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PLANS FOR EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The Commission has approved and sent to the Council a draft regulation to set up a European Centre for Vocational Training. The Centre will provide a means of intensifying and improving vocational training throughout the nine countries of the Community, in the framework of active Community-wide employment policies. Trade unions will be able to play an important part in running the Centre.

With the aim of promoting a common European policy in the development of vocational training, the Centre will organise courses, conferences, seminars and pilot projects, will give out research contracts and grant financial assistance to individual researchers or institutes for carrying out specific projects. It will also publish a Community bulletin on vocational training. Close collaboration will be sought with specialised national and international bodies in this field.

The Centre will be administered by a Management Board composed of 15 members appointed by the Commission. Five of the members will be proposed by employers' organisations and five by workers' organisations at Community level. The remaining five will be nominated by the Commission.

The site of the Centre will be decided by the Council of Ministers and an annual subsidy will be provided by the Commission.

INTERIM MIGRANT WORKERS' PROGRAMME

The Commission has approved an interim programme of measures to benefit migrant workers. It is due to present a long-term programme for migrant workers (both intra-Community and from third countries) by the end of 1974; the approval of interim measures now reflects the urgency which the Commission attaches to responding to the needs of migrant workers. The immediate actions involved are :

- 1) improving information on job availability by putting into operation a computerised system of matching job vacancies and demand throughout the Community;
- 2) using the European Social Fund to finance integrated migrant schemes, enabling migrant workers to train for jobs created in their own regions;
- 3) encouraging member countries to improve social services for migrants and their families and to provide broadly-based vocational training courses for them;
- 4) taking steps to ensure better treatment of migrant workers and their families in regard to social security and adopting a harmonised approach on social security in the context of current negotiations with third countries;
- 5) generally coordinating migration policies towards third countries through closer contact between the manpower services of member states.

COMMISSION PROPOSES EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL ACTION

In its first programme for education, to be placed before the Council of Ministers, the Commission proposes action in three broad areas : (1) extending opportunities for educators and students to move from one Community country to another for educational purposes; (2) education of the children of migrant workers and (3) encouraging the development of a European dimension in education.

In regard to the first objective, the Commission proposes to examine the scope for extending school group visits to other Community countries and exchanges between these, involving both teachers and pupils. Educational mobility for university students involves mutual recognition of qualifications so that students can enrol at a university in another member state for a full degree course, for part of a degree course or for post-graduate study. The Commission will present a standpoint on the mutual recognition of qualifications after hearing the views of all concerned in the educational world. The Commission points out that opportunities for teachers to spend a period of professional service abroad on an individual basis are very limited; it stresses the importance of increasing such opportunities for obtaining first-hand professional experience in other member states and will make funds available for pilot schemes of this kind. A Conference on Mobility in Secondary Education will be held in 1975. In addition, the Commission proposes to facilitate exchanges of experiences among educational administrators in the nine countries and to develop a programme of interchange for youth administrators and leaders.

There are more than one million children of migrant workers aged between 4 and 13 resident on the territory of the Community, and the Commission believes that the Community has a special responsibility in regard to the educational problems which they face. It is recognised that the problems of the children have to be seen in the context of the questions affecting the migrant family as a whole. (The Commission has already proposed to the Council of Ministers that new allocations should be made available from the European Social fund, with a view to improving the conditions of migrant workers and their families, through programmes which include language training.) There should be adequate structures to ensure the integration of migrant workers' children into their new educational environment, at the same time respecting their own cultural identities. The Commission proposes to examine problems connected with (a) reception of children into the new educational system; (b) provisions for continuing the study of the original language and culture; (c) arrangements for reintegration in the educational system of their original country; (d) the training of teachers specialising in problems of teaching migrant children and the recruitment of nationals of the country of origin for this purpose, and (e) arrangements for providing equality of access to education at all levels between migrant children and nationals.

The third area of educational activity proposed by the Commission concerns the development of a European dimension in education. The goal of European Union is hardly feasible without the enhancement of public understanding and the stimulation of an active interest in European integration; the Community should give impetus to educational work to this effect.

With a view to diminishing linguistic barriers between the different peoples, the Commission proposes to stimulate common action within the framework of the Community to improve the knowledge of foreign languages among its citizens. The report also calls for an intensification of European studies at secondary and post-secondary levels as well as in adult education. At a later stage the establishment of a European network of educational units specialising as focal points for discussion, curriculum development and teacher training in the field of European studies in each of the Member States might be envisaged. Another line of development would be the extension of European schools, at present catering mainly for children of Community officials, to cities where there are large populations of immigrant families, or where there may be special opportunities to introduce a distinctive European dimension.

It is proposed that a "European Committee for Educational Cooperation" should be set up, so as to pool information and to discuss educational questions of interest to the European Community. The Committee would comprise three members and three alternates from each member state.

The above proposals do not deal with vocational training, for which the Council has already adopted guidelines and for which the Commission has proposed the establishment of a European Centre; however, in view of the need for vocational training to take place in a wider educational context, the Commission suggests occasional joint meetings of European Ministers of Education and Ministers of Labour.

COMMISSION DECLARATION ON GREECE

A Commission spokesman has stated the following in regard to recent events in Greece :

"The Commission of the European Communities has learned with indignation that a new series of arrests and deportations are taking place at this moment in Greece.

Mr. Georges MAVROS, a politician whose attachment to democracy and to the European ideal have won for him a high reputation from the time when he was, as a Minister, leading the Greek delegations in European and international organisations, is among the victims of the deportation measures.

The Commission regrets having to repeat its declaration of 10 May 1972 that the present situation in Greece remains very far removed from the democratic principles on which the European Community is based and that the Association Agreement with Greece must continue to be strictly confined to routine business."

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE TAKES STAND ON CONSUMER QUESTIONS

The Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities, on which employers, trade unions, consumers and certain other organised groups are represented, has examined the draft first programme of the European Communities for the information and protection of consumers.

As an overall comment on the programme, the Committee considers that the Community should re-examine its basic assumption that a continuous increase in production and consumption is opportune and desirable. Representatives of consumers should participate with full rights in any Community body making such a re-examination. They should also participate in committees reviewing medium-term and long-term economic development.

On particular aspects of the programme, the Committee considers it important to make a distinction between what can best be done for consumers at Community level and what can best be done for them at national level. The Committee would like to have in the programme proposals for legislation on labelling, misleading publicity, disloyal commercial practices, replacement or repair of faulty goods, consumer credit in all its forms, representation of consumers and information to them.

The current President of the Economic and Social Committee is German trade union leader Alfons Lappas.

CALL FOR DYNAMIC EUROPEAN TRADE UNION ACTION

The Executive Committee of the European Organisation of the World Confederation of Labour has announced that an Extraordinary Congress of the EO-WCL will be held on 31 May 1974 to wind up the Organisation. This act will mark the last step in carrying out an agreement between the European Organisation and the European Trade Union Confederation, involving the affiliation of the former's member trade union centres to the ETUC (See "Trade Union Information" No. 1). The Executive Committee states :

After 17 years of active participation in European trade union life, the EO/WCL can affirm that its action has constituted an effective and important contribution to the defence of the interests of workers at European level and to the advancement of the ideal of a democratic and social Europe.

It wishes further to state : - that its only aim in the affiliation of its national confederations to the ETUC is the defence and furtherance of the interests of workers through the strengthening of European trade unionism, in the face of the European employers and multinationals and in the face of the European institutions;

- that, to attain this objective, the uniting of trade union forces must take place also on the level of the industrial sectors;

- that the enlarged ETUC must equip itself with a programme of demands and of action with which to confront the European employers and particularly the multinational companies;

- that European trade union unity within the ETUC must respect the individual character of each national confederation;
- that it is necessary to work for cooperation and solidarity between the European trade union movement and the world trade union movement;
- that this solidarity must find expression in particular through the WCL and the ICFTU, encouraging the cooperation of the two Internationals.

On the eve of its dissolution, the European Organisation of the WCL wishes to reaffirm its will, expressed on many occasions, to see the trade union movement become the motive force of European construction, so as to bring about a genuinely democratic and united economic and social Europe, furthering social objectives and the advancement of the workers. It is in this spirit that the EO-WCL expresses its confidence in European trade unionism, represented by the enlarged ETUC, and in a Europe marked by the imprint of trade union action.

FORTHCOMING ETUC CONGRESS IN COPENHAGEN

The first ordinary congress of the European Trade Union Confederation, founded in February 1973, will take place in Copenhagen from 23 to 25 May 1974.

A major task of the Congress will be to adopt a programme of action for the European trade union movement.

Subject to the statutory requirement of Congress ratification of new affiliations since the founding congress, the meeting will be attended by delegates from 29 trade union organisations in 17 European countries, grouping 33-million individual members.

Lord Feather, former British TUC General Secretary, will preside over the congress.

EUROPEAN METALWORKERS' STATEMENT ON CONCORDE

The need to put Concorde into service as quickly as possible and to step up production of the aircraft was stressed at a meeting of shop stewards from the French and British factories involved in Bristol on 29 March 1974. The meeting, which was under the auspices of the British Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and the European Metalworkers' Federation emphasized that employment must be guaranteed for the workers concerned. It pointed out that if Concorde was dropped, a technological lead would be lost leaving others to take its place; the break-up of scientist, design, technical staff and highly skilled craftsmen teams would constitute a social investment wasted, immeasurable in financial terms.

The EMF calls for an immediate conference on the European aerospace industry, to discuss the whole future development of the industry and to draw up a joint European policy. The European Commission should call such a conference, in which governments, airlines, manufacturers and trade unions should take part.

STEPS TOWARDS TRADE UNION UNITY IN THE NETHERLANDS

The executive bureaux of the Netherlands trade union federation NVV (670,000 members) and of the Netherlands Catholic trade union federation NKV (400,000 members) have reached agreement on a form of federation. In the next few weeks the plan will be discussed at numerous regional meetings, before being submitted on 10 June 1974 to the highest authorities of the two federations.

Discussions have been going on for some years among the Netherlands trade union federations with a view to attaining a federation which goes beyond the instrument for cooperation already in existence, the "Overlegorgan" (consultation body).

At the beginning of 1974 the discussions broke down since the NVV and NKV refused to accept a condition laid down by the Christian national trade union federation CNV (236,000 members) that it should be able to maintain a separate existence enabling it to examine in the CNV problems on the agenda of the executive meetings of the proposed new federation.

After the breakdown the NVV and NKV at once decided to continue between themselves the efforts to reach trade union unity.

The federation to be created would be called "Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging" (FNV). On the executive bureau the distribution of seats would be in the ratio of 3:2. The Overlegorgan would be abolished. Cooperation with the CNV would be not on a structural basis but on an ad hoc basis. For the first period of three years the present president of the NVV, Wim Kok, would be president of the FNV. The present president of the NKV Wim Spit would be vice-president.

ASSEMBLY OF LOCAL AND FACTORY-LEVEL TRADE UNION DELEGATES IN RIMINI

More than 4,000 delegates attended the first unitary assembly of local trade union leaders, organised in Rimini from 6 to 8 April 1974 by the Federation of the three Italian Confederations CGIL, CISL and UIL. The Rimini Assembly decided to develop the factory delegates' councils and the territorial councils as a new basic trade union structure.

The factory delegates' council will become the basic unit of the Federation CGIL - CISL - UIL. It will represent the union side on all matters in the factory and accordingly be able to sign agreements, declare strikes, etc.

The territorial councils will be composed both of delegates from the factory councils and of representatives of the territorial trade union

structures. Their essential task will be to promote effective participation of workers in trade union action above factory level, and more particularly to coordinate contractual policies with the general objectives pursued by the Federation (CGIL-CISL-UIL) on economic reform and development. While in the territorial councils there will still be representation of the three confederations individually, the factory delegates' councils will have a purely unitary structure.

The local union leaders' Assembly once again demonstrated the wish of the rank and file to advance towards unity, and to the extent that the new basic structure is developed, the drive towards unity will be strengthened.

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