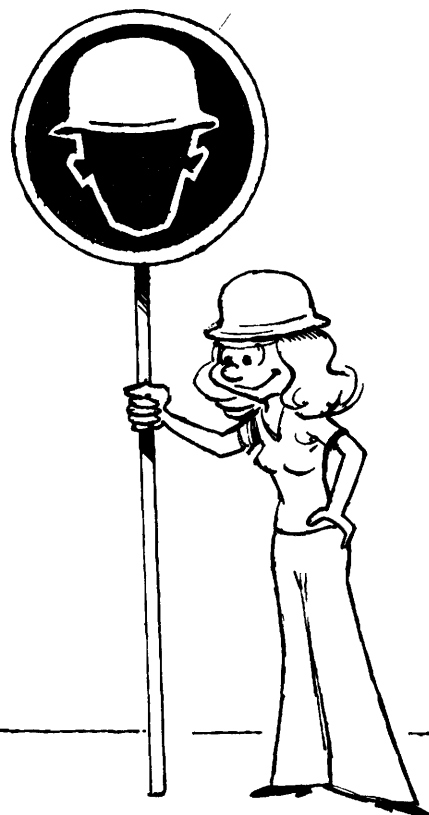
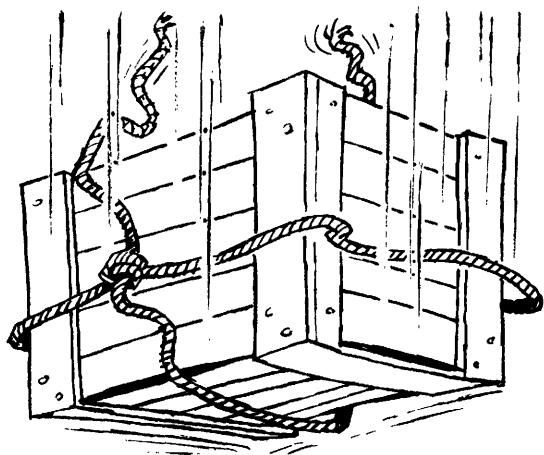


Brussels, 27 April 1976

No 17/76



MATAGNE / 15

Safety at work throughout the Community should be greatly improved by the new standardized system of safety signs. Hats off to the Commission!

X/237/76-E

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**** SAFETY AT WORK**

More than twelve million workers are injured in the Community each year. How many of these accidents could have been prevented by explicit, eye-catching safety signs?

In ANNEX 1, Euroforum presents the new signs which the European Commission proposes to make compulsory in factories and sites throughout the Community.

**** THE NINE: EMPLOYMENT POLICY IN 1975**

The serious economic and social situation which developed in 1975 forced all Community countries to adopt a series of exceptional measures to combat unemployment.

Details are given in ANNEX 2.

**** GROWING OPTIMISM ABOUT THE ECONOMIC SITUATION**

The results of the most recent EEC business survey indicate that industrialists in the Community are now much more optimistic about the economic situation. The recovery in industrial production which became evident last summer gathered further momentum at the beginning of 1976. Between December and January the seasonally-adjusted index rose by more than $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ to reach a level already some $4\frac{1}{2}\%$ up on the 1975 average. This acceleration is mainly due to renewed stockbuilding and the brisk revival in demand, principally on domestic markets, for durable and semi-durable consumer goods. Thanks to the improvement in the economic situation, the seasonally-adjusted number of wholly unemployed seems, generally speaking, to have stopped rising in the first few months of 1976 and short-time working has apparently started to decline in some countries, particularly in Germany. Statistics for February confirmed the emergence of a fresh bout of inflation, with the rise in consumer prices over the preceding twelve months reaching about $13\frac{1}{2}\%$ compared with $12\frac{1}{2}\%$ in January and 10% in the final three months of 1975. Furthermore, a rapid rise in the prices of foodstuffs in several Member States since the closing months of 1975 has persisted and spread to all countries, including Germany. The Community's trade balance continued to deteriorate in the early months of 1976, but probably more slowly than in the second half of last year, due to some easing in the rate of increase of imports and a gradual recovery in exports in some Community countries.

**** AVOIDING ANOTHER POTATO CRISIS**

The European Commission is anxious to avoid another potato crisis. This is why it has presented a proposal to the Community's Council of Ministers on the common organization of the market in potatoes. This should guarantee European consumers regular, adequate supplies of quality potatoes and at the same time safeguard free movement of potatoes, introduce marketing standards and common trade arrangements, and subsidize the formation of producers' groups.

The crisis was perhaps a blessing in disguise as it has increased awareness of the working of the potato market. Average prices on the Rotterdam market, for instance, fell by 20% between 1974 and 1975 despite buffer stocks in France, trade and planting controls in the United Kingdom and minimum prices in France, Germany and the Benelux countries.

Producers reacted to low prices by reducing the area under potatoes: in 1975 this was down by about 100 000 ha in the Community as a whole. Then a very dry summer brought yield per hectare to 245 ql, as against 286 ql in 1974. The net result was that Community production fell by about 20% (from 41 million metric tons in 1974 to 33 million in 1975).

To deal with this exceptional situation the Community had to adopt some rather exceptional measures: customs duties on seed potatoes, new potatoes and other potatoes for consumption were suspended until 28 March 1976 and a tax was introduced on exports of non-certified seed potatoes and main-crop ware potatoes.

A common organization of the market in potatoes should rule out the need for drastic measures of this kind in the future.

**** ENERGY IN THE COMMUNITY: SITUATION IN 1975 AND OUTLOOK FOR 1976**

The amount of energy consumed by the Community in 1975 was 4% down on 1974. This can be explained by a combination of factors: the economic recession, high energy prices, mild weather and measures to conserve energy. This fall in demand coupled with rising costs is causing the Community's energy industries serious concern.

The economic recovery forecast for 1976 - a 3% growth in Community gross domestic product - could lead to a 3% rise in energy consumption to give a total of 900 million toe (tonnes oil equivalent) as compared with 936 million toe in 1973.

Assuming that conditions on the oil market remain relatively balanced, the Community should be able to procure the crude oil it needs. Oil consumption could therefore rise by approximately 2% in 1976.

The European Commission expects Community coal production to remain at its 1975 level of just under 240 million metric tons. Demand for natural gas is expected to rise by 7% reflecting increased availability. Demand for electricity should be up by 2.4% with almost 9% of total gross production, or 93.6 TWh out of a total estimated consumption of 899 TWh (1 terawatt/hour = 1 000 million kilowatt/hour), being supplied by nuclear power stations.

**** FRONTIER CHECKS**

Mr van der Hek, Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, has sent a message on behalf of the Committee to Mr Thorn, President-in-Office of the Community's Council of Ministers, inviting the Council "in view of the foreseeable strengthening and increase of transfrontier passenger traffic, forthwith to press the relevant national departments to ensure that frontier checks on persons are carried out as

flexibly and rapidly as possible and without petty annoyances, so that the public image of a united Europe is not further compromised".

**** MILK POWDER FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

In 1976 the quantity of skimmed milk powder supplied by the European Community to developing countries as food aid should jump from 55 000 to 200 000 metric tons. The criteria applied to the selection of recipients vary with the type of food aid involved. Normal aid is granted to countries which have a large milk requirement, a per capita income of US \$300 a year or less and a poor balance of payments. A Usual Marketing Requirement (UMR) is determined by the Community and other donor countries for all food aid operations other than emergency or small scale ones. This UMR, which reflects normal imports, represents the quantity of skimmed milk powder the recipient country must undertake to buy on the international market in the year that food aid is granted. This arrangement ensures that the danger of international trade being disrupted is slight.

Emergency food aid is granted to countries in difficulties as a result of natural disasters or political upheaval. GDP and balance of payments figures are ignored in these cases and no UMR is fixed either for obvious reasons.

**** WASTE MANAGEMENT**

The European Commission is to set up a Committee of high-level national experts with special powers in the field of waste management to advise it on the development of a Community policy on industrial and consumer wastes. This Waste Management Committee will deliver opinions on various measures to ensure the prevention, re-use and recycling or disposal of waste. It will also advise the Commission on the application of directives on waste management and on the formulation of new proposals in this field.

**** NOISE FROM SUBSONIC AIRCRAFT**

It seems that it could cost as much as US \$200 million (at 1974 rates) to cut down the noise from subsonic jets by fitting them with quiet nacelles. And it would take until 1982 to modify even part of the European fleet. The European Commission has therefore decided that, since something must be done to improve the lot of those of us who live near airports, its best course is to concentrate on all aircraft, irrespective of weight, which have not yet been awarded an individual certificate of airworthiness. A recent proposal presented by it to the Community's Council of Ministers spells out the procedure for issuing noise limitation certificates without which subsonic aircraft would not be allowed to fly. It also makes provision for monitoring the noise characteristics of aircraft already in service, specifies maximum noise levels and defines methods of evaluating noise.

**** AN END TO TAX AVOIDANCE?**

The days of the tax-dodger are numbered. The European Commission has just presented the Community's Council of Ministers with a proposal for a directive to promote mutual assistance between the tax authorities of the different Member States - a "must" if tax avoidance, now practised on an international scale, is to be reduced. Such cooperation could take the form of an information system which would enable income and wealth tax liabilities to be correctly assessed. Information could be supplied automatically, or at the request of a Member State, or spontaneously by any revenue department which comes across relevant evidence.

Mutual assistance would also include investigations conducted by one Member State on behalf of another to obtain the information requested. The proposal would also make it possible for a revenue official of one Member State to work in another.

Taken together these measures go much further than existing bilateral cooperation between Member States - under double taxation agreements for instance.

The proposal also includes rules on the confidentiality of information collected and on the right of Member States to withhold information in certain circumstances, such as the absence of reciprocity.

**** WHAT PRICE TRANQUILLITY?**

The British consumer can buy certain tranquillizers at something between a quarter and half the price paid by consumers elsewhere in the Community. Information available to the European Commission shows that wholesale prices for Valium and Librium in the Community at the end of 1975 were as shown below. The prices, which are approximate, relate to the most common presentations and exclude tax and discount.

	<u>Valium</u> (u.a.*/100 5-mg tables)	<u>Librium</u> (u.a.*/50 10-mg capsules)
Belgium	3.10	1.37
Denmark	3.06	1.49
France	2.41	1.01
Germany	3.78	1.54
Italy	2.29	1.21
Netherlands	2.61	1.32
United Kingdom	0.98	0.49

* 1 u.a. = Bfrs 48.65; Dkr 7.57; FF 6.03; DM 3.22; Lit 829.75; Fl 3.35; £0.53.

**** PROTECTING MIGRATORY BIRDS**

A petition backed by more than 80 organizations, which between them can count on the support of more than 7 000 000 members, has been addressed to the European Parliament with the aim of protecting migratory birds. The signatories request both the European Parliament and the European Commission (and we quote)

- "(1) to lay down that migratory birds occupy a place all their own in International Law, and this in contrast to all other game which remains part of the patrimony of each nation, and
- (2) to sanction this position by drafting, and having the European Community adopt, a uniform migratory birds clause which guarantees all migratory birds in all nations of the Community equal and adequate protection - with the exception of a few named species which are patently noxious."

SAFETY AT WORK

More than 12 million workers are injured in the Community each year. How many of these accidents could have been prevented by explicit, eye-catching safety signs? With this in mind the European Commission recently presented a proposal for a directive to harmonize signs used at the work place.

It isn't only the worker who stands to benefit from improved safety signs. Factories, building sites and docksides also present dangers to the casual visitor and the passer-by who finds himself in unfamiliar surroundings and is not attuned to the dangers of a swinging girder, a live electric cable or a tool dropped from the scaffolding above.

The proliferation of different signs is becoming just as dangerous as no signs at all. Some firms have produced signs of their own so that factories and sites now have different ways of drawing attention to the same danger. The European Commission with the help of government experts has therefore devised a series of simple, striking pictograms which it proposes to make compulsory throughout the Community.

A special committee will advise the Commission on future action in line with new requirements and new developments in design.

The colours and shapes of the new signs are in line with international usage: red for prohibition, yellow for caution, green for safety systems and first aid and blue for mandatory signs; circles for mandatory and prohibition signs, triangles for warning signs and squares or rectangles for emergency, information and supplementary signs.

SÆRLIG SIKKERHEDSSKILTNING
BESONDERE SICHERHEITSKENNZEICHNUNG
SPECIAL SAFETY INFORMATION

SIGNALISATION PARTICULIERE DE SECURITE
SEGNALI PARTICOLARI DI SICUREZZA
BEZONDERE VEILIGHEIDSSIGNALERING

1. Forbudsskilte
Panneaux d'interdiction

Verbotszeichen
Cartelli segnalatori di
divieto

Prohibition signs
Verbodsborden



Rygning forbudt
Rauchen verboten
No smoking
Defense de fumer
Vietato fumare
Verboden te roken



Rygning og åben ild forbudt
Feuer, offenes Licht und Rauchen verboten
Smoking and naked flames forbidden
Flamme nue interdite et defense de fumer
Vietato fumare o usare fiamme libere
Vuur, open vlam en roken verboden



Ingen adgang for fodgængere
Für Fussgänger verboten
Pedestrians forbidden
Interdit aux pietons
Vietato ai pedoni
Verboden voor voetgangers



Sluk ikke med vand
Verbot mit Wasser zu löschen
Do not extinguish with water
Defense d'éteindre avec de l'eau
Divieto di usare acqua per spegnere incendi
Verboden met water te blussen



Ikke drikkevand
Verbot dieses Wasser zu trinken
No drinking water
Eau non potable
Acqua non potabile
Verboden water te drinken

2. Advarselsskilte
Panneaux d'avertissement

Warnzeichen
Cartelli segnalatori di
pericolo

Warning signs
Waarschuwingsborden



Brandfarlige stoffer
Warnung vor feuergefähr-
lichen Stoffen
Inflammable matter
Matières inflammables
Materiale infiammabile
Ontvlambare stoffen



Eksplodingsfarlige stoffer
Warnung vor Explosivstoffen
Explosive matter
Matières explosives
Materiale esplosivo
Explosieve stoffen



Giftige stoffer
Warnung vor giftigen Stoffen
Toxic matter
Matières toxiques
Sostanze velenose
Giftige stoffen



Ætsende stoffer
Warnung vor ätzenden Stoffen
Corrosive matter
Matières corrosives
Sostanze corrosive
Bijtende stoffen



Ioniserende stråling
Radioaktivitet/Røntgenstråling
Warnung vor radioaktiven Stoffen
oder ionisierenden Strahlen
Radioactive matter
Matières radioactives
Radiazioni pericolose
Radioaktieve stoffen



Kran i arbejde
Warnung vor schwebender Last
Beware, overhead load
Charges suspendues
Attenzione ai carichi sospesi
Hangende lasten



Pas på kørende trafik
Warnung vor Flurförderzeugen
Beware, industrial trucks
Charriots de manutention
Carrelli di movimentazione
Transportvoertuigen



Farlig elektrisk spænding
Warnung vor gefährlicher
elektrischer Spannung
Danger high tension
Danger électrique
Alta tensione, pericolo di morte
Gevaar voor hoge elektrische
spanning



Giv agt
Warnung vor einer Gefahrstelle
General danger
Danger général
Pericolo generico
Gevaar

3. Påbudsskilte
Panneaux d'obligation

Gebotszeichen
Cartelli segnalatori di
obbligo

Mandatory signs
Gebodsborden



Øjenværn påbudt
Augenschutz tragen
Eye protection must be worn
Protection obligatoire de
la vue
Protezione degli occhi
Oogbescherming verplicht

Hovedværn påbudt
Schutzhelm tragen
Safety helmet must be worn
Protection obligatoire de
la tête
Casco di protezione
Veiligheidshelm verplicht

Høreværn påbudt
Gehörschutz tragen
Ear protection must be worn
Protection obligatoire de
ouïe
Protezione dell'udito
Gehoorbescherming verplicht



Åndedrætsværn påbudt
Atemschutz tragen
Respiratory equipment must
be used
Protection obligatoire des
voies respiratoires
Protezione vie respiratorie
Adembescherming verplicht

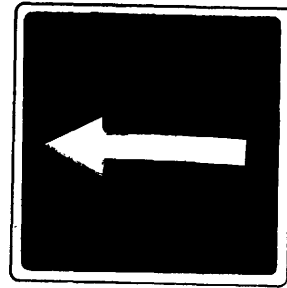
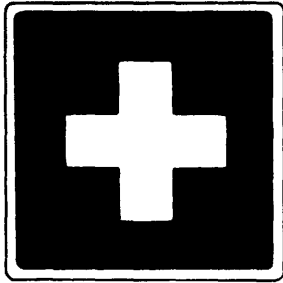
Fodværn påbudt
Schutzschuhe tragen
Safety boots must be worn
Protection obligatoire
des pieds
Calzature di sicurezza
Veiligheidsschoenen
verplicht

Beskyttelsehandsker påbudt
Schutzhandschuhe tragen
Safety gloves must be worn
Protection obligatoire des
mains
Guanti di protezione
Veiligheidshandschoenen
verplicht

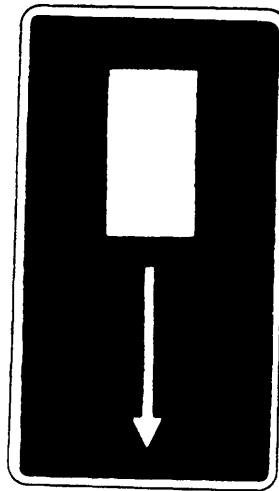
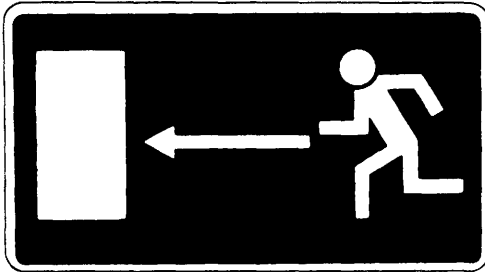
4. Nødhjælpskilte
Premiers secours et
évacuation

Rettungszeichen
Cartelli indicatori
"pronto soccorso"

Emergency signs
Redding en eerste hulp



Første hjælp
Hinweis auf "Erste Hilfe"
First aid post
Poste premiers secours
Pronto soccorso
Eerste hulp-post



Retningsangivelse til nødudgang
Fluchtweg (Richtungsangabe für Fluchtweg)
Emergency exit to the left
Issue de secours vers la gauche
Uscita d'emergenza a sinistra
Nooduitgang naar links

Nødudgang
(anbringes over udgangen)
Fluchtweg
(über dem Fluchtausgang anzubringen)
Emergency exit
(to be placed above the exit)
Sortie de secours
(à placer au-dessus de la sortie)
Uscita d'emergenza
(da collocare sopra l'uscita)
Nooduitgang
(te plaatsen boven de uitgang)

THE NINE: EMPLOYMENT POLICY IN 1975

The serious economic and social situation which developed in 1975 forced all Community countries to take steps to combat unemployment. Details of the measures adopted by each of the Nine, as described in the Report on the Development of the Social Situation in the Community in 1975 published by the European Commission, are reproduced below.

Belgium

On 12 December 1975 the government tabled its economic recovery plan. This would extend the concept of industrial closure to rationalization programmes involving a high number of dismissals and introduce special measures to promote the employment of young people, especially those under thirty in search of their first job. A voluntary retirement scheme is to operate on an experimental basis: men aged sixty-two and over and women aged fifty-two and over would be allowed to retire and would then be replaced by workers under thirty.

The employment situation, together with the legalization of the position of illegal immigrants, led the authorities to continue the ban on immigration, except in the case of highly skilled workers. During the first nine months only 3 138 new work permits were issued to immigrants from non-Member States; these were for jobs demanding high skills, jobs for which workers were not available on the Belgian labour market, and for the families of workers holding a work permit of unlimited duration valid for all occupations.

Legalization measures have meant that the position of about 8 000 illegal entrants has been brought within the law.

Figures for the end of September showed that 27 500 (11.9%) foreign workers were jobless out of a total of 186 000 (7%) unemployed. These included 14 700 Italian and 2 200 French workers.

Denmark

Under the 1975/76 Finance Act, a special reserve of Dkr 575 million was created to finance measures to increase employment. For the building industry, this included grants or loans for residential property improvement, slum clearance, mortgage credit improvements and help for building up exports.

For manufacturing industries, it covered loans to small firms, state guarantees for loans and the setting up of an aid fund for firms in difficulty. Support for regional development has also been increased and improvements have been made in the provision of export credit.

In addition, the sum of Dkr 17 million has been granted to the Ministry of Education and Dkr 30 million to the Ministry of Labour for the implementation of special employment measures and training for young people out of work.

Furthermore, in September increased government appropriations of more than Dkr 2 000 million were made available, 500 million being set aside for specific measures to increase employment and 1 100 million to encourage investment.

In an effort to help the unemployed, various improvements have been made to the unemployment insurance schemes, notably as regards the qualifying period and conditions governing entitlement. It has also been agreed that in the long term the possibility of extending unemployment insurance to cover the self-employed should be investigated.

As regards migrant workers, the decision to suspend immigration, other than immigration from Scandinavia or the Community, was upheld throughout 1975.

Germany

The decline in economic activity continued for most of the year. However, some improvement in the economic climate could be seen during the fourth quarter, the conditions for recovery becoming evident as a result of economic and financial measures taken by the government.

This positive effect has not however been reflected in an improvement in the employment situation. Unemployment had risen to 1 223 400, or 5.3% of total wage and salary earners, by the end of December.

Women were particularly affected by the deterioration in the employment situation; a third of all women workers were looking for part-time employment, particularly difficult to find during a period of recession.

Unemployment among young people under twenty continued to increase throughout the year - but at a slower rate than for other groups - particularly among young people who already had a first job, and even among those with occupational qualifications. Because of the lack of training places for young people in industry, the Federal Labour Office (Bundesanstalt für Arbeit) decided to increase its grants to institutions providing basic training courses for young people out of work.

In December 1974, faced with the rapid decline in employment, the government had adopted emergency measures to counteract unemployment as part of a programme to reflate the economy and maintain stability. A budget of DM 600 000 million was earmarked for this purpose.

Since it is unlikely that the employment situation will improve rapidly - even if an economic upturn is imminent - the government seems to be concentrating its efforts on labour supply rather than on demand.

The almost total ban on immigration from outside the Community (approximately 17 000 entrants during the first nine months of 1975 of whom 5 300 came from countries with whom Germany has manpower agreements) and the pressure of unemployment (133 000 foreign workers unemployed at

the end of September 1975) brought the number of foreign workers out of work to an estimated 2.1 million at the end of the third quarter, in other words 500 000 down on September 1973 and 250 000 down on September 1974.

The unemployment rate for foreigners (5.5% in September and 6.2% in November) continued to be higher than the overall rate (4.4% and 4.9%).

In an attempt to curb illegal immigration a law which introduces severe penalties entered into force on 1 July 1975.

Furthermore, to prevent over-saturation of certain densely populated regions, provisions restricting the inflow of foreign workers from outside the Community have been in force since 1 April 1975.

In 1975 all the recruitment agencies operated by the Federal Labour Office abroad, with the exception of those in Italy, were closed indefinitely.

France

An important initiative by the State in the struggle against unemployment has been the system of payments from national employment funds to certain industries or companies enabling them to maintain their labour forces by cutting working hours thus avoiding mass redundancies. Under this scheme the State may pay up to 90% of the benefits for which a company is liable for people on short time.

At the same time, new economic measures have been adopted including the granting of some FF 30 000 million to encourage investment and consumption, action to assist the Peugeot-Citroën group, and the encouragement of house-building.

Further measures, directly related to labour market operations, undertaken during the year included:

- . reorganization of the employment service with the creation of a group responsible for developing and coordinating employment policy and the formation of new national employment agency units;
- . bonuses to encourage firms to recruit additional labour without dismissing workers;
- . measures to find jobs for young workers, notably by instituting employment-training contracts enabling young workers to study during working hours (the company concerned receives state aid); priority for 16-20 year olds; improved income support for young people and their families;
- . improved consultation over dismissals due to economic factors (Law of 3 January 1975);
- . improved income guarantees for redundant and older workers.

The French authorities also maintained a ban on immigration from outside the Community in 1975 (11 551 permits issued during the first nine months of which almost 75% were legalizations). However since 1 July 1975 families have once more been authorized to enter.

Immigration from Algeria has not recommenced as yet.

As part of the government's policy designed to integrate workers who have been admitted, a new law has lifted the ban which prevented employers from appointing a foreign worker before expiry of his initial work contract and a decree of 21 November simplifies the regulations on work permits, replacing the seven types of card now in use by three.

A "Commission for the protection of migrant workers" was set up in June 1975. It is directly responsible to the State Secretary for migrant workers and its main task is to coordinate measures taken by the various authorities in an attempt to combat illicit traffic in manpower and the illegal employment of foreign workers, to collect information and to draw up proposals to improve penal and labour legislation.

As at 30 September 1975 out of a total of 945 800 unemployed 95 200 were foreign workers. The unemployment rate for foreign workers (5.0%) remains slightly higher than the overall rate (4.8%).

Ireland

The employment situation deteriorated steadily during 1975. The National Economic and Social Council estimates that total employment in 1975 was some 5% lower than in 1974. The drop in employment is put at 2% for agriculture, 4% for services and 7% for industry.

In its second budget for 1975, the government announced certain measures to deal with the unemployment situation. These include employment premiums to encourage the re-employment in manufacturing industries of workers who have lost their jobs as a result of the recession. The premium has been fixed at £12 a week per employee until 31 March 1976 and £6 from 1 April to 30 June 1976.

The budget also makes provision for a 6% increase in the public capital programme bringing the total for 1975 to £490 million. These additional funds were allocated as follows: housing (£10.5 million), telephone development (£8 million), industry (£5.25 million) and agriculture (£3.5 million). At the same time commercial banks are to make £40 million available over two years for house-purchase loans.

A scheme introduced at the end of the year gives young people under 25 who are out of work or wish to leave agriculture an opportunity of attending a 4- to 15-month training course.

Italy

Generally speaking, the Italian economy has been able to absorb the effects of the recession, partly thanks to economic recovery measures (notably in the monetary and budgetary spheres) and partly because of certain fundamentally negative characteristics of the Italian labour market, in particular the abnormal growth of non-institutional employment (two jobs, work at home, seasonal work and so on).

It should be stressed, however, that there has been a sharp deterioration in the labour market situation despite the fact that the increase in unemployment (13.8% between October 1974 and October 1975) was, apparently, the lowest registered in any Community country.

This figure understates the seriousness of the situation in that there was an increase in short-time working, as is borne out by the massive contributions from the Cassa Integrazione Guadagni.

Young people were particularly hard hit by the worsening situation. More than 75% of those looking for their first job and 31.6% of those totally unemployed belonged to the 15-21 age group; the total figure of 376 200 included 146 400 young women. It should also be noted that 30% of these young people had leaving certificates from secondary schools and that another 7% were university graduates. At the other end of the scale, more than 50% of all unemployed persons held only primary school certificates.

In the first six months of 1975, about 25 000 Italian migrant workers returned home voluntarily; this trend may well persist as long as the economic climate in the host countries continues to be unfavourable.

Several agreements have been concluded between both sides of industry and the government to increase compensation for workers who work for less than the normal number of hours. This has been made possible by aligning the various systems so far used as a basis for contributions from the Cassa Integrazione Guadagni. These measures are intended to guarantee partially unemployed workers a reasonable income and enable the process of industrial restructuring to continue. Under the new law approved in the spring, the Fund will apply a single guarantee procedure based on 88% (instead of 66.6%) of earnings lost in relation to a 40-hour working week.

Arrangements for financing the Fund have undergone considerable modifications and companies seeking assistance must now meet certain conditions.

Since the aim is to guarantee a higher level of income to workers who have been made redundant or placed on short time, part of the cost of operating the new scheme is to be borne by the firms involved; contributions will amount to 8% of workers' salaries, this being reduced to 4% in the case of small or medium-sized firms.

The Italian Government also adopted measures during the year to stimulate activity in the building sector and create new jobs. Work is in progress on a draft law which would set up a central employment planning agency and regional placement services.

Luxembourg

The decline in production and employment experienced in 1975 was the worst since the war. Steel production was more than 25% down on 1974 while GNP dropped by about 7.5% in real terms.

It did prove possible however to maintain full employment by the adoption of two types of measures: payment of compensation to small and medium-sized firms hit by short-time working and, from September, the organization of work in the public interest to provide employment for 10% of iron and steel workers who have maintained links with their firms. These measures were the fruit of close collaboration between the government and the social partners within a special joint committee.

The Law of 26 July 1975 provided for an initial appropriation of Lfrs 250 million for measures to maintain employment; by the end of December actual expenditure amounted to Lfrs 600 million.

For the first time in many years the lack of job opportunities led to an appreciable decline in immigration. Indeed only highly qualified workers were admitted.

Finally, the Luxembourg authorities continued their endeavours to assist migrant workers to find accommodation.

Netherlands

Unemployment increased during 1975 and stood at 5.8% of the labour force by 31 December. Workers in the metal-working and textile industries and in the distributive and administrative sectors were the worst affected.

As in neighbouring countries, the unemployment rate for women increased more rapidly than that for men.

Government measures were set out in the economic recovery programme adopted on 16 November 1974, which has had some positive effects in building and construction.

In April a further Fl 1 000 million was set aside by the government to stimulate activity in the building industry; in addition Fl 80 million was granted to Amsterdam to counteract structural unemployment.

The government's main concern was to promote job creation, notably by the payment of subsidies to employers to encourage them to recruit unemployed workers.

Special regional or sectoral premiums (textiles, clothing industry) were also granted to undertakings whose sales were declining in an attempt to encourage them to restructure their operations.

However, increased government intervention, which also concentrated on placement services, has had no more than marginal impact on unemployment.

When the 1976 budget was presented in September the government announced a further series of measures to stimulate the economy and improve the employment situation.

A major cause of concern to the authorities was the growing number of young people out of work; at the end of November 1975 there were 67 600 job seekers under 23. Admittedly this can be explained in part by the extension of the apprenticeship period from 3 to 4 years and in part by the introduction of minimum wages for young persons. Unemployment among university graduates is a special case, in that it reflects the failure of the country's educational system to meet the demands of the economy. The government has twice allocated sums of Fl 20 million to combat unemployment among young people. Special schemes were implemented for the benefit of the 15-20 age group.

The three main features of immigration in 1975 were:

- . the 50% increase in immigration from Surinam;
- . regularization measures in favour of illegal migrant workers (over 11 000 legalizations up to mid-November);
- . the pursuit of a restrictive immigration policy based on a strict control over the entry and employment of foreign labour from outside the Community. In addition to the granting of new work permits to non-Community nationals legally resident in the Netherlands and the regularization of illegal migrants workers, 886 workers from non-member countries in the Mediterranean region were recruited during the first nine months.

As at 30 September 114 400 valid work permits were on issue, of which 48 700 were held by workers who have been employed for more than five years. At the same date 8 200 foreign workers were registered as unemployed (5.9%) out of an overall total of 195 500 (4.8%).

United Kingdom

Action by the government in the employment field was restricted by its declared policy of not feeding inflation by the adoption of reflationary measures. It concentrated on selective action to improve the efficiency of the labour market (e.g. by facilitating labour mobility), to give special help to the hardest-hit groups, areas and industries, and to ensure - notably by expanding training facilities - that economic recovery is not jeopardized by a shortage of skilled labour.

In August the government instituted a scheme whereby industrial and commercial firms in "assisted areas" received a subsidy of £10 a week per worker for a period of three to six months on condition that they refrained from making particular employees redundant.

On 24 September a new package of measures was announced aimed at creating a further 100 000 jobs over the following 18 months. The cost of this was to be £75 million for short-term measures and £100 million for increased investment.

The package includes the following specific measures:

- (a) extension of the temporary employment subsidy to the whole country;
- (b) a subsidy to companies of £5 a week per job for the first 26 weeks of employment for unemployed school leavers or university graduates;
- (c) an additional £30 million to the Manpower Services Commission to create 15 000 new jobs in projects of community interest;
- (d) an additional grant of £20 million to the Training Services Agency for training schemes designed to avoid skill bottlenecks in the years ahead;
- (e) supplementary aid to the employment transfer scheme which assists unemployed workers to move to areas where jobs are available;
- (f) the allocation of £100 million by the government to aid companies to carry out modernization or build new factories;
- (g) £32 million for public sector building projects.

In November an important tripartite conference, organized under the auspices of the National Economic Development Office, brought management, trade union and government representatives together to prepare a common industrial strategy for 1976.

On 17 December 1975 the government announced improvements relating to the payment of benefit during temporary unemployment, the extension of the job creation programme, temporary import controls in the textile, clothing and footwear industries, the easing of hire purchase conditions and the financing of a £70 million steel stockbuilding programme.

As far as the controlled immigration policy for workers from non-Community countries is concerned, the authorities decided at the beginning of 1975:

- to set the annual quota for the catering industry at 8 500;
- to fix the maximum number of work permits which may be issued to domestic and hospital staff at 8 000.

In the first nine months of 1975 27 000 work permits were issued as against 29 000 during the corresponding period in 1974.

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