

Brussels, March 1964

P/16(64)

INFORMATION MEMO

Geographical and occupational mobility of workers in
the framework of a common European employment policy

M. Levi Sandri, Member of the EEC Commission and President of the Social Affairs Group, was the official rapporteur on "Geographical and occupational mobility of workers in the framework of a common European employment policy" at the fifth meeting on the problems of European integration, arranged in Florence by the Italian Federation of Trade Unions (CISL) in collaboration with the Communities' Joint Information Service.

Referring to the introductory address by M. Sorti, General Secretary of the CISL, M. Levi Sandri stated that nothing could be really achieved in the social field, or in any other sphere, without the co-operation of the unions, which must be ready to play their part in providing the necessary stimulus and initiative, for their role was just as indispensable as the national and European problems under discussion were important.

The Treaty of Rome, he went on to say, did not explicitly lay down a common employment policy, but a number of explicit provisions pointed to one and, in so doing, had produced one, for example: freedom of movement, the common vocational training policy, the Social Fund, regional policy, and harmonious economic and social development, which was the fundamental aim of the Treaty.

The Member States, moreover, had long recognized the need to harmonize and align the labour policies of the individual countries; they had approved the first of two regulations concerning the free movement of workers in 1961 and the second just recently. The third would be drawn up in 1967 and would mark the full implementation of free movement of workers as laid down by the Treaty for the end of the transition period (1969). This meant that the Community had once more progressed beyond the letter of the Treaty, by translating its clearly social inspiration into practice, and again it had acted ahead of the time-table laid down.

The free movement of workers, said M. Levi Sandri, from being only a way of abolishing unemployment and promoting a balance between labour supply and demand, as had originally been intended when the Treaty was drafted, had progressively been elevated to a fundamental right of the individual. More suitable means for abolishing unemployment now appeared to be offered by investment policy, regional policy and vocational training policy.

M. Levi Sandri went on to explain the provisions of the second regulation and stressed the importance of the Community's regulations in this sphere - which was self-evident when one remembered that the number of workers who circulated within the Community, especially

Italians, was still very large. Between December 1, 1962 and September 30, 1963, for example, 250 000 workers in the Community had taken up jobs in member countries other than their own. Of these, 188 000 were Italian, the majority (152 000) of whom had found work in Federal Germany.

During the same period 414 000 workers from non-member countries had moved into the Community (mainly Spaniards, Greeks and Turks). This attitude to migrant labour once again showed that the Community had not shut its doors to the outside world and therefore could not be accused of having set up a "six-member autarky". There was no doubt, M. Levi Sandri pointed out, that workers from outside the Community would also benefit in practice as time went by.

After briefly outlining the programme for freedom of establishment, to be fully implemented by 1969, the speaker went on to examine problems of the occupational mobility of workers, which was necessitated both by technological progress and structural changes in large branches of industry, mainly in consequence of trends in agriculture and the growth of the industrial and services sectors.

The principal instrument of the policy was vocational training, which had assumed cardinal importance. In this connection, the speaker referred to the principles of a common policy of vocational training which had been adopted as a "directive" (binding in respect of the object to be achieved) by the six governments, on the proposal of the Commission and announced that within a few days a tripartite advisory committee for vocational training would come into being in the Community, on which representatives of workers and employers would sit with those of the Governments. Among the first measures on which the Committee would be consulted was a programme for training instructors; another was a programme of intensive training courses in certain sectors which were short of manpower. A programme of the kind had already been carried out with aid from the Social Fund; 9 000 workers had been trained, two thirds of whom had found work in their own country and one third in other Community countries.

On the Social Fund, which in its first four years of activity had contributed to the retraining of 260 000 workers at a cost of Lit. 12 500 million, Professor Levi Sandri stated that the countries which had benefited most were Italy, France and the Netherlands. Nevertheless the Social Fund needed enlarging and to this end the EEC Commission would shortly submit a reorganization project which would extend its powers of initiative.

M. Levi Sandri concluded by stating that a medium-term economic policy, or programme, such as has been proposed by the EEC, necessarily implied a common employment policy including measures to meet the needs in both numbers and skills and to deal with questions of labour resources and any other labour problems.