovation and the qualitative improvement of training systems in Member States:

- (a) by setting certain common goals or guidelines in order to respond to the need for greater convergence of policies in this field whilst at the same recognising the diversity of training situations in the Member States, and the need for flexible Community action;

- (b) by contributing to raising the quality of training provisions by setting a framework which could serve as a point of reference for relevant activities of the European Social Fund;
- (c) by fostering experiment. which can help illuminate national policies and practices through a more organised process for exchanging and analysing experience at Community level;
- (d) by extending the arrangements for the dissemination of information and experience between Member States for the benefit of both policy-makers and practitioners, as a means of drawing attention to the quality of promising training initiatives for wider application.

V. The Council encourages the Commission to carry out the series of actions set out in its Communication, regarding the following three priority spheres of common concern :

- (a) the social and vocational preparation of young people for adult life and for entry into the labour market in the period following the end of full-time compulsory education (which in most Member States occurs at 16 years of age) up to the age of 18, coupled with the intensification of training measures for young people up to 25 years of age as an integral part of an overall social and employment policy;
- (b) training aspects of strategies for greater equality of opportunity, with particular reference to the improvement of basic skills and to the desegregation of the labour market through positive action to promote the participation of women in training programmes; and
- (c) the conception and harnessing of training measures to support social and economic development, and in particular the process of job creation, at local and regional levels, and the improvement of guidance and support for all workers facing the problems of change and transition including those approaching the period of retirement.

The Commission is requested to inform the Council periodically of progress made in the implementation of these actions.

VI. The financing of the measures to be implemented at Community level shall be provided in the framework of the rules and procedures governing the Community budget.

FINANCIAL DATA SHEET

1. The Community measures set out in the Communication to the Council should be fully operational in the period 1984-1989. The preparatory work which will include finalising details of the experimental, demonstration and pilot projects and establishing the interactive networks will be carried out in 1983 and 1984.

2. It is envisaged that the networks of experimental, demonstration and pilot projects will be financed within the framework of the Social Fund either under the existing provisions for ESF pilot projects and studies and regular intervention (chapters 60-62 of the Budget), or, subject to eventual decision by the Council, under the terms of Article 3(2) of the Commission's draft for a Council Decision revising the tasks of the European Social Fund, which proposes the setting up of a separate section of the Fund for specific innovatory operations. On the assumption that the financing will be made within the existing provisions of the Social Fund, Table A, Section 1 indicates the specific lines concerned. When, however, the Commission's proposals for the reform of the Fund are adopted by the Council, it is assumed that the financing would be made from within the special section of the Fund for specific innovatory operations.

So far as the other related activities are concerned, expenditure will be carried out under the budget heading of Article 6330 for Community activities relating to vocational training and guidance.

3. Provisional estimates regarding expenditure for the networks of experimental, demonstration and pilot projects as well as for the other related activities are presented hereafter in Table A (in 1982 ECU). Table B shows the distribution of projects over the duration of the period 1984-1989.

TABLE A - PROVISIONAL ESTIMATES FOR THE PERIOD 1984-1989 (in 1982 ECU; in 000 ECU)

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
I. NETWORKS OF EXPERIMENTAL, DEMONSTRATION AND PILOT PROJECTS						
A. Extension of demonstration projects on linked work and training (para. 26-27 and 34(c)) (Line 6010)	170	8 300	8 500	8 700	8 700	450
B. Establishment of a group of projects to assist in the development of training/production workshops (para. 28 and 34(d)) (Line 620)	170	3 570	6 770	6 770	3 800	200
C. Set of demonstration projects to improve basic skills of adults with particular reference to problems faced by long-term unemployed (para. 39 and 41) (Line 620)	115	8 300	13 500	13 500	6 000	300
D. Support of a set of small scale innovative projects in relation to training for particular groups of women (para. 45 and 49(c))(line 620)	85	4 425	5 800	5 800	2 200	200
E. Support of experiment and pilot schemes of training for development (para. 53 and 61) (Line 6100)	200	4 200	6 000	6 000	3 500	300
TOTAL I	740	28 795	40 670	40 770	24 200	1 450
II. OTHER ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNCIL RESOLUTION (Article 633)						
A. Reviews and Studies in regard to priority issues						
1. Monitoring of progress achieved by Member States in the building up of their capacity to cater for all young people (para. 34(e))	100	140	190	170	190	200
2. Examination of the possible use of multi media systems to increase basic skills for adults (para. 29 and 41)	60	60	40		pm	
3. Analysis of the emerging training requirements of development agents and other training specialists (para. 54 and 62)	30	70		pm		
4. Review of trends and provisions for enabling older workers to play an active role in Community following retirement (para. 57 and 63)	40	60	80		pm	
5. Review of training entitlements for adults in Member States including provisions for paid leave (para. 58 and 64)	60	60	50		pm	
TOTAL II(A)	290	390	360			

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
II. OTHER ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNCIL RESOLUTION						
B. Technical assistance to Member States in regard to priority issues						
(Article 633) 1. Technical assistance for the evaluation and planning of training provisions with a particular focus on those regions where the training infrastructure is weakened by the lack of industrial development (para. 53 - 55 and 60)	90	120	150	130	170	pm
(Article 633) 2. Technical assistance for the interprofessional training of trainers, vocational guidance advisors and development agents in support of small scale employment creation (para. 51)	--	50	150	150	---	pm
TOTAL II(B)	90	170	300	280		
II. C. Interchange and dissemination (Article 633)						
1. Establishment of a programme of exchange visits by training specialists for those involved in new schemes of linked work and training (para. 34(g))	50	90	120	140	80	60
2. Exchange of information and experience in relation to promising training initiatives for women (para. 49(c))	45	70	90	90	60	50
3. Pooling and dissemination on the main training developments to policy-makers (para. 65)	120	140	170	170	140	140
4. Programme of short-study visits for vocational training specialists (para. 66)	70	150	200	200	200	180
TOTAL II(C)	285	450	580	600	480	430
TOTAL II(A) + (B) + (C)	665	1 010	1 240	---	---	pm

Table B : NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO BE SET UP OVER THE PERIOD 1984 - 1989

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
A. <u>Network of projects on linked work and training for young people in the 18 - 25 age group.</u> Para. 26 - 27 and 34 (c)	Preparatory work	30	30	30	30	Evaluation
B. <u>Network of projects to serve as demonstration models for the development of training/production initiatives.</u> Para. 28 and 34 (d)	"	10(Phase 1) 10	10 10(Phase 2) 20	10 10 20	Evaluation Phase 1 10 10	Eval. Phase 2
C. <u>Network of projects to serve as demonstration models for the improvement of basic skills training for adults.</u> Para. 39 and 41	"	30(Phase 1) 30	30 20(Phase 2) 50	30 20 50	Evaluation Phase 1 20 20	Eval. Phase 2
D. <u>Network of projects to improve the training and access to work of women.</u> Para. 45 and 49 (c)	"	15(Phase 1) 15	15 5(Phase 2) 20	15 5 20	Evaluation Phase 1 5 5	Eval. Phase 2
E. <u>Experiment and pilot schemes of training for development.</u> Para. 53 and 61	"	15 15	15 5(Phase 2) 20	15 5 20	Evaluation 5 5	Eval. Phase 2

Annex I

1338/63

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

20.4.63

COUNCIL DECISION

of 2 April 1963

laying down general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy

(63/266/EEC)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 128 thereof;

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission;

Having regard to the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee;

Having regard to the Opinion of the European Parliament¹;

Whereas, in order to fulfil the obligation imposed on them by the Treaty, to ensure the maintenance of a high level of employment through their economic policies, Member States should take appropriate action to adapt the skills of their labour forces to changes in the general economic situation and to changes in production technology;

Whereas against the background of the rapid implementation of the common market and in conjunction with the co-ordination of regional policies and the progressive achievement of a common agricultural policy, the structural changes which are at present taking place in certain economic sectors raise urgent problems of vocational training and retraining;

Whereas a common vocational training policy which, in accordance with Article 128 of the Treaty, can contribute to the harmonious development both of the national economies and of the common market should be defined in the light of the general objectives of the Treaty, and in particular the Preamble and Article 2 thereof;

Whereas the implementation of an effective common vocational training policy will help to bring about freedom of movement for workers;

Whereas the freedom of choice of occupation, place of training and place of work which is the fundamental right of every person should be respected;

Whereas every person should, during the different stages of his working life, be able to receive adequate basic and advanced training, and any necessary vocational retraining;

Whereas the general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy should apply to all vocational training of young persons and adults who might be or already are employed in posts up to supervisory level; and whereas special importance should be attached to the basic and advanced training of teachers and instructors;

Whereas the attainment of the objectives set out in the following general principles requires not only that action be taken at a national level, but also that the Commission be enabled to propose appropriate measures, under the Treaty, to the Council or to the Member States; and whereas this will entail close co-operation both between Member States and between Member States and the competent institutions of the Community;

Whereas it is desirable to ensure, in particular by setting up an Advisory Committee attached to the Commission, co-operation between those public and private bodies within the Member States which are particularly concerned with problems of vocational training;

Whereas the following general principles are relevant to present economic and social conditions in the Community; and whereas they may subsequently be amplified progressively in the light of changing requirements within the Community;

¹ OJ No 31, 26. 4. 1962, p. 1034/62.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

The following general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy are hereby established:

First principle

A common vocational training policy means a coherent and progressive common action which entails that each Member State shall draw up programmes and shall ensure that these are put into effect in accordance with the general principles contained in this Decision and with the resulting measures taken to apply them.

The general principles must enable every person to receive adequate training, with due regard for freedom of choice of occupation, place of training and place of work.

These general principles must deal with the training of young persons and adults who might be or already are employed in posts up to supervisory level.

It shall be the responsibility of the Member States and the competent institutions of the Community to apply such general principles within the framework of the Treaty.

Second principle

The common vocational training policy shall have the following fundamental objectives:

- (a) To bring about conditions that will guarantee adequate vocational training for all;
- (b) To organise in due course suitable training facilities to supply the labour forces required in the different sectors of economic activity;
- (c) To broaden vocational training on the basis of a general education, to an extent sufficient to encourage the harmonious development of the personality and to meet requirements arising from technical progress, new methods of production and social and economic developments;
- (d) To enable every person to acquire the technical knowledge and skill necessary to pursue a given occupation and to reach the highest possible level of training, whilst encouraging, particularly as regards young persons, intellectual and physical advancement, civic education and physical development;
- (e) To avoid any harmful interruption either between completion of general education and commencement of vocational training or during the latter;

(f) To promote basic and advanced vocational training and, where appropriate, retraining, suitable for the various stages of working life;

(g) To offer to every person, according to his inclinations and capabilities, working knowledge and experience, and by means of permanent facilities for vocational advancement, the opportunity to gain promotion or to receive instruction for a new and higher level of activity;

(h) To relate closely the different forms of vocational training to the various sectors of the economy so that, on the one hand, vocational training best meets both the needs of the economy and the interests of the trainees and, on the other hand, problems presented by vocational training receive the attention which they deserve in business and professional circles everywhere.

Third principle

When the common vocational training policy is put into operation, special importance shall be attached:

- to forecasts and estimates, at both national and Community levels, of the quantitative and qualitative requirements of workers in the various productive activities;
- to a permanent system of information and guidance or vocational advice, for young people and adults, based on the knowledge of individual capabilities, training facilities and employment opportunities, operating in close co-operation with the productive and distributive sectors of the economy, vocational training services and schools;
- to the opportunity for every person to have recourse to the system provided for above at any time before choosing his occupation, during his vocational training and throughout his working life.

Fourth principle

In conformity with these general principles and in order to attain the objectives stated therein, the Commission may propose to the Council or to the Member States, under the Treaty, such appropriate measures as may appear to be necessary.

Moreover, in close co-operation with the Member States, the Commission shall carry out any studies and research in the field of vocational training which will ensure attainment of a common policy, in particular with a view to promoting employment facilities and the geographical and occupational mobility of workers within the Community.

Furthermore, it shall draw up a list of training facilities in the Member States and compare them with

existing requirements with a view to determining what actions to recommend to the Member States, indicating an order of priority where necessary; should the occasion arise, it shall encourage the conclusion of bilateral or multilateral agreements.

The Commission shall follow the development of such measures, compare the results thereof and bring them to the notice of the Member States.

When carrying out the tasks assigned to it in the field of vocational training, the Commission shall be assisted by a tripartite advisory committee, whose composition and rules shall be laid down by the Council after receiving the Opinion of the Commission.

Fifth principle

In order to promote a wider knowledge of all the facts and publications concerning the state and development of vocational training within the Community, and to help keep current teaching methods up to date, the Commission shall take all suitable steps to collect, distribute and exchange any useful information, literature and teaching material among the Member States. It shall ensure in particular the systematic distribution of literature relating to innovations already in use or to be introduced. For their part, the Member States shall give the Commission all the necessary help and support to carry out these various tasks and, in particular, shall provide any useful information concerning the present state and development of national systems of vocational training.

Sixth principle

In co-operation with the Member States, the Commission shall encourage such direct exchanges of experience in the field of vocational training as are likely to enable the services responsible for vocational training and specialists in such field to acquaint themselves with and study the achievements and new developments in the other countries of the Community in matters of vocational training.

Such exchanges shall be brought about in particular by means of study seminars and by programmes of visits and stays at vocational training institutions.

Seventh principle

The suitable training of teachers and instructors, whose numbers should be increased and whose technical and teaching skills should be developed, shall be one of the basic factors of any effective vocational training policy.

Member States shall, with the assistance of the Commission where necessary, encourage any measures

which are likely to contribute to the improvement and development of such training, in particular measures to ensure a continuing adjustment to progress in the economic and technical fields.

The training of instructors recruited among specially qualified workers shall be encouraged. Harmonisation of instructor training shall be sought; all exchanges of experience and other similar appropriate means, and in particular those mentioned in the Sixth Principle, may be used towards such harmonisation.

Special measures shall be taken in the Community countries to promote the basic training and advanced training of teachers and instructors for work in the less favoured regions of the Community and in developing States and territories, in particular those associated with the Community.

Eighth principle

The common vocational training policy must, in particular, be so framed as to enable levels of training to be harmonised progressively.

In co-operation with the Member States the Commission shall, according to requirements, draw up in respect of the various occupations which call for specific training a standardised description of the basic qualifications required at various levels of training.

On this basis, harmonisation of the standards required for success in final examinations should be sought, with a view to the mutual recognition of certificates and other documents confirming completion of vocational training;

The Member States and the Commission shall encourage the holding of European competitions and examinations.

Ninth principle

In order to contribute to the achievement of an overall balance between the supply of and demand for labour within the Community, and taking into account the forecasts made for this purpose, the Member States and the Commission may co-operate in taking adequate steps, in particular when drawing up suitable training programmes.

Such steps and programmes must aim at the rapid training of adults and vocational retraining, taking into account the situations caused by economic expansion or recession, technological and structural

changes and the special requirements of certain occupations, occupational categories or specific regions.

Tenth principle

In the application of the general principles of the common vocational training policy, particular attention shall be given to the special problems concerning specific sectors of activity or specific categories of persons; special measures may be taken in this respect.

Measures taken with a view to attaining the objectives of the common vocational training policy may be jointly financed.

Done at Brussels, 2 April 1963.

For the Council
The President
Eugene SCHAUS

Opinion of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training on the framework of proposals for action at Community level contained in the discussion paper "Vocational Training in the 1980's", presented by the Commission's services

The Advisory Committee for Vocational Training, at a plenary session held on 12/13 May 1982,

- having regard to Articles 118, 125 and 128 of the EEC Treaty;
- having regard to the Decision of the Council of 2 April 1963⁽¹⁾ laying down general guidelines for implementing a common vocational training policy;
- taking into account the conclusions of the Presidency of the European Council meeting of 29/30 March 1982⁽²⁾, and the conclusions of the joint Council meeting of Ministers of Economic Affairs, Finance and Social Affairs of June 1981⁽³⁾;
- taking into account the importance placed by the European Parliament on vocational training⁽⁴⁾;
- taking into account the discussions in its own plenary sessions and working groups;
- having regard to the analysis and the framework of proposals for Community action contained in the discussion paper on "Vocational Training in the 1980's", presented by the Commission's services⁽⁵⁾;

is of the opinion that:

- (i) whereas training is not a panacea for solving all employment and social problems, it must be developed as part of a total strategy in attacking the problem of unemployment and be coherent with other sectoral policies. Moreover, differing conditions in the Member States may necessitate different strategies and

emphases.

(1) OJ No 63 of 20.4.1963

(2)

(3) Bulletin of the E.C. 6/1981, point 1.3.3

(4) EP 74.712 of 17.9.1982 and 5464/82 of 11.3.1982

(5) V/576/82 of 19.4.1982

(ii) training has several functions:

- as an instrument of an intelligent and active employment policy, thus creating more efficient industry and commerce for the creation of wealth;
- it can contribute towards stimulating growth and investment in areas of decline.
Although training may not directly create jobs, it may trigger off new thinking and motivation leading to creation of jobs;
- as an instrument of social policy to encourage personal advancement by the provision of opportunities for continuing education and training, to enable people to cope with social and economic conditions, and to ensure their participation in a democratic society;

(iii) training strategies should also focus on the needs of specific risk groups :

- young people must be regarded as a vital priority. In addition, however, industry and commerce should also concentrate on other risk groups and thus take in account the training needs of adult workers;
- the quality of training of skilled workers must continually be improved;
- more attention is also needed to training provisions for the long-term unemployed;
- the needs of women and their equal rights of access to and participation in vocational training should receive continuing special attention;
- a balanced and flexible approach is essential, especially on account of the impact of demographic changes, and of the pattern of economic development in the Community as a whole in the years ahead;

- (iv) it is necessary to establish closer links between the different stages of education and vocational training, including the preparation of young people in the final years of compulsory education for adult and working life;
- bridges between school and the world of work and society generally need to be multiplied;
 - provision should be made for a period of transition involving the social and vocational preparation of all young people, in the period after the end of compulsory schooling up to the age of 18 years;
 - it is also necessary to encourage cooperation between teachers concerned with the final period of compulsory education, the 16-18 age group, and those concerned with adult vocational training. Practical support for these groups of training personnel is essential. Of greater importance however is the collaboration between groups of teachers with experience in industry, and who are familiar with its problems. Such collaboration should be encouraged. There is a need for pilot projects in new forms of training, and the employment of staff engaged in providing a broadly based vocational training;
 - constant renewal of the content of training is essential, and only feasible if continuing investment is made in the quality of training of the trainers;
- (v) the concept of a social guarantee for young people under the age of 18, with a view to removing the threat of unemployment, was broadly accepted, building on existing provisions for combinations of education and training, linked work and training, work experience and other forms of social service. Some government and employers' representatives stressed that this should not imply any legal obligation or entitlement:
- the Committee underlined the importance of young people deciding for themselves whether they wished to take up the further education and training opportunities offered, and of deciding for themselves which combinations they wish to follow;
 - it is also crucially important to develop a spirit of partnership based on concertation between governments,

employers and trade unions, to develop the necessary provisions, in particular by strengthening the capacity of vocational training systems to cater for all young persons;

- (vi) whereas the Committee is sceptical about regional master plans for the development of vocational training, it strongly advocates supporting operational initiatives at local and regional levels, to be defined as appropriate within each Member State, as well as the introduction of measures to ensure that education and training dimensions are integrated with economic and industrial efforts at regional and local levels, and closely coordinated with national training policies and programmes. The Social Partners should be closely associated with such integrated planning measures;
- (vii) the financing of training and of new initiatives is of crucial importance. The dispersal of scarce resources should be avoided, so as to enable their concentration on selected priority objectives. The Committee also advocates the examination of the possibility of trade-offs, by transferring resources within national budgets, with a view to reinforcing vocational training policies and provisions;
- (viii) the Advisory Committee welcomed the priority attention the Commission intends to give to the following issues:
 - (a) the social and vocational preparation of young people, after the end of full-time compulsory education up to the age of 18 years, for adult and working life;
 - (b) training in support of job creation schemes at local level, as well as in the promotion of social and economic development in disadvantaged areas; and

(c) training as an instrument in improving equal opportunities in society.

(ix) The Advisory Committee emphasised that in developing actions in these priority fields, the Commission should reinforce its role in the following ways:

- as a catalyst to foster innovation and development which will help the adjustment of national training policies to the new economic and social situation;
- by encouraging experimental projects with a view to speeding up the development of effective models for action;
- by informing and circulating information and data on training activities;
- by enhancing the value of experience and good practice by facilitating the exchange and transfer of information to the benefit of all.

In this regard, the Advisory Committee stresses the importance of ensuring linkage with national policies and with promising initiatives and machinery set up in Member States. Further, the Advisory Committee underlines the need of finding more efficient ways of disseminating information on policies and practices and facilitating exchanges within a mutual interactive process in relation in particular to the experiences drawn from pilot experiments at Community level.

(x) The Community actions to be developed in the vocational training field, especially in respect of the social and vocational preparation of young people under the age of 18, should be reflected in the reform of the European Social Fund, taking into account also the importance of developing

closer links with the operation of the European Regional Development Fund, and of other Community financial instruments.

- (xi) The Committee welcomes the Commission's intention to keep it closely informed of developments in these fields and to provide advise on a regular basis concerning the progress achieved in implementing the actions proposed.
 - (xii) The Committee requests the Commission to take this opinion into account in the formulation of its proposals for submission to the Council.
-