

PRESS RELEASE

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1372nd Council meeting
- LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS -
Brussels, 30 November 1989

President: Mr Jean-Pierre SOISSON

Minister for Labour, Employment
and Vocational Training
of the French Republic

The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium

Mr Luc VAN DEN BRANDE Minister for Labour and Employment

Denmark

Mr Erik KIRKEGAARD Minister for Labour

Germany

Mr Wolfgang VOGT Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Labour and Social Affairs

Greece

Mr Apostolos KAKLAMANIS Minister for Labour

Spain

Mr Manuel CHAVES GONZALEZ Minister for Labour and Social Security

France

Mr Jean-Pierre SOISSON Minister for Labour, Employment and Vocational Training

Mr André LAIGNEL State Secretary attached to the Minister for Labour, Employment and Vocational Training, with responsibility for Vocational Training

Mrs Michèle ANDRE State Secretary for Women's Rights

Ireland

Mr Bertie AHERN Minister for Labour

Italy

Mr DONAT CATTIN Minister for Labour

Mr Ugo GRIPPO State Secretary,
Ministry for Labour

Luxembourg

Mr Thierry STOLL

Deputy Permanent Representative

Netherlands

Mrs Elske TER VELD

State Secretary, Ministry of
Social Affairs and Employment

Portugal

Mr José Albino da SILVA PENEDA

Minister for Labour and
Social Security

United Kingdom

Mr Norman FOWLER

Secretary of State for Employment

Mr Tim EGGAR

Minister of State,
Department of Employment

o

o

o

Commission

Mr Martin BANGEMANN
Ms Vasso PAPANDREOU

Vice-President
Member

30.XI.1989

EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT SURVEY

The Council of the European Communities and the Ministers for Labour and Social Affairs, meeting within the Council, adopted the following Resolution on setting up a European employment survey:

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES AND THE MINISTERS FOR LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community,

Having regard to the Council Resolution of 22 December 1986 on an action programme on employment growth ⁽¹⁾,

Having regard to the Council Resolution of 5 June 1989 on continuing vocational training ⁽²⁾,

Having regard to the conclusions of the European Council meetings in Hanover on 27 and 28 June 1988, in Rhodes on 2 and 3 December 1988 and in Madrid on 26 and 27 June 1989,

(1) OJ No C 340, 31.12.1986, p. 1

(2) OJ No C 148, 15. 6.1989, p. 1.

Whereas completion of the internal market will bring enhanced growth thereby creating substantially more jobs in the Member States in the medium term;

Whereas the initial phase of increased competition and intensified restructuring could lead to job losses and changes in employment patterns localized in certain regions and certain sectors;

Whereas in order to make a success of these changes it is essential for all those involved to identify the problems soon enough to be able to minimize the likely adverse effects during the transitional phase and, conversely, to make the most of the advantages that are anticipated in the medium term;

Whereas, also, shortages of skilled labour are beginning to emerge in many sectors and whereas in some Member States, owing to their specific demographic trends, the working population is in decline;

Whereas employment policies are the responsibility of the Member States;

Whereas, in accordance with Community law, the Commission has a major role to play in the field of employment;

Whereas both sides of industry should be closely involved in efforts to investigate these problems and seek practical means of solving them, and whereas this co-operation would pave the way for progress in the Member States' economies;

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Whereas it is important that those engaged in economic and social affairs should have the information they need to define strategies which take account of the employment situation in sectors affected by completion of the internal market,

1. INVITE the Commission and the Member States to set up a European employment survey its remit being to study employment trends on an ongoing basis, focussing on the sectors affected by completion of the internal market, taking into account the work already carried out at Community level, namely:
 - to gather available information from the Member States on the prospects for change in employment and qualifications in the sectors most affected by completion of the internal market;
 - to provide an overview of the information gathered, making it possible to distinguish the broad trends in those sectors;
 - to circulate widely, for operational purposes, the results of the work referred to in the preceding indent to all those with responsibility for economic and social affairs, especially both sides of industry within the Community;

2. INVITE the Commission, in conjunction with the Member States and after consulting both sides of industry, to submit to them on a regular basis the topics and sectors covered by the survey's remit and, at the annual debate on employment, to submit to the Council a summary of work carried out on these topics and sectors;

INVITE the Commission, from the beginning of 1990, to take the necessary steps to set up the survey in question by calling upon the human and financial resources at its disposal;

3. INVITE the Member States to co-operate with the Commission in conducting the survey;

INVITE in particular each Member State to designate a national co-ordinator to provide the information referred to in the first indent of point 1 and give the Commission any appropriate assistance with its task, thereby creating a Community-wide network to assist in carrying out the remit described in point 1;

CONSIDER that the information provided within the framework of the survey should contribute to enabling both the Member States and the Commission to reflect, inter alia, upon improving the employment and job creation impact of the European Social Fund".

EUROTECNET PROGRAMME

The Council agreed to the Community action programme to promote innovation in the field of vocational training as a result of technological change in the European Community (EUROTECNET).

The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to finalize the text of the Decision with a view to its formal adoption as an "A" item at a forthcoming meeting.

The programme will run for five years from 1 January 1990 with the aim of promoting innovation in the fields of basic vocational training and continuing vocational training to take account of technological changes and their impact on employment, work and qualifications.

The EUROTECNET programme comprises a network of national or transnational innovatory projects designed to develop and improve vocational training policies and systems for the new technologies in the Member States and a series of Community measures designed to support and supplement national measures.

WORKPLACE DIRECTIVE

The Council adopted the Directive concerning the minimum safety and health requirements for the workplace (first individual Directive within the meaning of the framework Directive of 12 June 1989 on the protection of the safety and health of workers at work).

The Directive provides, inter alia, that:

- workplaces used for the first time after 31 December 1992 must satisfy the minimum safety and health requirements laid down in Annex I (concerning, for example: electrical installations, emergency routes and exits, fire detection and fire fighting, ventilation of enclosed workplaces, room temperature and room lighting, rest rooms, sanitary equipment, etc.);
- in the case of workplaces in use before 1 January 1993, employers must apply the minimum safety and health requirements laid down in Annex II - which are less stringent than those laid down in Annex I - at the latest four years after 1 January 1993.

Under the Directive, consultation and participation of workers and/or their representatives will take place in accordance with Article 11 of the framework Directive on the matters covered by this Directive, including its Annexes.

WORK EQUIPMENT DIRECTIVE

The Council adopted the Directive concerning the minimum safety and health requirements for the use of work equipment by workers at work (second individual Directive within the meaning of the framework Directive of 12 June 1989 on the protection of the safety and health of workers at work).

The Directive lays down in particular that the employer must obtain and/or use:

- work equipment which, if provided to workers in the undertaking and/or establishment for the first time after 31 December 1992, complies with the provisions of any relevant Community Directive which is applicable or the minimum requirements laid down in the Annex, to the extent that no other Community Directive is applicable or is so only partially;

- work equipment which, if already provided to workers in the undertaking and/or establishment by 31 December 1992, complies with the minimum requirements laid down in the Annex no later than four years after that date.

Under the Directive, consultation and participation of workers and/or their representatives will take place in accordance with Article 11 of the framework Directive on the matters covered by this Directive, including its Annex.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT DIRECTIVE

The Council adopted the Directive concerning the minimum safety and health requirements for the use of personal protective equipment by workers at work (third individual Directive within the meaning of the framework Directive of 12 June 1989 on the protection of the safety and health of workers at work).

The Directive lays down in particular that, before choosing personal protective equipment, the employer is required to assess the personal protective equipment which he intends to use. This assessment shall involve, inter alia, an analysis and assessment of risks which cannot be avoided by other means.

In accordance with the Directive, Member States shall ensure that general rules are established for the use of personal protective equipment covering risk cases and situations where the use of personal protective equipment is necessary.

The Annexes to the Directive contain useful information on the establishment of these notes.

The Directive also lays down that consultation and participation of workers and/or their representatives will take place in accordance with Article 11 of the framework Directive on the matters covered by this Directive, including its Annexes.

DIRECTIVE ON CARCINOGENS

The Council approved its common position on the proposal for a Council Directive on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens at work. This common position will be sent to the European Parliament under the co-operation procedure.

The proposed Directive lays down that the employer must reduce use of carcinogens at the place of work, in particular by replacing them, insofar as is technically possible, with substances, preparations or processes which are not dangerous or are less dangerous. Whenever carcinogens are used, the employer must apply a series of organizational measures to prevent or reduce exposure.

FORCE PROGRAMME

Commissioner PAPANDREOU presented to the Council a Commission communication on a Community action programme for the development of continuing vocational training (FORCE). Following an exchange of views, the President drew the following conclusions:

"The Council notes with satisfaction that the Commission has submitted a Community action programme for the development of continuing vocational training.

This proposal, prepared following the Council Resolution of 5 June, gives concrete form to the challenge which effective access to continuing vocational training represents for every European and is consistent with the priorities outlined in the context of the social dialogue at VAL DUCHESSE.

In line with the approach evolved at the informal meeting in AUXERRE, this action programme will reinforce the fundamental role which continuing vocational training needs to play in the completion of the interior market. It will help to underpin investment in human resources, which is a decisive factor both socially and economically.

For this reason, the Council considers that the Working Party on Social Questions needs to commence examination of the Commission proposal without delay. The Council wishes to reach a decision by 1 July 1990."

COMMISSION ACTION PROGRAMME IN THE FIELD OF EMPLOYMENT, INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS,
SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND TRAINING

The Council heard an oral communication from Mrs PAPANDREOU on the Commission action programme on the implementation of the Social Charter.

The Council awaits with interest the first series of proposals which the Commission will be submitting to it under its 1990 work programme.

EUROPEAN COMPANY

The Council heard a communication from Vice-President BANGEMANN on the social aspects of the European Company.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN EUROPE

The Council heard a communication from the French delegation on vocational training and the employment of women in Europe.

ILO: SAFETY IN THE USE OF CHEMICALS AT WORK

The Council adopted a Decision concerning the negotiations of the International Labour Conference on Safety in the Use of Chemicals at Work.

MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONSDisplay screen equipment

Following substantive approval at its Social Affairs meeting on 30 October 1989, the Council adopted the common position with a view to the adoption of the Directive on the minimum safety and health requirements for work with display screen equipment.

It should be noted that this Directive will be the 5th individual Directive within the meaning of the framework Directive of 12 June 1989 and will constitute the final action of the Article 118a package submitted by the Commission in March 1988.

Under the Directive, employers are required to:

- analyse workstations in order to evaluate the safety and health conditions to which they give rise for their workers;
- take appropriate measures to ensure that workstations meet the minimum requirements laid down in the Annex to the Directive with regard to equipment, environment and operator/computer interface.

The Directive also lays down that:

- the worker's activities must be planned in such a way that daily work on a display screen is periodically interrupted;
- workers are entitled to an appropriate eye and eyesight test and, if necessary, an ophthalmological examination.

The Directive lays down that consultation and participation of workers and/or their representatives will take place in accordance with Article 11 of the framework Directive on the matters covered by this Directive.

Genetically modified organisms

Following the policy agreement reached at its Environment meeting on 19 September 1989, the Council adopted the common position with a view to the adoption of a Directive on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms.

This Directive, together with that on the confined use of genetically modified organisms - agreed on at the Environment Council meeting on 8 and 9 June 1989 but for which the consultation procedure with the European Parliament is still in progress - sets out to create a consistent framework for the development of biotechnology within the Community under safe conditions.

It is designed to ensure that genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are used in the natural environment in complete safety. It lays down a case-by-case notification and approval procedure, with the procedure varying depending on whether release is for R&D purposes or in the form of products for placing on the market.

Relations with the EFTA countries

The Council decided to sign, subject to conclusion, the Agreements between the European Economic Community and the Republic of Austria, the Republic of Finland, the Republic of Iceland, the Kingdom of Norway, the Kingdom of Sweden and the Swiss Confederation on trade electronic data interchange using the communications network (TEDIS).

Undertakings, including small and medium-sized enterprises, research establishments and other bodies established in the six partner countries may

tender for and perform contracts under the TEDIS programme on the same terms and under the same procedures as those applying to undertakings, research establishments and other bodies established in the Community.

The outcome of the implementation of the TEDIS programme and, in particular, of contracts concluded in accordance with Article 2 is notified to the Contracting Parties.

Financial contributions by the Contracting Parties will be determined by a GDP-based proportional coefficient.

The Council also decided to consult the European Parliament, in accordance with the urgent procedure, and the Economic and Social Committee on the aforementioned Agreements.



Bruxelles, le 29 novembre 1989

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NOTE BIO(89) 362 AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX
CC. AUX MEMBRES DU SERVICE DU PORTE-PAROLE

PREPARATION DU CONSEIL AFFAIRES SOCIALES DU 30 NOVEMBRE 1989

Bonnes perspectives pour la réunion des Ministres des Affaires Sociales qui se tiendra le 30 novembre à Bruxelles. Le Conseil sera en mesure d'adopter trois directives sur lesquelles il avait déjà dégagé une position commune lors de sa session du 5 avril 1989. Il s'agit des directives concernant la santé et la sécurité dans les "lieux de travail", les "équipements de travail" et les "équipements de protection individuelle" (voir aussi IP(89)223). Sur ces textes ne subsiste pratiquement plus de difficultés de fond. Dans certains cas, cependant, le Conseil est revenu à sa position commune en dépit des amendements du Parlement européen repris par la Commission.

En ce qui concerne plus particulièrement les prescriptions minimales de sécurité et de santé pour les lieux de travail une distinction est faite entre les lieux de travail utilisés pour la première fois après le 31 décembre 1992 et ceux déjà utilisés. Pour ces derniers, les prescriptions minimales devraient s'appliquer, de l'avis unanime des délégations, au plus tard quatre ans après le 31 décembre 1992. Reprenant un amendement du PE, la Commission a proposé deux ans (la position commune prévoyait cinq ans).

Même situation pour la directive "équipements de travail". La Commission, dans sa proposition réexaminée suite à l'avis du PE, a proposé que le délai d'adaptation pour les machines utilisées au travail et qui existent avant le 31 décembre 1992 soit de deux ans. La position commune avait retenu cinq ans, onze délégations sont en faveur de quatre ans, l'Italie soutient la Commission.

De même, le Conseil sera en mesure d'approuver la proposition de décision relative au programme "EUROTECNET II". Il s'agit du deuxième programme d'action communautaire dans le domaine de la formation professionnelle et du changement technologique (voir aussi P-42).

Ce programme, d'une durée de cinq ans (1990-1994), a principalement pour objectif d'améliorer la capacité de l'offre de formation initiale et continue dans la Communauté et de prendre en considération les changements technologiques et leur impact sur l'emploi, le travail et les qualifications nécessaires.

Bien que le programme soit prévu pour cinq ans, la Commission n'a proposé d'estimation budgétaire que pour les trois premières années du programme dans le cadre des perspectives financières 1988-1992 résultant de l'Accord Interinstitutionnel. L'enveloppe budgétaire de 7,5 Mécus qui est suggérée est destinée à couvrir les actions d'accompagnement du programme (échanges, animations, assistance technique, conseils, etc.) alors que le financement des projets proprement dits relèverait des Etats membres; des ressources complémentaires pourraient être obtenues auprès du Fonds social pour des projets éligibles à ce fonds (approximativement 21,5 Mécus seraient à mobiliser dans le cadre du Fonds social).

Autre sujet important le programme d'action relatif à la mise en oeuvre des droits contenus dans le projet de Charte sociale. Madame PAPANDREOU a l'intention de faire une communication orale en vue d'informer les Ministres du contenu du programme (voir aussi P-67). On s'attend ainsi à un premier débat à ce sujet au sein du Conseil.

Le Conseil examinera enfin un projet de résolution que la Présidence lui a présenté, invitant la Commission et les Etats membres à mettre en place un Observatoire européen de l'emploi. La mission de cet observatoire serait d'analyser l'évolution prévisible de l'emploi dans les Etats membres. Il est à noter à cet égard que la Commission utilise déjà un système d'observation de l'évolution de l'emploi dans la Communauté.

Amitiés,

C. STATHOPOULOS

Bruxelles, le 30 novembre 1989

NOTE BIO(89) 362 (suite 1 et fin) AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX
CC. AUX MEMBRES DU SERVICE DU PORTE-PAROLE

Accord du Conseil sur les trois directives concernant la santé et la sécurité dans les lieux de travail, les équipements de travail et les équipements de protection individuelle. Comme prévu, les ministres ont pu adopter ces trois propositions moyennant certains amendements. Ainsi, en ce qui concerne la directive "lieux de travail" la période transitoire prévue pour l'adaptation des lieux de travail déjà utilisés a été réduite à trois ans (quatre pour le Portugal). Le délai d'adaptation pour les "équipements de travail" existants avant le 31 décembre 1992 est resté de quatre ans. A l'accord sur ces trois directives s'est ajouté un accord sur une position commune concernant la directive "agents cancérogènes". Il s'agit de la proposition de la Commission qui vise à harmoniser les réglementations des Etats membres concernant l'exposition professionnelle et de renforcer la protection des travailleurs contre 31 agents cancérogènes et huit procédés industriels. Pour ces substances et procédés, l'exposition des travailleurs doit être réduite à un niveau aussi faible qu'il est raisonnablement possible d'atteindre.

Avec l'adoption des trois directives sur la santé et la sécurité et de la position commune sur la "directive cancérogènes", l'Europe sociale a acquis de nouvelles frontières, a déclaré le Commissaire Madame PAPANDREOU. Chaque directive concernant la santé et la sécurité adoptée, a-t-elle ajouté, renforce le parallélisme établi entre la construction du Grand Marché Intérieur et de l'Europe sociale, diminue les inégalités et encourage la croissance en améliorant les conditions de vie et de travail.

Le Conseil a également approuvé le projet de résolution pour la mise en oeuvre d'un Observatoire européen de l'emploi.

En marge du Conseil la Présidence et Madame PAPANDREOU ont reçu le Président du PE Enrique BARON CRESPO qui leur a exprimé l'avis de son Institution sur le projet de Charte sociale. Le texte du compromis que la Présidence soumettra au Conseil européen n'est pas acceptable, selon M. Baron. "C'est le projet de Charte sociale adopté par la Commission européenne", a-t-il dit, "qui constitue un premier pas pour la mise en place de droits sociaux fondamentaux dans la CEE et le PE considère qu'il ne représente qu'un socle minimum en-deçà duquel le Conseil européen ne saurait aller".

Le Conseil a eu aussi en restreinte un bref débat sur le programme d'action que la Commission a présenté et qui complète la Charte sociale. Madame PAPANDREOU a esquissé les grandes lignes de ce programme. Certaines délégations (IT, DE, ESP) ont déclaré qu'ayant à peine reçu le document, elles n'étaient pas en mesure de faire de commentaires, d'autres ont appuyé les idées principales du programme; la délégation britannique a exprimé son appui pour des initiatives dans le domaine de la santé et de la sécurité dans les lieux de travail, mais aussi des critiques sur d'autres mesures envisagées soulignant qu'il faudrait donner la priorité à la création d'emplois.

Le Conseil a approuvé aussi la décision relative au programme "EUROTECNET II" (accord du DK ad referendum). Il a écouté enfin un exposé du Vice-Président BANGEMANN sur la société de droit européen. M. BANGEMANN a esquissé le contenu de la proposition de la Commission tout en soulignant son caractère optionnel et le choix qui peut être fait entre trois modèles différents.

Amitiés,

C.D. EHLERMANN