

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING
THE TRANSFER
OF KNOWLEDGE**

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Catalogue No. ESC-97-009-E

CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Final declaration adopted at the fifth international conference of economic and social councils and similar bodies in Caracas.	6
Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the Green Paper on "Education-Training-Research - The obstacles to transnational mobility"	9
Speech by Tom Jenkins, President of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities at the Caracas Conference	17

Introduction

Despite the fact that it is not mentioned in the Treaty on European Union, during recent years education and training policy has become an increasingly important field of action for the Community institutions. In May 1996, for example, the Economic and Social Committee hosted a major conference on lifelong learning in Milan, in the context of its action programme for a Citizens' Europe.

Similarly, education and training has been high on the European Commission's agenda since the establishment of the Socrates programme in 1994. With its implications for higher education (Erasmus), primary and secondary education (Comenius) and, since 1995, its introduction into the vocational training section of "Leonardo da Vinci", Socrates provides proof that in these times when spirits are easily dampened by economic pessimism and unemployment, the discovery of new values and new riches can open to us the doors of the second millennium.

In a world which is being totally restructured, and where the working population is contracting sharply for reasons both economic and demographic, the untrained and uneducated are likely to have a significantly reduced of earning a livelihood. In addition, even if we are aware that in the absence of everything else, education is a value in itself, this same survival instinct tells us to develop and consolidate the links which should obviously exist between schools and business. Education and training should lead to a job; good management of a company presupposes a precise definition of its needs in terms of manpower and skilled staff, together with projections for the longer term. This way, the firm becomes an integral part of vocational training.

This type of improved company, more in tune with its needs and possibilities, was the theme of the 5th International Meeting of Economic and Social Committee and Similar Bodies, held at Caracas on 7 and 8 March.

This pamphlet contains the final declaration of the Caracas meeting, followed by the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities on the Green Paper on education, training and research and the obstacles to transnational mobility. The third part of the pamphlet contains an important speech made by Tom Jenkins, a British trade union leader who is currently President of the Economic and Social Committee, at the Caracas meeting. The speech summarizes both the work of the Economic and Social Committee, and the progress made by the European Union, in the field of education and continuous training.

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THE CARACAS CONFERENCE

Final declaration

The international organization of Economic and Social Councils and similar bodies met in Caracas on 7/8 March 1997 at the invitation of the National Economic Council of Venezuela. Discussions focused mainly on vocational training and the transfer of knowledge.

The following were the main points to emerge:

- ➔ the discussions highlighted the fact that learning, vocational training and the transfer of knowledge in view of their importance in economic, social and human terms were essential for social and national development;
- ➔ delegates stressed the general nature of civic education, extending well beyond the scope of basic schooling, and the need to combine education and learning with production and individuals' working lives;
- ➔ special attention had to be focused on the relationship between learning and job opportunities so that people could live useful lives. Attention was drawn to the gap between qualifications and job opportunities which was widening and was to be found in countries with different levels of development. As a result, the exclusion of a large number of social groups from productive activities and youth unemployment were now serious and growing problems in various parts of the world;
- ➔ the changing world economic climate, characterized by the rapid introduction of new technologies, the need to be competitive and to produce high quality goods, and the increasing globalization of trade were the major factors that had led to the rapid decline of traditional education and training systems;
- ➔ special attention should therefore be paid to building skills and know-how through work and, especially, to turning the workplace - and hence the company - into a centre for continuing training and education;
- ➔ in this connection, alternative approaches to learning, with the participation of as many social groups as possible, were needed to offset the rising cost - in terms of organization and the need for modern equipment - of formal education systems;
- ➔ business, workers and public authorities should cooperate in devising new approaches to learning, vocational training and the transfer of knowledge by combining and using the means available to each of them. This was a step that would benefit all parties;
- ➔ all countries and regions had acknowledged that education systems needed to be radically reformed and made more flexible. This had led to innovations and proposals to deal with the problems mentioned above. Delegates described their various experiences and agreed on the need to further develop this type of exchange;
- ➔ Some of the overall objectives of the new currents in education were i) to provide training for persons already integrated in society and possessing the basic skills so that they could adapt to the rapid changes in modern life, in the labour market and in business, and ii) to develop multi-purpose skills which would make

it possible for people to move from one sector of the labour market to another and from one country to another;

- ➔ as part of this general picture, attention was drawn to the fact that efforts in basic schooling, literacy and large-scale infrastructure establishment - particularly in Africa and Latin America - were slowing down and would continue to do so unless a more dynamic approach were adopted, geared to the new economic and social requirements;
- ➔ the "learning society" approach, adopted by the European Union, would, on the whole, be applicable to other countries and regions, provided that in every case individual societies' specific cultural features and requirements, and level of economic development, were taken into account;
- ➔ if the learning society approach was to be widely implemented, care had to be taken to step up basic and adult education, and involve women, rural communities and other deprived sectors in the training and learning process;
- ➔ population pressure, the lack of funding, the stagnation and vulnerability of some developing country economies militated in favour of a major international cooperation effort in education and vocational training; without this, the present process of political democratization and economic internationalization could be distorted, increasing the tension brought about by economic imbalances, migration and the marginalization of broad swathes of society.

The above comments led the economic and social councils attending the Vth international meeting to draw up the following recommendations:

- ➔ the major players in the training sector, i.e. the family, schools, employers and workers, the community, the public authorities and any other cultural and spiritual organization affected by social change, should together assess the education and vocational training systems with a view to reform;
- ➔ the reform process should focus not only on developing the work skills of young people and adults, but even more on their development as individuals;
- ➔ the reform should also attach priority to adaptability and creativity, bearing in mind the requirements of each of our societies.

In this connection, it is essential to have a good understanding of the forces controlling the learning process and the traditional sectors and economies, which provide a livelihood for more than half the world's population, and to use those forces to provide better training for our people.

Finally, the international community must be made more aware of the current appalling state of the job market and of basic and continuing training in some of our countries.

The economic and social councils left Caracas to return to their respective countries convinced of the need to take the steps outlined above.

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OPINION

**of the Economic and Social Committee
on the Green Paper on education,
training and research - the obstacles
to transnational mobility**

Brussels, 26 February 1997

(COM(96) 462 final)

Introduction

It is clear from experience gleaned during the development of the various phases of the Community education, training and research programmes that the principles contained in Articles 126, 127 and 130g of the EC Treaty are considerably hampered by a range of obstacles that stand in the way of Community citizens wishing to train in other Member States.

The Committee notes that the movement of goods, capital and services within the Community is in many ways made much easier than that of the Community's own citizens. In theory it is they who should be able to take full advantage of the tasks which the Community sets itself in Article 2 of the Treaty.

EU citizenship as set out in Treaty Article 8a gives nationals of the Member States the right to move and reside freely within the Union. This fundamental individual right has, however, been jeopardized by a number of problems and difficulties which hinder the mobility of citizens who wish to avail themselves of training opportunities on offer outside their Member State of origin. In short, this is an indicator of the slow progress in the social sphere in the Community

It is Community programmes for education, training and research which are responsible for the movement of the largest number of citizens between the different States. This places them in a particularly good position to determine the obstacles experienced by Community citizens exercising their right to move freely and take up residence in the EU.

The Commission is presenting this green paper with the understandable intention of providing Community citizens with the most appropriate solutions to mobility problems within the EU. It hopes that the document will provide the basis for a vigorous debate that will uncover both the problems experienced by people moving to another Member State for training purposes and solutions to these problems.

It must be made clear that it is useless to highlight problems and suggest solutions if this is not accompanied by a sincere desire to take firm and appropriate action to change the status quo by revamping the rules where necessary. Adopting viable solutions is the responsibility of the Council and the Member States, each within their own sphere or competence. Euro-scepticism among citizens can be countered by showing them that they will have a better everyday life and brighter prospects for the future within a strong, united Europe in which human and social values occupy the pre-eminent position accorded them by the spirit and content of the Union Treaty.

* * *

The Commission green paper

The green paper summarizes the background, obstacles and possible solutions from a point of view which is firmly rooted in the experience that the Commission has acquired in the implementation of the many different Community education, training and research programmes. Far from claiming that the document is exhaustive, the Commission calls on the EU's socio-economic interest groups not only to give a formal opinion on the lines of action, but also to suggest other measures for removing those obstacles which have already been detected and any obstacles which they may be able to identify.

In Part A, the green paper lists a number of advantages - which the Committee endorses - of mobility for educational, vocational and continuing training, and research purposes. Mobility of this kind generates a real wealth of knowledge and experience which encourages improved occupational qualifications both now and in the future. This in turn will help to improve employment prospects in the Community.

In Part B, the green paper lists clearly and concisely those obstacles regarded as most urgent on the basis of the experience acquired in the programmes. There are three main groups of problems detailed in the lengthy list given in the Commission document:

Legal and administrative obstacles concerning

- ➔ the right of residence;
- ➔ the recognition, certification and validation of courses of study;
- ➔ the territorially restricted nature of national grants;
- ➔ the administrative and organizational problems of educational institutions attended by students and pupils.

Socio-economic obstacles associated with:

- ➔ the different tax arrangements in the Member States;
- ➔ social protection.

Obstacles of a practical nature:

- ➔ language and cultural difficulties;
- ➔ a lack of information on the host country;
- ➔ the shortage of businesses prepared to take on young people for training;
- ➔ everyday life in the host country.

The green paper ends with a number of lines of action designed to tackle each of the obstacles described in the document. They contain various legal measures, such as the actual application by Member States of existing directives which have not yet been applied, the introduction of new legal instruments aimed at harmonizing arrangements in the Member States, and recommendations that - while respecting national sovereignty - give clear guidelines as to how to eliminate the obstacles which hinder citizens.

Comments

General comments

The Committee endorses any initiative which adopts a critical stance towards the way the European integration process is developing. The green paper is in itself a clear recognition of the deficiencies that have blighted the integration process over the years, especially those which have a direct impact on citizens. It is both positive and healthy that Europe's leaders have sufficient social awareness to set about the task of making genuine individual freedom of movement possible by removing all legal and bureaucratic obstacles. Equally, Member States cannot use the argument of sovereignty to obstruct citizens' possibilities of embarking on those training courses within the Community which are best suited to them.

The Committee welcomes this initiative which it is convinced can help to create the conditions necessary to guarantee better coordination between the Commission and the Member States and thus gradually overcome the obstacles encountered by citizens moving within the Union.

The more material provisions of the Treaties have been implemented more effectively than its human aspects. As a result goods move more easily within the Community than people.

What is needed is a move towards political agreement that paves the way for a more genuine Citizens' Europe.

From the point of view of strategy, it is appropriate that once the Community education, training and research programmes have moved through a number of stages of development - and have involved a large number of EU citizens - the question be raised of the need to solve mobility problems between Member States.

The ESC hopes that this initiative will culminate in a document which will serve as the basis for the removal of existing obstacles. In this connection the Committee would refer to its opinion on the White Paper on education and training - teaching and learning: towards the learning society, adopted at its plenary session on 10 July 1996, in which it stated that mobility was a fundamental principle of lifelong education and training.

The Committee would particularly highlight those chapters of the green paper dealing with third country nationals who legally reside in a Member State. These citizens experience additional problems on top of those which persistently affect Community nationals. All measures aimed at integrating third country citizens should be encouraged and supported, particularly with the objective of stepping up action to counter racism and xenophobia in the Union.

The Committee therefore explicitly supports any measures adopted to implement line of action No 6 (improving the situation of third country nationals with regard to training).

In the interests of a more efficient use of resources, the Commission should as far as is possible endeavour to avoid duplicating research into the obstacles experienced by EU citizens when they attempt to move freely within the Union.

For this reason, the Committee considers that some coordination would have been desirable between (a) the group of experts set up by the Commission under the chairmanship of Mrs Veil to study the obstacles hindering the free movement of workers and people in general and (b) the other groups of experts that the Commission is set up to facilitate the transnational mobility of teachers and students. What is needed in both cases is the presence of representatives of the social partners, since the world of work - in the form of businesses, workers and other economic and social activities - is a constant factor in all movement associated with education, training and research programmes.

This green paper essentially provides the chapter on education, training and research for the white paper that the Commission is to publish tackling the full range of obstacles to mobility experienced by EU citizens, regardless of their reasons for moving.

To continue the point made above, the ESC, as the Community advisory body representing the socio-economic players, regards itself as a discussion partner that is well-placed to know what kind of training for young people and the unemployed is actually required in the labour market.

The definition of young people varies widely from one Community programme to another. The Committee feels that, in practice, this creates an obstacle to mobility and suggests, therefore, that a more flexible definition be sought.

All levels of training have the overriding objective of preparing young people for the challenges of the marketplace. Accordingly, Community education, training and research programmes are an important step forward in achieving this aim.

That is why the ESC - as the legitimate representative of the socio-economic interest groups - should be directly involved in the consultations which are underway on the final version of the present document, given that some proposed solutions could have a direct impact not only on the future employees of Europe's businesses, but also on today's workers and firms.

It is of consummate importance to find solutions to the problems hindering the mobility of those preparing to enter the labour market. At a time when jobs are scarce and hard to come by, any attempt by the Member States to protect their national labour market must be actively opposed. The green paper does not mention this problem which may be encountered by participants in Community training programmes when they complete their period of training.

Furthermore, the Committee notes that many Member States reserve some, if not all, public sector jobs for their own nationals and feels that the public sector in all EU countries should be open to all Community citizens.

The Committee considers that the Commission should highlight this aspect so that it is included in the final document.

Specific comments

The green paper acknowledges the patchy application at national level of directives dealing with the removal of obstacles to citizens' mobility. The Member States must therefore make a real effort to eliminate such obstacles, and their governments must, without delay, apply Community regulations to help citizens in their everyday lives.

The Committee wishes once again to highlight the need for a European researchers'

and grant-holders' charter to enable researchers and grant-holders to avoid the problems, especially in the areas of tax and social protection, which hinder movement between the Member States. On several occasions, the Committee has asked the Commission to submit a proposal for such a charter in order to facilitate mobility for all types of training, whether academic or in-service, and would once again reiterate its request.

The implementation of all Community education, training and research programmes should be preceded by an analysis of the potential mobility problems which, though unrelated to the programmes themselves, participants may experience.

Citizens who are considering taking part in such programmes should be informed beforehand of these difficulties. Where programmes involve moving from one Member State to another, programme information should specifically tell potential candidates of the problems which they will experience both during and after training. The information should also contain practical solutions which can be applied by the participants.

The Committee therefore calls for line of action No 9 (improving the information available) also to state that all such Community programmes should contain specific information on the difficulties that candidates may experience during or after the period of training and possible solutions.

We should also bear in mind the disabled or handicapped who, because of their disability, may experience additional problems to those encountered by all citizens moving abroad for training purposes. The Committee feels that the final version of the green paper should include a special reference along these lines.

Broadly speaking, the dissemination of information in the Member States must not only be guaranteed but also checked for ease of access by citizens. Everyone has a right to know what opportunities are available. It is the Commission's responsibility to ensure that the dissemination of information of this kind is not restricted to the usual small groups of people who receive information on Community action. We can hardly create a European consciousness if we do not publicize transnational training activities among all those involved in the EU's educational, social and business communities. Full-scale information networks must be set up and make use of all the multimedia possibilities available in society. All EU educational institutions and businesses must have access to such networks.

The Committee therefore calls for line of action No. 9 also to state that a network be set up to systematically disseminate information to citizens on all Community training opportunities that are on offer.

The language barrier is the first obstacle for those who want to avail themselves of transnational EU training opportunities. It is impossible to go abroad for educational, training or academic purposes generally without a knowledge of the language of the country to which you are going. Children must be encouraged to learn other Community languages from the time they start school.

The Committee has commented repeatedly on this matter, stressing the need to encourage, develop and strengthen all initiatives aimed at improving citizens' knowledge and use of EU languages. In this connection it would refer to its opinions on the Green Paper on the European dimension of education, the proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision setting up the Community action programme Socrates, the Leonardo programme, and more recently the opinion on the White Paper on education and training - teaching and learning: towards the learning society.

The Committee would therefore reiterate its comments on languages in all the opinions it has issued on the various education, training and research programmes. All action which is adopted by the Commission and the Council to promote and encourage the teaching and learning of Community languages must be supported. In the long-term this will not only improve EU citizens' training opportunities, but also familiarize them with Europe's cultural diversity, as well as stimulating mobility.

Programmes which promote language learning for young people and adults are meaningless if we do not think about the future. We must concentrate our efforts on children and promote the teaching of Community languages in schools throughout the EU. At the same time we must respect as far as possible freedom of choice regarding the languages taught to children. In this connection - and in compliance with Member States' own freedom to decide on educational matters - line of action No 8 should also state the need for agreement among Member States on the requirement that national education systems a) include a minimum of two Community languages in syllabuses, and that b) a sufficient amount of teaching time is set aside to ensure that the languages are learnt to a high standard. A more comprehensive young student exchange programme to round off the language teaching given in schools should also be promoted.

Similarly, adults who have not had the opportunity to study other Community languages must be encouraged to do so. Continuing training may be the appropriate context in which to provide basic and advanced language training programmes for these learners.

In addition to boosting the learning of Community languages in schools, the ESC calls for students to be encouraged to study subjects related to European integration and the European venture. This would be a long-term attempt to remove barriers which are less visible and less concrete than those described in the green paper, and which are more closely linked to personal and collective attitudes than obstacles created by differences in national legislation. Differences in culture, religion, the way we think, skin colour, ethnic background, and so on - indeed, everything that makes us different from nationals of the host country - can be problems which are not mentioned in the Commission document but which are used and fanned by xenophobic political movements in the hope that locals will turn against people from abroad. Although such political activity is fortunately only practised by a minority in the Community, promoting knowledge about other peoples, their cultures, beliefs and what we have in common is the best way of halting and eradicating such views.

A new line of action which the Commission should consider including is to introduce at Community level and in all EU schools a specific academic subject along the lines described above. This would be taught to all EU schoolchildren and its content would be the same across the Union.

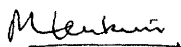
Validation and recognition of study courses carried out in another Member State must remain a priority for the Community. This will give workers and the unemployed access to job opportunities throughout the EU. It is a principle which must be extendible to vocational training and to all non-regulated studies. The single market and the principle of free movement of workers can no longer be jeopardized because legal or administrative questions about their diplomas and certificates cast doubts on their occupational qualifications. In this context the Committee would point out the contribution made by CEDEFOP to vocational training and the recognition of qualifications. It is only right to take this contribution into account. Furthermore, attention should also be drawn to the role of the NARIC network.

The Council and the Commission must continue to give detailed attention to the removal of obstacles to the recognition and validation of courses and qualifications and, where necessary, use all the instruments available in the Treaty to ensure that Member States comply with Community regulations.

In the interests of improving social justice, it is essential that immediate and priority action is taken to ensure that the most disadvantaged citizens are able to benefit from the Community programmes dealt with in the green paper. Young people without economic resources and unemployed people with little or no social protection may be - as the Commission document recognizes - precisely those who find it most difficult to participate in programmes of this kind. If we want a stronger Citizens' Europe, we must strengthen solidarity and fairness in access to the opportunities offered by society at Community level. Distribution of aid for transnational mobility can only be termed fair if the recipient's socio-economic position is taken into consideration. The Committee thus calls for line of action No. 7 to state that the financial aid set out in the programmes should take account of the recipient's financial position or that of their family, bearing in mind the special features of national schemes for funding studies. Accordingly, the programmes should include a scale whereby assistance would be awarded to those in greater financial need.

Brussels, 26 February 1997.

The President
of the Economic and Social Committee
Tom JENKINS



The Secretary-General
of the Economic and Social Committee
Adriano GRAZIOSI



**FIFTH INTERNATIONAL MEETING
SPEECH BY MR TOM JENKINS, PRESIDENT OF
THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE OF
THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, TO THE ROUND
TABLE ON THE TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE.**

Caracas, March 1997

EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

Introduction

The Treaty on European Union stipulates that the Community:

- ➔ will contribute to the development of quality education by supporting and supplementing action taken by the Member States, while fully respecting their cultural and linguistic diversity as regards the content of teaching and the organization of education systems (Article 126),
- ➔ implement a vocational training policy to support and supplement the action taken by the Member States (Article 127).
- ➔ In the Community Charter of the Fundamental Rights of Workers, endorsed by all Member States except one, it is said on vocational training (paragraph 15):

“ Every worker of the European Community must be able to have access to vocational training and to benefit therefrom throughout his working life. In the conditions governing access to such training there may be no discrimination on grounds of nationality.

The competent public authorities, undertakings or the two sides of industry, each within their own sphere of competence, should set up continuing and permanent training systems enabling every person to undergo retraining more especially through leave for training purposes, to improve his skills or to acquire new skills, particularly in the light of technical developments.”

The ESC expressed its support for the right to have access to vocational training in its Opinion on Basic Community Social Rights adopted in February 1989.

In the Commission Communication entitled “Action for Employment in Europe - A Confidence Pact” it is stated that education and training should be seen as keys to the door of employment:

- ➔ As paper qualifications are no longer an adequate accreditation of skills acquired something else is needed. The Commission will make proposals designed to facilitate lifelong access to and validation of skills. The social partners might develop a reference framework for various levels (national, industrial, the firm) as regards access to skills and their recognition.
- ➔ To integrate young people the Commission advocates actions: development of an Erasmus apprenticeship scheme on the basis of the Leonardo programme and beginning discussions with governments and the social partners to devise a system of European articles of apprenticeship
- ➔ The new information technologies will open the door to tomorrow’s skills. In this context an action plan for “learning in the Information Society” will be presented by the Commission.

In the ESC Opinion, adopted in October 1996, on the Commission Communication "Action for Employment in Europe - A Confidence Pact", the Committee underlines that the five goals set out in the White Paper on Education and Training must play a key role in the establishment of the learning society. The education system, which lies virtually exclusively within the remit of the Member States, is in crisis. The education provided is frequently inappropriate and inadequate. The Committee calls for stronger links between schools (and colleges or universities) and the world of work experience and for education systems to concentrate more on training for the jobs of the future, in areas such as the media, telecommunications, the environment, health-care and tourism.

The Commission rightly draws attention to the shortcomings in ongoing training. It is necessary to combine work with training, in schemes such as apprenticeships and sandwich courses, for everyone working in firms, without any form of discrimination, in particular the limiting of such training solely to academically-qualified employees. With a view to facilitating mobility, steps must be taken to enable comparisons to be made between vocational training systems and to introduce comparable vocational training certificates valid throughout the EU labour market.

Education and vocational training are examples of areas which lend themselves to national action involving the social partners under a confidence pact. Employers know what education their workforce needs and the workforce is interested in education and vocational training in order to keep their jobs, achieve promotion or find a new job. A workforce with the requisite skills is of common interest for the social partners. Mobility both within the enterprise and on an inter-enterprise level is therefore of mutual interest. The Committee urges the social partners to conclude confidence pacts for education and vocational training with a view to boosting employment.

The Committee believes that there is a need for a root-and-branch revamping of the Structural Funds; it stresses that these Funds must be used to create lasting, additional jobs. The provision of new financial resources for this purpose would increase public expenditure and thus taxation. The Committee therefore takes the view that appropriations should be re-allocated between the Objectives. From 1997 it will be possible to re-focus the Funds in such a way that they will have a greater impact on employment prospects; the Committee firmly believes that this opportunity should be taken. (See also point 7).

Finally, the Committee points to the special importance which it attaches to measures to bring improvements in the following areas: initial training, vocational training, ongoing adjustment to cope with technological and structural developments, links between schools and businesses and mutual recognition of qualifications.

* * *

1. WHITE PAPER ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING 'TEACHING AND LEARNING - TOWARDS THE LEARNING SOCIETY'

Education and vocational training are the two cornerstones to secure investment in people and enhance their qualifications, creativeness and adaptability.

It is in this context that the Commission adopted its White Paper "Teaching and learning: towards the learning society" which proposes avenues of action in an endeavour to better respond to the challenges of the 21st century when it comes to education and training.

Of the many and complex changes taking place in European society, the White Paper picks out three "factors of upheaval":

- ➔ the impact of the information society;
- ➔ the impact of internationalization;
- ➔ the impact of the scientific and technological world.

The White Paper puts forward two responses that education can give:

- ➔ enhancement of a broad knowledge base as a means of understanding the world outside the confines of education and as a compulsory step towards the acquisition of new technical skills;
- ➔ fostering of the ability for employment by encouraging the mobility of young people and employees, developing apprenticeship/traineeship and all types of linked work and training, validating the skills acquired throughout life, whether or not through a tradition course, and lastly offering a second chance to young people threatened with exclusion.

Although it has no intention of taking the place of national competences, the White Paper proposes guidelines for action linked to five general objectives:

- ➔ encourage the acquisition of new knowledge through the introduction of a European system of accreditation of technical and vocational skills, which could take the form of personal skills certificates allowing instant assessment of everybody's skills and qualifications as and when they are acquired throughout life;
- ➔ bring schools and the business sector closer together through the development of all forms of apprenticeship/traineeship: opening up of education to the world of work, involvement of companies in the training drive. The White Paper proposes to set up networks of apprenticeship/traineeship centres covering various European countries, to foster apprentice/trainee mobility along the lines of the Erasmus model and to establish a European apprentice/trainee charter;
- ➔ combat exclusion by offering young people under threat a second chance through school. The White Paper proposes to redeploy additional European funding under existing programmes (Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci) to supplement national and local schemes, and to promote the development of European voluntary service;
- ➔ proficiency in three Community languages: as multilingualism is a fundamental element of the learning society and an essential condition for benefiting from the occupational and personal opportunities opened up by the single market, the White Paper proposes the creation of a 'European quality label' which would be

awarded to schools that have been the best in developing the teaching of languages;

- treat capital investment and investment in training on an equal basis, for example by allowing companies which have made a special effort on training to enter some of this investment in their balance sheet as part of their intangible assets.

The ESC Opinion, (adopted on 10 July 1996 by 111 votes to two, with one abstention) broadly backs the White Paper proposals. The Committee also believes, however, that a sixth objective must be added to the five set by the White paper, namely the humanist dimension of the learning society. In the Committee's view, education programmes must be established to cultivate democratic and social awareness among schoolchildren, inculcating them with their fellow-beings and acceptance of the diversity of humankind in terms of age, colour, race, sex, religion or ideology.

The Committee recognizes the importance of the White paper proposals but feels that they should be linked to a precise finance plan.

2. EDUCATION

There were significant developments in the action undertaken by the European Union in the area of education and training in 1995.

On 14 March 1995 the Socrates programme was adopted covering the whole of education. It groups together all the actions conducted hitherto on education (Erasmus, Lingua) and develops new activities: actions in the area of secondary school education, promotion of open and distance learning, transnational projects designed to strengthen the European dimension of adult education, exchanges of information and experience on education systems.

The education programme comprises three areas of Community action: higher education, school education and horizontal activities in the areas of language learning, of open and distance education and learning, information and adult education.

The programme aims to develop the European dimension in studies at all levels and to promote knowledge of the languages of the Community so that its citizens may take advantage of opportunities arising from the completion of the European Union, while at the same time reinforcing solidarity between the peoples of the Community.

It aims (a) to increase mobility for students in higher education and (b) to promote broad and intensive cooperation between institutions at all levels of education in every Member State, and to realize their intellectual potential through the mobility of teaching staff.

It also aims to encourage the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study, in particular through the introduction of academic credits and modules aimed at facilitating such recognition at Community level.

The programme has moreover been opened up to the countries of the European Economic Area, to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and to Malta and Cyprus.

The ESC Opinion on the Community action programme Socrates was unanimously adopted in April 1994. The Committee underlined that the programme has to be seen in the light of Chapter 7 of the White Paper on growth, competitiveness and employ-

ment in which education is mentioned as a key instrument for combating social exclusion and unemployment, racism and xenophobia.

The Committee welcomed Socrates as an exchange programme, and considered it an efficient instrument for the promotion of the European dimension in Education. The instrument proposed by the Commission was to give priority to projects and activities relating to the teaching of the lesser used or lesser taught languages of the Community. Even though the Committee was in favour of protecting the lesser used and lesser taught languages, it did not think that this instrument would contribute to the European dimension. Referring to its previous Opinions, the Committee recommended that two Community languages be taught in addition to the national language.

The Committee welcomed the integration and continuation of the former Erasmus and Lingua exchange programmes. The Committee was in favour of the extension given in the programme to education at school level and noted with satisfaction the innovation of the programme. In fact, the Committee in the Opinion on Lingua was already concerned with the fact that teaching of languages was limited in to the higher education level.

As the Committee had stated in its Opinion on Youth for Europe III, it was underlined that the supply of information is one of the most important instruments for making a programme a success or failure. In the same Opinion, the Committee had asked for a proper coordination between the various exchange programmes of the Commission, i.e. Leonardo, Socrates and Youth for Europe III. The different national agencies should cooperate in an efficient way, as they have done in the past.

3. VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The Leonardo da Vinci programme came into force on 1 January 1995. The programme relates to vocational training and carries on - while introducing a number of innovations - from the Comett, FORCE, PETRA and Eurotecnet. Its aim is to improve the quality of vocational training in Europe to develop exchanges, to better understand the running and actual needs of training, and to encourage adjustment to the information society.

Community action is based on a common framework of objectives aimed among other things at:

- ➔ improving the quality and innovative capacity of Member States' vocational training systems and arrangements;
- ➔ developing the European dimension in vocational training and guidance;
- ➔ promoting lifelong vocational training and supporting associated policies;
- ➔ encouraging vocational training measures for unskilled adults;
- ➔ enhancing the status and attractiveness of vocational education and training, and fostering equivalence between academic and vocational qualifications;
- ➔ promoting vocational training for young people and preparing them for adult and working life;
- ➔ encouraging vocational training measures for disadvantaged young people lacking adequate training.

The ESC Opinion on the Leonardo da Vinci programme was unanimously adopted in March 1994. In the Committee's view the proposal, submitted in accordance with Article 127 of the European Union Treaty, primarily fulfilled two formal objectives: a) Together with the Socrates programme it placed the Community's education and training policy on a new, coherent planned footing and b) it follows on directly from the earlier, on the whole successful, individual programmes. However, the Committee also pointed out that the acid test for any assessment of the Commission's proposals and their priorities will be their actual contribution to the development of quality education (Art. 126) and a high level of qualifications (Art. 127) in the Member States, in such a way as to foster the harmonious development of the Union as a whole.

In this respect the Committee stressed that it regards Article 127 as a thoroughly solid legal basis for the action programme.

Basically the Committee also welcomed the Commission's initiative because:

- ➔ It will encourage a broad debate at national and Community level on the Community new responsibilities in the field of vocational training policy in the post-Maastricht era, and
- ➔ by bringing together the Community's basic vocational training activities in one comprehensive programme, it can shed more light on individual projects and their overall relationship to each other.

While fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content and organization of vocational training, the primary goal of Community policy must be to ensure that everyone in the Community receives a high-quality education and that standards rise. Of equal importance are a) the individual's right to an education in keeping with his or her abilities and motivation and b) safeguarding the competitiveness of the Member State economies, and hence the economic prosperity of the Community. The Community's particular contribution in this context is to encourage cooperation between Member States so as to develop the European dimension.

In the Committee's view, the Community's aid policy under its Social Fund should be coordinated with the objectives laid down in Article 127, since only by recourse to these funds (substantial in comparison with those for the Leonardo da Vinci programme) will the Community be able to mount an effective vocational training policy.

The Committee calls on the Commission to ensure that overall the funding for the proposed programme is equal to that provided for the programme on general and university education.

4. YOUTH

On 14 March 1995 the Community programme "Youth for Europe" (3rd phase) was adopted. It ensures continuity of the Community initiatives developed previously for the benefit of the young ("Youth for Europe" and a part of PETRA) while at the same time extending their scope. The programme is adopted for the period running from 1 January 1995 to 31 December 1999.

The programme provides for specific aims which include:

- ➔ intensification of exchanges of young people aged 15 to 25 living in the Community;

- ➔ support for innovatory projects and initiatives from young people;
- ➔ allow young people to benefit from joint Community-level actions linked to the general aims of youth policy at national or Community level;
- ➔ step up cooperation among Member States and between them and the Commission through exchanges of experience and joint initiatives at Community level;
- ➔ promoting exchanges with young people in non-member countries.

Under the proposal special attention will be paid to ensuring that disadvantaged young people will have access to activities run under the programme and to improving the quality of the projects undertaken for this target group.

The Commission encourages Member States to take appropriate measures to preserve and develop the structures set up to achieve the objectives of the programme and to make suitable arrangement for evaluating and monitoring the action set out in the programme and for applying consultation and selection mechanisms.

The ESC opinion on the Youth for Europe programme was unanimously adopted in March 1994. The Committee approved the contents of the programme, it had, however, some remarks about the introduction of the proposal.

The ECU 157 million envisaged for the programme in actual fact works out at less than ECU 3 per person aged between 15 and 25, over the period 1995-1999.

In addition, project funding must make provision for the costs involved in effective preparation and subsequent assessment of the actual operations.

The aim of the "Youth for Europe" programme is to promote intercultural learning by young people. It would therefore be wrong to concentrate solely on the major differences in periods spent abroad by young people from different Member States.

In an Own-initiative Opinion on Youth Unemployment (adopted by majority vote, with four abstentions, in July 1995) the ESC discussed and recommended proposals, which do not come under labour market initiatives exclusively. It draws the attention to the growing difficulty of integrating young people into working life. It sets out to increase awareness of the need to network labour-market initiatives and programmes to tackle youth unemployment, thereby launching a political offensive to guarantee a better future for young people.

- ➔ Wage-cost subsidy scheme for young job seekers, supporting newly created jobs over a limited period.
- ➔ Voluntary European Community Service scheme open to all under 25-year old. This could be supplemented by a trainee programme with emphasis on business exchange experience. The starting point for such a scheme could be a kind of social partnership (rather like a social contract) between the public authorities, businesses, the social partners and young volunteers in the regions.
- ➔ "Workplace Europe" action programme. The purpose would be to provide young people who are preparing for career, receiving vocational training or who have qualified with no job to go, with the opportunity to do a traineeship leading to qualifications, of at least three months in an EU company. The programme should be financed out of the European Social Fund budget.

In April 1996 the ESC adopted an Opinion on the Working Document of the Commission entitled Towards a European Voluntary Service for Young People, by 39 votes to one, with four abstentions.

The Commission Working Document set out proposals for a European Voluntary Service for young people. This pilot action is intended to provide the foundation for the multi-year voluntary service programme which the Commission hopes to present at the end of 1996.

The Commission aims to promote transnational voluntary service by involving the national organizations already participating in the Youth for Europe scheme. They will act as intermediaries between host organizations abroad and potential volunteers.

The Commission believes that this programme can help to provide its young participants with work experience. On completion of their activities, they will receive a certificate serving as evidence of participation for future employers.

The Commission acknowledges that prospective participants still face a number of problems, volunteers have neither student nor employee status.

The Committee endorsed the Commission's initiative. In its Opinion on youth unemployment (October 1995, CES 1162/95), the Committee called for establishment of a programme to provide young people with work-experience opportunities.

As the working document makes clear, the Commission has adopted a pragmatic approach by launching the pilot action without waiting for all the many problems to be ironed out. This approach is endorsed.

At the same time, the Committee thinks that a certain minimum conditions must be satisfied before such action can be initiated. In the first place, volunteers must have expressly guaranteed social coverage for health and disability hazards. In the Committee's view, this should be the responsibility of the host organization supervising the volunteers' activities. The Commission must verify that their cover is indeed provided.

The Committee recommends maximum involvement of the social partners in the formulation, development and execution of the programme. The involvement of workers' and employers' organizations is particularly important to prevent the replacement of normal employment by voluntary work. It is now clear that the Committee can endorse the Commission's proposal only on the condition that full-scale employment is not replaced by voluntary activity. This applies to both new and existing jobs.

5. 1996 - THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF LIFELONG LEARNING

The European Year of Lifelong Learning has five main objectives:

- to underline the importance of continuing education and training throughout one's life in a world which is undergoing great social and economic upheaval;
- to promote individuals' personal development and sense of initiative, their integration into working life and society, their participation in the process of democratic decision-making and their ability to adapt to economic, technological and social change;

- ➔ to introduce Europeans to new knowledge transmission methods, in particular educational software and multimedia;
- ➔ to boost education and training programmes set up by the European Union (Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates and Youth for Europe III), particularly in terms of their ability to promote continuing education and training;
- ➔ to provide a framework for discussion of the proposals set out in the Commission's White Papers Growth, Competitiveness and Employment (December 1993) and Learning and Teaching: Towards the Learning Society (November 1995).

The ESC Opinion, unanimously adopted in November 1994, approved the Commission initiative to establish 1996 as the European Year of Lifelong Learning. The initiative was already mentioned in the White Paper on "growth, competitiveness, employment" which states: "Investment in human resources is necessary in order to increase competitiveness, and especially in order to make it easier to assimilate and spread new technologies." The Committee fully endorsed the decisive role of education and training in preparing Europe for its role in the 21st century.

The White Paper on European Social Policy states categorically that: "Social policy must serve the interests of the Union as a whole and of all its people, both those in employment and those who are not". By the same token activities during the European Year of Lifelong Learning concern not only all the citizens of the Union, but also workers in the strict sense of the term.

The Committee also stressed that good continuing education and training must be founded upon sound initial training.

6. CEDEFOP

From September 1995, the CEDEFOP became operational at its new premises in Thessaloniki. The objective of CEDEFOP is to promote and develop vocational and continuing training at Community level, and to assist the Commission in implementing the Community vocational training policy. Its activities centre on three essential points: qualifications and trends in occupations, the analysis of vocational training systems in the Member States, communication and information. The purpose of the Centre is to provide assistance to the Commission and, through its scientific and technical activities, to contribute to the promotion of vocational and continuing training at Community level. Its tasks are:

- ➔ to compile and disseminate selected documentation covering recent developments, research and structural problems connected with vocational training;
- ➔ to develop and coordinate research teams in the field of vocational training;
- ➔ to stimulate interest in the changing nature of occupations and vocational qualifications so as to raise awareness and improve information in this respect within the Union;
- ➔ to contribute to the implementation of the Leonardo da Vinci programme and to administer, on behalf of the Commission, the 'study visits' programme aimed at promoting exchanges of experience and information between experts and policy-makers in the field of training;
- ➔ to provide a forum for meetings and discussion.

The ESC has consistently drawn attention to the valuable role and work by CEDEFOP (also see point 8).

7. THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND CONTRIBUTION TO INVESTMENT IN TRAINING

The European Social Fund (ESF) devotes a large share of its resources (around 47 billion ECU in the period 1994 to 1999) to supporting Member State training efforts. Objective 3 of the Structural Funds which absorbs about 27% of ESF resources, focuses on young people, the long-term unemployed, those who have difficulty entering the labour market - such as the disabled - and women. Support is given to improvements in training systems as well as training itself.

The objective 4 of the ESF is geared especially to the identification of future skill needs and to the corresponding adaptation of worker qualifications. As such, it supports Member State efforts to develop life-long learning and adaptation to changes brought about by technological progress. Its aim is to encourage greater investment by businesses in human resources in order to both preserve jobs and increase competitiveness. Priority is given to SMEs to anticipate their skill needs and train their employees accordingly.

The ESF also makes a major contribution to national training measures in the context of regional programmes (Objectives 2 and 5b and regional Initiatives) and gives special support to the less developed Objective 1 regions to strengthen and improve education and training systems and to encourage closer links with business.

In the ESC opinion on the Commission Communication "Action for Employment in Europe: a confidence pact" the Committee underlines that the Structural Funds need to be restructured.

Objectives 1, 2, 5b and 6 are specifically regional in character and involve measures restricted to certain eligible regions or parts of regions. The regions eligible for assistance are not all areas of high unemployment; some of them have very low levels of unemployment; conversely, some regions which are not eligible for assistance under these objectives have relatively high unemployment levels: Objectives 3,4, and 5a, on the other hand, cover the whole of the EU.

According to the Commission's fifth periodic report on social and economic situation and development of the regions in the EU, the average level of unemployment in Objective 1 regions has actually increased from 15.4% in 1986 to 16.7% in 1993. In the same period, the average level of unemployment in Objective 2 regions declined from 14.7% to 12.1% and in Objective 5b regions from 8.3% to 7.3%. It therefore appears that Objective 2 has had the most favourable impact on employment.

Objective 3 is specifically aimed, inter alia, at combating long-term unemployment and facilitating the integration into working life of young people. The ESC concludes that the best way of deploying the Structural Funds in the service of employment would be to increase, and also to use more effectively the amount allocated to the Objectives specifically geared to boosting employment.

8. RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS

Recognition of qualifications is crucial to the freedom of movement of workers. Community experience in the area of recognition of vocational and academic qualifications is particularly rich.

The objective of the communication from the Commission on the recognition of qualifications for academic and professional purposes is to remove obstacles to mobility of the professions and of training stemming from the coexistence of 15 national education systems. This communication supplements Directives 85/368/EEC - on the comparability of vocational training qualifications.

A number of aims are being pursued, involving instruments for occupational recognition, essentially of a legal nature, designed to establish a European area for the professions, and instruments for academic recognition, of an exhortational nature, designed to strengthen the European dimension of education. There is a need for greater interaction between the various objectives or recognition of qualifications.

The actions concerning the academic recognition of qualifications and periods of study between the Member States can facilitate free movement of the professions. Conversely, the systems for recognition of qualifications for professional purposes can facilitate mobility during studies.

The communication identifies four paths to follow in order to develop synergy between recognition for professional purposes and recognition for academic purposes:

- ➔ development of high quality information sources to improve knowledge of the different educational systems within the Community;
- ➔ establishment of academic and professional networks as a mechanism for exchange of information between academics and professionals, in order to obtain a more thorough knowledge of the issues surrounding the various forms of recognition;
- ➔ joint adaptation of courses, following up programmes such as Erasmus, Comett and Lingua;
- ➔ bringing course quality assessment systems, current or future, into contact with each other and involving members of the professional and business world.

The Commission seeks, via these four paths, to strengthen the initiatives it has already undertaken in this area and to establish new ones coming under its competence.

The ESC Opinion was adopted by a majority in April 1995. The ESC welcomed the Communication as the proposals are necessary as a contribution to an open and progressive education, training and qualifications space to support the employment agenda firmly set out in the White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment.

However, it was pointed out that the Communication did not relate to the comparability work on vocational qualifications for skilled workers undertaken by the CEDEFOP as well as relating to the two General Directives on mutual recognition for professional and occupational purposes. The Commission should consider developing firm proposals building on these achievements so that all levels of occupations and related vocational qualifications for skilled workers also benefit from further inno-

vative measures that give recognition benefits and open up mobility possibilities for workers.

It was also pointed out that the first and second General Directives on mutual recognition have been implemented, or are in the process of completing implementation. The first General Directive (1989) concerning the recognition of higher education diplomas awarded on completion of professional education and training of at least three years duration has now been transposed into domestic legislation except in two Member States. The second General Directive (1992) concerned with supplementing and extending the first one through a second general system for the recognition of professional education and training has been transposed in only four Member States so far. This represents considerable progress but many obstacles remain particularly in the area where occupations are not regulated.

Very relevant to such general considerations is the experience and contribution that the social partners can make undertaking this wider assessment in the formulation and implementation of proposals.

A proposal for a European Parliament and Council Directive, establishing a mechanism for the recognition of qualifications in respect of the professional activities covered by the Directives on liberalization and transitional measures and supplementing the general systems for the recognition of qualifications, was presented in February 1996.

The purpose of the proposal is to introduce machinery for the recognition of qualifications relating to professional activities not covered by the existing "general system" Directives (89/48/EEC and 92/51/EEC). The machinery will permit migrants to apply for the recognition of their qualifications if they do not possess the professional experience required in order to invoke a "transitional measures" Directive.

In July 1996 the ESC adopted the Opinion by 103 votes to two, with six abstentions. The Committee welcomed the proposal. It considered that the previous general systems worked well on the whole, that no complaints were registered and that consultations with the main professional associations at European level would indicate that the current proposal could work on the same basis. The Commission will need to be vigilant on this point, monitoring progress to ensure freedom of movement and be prepared to intervene if necessary. At the same time, the basic mutual recognition "assumption" principle might require fine-tuning if or when enlargement of the EU takes place.

More in detail the Committee also urged the Commission:

- ➔ to include a mechanism to assist professional bodies at Member State level in their bilateral negotiations
- ➔ to draw up a simplified and updated brochure on mutual recognition of qualifications
- ➔ to propose rigorous and clear appeal procedures
- ➔ to handle the burden of proof of good repute sensitively
- ➔ to ensure the active participation of the relevant associations in implementation of the Directive and the monitoring of its application.

9. OPENING UP TO THIRD COUNTRIES

One of the increasingly important dimensions of European policy on education and training is its ever-widening opening up to third countries.

- ➔ since 1 January 1995 the EFTA countries who signed the EEA Agreement have taken part in all Community cooperation activities in the areas of education, training and youth;
 - ➔ all Community programmes will gradually be opened up to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.
 - ➔ the European Training Foundation established in Turin became operational on 1 January 1995; its duties include technical assistance to the Commission for the implementation of actions under the Tempus programme;
- decisions were adopted to establish a cooperation programme in the area of higher education and vocational training with the USA and Canada.

TEMPUS II

Tempus (the trans European mobility scheme for university studies) developed from a request by the European Council held in Strasbourg in December 1989 to the Commission to submit proposals on the measures taken in the area of higher education and training in order to support the reforms under way in the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In April 1993, the Council approved the Decision (Decision 93/246/EEC) adopting the second phase (Tempus II) covering 1994 - 1998. The programme's overall objectives are to:

- ➔ Promote the development of higher education systems in the countries involved in the Phare and Tacis programmes.
- ➔ Assist in curriculum development in those countries.
- ➔ Assist in university structural reform and management.
- ➔ Assist in the development of skill-related advanced training.

Article 11 of the above Decision requires the Commission to submit an interim report including the results of the programme evaluation, before 30 April 1996 and, where appropriate, a proposal for the continuation or adaptation of Tempus II for the period beginning 1 July 1998.

The proposal to amend Decision 93/246/EEC suggests in broad terms:

- ➔ To promote higher education and training as key sectors in the economic and social reform process, in agreement with the Phare and Tacis programme beneficiary countries. Within those programmes, Tempus will ensure continued support for the reform of these countries' education and training systems.
- ➔ To include higher education and training in Community programmes such as Leonardo and Socrates which are an integral part of the strategic pre-accession process for countries involved in the Phare programme, as established at the Essen European Council in December 1994.

- ➔ To ensure that the development of higher education and the improvement of vocational qualifications become valid instruments for the economic reform required to guarantee the associated countries' integration into the European Union's internal market.

In July 1996 the ESC adopted the Opinion by 98 votes to one, with three abstentions. It was stated that the beneficiary countries have made positive strides since the first Tempus programme was approved. The Committee is pleased that proposals have led to activities that have played a decisive role in stepping up the pace of social and economic reform in the beneficiary countries, gradually bringing them closer to integration into the European Union.

The Committee, therefore, welcomed the extension of Tempus and its adjustment to meet concrete objectives of improved socio-economic conditions in the beneficiary countries.

The Joint European Projects should continue to be the major Programme support. The participation of industry in the JEPs should be more highly rated and favoured in the project selection process. As this is an amendment of the second phase of Tempus II, it would be particularly beneficial for the Programme if participation of beneficiary country enterprises was made a basic selection criterion. The participation of these enterprises will, of course, be matched by the involvement in the project of one European Union enterprise.

The Committee recommends that the social partners be assigned a greater role in Joint European Project preparations and evaluation. Those partners most aware of labour market's training and qualification requirements will, through their active participation in the process, ensure that courses offered by the higher education centres meet requirements of the labour market.

Without more active involvement of the social partners and industry in the projects, it will not be possible to combine the needs, in terms of restructuring, of universities, industry and the professions into a single reform process.

The Committee attaches top priority to education reforms designed to meet the industry's training needs.

The professional staff having to meet the production and management challenges in the economies undergoing major reform should be provided with training facilities to allow them to bring themselves up to date, retrain or round off their training. The new generations of professionals coming into the job market should also have received training that meets the market's needs.

Higher education should ensure that it produces professional people with qualifications and know-how in line with the country's development needs.

10. OBSTACLES TO TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY

In October 1996 the Commission published a working document, the Green Paper on Education - Training - Research: The obstacles to transnational mobility. The Green Paper identifies five major obstacles to mobility and proposes for consideration some possible lines of action to remove such obstacles.

1. An obstacle to transnational training for the unemployed

Case Study: Somebody looking for work and wanting to undergo training in another Member State loses his rights to unemployment benefit and social security if this training lasts longer than three months.

Line of action: Extend to the unemployed in training Community law that allows job searching in another Member State for six months without a loss of rights and ensure the continued right to unemployment benefits for the unemployed undertaking training in another Member State.

2. Statutory problems for trainees and young people doing voluntary work

Case Study: A student wishing to take up a traineeship in a company in another Member State is confronted in certain Member States with difficulties in finding a host company, as legislation in certain Member States would consider him as an employee, and the company would therefore have to pay him at least a nominal wage and would be responsible for associated social payments.

Line of action: Give a legal framework to the situation of trainees and volunteers within the European Community.

3. Territorial restriction of student grants

Case study: In most Member States, students entitled to grants or other forms of assistance lose them if they pursue their studies in another Member State: these grants are only paid for studies in the Member State paying them.

Line of action: Remove the "territoriality" of grants and other assistance.

4. The fiscal arrangements for research grants

Case study: Community research grants are implemented differently across the Community depending on the status given to the researchers by the host country, i.e. that of student, employee or self-employed.

Line of action: Apply the same rules to Community funded researchers in all Member States of the European Union, either by the exemption of grants, or coordination of the rules applied in all Member States.

5. Problems of mutual recognition of academic and vocational qualifications

Case study: Employees wanting to undergo training in a country other than their own can face problems due to the lack of mutual recognition of qualifications,

training courses and placements. This lack of recognition has a very strong discouraging effect.

Line of action: Move towards mutual recognition of placements and vocational training courses, extend the European credit transfer system (ECTS) already established in higher education through Community action, to the vocational training sector.

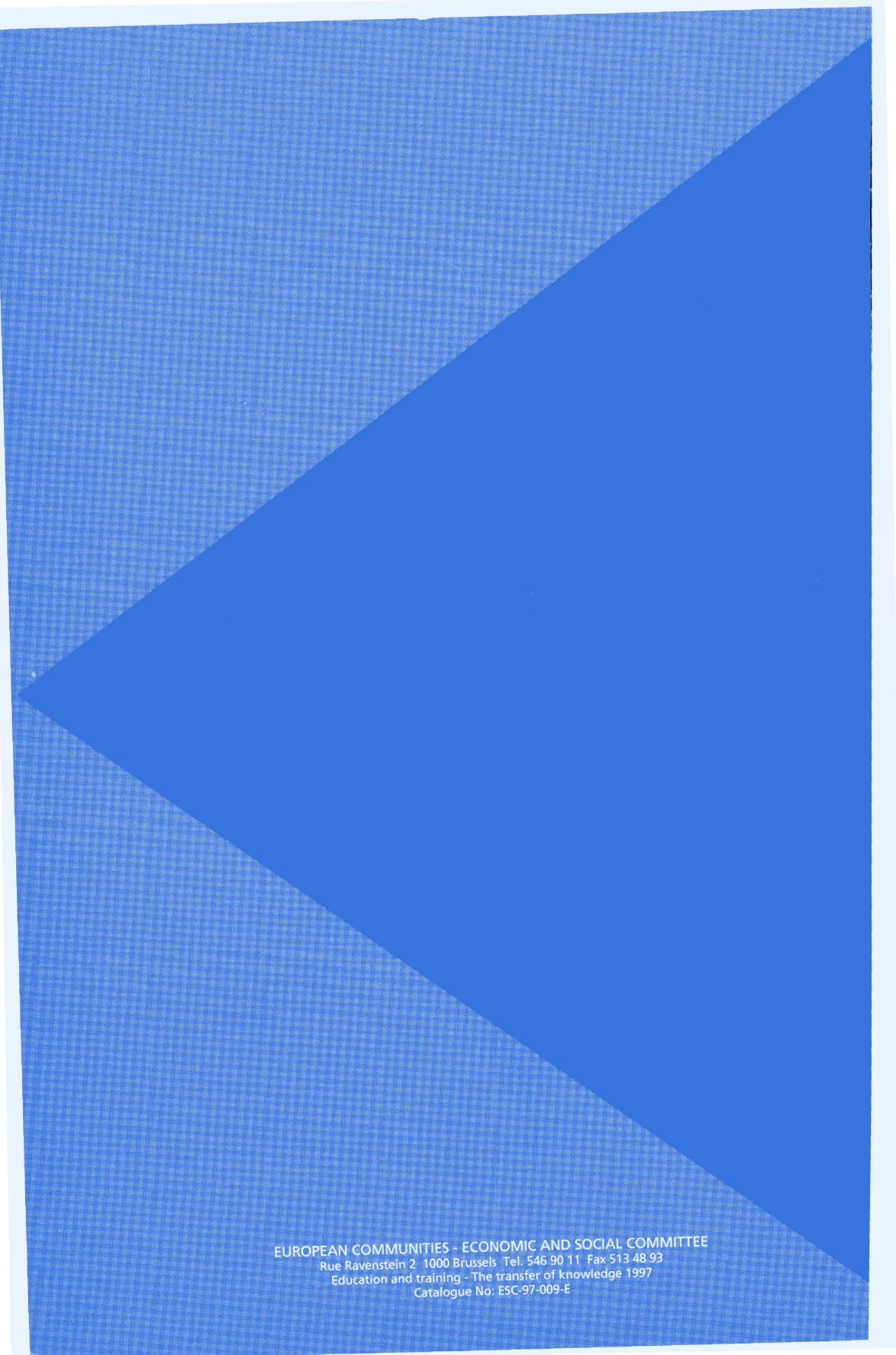
The Committee is presently working on an Opinion on the Green Paper.

11. OUTLOOK

In the next few years, the measures envisaged to follow up the White Paper "Teaching and learning: towards the learning society", will be focused on their potential impact on employment and the fight against exclusion. As well as pursuing action already in progress (creation of a European voluntary service, teachers and students), the Commission intends to launch a trans-European project for the accreditation of skills and a programme to develop apprenticeship in Europe, and to work on "second chance" schools and new occupations in the tertiary sector.

European Communities - Economic and Social Committee
Education and Training - The transfer of knowledge 1997
34 pages E, F, Gr, Sp Catalogue No. ESC-97-009-E

1



EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES - ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE
Rue Ravenstein 2 1000 Brussels Tel. 546 90 11 Fax 513 48 93
Education and training - The transfer of knowledge 1997
Catalogue No: ESC-97-009-E