

INFORMATION**SOCIAL POLICY****ACTIVITY OF EMPLOYMENT OFFICES IN MEMBER COUNTRIES**

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For the third time the Commission has prepared a report on the activities of employment offices in the member countries. It covers the period 1968-70. These reports were one of the priority tasks specified by the Council in June 1967.

The report differs from the last one dated 1969, in that the details given of the regulations and organisation are limited to noting the chief changes introduced during the intervening years. There are in fact not many of these. On the other hand, the account of the actual activities covers a wide field, and frequent adaptations to circumstances make it a changing one. At the end is a note of the prospects for new activities. This deserves special attention, since it reflects efforts which are being made to provide more cooperation in the future between the employment services in the member countries.

This note is intended as a summary of the outstanding features in the report.

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES, REGULATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE

- In Belgium, special mention must be made of the Royal Order of December 5, 1969, providing for the declaration of collective redundancies and the compulsory declaration of vacancies by firms employing twenty workers or more.
- In Germany, the law on the promotion of labour came into force on July 1, 1969. The classes of firms in which indemnity payments may be made for partial unemployment, has been extended to agriculture and forestry, and to workers living wholly or partly from an occupation as domestic workers. In addition, foreign workers now receive unemployment assistance payments on the same terms as German workers.

In France, the changes in 1969 and 1970 included the formation of the National Information Office on education and the professions and, as part of this office, of the study and research centre on qualifications; the formation of an employment study Centre; the structural and operational expansion of the national employment agency, which has now been set up in nearly two-thirds of the departments.

- In Italy, law No. 300 of May 20, 1970, provides additional deliberative tasks for the local placing committees. This is part of the "democratisation" process in the job-finding service, since the trade union organisations now play a more active part in the management.

In some provinces in central and southern Italy, too, the Ministry for Labour and Social Security has decided to set up specialised committees for the vocational training of workers, and the formation of the social infrastructure. These committees will make it easier to deal with the problems raised by new industrial development.

- In Luxembourg, the law of January 28, 1971 provides a compensatory wage in cases of unemployment arising from winter weather conditions and exceeding 8 hours per calendar month.

- In the Netherlands it has been provided that in exceptional circumstances use may be made of the special "35 % regulation", which gives workers, aged 50 or over, the benefit of an additional wage payment when they are working for a new employer. The Agriculture Improvement and Development Fund has set up a system of aids for people who have left agriculture and are undergoing vocational re-training.

ORGANISATION OF ACTIVITIES

The indications in the earlier reports are, for the most part, still valid.

- It should be recalled that in Belgium there has been a reorganisation of the National Employment Offices. There are now no longer distinct services for men, women, young people and handicapped persons. All applicants for employment now report to the same service.

- In Germany, the Federal Labour Institute now comprises six divisions, one of which is the Employment and Professional Market Research Institute. This institute employs 400 people. The use of computers is increasing; and the work carried out, or contemplated, in this field is aimed at improving the service provided to the citizen, and to stimulate the automation process inside the administration.

- In France, about 80 % of the wage-earning population was, at the end of 1970, served by the National Employment Agency.

- In the Netherlands, the reorganisation plan for the Finance division of the Directorate General for Employment was brought into force in 1969, in a mechanised form, using electronic computers to expand the information service.

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- In Germany, the Federal Labour Institute has been putting the accent on security of employment, resulting from an active employment policy. On the top line of its preoccupations, has been the promotion of vocational education through orientation and financial aid.

- In France, it was decided at the end of 1970, to set up an inter-ministerial Employment Committee. It is provided that this shall be formed by the ministries concerned, and its work prepared by a permanent committee civil servants with its own secretariat. In addition, a decree law of September 1970, reformed the system of regional committees for vocational training, social promotion and employment. The reform in question will materially increase the part played by these committees, and promote a better balance between their work on vocational training and those relating to employment which had been neglected in some regions.

- In the Netherlands, new institutions set up about the middle of 1970, were the Employment Market Council and the inter-ministerial Employment Market Policy Committee. The aim is to secure, so far as possible, the integration of employment policy into the general policy of the country.

RESULTS OF SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

During the period covered, there was an improvement in the employment potential. The employment services were seeking to reduce qualitative labour shortages and intensify their action in vocational training and re-education for the benefit of specific categories of workers -- young people, women, elderly workers and handicapped persons.

Moreover, several countries paid special attention to further training and re-training for the personnel of the employment services.

Not only was there an intensified effort to secure the best use being made of the national manpower available; but it was also necessary for several countries to recruit considerable numbers of foreign workers to deal with increased labour requirements.

In Germany, the number of newly-introduced foreign workers from outside the EEC rose from 390,879 in 1968 to 646,079 in 1969 and 523,265 in 1970. The 1970 total includes 198,742 Yugoslavs, 123,626 Turks, 64,026 Greeks and 48,836 Spaniards.

The proportion of foreign workers to total wage-earners in Germany, rose from 4.8 % in September 1968 (1,089,873 workers, including 321,148 women) to 7.2 % a year later (1,501,409 workers, including 439,400 women) and 9.1 % at the end of September 1970 (1,948,951 workers, including 557,989 women).

France also recruited a substantial amount of foreign manpower, comprising 167,802 units in 1969 and 174,243 in 1970 (including 9,016 and 8,784 respectively from EEC countries). These figures are at record level, and show a big increase compared with requirements in 1968 (93,165) 1967 (107,833) and even 1966 (131,723). The salient fact is the high proportion of Portuguese workers, representing about 50 % of the immigrant population. Spontaneous immigration (81.9 % in 1968, 69.2 % in 1969 and 60.9 % in 1970, excluding those from EEC countries) is still at a high level, despite official efforts to the contrary.

In Italy, there was a continuation in the downward tendency in the number of migrants. In 1970 emigration was about 150,000, or 30,000 less than in 1969.

Switzerland is still the main outlet in Europe for Italian manpower.

In the Netherlands, there has been some official concern at the comparatively large inward movement of foreign workers outside the official recruitment sources. In many cases it has been difficult to find sufficient facilities for their reception, housing and establishment.

In Luxembourg, foreign workers account for over 30 % of the total wage-earning population, excluding public servants. In 1970, the number of foreign workers was 33,100, including 7,400 frontier workers.

PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER ACTIVITIES AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE NATIONAL SERVICES

Increased importance is everywhere attached to plans and experiments for improving methods of work and quick adaptation to very fluctuating circumstances.

The funds and technical resources available are gradually increasing. This includes computerisation and also the growing interest attached to the regular exchange of information on the plans and experiments in neighbouring countries.

Under the latter head, the Commission has organised a number of courses and seminars in cooperation with the departments concerned in the member countries; and these have made it possible to compare the placing activities in the different member countries, and to make it clear how the cooperation between them should be extended, both in scope and in depth. Twelve of these were held between 1966 and 1971, of which six were devoted mainly to examining the current problems in the employment offices, five to discussing the use of electronic computers and one to the study of employment forecasting.

In the future, the subject matter will give priority to questions relating to the training and re-training of the personnel in the employment offices. This should cover, in the first instance, an analysis and comparison of the contents and sub-division of the training programmes, and also the teaching methods and resources brought into play.