

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(91) 233 final

Brussels, 28 August 1991

Proposal for a
COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

on child care

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

A. BACKGROUND

1. In 1989, eleven Member States of the European Community adopted the Community Charter of basic social rights of workers with certain undertakings regarding the development of equal opportunities for men and women (Paragraph 16) and the reconciliation of occupational and family obligations.
2. In its action programme implementing the Community Charter, the Commission has included among its aims the adoption of a Recommendation concerning child care.
3. Studies have shown inadequacies and gaps in all the Member States and that measures are required to reconcile family responsibilities arising from the care and upbringing of children with the employment, education and training of parents and other adults with family responsibilities for children; and the adverse effects of this situation on the attainment of equal opportunities for men and women in employment, training and education and the well-being of their families⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾.
4. The Commission Action Programme implementing the Community Charter of basic social rights for workers notes that, as early as 1982, the First Action Programme on Equality highlighted the link between employment and childcare. The Second Community Action Programme on the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Women (1985-1990) noted that: "A sine qua non for the promotion of true equality at work is the sharing of family and occupational responsibilities, particularly the development of adequate child-minding facilities and a review of social infrastructures in general".
5. The Third Medium-Term Community Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (1991-1995), in the context of improving the working conditions and the reconciliation between work and family responsibilities for men and women, envisages the Commission undertaking measures concerning the development of child care facilities and leave for family reasons.

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- (1) "Childcare and Equality of Opportunity". Consolidated Report to the European Commission, Peter Moss, Co-ordinator, Childcare Network, based on national reports of Network representatives in the Twelve Member States, April 1988.
 - (2) "Infrastructure and Women's Employment": Centre for Research on European Women (CREW) and James McLoone and Maire O'Leary, University College, Galway, V/174/90-EN, October 1989.
 - (3) "Who Cares for Europe's Children?", by A. Phillips and P. Moss, Brussels, European Commission, 1989.

6. The communication from the Commission on Family Policies of 8 August 1989⁽⁴⁾ mentions the need to continue actions to reconcile professional and family life and to encourage the sharing of family responsibilities and attaches particular importance to the intensification of current work relating to the "Childcare Network". It also draws attention in this context to the need for job flexibility, the development of atypical working timetables and job status, and the provision of adequate basic infrastructures (working hours of public and private services, transport).
7. In the present economic context, there is a clear need for closer approximation in levels of support for employed parents, including services providing care for children, in order to eliminate imbalances in the labour market and facilitate mobility between Member States. The Single Market will produce new jobs and women will be able to take advantage of these, if support measures, including services providing care for children are available and affordable. These support services are also essential, if women are to undertake training and retraining which is crucial during periods of labour market restructuring. Finally, these support services are equally essential, if the Community is to make the optimum use of women's skills, talents and abilities. It is thus economically and socially desirable to improve the quantity and quality of services providing care for children and other measures intended to reconcile responsibilities arising from the care and upbringing of children with the employment, education and training of parents.

B. SITUATION IN THE MEMBER STATES

The Employment Position of Women and Men with Children

1. Annex 1 provides an overview of some aspects of the employment position of women and men with children. This Annex shows the continuing differential impact of children and their care on participation by men and women in the labour market; 44% of women with children aged 0-9 were employed in 1988, less than half the level for men with children (92%) and substantially lower than the employment rate for childless women of childbearing age (71%). Women with children were more likely to be employed part-time, compared to men with children or childless women.
2. There is little data on the qualitative aspects of parents' employment (for example, type of occupation, pay and conditions, prospects, etc.), which would permit an assessment of the impact of children and their care on these aspects of the employment position of men and women.

Gaps in Service Provision

3. Annex 2 shows the number of places in publicly-funded services for children up to the age of 10, as a percentage of the child population; it excludes children attending primary school, which is compulsory in all the Member States, but shows the hours that children attend primary schools, and therefore the contribution that these schools make to children's care. Although information on the private sector is more sketchy, there are indications of substantial unmet need for services throughout the Community, even in the country with the highest level of provision.

(4) COM (89) 363 final.

4. In addition to levels of provision varying substantially between Member States, differences also exist within individual Member States, so that there are disparities between regions regarding access to services. In general, cities tend to be better served than rural areas regarding public provision.

Ages of Children covered by existing services

5. There is a high level of unmet need for children under three, with places for 5% or less of children under three in services in eight Member States. Places in publicly-funded pre-primary schooling or kindergartens for children over the age of three, but below compulsory school age, are more common. Four countries provide such provision for over 80% of children; six for 50%-80%; and two for under 50%. In many countries, however, the hours of opening of these services, like primary schools are such that they need to be supplemented by services providing "outside school hours" care. There is, however, also a high level of unmet need for services providing this type of care with very low levels of provision in many countries⁽⁵⁾ (see Annex 1, last column).
6. Public funding may be supplemented by other sources of funding, for example from parents and employers. At present the extent of public funding varies widely, not only between Member States, but also for different age groups of children within Member States. Except in one Member State, most parents with children under 3 must rely on privately funded services; parents with children under 3 using publicly funded services, and parents with older children at kindergarten, have to pay according to income, although levels of payment vary between Member States; parents with children in pre-primary or primary school make no payment although they may have to pay for "outside school hours" care. In five countries, there is some degree of tax relief to parents for costs incurred in using services, but this subsidy is much less than that given to parents using publicly-funded services and is not income-related so as to give more assistance to lower income families.
7. Moreover, research suggests that a barrier to increased labour force participation rates, and more particularly employment rates, among women is the presence or absence of suitable childcare arrangements for children from 0 to 10 and not merely creches for babies. Care for children of school age fails to be provided for more than a third of children in any country and is virtually non-existent or very low in nine Member States. While variations can partly be explained by different levels of need and national income, this is only a partial explanation for the unequal access to services that exists.

(5) "Childcare in the European Communities, 1985-1990". Published in "Women in Europe", August, 1990. Peter Moss, Co-ordinator, Childcare Network.

8. Major gaps in information make it impossible to provide comprehensive and comparative data on the position in Member States, not only as regards services providing care for children, but also leave arrangements for employed parents with responsibility for the care and upbringing of children, the environment, structure and organisation of the workplace and the sharing of family responsibilities which are component parts of a broad approach to child care (see section C below).
9. Information on privately funded childcare services is generally inadequate, if available at all. Many women, however, seek private solutions. Surveys show that relatives provide childcare for most children under 3 in all Member States but one and private or workplace nurseries provide less than 2% of care for the under-threes in all countries.

Leave Arrangements for employed parents with responsibility for the care and upbringing of children

10. Annex 3 provides an overview of Parental Leave. Main points about this provision are that parental leave is offered in 8 countries, one offers a more general leave which can be used for child care purposes; there is no provision in three countries. Periods of leave vary from 10 weeks to nearly 3 years. Except for Denmark, parents taking leave receive either no payment or else a payment that is low in relation to normal earnings; leave is also inflexible in terms of the degree of choice available to parents in how they may take leave (for example, parents may not choose between taking leave on a full-time or part-time basis, or between taking it in one bloc of time or several). Leave is taken overwhelmingly by mothers.
11. In addition to this form of leave, six countries provide some statutory leave to care for sick children, but this is only paid in three cases. Only Denmark provides statutory Paternity Leave.

Environment, structure and organisation of the workplace

12. As regards initiatives to reconcile working and family life in the context of the environment, structure and organization of the workplace, national studies in a few Member States suggest that developments have, so far, been limited and uneven in application (6) (7) (8).

Sharing of Family Responsibilities

13. A major change that has taken place in employment in the past 20 years is the growing proportion of women (especially married

(6) "The Industrial Relations Review and Report", UK, May-June, 1989.

(7) "Retaining Women Employees", Hilary Metcalf, Institute of Manpower Studies Report, UK, 1990.

(8) "Maternity Rights: the Experience of Women and Employers", S. McRae, W.W. Daniel, Policy Studies Institute, UK, 1991.

women) in the labour force. However, women's increased participation in the world of work has not been accompanied by the measures necessary to achieve a matching reduction in women's share of family responsibilities, and to facilitate the reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities for both men and women. Many women are still forced into making undesirable choices between a career at work, carrying the double burden of also being mainly responsible for the family or a career at home, and in the main expected to make arrangements for caring for children and relatives and giving up their leisure time and even part or all of their work, if the need arises.

C. THE BROAD APPROACH TO CHILD CARE

1. An essential component of child care services is the need for quality. Quality in child care must mean that which is conducive to the welfare and development of the child. It is important to break down the false distinction between care and education, so that there is no stigmatisation of "care", in so much as it is seen as a "parking service" for parents at work. Services should be flexible, local, and multi-functional. Good quality child care is an inseparable issue from that of the people who work to provide those services. Moreover, services of poor quality will constrain women's employment, deterring some from entering the labour market and providing an additional source of stress for women already employed.
2. Reconciling family responsibilities arising from the care and upbringing of children with employment, education and training requires measures in four areas : high quality services to provide care for children while parents with family responsibilities for children are employed or receiving education or training; leave arrangements for parents with responsibility for the care and upbringing of children; changes in the culture and structure of individual workplaces, to make workplaces supportive of the needs of workers with responsibilities for the care and upbringing of children; the more equal sharing of family responsibilities arising from the care and upbringing of children, particularly between men and women. Each area is necessary, but not sufficient. A comprehensive and coherent programme, covering all these areas, is needed.

D. SERVICES TO PROVIDE CARE FOR CHILDREN

1. There is a range of services which may be provided in institutions such as nurseries, kindergartens, pre-primary or primary schools, centres providing out-of-school care; or by childminders in organised childcaring schemes.
2. The main points about such child care services are:
 - (i) There are major and unjustifiable inconsistencies, or lack of coherence, between services in a number of important areas, including : accessibility; funding and costs to parents; availability of places; hours of opening; orientation and purpose; administrative responsibility; training, pay and conditions of workers.

- (ii) Services need to work closely with local communities and with parents. This includes : responsiveness to local and parental needs and circumstances; regular contact and exchanges of information; and creating opportunities for parents and local communities to influence the objectives and management of services.
- (iii) Although Annex 2 covers only services for children until the age of 10, it should be recalled that family responsibilities arising from the care of children are wide-ranging and continue to exist at least until children leave school, although the nature of these responsibilities change, as children get older and become less dependent.
- (iv) Nearly all workers in the relevant services, whether publicly or privately funded, are women. The conditions and training of workers in child care services should be improved to reflect the importance of their work.
- (v) While some parents use private arrangements from choice, many others do so for lack of publicly-funded services. Increased services at an affordable cost are therefore necessary to ensure that there is a closing of the gap between demand and the existing level of services. Given that the need for child care is not a matter concerning parents alone, but is of economic and social consequence, public funding should also make an important contribution to provision.
- (vi) Where public funding is supplemented by other sources of funding, for example from parents and employers, this should be part of a coherent and comprehensive policy on the funding of services. Where services are provided in workplaces or otherwise supported by individual employers, this should be regarded as a supplement to locally based, integrated services and not as an alternative and should be provided within the framework of a fully developed equal opportunities policy.

E. LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR EMPLOYED PARENTS WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CARE AND UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN

Working parents may not always be able or willing to leave the care of their children to professional or other childminders. An intrinsic feature of child care is therefore the need for various forms of leave from work to enable parents to be absent from employment at key times and return without loss of job, seniority or interruption of their contractual relationship⁽⁹⁾.

(9) "The Impact of the Completion of the Internal Market on Women in the European Community".

F. THE ENVIRONMENT, STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION OF THE WORKPLACE

1. The working environment, workplace practice and attitudes are also a crucial element in a broad approach to childcare. Arrangements in these areas may additionally permit continuity of working careers and contribute towards reducing the costs of staff turnover.
2. There is therefore a need to increase understanding amongst employers and trade unions of the importance of improving the environment, structure and organisation of individual workplaces and of the means to do this. Measures are needed to review the situation in workplaces, to introduce appropriate initiatives and to monitor their effectiveness, to stimulate, evaluate and disseminate innovative measures of good employment practice. Examples of such practice include the hours at which meetings are held to avoid incompatibility with the need to collect children from creches; the importance of giving adequate notice of the need to travel; the need for flexible working hours, etc.

G. SHARING OF FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Women carry too great a share of responsibilities and that is one of the fundamental causes of women's unequal position on the labour market and consequent inequalities in employment and income. Wage rates and occupation position - central criteria for assessing quality - are not determined purely by market forces, but by the social costs of reproduction which are unequally distributed. A greater involvement of men in family responsibilities seems crucial, if women are to enter the labour market on an equal footing and to improve the quality of their working and personal lives. As well as taking a fair share of family responsibilities, men should equally be able to benefit from the full range of measures to reconcile family and professional life without jeopardising their own chances of career development or running the risk of hostile attitudes. Changes in male attitudes are needed both in the home and workplace to make the working environment more sympathetic and responsive to the needs of children.

H. THE NEED FOR INFORMATION

There is a need to make appropriate arrangements to gather regularly information on : the supply and distribution of care and education services for children; the take-up and use of services by families and the costs for families; the take-up and use of leave; the provision of employment benefits resulting from collective or workplace agreements intended to provide support to workers with family responsibilities, and the use of these benefits; and the level of participation by men in the care of children. In gathering information and reviewing progress in achieving policy objectives, particular attention should be paid to the position of certain groups of families, including : lone parents; low income families; rural families; and families with special and/or other special needs.

J. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

1. In the Commission's view, it emerges from the analysis of the issues examined above that the Member States should undertake measures to enable women and men to reconcile employment, education and training with responsibilities arising from the care and upbringing of children. The Commission therefore recommends that the Member States should undertake a number of specific initiatives, in order to ensure that all parents with such responsibilities have access to locally-based and good quality services.
2. Given that there are major gaps of information, particularly concerning the supply of privately funded services, the care arrangements made for children while parents are employed and the quality of services, it will be necessary to take steps to rectify these inadequacies. This process should aim to increase the level of knowledge about the provision of care for children to that which already exists on the educational system in general.
3. The Commission undertakes : (a) to promote, in collaboration with the Member States and the Social Partners, the exchange, assessment and dissemination of information and experience in this field; and (b) to support projects which are innovative and of transnational relevance and disseminate the results.

Annexes: 3

Parental Employment, 1988						
	% employed - women with child under 10	% employed - men with child under 10	% employed - women aged 20-39, without children	Change in % employed, 1985-88 - women with child under 10	% unemployed - women with child under 10	% unemployed - men with child under 10
Germany	38% (21%)	94% (1%)	75% (15%)	+2.6% (+2.5%)	6%	3%
France	56% (16%)	93% (1%)	75% (11%)	+1.3% (+1.9%)	10%	5%
Italy	42% (5%)	95% (2%)	55% (4%)	+3.6% (+0.7%)	8%	3%
Netherlands	32% (27%)	91% (9%)	68% (30%)	+8.2% (+7.7%)	8%	5%
Belgium	54% (16%)	92% (1%)	68% (13%)	+2.8% (+2.4%)	12%	5%
Luxembourg	38% (10%)	98% (-)	69% (5%)	+3.7% (0.6%)	2%	1%
United Kingdom	46% (32%)	88% (1%)	83% (20%)	+7.5% (+6%)	8%	8%
Ireland	23% (7%)	79% (1%)	67% (6%)	+5.1% (+1.5%)	8%	17%
Denmark	79% (32%)	95% (2%)	79% (6%)	+2.6% (-1.5%)	8%	3%
Greece	41% (5%)	95% (1%)	52% (3%)	+3.8% (-0.2%)	6%	3%
Portugal	62% (4%)	95% (1%)	69% (6%)	No Information	6%	2%
Spain	28% (4%)	89% (1%)	44% (5%)	No Information	10%	8%
European Community	44% (17%)	92% (2%)	71% (13%)	No Information	8%	5%

Key: Figures in brackets = % employed part-time

Places in publicly funded childcare services as % of all children in the age group

	Date to which data refer	For children under 3	For children from 3 to compulsory school age	Age when compulsory schooling begins	Length of school day (including midday break)	Outside school hours care for primary school children
Germany	1987	3%	65-70%	6-7 years	4-5 hours (a)	4%
France	1988	20%	95%+	6 years	8 hours	?
Italy	1986	5%	85%+	6 years	4 hours	?
Netherlands	1989	2%	50-55%	5 years	6-7 hours	1%
Belgium	1988	20%	95%+	6 years	7 hours	?
Luxembourg	1989	2%	55-60%	5 years	4-8 hours (a)	1%
United Kingdom	1988	2%	35-40%	5 years	6½ hours	(-)
Ireland	1988	2%	55%	6 years	4½-6½ hours (b)	(-)
Denmark	1989	48%	85%	7 years	3-5½ hours (a,b)	29%
Greece	1988	4%	65-70%	5½ years	4-5 hours (b)	(-)
Portugal	1988	6%	35%	6 years	6½ hours	6%
Spain	1988	?	65-70%	6 years	8 hours	(-)

NB. This Table should be read in conjunction with the national reports, which contain important qualifications and explanations. The Table shows the number of places in publicly funded services as a % of the child population; the % of children attending may be higher because some places are used on a part-time basis. Provision at playgroups in the Netherlands has not been included, although 10% of children under 3 and 25% of children aged 3-4 attend and most playgroups receive public funds. Average hours of attendance - 5-6 hours per week - are so much shorter than for other services, that it would be difficult and potentially misleading to include them on the same basis as other services; however playgroups should not be forgotten when considering publicly funded provision in the Netherlands.

Key: ? = no information; (-) = less than 0.5%; (a) = school hours vary from day to day; (b) = school hours increase as children get older.

Annex 3

	Parental Leave *
Germany	18 months. Low flat-rate payment for 6 months; payment then depends on family income, so higher income family gets less
France	Until child is 3. No payment unless 3 or more children; then low, flat-rate payment
Italy	6 months. 30% of earnings
Belgium	None, but workers can take leave for family or personal reasons (see national report)
Netherlands	None, but Government proposal for part-time leave has been made
Luxembourg	None
United Kingdom	None
Ireland	None
Denmark	10 weeks. 90% of earnings (up to a maximum level)
Greece	3 months per parent. Unpaid
Portugal	24 months. Unpaid
Spain	12 months. Unpaid

* Parental leave means entitlement to leave of a given duration to wage-earners, fathers, mothers, including staff working in the public sector, consequential upon the birth of a child, during the period following the termination of maternity leave, or to workers as defined above, or the adoption of a child during the period following its reception in the adoptive parents' household, during which period of leave the beneficiary takes responsibility for the actual care of the child.

Proposal for a
COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

on child care

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 235 thereof;

Having regard to the proposal submitted by the Commission⁽¹⁾

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament of...

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic Social Committee of...

Whereas point 16 of the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers calls for measures to be developed to enable men and women to reconcile their occupational and family obligations;

Whereas the Commission in its action programme implementing the Community Charter has included among its aims the adoption of a recommendation concerning child care;

Whereas the Community Charter notes that child-care methods, parental leave and maternity leave form part of a whole which enables people to combine their family responsibilities and occupational ambitions, and a Community response alone will not suffice, if this objective is to be attained;

Whereas in its Third Medium-Term Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (1991-1995), the Commission identified the need for further action in this area;

Whereas the Communication from the Commission on Family Policies⁽²⁾ draws attention to the need to continue actions to reconcile professional and family life and encourage the sharing of family responsibilities, and emphasises the importance of intensifying work relating to child care;

Whereas the reconciliation of professional and family life has to be viewed in a wide perspective and it is important for the Community to promote a global policy aiming to achieve this reconciliation;

Whereas it is essential to promote the well-being of children and families, ensuring that the needs of all children and families are met and taking into account that responsibilities arising from the care and upbringing of children continue up to and throughout the period of children's schooling, and to recognise the diversity that exists in the employment and household circumstances of parents;

(1)

(2) COM(89) 363 final, 8.8.1989.

Whereas inadequate provision of good quality, affordable services providing care for children and other measures to reconcile responsibility for the care and upbringing of children with the employment, education and training of parents constitutes a major barrier to women's access to and full participation in employment, education and training, on equal terms with men, as well as full participation in all areas of society;

Whereas improvements in services and other measures to reconcile responsibilities for the care and upbringing of children with the employment, education and training of parents are crucial in order to enable women to take full and equal advantage of the favourable effects of the Single Market;

Whereas furthermore, adequate services providing care for children could facilitate freedom of movement of workers and mobility on the European labour market;

Whereas child care is a broad concept which involves good quality service provision, the development of a working environment which is supportive of parents with responsibility for the care and upbringing of children, and the sharing of family responsibilities between women and men;

Whereas lack of services providing care for children and other measures to reconcile the care and upbringing of children with the employment, education and training of parents hinders the effective use of women's talents, skills and abilities and whereas demographic trends and structural changes on the labour market call for these to be better used;

Whereas some of the Member States have undertaken initiatives in this area but the measures involved have often remained limited;

Whereas in all Member States the demand for good quality, affordable care for children considerably exceeds the existing supply;

Whereas, moreover, disparities exist in good quality, affordable services providing care for children and other measures to reconcile the care and upbringing of children with the employment, education and training of parents between Member States and between regions within Member States;

Whereas the standard clause included in the Community Support Frameworks for structural policy stipulates that the actions and measures taken within such a framework must conform with and, where appropriate, contribute to the implementation of Community policy and legislation relating to equality of opportunity between women and men, and that in particular, consideration must be given to training and infrastructure requirements which facilitate labour force participation by women with children;

Whereas, furthermore, in the NOW Community Initiative for the promotion of equal opportunities for women in the field of employment and vocational training, child-care measures are provided to assist women with children to have access to the labour market and to vocational training courses;

Whereas it is therefore important to establish Community guidelines for carrying out a number of specific comprehensive actions, in order to ensure the development of good quality and affordable services providing care for children and other measures to reconcile the care and upbringing of children with the employment, education and training of parents,

HEREBY RECOMMENDS AS FOLLOWS :

Article 1

It is recommended that Member States develop measures in order to enable women and men to reconcile their occupational and their family obligations, arising from the care and upbringing of children.

Article 2

It is recommended that, to this end, the Member States develop with the appropriate involvement of central, regional and local authorities, the Social Partners and other relevant organisations, measures in the following four areas:

- (I) the provision of care for children while parents are in or seeking employment, education or training;
- (II) leave arrangements for employed parents with responsibility for the care and upbringing of children;
- (III) the environment, structure and organisation of the workplace, to make it responsive to the needs of workers with children;
- (IV) the sharing of family responsibilities arising from the care and upbringing of children between women and men.

Article 3

In relation to the provision of services providing care for children, it is recommended that Member States should take measures designed to:

- (a) enable all parents in or seeking employment, education or training to have access to locally based and good quality services. This requires that services are affordable, services combine safe and secure care with a broad education or pedagogical approach, the needs of parents and children are taken into account in determining access to services, services should be available in all areas and regions of Member States, both urban and rural areas, services should ensure access to children with special needs, with linguistic needs and to children in lone parent families, and be responsive to those needs;

- (b) encourage flexibility and diversity of services, as part of a strategy to increase choice and meet the different preferences, needs and circumstances of children and families. This should be combined with coherence between different services;
- (c) seek to improve the training (both initial and continuous) of workers in child-care services, with the objective of ensuring that this training is appropriate to the great importance and social and educative value of their work;
- (d) encourage services to work closely with parents and with local communities involving regular contact and exchanges of information, so as to be responsive to local parental needs and circumstances;
- (e) ensure that public funding makes an essential contribution to the development of affordable, good quality, coherent services which offer choice to parents.

Article 4

In relation to leave arrangements for employed parents with responsibility for the care and upbringing of children, it is recommended that Member States should continue to develop measures to take realistic account of women's increased participation in the labour force. This requires the provision of leave to enable all employed parents, both men and women, to discharge effectively their dual working and family responsibilities, with, inter alia, flexibility in how leave may be taken.

Article 5

In relation to the environment, structure and organisation of the workplace, it is recommended that Member States should:

- (a) encourage both sides of industry to promote action, inter alia, within the framework of collective agreements, to make the environment, structure and organisation of individual workplaces supportive of the needs of all working parents with responsibilities for the care and upbringing of children;
- (b) undertake initiatives to improve the employment conditions of workers in services providing care for children and ensure that the social value of their work is recognized;
- (c) promote action especially in the public sector which might serve as an example in developing initiatives in this area.

Article 6

In relation to responsibilities arising from the care and upbringing of children, it is recommended that Member States promote and encourage increased participation by men, in order to achieve a more equal sharing of parental responsibilities between men and women.

Article 7

The Member States shall inform the Commission, within three years of the date of the adoption of this Recommendation, of the measures taken to give effect to it, in order to allow the Commission to draw up a report on all such measures.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council

The President

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