

# COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(78) 642 final

Brussels, 27 November 1978

Draft

## COUNCIL REGULATION (EEC)

on the organization of a labour force sample survey in the  
spring of 1979

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(submitted by the Commission to the Council)



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EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. Taking into account the wish of the Member States to set up at Community level a system of surveys and statistical studies with a view to improving the information available on the structure and short-term trends of labour markets, the Commission forwarded to the Council in October 1975 a communication on the Programme of Employment Statistics (1).

The Council took formal note of this Programme on 19 July 1976, approving its main outlines and reaffirming the importance of its effective implementation.

2. The labour force sample survey is a crucial part of this programme: it is designed to enable the structure and current trends of employment and unemployment to be recorded at regular intervals. Since it is carried out among households, it is the most suitable instrument for providing a link between the general population censuses which take place only every 10 years.

In the context of the information required by the Community for its action programmes, the labour force sample survey is at present one of the few statistical sources providing data which are compiled applying uniform methods and based on common definitions. Since the results it contains illustrate different aspects of the problems of employment and unemployment, it provides the statistical information which is needed for social, economic, regional, industrial and agricultural policy and for the policy on education and the environment.

3. The Programme of Employment Statistics provides for the holding of these labour force sample surveys every two years.

Pursuant to Council Regulations, the latest surveys were carried out in 1973, 1975 and 1977 (2). Thus the next survey is due to be held in spring 1979.

4. The results of the labour force sample surveys enable an analysis to be made for the Community, for each Member State, and at certain regional levels, of the following:

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(1) Doc. COM(75) 485 final

(2) 1973: Council Regulation (EEC)2723/72 of 19 December 1972

1975: Council Regulation (EEC)2640/74 of 15 October 1974

1977: Council Regulation (EEC)2874/76 of 23 November 1976

- a) the structure of the population in terms of the main criteria relating to activity (persons with an occupation, unemployed persons, non-active persons);
- b) the structure of employment in terms of individual characteristics (sex, age, marital status, etc) and occupational characteristics (status, sector, branch, etc);
- c) the structure of hours worked per week;
- d) the structure of unemployment and of other persons seeking employment in terms of individual characteristics, taking account of the type of work sought, the reasons for seeking employment, the duration and method of search.

Account is also taken of certain specific aspects of the activity which are not brought out by other statistics. In particular, this involves the different types of activity (full time/part-time, occasional or supplementary activities, second activity), and regional and/or occupational mobility.

5. In consultation with the experts of the nine Member States, it has been decided that the basic survey described above will be repeated in 1979 without major change compared with previous surveys.
6. The Programme of Employment Statistics also envisages the possibility of introducing into the labour force sample surveys supplementary questions on problems directly related to employment.

The first special survey of this type, on general education and vocational training, was carried out in 1973. Amongst other things, the results of this survey have enabled a preliminary study to be made of the relationship between occupation and training.

In 1975 supplementary questions were asked on working conditions. This has allowed a more thorough analysis to be carried out at Community level of the problems of night work, Sunday working and shift work. Some very useful information on the distance between home and the place of work has also been collected.

For the most recent survey, that of 1977, the following two subjects were chosen: determination of the work potential among persons not economically active and pensions.

7. In view of the increasing difficulty of integrating a large number of persons, particularly young people, into working life, the supplementary survey for 1979 will deal with relationship between employment and training. In their search for

solutions to these problems, both the Member States and the Commission require more precise information about the current situation. However the statistics which are collected at present provide very limited answers to these questions, since the administrative statistics relating to employment and to education provide little basis for studying the relationship between training and the opportunities for entering working life.

The fact that these statistics need to be improved was emphasized by the Ministers of Education at their meeting of 13 December 1976 and confirmed, *inter alia*, by the Tripartite Conference in Luxembourg on 27 June 1977.

The experts of the nine Member States have agreed that this subject should be chosen.

8. The following matters will be investigated with the aid of a special questionnaire:

- a) education and training in progress at the time of the survey;
- b) initial school and university studies completed;
- c) the transition from initial school or university studies to working life;
- d) the most recent post-school training completed.

The data on education and training in progress at the time of the survey will relate to all persons aged 14 to 44 years, while the questions on education and training completed and on the transition to working life will be confined to persons aged 14 to 44 years who are employed or are seeking employment.

Education and training will be described in terms both of its technical aspects and of its relationship to individual circumstances.

A comparison of individual data from the basic survey with data from the special survey will produce a large amount of statistical information with which to analyze the transition to working life. Simultaneous processing of data from the two surveys is also the most suitable and most economical method by which to obtain this type of information.

9. As laid down in article 9 of the Draft Regulation, the Member States will receive for the conduct of this survey a flat-rate sum proportional to the number of households questioned. This amount will be covered by the budget of the European Communities (art. 264). On the basis of the sums allocated for earlier surveys and taking account of the number of households, the maximum cost of the financial support to the nine Member States is estimated to be 2 000 000 ECU, which corresponds to a flat-rate subsidy per household of 3.33 ECU.

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THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 213 thereof,

Having regard to the draft Regulation submitted by the Commission,

Whereas, in order to carry out the tasks which are assigned to it by the Treaty, in particular in Articles 2, 117, 118, 122 and 123 thereof, the Commission must know the situation and the developments in employment and unemployment;

Whereas the statistical information available in each of the Member States does not provide a suitable basis for comparison, particularly because of the differences between the laws, rules and administrative practices of the Member States on which these statistics are based;

Whereas by reason of the considerable changes which take place in the field of employment and unemployment, it appears necessary to make available at regular intervals statistics permitting proper comparisons between Member States;

Whereas the best method of knowing the level and the structure of employment and unemployment consists in carrying out harmonized and synchronized Community sample surveys of labour forces; whereas only the renewal in 1979 of the surveys already carried out in 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1971, 1973, 1975 and 1977 enables this information to be obtained;

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION :

Article 1

In the spring of 1979 the Commission shall undertake a labour force survey based on a sample of households in each of the Member States.

Article 2

This survey shall be carried out in each of the Member States in a sample of households whose residence is in the territory of these States at the time of the survey. The information shall be collected for each member of the households included in the sample.

Article 3

The sample shall comprise between 60 000 and 100 000 households each in the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom; between 30 000 and 50 000 each in Belgium, the Netherlands and Ireland; between 30 000 and 40 000 in Denmark, and approximately 10 000 households in Luxembourg.

Article 4

The basic survey shall cover:

- a) the individual characteristics of all members of the households questioned;
- b) the occupations of these persons (status, branch of activity, hours of work, etc.) at the time of the survey and one year prior to it;
- c) the search for work, taking into account the type of employment sought, reasons for seeking it, and the length of time spent seeking it.

Article 5

A supplementary survey dealing with the relationship between employment and training shall be conducted as part of the 1979 labour force sample survey. Questions shall be asked on:

- A. the education and training currently being received by persons aged 14 to 44 years;
- B. the process of integration into working life for persons aged 14 to 44 years who are in employment or are seeking employment, with details of
  - a) the school and university studies they have completed,
  - b) the transition from initial school and university studies to working life,
  - c) the most recent post-school training completed.

Education and/or training shall be described both in terms of its technical aspects (type, duration, etc.) and in terms of individual circumstances (objectives, financial assistance, etc.).

Article 6

The information shall be gathered by the statistical authorities of the Member States on the basis of a list of questions drawn up by the Commission in co-operation with the said authorities.

The Commission shall determine, in collaboration with these authorities, the technical details of the survey (basic survey and supplementary survey). It shall also establish, under the same conditions, the starting and closing dates of the survey and the deadlines for answers to the questionnaires.

Article 7

The statistical authorities of the Member States shall check the answers collected. They shall forward to the Commission the results of the survey for each respondent, who shall remain anonymous.

Article 8

The individual items of information provided in the course of the survey may be used only for statistical purposes. They may not be used for fiscal or other purposes and may not be communicated to third parties.

Member States shall take appropriate measures:

- a) to ensure that the information requested is furnished truthfully and in its entirety within the times specified;
- b) to punish any infringement of the obligation under the first paragraph to preserve the confidentiality of the information gathered.

Article 9

For the conduct of this survey, Member States shall receive a flat-rate sum proportional to the number of households surveyed. This amount shall be set off against the credits provided for this purpose in the budget of the European Communities.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at

For the Council  
The President