

TRADE UNION INFORMATION BULLETIN

In This Issue:

- * **Community Action Programme on the Social Charter.**
- * **Health and Safety.**
- * **Community Support for Eastern Europe.**
- * **The Social Dialogue.**
- * **Commission Labour Market Survey.**
- * **Economic and Social Committee.**
- * **Internal Market.**
- * **European Parliament.**
- * **CEDEFOP.**
- * **Eurodata - Statistics.**

1-1990

Commission Action Programme on the Social Charter.

During early January, the European Commission unanimously adopted its 1990 Action Programme on the Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights. The Programme is designed as the first stage of the implementation of the Charter, adopted by eleven of the Member States at the Strasbourg European Council meeting in December. The Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights was intended as a general statement of minimum social rights which would be applicable throughout the Community. Within the version of the Charter adopted by the European Council meeting was an invitation to the Commission to put forward initiatives with a view to the adoption of legal instruments for the effective implementation of the rights contained within the Charter. This invitation was echoed in the report of the Presidency to the Strasbourg summit meeting.

The 1990 Action Programme announced by the Commission in January, contains the first series of proposals based upon the Charter. At this stage no firm details are available on the precise content of the various measures; however the Programme does give an indication of the areas within which the Commission will be introducing firm proposals during the coming months. The following proposals are contained within the Programme:-

Continued on Page 2



Published by the Trade Union Division of the Directorate-General for Information, Communication and Culture.

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (DGX)

200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.

Editor: Alan Burnett. Sheffield UK.

The views expressed in the Bulletin are those of the Editor and are not necessarily those of the European Commission.

Commission Action Programme - The Social Charter.

ATYPICAL WORK : The Commission will propose a draft Directive on atypical working arrangements. This will provide protection for part-time and temporary workers and workers on fixed-term contracts.

WORKING HOURS : The Commission will put forward a draft Directive aimed at the improvement of working hours.

INFORMATION, CONSULTATION, PARTICIPATION : The Commission promises the introduction of a Community instrument on procedures for informing, consulting and encouraging the participation of workers in companies of "Community dimension". It is likely that such proposals will be within the context of the current proposals on a European company statute.

PROOF OF CONTRACT : There will be a proposed Directive concerning the establishment of a common form of proof of contract which will be applicable to non full-time workers or workers with fixed term contracts.

BORDER WORKERS : The Commission will introduce a Communication on the working conditions of Community citizens who reside in border regions and, in particular, cross-border workers.

SUB-CONTRACTING : The Work Programme contains the proposal for a Community instrument on the working conditions of workers from other Member States working within a host Member State on a sub-contract basis.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING: A number of measures are proposed to achieve the improved coordination of existing Community programmes, particularly in the field of training for young workers.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK : The Action Programme includes several proposed Directives in the field of health and safety. These include proposals on medical assistance aboard ships, standards for mobile and temporary health care centres, health and safety and the industrial sector of the mining, exploration and drilling industries and sign-posting in the workplace. A Directive is also proposed on the creation of a specific information system for people exposed to certain dangerous industrial agents.

THE FREE MOVEMENT OF WORKERS : The Commission proposes to carry out preparatory work relating to the transferability of complementary pension schemes. Further work is also planned on the current regulations relating to the provision of social security to workers moving between Member States.

PREGNANT WOMEN : The Commission intends to propose a Directive on the protection of pregnant women at work. A third Community programme (1991-95) on equal opportunities for men and women will also be prepared.

THE HANDICAPPED : A draft Directive concerning the improvement of conditions for the mobility of handicapped workers will be prepared.

Full detail of all these proposed measures will become available during the first part of the year and the Trade Union Information Bulletin will be carefully following their progress throughout the coming months.

Commission President Jacques Delors told the European Parliament when he outlined the 1990 Programme of the Commission, that "the Commission intends fully to use articles 100A and 118A of the Treaty of Rome" in connection with the Action Programme on the social dimension. Both these articles allow the Council of Ministers to take decisions by a qualified majority vote in co-operation with the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee.

Whilst the European trade union movement, and the governments of many Member States, expressed some disappointment at the generality of the Social Charter and the decision by the United Kingdom not to approve it, the Commission Action Programme should provide a new impetus to the social dimension. The progress and development of the various proposals contained within the Action Programme over the coming months will obviously be of great interest to European trade unionists.

BACKGROUND BRIEFING

THE SOCIAL DIMENSION PROGRAMME

The proposed social dimension of the internal market was first outlined by Jacques Delors in his speech to the Congress of the European Trade Union Confederation in Stockholm in May 1988. He spoke of the single market as "an organised space governed by commonly agreed rules that will ensure social and economic cohesion as well as equality of opportunity for all". He went on to suggest three key elements to the social dimension - a Charter of Basic Social Rights, the creation of a European Companies Statute, and the provision of the right to continuous training.

In September 1988 the Commission published its first Work Programme on the Social Dimension and two months later a formal request was made to the Economic and Social Committee to produce an Opinion on the contents of the proposed Social Charter.

By February 1989 the Economic and Social Committee had adopted an opinion which provided a suggested content for the Social Charter. In the following month the European Parliament adopted a resolution in support of the social dimension programme.

In May 1989 the Commission produced its first pre-draft of the Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights and this became the basis of a wide-ranging discussion with the social partners and the governments of the Member States. A final draft version of the Charter was submitted to the Strasbourg summit meeting in December and was adopted by eleven Member States.

During discussions on the draft Social Charter the Commission emphasised its intention to put forward an action programme aimed at the implementation of various measures contained within the Charter; and it is this Action Programme which was formally announced in January 1990.

THE TREATY OF ROME

ARTICLES 100A and 118A OF THE TREATY OF ROME

Article 100A (1) By way of derogation from Article 100 and save where otherwise provided in this Treaty; the following provisions shall apply for the achievement of the objectives set out in Article 8A. The Council shall, acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission in co-operation with the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee, adopt the measures for the approximation of the provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States which have as their object the establishment and functioning of the internal market.

Article 118A (1) Member States shall pay particular attention to encouraging improvements, especially in the working environment, as regards the health and safety of workers, and shall set as their objective the harmonisation of conditions in this area, while maintaining the improvements made.

(2) In order to help achieve the objective laid down in the first paragraph, the Council, acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission, in co-operation with the European Parliament and after consulting the Economic and Social Committee, shall adopt, by means of directives, minimum requirements for gradual implementation, having regard to the conditions and technical rules obtaining in each of the Member States.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

NEW COMMISSION GUIDELINES ON PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT.

During 1989 the European Community adopted a series of Directives relating to health and safety at work. One of these Directives (89/656/EEC) established minimum requirements for the use by workers of personal protective equipment. The Directive requires the adoption of Regulations in each Member State governing the use of personal protective equipment and stipulates that employers' and workers' organisations must be consulted in advance on establishing suitable Regulations.

In order to facilitate such consultations the Commission has recently published a Communication listing the factors to be taken into account in choosing and using each of the main categories of personal protective equipment along with a list of the risks arising from the use of the protective equipment itself. The information contained within the Communication is seen as non-exhaustive; it is presented with a view to creating the most effective dialogue between the social partners during the formulation of national regulations.

The Communication covers nine categories of protective equipment:-

1. Industrial helmets
2. Goggles and visors
3. Ear protectors
4. Respirators
5. Gloves
6. Boots and shoes
7. Protective clothing
8. Life jackets for industrial use
9. Protection against falls

For each category of protective equipment the Communication examines three aspects:-

1. The risks to be covered by the equipment
2. The risks arising from the equipment itself
3. The risks arising from the use (or rather misuse) of the equipment.

Each risk is further broken down into two elements - the origin and type of risk and the safety and performance criteria for the selection of equipment to protect against the risk. The resultant information grid provides a substantial reference document which will be of considerable use to the social partners in the various national consultations surrounding the Regulations to be adopted under the Directive.

Some indication of the overall scope and style of the Communication can be provided by quoting from just one section - that relating to ear protectors.

EAR PROTECTION:

(i) Risks to be covered:

RISK: Noise.

ORIGIN AND TYPE OF RISK: Continuous noise. Impulse noise.

SAFETY AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA: Sufficient noise reduction for all types of noise.

RISK: Thermal

ORIGIN AND TYPE OF RISK: Metal splashing, for example during welding.

SAFETY AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA: Resistance to molten or burning materials.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

(ii) Risks arising from the equipment:

RISK: Discomfort, interference with work.

ORIGIN AND TYPE OF RISK: Inadequate comfort:- too bulky, too much pressure, increased perspiration, inadequate grip.

SAFETY AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA: Ergonomic design taking into account bulk, pressure when worn and effort required to keep in place and adaptability to individual requirements.

RISK: Restriction of hearing capacity.

ORIGIN AND TYPE OF RISK: deterioration of ability to understand words, recognise signals and key sounds during work and to locate direction of noise.

SAFETY AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA: Variation in noise reduction depending on frequency. Possibility of replacing shells with earplugs. Audio tests before selection. Use of appropriate electro-acoustic protection.

The Guidelines go on to consider other potential risks arising out of the use of ear protectors such as accidents and health hazards, the ageing of the equipment and the dangers of inadequate protection.

The full text of the Communication can be found in the Official Journal of the European Communities, C 328, 30 December 1989.

NEW DRAFT DIRECTIVE LIMITING THE USE OF CADMIUM.

The European Commission are proposing a new Directive which will limit the use of cadmium and its compounds. For many years cadmium has been recognised as potentially one of the most dangerous metals in industrial use. Long-term exposure to dust and fumes may lead to emphysema, chronic kidney disease, liver damage, anaemia and cancer of the prostate. The new proposed Directive, in the form of an amendment to the 1976 Directive on restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations, limits the use of cadmium in a variety of circumstances.

The cadmium content of a number of products is limited to 0.01% by weight. This will apply where cadmium is used as a colouring agent in finished products such as polyvinyl chloride (PVC), polyurethane, cellulose acetate and epoxy resins. Where cadmium is used to stabilise the finished product the 0.01% limit applies to products such as packaging materials, office and school supplies, fitting for furniture and coachwork, clothing, floor and wall coverings, gramophone records and tubes and pipes and their fittings.

An absolute ban on the use of cadmium for plating metallic products or components is proposed in relation to machinery and equipment used for food production, agriculture, cooling and freezing and the production of household goods, furniture and sanitary ware. Within five years of the date of the adoption of the Directive this ban will be extended to machinery and equipment used for the production of paper, board, textiles and clothing, road and agriculture vehicles, rolling stock and vessels.

A general exemption from the provision of the Directive are made in the case where cadmium is used for safety purposes in the aerospace, mining, offshore and nuclear sectors.

Community Extends Support Measures To Eastern Europe

The rapid political changes which have swept through Eastern Europe during the last few months have brought the prospect of, what Alexander Dubcek recently called, a qualitatively new era in European civilisation. The European Community has been quick to respond to the challenge: opening up new dialogues with the Eastern European states and laying the foundation for future social, economic and political cooperation. Here we briefly review some of the key developments in relations between the Community and the countries of Eastern Europe which have occurred during recent months.

GROUP OF 24 MEETING

The Group of 24 was established last year to provide a focus for the western industrialised nations who were anxious to provide aid to their eastern neighbours during their search for a new political and economic consensus. The twelve Member States of the Community are members of the Group and the European Commission has been given the task of co-ordinating the actions and initiatives of the Group.

In the first place the Group has been responsible for channelling aid to Poland and Hungary, but the fifth high-level meeting of the Group, held in Brussels in February, confirmed its readiness to extend assistance to other Eastern European States. The February meeting of the Group reviewed on-going measures and examined ideas for new initiatives in the field of environmental protection, agricultural aid, infrastructure investment and training.

On-going measures include food aid for Poland amounting to ECU 380 million, measures to facilitate access to western markets and the establishment of a US\$1 billion stabilisation fund for Poland. A final decision concerning the extension of the aid measures to other Eastern European countries is likely to be made at the Ministerial meeting of the Group in June.

INFORMAL COUNCIL MEETING

The current President of the European Council, Irish Taoiseach Charles Haughey, has announced that he is to convene a special informal summit meeting of Community leaders in Dublin in the second half of April. The summit will provide an opportunity for leaders of the 12 Member States to discuss the rapidly developing situation in Eastern Europe and its implications for the Community. It will follow the format set by the previous special informal summit on Eastern Europe which took place in Paris last November. In a statement, Mr Haughey said that it was important that Community leaders should have an early opportunity to discuss the evolving situation and how the Community should respond to it.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The European Community is considering a number of initiatives in the field of vocational training as part of its overall programme of aid to Eastern Europe. Poland and Hungary have already identified vocational training as being one of the key areas in which the west can contribute to the economic regeneration process within their countries.

Two initiatives are currently being considered by the Community. The first is concerned with the establishment of a European Foundation for Vocational Training which would be given the responsibility for coordinating the development of training and Western European aid in this field.

The second initiative is the TEMPUS programme which aims to encourage cooperation in the higher education sector. It would constitute a companion programme to existing Community schemes such as ERASMUS, COMETT and LINGUA, but be adopted to the specific needs of Poland and Hungary. At the moment there are proposals for three broad categories of action - joint European training projects between Community countries and Eastern European countries, increased mobility of teachers and students and complementary measures such as youth exchanges and information exchanges.

THE SOCIAL DIALOGUE:

.....Third Steering Group Meeting.

The third meeting took place on Friday 26 January 1990 of the Val Duchesse Social Dialogue Steering Group. The Steering Group, made up of leaders of the the ETUC, UNICE, CEEP and representatives of the European Commission was established last January as part of the relaunch of the Val Duchesse social dialogue process. Its tasks are to provide a driving force for the continued development of the dialogue between representatives of workers (ETUC), employers (UNICE) and the public sector (CEEP).

The group formally noted the importance of the revitalised social dialogue and adopted a common opinion concerning training and education. This opinion stresses the importance of both basic training and continuous training to the improvement of competitiveness and the promotion of the prosperity of employees within the Community. It emphasises a number of specific points:-

- * The importance of basic vocational training, which is accessible to all young people, designed to help young workers make a success of their professional lives.
- * The importance of measures, such as apprenticeships and training/working programmes, designed to facilitate the transition from school to working life.
- * The recognition of the right of workers to perfect their knowledge and improve their qualifications.
- * The particular importance of training to groups such as migrants, the handicapped, ethnic minorities and the long-term unemployed.
- * The acceptance of the principle that workers should be informed and consulted by their employer on training issues within the enterprise and that employers and employees should be associated with the policies and programmes for teaching and vocational training.

In addition to adopting the common opinion the Group asked the Education and Training Working Group to further examine two distinct areas - the transition from school to work and the involvement of the social partners in Community training programmes.

The Steering Group also discussed the means by which existing common positions agreed by the social partners at Community level can best be applied at both Member States level and sectoral level. Finally the Steering Group agreed that further discussions were necessary before a common opinion on new technology, the organisation of work and the adaptability of the labour market could be agreed.

TRADE UNION BULLETIN - Into A New Decade.

The European Trade Union Information Bulletin enters its sixth year of publication, and a new decade, with a new layout and a new look. The objectives of the Bulletin remain the same however: to provide an overview of events taking place within the European Community during the previous three months which will be of interest to trade unionists. During the coming months we will be concentrating on the key issues which will shape the future of the Community and its citizens - the development of the internal market and its social dimension, the progress of the social dialogue at Community level and the preparations for Economic and Monetary Union.

We try to be responsive to the views of European trade unionists and if you have any suggestions as to how the Bulletin could be further improved, we would welcome them. Please address any suggestions to: The Editor, Trade Union Information Bulletin, Social and Trade Union Information Division, Commission of the European Communities (DGX), 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.

COMMISSION SURVEY OF THE COMMUNITY LABOUR MARKET.

The first results have just been announced by the European Commission of its special 1989 survey of the Community labour market. The last labour market survey conducted by the Commission took place in 1985 and a number of trends can be identified by comparing the results of this earlier survey with the 1989 survey results. A number of areas of interest to trade unionists are covered by the survey.

Structure of the workforce:

Within the Community as a whole, 94% of the total industrial workforce are employed full-time, the remaining 6% being part-time workers. 63% of Community workers are classified as skilled workers by the survey. However considerable variations between Member States exist in both the proportion of full-time workers and the proportion of skilled workers as the following table indicates.

STRUCTURE OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORKFORCE (%):

	B	D	GR	E	F	IRL	I	NL	P	UK
Full-Time Workers	97	94	95	72	97	96	99	91	97	91
Part-Time Workers	3	6	5	18	3	4	1	9	3	9
Skilled Workers	62	62	67	56	80	59	79	76	50	38
Unskilled Workers	38	38	33	44	20	41	21	24	50	62

WORKING AND OPERATING HOURS:

The survey provides valuable information on the trends in working hours within the Community and changes in plant operating hours. The average for contractually agreed weekly working hours for full-time employees is 39, whereas the average operating hours is 66. The difference between these two figures represents the use of flexible working hours or shift systems. Shifts are worked in 70% of all industrial firms within the Community. Of those working shifts, 31% are involved in a single shift system, 29% in a two shift system, 23% in a three shift system and a further 17% work systems of four or more shifts.

Whilst the survey indicates that within the Community as a whole plant operating times have been stable or falling in the majority of cases, there is some evidence that there will be significant increases within the next 12 to 24 months. Again considerable variations exist between Member States.

MEMBER STATE	<u>VARIATION IN OPERATING HOURS IN LAST 5 YEARS (%)</u>			<u>EXPECTED VARIATION IN NEXT 12 TO 24 MONTHS (%)</u>		
	<u>Decrease</u>	<u>No Change</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>	<u>No Change</u>	<u>Increase</u>
B	45	32	21	3	80	16
D	43	42	15	27	53	18
GR	14	61	23	1	83	13
E	48	29	22	36	44	17
F	23	30	43	10	52	34
IRL	20	62	15	35	50	14
I	13	71	16	7	50	43
NL	17	52	30	4	71	26
P	3	92	5	11	82	7
UK	24	28	43	20	47	33
EUR12	29	43	26	18	53	27

The survey provides considerable information which will be of value to European trade unions in their attempts to analyse trends in industrial employment.

Economic and Social Committee

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE CALLS FOR COMMISSION PROPOSALS ON SOCIAL DIMENSION

The Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities has called upon the Commission to submit proposals during 1990 for Community instruments in three specific areas relating to the social dimension of the Internal Market. The proposals, outlined by the Chairman of the Workers' Group at the 273rd Plenary Session of the Committee which took place at the beginning of February, were presented as a response to an invitation from the Commission for the Committee to express its views on the Social Charter action programme.

The three specific areas identified by the Economic and Social Committee are:-

1. A Community instrument on the dismissal and subcontracting of cross-frontier workers and the unfair exploitation of their non-typical terms of employment.
2. A Community instrument providing the right to information and consultation in the event of the restructuring, amalgamation or merger of firms.
3. A Community instrument to enforce existing social legislation and collective bargaining agreements when awarding public contracts.

The three urgent measures called for by the Committee already featured in the Committee Opinion on basic Community social rights which was adopted on the 22 February last year. Their enumeration at the 273rd Plenary Session coincided with a visit to the Committee by Commission President Jacques Delors.

In thanking the Committee for their views, Jacques Delors stressed the important role of the Economic and Social Committee in the development of the social dimension to the Internal Market. In agreeing with the views of the Committee, Commission President Delors stressed that there could be no true competition unless certain labour legislation is observed in all Member States.

Jacques Delors was present at the Committee Plenary Session in order to present the Commission's 1990 work programme. In introducing the programme he emphasised that making a success of the Single Act was still the main priority of the Commission. In a wide-ranging speech he touched on a number of themes - the difficulties still remaining in terms of the Internal Market programme, relations between the Community and EFTA - and suggested a number of important issues in respect of the Community's future development. In conclusion Jacques Delors said that the forthcoming intergovernmental conference would have to examine the powers of the Community and its political institutions.

273rd Plenary Session : Opinions on Qualifications and Product Safety

The 273rd Plenary Session of the Economic and Social Committee adopted a number of important Opinions, including Opinions on professional education and training and product safety.

RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS.

The Committee stressed the importance of the proposed Directive on a second general system for the recognition of professional education and training. The Committee called for the proposals to be presented in clearer terms and emphasised a number of key requirements for the Directive.

GENERAL PRODUCT SAFETY.

An Opinion supporting the proposed Directive on general product safety was adopted by 93 votes to 59. However the Opinion calls for a number of changes in the proposed Directive and stresses that it should only apply where there are no adequate specific Community safety rules.

The Economic and Social Committee is composed of representatives of employers, workers and other groups (the self-employed, farmers, the professions and consumer interests) from the Community Member States.

1992 - THE INTERNAL MARKET

Progress Towards the Single Market

142 of the 279 legislative proposals contained within the 1985 Commission White Paper, "Completing the Internal Market", had undergone final adoption by the Council of Ministers by the end of 1989. This information emerged in a Commission report on progress achieved by the single market programme.

The Commission has formulated draft proposals on all but 18 of the 279 White Paper proposals. Besides the 142 which have passed through all their stages within the Community decision-making process, 119 proposals are still under discussion at one stage or another. The Commission is thus ahead of schedule in its own programme of proposals.

As the Commission has indicated on previous occasions, the picture is not quite as satisfactory in terms of the transposition of Community decisions into national laws. Only 14 decisions have so far been transposed into domestic laws by all twelve Member States. 54 decisions have been transposed in eight out of the twelve Member States. Much of the delay in transposition is due to the time period between the adoption of a Community act and the deadline for its application by Member States. It is therefore likely that the number of decisions which will be in force throughout the Community will increase significantly during the final years of the single market programme.

The Commission expressed its concern at the delays in transposition by Member States, and some Member States in particular, last year and this was later the subject of a statement by the Internal Market Council. The Commission have recently noted some improvements in the rate of transposition, nevertheless at this level the programme is still behind schedule.

1992 UPDATE:

A brief review of the current status of some of the decisions which form part of the Community internal market programme. The full texts of the various measures can be found in the Official Journal of the European Communities.

HAZARDOUS WASTE:

Amended Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 75/442/EEC on Hazardous Waste.

Proposal published in the Official Journal, C326, 30 December 1989.

VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:

Commission Communication on the comparability of vocational training qualifications between the Member States of the EC established in implementing Decision 85/368/EEC - Sector: Electrical and Electronics.

Communication published in the Official Journal, C321, 22 December 1989.

CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING:

Proposal for a Council Decision proposing the adoption of a Community action programme for the development of continuing vocational training.

Proposal published in the Official Journal, C12, 18 January 1990.

HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Directives on workplace health and safety, work equipment and personal protective equipment (1st, 2nd and 3rd Individual Directives under 1989 Framework Health and Safety Directive)

Directives finally adopted and published in the Official Journal, L393, 30 December 1989.

TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS:

Council Directive of 21 December 1989 on vocational training for certain drivers of vehicles carrying dangerous goods by road.

Directive finally adopted and published in the Official Journal, L398, 30 December 1989.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

13th Company Law Directive : Take-over and Exchange Bids.

The European Parliament have suggested a number of amendments to the draft 13th Company Law Directive on public take-over or exchange bids. The amendments came during Parliament's discussion of the report of MEP Nicole Fontaine on the European Commission proposals. From a trade union point of view the most important amendment relates to the requirement to inform workers of the likely implications of a bid.

The amendment, proposed by Lode Van Outrive, requires the company making the take-over bid to communicate to workers' representatives an assessment of the likely consequences for the personnel of the two firms. The bidding firm is also required to inform the workers of its commitments on social and employment matters. The amendment also states that once the administrative body of the target company has received an offer, it will be obliged to submit a copy within 24 hours to its workers' representatives.

These amendments occurred during the first stage of the conciliation procedure between the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. It therefore means that the amended proposal must now go back to the Council for further consideration.

Parliamentary Committee Defines Priorities for Social Charter.

The Social Affairs and Employment Committee of the European Parliament have set out a list of priority actions for the legislative implementation of the Social Charter. The Committee calls for the Commission to present proposals before the 30 June 1990 in a number of priority areas. These include:-

- * The strengthening and development of employment programmes.
- * A Directive on minimum income levels.
- * The improvement of living and working conditions and the reduction in working hours.

- * Information, consultation and the participation of workers in enterprises.
- * The freedom to establish trade unions and the right to collective bargaining.
- * Further measures to ensure the protection of health and safety in the workplace.

The Committee called for Decisions to be taken by qualified majority within the Council. They also called for greater progress to be made with the proposals currently being considered which relate to the European Company Statute.

Parliament Adopts Resolution on Economic and Social Cohesion.

The November Plenary Session of the European Parliament adopted a series of resolutions on economic and social cohesion within the Community. The first resolution urged the Commission to take into account the specific situation of women in the labour market when it draws up its planned action programme on fundamental social rights. In particular the resolution calls for concrete proposals defining the concept of work of equal value, proposals for the upward harmonisation of provisions for pregnancy and maternity protection and the extension of measures to promote new job opportunities for women.

A second resolution calls for the introduction of a dynamic Community social policy. Such a policy would entail, according to the resolution, an enhancement of resources in the fight against unemployment, the coordinated use of the structural funds in order to reduce regional imbalances, an improvement of social protection systems and a consistent policy of public and private investment to bolster the return to economic growth. This same resolution requests that the future intergovernmental conference should include on its agenda a reform of the Treaty enabling rapid, practical progress to be made towards a social Europe by extending voting by qualified majority in the Council to all matters relating to social policy.

NEWSBRIEF

Joint Trade Union Declaration on the Social Charter Action Programme

A joint declaration was made on 18 January by various representatives of workers' interests on the proposed Commission action programme on the Social Charter. The signatories of the declaration included the European Trade Union Confederation, trade union members of the Economic and Social Committee and members of the Union intergroup of the European Parliament.

The declaration stresses the risks which could arise from the blocking of proposals to give concrete substance to the rights contained within the Social Charter. Two specific points are made within the declaration:-

1. The Commission is requested to ensure that the legal basis for proposals under the action programme is one which requires a qualified majority vote and therefore is not subject to blocking by the need for unanimity on the Council of Ministers.
2. There should be a precise timetable drawn up for all social measures linked to the completion of the internal market so that they can be adopted before the 1 January 1993.

Launch of the MERCATOR Programme

The European Commission has announced the creation of a new network - to be known as the MERCATOR network - aimed at allowing greater exchange of information on minority languages and cultures. The European Parliament recently requested that the Commission should pursue activities with the objective of safeguarding and promoting minority languages and cultures and it is within the context of this request that the new MERCATOR network has been proposed. Approximately 50 million Community citizens use with some regularity a

language other than one of the official Community languages.

The first stage of the programme has seen the designation of four centres as pilot centres for the development of the new network. These four centres - the Fryske Akademy in the Netherlands, the SIEMEM in Barcelona, the University College of Wales in Aberystwyth and the French Committee of the European Bureau for Minority Languages - will begin work on a computerised databank which will contain biographical data, an inventory of institutes and experts and a variety of facts and statistics relating to minority languages and cultures.

A detailed brochure describing the network and its aims will be distributed shortly.

Unemployment Milestone

A considerable milestone has been passed in terms of the Community's fight against unemployment. Henning Christophersen, Commission Vice-President with special responsibility for economic and financial affairs, recently announced that the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Community fell in November 1989 to 8.9%, the first time that it had been below 9% since 1982.

Vice-President Christophersen stated that the fall in unemployment from 9.7% to 8.9% during the first eleven months of 1989 illustrated the efficacy of Community policies for investment and growth within the framework of the completion of the internal market. Whilst Henning Christophersen underlined that full-employment was still a long way off, he expressed his conviction that the Community Structural Funds will have a significant impact on the reduction of long-term unemployment and youth unemployment over the coming years. He noted that the coming discussions on economic and monetary union will take place in a context of an improving employment situation.

NEWSBRIEF

Council Calls For The Establishment of Trans-European Networks

The Internal Market Council meeting just before Christmas adopted a Resolution which invites the European Commission to produce a work programme of proposals aimed at the development of trans-European infrastructure networks. The Council consider that the development of networks, in such fields as air traffic control, energy distribution, transport infrastructure and telecommunications, is an essential part of the single market process. Accordingly the Council have invited the Commission to submit to it, before the end of 1990, a work programme and proposals for appropriate measures. The Council also noted that the Commission intends to organise its future work programme around a number of specific points, these being:-

- * verification as to whether Community intervention is justified or whether projects should be carried out by other public or private bodies.
- * the establishment of a timetable for completion.
- * the identification of any obstacles and shortcomings.
- * the evaluation of financial problems.
- * the provision, if needed, of a consultation procedure to precede the establishment of projects.

Two aspects of trans-European networks which are likely to feature in the Commission proposals are the need for efficient surface communication links and the establishment of broad-band telecommunications networks linking the main Community conurbations.

Co-operative Enterprise

The European Committee of Production Cooperatives (CECOP) set out its three year programme for the development of cooperative enterprises within the framework of the single European market at its General Assembly which was held in December. The programme lists a number of

priorities which CECOP will raise with the various Community institutions. The programme priorities include:-

- * The creation of an optional European cooperative statute.
- * The creation of a European support framework for the transformation of companies in crisis into cooperatives.
- * Changes in the funding structures of cooperative enterprises.
- * Increased participation of cooperative enterprises in the programmes, policies and actions of the Community.

A Bridge for Berlin

The European Regional Development Fund is to contribute 5 million ECU to help reconstruct the Kronprinzen Bridge in Berlin. The decision was announced by European Commissioner Bruce Millan during his recent meeting with the Mayor of West Berlin, Mr Momper. The EC contribution towards the rebuilding of the bridge - which constitutes half the cost of the total project - will form part of a package of aid to the City under Objective 2 of the Structural Funds of the European Community.

Besides the rebuilding of the Kronprinzen Bridge, which will be essential to the City following the reopening of traffic between East and West, the Community will contribute towards the rehabilitation of derelict industrial sites, the improvement of the environment, the encouragement of industrial development and the development of the City as an exhibition and conference centre. All told, the Structural Funds are set to provide assistance to Berlin of 60 million ECU for the 1989-90 period.

Bruce Millan also recently visited South Wales where he visited several projects which have benefitted from Structural Fund aid. During the period 1989-1991 Wales is set to receive almost 100 million ECU from the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund. It is hoped that Structural Fund assistance will help the region overcome some of the problems associated with structural decline.

CEDEFOP

East-West Conference on "Quality and Training"

Over 300 training experts from both East and West Europe met in Budapest, Hungary on the 18th and 19th January 1990 to discuss cooperation in the field of vocational training. They met in the context of a major conference on "Quality and Training" organised jointly by CEDEFOP, the Institute of Vocational Training in Paris and a number of Hungarian institutions attached to the Ministries of Education and Labour. The conference provided a unique opportunity for representatives from East, West and Central Europe to discuss future cooperation in the important field of vocational training following the major political developments in Eastern and Central Europe.

The Director of CEDEFOP, Ernst Piehl, stressed that preparations for the conference has begun before many of the political changes which have brought about a renewed interest in training issues had taken place. The main aim of the conference had been to provide a forum where training experts from throughout Europe could meet and make contact.

The conference was successful at a number of levels. In particular it provided Western European training experts with an idea of the needs and constraints that exist in Eastern Europe and thus the means by which projects can be developed in cooperation with the people in Eastern Europe rather than simply "for" them. Ernst Piehl stressed that there were many steps to be taken on the road to cooperation between East and West Europe in the field of training. Although in the first period cooperation would undoubtedly mean assistance by Western countries to their East European neighbours, the longer term perspective should be that of mutual cooperation.

CEDEFOP is pledged to continuing to contribute to East-West cooperation in the field of training. It intends to produce and publish reports on the vocational training systems in Eastern Europe. It will also make a start on the inclusion of East European countries within its network of Documentation and Information Centres. It will also work closely with other institutions on the establishment of the proposed European Foundation for Training.

Comparability of Vocational Qualifications

In its 1990 Action Programme, the European Commission has highlighted the need to accelerate work on the comparability of vocational qualifications. It is hoped that work will be completed on the comparability of qualifications for blue and white collar workers by the end of 1992. CEDEFOP and the European Commission have already prepared a number of comparative tables listing diplomas, certificates and other qualifications covering such sectors as hotels and restaurants, motor vehicle repairs, the construction industry and the electrical and electronics sector.

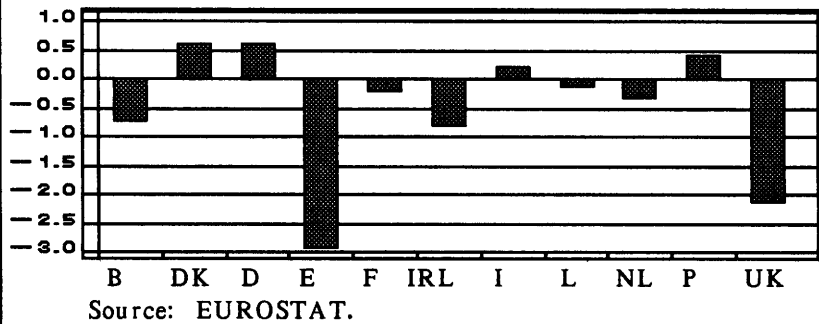
CEDEFOP have also been involved in the preparation of a sample information sheet to be given to workers interested in working in another Member State of the Community. The aim of the information sheet is to facilitate the acceptance of qualifications by employers in the host country.

A recent meeting of national liaison officers agreed that Member States would nominate national institutions with responsibility for passing on information on the comparability of qualifications by the 15 February 1990. They also agreed to compile a list of priority sectors for future work on the comparability of vocational qualifications.

EURODATA - STATISTICS

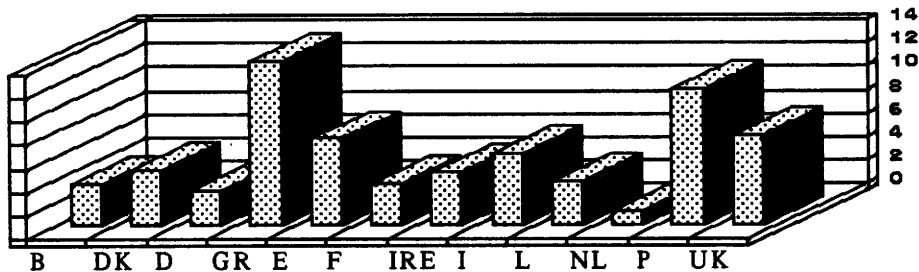
UNEMPLOYMENT:

Percentage Change in Unemployment Rate,
September 1988 - September 1989.

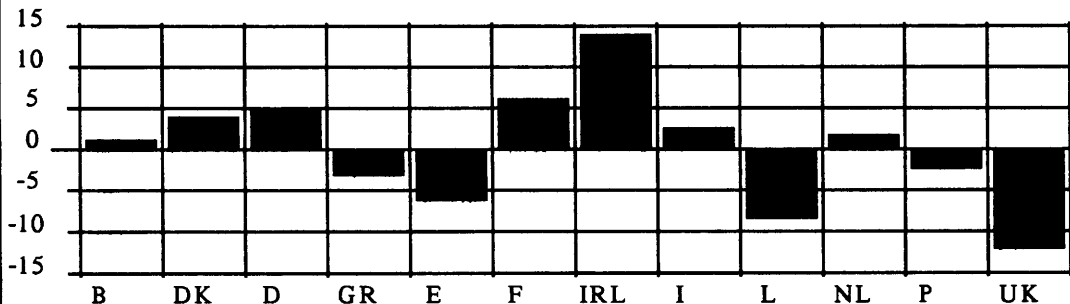


CONSUMER PRICES:

Percentage increase in consumer prices, November 1988 - 1989.



CONSUMER CONFIDENCE:



Trends in Consumer Confidence : (+) Positive, (-) Negative. November 1989.
Source: EUROSTAT

EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

INFORMATION

Commission of the European Communities 200 Rue de la Loi - 1049 Bruxelles

Informationskontorer □ Presse- und Informationsbüros □ Γραφεία Τύπου και Πληροφοριών
Information offices □ Bureaux de presse et d'information □ Uffici stampa e informazione
Voorlichtingsbureaus

BELGIQUE — BELGIË

Bruxelles/Brussel

Rue Archimède/Archimedesstraat, 73
1040 Bruxelles/Brussel
Tél.: 235 11 11
Télex 26657 COMINF B

DANMARK

København

Højbrohus
Østergade 61
Postbox 144
1004 København K
Tél.: 14 41 40
Télex 16402 COMEUR DK

BR DEUTSCHLAND

Zitelmannstraße 22
5300 Bonn
Tel.: 23 80 41
Kurfürstendamm 102
1000 Berlin 31
Tel.: 8 92 40 28
Erhardtstraße 27
8000 München
Tel.: 23 99 29 00
Telex 5218135

ΕΛΛΑΣ

Οδός Βασιλίσσης Σοφίας
Και Ηρώδου Αττικού
Αθήνα 134
τηλ.: 724 3982/724 3983/724 3984

FRANCE

61, rue des Belles Feuilles
74782 Paris Cedex 16
Tél.: 45.0158.85
C.M.C.I./Bureau 320
2, rue Henri Barbusse
F-13241 Marseille Cedex 01
Tél. 91 91 46 00
Télex 402538 EUR MA

IRELAND

39 Molesworth Street
Dublin 2
Tel.: 71 22 44

ITALIA

Via Poli, 29
00187 Roma
Tel.: 678 97 22
Corso Magenta 59
20123 Milano
Tel.: 80 15 05/6/7/8
Telex 316002 EURMIL I

GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG

Bâtiment Jean Monnet
Rue Alcide de Gasperi
2920 Luxembourg
Tél.: 43011

NEDERLAND

Korte Vijverberg 5
2513 AB Den Haag
Tel.: 46.93.26

UNITED KINGDOM

Abby Building
8, Storey's Gate
Westminster
LONDON — SWIP 3AT
Tél.: 222 81 22
Windsor House
9/15 Bedford Street
Belfast BT 2 7EG
Tel.: 40708
4 Cathedral Road
Cardiff CF1 9SG
Tel.: 37 16 31
7 Alva Street
Edinburgh EH2 4PH
Tel.: 225 2058

ESPAÑA

Calle de Serrano 41
5A Planta-Madrid 1
Tel.: 435 17 00

PORTUGAL

Centro Europeu Jean Monnet
Rua do Salitre, 56-10°
1200 Lisboa - Tel. 54 11 44

TÜRKIYE

15, Kuleli Sokak
Gazi Osman Paça
Ankara
Tel.: 27 61 45/27 61 46

SCHWEIZ - SUISSE - SVIZZERA

Case postale 195
37-39, rue de Vermont
1211 Genève 20
Tél.: 34 97 50

AUSTRALIA

Capitol Centre
Franklin Street
P.O. Box 609
Manuka ACT 2603
Canberra ACT
Tél.: 95 50 50

UNITED STATES

2100 M Street, NW
Suite 707
Washington, DC 20037
Tel.: 862 95 00

3 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza
245 East 47th Street
New York, NY 10017
Tel.: 371 38 04

CANADA

Inn of the Provinces
Office Tower
Suite 1110
Sparks Street 350
Ottawa, Ont. K1R 7S8
Tel.: 238 64 64

AMERICA LATINA

Avda Américo Vespucio, 1835
Santiago de Chile 9
Chile
Adresse postale: Casilla 10093
Tel.: 228 24 84

Quinta Bienvenida
Valle Arriba
Calle Colibri
Carretera de Baruta
Caracas
Venezuela
Tel.: 92 50 56

NIPPON

Kowa 25 Building
8-7 Sanbancho
Chiyoda-Ku
Tokyo 102
Tel.: 239 04 41

ASIA

Thai Military Bank Building
34 Phya Thai Road
Bangkok
Thailand
Tel.: 282 14 52

TAJ MAHAL HOTEL
Suite No. 222/1
Mansingh Road
Chanakyapuri
New Delhi 110011
India
Tel. 38 66 62