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Brussels, 18 November 1992

**VOCATIONAL TRAINING
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE
The role of the European Community**

**SYMPOSIUM
THESSALONIKI, 23-24 NOVEMBER 1992**

995.1
491.2(3)

A long-term challenge

The changes which have taken place in Central and Eastern Europe have led to the European Community being called upon to play a decisive role in helping these new democracies to implement political, economic and social reforms. Investment in human resources and the establishment of new vocational training policies are crucial factors in this process.

This was clearly recognised throughout the Community and immediate action was taken to relieve the often urgent needs of these countries. Now that almost three years have elapsed, however, it is time to evaluate the work undertaken and to examine new types of assistance with particular emphasis on long-term aid.

This is the dual objective of the symposium to be held in Thessaloniki on 23-24 November 1992 on behalf of the Commission of the European Communities' Task Force for Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth, which will be attended by Ms Vasso Papandreou, Member of the Commission.

A challenge for East and West

Investment in human resources is a challenge which must be met jointly at the highest levels by both East and West in order that new cooperative efforts based on mutual benefit may develop.

For this reason, the symposium is directed at policy-makers in countries of Central and Eastern Europe eligible for the Community aid programme PHARE⁽¹⁾, their partners in the Community and the Group of 24, as well as large international organisations involved in aid programmes to those countries.

(1) Countries eligible for the PHARE programme are Albania, the Baltic States (Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia), Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Czech and Slovak Republics and Slovenia.

A challenge for businesses

The employment situation in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe is changing dramatically as their economies are gradually being opened up to market forces. Privatisation is accompanied by a rise in structural unemployment, while businesses try to become more competitive by opting for better qualified human resources.

Vocational training must not be carried out in isolation from the economic restructuring of these countries. With this in mind, the symposium's organisers, the Assembly of French Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Central Association of Greek Chambers of Commerce and the Greek Federation of Industry, have proposed the following subjects for discussion at the symposium:

- (1) Identification of needs
- (2) Development of vocational training systems
- (3) Optimal utilisation of human resources for economic and social development

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At the end of these two days of evaluation, exchanges and discussions, a number of recommendations will be made with a view to maintaining or further developing cooperation between the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Western nations.

By way of conclusion to the symposium, politicians from East and West will be invited to give their opinions on the policy approaches which have resulted from the work.

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