

PROGRAMME OF RESEARCH AND ACTIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LABOUR MARKET

ANALYSIS OF VACANCIERS IN FRANCE, GREAT BRITAIN,  
THE NETHERLANDS AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF  
GERMANY

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## P R E F A C E

Since the statistical data were collected (annual means from 1979) and since the last joint discussions were held (in spring 1981) on the topic of adequate labour market policy measures and instruments to tackle the problem of hard to fill vacancies in the best possible way, the overall labour market data in all four EEC countries, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany, have undergone drastic changes.

Economic growth is unsatisfactory or non-existent. In some countries the labour force is growing while jobs are being abolished. Under these conditions unemployment was rising while the number of reported vacancies was continuously falling.

So the placement services have generally been able to fill vacancies faster and better due to the high number of unemployed persons who are also better skilled now on average, and the low number of available vacancies, consequently the numbers of hard to fill vacancies decreased. For the same reasons this problem does not hold the same priority in the labour market considerations of the employment placement and guidance services as it did at the outset of the study. This is a situation that is already suggested in reference to Great Britain in the study and that is now increasingly - although with a time lag and to different extents - becoming a reality for the three other countries.

In a time marked by the problems mentioned, the public placement services can best fulfill their tasks if they undertake all possible efforts to induce employers to report all available vacancies to them. This can be achieved mainly by strengthening the contacts with industry, as the provider of jobs, by means of intensified outside duty.

Final Report

The Analysis of Vacancies in Great Britain, the  
Federal Republic of Germany, France and the  
Netherlands

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" Do you need skilled workers ? "

### Preliminary Remarks

In 1980 6.8 million unemployed people were counted in the countries of the EEC which amounts to an unemployment rate of 6.2 %. In spite of this high unemployment figure the labour market presents itself as a very complex phenomenon. It is complex both with regard to the different problem groups such as older people, handicapped, long term unemployed, these seeking part-time jobs, and also with regard to hard-to-fill vacancies, which exist despite this high level of unemployment.

In view of this some financial journalists are describing the labour market situation as "full employment and unemployment side by side" (cf. Süddeutsche Zeitung of February 6, 1980) and some experts are asking, "why is unemployment so high at full employment" and industrial experts already see "many wheels stop turning" because of a shortage of skilled labour (Die Zeit of December 1, 1978). To investigate certain aspects of these phenomena on the labour market the EEC Commission has occasioned two studies. Whereas under the responsibility of the French employment services the problem of high permanent unemployment (long-term unemployed persons) was dealt with, the present report for which the German Federal Employment Institute<sup>1)</sup> was responsible, is concerned with problems of filling vacancies notified with the employment services, particularly hard-to-fill vacancies.

The report consists of a more theoretical and a more practical part. The first "Part A" concerns itself with the following questions:

1. How much informational value do vacancy statistics have for assessing the problem of hard-to-fill vacancies?

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<sup>1)</sup> Within the scope of the EEC Commission's short term study programme, the Federal Employment Institute assumed the responsibility for the present study in the meeting of the representatives of the heads of the employment administrations in a meeting on February 16, 1979. The employment administrations of France, Great Britain and the Netherlands offered their cooperation.

2. What are the present dimensions of the problem and how does it affect the individual branches of industry, social groups and occupations ?

The conclusions reached in Part A are mainly based on statistics of the German employment administration, this results in part from the fact that here a broader range of data was available (whereas e.g. the registration of certain personal data for vacancy statistics is prohibited in Great Britain, France and the Netherlands) and is due to the incompatibility of the statistics of the various countries surveyed, particularly with regard to relevant details on flows and fluctuations.

In all four countries special attention is paid to the fact that despite high unemployment and an overall deficit of jobs, there is a certain number of hard-to-fill vacancies - although this number varies from country to country.

For certain jobs, enterprises are often unable to find enough suitable workers - e.g. workers with the skills demanded. Often the jobs are not offered in the regions which suffer the highest unemployment and could therefore offer suitable labour to fill such vacancies.

To determine the various reasons for the existence of hard-to-fill vacancies from the current statistics in all four countries would have required a disproportionate effort and would also have been impossible in part. So the specific problems for employment placement and advisory services resulting from this "category" of vacancies were discussed with the employment services' officials from all four countries in the first quarter of 1981. The officials are working in different employment offices which represent various industrial and occupational structures.

The purpose of this was to find out what staff working in these offices consider to be hard-to-fill vacancies, why they are hard-to-fill, and in their experience what measures or initiatives can be taken to overcome existing difficulties. These data were collected with questionnaires to make them comparative (Appendices 1 and 2 resp.).

The results of these discussions are presented in Part B. They are not, nor do they claim to be, representative; but they nevertheless demonstrate that irrespective of all peculiarities of country, region, labour market and procedure a common core of problems exists everywhere.

Since it is often not possible to understand the different emphasis of activities or the relative weight of certain activities of the employment placement and advisory services in all four countries investigated, without referring to their organisational structure, number and qualification of staff, Appendix 3 provides a brief survey of the respective forms of organisation and staff.

## Part A: Analysis of Vacancies

### 1. Informational Value of Vacancy Statistics

#### 1.1 General Reservations

Official vacancy statistics are - just as unemployment statistics - the statistics on business of the employment service concerned. The tasks and scope for action of an employment service thus determine that the notified vacancies represent only one part of the actual labour demand. On the other hand the notified vacancies also include, apart from the additional demand also the demand for job changing, which does not promote employment.

Furthermore those vacancies registered at the employment offices at any given time, also contain the demand for labour that will arise in the future. Additionally these business statistics might comprise demands for labour for which no jobs or only unrealistic ones are being offered.<sup>1)</sup>

Owing to these limitations it is difficult to base valid conclusions concerning the extent and cause of the difficulty of filling such vacancies on such business statistics.

These differences could be disregarded for the purposes of this investigation of vacancy filling problems if they were constant in duration as well as for all countries.

In the following we assume that the differences mentioned between additional, replacement, exchange and future de-

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<sup>1)</sup> See J. Kühl: Zum Aussagewert der Statistik der offenen Stellen (On the Informational Value of Vacancy Statistics), Mitteilungen aus der Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung (MittAB) 1/1970, p. 250

mand are of no direct practical consequence for the employment services.

1.2 Involvement of Employment Placement and Advisory Services in the Filling of Vacancies

For the employment services it is important to know to what extent they "penetrate" the registration and filling of vacancies. To reach the objective of filling vacancies fast it is desirable to strive for a maximum involvement both in registering and filling job openings. Some estimates will be presented below.

1.2.1 Proportion of Vacancies Notified with the Employment Services

The ratio of "new notifications of vacancies" to "number of engagements" is defined here as the penetration rate. Obviously this ratio can serve only as a guide. The penetration rate in the registration of vacancies is to a large extent determined by the qualifications required for the jobs. It is known that the penetration rate is quite high for jobs without any particular skill demands and very low for jobs for highly qualified labour. The following estimates were compiled for the countries surveyed (cf. Table 1).

The penetration rate of the German employment services in filling vacancies was 29.9 % in 1979, as against 40.2 % at the height of the last recession (1975) and 35 % before the recession (1973).

A positive tendency has been observed in the British employment Services' penetration rate for more than ten years. At the moment it stands at about 1/3. In contrast

Table 1: Penetration Rate in the Finding of Vacancies<sup>1)</sup>  
(in %)

Year	Fed. Rep. of Germany	Great Britain <sup>2)</sup>	France <sup>4)</sup>	Nether- lands
1968	49.1	20.1		
1973	35.0	22.9		
1974	38.1	25.0		
1975	40.2	25.3		
1976	38.6	26.2		
1977	36.0	28.8		
1978	33.2	31.1		<40
1979	29.2 <sup>3)</sup>	32.7	≈ 28	

to their German counterpart, the British employment services were able to raise their penetration rate from 1/5 to 1/3. This success can also be attributed to the reorganisation of the traditional employment offices as "Jobcentres"<sup>5)</sup>.

A second difference between the figures for the Federal Republic of Germany and Great Britain has to be mentioned. Whereas no cyclical consequences can be detected in the figures for Great Britain, the German figures show strong anti-cyclical deviations.

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1) Penetration rate = 
$$\frac{\text{Number of new notifications of vacancies per year}}{\text{Number of engagements per year}}$$

2) Annual period refers in each case to the period ending six months previous

3) Preliminary result

4) Based on number of new notifications of vacancies to be filled for more than 3 days

5) Also see Part B

The high penetration rate of the German employment service at the height of the recession in 1975 is somewhat surprising since in such a situation it is relatively easy for firms to recruit labour on the external market. This phenomenon could possibly be explained by the fact that German companies vastly improved their employment patterns by making use of the placement services of the employment offices : less efficient manpower was laid off in order to fill the vacancies with more efficient unemployed persons. The large percentage of replacement and exchange demand in the total number of job openings during times of recession is demonstrated quite clearly by this.

In France the penetration rate is estimated at about 15 %. As a result of current measures for restructuring there is an upward trend.<sup>1)</sup>

In the Netherlands the maximum rate was 40 %, but (as in France) this was computed on the basis of a representative survey among employers.

#### 1.2.2 Filling of Vacancies by the Employment Placement Services

When discussing the penetration rate of employment services, it has to be considered that not only the above mentioned penetration rate in the finding of vacancies exists but also a penetration rate in filling vacancies.

Table 2 shows the penetration rate for placements made. This specifies the percentage of cancellations by placement through the services, i.e. cancellation by filling or recall.

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1) Cf: Emploi: L'entreprise A.N.P.E., in L'Express, January 12, 1980

Table 2: Penetration Rate in Filling Vacancies in 1979  
(in %)

Federal Republic of Germany <sup>1)</sup>	63.7
Great Britain	67
France <sup>2)</sup>	49.4
Netherlands <sup>3)</sup>	

These figures are also an indication of the number of job-seekers who seek and find a job on their own. A low figure shows that the majority of vacancies are filled without the assistance of the employment services or that the jobs were abolished altogether, i.e. not filled at all.

Accordingly about one half of all jobs are filled with official assistance in France. In recent years, however, the penetration rate of the French employment services increased for placement in temporary jobs.

About 2/3 of all cancelled vacancies were filled with the involvement of the official placement assistance in the Federal Republic of Germany and Great Britain. In both countries this figure remained almost constant in the course of the last three years.

### 1.3 Discussion of the Figures for Stocks and Flows

#### 1.3.1 Registration Age and Registration Terms of Notified Vacancies

On the basis of the official data on the number of vacancies at any given time the question could be discussed to what extent, if at all, the employment services are capable of filling such vacancies within a reasonable

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1) Placements in 1979, requiring more than 7 days

Reduction of number of vacancies in 1979

2) For full-time manpower and jobs

3) Comparable figures are not available for the Netherlands, since Dutch open placement involves no registration.

period of time with suitable applicants. In view of the above-mentioned differences with regard to the penetration rate of those services in the finding and filling of such job openings, it becomes increasingly difficult to answer such a question.

Apart from these limitations there is an additional systematic distortion in referring to the duration of a vacancy, whenever such a period is determined on the basis of the number of vacancies at any given time, instead of on the amount of flow (incoming and outgoing). There is the danger of coming to wrong conclusions, since most statistical data on vacancies refer only to the number of vacancy stocks on a fixed date.

Whenever the number of vacancies forming the stock of the employment services increase, this is taken as an indication of the employment services' incapacity to fill those vacancies satisfactorily, i.e. within a reasonable period of time.<sup>1)</sup> This is especially true in times of high unemployment. Such a conclusion does not usually take account of the fact that these stocks include the hard-to-fill vacancies which by definition have longer registration terms than others and are therefore overrepresented, whereas those making up the major part of the placement activities of the services are hardly considered.

Data on these kinds of job openings and "placement business" of the services cannot be computed on the basis of stocks figures. This necessitates a continuous survey of incoming and outgoing vacancies over a certain period of time. It required the analysis of the structure of the vacancies notified (flows on the register) as well as the analysis of the placement process (flows off the register). This then furnishes the answers to questions on the registration

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<sup>1)</sup> In times of economic boom a high vacancy rate also expresses additional labour demand

terms of vacancies, the number of submissions, type of filling, flexibility shown in filling the vacancies, etc.

Table 3 shows the discrepancy between the time taken to fill vacancies, i.e. the period of time between notification and cancellation of the vacancy (or a placing) and the age in a register of these vacancies (period between registration and sampling date of vacancy stocks). This table precedes a detailed discussion of such investigations to demonstrate the extent of distortion in the registration period of the vacancies when calculated on the basis of the stocks figures.<sup>1)</sup>

Table 3: Registration Term and Registration Age of Vacancies in the Federal Republic of Germany 1977-1979 (in months)

Time	Registration Term <sup>2) 4)</sup>	Registration Age <sup>3)</sup>
1977	1.27	2.86
1978	1.46	3.06
1979	1.85	3.36

The periods of registration of vacancies when calculated on the stocks (registration age of vacancies) amounts to twice as much as the actual period between the vacancy's flow on and off the register (registration term). This is all the more surprising since this method of computing the age of vacancies takes only part of their total registration time into account. However, this factor is more than compensated for by the so-called selection factor, which means that for some reason or other hard-to-fill vacancies remain on the register for the longest period.

This selection factor finds its parallel in the so-called process of structuralisation, to be observed especially

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1) Thus the registration term of a vacancy is determined on the basis of the total of cancellations, whereas the registration age relates to stocks figures.

2) Period between beginning and termination of registration of a vacancy on the respective period of year.

3) Period between registration and sampling date of vacancy stocks on the sampling day, end of May of the resp. year.

4) For Great Britain and France see Table 4

in the group of long-term unemployed. This means that employers do not engage such unemployed persons who are in many cases less efficient.

### 1.3.2 Analysis of the Placement Process

Recently the Institute of Employment Research (IAB) of the Federal Employment Institute carried out the first empirical study of the placement process by means of a random sample survey for the Federal Republic of Germany, based solely on the flows off the register of notifications.<sup>1)</sup>

Among others there were the following findings

- at least 95 % of those cancellations were due to a filling of the vacancy (here 62.5 % by placement through the offices)
- 50 % of vacancies were registered for less than 14 days, the average registration term of all vacancies was 32 days
- on average there were 2.4 submissions per vacancy (for 90 % of the vacancies there was at least one submission)
- in the number of submissions, the registration term of the vacancies, and the placement rate there exist considerable differences according to the particular branch of industry and type of job.

These are the results of the sampling of twenty-five representative employment offices in the Federal Republic of Germany for 14 days in autumn 1977. These results are not completely up-to-date now, since the registration terms have considerably increased in the Federal Republic of Germany during the last two years (cf. Table 3). The differences in registration terms of the vacancies mentioned in point 4, already indicate, however, certain problems in the filling of positions for skilled workers. The next

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1) Cramer, U. and Leupoldt, R.: Laufzeit und Besetzung von offenen Stellen - Ergebnisse einer Abgangsstichprobe (Registration Term and Filling of Vacancies - Results of a Sample of Flows off the Register), Mitteilungen aus der Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung (MittAB) 4, 1978

chapter will furnish up-to-date information relating to this.

With regard to the willingness to make concessions on the part of both employers and unemployed when filling a vacancy , the study revealed the following<sup>1)</sup> :

- In the majority of cases an unemployed person can be placed because both he and the employer concede to the particular features and demands of the other side in one way or another:
  - about 41 % of the unemployed accept a job different from what they originally desired and 56 % of the vacancies were filled by unemployed persons who were actually looking for a different type of work;
  - minimum or maximum age limits in some job openings are often no real obstacle. In nearly 14 % of the jobs with a minimum age limit, younger unemployed persons were placed and the same is true of older unemployed persons for more than 21 % of job openings with maximum age limits;
  - nearly 13 % of the vacancies demanding completed vocational training will be filled by unemployed persons without the required qualification. About 14 % of the job openings for skilled workers are filled by unskilled workers;
  - the majority of unemployed persons also change over into a different branch of industry when taking up new employment. Flexibility in the labour market remains low, however, with regard to sex: jobs that are traditionally the domaine of one sex are only rarely filled with a member of the other sex;

This study very clearly demonstrates that flexibility on the labour market is an essential prerequisite for a

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1) Cramer, U.: Anpassungsvorgänge bei der Besetzung von offenen Stellen (Adaptation procedures in the Filling of Vacancies ) Mitteilungen aus der Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung 1/1980

rapid filling of vacancies. As will be shown in the next chapter in detail, such flexibility is determined not only by the willingness to make concessions on the part of the employers and the unemployed and the efficiency of the employment services but also by the labour market situation. With increasing tension on the labour market, the employer's readiness to make concessions grows.

#### 1.4 Brief Summary

An investigation into the difficulties met by employment offices in filling vacancies, is hampered by several factors:

1. Official vacancy statistics show, apart from actual manpower demand, also the demand for replacement or exchange of manpower which does not increase the level of employment. Furthermore, there are notifications of vacancies which are unrealistic or aimed at the future. Nevertheless this can be helpful in order to understand the difficulties of filling notified vacancies.
2. The employment offices' penetration rate in the finding of vacancies points to the fact that the majority of vacancies are never reported to the offices, these probably being a large part of the vacancies which are relatively easy to fill.  
But in practically all the countries surveyed the majority of vacancies actually notified with the offices could be filled. The degree of involvement in filling vacancies is much larger, than in finding them.
3. The problems arising from the difficulty in filling vacancies are often over-estimated, since conclusions are based on stocks figures on a certain sampling date (instead of on the more comprehensive factor of fluctuation) they are unrepresentative though, since as well as all hard-to-fill vacancies they also include some of the easy to fill ones.

A closer examination shows that the stocks are formed by frequent fluctuation and not by excessive notification of vacancies.

4. There are some vacancies that cannot be filled or are hard to fill, as the "mean registration age" of vacancy stocks demonstrates which is relatively high at 3.4 months, for example in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Whenever in the following chapter "registration ages" based on stocks figures are quoted for hard-to-fill vacancies, one must keep in mind the contents of the present chapter. This means that a stocks analysis is always a "longitudinally" distorted sample and its results are therefore not representative any more for all vacancies notified during a given period.

## 2. Number and Distribution of Notified Vacancies Which Remain Unfilled for a Relatively Long Period

### 2.1 Why Vacancies That Remain Unfilled for a Relatively Long Period occur

When discussing "hard-to-fill" vacancies in the following, this is meant to refer not only to the difficulties of filling a vacancy but also to keeping it occupied.

Whereas the former phenomenon occurs at the moment mostly with regard to jobs for qualified skilled labour, the latter concentrates on jobs requiring little qualification - as will be seen below.

This distinction already makes obvious that there are a number of reasons for the occurrence of long term hard-

to-fill vacancies. Lack of suitable manpower is only one reason among many, such as:

- working conditions (working hours, wages, career opportunities, working atmosphere) of the job offered;
- geographical location of the job, poor transportation;
- image of the firm.

Empirically it is not possible to quantify the reasons mentioned above from the statistical data available (cf. explanations in Part B).

It is our objective to break down statistically the long-term unfilled vacancies, according to their major structural features. To this end reference will be made to the registration term and the registration age of vacancies as indicators. Preference is given to these indicators as against the traditionally applied evaluator "ratio of unemployed persons to vacancies". This evaluator is considered not to be informative in view of the different penetration rates (particularly when broken down according to structural features).

## 2.2 Structural Features of Notified Vacancies

For France and the Federal Republic of Germany it was possible to come to a break down of the vacancy rate into the components fluctuation rate and registration term, comparable to the break down of the unemployment rate.<sup>1)</sup>

Additionally more detailed information on the registration age of vacancies in the Federal Republic of Germany can be given for the first time.

### 2.2.1 Components of the Vacancy Rate

All vacancy stocks have to be judged differently owing to structural discrepancies. They come about either

- 1) For procedure of breakdown, see: Egle, F.: Ansätze für eine systematische Beobachtung und Analyse der Arbeitslosigkeit (Approach to Systematic Observation and Analysis of Unemployment), Beiträge zur Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung (BeitrAB) 36/1979

through frequent turnover and short registration terms or through long registration terms and low fluctuation.

The differentiation is achieved by breaking down the vacancy rate into its constituents: fluctuation rate and mean registration term. Here the following formula is applied:

$$VR (\%) = \frac{FLUC (\%) \cdot MRPV (\text{weeks})}{\text{No. of weeks per year}}$$

where

VR = average annual vacancy rate

(= average annual stocks of vacancies: total employees)

FLUC = fluctuation rate

(= annual total of vacancy registrations: total employees)

MRPV = mean (terminated) registration term of vacancies

The fluctuation rate indicates how many vacancies ( as a percentage of total employees) are reported to the employment offices as such per annum. Long registration terms for vacancies point to difficulties in filling, either because of a discrepancy between the structural features of the jobs offered and the job-seekers or because of a lack of manpower.

Table 4 below illustrates the components of the vacancy rates of France, Great Britain, and the Federal Republic of Germany.

Table 4: Components of Vacancy Rates. France,<sup>1)</sup> Great Britain and Federal Republic of Germany

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1) The comparison is somewhat distorted since the figures for France include only fulltime-jobs and the basis of calculation for the British figures is a different quarter of the year (April-March).

Table 4: Components of Vacancy Rates  
France<sup>1)</sup>, Great Britain, Fed.Rep.of Germany

Time	France			Fed.Rep.Germany			Great Britain		
	VR %	FLUC %	MRPV %	VR %	FLUC %	MRPV %	VR %	FLUC %	MRPV %
1973	1.2	7.7	8.0	2.5	11.8	10.3	1.2	11.8	5.3
1974	1.0	6.5	7.5	1.4	9.8	7.0	1.2	10.9	5.7
1975	0.5	4.4	5.8	1.1	9.7	5.5	0.5	8.6	3.0
1976	0.6	4.8	6.3	1.1	10.3	4.3	0.6	9.8	3.2
1977	0.5	4.0	6.2	1.0	9.7	5.5	0.7	10.7	3.4
1978	0.4	3.5	5.9	1.1	8.9	6.2	1.0	12.1	4.3
1979	0.4	3.6	5.9	1.3	8.6	8.0	1.0	12.3	4.2

A look at the mean values for all years reveals that the markedly lower stocks of vacancies in France compared with the Federal Republic can be attributed mainly to a lower fluctuation rate. One reason for this can certainly be found in the lower penetration rate of the French employment services in finding vacancies.

With regard to the registration terms two points deserve mentioning:

1. There is practically no difference in the registration terms of vacancies in France (6.5 weeks) and in the Federal Republic of Germany (6.8 weeks) in the mean of the last seven years. I.e. about the same difficulties exist in filling vacancies in both countries, although the vacancy rate is at a different level.
2. In contrast to the Federal Republic of Germany the figures for the registration terms in France are much less subject to cyclical developments. The level of fluctuation between minimum and maximum values in France is ca. 2 weeks, whereas in the Federal Republic it is about 5 weeks. The possibility of filling vacancies

1) See footnote p.18

improves only slightly during periods of recession in France (despite high stocks of unemployed persons) in the Federal Republic it does so comparatively distinctly.

The situation in Great Britain presents itself in a positive light when compared to the Federal Republic of Germany and France: on the one hand the fluctuation rate was successfully brought up to the pre-recession level in 1974/75 and on the other hand one was able to fill the notified vacancies even faster. (The latter is also due to the high unemployment rate and the competition among the unemployed regarding rare jobs). In addition the fluctuation rate is at 12 % (i.e. approximately one out of every eight jobs was notified as a vacancy with the employment administration in the course of a year) higher than in the Federal Republic and nearly triple that of France.

Table 5 shows supplementary information on registration age structures.

Table 5: Vacancy Rate, Registration Term and Age of Vacancies 1979

Country	Vacancy Rate (%)	Proportion of registrations dating back more than 3 mths.	Average Registration term of vacancies (in weeks)
Fed. Rep. of Germany	1.3	31.5	8.0
Great Britain	1.0		4.2
France	0.4	16.7	5.9
Netherlands	1.5 <sup>1)</sup>	33 <sup>2)</sup>	

1) 1978 figure

2) Figure resulting from non-representative sample

There is a striking difference in the vacancy rates of the four countries<sup>1)</sup>. The highest figure is currently furnished by the Netherlands at 1.5 %. Great Britain has the shortest registration term for vacancies at about four weeks. This points to a high turnover. This high turnover is still more obvious when considering that the vacancies filled by the British employment offices have an average registration term of only one week (about 70 % of the flows off the register).

There is a low proportion of long-term unfilled vacancies in France when compared with the Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands. When considering the approximately equal duration of vacancy registration terms, this indicates a low level of differentiation between periods in France. It seems that most vacancies remain unfilled in France for about the same period of time. This contrasts in the Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands with many vacancies being filled rapidly and many that cannot be filled for a long time.

### 2.2.2 Period that Vacancies Remain on the Register

Since the following data were only available for the Federal Republic of Germany, the conclusions of this section only refer to this country.

By means of Table 6 an attempt is made to illustrate the structure of vacancies, according to the features-age limitations, importance of vocational training and the combination of those features as well as the specifications "part-time jobs"<sup>2)</sup> and "sex of employee envisaged"<sup>3)</sup>.

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- 1) Attention has to be drawn to the exclusion of part-time jobs in France.
  - 2) "Part-time" is defined here as a job with less than 36 working hours per week.
  - 3) This refers to the characteristic "Men or Women", i.e. "sex unspecified".

Table 6: Structural Proportion of Vacancies According to Individual-Related Features (May 1978 and May 1979) Federal Republic of Germany

Time	Vacancies				Vacancies	
	With age limitations (without vocational training)	With vocational training (without age limitations)	With age limit, and vocational training	without age limit, and without voc. training	part time	sex unspecified
1978	16.4	33.3	21.7	28.7	8.1	5.4
1979	17.5	33.8	19.0	29.7	7.2	8.8

This permits some interesting conclusions:

- for ca. one fifth of the job openings the employers make certain demands with regard to the vocational training and the age of applicants. In a tight labour market situation such high demands are already scaled down in part in the wording of the job offer, as is proven by the decrease from 21.7 % in 1978 to 19 % in 1979. As has been pointed out above, this willingness to make concessions increases further during the actual placement procedure.
- The proportion of vacancies without qualifications as to the sex of the applicants increased considerably from 5.4 % in 1978 to 8.8 % in 1979. This can be credited to the campaign "Women for Male Jobs". But during the actual placement procedure no more concessions are made, as mentioned above under 1.3.2.

Table 7 is to show for how long the vacancies analysed in Table 6 had already been part of the stocks.

Table 7: Percentage of Vacancies Unfilled for more than 3 Months of total Vacancies (May 1978 and May 1979) Federal Republic of Germany

Features	1978	1979
With age limitation (without vocational training)	22.5	23.9
With vocational training (without age limitation)	33.6	37.9
With age limit, and vocational training	35.0	40.4
Without age limitation and without vocational training	21.2	22.8
Total	28.5	31.5
Of these part-time:	23.4	24.3
Of these Sex unspecified	34.9	34.8

Thus the following can be stated:

- The percentage of long-term unfilled vacancies increased from 26.5 % in 1978 to 31.5 % in 1979;
- The largest increase ( from 35 % to 40.5 %) could be observed for the job openings demanding both a certain age and a certain form of vocational training of the applicants. This is an indication of an existing shortage of skilled workers;
- The increase in the percentage of long-term unfilled vacancies for openings without specific qualification or age stipulations is negligible (from 21.2 % to 22.8 %).

Therefore an even greater readiness on the part of the employers to make concessions with regard to age and

skills could perceptibly reduce the proportion of hard-to-fill vacancies.

The same could be true of a sharp increase in part-time jobs, since such vacancies can be filled relatively quickly (the percentage of vacancies in the stocks for more than three months is only 24.3 % here, compared with an average of 31.5 %). It has to be kept in mind, however, that an increasing availability of part-time jobs would not really remedy the skill shortage but rather the difficulties in filling part-time jobs, since here part-time job offers have a larger share anyway.

Table 7 illustrated the strong bearing the features vocational training and age limitation have on the percentage of vacancies unfilled for a long time. In Table 8 then, the influence of the labour market situation is scrutinized. To this purpose the 141 employment administration districts of the Federal Republic of Germany<sup>1)</sup> were subdivided according to their unemployment rate. Districts with an unemployment rate of less than 3 % were qualified as possessing a "favourable" labour market situation, those with a rate above 3 % as having an "unfavourable" labour market situation.

Table 8: Percentage of Vacancies Unfilled for more than 3 Months of Total Vacancies - Regional Subdivision - May 1979, Federal Republic of Germany

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1) excluding Berlin (West)

Percentage of Vacancies Unfilled for more than 3 Months  
 Table 8: of Total Vacancies - Regional Subdivision - May 1979,  
 Federal Republic of Germany

Features	Employment Administration Districts with	
	favourable labour market situation (< 3% unemp.rate)	unfavourable labour market situation (> 3% unemp.rate)
With age limitation (without voc.training)	26.7	21.5
With voc.training (without age limitation)	41.8	34.6
With age limitation and voc. training	43.9	37.4
without age limitation and without vocational training	24.5	21.2
Total	34.2	29.0
Of these part-time	24.9	23.7
Of these Sex unspecified	35.6	34.1

It shows that apart from the features "skills" and "age", dealt with above, the labour market situation in the specific region also exerts significant influence on the percentage of long-term unfilled vacancies. This influence is brought to bear even more when there is a combination of all those features. This means that of the job openings demanding a qualification and a certain age of the applicant, nearly one half (43.9 %) remain unfilled for more than three months in regions with a favourable labour market situation. To explain the difficulties in filling vacancies, regional differences in the unemployment rate are also of considerable importance in Great Britain, where in particular the Southern and South-eastern regions have encountered such problems in a relatively favourable labour market situation.

From the different structure of the features of vacancies in favourable and unfavourable labour administration districts the reactions of employers during a favourable labour market situation to the problem of long-term unfilled vacancies can be seen (Table 9).

Table 9: Structural Percentages of Vacancies according to Individual-Related Features and the Regional Labour Market Situation. May 1979, Federal Republic of Germany (in %)

Regional Labour Market Situation	Vacancies			Vacancies		
	w.age limit. (no vocation training)	w.voc. (no age limit.)	w.age and voc. train.	no age no voc. train.	part time	sex unspecified
Favourable (unemp.rate 3%)	17.2	33.0	18.9	31.0	9.3	5.3
unfavourable (unemp.rate 13%)	17.9	34.5	19.2	28.5	8.9	9.3

As the comparison makes clear, employers in labour administration districts where the labour market situation is already tight, make less demands with regard to the vacancies to be filled: The rate of vacancies with age and/or qualification stipulations amounts to only 69.1 % in favourable labour administration districts but in unfavourable districts to 71.6 %.

Had the employers been induced by the tight labour market situation in the favourable districts to increase the amount of vacancies for part-time work, these vacancies could probably have been filled faster (cf. Table 8).

As a final point there shall be the discussion of the following question: Is there a relation between the difficulties to fill vacancies and the difficulties to keep filled jobs occupied? To this end Table 10 specifies vocational groups whose share of hard-to-fill vacancies is clearly above average.

Table 10: Multiple Unemployment and Percentage of Long-Term Unfilled Vacancies according to Selected Vocational Groups (September and May 1979)  
Federal Republic of Germany

Vocational Group	Code No.	Incidence of cases of unemployment (9/1979)	Percentage of vacancies unfilled for more than 3 months (5/1979)
Crop farmers animal breeders jobs in fishery, forestry and hunting	01- 06	1.37	35.8
metal manufac- turers,- workers	19- 24	1.33	32.8
fitters,mechanics and related jobs	25- 30	1.33	37.0
electricians	31	1.30	34.2
construction workers	44- 47	1.49	35.8
decorators,uphol- sterers,constr.re-	48- 49	1.37	39.1
lated jobs joiners,cast- builders	50	1.37	47.3
house painter, varnisher and related jobs	51	1.44	32.9
Total		1.28	31.5

A number of occupational groups, where according to their proportion of long-term unfilled vacancies, a shortage of manpower exists (Table 10) are at the same time those, where the unemployed show the highest amount of repeated unemployment<sup>1)</sup>. So it seems quite probable that there is a relationship between the difficulties encountered in filling vacancies and those in keeping jobs occupied. The latter certainly is also a consequence of uncertainty of employment and adverse working conditions. These often lead to engagements of short duration and a continual renewal of the job opening by the employer.

### 2.3 Brief Summary

1. The problem created by the difficulty of filling certain vacancies is often overestimated because conclusions are based on unrepresentative stock data (and not on the more comprehensive factor of fluctuation). Stocks are determined mostly by frequent fluctuation and not by excessive registration terms. The mean time lapse between notification of a vacancy and its filling is between four to eight weeks in the countries under investigation.
2. Although most vacancies can be filled easily and rapidly, there are some that are difficult or impossible to fill. This can be deduced from the registration age of vacancies (the period of time between notification of the vacancy and the sampling date of vacancy stocks) running in these cases twice as high as the average registration term.
3. There are a variety of reasons for the sometimes large proportion (up to 1/3) of job openings that are vacant for a relatively long period (more than 3 months). Lack

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1) The average multiple unemployment rate in Table 10 indicates how often the same unemployed person became unemployed per person and year.

of manpower counts only as one reason among many, such as e.g. working conditions, geographical location of the job, image of the firm.

4. Among the features that determine the proportion of long-term unfilled vacancies the first to be mentioned are the demands of the employers with regard to the vocational qualification and age of the applicant. Beyond these the regional situation on the labour market figures as a significant factor exerting influence on the number of long-term unfilled vacancies.
5. Employers tend to scale down their demands regarding the age, skill and sex of the applicant in cyclically improved labour market situations, as a respective study in the Federal Republic of Germany showed: the number of vacancies demanding a certain age and/or skills decreased both from 1978 to 1979 and in the interregional comparisons between employment administration districts with lower and higher unemployment rates.
6. The employer's willingness to make concessions is even greater during actual placement. This is true of age and vocational qualifications but not of sex.
7. Apart from the difficulties in filling vacancies for skilled workers in certain occupational groups, there is a surprisingly high correlation between the problems of filling certain vacancies and of then keeping these positions filled. The latter is certainly also a consequence of uncertainty of employment and poor working conditions. These often lead to engagements of short duration and a continual renewal of the job opening by the employer.

Part B: Reasons for the Existence of Notified Hard-to-fill  
Vacancies and Remedies Offered by Employment Placement  
and Advisory Services

1. Notified Hard-to-fill Vacancies: Dimensions and Definition

To complement the statistical analysis of the number of long-term notified vacancies, the experts of the employment services of the four countries were also asked for an assessment of the number of notified vacancies they categorized as "hard-to-fill".

In the opinion of the staff members from the Federal Republic of Germany a proportion of more than 50 % of the vacancy stocks can be considered hard to fill. In France between 15 % and 25 % of the presently notified vacancies are considered hard to fill. In Great Britain this amounts to between 2 % and 3 % at the moment, because of the extremely high unemployment and a labour market situation in which very highly skilled job-seekers and above all unemployed persons compete for jobs everywhere and thus nearly all vacancies can be filled. The Dutch colleagues name a proportion of one third, considering the number of vacancies unfilled for three months and more, figuring in the vacancy statistics.

In judging these estimated proportions, it has to be taken into consideration that following an evaluation of statistical data only between approximately 15 % and 40 % of the vacant jobs are notified with the employment placement services<sup>1)</sup>.

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1) To increase the penetration rate, there is a bill in the Dutch parliament to introduce compulsory notification for job openings in 1983. This compulsory notification has been prescribed by law in France since 1946. The employer's adherence to the law is not enforced by the authorities responsible though.

The objective of coming to a definition as to when to categorise a vacancy notified as "hard-to-fill" was abandoned.

To attempt such a categorisation of a vacancy as "hard-to-fill", simply on the basis of a certain period of time is very dubious, for example because it also has to be considered in each case, whether this is a job offer for industry or public service, for skilled or unskilled labour, whether the vacancy is circulated only within one employment office district or also in the travel-to-work-area, or supraregionally as well as which terms of notice are common for certain occupations. Also the general labour market situation plays a decisive rôle.

So the placement and advisory officers can in some cases classify an incoming vacancy right away as hard to fill.

Irrespective of the lack of generally valid criteria, all countries refer to the time aspect, exceeding certain registration terms, in classifying a vacancy as "hard-to-fill". Here longer registration terms result from different problems in the filling process.

Discussions with the placement experts from France, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany showed that in view of the current labour market situation, they classify a job that is vacant for four weeks as hard to fill in any case, but this classification takes place in the Federal Republic only after about three months sometimes, for the public service.

All vacancies showing a registration term of more than one month in the monthly statistics in France, are subject

to a detailed investigation. In the Netherlands an employer will be asked after four weeks, at the latest after three months after registration, whether the job offer should be continued on the register. In the Federal Republic of Germany there is the regulation that all vacancies in the stocks for more than two months must be notified with the heads of the placement and advisory departments so that special measures can be initiated.

In Great Britain there is no comparable rule at the moment although there is a system of reporting every six months on vacancies in certain skilled occupations which remain unfilled for 2 months. Offices must submit skill shortage reports which give details of the steps taken to fill such vacancies. The drastic deterioration of the labour market, with more and more unemployed people and fewer notified vacancies means that very few vacancies remain unfilled for such a long time.

## 2. Major Reasons for the Existence of Long-term Notified Vacancies

### 2.1 General Problems of Balancing the Labour Market

There is a host of reasons making it frequently impossible to fill vacancies within a reasonable period of time or at all, despite there being many more unemployed than vacancies in terms of numbers.

The decisive factor is the discrepancy between the occupational skills of the job-seekers and the requirements of the employers' job descriptions. Often the jobs are not offered in places where suitable labour would be available.

Since the labour market is a conglomeration of a variety of sub-labour markets, differing according to region,

industrial branch or structure, an overall balancing of the labour market is made increasingly difficult.

But even a matching of, e.g. occupational skills and job demands, in addition to maximum regional mobility is no guarantee for the actual filling of a vacancy.

This can also be impeded by the working conditions (e.g. noise, cold, draft, dampness etc). Neither is merely the occupational qualification, the skill of the worker, the only and decisive criterion for his engagement by the employer. Very often there are additional features, independent of skills, that are demanded by the employers: a certain sex, nationality, minimum or maximum age, etc. Similarly also the unemployed person has a right to bearable working conditions, adequate pay and to refusing a job under certain conditions.

Furthermore there is the structure of the group of job-seekers that makes it difficult to find suitable labour for hard-to-fill jobs, particularly from the group of the unemployed.

Long term unemployment in the four EEC countries has increasingly favoured the formation of a core of unemployed persons that share one or several features that make them difficult to place. So they are ever more unavailable for placement in hard-to-fill vacancies, independent of their occupational skills.

Such features that make a person difficult to place are e.g. the duration of unemployment (one year and longer), the age and frequency of change of employment within a certain period (multiple unemployment), physical handicaps, etc.

Furthermore the following has to be considered: In the Federal Republic of Germany and in France more women than men were registered as unemployed during the period of investigation. Not only in those two countries, however, but in Great Britain and the Netherlands as well, the impression was mainly that it was rather the jobs with typical male activities that were classified as hard-to-fill and not those with typical female work.

Apart from certain particular industries or occupations, the possibilities of filling vacancies for hard-to-fill jobs with females are seen as greater in the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany because of higher female than male unemployment<sup>1)</sup> (including the hidden reserve) which allows resorting to a larger pool of labour. In the Federal Republic of Germany it was pointed out, however, that men are much more mobile geographically. Regional mobility of job-seeking women is also hampered by the fact that most of them are married.

The French colleagues indicated that they could not see much difference but experience in Great Britain also showed that in general there is less success in filling male jobs, here specifically hard-to-fill jobs. Reasons named for this were 1) mainly men had had special training and 2) they were on the whole less willing to take up a related job under certain conditions but rather preferred to insist on a job in the field they were trained in. Women generally possessed less vocational training and were more disposed to take up another, related activity.

## 2.2 Special Causes of the Difficulties in Filling Notified Vacancies

In attempting to classify the causes indicated by the experts in placement and advisory services, according to their relative weight, the following classification results:

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<sup>1)</sup> Specified unemployment rate, yearly average 1980 for the Federal Republic of Germany, according to EUROSTAT statistics telegramme: Men 2.7 %, women 4.6 %; the Netherlands: Men 4.5 %, women 5.5 %.

### 2.2.1 Skill Shortage

Even in the present labour market situation, France, Great Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany primarily mention problems in finding skilled labour, as desired by the employers, for certain types of jobs and/or enterprises. Here skilled labour does not only include blue-collar workers but also white-collar employees- especially computer experts, from operators to systems analysts to electronics engineers in general.

In connection with the problems of skilled labour, experts from all countries unanimously reported that in regions where well known big enterprises had their site and were the biggest or a big single offerer of jobs, skilled labour from small and medium sized enterprises increasingly moved to these big enterprises. Since such an enterprise has a certain image, offers top pay also for unskilled work and above average fringe benefits, some skilled workers consciously opt for working in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs.

The personnel managers of these enterprises favour such attitudes of the skilled workers since preference is given whenever possible to workers who have had some kind of vocational training, even for work that could just as well be done by unskilled workers. Here the type of occupational training is of no importance.

This is confirmed by an investigation on "occupational careers of skilled labour"<sup>1)</sup>, recently published by the Institute for Labour Market and Occupational Research of the Federal Employment Institute. Among other things it is noted that -according to their own indications -

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1) Hofbauer, H.: Berufswege von Erwerbstätigen mit Fach-  
arbeiterausbildung (Occupational Careers of Skilled  
Labour), Mitteilungen aus der Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufs-  
forschung 2/1981

at least 11 % of those trained as skilled workers, worked in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. This mostly concerns skilled labour that was trained in small enterprises and went on to work in larger enterprises. Only a very small number saw the transition from a skilled job to a semi- or unskilled job as occupational down-grading.

The representatives of the Dutch employment offices did not see a special skill shortage as the main reason for the difficulty in filling certain vacancies but rather the extremely high demands - not only with regard to occupational qualification but generally being made on prospective employees. One cause for this they considered to be the fact that an employee, once engaged, is very difficult to dismiss. A tendency of skilled labour to change to big enterprises could not be observed but a preference for changing to public administration or state enterprises was obvious.

#### 2.2.2 Working Conditions / Seasonal Influences

A second major reason complicating the filling of a vacancy generally, are poor working conditions, as was pointed out (e.g. cold, heat, wet, hard physical labour).

But also special working hours (early, late shifts, weekend work), have a negative bearing on the possibilities of filling a vacancy.

As an example especially the hotel- and catering industry was cited, where the importance of the seasons for many enterprises makes permanent employment impossible and thus further aggravates the negative conditions. In all

countries -except France- there is mainly a shortage of unskilled and semi-skilled labour in this branch of industry.

The same trend can also be observed in the construction trade.

### 2.2.3 Wages

If an enterprise does not adhere to collective bargaining agreements and pays less than the neighboring enterprises that have joined in wage agreements, then this is a decisive criterion making a job hard to fill. Similar problems arise if wages are below the "locally normal" level.

### 2.2.4 Geographic Location

In an area with relatively many widely distributed small enterprises, poor public transport to the individual enterprise and the residential areas, can considerably influence the filling of vacancies.

### 2.2.5 Structural Adaptation

Filling difficulties generally occur more frequently when jobs are offered that so far had been partly or completely unknown in the area, be it because of structural adaptations within enterprises or settlements of new industries.

### 2.2.6 Other Causes

It was generally stated that particularly in times of poor business it is difficult to fill certain vacancies, because the employers then make extremely high demands

on future staff members and are very selective.

Those extremely high demands on prospective employees for skilled, semi- or unskilled labour alike, also permit the conclusion that quite often an exchange of staff takes place, with the objective of upgrading the average level of skills of all staff members.

A further reason mentioned for the difficulty of filling a certain job was that often the employers give insufficient and unclear details on the job profile and the worker desired.

### 3. Measures to Fill Long-term Notified Vacancies

#### 3.1 Measures of the Employment Administration

##### 3.1.1 General Organisational Measures

Just as manifold as the single or multiple causes that make a vacancy hard to fill, are the measures that aim at abolishing or ameliorating these causes.

##### 3.1.1.1 Administration of Notified Vacancies

In Great Britain as well as in the Netherlands there are special staff members who receive the employers' orders, i.e. his job openings. In Great Britain there are furthermore certain jobcentres in selected areas, specialising in the reception of vacancies. This information is rapidly distributed to the jobcentres associated with them.

In both countries placement and advisory officers have access to all notified vacancies at all times.

The special advantage of a central register, where job openings are classified according to occupational groups, is that with increased access also the chances for filling the vacancy are improved. Furthermore it is easier to find a related activity or get some ideas about a specific course of training that would be advisable, when looking for opportunities for unskilled workers or job-seekers with rare occupations.

In France placement officers as well as staff members in a central office, where the central vacancy file is kept, accept notifications of vacancies. The procedure for gathering comprehensive information about all vacancies is for the placement officer about the same as in Great Britain and the Netherlands.

In the Federal Republic of Germany vacancies, classified according to occupations, are always accepted by the placement officer of the respective occupational grouping, who also deals with the unemployed or job-seekers from his occupational sector.

All staff members meet regularly for an exchange of information with their colleagues to achieve a comprehensive view of all vacancies available. The vacancies registered in the semi-open placement scheme are also evaluated by all.

#### 3.2.2.2 Job Descriptions

To rule out most misunderstandings between employers and placement officers regarding the requirements of

the job, it is necessary to have detailed descriptions of the job, the skills required for it and the working conditions. A specific submission and thus successful placement and advisory services depend on this. Frequent "unsuccessful submissions" that can also result in the vacancy being considered "hard-to-fill", are thus kept to a minimum, as are disappointments to employers and applicants. Useful descriptions are also the basis of any relevant counselling to employers and job-seekers.

### 3.1.1.3 Publicizing Notified Vacancies

The number of job offers that are considered hard to fill is also influenced by the manner, speed and extent of the publication of the vacancy.

All four countries attempt to inform job-seekers as fast and fully as possible about vacancies, using a variety of different methods.

When providing information about vacancies beyond the local district two different factors have to be taken into account: a supraregional procedure of matching jobs requiring highly qualified personnel, management positions, experts etc. which is normally nationwide (and in certain cases even goes beyond national borders), can be organised differently from a supra-regional matching between neighbouring districts or districts at such distances that an employee can be expected to commute (travel-to-work area). For the first of these possibilities the filling of vacancies will, by the very nature of the matter, take longer. When information about "normal" vacancies is passed on

faster to the travel-to-work-areas this considerably increases the possibilities for a rapid filling with suitable applicants of the vacancies notified in a certain office's district.

In France, Great Britain and the Netherlands in recent years one has increasingly emphasised that the job-seekers must have the opportunity of making an initial selection on their own. To this end, nearly all of the incoming vacancies are publicized, e.g. by putting them up on a notice-board.

In the Federal Republic of Germany the employment offices have so far only put a representative selection of job openings on such boards. Soon this system shall be replaced by semi-open placement through micro-fiche, which gives an overall survey of all job openings within a travel-to-work -area to job-seekers and placement officers alike. In the regional employment office of Northern Bavaria this has been tested successfully and up to 16,000 job openings were offered at the same time.

#### France

In France the most important and most successful medium of publication is semi-open placement which is practised via notices. The address of the employer offering the job is handed to the applicant only after consultation with the placement officer.

These notices are put up, not only on the premises of the placement services themselves but e.g. in rural areas, this can also be done in the post offices. In all cases there is the advice to apply to the employment offices for further information.

Job-seekers applying directly to the placement offices are presented with suggestions for jobs after the central vacancy register was checked. Of course, suitable applicants are also informed in writing or by telephone when a promising job opening has resulted from the matching of job-seekers' and vacancies' registers.

Additionally information about vacancies is published-sometimes daily - on radio and television.

Information on vacancies is circulated by two different methods. The first is to telex all vacancies of one office to the other offices within the travel-to-work area, they then use the print - outs in semi-open placement.

The second method is faster: information is passed on via computer terminals with keyboards and printers. So far 160 offices (64 in Paris) are equipped with such terminals. It is intended to link up between 400 and 420 offices but not all, to this system. In its final stage there shall be automatic matching of job-seekers' and vacancies' data.

#### Great Britain

The core of the publication of vacancies in Great Britain is formed by semi-open placement. About 90% of all vacancies are put up on boards after rearranging them for easy reading. The address of the employer is never included in such notices. The job-seeker always turns to the receptionist before getting into contact with the employer. He will discuss with him the job selected, its requirements, and conditions and if necessary present the client with further suggestions.

Copies of all jobs on the notice-board are available to the receptionist. The British method comes up against its limits when there is no sufficient space for notices. Up to 1000 jobs can be put up at the same time in the jobcentres, depending on their size. More than 50 % of the vacancies are filled in this way; top rates are around 80 %.

Apart from these notices, the placement officers and advisors match their files on job offers and job-seekers by hand and then inform suitable applicants by letter or telephone about the opportunity.

In Great Britain job offers can be sent to other offices by mail as photocopies or as facsimile communication through the telephone network.

Secondly there is a network of computer terminals that is the main information system within travel-to-work areas, called messageswitch. These terminals are equipped with keyboards and printers and interconnected by telephone lines. In this way it is guaranteed that all integrated jobcentres are informed on the spot about additional or cancelled job offers.

Computer-directed, automatic matching is made possible by the so-called Capital-System<sup>1) 2)</sup>. This computer-assisted placing has been introduced only in one part of London so far. Here the desks of all staff members in the jobcentres are equipped with displays and keyboards, they are on-line with the central computer and thus have access at any time to all vacancies and data on job-seekers of a travel-to-work area, stored there.

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- 1) Capital = Computer Assisted Placing in the Areas of London  
2) For budgetary reasons it will be discontinued in summer 1981

In this way they can check for correspondence between qualifications and job demands. In the same way all desired or thus found vacancies can be called upon for a visiting job-seeker. Since they are of course, also printed out. From such a desk the filling of a certain vacancy can also be entered immediately.

In the opinion of the staff members of the British employment services, this semi-open placing is faster in filling vacancies than e.g. private services or "Positions vacant" advertisements in newspapers. The immense speed with which the Capital system provides all on-line jobcentres with the latest vacancies - either by programme or manually - (1 hour) has made it possible to fill vacancies on average one half day earlier than before. Job-seekers from other districts which still receive their vacancy information in the traditional way, stand less chances of getting such a job, because they contact the employer only much later than those from the areas equipped with the Capital system.

To introduce modern technology into placement, microfiche for publicizing vacancies was also tested some years ago. At that time it became obvious that in using such a method, speedy information about vacancies was not possible in the same way that it is possible with the present system, because the postal service was involved. Further drawbacks were that too few job-seekers had access to this overall information at the same time and that the applicants shied away from the new technology.

MSC<sup>1)</sup> has a further 31 offices to assist in the place-

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1) Manpower Services Commission

ment of professional and executive staff (PER). A weekly paper containing all relevant job offers is mailed to them.

A second supraregional exchange takes place between jobcentres. Whenever information about vacancies is to be passed on to more distant areas, this is done via the area offices.

The area offices pass on the job openings to other area offices. The receiving offices then decide on what is to be passed down to the job centres. Job openings which are known to be almost impossible to fill will not be handed on to the jobcentres but kept centrally in the area offices. If need be the jobcentres can turn to them for information.

#### The Netherlands

In the Netherlands as well, modern technology, procedures demanding the initiative of the job-seekers and the traditional matching of files are used. The latter can also be done in cooperation with the employer.

It is about four years now since all offices introduced self-service or open placement, i.e. the applicant can get in touch with the employer directly, without consulting the employment office staff, since in addition to the job description also the employer's address is given. Information about job offers is not put up on notice-boards but can be read in binders like a book. the employers are quite content with this procedure.

Display terminals have been installed in 20 Dutch employment offices so far, thus they, together with a

large computer, can match the stored job openings and the applicants. There is only semi-automatic computer matching so far, because job offers will only be entered into the computer store in 1983. It is, however, possible now to receive a list of possible applicants for a vaguely described vacancy. It is also possible to carry out matching overnight and have the print-outs available the next morning. These terminals, to which only the employment placement or advisory officers have access, are to be installed in all employment offices within the next two years.

Vacancies are also published in the employment office's own newspaper- for university graduates' jobs -, on the radio, in "positions vacant" advertisements, and the job-seekers are mailed leaflets with selected job offers.

At the moment there is a pilot project underway, where job-seekers can get direct access to the vacancies by means of display terminals that are not set up in the offices of the services but in some other public building that is well frequented.

In the Netherlands vacancies are only passed on to other offices if the employer expressly so desires, since he has to pay for the travelling cost and time of the applicant.

In general vacancies that are to be registered in other offices are mailed and then put up as notices in those offices and/or matched with the job-seekers.

The 20 employment offices equipped with computer terminals use them for supraregional circulation as well.

Federal Republic of Germany

In the majority of cases the vacancies are explained to the applicants in personal conversations. The notice-boards with job openings as part of semi-open placement for lack of space permit only information about a representative cross-section of job offers. For some time, however, there have been tests with micro-fiche displays to give a job-seeker the opportunity of taking the initiative and getting a complete survey of all vacancies available in the office's district and the surrounding travel-to-work area. After an initial selection of the job openings of interest to him, the job-seeker must in any case talk to the placement officer. Each officer's desk is equipped with a micro-fiche reader which contains the employer's address as well. When necessary the placement officer and his client will discuss whether and to what extent the jobs he has selected really fit his talents and skills.

After a successful conclusion of the trial period this method is to be introduced as fast as possible throughout the Federal Republic. Apart from this, computer display readers are being tested which permit direct access to decentrally placed computers of medium technology to get an overview of all vacancies notified. In-put as well as the cancelling of vacancies is also done directly via the keyboard at the officer's desk. This signifies the first step towards an intensive utilization of electronic data-processing in the daily routine of labour placement and guidance. The objective is to arrive at a specific matching of job offers and job-seekers, at first manually by means of a search programme, in the final stage automatically.

It is expected that this will help in making semi-open placement by micro-fiche progressively more efficient.

Computer -assisted placement in the employment offices cannot and is not intended to replace qualitative placement and advisory activities, on this all four countries agreed. Its strong points are clearly that detailed information on the labour market is available at any time rapidly and completely and that necessary, time-consuming activities, such as the matching of vacancies and job-seekers, can be accomplished more comprehensively and quickly than is possible by hand. The computer can assist in filling vacancies faster and with the most suitable applicants.

For years there has been successful computer-assisted placement in the field of special placement for highly qualified experts and managers. Here the vacancies' and the job-seekers' data are matched overnight for the whole national area and resulting successful matchings are printed out. Then each individual case is checked by the placement officer. At the moment 19 special placement services and the Central Placement Agency (Zentralstelle für Arbeitsvermittlung) are linked up to this system.( see App. 3,p. xii).

Any other second registrations of vacancies are circulated by mail, be it within a travel-to-work area, the regional labour office district , the whole national territory or specifically from one employment office to another.

Apart from this special listings of jobs give information about selected job offers and on the level of the

regional employment offices a supraregional matching of jobs takes place regularly.

### 3.1.2 Specific Measures

#### 3.1.2.1 Checking the Vacancy Registers

In all four countries the registers are regularly scrutinised specifically with regard to the registration terms of the vacancies, either by the placement officer or by electronic data processing. Such checks occur at different intervalls.

Putting up all vacancies in open placement, as in the Netherlands, demands as a matter of course a permanent up-dating of the offers, in order to rule out right away that applicants and employers be annoyed by applications for jobs that are already filled. By continuously dealing with the files in such a way, the placement staff is confronted with the hard-to-fill vacancies all the time.

In France flows on and off the register are checked every four days in those offices where electronic data processing is employed, since after this period either an input is needed to keep the vacancy stored or it will automatically be sorted out.

In Great Britain a weekly or at least monthly check for up-dating is normal. Vacancy notices are removed as soon as an office finds out that the vacancy is filled.

In the Netherlands there has recently been a centrally issued directive to make special efforts to fill vacancies that have remained in the stocks for three months and longer. Normally there is a continuous up-dating which is facilitated by the fact that some vacancies are filed centrally according to entry date. Therefore vacancies of any registration term desired are accessible for special measures at any time.

In the Federal Republic of Germany all vacancies are screened for their registration terms at the latest on the sampling dates for monthly statistics. The offices with semi-open placement by micro-fiche must keep their registers always up to date.

In all four countries alike, it is the purpose of these regular checks to contact the employers - by telephone, in writing or in person - because of this hard-to-fill vacancy and to discuss the reasons, possible measures to be taken and the possibility of filling it.

#### 3.1.2.2 Advisory Services for Employers

In all of the countries surveyed it has become a matter of course for the placement and advisory staff of the employment services to offer advice to the employers concerning the hard-to-fill vacancies. Either as concrete hints or by taking certain measures to adapt the jobs in some way to the reality of the labour market.

Often the employers themselves ask for such support.

The range of advice offered is wide and varied.

The placement and advisory staff has to investigate the job personally, in order to be able to offer useful advice, which will be accepted by the employers.

This was one of the reasons why in the Netherlands a directive of priorities was given to the employment offices to do much more outside duty than they had done so far, even if it were to the detriment of other activities. Prior to that in the Netherlands the counselling of employers with regard to adaptation possibilities of a hard-to-fill vacancy focuses not so much on a specific job but more on general advice on the available financial incentives. Neither the employers nor the employment services' staff considered this to be sufficient and in keeping with the labour market situation.

In the other countries as well, employers receive concrete advice on hard-to-fill vacancies. According to the individual case it will be pointed out e.g. that the labour market conditions should be seen more clearly and maybe wages should be increased. Also the necessity of improving working conditions is stressed. Here the British employment services can refer the employers to suggestions by government experts, who offer concrete advice on optimum conditions for a job (cf. Appendix 4). At the same time advice is given to solve the problems by training or giving some type of skills to staff members or unemployed persons.

Other than that suggestions range from the enterprises' offering of a canteen, a kindergarten or means of transport to creating or changing part time jobs or employing women for traditionally male jobs and vice versa.

In addition to the very important outside duty, each country makes use of a multitude of media to establish contacts and disseminate information, such as

- telephone calls
- regular letters
- newspaper advertisements
- posters
- pamphlets
- television
- radio
- lectures.

In Great Britain employers are also invited to the jobcentres for informational visits. In the Federal Republic of Germany and in France there are regular discussions of the labour market situation to which the management of enterprises is invited. Labour market discussions are to improve the contacts with those partners in the labour market that are directly or indirectly involved in personnel decisions. This mainly concerns the representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises.

The same group is reached by lectures in the employer's associations in the Netherlands.

There is also effective support for the dissemination of information in the Federal Republic, just as in all countries with comparable institutions, from all representatives in the self-governing bodies.

In France, Great Britain and the Federal Republic there are special information booklets <sup>1)</sup> <sup>2)</sup>, giving

- 1) As a complementary effort, information leaflets on certain labour market instruments are published in Germany, specially for worker's representatives in industry (worker's councils) who in turn can then point out certain activities of the employment services to the employers. For the same purpose also discussions on the labour market situation take place with these persons.
- 2) France published a booklet "Guide pratique de l'employeur" and Germany "Wege zur passenden Arbeitskraft" for employers.

details on the possibilities for employers of finding a suitable employee for a hard-to-fill job.

As an example, Appendix 4 lists the British suggestions in this area.

### 3.1.2.3 Financial Incentives to Facilitate the Filling of Notified Long-term Vacancies

In most countries a different number of measures can be taken to counteract the difficulties in filling certain vacancies.

In Great Britain there are no financial incentives specifically linked to hard-to-fill vacancies but certain general measures help to alleviate the problem. Financial help can be given to individuals moving from one part of the country to another to take up job opportunities; and extra grants can be given to workers who move to fill jobs in certain skilled occupations. In addition the Manpower Services Commission supports training courses and pays trainees in a wide variety of occupations in which there is a continuing demand for workers.

In the following a list of the most relevant alternatives: In France training courses can be established for the unemployed to train them for jobs in occupations or industries where an disproportionally high number of vacancies exist. The employer has to pledge, however, to engage the thus trained workers after the course. During training the unemployed receive a minimum wage, a minor part of which is at the expense of the employer, the major part is paid by the state. Such measures (Stages de mise à niveau) have to be applied for by an enterprise or by several enterprises jointly. Furthermore the state has for a limited period of three years been running programmes with the intention to facilitate an occupational start for young people under 25. Since 1981

also women could benefit from this programme. These programmes consist in training courses which last for six months as a rule. The participants are paid a wage of 90% of SMIC (state guaranteed minimum income). The employer only has to pay 20% of the wage and is exempt of part of the social security payments.

Each of the two measures mentioned above aims at a different objective. The "Stages de mise à niveau" intent to adapt the workers available (at a certain point in time) in terms of qualifications to the demands of vacancies offered. In the case of the cyclical measures for young people the employer is given a subsidy for the employment of young people not yet adequately trained for the job.

In the Netherlands exist a multitude of different subsidies which are quite effective, specifically in connection with hard-to-fill vacancies.

There is for example the possibility of paying allowances to unemployed persons that take a hard-to-fill job and are therefore paid less than they were paid in their last job before unemployment. These allowances are of limited duration and even out the differences in pay to a certain extent. Over a period of up to four years there is a gradual adaptation to the lower wage. In practice some difficulties were caused by this procedure, in that enterprises employing subsidised employees paid different wages for the same jobs which can cause ill feelings among the staff members.

Another measure that can be quite effective in individual cases, is payment of moving costs if unemployed who are geographically mobile offer to take a hard-to-fill job away from their home town.

In the Netherlands financial support is also available for retraining measures, specifically for occupations with skill shortages.

Furthermore an unemployed person who has been unemployed for at least 3 years, has been looking for a full-time

job in vain, and is now ready to take a part-time job, can be paid the difference between the wage in the part-time job and that of the originally desired full-time job for one year.

There is a 10 month test being run now, which provides a single premium (2.500 Dutch Guilders) for paying employers, if they split a hard-to-fill full-time job in two part-time jobs and thus create additional part-time work.

In the Federal Republic of Germany there is the possibility of financing retraining and further training as well as in-plant adaptation measures, particularly to counteract skill shortages.

The so-called "familiarization subsidy" is offered to employers as wage subsidy, if they provide a job-seeker or unemployed with additional skills beyond the initial training in the plant.

In the Federal Republic as well, financial subsidies to enhance regional mobility can influence workers to accept a hard-to-fill job in some cases.

Other measures of promoting employment (e.g. paying for application or equipment costs, adaptation, settling in grants and the like, in certain cases) do at least indirectly improve the chances of filling some hard-to-fill vacancies.

#### 3.1.2.4 Subsidies to Fill Seasonal Jobs

This problem exists mainly in the hotel and catering industry and in other fields which are highly dependent

on the seasons (construction, harvest). France has ameliorated it by granting work permits for seasonal jobs to foreign workers (mainly from Marocco, Spain and Portugal). No unemployment or pension benefits can be accumulated. Health and accident insurance are, however, provided for during that period.

### 3.2 Employer's Own Efforts

In all four countries the employers themselves are eager to contribute to the filling of hard-to-fill jobs with the right employees. Here all placement and advisory services investigated reported that in the present labour market and economic situation the employers were not as ready as they were during boom periods to waive fixed requirements regarding the qualifications of the prospective employee and/or to change the conditions of work. All placement and advisory services had had the experience that the opposite was true when there were hard-to-fill vacancies that represented real additional labour demand. This is true for branches of industry or individual industrial or service fields, that are experiencing an expansion despite the generally poor condition of the economy. In France these are e.g. certain areas of the electronics or data processing industries. The German services mentioned tax consultants as an example.

The results of the discussion on adaptability in Part A (see 1.3.2 "Analysis of the placement process") demonstrate that employers are basically flexible with regard to the employee or the job (even if not to the extent as in boom periods).

In 1972, a boom year, a survey on the availability and filling of jobs was carried out in the Federal Republic of Germany<sup>1) 2)</sup>. It found that in industry, the crafts and mines substitutes were accepted with regard to the field and level of training to fill job openings actually envisaged for trainees of the plant. The substitutes were of the following nature

- 14 % trainees from different fields of training from within the enterprise
- 6 % members of the opposite sex
- 26 % personnel with a different level of training (higher/lower)
- 38 % foreign nationals.

Also changes in the organisation of the enterprise are carried out, abolition and redistribution of jobs within the enterprise. The redistribution of jobs within the enterprise contributes considerably to reducing hard-to-fill jobs. So this way of decreasing the number of hard-to-fill jobs is specially stressed in the information leaflets for employers -see 3.1.2.2.

The services in France, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany recently observed that more and more enterprises attempt to solve their staff problems by resorting to temporarily hired labour. This is an advantage also insofar as one's own staff does not have to be enlarged.

To fill vacancies more quickly and easily the employers have lately been given the opportunity in the Netherlands of presenting to the job-seekers a film made and paid for by the enterprise on its jobs, the enterprise etc in a video presentation. This, however, is also assumed

- 1) See Quintessenzen der Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung 7, Institute für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung of the Federal Employment Institute (editor)
- 2) See Kühl, J.: Bereitstellung und Besetzung von Arbeitsplätzen (Availability and Filling of Jobs), Mitteilungen aus der Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung 4/1976, pp.414

to incur the danger of inequality since often only large enterprises have the means to produce and finance such films.

A relatively new manner of publicizing also hard-to-fill vacancies in the Netherlands are the so-called "Banen-markets" (loosely translated "markets for occupational careers"). This means that the employers themselves present their jobs to the job-seekers. Placement officers organise such meetings in cooperation with the local authorities and the chamber of commerce. They are especially successful in areas where more vacancies than job-seekers are registered or where structural labour market imbalances exist. The cost of organisation is borne by the employment services. This type of placement has met with criticism lately which will be discussed in a report on the experience gained with this system in the near future.

In the Netherlands the employers use TV and video-text programmes to give information on supraregional vacancies to job-seekers at home on their TV sets. Only a small number of job-seekers can take advantage of this system though, since an extra decoder is needed to receive video-texts.

Furthermore employers in all countries can also resort to newspaper advertisements to enhance the chances of recruiting labour for hard-to-fill jobs. In this way they can appeal not only to unemployed persons but also to people still in employment. Here the German employment services reported that as far as is known, employers were not considerably more successful in filling such hard-to-fill vacancies by publishing them and that most vacancies were also notified with

the services. A major reason for this is probably that precisely in the case of a hard-to-fill vacancy, people in employment can be even less tempted than unemployed persons to take the job.

Developments in Great Britain show that people in employment do not take up hard-to-fill jobs in considerable numbers because they usually have high qualifications and because the unemployed show very much initiative in the present situation.

Events in France and the Netherlands, however, showed that there was quite a considerable number of people in employment that took up hard-to-fill jobs. So the French services pointed out that specifically for hard-to-fill vacancies also employer's associations advertisements of jobs proved to be quite successful - this mostly for skilled workers. Also the Dutch services had noted that e.g. in the Banenmarkets, where as mentioned above, employers can present their jobs themselves, and which are attended by many job-seekers, mainly skilled workers among the employed chose to take a hard-to-fill job.

Are employers ready to fill a vacancy contrary to tradition with a member of the opposite sex or will they only publish the vacancy as "unspecified to sex"?<sup>1)</sup> The experience of the services in all four countries has shown that it seems not to be the prejudice of employers that creates most problems in this respect.<sup>2)</sup> Rather it is the male and female workers themselves that find it difficult to break with the traditional pattern of job distribution according to sex. In other

- 1) At the time of the inquiry the Federal Republic was the last of the four countries, where the employers were not forced to specify a job either for one sex only or for both. The other three countries have legal provisions to publish vacancies "unspecified as to sex".
- 2) In France it was noted in 1978 that for 60% of notified vacancies, workers of a specific sex were demanded.

words: the readiness of women to work in a traditionally male job and vice versa - is not very pronounced yet. Certainly it will take quite a while before the workers have changed their attitudes.

4. Consequences of Hard-to-fill Notified Vacancies for the Cooperation between Employment Placement and Advisory Services and the Employers

It was the impression in France that after a certain number of frustrated attempts and efforts to recruit suitable labour with the help of the placement services, employers tend to continue cooperation less intensively or not at all. Which does not mean that they blame this failure on the services' staff, they know quite well that it is mainly the labour market situation and its structural distortions that cause the difficulties in filling certain jobs.

Apart from this all employers, not only in France, first of all tried other methods of finding suitable employees, such as newspaper advertisements or, as in Great Briatin, private placement agencies. After everything else had failed they finally turned to the employment services.

However, the Employment Service in Great Britain reports a change in employer attitudes in that they increasingly turn to the public Employment Service in the first, rather than the last, resort.

In the survey the Dutch placement services indicated that they had recently noted a similar attitude of the employers as their French colleagues had mentioned. Cooperation with the employers decreases also because

of the very critical attitude they have towards the applicants submitted by the services which often prevents an engagement. A similarly critical attitude is not shown towards applicants that are interviewed on their own initiative.

On the whole the effects of hard-to-fill vacancies on the cooperation with the employers was seen as less drastic in the Federal Republic of Germany; quite the opposite seemed observable, namely that employers increasingly turned to the employment services as the first or at least equal choice for recruiting labour.

In principle it can be said for all countries that negative effects for the cooperation with the placement services could be avoided in the same measure as the contacts between both parties were intensified.

5. Reflections on the Possibilities of Intensifying the Relations between Placement Services and Employers

France

Although in recent years the services of the French employment offices have been used increasingly by the employers, the French employment placement services still hold the opinion that a number of things remain to be done to achieve a further improvement that is to say a more intensive utilization of their services.

The establishment of bodies with one third parity (of employers, trade unions and state) on the regional and national level is meant to intensify contacts between employers and trade unions. They will in future be automatically involved in the planning and devising of ANPE's labour market policy measures.

Of special importance is the more intensive contact with the individual enterprises to be in a better position to judge the jobs offered, the demands connected with them, and the enterprise in general. If there was a relationship of greater trust with the heads of personnel departments and employers a future oriented labour market policy could be followed by, e.g. having more information on personnel planning available. This, in order to act preventively before large scale lay-offs or restructuring measures take place, giving rise to new needs in training.

In an ever closer cooperation with the enterprises there should be intensive investigation into the factors that make some jobs difficult to fill.

Apart from an increased use of electronic data processing, making possible a faster distribution of job offers, some technical changes could also prove useful, e.g. in the area of the classification of jobs (introduction of new occupations, changing or deleting of other occupations...) or in the area of updating notified vacancies.

Other than this, in the long run the efficiency of the measures of the placement services will depend to a large degree on the level of training, the knowledge and experience of the placement and advisory staff. For this reason it is planned to open a centre for further training, where officers can be trained for ANPE's tasks permanently.

#### Great Britain

For the British placement services as well, more frequent contact with the employers seems of prime importance for an improvement of the services' efficiency in the future. Here negotiations about working conditions and better information about the services available from MSC figure as the most prominent aspects.

Placement experts are of the opinion that in particular the intended extension of computer-assisted placement to most offices, be it the terminal system or the Capital system, which have proven to supply faster placement will cause the employers to make more intensive use of the services.

Also high training standards of staff are decisive.

#### The Netherlands

In the Netherlands it is also supposed that increasing application of electronic data-processing together with more intensive outside duty and better trained staff, will make the services more attractive for employers.

#### The Federal Republic of Germany

At the beginning of 1979 a number of short-term and medium-term effective special projects in placement and guidance were introduced in the Federal Republic of Germany.

As in the three other countries, first of all an intensification of outside duty and thus of the contact between industry and administration has to be mentioned. This requires e.g. corresponding qualifications for placement and advisory officers.

More efficiency is expected in particular of a nationwide introduction of semi-open placement by micro-fiche and full application of electronic data-processing in placement.

An improvement is also to be expected because of the training of staff in the Federal Technical College, Department of Labour Administration which has been compulsory since autumn 1979.

Positive effects are expected of an increased involvement of the self-government in the employment offices in the labour market activities.

In their consideration of improving relations with the employers and thus increasing vacancy filling performance, all countries investigated come to the conclusion that for a more frequent consultation of the placement and advisory services by the employers, efficiency is the main prerequisite.

Appendix 1

Specified Questionnaire on

— Organisation of employment placement and advisory services

- Which general basic legal provisions govern the activities of the employment placement services (e.g. who is entitled and competent to make placements?)
- Organisational structure of employment placement services (Are there special placement offices for certain occupations or branches of industry ?)
- Number of staff

— Finding and filling vacancies

- Are the same staff members responsible for finding and for filling vacancies ?
- If not, what mutual information exists?

— Finding vacancies

- How is contact established?
  - Is the initiative mainly taken by the placement services or by the employers ?
- What data on the vacancies are specified ?
- How are data recorded ?
- Does one inquire only for job-related data or also for individual-related data (men/women, age, demands on performance) ?
- Which data on vacancies are volunteered by the employers ?
- Do third parties (employers' associations etc) support the work of the placement offices ?
  - If so, in what manner ?
- Are you informed by the employers, whether they publish the vacancies notified with the services elsewhere at the same time (e.g. newspapers, magazines, radio, TV) ?

- Are there vacancies that are hardly ever or never notified with the placement offices according to your experience?
  - Does this occur more frequently in certain branches of industry or occupational groups?
- For which branches of industry or occupational groups are vacancies notified more often with the placement services?
- How are employers informed about the services of the placement offices ?

— Filling notified vacancies

- How are vacancies made public?
  - How do you judge the effectiveness of the different methods of publication?
- What information on the vacancies is given to the applicants?
- Is contact with the employer only possible after previous consultation of the placement services ?
- Do the services preselect the possible applicants ?
- Are there special difficulties in filling vacancies with unemployed persons ?
- Are certain types of vacancies easier to fill than others, depending on requirements of skill, branch of industry ?
- How do you assure that all staff members in the placement services are thoroughly informed on all vacancies notified throughout the district ?
- What is done to assure information on vacancies beyond the local district ?
- What is done to make employers report the filling of vacancies immediately ?
- Can financial incentives be granted to employers ?
  - If so, under which conditions ?
  - What do the enterprises undertake on their own initiative ?

— Final Remarks

- How do you assess the administration of vacancies by the placement services ?
  
- Are measures possible or intended that will improve the finding of vacancies ?
  
- How do employers judge the cooperation with the placement services ?

Questionnaire on "notified hard-to-fill vacancies"

1. How long after its registration is a vacancy classified as "hard-to-fill", according to your experience. Are there certain job-offers that will be classified as such immediately upon registration, regardless of the time factor ?
2. Is there a corresponding check of registers ?
  - a) continuously
  - b) at what intervals
3. Do you inquire with the employers whether a notified vacancy is to continue on the register upon its identification as a so defined vacancy ?
  - a) regularly
  - b) prior to statistic sampling dates
4. What is the mean proportion of hard-to-fill vacancies of the service's stocks of notified vacancies?
5. Are the difficulties in filling related to
  - seasonal influences (e.g. weather)
  - regional peculiarities (e.g. restructuration)
  - certain occupations ( e.g. skilled workers)
  - certain branches of industry (e.g. mono-structures, expanding industries etc.)
  - general conditions of work (e.g. hotel and catering industry, fishing industry etc.)Scale the different items.
6. Is there a tendency towards faster filling of hard-to-fill vacancies
  - a) during rising or high unemployment ?
  - b) during boom periods ?

7. Are there indications that hard-to-fill vacancies are filled by job-seekers not registered with the employment offices?
8. In as far as jobs for men and women can be distinguished, are there more hard-to-fill vacancies for men or for women ?  
If so, which ?
9. Are hard-to-fill vacancies kept as "constant bookings"
  - a) sometimes ?
  - b) regularly ?
10. Are there indications that employers refrain from notifying such vacancies in future, if it turned out that they are hard to fill for the placement services ?
11. To what extent are those hard-to-fill vacancies replacement or real additional demand ?
12. Do the placement and advisory services inform employers on how hard-to-fill vacancies can be made easier to fill ?  
What advice is given
  - a) adaptation of the employer's requirements to the labour market situation
  - b) changes in the conditions of work
  - c) other (please indicate) ?
13. Which legal possibilities do the employment services have at their disposal to influence the conditions for hard-to-fill vacancies :
  - measures to the benefit of the workers (e.g. promoting vocational training ?
  - support for the employers (e.g. subsidizing familiarization periods )?

14. Do you have information on the employer's opinion of the cooperation with the employment services, regarding the filling of such vacancies ?
  
15. What initiatives do the employers themselves take if a vacancy turns out to be hard to fill ? Do they for example modify requirements of the job or of skills ? Do they attempt to solve the problem by rearranging jobs within the enterprise ?  
Do they make changes in the organisation to abolish the hard-to-fill job altogether ?  
Do they increasingly attempt recruitment by newspaper advertisements, private placement agencies or the like ?
  
16. Do employers often know beforehand that a vacancy notified by them will be hard to fill and have they made other recruitment attempts?  
Do they indicate this when notifying the vacancy?
  
17. Inasmuch as it is permitted to specify the sex desired of an applicant for a certain vacancy - is there a marked tendency to accept a member of the opposite sex also, if the vacancy turns out to be hard to fill ?
  
18. Are there local or supraregional agreements of employers or their associations to carry out special retraining or familiarization measures for unemployed persons ?  
Do the worker's representatives react favourably to these measures ?
  
19. Or do the employment services normally
  - a) initiate
  - b) subsidize
  - c) carry out such measures ?

Appendix 3

Survey of Organisational Structure and Personnel

1. Organisational Structure

France

The French employment placement service (ANPE<sup>1</sup>) is divided into one central office, 25 regional institutions, 100 offices in the Departments and 616 local offices concerned with the actual placement activities. The ANPE is under the direct supervision of the Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs. A new statute is planned that will provide for an administrative council with a parity of representatives of employees, employers and the state which is to determine the basic guidelines of ANPE's policies. It is headed by a government-appointed Director General.

The actual work is done at the local level by

- placement officers who apart from their placement services also actively scout for vacancies ( ca. 20% of their working time);
- vocational advisory personnel, they also counsel employers (general information, counselling in the case of large-scale lay-offs, talks about working conditions);
- special staff to keep in contact with the enterprises. These officers cooperate closely with the placement officers. Once a month they compile a report on the economic development in their area and on difficulties in the cooperation between their office and the enterprises. In some individual cases that pose extraordinary problems they also help with placement. These staff members work almost exclusively on outside duty. They spend about 40% of their working time on the acquisition of vacancies, 30-40% on keeping up good relations with the enterprises;
- staff for the information services, who give brief, general information.

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1) Agence Nationale Pour l'Emploi

The keeping of contacts with the enterprises has lately been supplemented by the work of comparable specialists at the Department level. It is their main task to establish contact with the employers' associations and to keep in touch with them. They also arrange educational measures and find vacancies.

The heads of the local offices also try to keep in contact with the enterprises as much as possible.

Specialisation of placement and advisory staff with regard to certain occupational groups is only the case when there is competition with private placement services (which are subject to authorisation), e.g. for managers, hotel and catering industry staff, the severely handicapped.

The services of ANPE are free of charge.

#### Great Britain

The British MSC does not have a self-government that could be compared to the system in the Federal Republic of Germany. The Commission, the management, is independent of the government but responsible to the Department of Employment. The Commission consists of ten members who hold office for three years: a chairman, who is the only one employed full-time, three members are appointed in consultation with the trade union leaders and three more members represent the employer's side; two members are appointed in consultation with local authorities and one member represents educational interests.

The practical work is done by two executive directors, 18 area offices, 107 district offices and 1018 jobcentres.

The latter exist in two different forms of organisation and are called "employment offices" wherever the modern concept has not been put into practice yet.

The jobcentres which perform the actual placement, have among their staff - apart from the management -

- placement officers, they mainly match the vacancy files with the files on job-seekers and do also interview them;
- receptionists, counselling the job-seekers who come in on their own initiative after having seen the published job offers;
- employment advisors, they give guidance to the unemployed and job-seekers, accept notification of vacancies and do about 40 % outside duty.

Not all jobcentres accept job offers. There are some regions (e.g. London) where some selected jobcentres take care of this centrally for a certain number of offices.

On average the staff members in the jobcentres do ca. 15 % outside duty; in this they are supported by marketing experts stationed in the 14 area offices. They carry out market research. The marketing officers work out programmes for a specific and individualized way of keeping up good relations with the employers, design public relations lectures to inform about the services of the jobcentres, they train the advisory staff especially for their outside duties (they have done so for about five years now); this is also the responsibility of the heads of the respective offices. MSC attributes considerable importance to these marketing activities, all the more, the more unemployment rises.

There is a special professional and executive placement service for highly qualified staff (managers; university

graduates), it is an independent organisational unit. For a successful placement of highly qualified staff, the employer has to pay a fee of 10 % of the annual wage to MSC.

In connection with the jobcentres, there are special services for the hotel and catering industry and for nurses. Whose placement, just like all other services, is free of charge.

MSC also runs jobcentres to handle clerical occupations (secretaries and the like) and temporary jobs.

Local authorities offer special services for school-leavers and young people to counsel them after and during their time at school and to place them in suitable jobs. The young people have a choice of applying either to the local authorities or the jobcentres for help.

#### The Netherlands

At the head of the employment placement services in the Netherlands is the "Direktoraat Generaal" (central office). Eleven regional employment offices coordinate the work of 130 local offices (80 main offices, 50 branch offices). This is where placement and guidance take place. There are consultative committees at the level of the local offices, the members of which are local dignitaries (e.g. the mayor). They advise the director about dismissals in enterprises on which he has the final decision. They also initiate the introduction of labour market policy measures and discuss their results with the director.

The placement services are divided into general and special departments.

Special placement services concentrate on the placement of unemployed persons who are difficult to place and of severely handicapped persons.

The following are parts of the general placement services:

- labour market investigators, dealing with the possibilities of reintegration for the members of certain occupational groups etc.;
- placement officers for people who can be placed relatively quickly;
- staff for the reception of vacancy notifications and the matching of files. They do the preliminary work for the placement officers. As part of this they also search the registers together with the employers for suitable labour;
- special staff to visit enterprises, in particular small and medium-size enterprises;
- outside duty, mainly visits to companies, are the task of all placement officers. For some branches of industry special staff members establish and maintain these contacts.

There are special placement services for university graduates in the university towns.

#### Federal Republic of Germany

The Federal Employment Institute<sup>1</sup> of the Federal Republic of Germany is divided into one central office, nine regional employment offices in the Länder, 146 local employment offices and approximately 500 branches. The employment offices are directly concerned with the work specific to the organisation. The duties of placement and guidance are carried out in the respective departments of the local employment offices. There is a corresponding department in the central office and the various regional offices.

The principles of labour market policy are worked out by the head office in Nuremberg, where the self-governing bodies discuss and decide upon them. Self-government with

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one-third parity for representatives of employers, employees, and public bodies is to be found on all three levels (central office, regional offices, employment offices) and guarantees that the work is practically oriented. Particularly through this self-government the close contact needed between the institutions of the Federal Institute on the one hand and the forces determining the country's social conditions and economic life on the other is maintained.

The department for employment placement and guidance is divided into several occupational areas- depending on the size of the office and independent of the management. Each occupational area comprises

- one vocational guidance officer who is responsible both for the job-seekers, e.g. counselling on occupational qualifications, and for the employers. In some difficult individual cases he participates in placement;
- main placement officer who deals with the job-seekers and at the same time accepts and scouts for vacancies;
- clerks and assistant clerks working with applications and filing, mainly to carry out the routine administrative tasks.

Employment placement officers and guidance officers are specially trained for visits to enterprises and are urged to spend about 20 % of their working hours on outside duty.

There are specialised placement agencies, free of charge just like all services of the Federal Employment Institute, for e.g. managers in industry (centrally organised - Central Placement Agency-) as well as for other highly qualified special manpower and managers (regionally organised in 19 selected employment offices - Special Placement Agencies) and for particular occupational fields (such as artists, hotel- and catering industry staff, sailors and the like).

There is also special treatment of the severely handicapped and rehabilitants in the employment offices.

## 2. Personnel

### 2.1 Number of Staff

At the time of the inquiry the individual national labour placement and guidance services had the following number of staff, referring to the organisation as a whole:

-ANPE	8,255
-MSC	13,843 (as at Oct.1,1980)
-Netherlands	2,400
-Fed. Employment Institute	16,413 (as at Dec. 31,1980)

### 2.2 Education and Training of Staff

#### France

Newly employed placement officers must have the "baccalaureat". Advisory staff are mostly university graduates. Staff members working with the enterprises must have job experience. Such staff members working at a local level need a minimum of seven years professional experience, in leading positions, at Department level at least ten years.

There is no professional image of the "employment placement officer" or "advisor". Special training for work with ANPE takes several months and is carried out within the institution itself.

#### Great Britain

No university entrance qualifications comparable to the German "Abitur" are demanded of placement staff, although many of them possess these qualifications. They are trained for their tasks during about nine weeks in the local offices.

Of the advisors a university entrance qualification is required.

About 40% of the advisors are university graduates. They also have a six months' special training period.

#### The Netherlands

Staff members must have had vocational training, no matter which. Training for their tasks in employment placement is provided over a period of 3 1/2 years in service by third institutions which sometimes recruit staff of the employment services as expert teachers.

Recently an academy for labour market and vocational choice has started to provide such training.

#### The Federal Republic of Germany

Since autumn 1979 training for both the placement and guidance officers has been offered in a technical college. Courses there last three years and under certain conditions reliable staff members of the Federal Institute can work towards similar qualifications elsewhere than at the technical college.

For career guidance officers for specially qualified manpower and management, university graduation is always a prerequisite.

Appendix 4

Contents of the British leaflet for employers " Do you need skilled workers ?"

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1. Make the best use of your existing workforce , by asking yourself the following questions:
  - Are your skilled workers used to best advantage?
  - Or are they doing work which could be done by less skilled workers ?
  - Can the skills of existing workers be upgraded or converted ? MSC can help with:
    - . courses tailored to your needs at your local skillcentre
    - . the loan of instructors to help you to do the training on your own premises
    - . training courses in instructional techniques for your own craftsmen (so they can do your training)
  - Have you asked your Industrial Training Board for advice ?
  - Have you explored the possibility of courses offered by further education institutes ?
  
2. In many cases upgrading or re-deployment is inappropriate. Then you have to look outside for workers:
  - Present your job as attractively as possible.
  - Make the best use of your local jobcentre. It can:
    - . advise on the availability of labour both locally and in other areas
    - . give you up-to-date information on wages
    - . circulate your vacancy throughout the country
    - . help you design a recruitment campaign
    - . inform you of TOPS courses running in the locality and their completion dates.

Be prepared to widen your horizons:

  - . What about taking on someone to train ?
  - . What about taking someone trained under the Training Opportunities Scheme (TOPS) in a skillcentre or college?

The skillcentre may be able to bias the final stages of training to your particular needs.

- Look at your recruitment process:
  - . are you over-selective?
  - . how long does it take between initial enquiry and engagement? Slow selection loses applicants-especially those you are most likely to want.
  - . Can you help with accomodation either temporary or permanent?
  - . Is your firm accessible ?Would it help if you improve transport?

### 3. Looking ahead.

You may solve your immediate problem. But what of the future? Ask yourself these questions:

- Is your regular need for skilled workers caused by above average staff turnover? Are the causes known? Do you interview skilled workers who are leaving, and act on what they tell you? The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) can help you analyse your turnover problem.
- Could advice from ACAS on manpower planning and payment systems help you?
- Are you training for the future ? Have you enough apprentices? Do you make full use of the facilities offered by your Industrial Training Board ?
- Is the job correctly graded ? Are your recruitment standards too high ?