

Commission of the European Communities DG V

Working document on employment policies

On the basis of an agreement of the directors general for employment, the Commission of the European Communities has created a Mutual Information System on Employment Policies (MISEP). inforMISEP (iM) is the quarterly outcome of this system. It presents the changing policies and actions, particularly those sponsored by national ministries and agencies, aimed at promoting and improving employment within the European Community. It is compiled on the basis of information provided by national correspondents (listed on the back page). No statistical information is provided, readers being referred to the various Eurostat publications. The present issue covers the following areas:

Overall developments

Spain: Government policy **Ireland:** Policy statement **Netherlands:** 1990s policies.

Training

Italy: Innovations in regional training provision **Netherlands:** Apprenticeship training; Branch-level scheme; Minimum wages and training; **United Kingdom:** Business Growth Training.

Job creation

Belgium: Enterprise centres **Netherlands:** Wage-cost subsidy scheme.

Long-term unemployed

Belgium: LTU Flemish pilot **Germany:** LTU action programme **Netherlands:** LTU legislation streamlined; Young LTUs and individualised contacts **United Kingdom:** Jobclubs reviewed; 50-PLUS Jobstart.

Other special categories of workers

Greece: Employment of minors' legislation **Italy:** Workers from non-EC countries **Netherlands:** Temporary part-time jobs scheme for the young; Disabled workers campaign.

Working time

Belgium: Early retirement agreement.

Placement

France: ANPE and "RMI" **Ireland:** Community mobility **Portugal:** Private placement agencies.

Miscellaneous

Belgium: Family and labour market.

DEVELOPMENTS AT A GLANCE

Belgium	Since 1983, enterprise centres (presented on page 7) have helped to create new jobs. The Flemish Executive has introduced a pilot scheme of advice and job offers for LTUs (p. 9). Following the central agreement of November 1988, a supplementary agreement on early retirement was concluded in the CNT which lowers, temporarily, the age from which certain older workers can draw on the system of a supplementary allowance in case of dismissal (p. 14). The first (fact collection) stage of a governmental study of the family and the labour market has been concluded (p. 17).
Germany	The government has earmarked DM 1.5bn for an action programme to subsidise employers providing open-ended employment contracts for the long-term unemployed and to provide support facilities (p. 9).
Greece	A law renews and modernises legislation on the employment of minors (p. 12).
Spain	The government's employment policy proposals to the social partners have five thrusts: the employment of young people; permanent employment; the "social economy"; vocational training; and fighting fraud as regards hiring and subsidies (p.3).
France	ANPE is contributing to the implementation of the minimum integration income (RMI) legislation through special officers entrusted with occupational appraisal, vocational guidance and job search activities (p. 15).
Ireland	The new coalition government has identified eight areas of measures for creating and maintaining an environment favourable to employment (p. 4). A review has been completed of improving the use of EC Regulation 1612/68 on freedom of movement of workers to assist Irish workers wanting to explore job opportunities abroad (p. 16).
Italy	A ministerial decree has defined criteria for financing innovative programmes of the regional training systems (p. 5). Another ministerial decree has set up a council for the problems of workers from non-European Community countries (p. 13).
Netherlands	The government has asked the Socio-Economic Council to advise it on the main labour market issues of the 1990s and how they can be tackled (p. 4). The main 1989-90 thrusts of the BVJ (grant-aided apprenticeship training scheme) include raising the age limit from 25 to 27 (p. 5). A new grant-aided training scheme for the unemployed has been established at the branch level (p. 5). A temporary scheme enables employees undergoing certain training at the workplace to be paid below the statutory minimum wage (p. 6). Employers can receive an allowance towards the wage costs of employees who work for the minimum statutory wage, with the aim of creating 19,000 new jobs over time (p. 9). The Vermeend/Moor Act for work experience and grant schemes for LTUs has been streamlined (p.10). Providing poorly educated young LTUs with individualised contacts appears to be an effective tool to their finding work (p. 11). The temporary scheme giving financial support to municipalities which provide unemployed youths with a temporary part-time job has been further extended (p. 13). A new campaign has been launched to encourage the hiring of disabled workers (p. 14).
Portugal	Private profit and non-profit placement agencies can now be established (p. 16).
United Kingdom	The "Business Growth Training" (grant) scheme provides companies with five training options depending on their specific circumstances (p. 6). A review is made of the development and current situation of jobclubs on p. 11 "50-PLUS Jobstart" is a pilot programme to encourage LTUs aged over 50 to take part-time jobs (p. 12).

Overall developments

SPAIN

Governmental proposals on employment

A round table on employment was organised by the government in April. Its purpose was to concert with the social partners on employment and training policy. The government submitted an overall proposal structured around five points:

- 1) promoting the employment of young people: their vocational training; their integration into working life; and their vocational integration;
- 2) promoting permanent employment;
- 3) promoting the "social economy" and
- 4) vocational training;
- 5) fighting fraud as regards hiring and subsidies.

Promoting youth employment

To this end, the government is proposing to undertake actions aimed at:

- * making it easier, through INEM, for young people hired by enterprises under a training contract to be trained outside the enterprise, with appropriate provisions being made in a collective agreement;
- * offering every young person who is still unemployed at the end of the training contract a course of a minimum of 200 hours;
- * extending the programme of non-work training periods in companies;
- * offering unemployed persons seeking their first job a practical vocational training course enabling them to qualify for being taken on under a practical traineeship contract;
- * extending to 50,000 persons per annum the number of participants in the workshop-schools ("escuelas-taller") and youth training centres ("casas de oficio");
- * enabling young people between the ages of 25 and 30 who are seeking their first job to conclude a training contract;
- * making it compulsory to have young people replace workers aged 64 who can claim a full retirement pension or those workers who meet the necessary conditions for being able to take partial retirement with a relief contract ("contrato de relevo");
- * encouraging the hiring under an indefinite term contract of young persons under the age of 25 or those between the age of 25 and 30 who have never been employed before;
- * encouraging the conversion of practical traineeship contracts or training contracts into indefinite contracts; and
- * drawing up a plan for promoting cooperatives and the self-employment of young persons under the age of 30 with a development body under public law managing a guarantee fund.

Promoting permanent employment

In addition to the relevant youth employment activities,

the government is proposing to undertake the following actions:

- * to grant tax relief to employers who increase their workforce by means of indefinite contracts;
- * to encourage the conversion of previously concluded temporary contracts into indefinite contracts at the moment of establishing commitments for the coming three years by collective agreement;
- * to encourage enterprises to hire, full-time and for an indefinite period, women over 30 years of age who are seeking to return to working life after a long break;
- * to increase within the employment plans of the Autonomous Communities the mechanisms aimed at strengthening the way in which the overall employment situation and/or the social protection of the most disadvantaged unemployed (especially the over-45s) are dealt with.

Promoting the "social economy"

Other than the above mentioned guarantee fund, the following activities are to be undertaken:

- * the creation of a Higher Council for Cooperatives and the "Social Economy";
- * the establishment of a network of local employment agents;
- * the creation of the equivalent of all the measures to promote permanent employment in order to avoid discrimination between wage-earners' indefinite employment and the employment of members of cooperatives and of "SALES" (workers' companies).

Vocational training

To develop vocational training, the government is proposing to focus action in the future on the following points:

- * to reach a tri-partite agreement for making recurrent training generally accessible in companies above a threshold size;
- * to undertake joint tri-partite actions at the sectoral level aimed at opening up recurrent training for the workers of small and medium-sized firms;
- * to establish new forms of collaboration between the central, autonomous and local government and the social partners in order to bring into general use the "Observatory of occupations", the national plan for forecasting skills' needs and the development and improvement of vocational training;
- * to set up, within the General Council for Vocational Training, permanent mechanisms for collaboration between the Administration and the social partners on the themes of the European Social Fund.

Fight against fraud

The following measures are being proposed to fight fraud:

- * to be granted subsidies, enterprises will have to provide INEM with an annual statement of the size and composition of their workforce compared with the previous year;

- * INEM will send directly to the worker concerned a copy of the registered and approved contract;
- * all the models of employment contracts will be simplified and standardised, with recourse to written contracts (though not being compulsory) being generalised and the registration at INEM of all contracts will be recommended;
- * the full computerisation of the INEM offices (which will be completed within two years at most) and their link-up with the social security registers will enable checks to be made that employers and workers meet the legal requirements;
- * the (tri-partite) INEM provincial commissions will periodically receive a detailed report on the developments as regards employment contracts in their province;
- * the conclusion of tri-partite agreements will be encouraged, aimed at undertaking specific activities at the sectoral or regional level or within the framework of a set of employment measures through the collaboration of the labour administration and the social partners;
- * an information programme on the legal rights of workers to information, representation and consultation will be implemented.

All these measures proposed by the government to the social partners within the context of the social dialogue on employment are in the process of being fleshed out and will be adopted shortly without prejudicing what might come out of this social dialogue as regards new policy thrusts for integration and vocational training, especially as regards the recurrent training of workers within their companies.

IRELAND

New Programme for Government 1989-93

Following the general election in June, a new coalition Government, comprising the Fianna Fail and Progressive Democrats parties, and led by the outgoing prime minister, was elected in July. As part of the process of Government formation, a new four-year programme for economic and social progress has been jointly agreed between the coalition partners.

The new Programme for Government will be reviewed after two years, and annually thereafter.

The document contains a statement of agreed objectives covering all the principal areas of Government policy, such as employment, tax reform, health, education, the environment, social welfare, etc.

This programme will form the basis of Government policy over the next four years, together with the Programme for National Recovery (cfr. iM 21) and the National Development Plan (cfr. iM 26).

The new Government will fully honour all the commitments entered into with the social partners by its predecessor in the Programme for National Recovery. Over the coming months, the new Government will begin discussions with the social partners to seek a new agreement to succeed the current Programme for National Recovery

and to build social consensus into a permanent way of managing public affairs in Ireland.

Employment creation

In the area of employment creation, the new Government has identified the following measures as crucial to creating and maintaining an environment genuinely favourable to employment:

- * achieve pro-jobs tax reform;
- * reduce disadvantages represented by access costs, energy costs and internal transport costs;
- * reduce anti-competitive and restrictive practices at all levels in the economy;
- * exploit the full potential of the Single Market within the EC;
- * reduce disincentives and bureaucratic burdens for small business;
- * use the additional Structural Funds from the Community to create additional jobs in internationally traded goods and services sectors;
- * increase gross job creation to at least 35,000 jobs per year, as provided for under the National Development Plan;
- * pursue macro-economic policies to keep interest rates and inflation to the minimum.

In addition, the new Government has made clear its commitment to the maintenance of a viable and profitable commercial semi-State sector. Any changes in the ownership structure of particular State companies will only take place if it is in the public interest and in the best interest of the company and its employees, and following consultation with the social partners.

NETHERLANDS

Labour market policy for the 1990s

The government has asked the Socio-Economic Council (SER) to let it know what, in its opinion, are likely to be the main issues on the labour market in the 1990s and how they can be tackled.

In his request to the SER, the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment pointed out some of the problems which are emerging. Thus, the number of jobseekers is increasing; so, to reduce unemployment, there needs to be continuing strong growth in employment. Furthermore, there is an emerging shortage of personnel on the one hand, while, on the other, in some groups the decline in unemployment is insufficient. Some groups are getting into more and more difficult positions on the labour market. Technological and organisational changes mean that the positions of those with little or no basic education are becoming increasingly vulnerable. According to the Minister, it must be recognised that there is a group which cannot be helped to find work with the currently existing training and work experience instruments.

The Minister also outlined a number of policy thrusts. Thus, the possibilities for moderating and differentiating wage costs must be examined. Attention must also be given to a further intensification of training and the provision of good information about expected developments

on the labour market. There could also be a further redistribution of work through forms of reduction in working time in combination with training and/or the flexibilisation of working hours and company operating time. Participation of, in particular, women on the labour market could be increased through more part-time jobs. More social mobility and a strengthening of the economic structure are also important.

The Minister asked the SER to give, among other things, its vision on developments on the labour market in the light of European integration and on the expected deve-

lopments in the supply of labour. He would also like to know which measures the SER considers to be necessary for better matching supply and demand on the labour market and how these measures can be implemented. He also wants advice on further stepping up training efforts for those who are working as well as those looking for a job. The SER is being requested to indicate how training for jobseekers can be fostered through the introduction of elements of the "Swedish model". And finally, the Minister is asking for suggestions for re-integrating into working life groups who are in a difficult position on the labour market, such as ethnic minorities.

Training

ITALY

Innovations in regional training systems

Law n°492 of 12.11.1988 provided for the financing of innovation plans of the regional training systems. A ministerial decree of 9.5.1989 defines the objectives of the innovation process of the regional training systems, the appropriate indicators for measuring the progress of the process and the various categories eligible for grants-in-aid.

The innovation programmes pursue the following objectives:

- a) enhance the quality of the regional programme planning;
- b) develop links with the schooling system;
- c) bring about closer relationships with firms, taking account of the development of legislation on training-work contracts;
- d) achieve higher levels of transparency and efficiency in managing the activities;
- e) improve the contribution of vocational training to active labour policy with particular reference to the disadvantaged groups;
- f) strengthen the contribution of vocational training to the spreading of new technologies within the production systems, particularly with respect to small and medium-sized companies;
- g) develop vocational guidance activities.

Regional training systems are understood to mean in particular the total training infrastructure - including the bodies having agreements with the region - human resources, organisation and teaching methods, planning the training programme, monitoring systems, and control and evaluation mechanisms.

NETHERLANDS

BVJ age limit raised

The age limit of the BVJ scheme (grant scheme for the apprenticeship training of young persons) has been raised

from 25 to 27 years. This was indicated by the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment in presenting the main thrusts of the BVJ in 1989-90.

The amount of the grant which is paid to the training funds is the same as last year: HFL 3,500 for every new apprentice, which can be increased by HFL 3,000 if the apprentice undergoes training within the framework of a joint training activity. When the training is for a girl in a traditionally male occupation, an additional grant of HFL 2,000 is provided.

Also as last year, an additional subsidy of HFL 3,000 is being granted for a maximum of 2,000 apprentices from ethnic minorities. In 1988 these grants were only made available for training in occupations in construction, metal, health care, retail trade and economic and administrative professions. In the following course year, the grant will be available for all sectors.

It is becoming more and more difficult to fill all the available apprenticeship places. This is due to the declining birth rate and the larger flow into full-time day education. Moreover, a large number of apprentices stop training before it is completed.

In the 1989-90 course year, HFL 233m is available for BVJ. An additional HFL 6m has been earmarked for grants for apprentices from ethnic minorities.

NETHERLANDS

New BBS industrial training grant scheme

The Minister of Social Affairs and Employment has, in close consultation with the social partners, set up "BBS", a new grant-aided training scheme at the industrial branch level. The purpose of the scheme is to stimulate the training of the unemployed at the industrial branch level. The scheme provides for a financial contribution to joint associations of employers' and trade-union organisations on the industrial branch level which have drawn up a training plan through which unemployed persons registered at the employment office can be trained. HFL 25m has been earmarked for the scheme in 1989, which

should enable at least 2,500 unemployed persons to be trained. This contribution should be increased in 1990 and later to HFL 60m.

BBS is the outcome of the cabinet decision to make available HFL 250m of the previous WIR (Investment Account Act) funds for additional training.

BBS supplements existing training schemes such as the KRS (the framework regulation for training) and BVJ (the grant scheme for the vocational training of young persons). The complementary character lies in the possibility of carrying out industry branch based and trans-regional training plans. The scheme is thus not targeted at individual employers.

For every individual training plan a maximum of HFL 2m will be made available, with a maximum of HFL 10,000 per training place. Priority will be given under the scheme to the difficult-to-place groups, such as minorities and LTUs. There is no age limit.

A training plan can qualify for financial support when it contributes to resolving staffing problems in the industry branch in question. The scheme is intended above all for small and medium-sized firms, since they are behind as regards training. Furthermore, the employment prospects in such firms seem to be favourable. The schooling plans have to indicate in which way they foster the transition from training to gainful employment. Later on an examination will be made to determine in how far the scheme has helped the unemployed to move into jobs in small and medium-sized firms.

Industry branches, branch organisations, employers' and trade-union bodies as well as collective bargaining parties are being informed of the scheme.

NETHERLANDS

Temporary scheme on minimum wages continued and extended

Employers may, under specified conditions, be allowed to pay employees undergoing schooling and training at the workplace at rates below the full statutory minimum wage. The temporary scheme which makes this possible is aimed at preventing that problems arise about wages in cases where the line to be drawn between working and learning is not clear.

The starting point of the scheme is that at least the minimum wage must be paid for the hours in which productive work is done. Exoneration from the requirement to pay the statutory minimum wage applies exclusively if the wage is laid down in a collective agreement or a similar regulation under public law. Moreover, the regulation only covers jobs in the context of a collectively agreed training or work experience plan.

A bill to this effect has been introduced by the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment to the Second Chamber. This bill should continue and extend the law on the temporary minimum wages scheme ("WTVM"), which was in force until 31 December 1988. The bill is the outcome of agreements during the Autumn Consultation. This regulation removes a possible obstacle to the introduction of youth work plans and work experience.

Until 31 December 1988 WTVM only concerned wages for youths in youth work programmes. The current bill extends the target group to those participating in training and work experience programmes for the benefit of, in particular, LTUs, women (including those returning to the labour market) and ethnic minorities. The new bill extends the temporary scheme for four years. In the third year, an evaluation will be made.

UNITED KINGDOM

Business Growth Training

Business Growth Training (BGT) was formally launched in April 1989. Its primary objective is to help individual companies improve their capability to invest effectively in the skills of their workforce. To this end, the new programme will join with other Employment Department initiatives to raise the profile of training as a business investment.

The new programme

BGT comprises five Options each of which can be tailored to the needs of particular business situations. All of these services have been tested operationally during the past year. The following paragraphs describe each of these Options and the business environment for which they have been designed:

Option 1: Kits for better business and training plans

Many smaller businesses do not have a structured business plan. Most smaller businesses do not have any sort of plan which includes necessary actions about training. Over the past year the Training Agency has worked closely with Durham Small Business Club, one of the most active such clubs in the country, to develop a self-help kit which will enable business people to structure their own business plan and to analyse the training needs which flow from it.

The kit is now available in three versions. These cover the new business just starting up, the established owner-managed business, and the medium sized team-managed business. Following a pilot phase involving 27 agents, it is planned to have about 300 agents on stream in the first year of BGT. Businesses will get the kits free of charge but agents will normally charge a small fee for workshop events or one-to-one counselling sessions.

Option 2: Better business skills for owner-managers

Research over many years has demonstrated that the business skills of the owner-manager are likely to be a key determinant in the performance of small businesses. BGT will therefore take over and develop several programmes which were previously available under Training for Enterprise. These are the Business Skills Seminars (BSS), the Growth Programme, Firmstart and the Graduate Enterprise Programme. All these programmes focus on improving the performance of the business by providing the owner-manager with better business skills and expert advice.

BSS will be widely available to any small business which is keen to enhance its performance. The other programmes are selective and provide intensive support to a range of small businesses which are judged to have real growth potential. The programmes will be available through agents in all regions. In recognition of the financial pressures on small businesses, all the programmes are subsidised and in certain cases (the Graduate Enterprise Programme and businesses less than a year old which apply for BSS) no charge at all is made.

Option 3: Using consultants to manage change

Once a small business has grown to the level where it requires a management team, it faces different challenges. There is a need to put more emphasis on analysing markets, planning further ahead, and developing resources, particularly workforce skills, to enable the business to manage growth or change effectively. Various pilot projects over recent years have demonstrated how performance can be significantly improved by providing external consultancy to assist the management team to develop its own capability to the full.

This programme is designed for companies with up to about 500 employees which are prepared to invest a significant amount of time and money in developing their management capability. BGT will be prepared to invest up to £15,000 (providing that represents no more than half the company's own investment) in selected companies.

A typical project would last 12 months and support would be available for developing and implementing a strategy for managing change, management development, developing a Human Resources Development strategy, and establishing a continuing training capability (for example through trainer training).

Since this is a relatively new area of Training Agency activity, detailed case histories will be collected from companies both to inform the consultancy process in other companies and as part of a promotion campaign to demonstrate to the business community the results that effective training can achieve.

Option 4: Tackling skill needs jointly with other companies

As the economy continues to expand, key skills' needs

can hold back the growth of individual businesses. Persuading employers of the benefits to them of working in partnership is an important Training Agency activity - which lies at the heart of the Training and Enterprise Councils concept (cfr. iM 25). Within BGT it is intended to build on previous experience of working through industrial training organisations and through a range of local partnership mechanisms. Employers will be invited to take the lead in new partnership projects designed to define skill needs in localities and/or sectors, to secure long-term employer-led strategies for improving skills supply, and to ensure that these strategies are implemented.

It is anticipated that these projects will serve to harness more effectively the various skill supply initiatives, which include many Training Agency programmes, already in operation. BGT investment in single projects, which may not last for more than 12 months, can be up to £60,000 (provided that this represents no more than half the amount being invested by the project partners). The BGT investment must be linked to outputs and not to the running costs of any organisation.

Option 5: Implementing your own innovative training solution

Training is now a business in its own right. New techniques and technologies are continuously emerging. In recent years great advances have been made in the development and use of open and flexible learning methods. It is vital to identify the most effective ways in which these innovative approaches to training can be harnessed and applied so as to improve the performance of more businesses.

BGT will, therefore, offer the opportunity for selected companies to participate in demonstration projects. For companies with fewer than 1,000 employees BGT will invest up to £60,000 (providing this represents no more than half the company's own investment) in agreed costs of the project itself and in the process of disseminating the results to other companies. Where projects are agreed in larger companies, the BGT investment will be limited to costs to the dissemination process. Projects must focus on the development and application of new training methods linked to business needs and with eventual business benefits clearly identified.

Job creation

BELGIUM

Enterprise centres

In the process of revitalising the economic fabric, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are often seen to be effective, innovative and job-creating. In order to foster the creation and growth of such enterprises a set of support measures has been developed. These include loans for the unemployed to set up their own firms, various forms of reducing social security contributions and fiscal incentives.

Yet the failure rate among young enterprises has remained relatively high. In order to maximise young enterprises' chances of success, enterprise centres have been established in Belgium since 1983. The purpose of these centres is to help young enterprises from the very beginning since most failures occur during the start-up phase because of bad planning, under-estimating start-up costs or ignorance of administrative problems.

This article starts by trying to clarify the notion of an "enterprise centre", and thereafter provides a rapid overview of the current situation as regards enterprise centres in Wallonia and Flanders.

Definition

The notion of an enterprise centre is often somewhat unclear and the concept depends on the criteria referred to. For present purposes, the criteria chosen are those of the infrastructure (the premises), the services provided, guidance, the economic development of the region in question and the basic philosophy expressed through a willingness to help those enterprises with growth potential.

Generally speaking, enterprise centres often differ on account of the background of their sponsors, their financial backing, the types of premises offered, the nature of the support provided (advice from a manager) and the range of other common services offered. These services tend to include administration, a telephone operator, telex or telefax, mail, photocopying facilities, meeting rooms, sanitary installations and audio-visual equipment.

Since enterprise centres were established to help company start-ups, firms which have overcome this initial stage are supposed to leave the centre and to set up on their own.

Despite the differences between centres, the definition given enables enterprise centres to be clearly recognised and to be distinguished from other types of support services. It takes account of the aspects of lodging start-up firms, of logistics and of accompanying support. It enables enterprise centres to be distinguished from "technology centres" which are also called "enterprise and innovation centres"; for technology centres attract primarily technology-based enterprises or those based on innovative products. Stress is more on technologically and managerially accompanying projects, often drawing on outside specialists. Ideally, enterprise and innovation centres operate in close contact with the industrial and university environment or are even a central part of a technopolis.

Enterprise centres in Wallonia

There are both private, non-private and mixed (public/private) enterprise centres. In "non-private" centres the sponsor can for instance be an "intercommunale", i.e. a mixed intercommunal body whose capital comes largely from the private sector, and whose management is carried out by administrative boards where there is, theoretically, a majority representation of the public sector. The manager obviously plays an important role: he/she must be experienced and able to give the young business heads concrete support. He/she must also be a good manager of the enterprise centre itself. He/she might, or might not, be surrounded by a specialist staff, some centres being very modest in this respect.

The main concern of the potential users of a centre is that its competence and the quality of its services are guaranteed to be high.

Enterprise centres are usually located within urban areas, but also near university centres or on the outskirts of industrial zones. They attract enterprises which are being started up or which have recently been created. But they house them only for a limited period of time: five years seems to be the maximum.

Capital is usually forthcoming from private or public share-holders: large corporations sometimes take a share

of the capital, and the enterprise centre might receive local, regional and in some cases European grants.

Premises are from 200 to 400 and more square meters in area. They are often renovated old buildings (eg. factories, schools or barracks). Costs of rent vary according to the facilities and the inclusion, or otherwise, of services (which can of course be paid separately).

The number of persons which firms can draw on varies considerably from one centre to another, ranging from a "full-time secretary and voluntary adviser" through some TCT workers (persons on the government's work creation scheme) carrying out secretariat functions, to more than 20 qualified persons. In some cases, some assistance can be sub-contracted to an outside consultant.

Finally, the know-how support varies considerably from one enterprise centre to another, whether or not beneficiaries contribute to costs; a number of centres also put on training, free of charge or fee-paying, which can be granted by the public or private sectors.

Enterprise centres in Flanders

Of the 20 enterprise centres planned, 17 have been set up. The first Flemish centre was that in Courtrai, dating from December 1983.

The concept is a little more limited than in the French-speaking part of the country: it includes space rental, common services and a manager. Training is not one of the "musts" of Flemish enterprise centres, the opinion being that it is already provided elsewhere.

The Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) are responsible for setting up enterprise centres in Flanders, all inspired by the Courtrai model.

As regards public help, the Flemish Executive makes available to each RDC BEF 20 million to take a financial interest in four enterprise centres. According to the decree of 29.02.84, the RDC's participation in a centre's capital cannot exceed one third. Furthermore, the centres are given maximum support under the aid programme for economic expansion, are granted 5 years' exemption from real estate tax ("précompte immobilier") and are allowed accelerated depreciation. The capital structure (between BEF 15m and 27m) is one third public, one third the world of finance, and one third industrial partners. The number of partners does not exceed 28.

Flemish enterprise centres are located in important regional centres. In the beginning buildings were purchased in industrial zones; subsequently they were built in industrial zones; the area available is for from 15 to 20 firms. The manager is almost always a former private sector manager. The staff is limited to one full-time or two part-time secretaries.

Experience shows that the occupancy level is less for production areas: with certain exceptions, centres hardly seem designed to this effect. At the beginning of 1987, some 80 to 90% of the offices were taken, except for some exceptional cases.

As regards employment, there were 282 jobs, above all in services, in 1987 in the 11 centres and some 90 firms. As regards the financial outcome, it is too early to draw conclusions and the results are in fact difficult to establish. The first centres seem to have registered a positive return on investment.

It is worthwhile noting that situations can differ from one place to another, each sub-region having its own specific character. This is equally true of Wallonia as Flanders.

NETHERLANDS

Wage-cost reduction for minimum wage earners

Employers can receive an allowance towards the wage costs of employees who work for the statutory minimum wage. To qualify for the allowance, the minimum wage earners must be at least 23 years of age, have been in service for an uninterrupted period of at least three months and work for at least one third of the normal working time. The reduction of wage costs amounts to HFL 3,200 per year or HFL 800 per quarter for minimum wage earners working a full working week; it can be set off against income tax and health insurance contributions that are due. For part-time workers the reduction is lower in proportion with the number of hours worked. Through

this scheme the wage costs of an employee on the minimum statutory wage should be reduced by some 10%.

This is the tenor of a bill by the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment and the Secretary of State for Finance, which has been introduced in the Second Chamber. The bill has been drafted after discussions during the Autumn Consultation between the social partners and the government.

The Minister hopes that by reducing the wage costs at the level of the minimum wage, the labour market position of poorly trained unemployed persons will be improved.

Expectations are that this scheme should lead, in a few years, to 19,000 new jobs and a reduction in unemployment by 15,000 persons.

In principle the scheme should remain in operation for four years. Its costs are estimated at HFL 365m per year and should be borne by the funds under the General Disablement Benefits Act (AAW) and the General Act on Special Medical Costs (AWBZ). To cover these costs, contributions to these social insurances must together be increased by some 0,15%.

Long-term unemployed

BELGIUM

The Flemish Executive's "Weer-Werk" Plan

Within the framework of its employment policy for the long-term unemployed, the Flemish Executive has brought in the "Weer-Werk" (back to work) plan. The aim of this plan is to reintegrate the long-term unemployed into normal working life.

The action consists of two thrusts: the first provides guidance and individual advice by career advisers who look for possible openings for the jobseeker. The person in question remains free to accept or refuse the job offer. The second thrust consists of the reintegration as such. At this level there is a variety of possibilities: employment on the open labour market; creation of grant-aided jobs in the public sector; or the offer of a training place.

The programme is targeted at persons who have been unemployed for at least one year.

There are three phases to the programme: a pilot phase; an extension phase; and a phase foreseen to cover the whole of Flanders in 1991.

The Flemish Executive has earmarked additional finance for creating new jobs and extending existing training provision.

The programme is accompanied by an information campaign in the media to make the target group aware of its existence.

GERMANY

Aid to the long-term unemployed

Employers who take on long-term unemployed persons can receive temporary wage cost subsidies. Through the action programme "Employment aids for LTUs", the "Round Table on Social Responsibility" is providing support for those without employment for more than one year.

The round table participants are representatives of trade unions, employers, business, the provinces and municipalities, churches, welfare groups and BA, the Federal Employment Services. They have welcomed the government's initiative in a joint declaration.

Wage cost subsidies for employers

The round table discussions should be followed by similar discussions on the regional and industry level with the aim of providing LTUs with the skills needed in the prevailing conditions for gainful employment and enabling them to return to working life.

According to the plan (which follows up on the government's April declaration - cfr. iM 26), employers who conclude an open-ended employment contract with an LTU will receive a wage cost subsidy for one year. If the new employee has been unemployed for between one and two years, the subsidy amounts to 60% of pay for the first six months and 40% for the following six months. If the

period of unemployment has been between two and three years, a 70% subsidy is paid for the first six months and 50% for the second. After three and more years of unemployment, the subsidy amounts to, respectively, 80% and 60% of pay.

Employment relationships which are started before the end of 1991 can qualify for the subsidy, provided there are sufficient resources. The Federal government has earmarked DM 1.5bn for this period which should bring some 60,000 LTUs back into working life.

This initiative is being backed up by accompanying measures and schemes for providing the most difficult to place unemployed (MDPs) with basic qualifications. For these MDPs the government has earmarked a further DM 250m over the coming three years.

MDP schemes

Experience and research has clearly demonstrated that the instruments of the Labour Promotion Act are often insufficient for really helping particular problem groups of the unemployed back to working life. So new instruments have to be developed and new ways found for helping in particular those who have been unemployed for more than two years back into working life.

These resources should not be used as individual help for the unemployed in the form of wage cost subsidies for instance, but rather be made available for project sponsors who offer jobs to the most difficult-to-place, provide them with occupational skills and take care of them socially. The following actions are foreseen:

- * lump sum subsidies for investments to set up schemes which fully fit the target groups;
- * subsidies for up to two years towards the operating expenses of implementing the schemes;
- * personnel costs' subsidies, also for up to two years, to guarantee the appointment of especially trained monitors.

The vocational reintegration of particularly disadvantaged LTUs depends to a considerable extent on their being helped in the beginning by trained staff and monitors. Such persons are always on hand to discuss both working life and private problems and, when necessary, to boost their morale so that they do not give up. Church and charitable institutions, employment initiatives and the BA which are all involved in this field strongly confirm these ideas.

Hence, the bulk of the DM 250m i.e. some DM 130m, is earmarked for such actions; DM 70m is for investments and the remainder for operating expenses. However, according to the requirements, these amounts can be varied within the total expenditure. The schemes in question can be adapted in line with what has already been tested. But they also offer the sponsors opportunities for trying out new approaches.

There are already a few examples of such initiatives, which to some extent are supported by the labour minister's programme "New approaches to labour market policy". This programme has been in existence since 1986 (cfr. iM 14) and has been allocated DM 3.5m for 1989. The following examples can be given:

"New approaches to labour market policy"

- * Setting up a workshop common to several small and

medium-sized companies to train the most difficult-to-place LTUs to be taken on by the firms. This can be achieved through the use of specialised personnel. In this way significant skills' shortages can be overcome.

- * Establishment of an association by community-conscious lawyers aimed at employing recently released prisoners in the association's own workshops (eg. as carpentry shops, car repair shops, etc) until such time as work can be found for them on the open labour market.
- * Establishment by persons working in psychiatric care, of a cafeteria providing midday meals to enable mentally handicapped unemployed persons to be given permanent jobs in the kitchen or as waiters.
- * Founding an initiative for being on hand and providing basic care for homeless persons. The aim is, once having stabilised their personality, to help such persons into a job in a firm or a training scheme.

NETHERLANDS

Amended Vermeend/Moor Act

The amended Vermeend/Moor Act has passed the First Chamber. Three points in the old act have been changed:

- * There is a new grant for employers providing LTUs with work experience
- * Three existing grant schemes for LTUs have been brought together
- * The lump sum contribution to the training and accompanying support costs has been increased and some aspects of the conditions for exemption from social security contributions have been improved and streamlined.

The amended act is a follow-up of the discussions which took place during the 1988 Autumn Consultation between government, trade unions and employers.

The details

For LTUs who are given work experience in work organisations, market sector enterprises receive a grant of HFL 15,000 and public institutions and institutions in the subsidised and state-aided sectors, HFL 22,000. These are lump sum payments and apply for one year for each work experience place. To qualify for work experience places persons have to be unemployed for more than three years. Moreover, during a counselling interview it must have been established that taking up work experience is desirable for the person concerned. Employers who provide a person with a work experience place also benefit from the exemption from social security contributions.

In exceptional cases, enterprises in the market sector can receive a grant higher than HFL 15,000 but less than HFL 22,000. The desirability of a higher grant must have been established during the counselling interview and at the same time the enterprise must offer the unemployed person in question the prospect of a permanent job.

The grant for work experience places can be made retroactively from 1 May, 1989. To qualify for the grant-in-aid, the work experience places must result from agree-

ments between employers and employees. The employment office decides whether work experience places which do not result from consultation between the social partners can be taken into consideration for the grant.

Employers can moreover be exempted from social security contributions if they offer a normal job to someone who has been unemployed for two years. If a member of an ethnic minority is hired the exemption from social security contributions is granted after only one year's unemployment. The exemption from contributions is also possible for young persons leaving the JWG (Youth Employment Guarantee Scheme) - foreseen to be introduced shortly - or its forerunner, the TVGW (Temporary Scheme of Municipal Employment Initiatives). The exemption from contributions is granted for a maximum of four years.

Employers can, in addition to the exemption from social security contributions, receive a lump sum payment of HFL 4,000 for the costs of training and accompanying support if they hire someone who has been unemployed for two years, is a member of an ethnic minority who has been unemployed for one year or has left the JWG or TVGW after six months. For persons who have been unemployed for three years, the lump sum amounts to HFL 6,000.

The amendment to the act amalgamates three grant schemes for LTUs: MLW (the long-term unemployed scheme); MOA (the measure to support integration into working life) and MVM (the employment creation scheme). MLW and MOA are being phased out. MVM remains solely in application for a number of on-going employment projects for Moluccans.

NETHERLANDS

WOMs evaluated

The chances of young LTUs with a low level of education finding a job can be greatly improved by providing them with intensive individual accompanying support. Also, the better coordination of the efforts of employment offices and socio-cultural and socio-educational institutions to help these young persons can increase their chances of finding work. This coordination can best take place through a local or regional coordination point.

Such are the conclusions of an evaluation of the "WOMs" (work development societies) experiment. The experiment was started in 1987 following from a study, commissioned by NWJ (the national working group for the year of youth) which showed that the lack of coherence between schemes and measures in the area of schooling and work considerably limited their useful effect.

In the context of the experiment, WOM coordinators were employed in three regions for two years to try to improve the position of young LTUs with a low level of basic education. In two regions, the coordinators focused their efforts on better coordination and increased cooperation between the various institutions which run activities for this target group. In the third region, the WOM coordinator emphasized individual contacts with all the youths in the target group.

These individual contacts had the direct, measurable result that, after contacts with the WOM coordinator, one third of the target group found a job and one quarter had started on training. The structural approach in the other two experiments could naturally not lead to a similar rapidly visible result. In one region the intended joint approach to long-term youth unemployment has got off to a good start.

UNITED KINGDOM

Jobclubs

In the United Kingdom about two thirds of those who become unemployed find a job within six months. For the minority who do not, the chances of quickly finding work deteriorate significantly. Their rate of job applications falls off, their self-confidence weakens and they begin to encounter prejudice from employers wary of their employability. Jobclubs aim to reverse this trend by rebuilding confidence, developing job search techniques, and providing the resources necessary for an intensive and extensive job search.

The first UK jobclubs were opened in 1984 (cfr iM 12) developed from pioneering work done by North American behavioural psychologists Nathan Azrin and Victoria Besalel. They proved popular and successful and a rapid expansion of provision followed. In 1989-90 some 1000 jobclubs with places for 175,000 members will be run in the UK.

How jobclubs work

A jobclub is open for four half days a week. Members attend every day until a job is found. The average length of stay is around six weeks. The jobclub is run by a trained leader who plays a crucial role in training and motivating members. Over their first two weeks new members are taken through eight training sessions which show them how to:

- * establish 2 or 3 target jobs;
- * assess what they have to offer to employers;
- * prepare a personal profile;
- * make speculative approaches including telephone calls;
- * fill in application forms;
- * make effective use of newspapers, jobcentres and all other sources of vacancies;
- * perform well at job interviews.

Particular emphasis is based on identifying jobs that are not advertised: around half those members who find jobs do so following a speculative approach.

During these two weeks, normally on day one, members are asked to show their commitment by accepting an agreement to:

- * attend regularly and punctually;
 - * try out new approaches to finding jobs;
 - * follow up on an agreed number of job leads every day.
- Jobclub leaders undertake in return to provide:
- * help, advice and support;
 - * free resources, such as telephones, stamps and stationery, a place to work.

After the first two weeks, members conduct their own job search, using the free resources provided. They continue to receive encouragement from both the leader and other members of the group. It is essentially a self-help service: leaders do not try to find jobs for members, but facilitate their own job search and application - typically five to ten a day.

A new intake of around 12 members starts every three weeks, any members remaining from the previous intake continue to attend and apply for jobs.

Results

In 1988-89 136,672 people joined jobclubs. 54% of leavers found work. A further 15% went into other positive outcomes such as Employment Training.

Members

Jobclubs are open to anyone who has been unemployed for six months or more. The eligibility conditions for others at a disadvantage are relaxed, eg. people with disabilities who may join immediately on becoming unemployed.

Recruits usually learn about jobclubs from staff in Jobcentres, particularly when attending a mandatory "Restart" interview. Others respond to publicity or hear from a friend or neighbour who may have found a job through a jobclub.

Jobclubs welcome people of all ages from 17 upwards. They are open to men and women in all occupations.

A recent analysis of the age of members showed that:

- * 31% were under 25
- * 25% were aged 25-39
- * 33% were aged 40-59.

The same analysis showed that members went into the following types of work:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------|
| * Managerial/professional | - 12% |
| * Clerical/office | - 13% |
| * Sales/personal service | - 20% |
| * Skilled | - 5% |
| * Semi skilled | - 8% |
| * Unskilled | - 42%. |

A joint venture

Originally, all jobclubs were operated by Employment Service employees working in jobcentres. With the expansion of the service, agents have been appointed to

operate jobclubs to standards laid down by the Employment Service. Agents now run the majority of jobclubs, having been appointed after a competitive tendering process. They receive advice and support from Employment Service staff. Agents come from the public, private and voluntary sectors and include employers, local authorities, chambers of commerce and community groups.

UNITED KINGDOM

50-PLUS Jobstart for older workers

A new programme, 50-PLUS Jobstart, is being piloted in the Lothian and Borders region of Scotland, in Dudley and Sandwell, Leeds and South London. 50-PLUS Jobstart will encourage people aged over 50 who have been out of work for a year or more to take up part-time jobs, by offering them an allowance of £20 a week.

The initiative started in June 1989. It is a development of the existing Jobstart programme which is limited to full-time jobs paying £90 a week or less.

To be eligible, the part-time jobs must involve at least 10 hours' work each week and the hourly rate should not exceed £2.57.

Background

Some older workers who have difficulty getting full-time jobs feel that part-time work would give them a stepping stone to the full-time jobs they want. This initiative will give them the chance to prove to themselves, and to their employers, that they still have a lot to offer.

With a decline in the number of school leavers coming into the labour market, employers will need to look increasingly to older workers to meet their recruitment needs. Older workers who are unemployed should therefore be encouraged to take the jobs which are now available and which will become available in the future. This programme will allow them to make use of their skills and experience and help them get re-established into the labour market. It will give them the flexibility to consider part-time jobs - and the number of these is expanding - and should improve their chances of competing for, and getting, full-time jobs.

Other special categories of workers

GREECE

Protecting minors at work and miscellaneous provisions

A law has been passed renewing and modernising legislation regulating the modalities and the conditions under which minors are allowed to work in Greece. The following are the most important points of the law:

- * The employment of minors under 15 years of age is prohibited until they complete the compulsory schooling at age 15.

- * Minors aged 15-18 years are forbidden to be employed in dangerous, heavy or dirty work as well as work which impairs mental health and which hampers the free development of their personality. The work in question is laid down by the Ministry of Labour after consultation with the Health and Safety Council.
- * By derogation, employment is authorised for minors under the age of 15 in show business for a limited period which must not exceed three months.
- * Vocational information and guidance programmes have been introduced out of school for minors before entering employment.

- * Minors under 16 years of age who are going to gymnasiums (first cycle secondary education establishments), "lyceums" or technical schools are not allowed to work more than six hours a day or 30 hours a week.
- * A daily rest period has been brought in lasting at least 12 consecutive hours, with no work at all being allowed between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.
- * Working minors (those aged 15-18) are paid at least on the basis of the minimum wage paid to unskilled workers as this is laid down in the general collective agreement concluded nationally, with the calculation being made according to the total number of hours actually worked.
- * Legal annual holiday must be given during the usual period of the year coinciding with the summer school holidays. At the same time, for those working minors making the request, the holiday can be split, with half the holiday being taken at another time in the year.
- * Scholars and students who are minors can be given special leave to enable them to take school exams, regardless of their total length of service.
- * A suitable and thorough medical examination is given, free of charge, to all minors before being given their "employment cards" by the competent services of the National Health Service (ESY) and the Social Insurance Institute (IKA).
- * Special medical examinations are required for specific work or for specific groups of work.
- * When certain types or groups of work have to be done, the law lays down a special procedure for the delivery of "employment cards".
- * Every employer has to keep a register with all the numbers of the "employment cards", with the registration being performed by a labour inspector for all working minors. This measure is intended to enable the application of the labour law to be checked at any time.
- * The working minor must have a contract of employment with his/her employer.
- * Additional measures for protecting working minors at the place of work are laid down.
- * Persons who have been convicted of sexual offences or violation of the anti-drug law and law 500/84 are not authorised to employ minors.
- * Penal and administrative sanctions are laid down against employers or their representatives who contravene the provisions of this law.
- * Sanctions are also foreseen against parents or guardians who authorise a minor to work in violation of certain provisions of the law.
- * Presidential decrees drawn up by a joint decision of the Ministers of Labour and the Merchant Navy provide that the provisions governing work in the navy be harmonised with the provisions of this law.

In conclusion, important socio-political changes, changing conceptions and demands in Greek society have brought about the need for the State to lay down the above outlined provisions and to tackle the protection of minors in employment in a new way, in line with the development of the country.

ITALY

Non-Community workers and their families

The ministerial decree of 4.7.1989 instituted the council for the problems of non-Community workers and their families provided for under law n°943 of 30.12.1986.

The council is composed of:

- a) six representatives of non-Community workers nominated by the most representative associations operating in Italy;
- b) four representatives nominated by the national trade union confederations;
- c) three representatives nominated by the national employers' organisations from the various sectors of the economy;
- d) four experts nominated respectively by the Ministries of Public Education, the Interior, Foreign Affairs and Finance;
- e) four representatives of local governments, two of whom are nominated by the regions, one by the National Association of Italian Communes (ANCI) and one by the Union of Italian Provinces (UPI);
- f) three representatives of the associations which work in the field of immigration assistance.

For each full member of the council one substitute is nominated.

The council is chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Security.

The purpose of the council is to foster, through the participation of those directly concerned, suitable initiatives to remove the obstacles which impede the rights referred to under Art. 1 of law n°943 of 30.12.1986 from being effectively carried out. These cover in particular:

- a) equality of treatment and full equality of rights with respect to Italian workers;
- b) rights as regards the use of social and health services;
- c) the right of preserving cultural identity, the rights as regards schooling and access to housing within the scope of the regulations governing the exercise of these rights.

NETHERLANDS

Temporary scheme of municipal employment initiatives for young people

The scheme grants financial support to municipalities which offer unemployed youths aged up to 21 years a temporary part-time job. It is being extended to the date when the proposed law on the Youth Employment Guarantee Scheme (JWG) will come into force, but not later than 1 July 1990. Until that date, municipalities can offer new youths temporary part-time jobs. Furthermore they can continue to canvass new places for the young persons.

The temporary scheme precedes the Youth Employment Guarantee Scheme (JWG) which the government intends to lay down in the JWG-law. Municipalities are free to take up the temporary scheme. In implementing JWG all municipalities will, in the long run, be involved.

Extending the temporary scheme is necessary because the bill which governs the JWG still has to pass parliament. Moreover, once it has passed parliament, time is needed for preparing the best possible implementation by the municipalities. By extending the temporary scheme the Minister will avoid no more young people being taken on in a temporary job in the second half of 1989.

At present, some 500 municipalities and between 8,000 and 9,000 youths make use of the temporary scheme every year.

NETHERLANDS

Campaign for the disabled launched

In July 1986 the law on the employment of disabled workers (WAGW) came into force. The law requires employers and employees to decide jointly on measures for (re-)integrating the disabled into working life. It also makes it possible to impose a quota of between 3% and 7% of posts to be filled by disabled workers on employers who do not make sufficient efforts to hire such persons.

Shortly after the enactment of the law, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment launched an information campaign. This was intended to make the WAGW law generally known. Now another campaign has been launched to bring out the fact that the disabled are among the most motivated workers. For those with a handicap know very well what it means to vanquish a difficulty and they appreciate more than anyone else that working is more than a nine-to-five job.

Working time

BELGIUM

Early retirement by agreement - Supplementary agreement

Early retirement by agreement is a system whereby older workers who have been dismissed can be paid, under certain conditions, a supplementary allowance in addition to unemployment benefit. This supplementary allowance has to be provided for in a collective labour agreement (CCT). The CCT can be concluded at the level of a joint commission ("commission paritaire"), of a joint sub-commission or of an enterprise or, again, it can be CCT n°17 of 19.12.74.

According to CCT n°17 a worker can draw on the scheme from the age of 60. However, the same agreement already provides for the possibility of concluding, at the branch level, collective agreements which extend the system in question to workers under 60 years of age (at least 58 years if the early retirement is granted on the basis of a CCT registered after 1.09.87 - cfr iM 20).

Although agreements lowering the age below 60 years have been concluded in most branches, certain branches still lack such provisions. This situation has sometimes led to unequal treatment between older workers who had been made redundant. As a remedy, the signatories to the national agreement of 18.11.88 (cfr iM 25) agreed to "conclude a supplementary agreement coming into force on 1 April 1989 and expiring on 31 December 1990 for enterprises employing at least 10 workers and which, for the 1989-90 period, are not covered by a sector or company level CCT providing for either an early retirement system or new measures to promote employment".

In carrying out this commitment, CCT n°44 of 21.03.89 (MB of 30.05.89) was concluded in the CNT - the national labour council. This agreement lowers, temporarily, the

age from which certain older workers can draw on the system of the supplementary allowance in case of dismissal. It should, however, be pointed out that this is a supplementary agreement, the area of application of which is strictly limited to workers and to enterprises which are not covered by an agreement meeting exact criteria.

Area of application

The present agreement applies to enterprises which, in the civil year 1988, employed at least 10 workers. It excludes (in addition to enterprises employing less than 10 persons) enterprises which are bound by a CCT providing for:

- * either an early retirement system after dismissal from an age below 60 years; or
- * employment promoting measures.

CCT n°44 gives a non-exhaustive overview over the employment promoting measures. These include measures for risk groups taken in execution of the national agreement of 18.11.1988 (cfr iM 25), measures granting the right to career breaks (cfr iM 15), positive actions for women (cfr iM 20) and measures to reduce working time.

The agreements in question obviously only free the employer from respecting CCT n°44 for as long as they remain in force. Hence, if these agreements expire before 31 December 1990, the employer will be bound by CCT n°44 from the date the other agreements expire.

It should also be mentioned that when the CCT in question applies only to one category or one part of a category of workers employed in the enterprise, the employer is freed from respecting the requirements of CCT n°44 for the whole of this category of workers.

Lowering the retirement age

The system of a supplementary allowance as it is orga-

nised by CCT n°17 mentioned above, is for workers aged 58 years and over who are made redundant (except in cases of serious misconduct - "motif grave").

CCT n°44 derogates from CCT n°17 as regards the age condition, opening up the right to early retirement by agreement from 58 years. Thus, the conditions for and the periods of payment as well as the calculation and the revision of the amount of the supplementary allowance continue to be governed by CCT n°17.

It should finally be noted that the special procedure for joint consultation foreseen in CCT n°17 is equally applicable under CCT n°44. This procedure is intended to

prevent the systematic dismissal of workers who have reached the qualifying age for early retirement by agreement.

Coming into force and duration

CCT n°44 has been concluded for a fixed duration: it came into force on 1 April 1989 and expires on 31 December 1990.

It applies solely to workers who have been given notice since 1 November 1988.

CCT n°44 will continue to apply for workers put on early retirement on this basis until they reach the normal retirement age.

Placement

FRANCE

ANPE and implementing the RMI

ANPE, the National Employment Agency, is contributing to the implementation of the "minimum integration income" ("revenu minimum d'insertion", or RMI) - described in iM 26 - by assigning an RMI employment officer ("chargé de mission - CM/RMI") to the Prefect of the "département" - - the Prefect ("Préfet") being the local representative of central Government. This "CM/RMI" is entrusted with providing the Prefect and the "départementale" services with the following back-up support:

- * set up the "départementale" infrastructure consisting of: "CDI" or "départementale" integration council, "CLI" or local integration commission, and the support unit ("cellule d'appui");
- * contribute to drafting the "départementale" programme and follow up its implementation;
- * lead and follow the progress of the activities of the support unit;
- * organise cooperation between ANPE's local employment agencies (ALEs) and the CLIs.

In their activities the CMs/RMI draw upon ANPE competence as regards:

- * the occupational appraisal ("bilan professionnel")
- * running integration activities, and
- * the provision of job offers or activities.

Occupational appraisal

To meet the demands of its clients and partners, ANPE has developed a series of skills and services for help in occupational appraisal, vocational guidance and job search. These services are aimed at:

- * providing careers guidance
- * appraising a career
- * checking training projects
- * enabling the jobseeker to stand on his/her own feet.

The appraisal consists of various mixes of these services. This means that an appraisal by ANPE enables a jobseeker to

- * assess his/her strong and weak points in relation to a training or vocational re-integration goal;
- * size up his/her environment;

- * ascertain his/her situation on the labour market;
- * choose and map out his/her way back to working life;
- * provide him/herself with the means for setting out on this path.

Making an appraisal is an interactive approach which seeks to enable the individual to become aware of his/her strong and weak points both through the light shed by this appraisal and the lessons which he/she draws from his/her investigations of the labour market, viewpoints of friends and colleagues, etc. It is a training method which both gives the user an active role and integrates the concept of "time": the time needed to win the user's trust, to closely involve him/her with the appraisal approach so that together with the CM/RMI he/she can draw up a well-founded integration project.

But on the other hand, an appraisal is never final. It is an approach limited in time, determining a position at one point of time and in respect of one precise prospect.

Appraisal services in the RMI framework

These services are not intended to solve each and every problem. They do not always fit the case of every target group. For it is difficult to

- * develop a career path with persons living from day-to-day and who cannot think about tomorrow;
- * go in for training when the persons in question do not master basic literacy and numeracy and reject any "school" system whatsoever.

The following types of services can be adapted to RMI recipients:

- * in-depth guidance sessions;
- * the appraisal and widening of career goals for groups with a low level of education;
- * evaluation in the working environment;
- * appraisal of the level of vocational competence;
- * sessions of job search techniques.

Organising integration activities

ANPE provides its experience in putting on integration activities in the form of drawing up integration strategies, negotiating a schedule of conditions on appraisal methodology, etc. It does this through

- * its experience of inter-institutional work;
- * its knowledge of the provision of support measures for

- * vocational integration at the level of the "département" its knowledge of the local training network and of the innovative practices which can be developed.

IRELAND

Improvements in FÁS's Emigrant Advisory Services

The Minister of Labour has recently carried out a review of the role of FÁS, the State Training and Employment Agency, in relation to labour mobility and job opportunities abroad in the context of the single European labour market. The purpose of the review was to determine how FÁS can carry out more actively its obligations under EC Regulation 1612/68 on freedom of movement of workers in assisting Irish workers who want to explore job opportunities elsewhere in the European Community.

FÁS already operate a pre-departure information and advisory service for Irish nationals looking for work elsewhere. The service aims to make persons contemplating emigration aware of the difficulties they may encounter abroad and to advise them, if they still decide to emigrate, on how best to cope with conditions in their country of destination.

Every effort is made to dissuade from emigrating persons who lack the necessary maturity, education, skills and resources which would enable them to gain employment quickly. Unplanned or ill-planned emigration is actively discouraged.

In addition to these advisory services, FÁS also participates in the SEDOC information exchange system which circulates information on job-seekers and job vacancies among the national employment services in the different Member States.

While satisfied from his review that FÁS are adopting the correct approach to labour mobility and job opportunities abroad, the Minister believes there are a number of steps which can be taken to improve the quality of the service provided. Accordingly, he has directed FÁS staff to attach greater priority to the filling of EC vacancies, and in particular to ensure that all EC vacancy notices and all enquiries by Irish job-seekers are dealt with expeditiously and efficiently. A more comprehensive and up-to-date range of information on the Community labour market and the regulations governing it will in future be made available in all FÁS offices while efforts will also be made to improve the operation of the SEDOC system through

strengthening bilateral arrangements between FÁS and the employment services of other Member States. Complementary to these improvements in its emigrant advisory service, FÁS will also continue to assist any Irish nationals abroad wishing to return to work or to set up business in Ireland.

The Minister is satisfied that these improvements are necessary both to bring the standard of service at FÁS offices into line with the kind of service generally available at offices of the employment services of other Member States, several of which already jointly operate integrated placement services (eg. Germany/Netherlands; France/Belgium), and to observe the spirit as well as the letter of EC regulations on free movement of workers.

PORTUGAL

Private placement agencies

Decree-law no. 124/89 of 14.04.89 sets up a new legal system of private placement agencies, both for-profit and non-profit agencies.

For carrying out their activities, for-profit agencies have to have a licence and non-profit agencies an authorisation given by the Ministry of Employment and Social Security on the advice of the IEFP, the National Employment and Vocational Training Institute. IEFP is entrusted in particular with organising the legislative procedures concerning the agencies and with evaluating the way in which their activities are integrated within the national employment policy.

Agencies cannot ask jobseekers to pay for the services of registration, vocational guidance and selection; but for-profit agencies are entitled to claim from the jobseekers they place maximum amounts varying between 10% and 50% of the national minimum wage in the case of **temporary employment** (the amount depending on its duration) and up to 75% of the national minimum wage in the case of **permanent jobs**.

This legal system also bans placement agencies from acting as temporary work enterprises; these will be the subject of separate regulations drafted in accordance with the principles laid down by the authorisation law of the Assembly of the Republic (June 1989).

Rough currency conversion rates

One European Currency Unit (ECU) was roughly equivalent to the following amounts of national currencies in August 1989:

* Belgium	43.4 BFR
* Denmark	8.1 DKR
* Germany	2.08 DM
* Greece	173 DRA
* Spain	130 PTA
* France	7.0 FF
* Ireland	0.78 IR£
* Italy	1,490 LIT
* Luxembourg	43.4 LFR
* Netherlands	2.35 HFL
* Portugal	173 ESC
* United Kingdom	0.64 UK£

Miscellaneous

BELGIUM

Family and the labour market

The world of work has experienced significant changes over the past two decades, which have been mainly characterised by the increased labour force participation of women. In Belgium, four women out of ten are currently in gainful employment. Among the women aged 25-35 years the activity rate exceeds 70% and forecasts indicate that the highest point has not yet been reached. In fact, today's social-economic and demographic trends are likely to bring about tensions on tomorrow's labour market.

To reduce these tensions, various solutions are being examined of which drawing on parents with dependent children is a significant aspect. Hence, a dynamic employment policy will owe its success to taking into consideration the harmonious combination of family life and working life. It should not be forgotten that mothers represent a significant proportion of all workers and of manpower reserves. The activity of married women and of housewives will increase if the organisation of their family life is taken into consideration.

The world of politics has found itself invested with a new task of bringing about a harmonious relationship between working life and family life through measures in favour of the family. With this end in view the Minister of Employment and Labour has set up a working group with a three-fold objective:

- * to clearly define, in a first phase, the socio-economic profile of families with children. For adequate proposals cannot be set out without having a good prior understanding of the target group;
- * to make, in a second phase of the work, an inventory of already existing relevant measures in order to detect possible deficiencies;
- * to set out, in a final phase, a series of proposals aimed at improving the situation of working and non-working parents.

The first phase was concluded at the beginning of June 1989 with the publication of a file entitled "The socio-economic profile of families with children". The following two phases will result in further publications. The present article outlines the conclusions of this report which will constitute the basic material from which future actions can be undertaken.

Demographic and sociological trends within the family

Demographic trends show that families are getting smaller: those with four children are declining and being replaced by those with two children. At the same time as the structure of the family is changing, there is the growing participation of women in working life; this increased female activity takes place in the same age bracket as that where women have children.

Because of this trend, both demographically and socio-logically, the family model tends to become one where both parents are working. The question is raised whether the behaviour of women towards working life has had any influence on the number of births. According to the results of the study, there is no causal relationship between the falling birth rate and the increase in the number of working women. The negative trend in births is due to a multitude of sociological factors of which the work of women is not the most representative.

Defining and estimating target groups

Since the aim of the "Family and employment" project was to draw up measures in favour of the family, a good understanding of the potential number of families with children was indispensable.

Two groups of families were distinguished: the first group, consisting of families where both parents work, mainly requires measures which facilitate the combination of family and employment; the potential numbers involved are 650,000 units (including the 100,000 single-parent families where the sole parent works). The second group, which covers families where at least one parent does not work, can express the need or the desire to be integrated, or reintegrated, into the labour market; the potential numbers involved here are 1 million units. Within both these groups of families sub-divisions have been defined so as to better target the priority categories as regards measures favourable to the family (eg. parents working full-time or single jobless mothers or where the husband is jobless).

The working group regrets, however, not having been able to integrate some important criteria because of the lack of statistical data.

Family and employment: realities and aspirations

In households where both parents work, a compromise has to be found between work and the family: this must reconcile, on the one hand, "time" (time divided between the family, leisure and work) with, on the other, "income". The balance varies according to the social and cultural environment (the occupational aspirations of the parents, the break-down of roles within the family, the level of training of the parents, etc) as well as the number and age of the children.

Parental choice in reconciling family, leisure and income can be expressed in different ways according to the individual situation of each household:

- * working full-time, which can be made easier through flexible working hours or drawing on child-care services;
- * career breaks (total or partial) and all the other forms of part-time work which enable a link with working life to be maintained;
- * withdrawal from the labour market, whether momentarily or not.

This choice can also be influenced by the sector in which the parents are working or by the system under which they

are gainfully employed. There are furthermore numerous sectoral agreements, although they differ considerably from one sector to another. The harmonisation of some of these agreements could be a first step in integrating the family into working life.

In this respect it should be stressed that in many cases families are looking for a compromise which provides them with a satisfactory level of income. Thus, measures offering more free time without any financial benefit would not necessarily be effective since they would not take account of the level of family income, the cost of child-care or transport, the tax system or the vocational qualifications of the parents.

An increase in the costs of child-care and of transport would stimulate parents with low incomes to opt for more free time, particularly if this is accompanied by a financial benefit. Fiscal reforms, such as those recently introduced, can also influence the balance between time and income. Being able to deduct the cost of child-care from tax returns thus stimulates parents to work. On the other hand, fictitiously attributing an income to mothers at home ("splitting") contributes to accelerating the reintegration of women into their households.

Improving child-care facilities, as regards both costs and organisation (hours available, for instance) alleviates the problems for all families. More developed child-care facilities for the youngest children and children of school age would enable there to be greater harmony between family and working life concerns; it would be all the more useful in that it would meet specific problems (such as looking after sick children), in that hours would be adapted more flexibly to working hours and in that the costs would be reasonable.

In families in which at least one of the parents does not work, the problem is much more one of the level of family income. This will be particularly the case when the family is faced with an unexpected situation (unemployment of the working parent, separation or death). The problems linked to this group's (re)integration on the labour market

have already been underlined at the national and international level.

Future

On the basis of the data outlined above, which will be completed in later phases of the work, an employment policy taking the family dimension better into account will be developed in the coming months. When the findings of the first part of the study were presented the Minister of Employment and Labour already sketched out the main thrusts of the policy he wants to see implemented.

Above all else he wants to give priority to improving the system of career breaks so that it becomes a real tool for families to use in their quest for a balance between work and family life.

The debate on career breaks must also be linked with that of flexibility. So far, the term "flexibility" has been associated with the needs of employers in their search for optimal (for them) organisation of work, and which is often to the detriment of some individual aspirations of the workers. The Minister wants work flexibility to be used to harmonise the needs of both sides. The challenge is in integrating career planning with a work system which is more flexible as regards both personal and family needs and the demand for the optimal use of the factors of production.

Within this context an examination will be made of how part-time career breaks (= reducing the amount of work) can be stimulated. Furthermore, a study will be made of how to extend the duration of the break, its assimilation with a period of full-time employment for pension entitlement and the modalities relating to the requirement for a replacement.

Other measures envisaged all concern the introduction or generalisation of certain modalities concerning leave: the right to leave for family reasons (eg. a child's accident or illness), adoption leave, paternity leave, the splitting-up of maternity leave when the new-born is hospitalised and the system of leave during school holidays.

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