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TRADE UNION INFORMATION BULLETIN

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**1992 – Social Dimension
Annual Economic Report
Commuting**

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Trade Union Information

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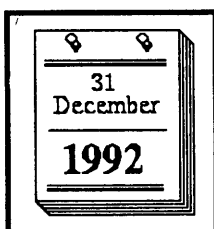
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The Single European Market: **THE SOCIAL DIMENSION**

Debate and discussion within Europe over recent months has been dominated by the Commission proposals to create a social dimension to the internal market. The proposal was first put forward by Commission President Jacques Delors in his speech to the ETUC Congress in Stockholm, and President Delors reiterated the main aims of the social dimension in his speech to the British Trades Union Congress in September. Despite a critical reaction from some Member States, firm proposals are being prepared and the broad outline of the various policies that make up the social dimension are likely to be discussed by the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee before the end of the year. Definite proposals will probably emerge during 1989 for consideration by the Council of Ministers.

The Commission believe that a social dimension to the internal market is essential in order to secure the full support of European workers for the objective of completing the creation of a market without frontiers by the 1992 deadline. Although the research carried out by the Cecchini group suggested that there would be considerable medium and long-term benefits in terms of additional employment resulting from the completion of the internal market, they did warn that in the short-term the necessary restructuring might bring about some job losses. Equally, whilst the increased competition which will exist after 1992 will help to reduce prices and improve efficiency, there could be a danger of competition forcing protective standards down throughout the Community. It is important that such dangers are avoided, the single internal market must be seen to benefit all Community citizens and not just industry and employers.

Just as harmonised standards on technical regulations are necessary so there must be a common set of social protection measures applicable throughout the Member States. With this objective in mind President Delors and the Commission have proposed:-

1. The establishment of a platform of guaranteed social rights, containing general principles, such as every workers' right to be covered by a collective agreement, and more specific measures concerning, for example, the status of temporary work.
2. The creation of a Statute for European Companies, which would include the participation of workers or their representatives. Those companies concerned could opt, on the basis of their traditions and wishes, between a number of formulae.
3. The extension to all workers of the right to lifelong education. This would be done on the basis of existing provisions and after a full consultation of unions and management.

In early November President Delors and Vice-President Marin wrote to the Economic and Social Committee chairman asking the Committee to draw up a Community charter of basic social rights. In the letter the Commission listed the main themes for consideration and these include social protection, the social dialogue, collective conventions, work contracts, health and safety at work, lifelong education, equality between men and women at work and provisions for informing and consulting employees. The Commission have asked for the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee by the beginning of 1989 so that a proposal can be submitted to the Council of Ministers in the first half of 1989. The European Foundation For The Improvement of Living and Working Conditions has also turned its attention to the social consequences of the internal market. It has adopted a four-year study programme entitled "1992 and Beyond: Fresh Opportunities to work to Improve Living and Working Conditions in Europe".



ETUC RESOLUTION

Although the European Trade Union Confederation welcomed the decision by the Hanover Summit to examine the provisions necessary to create a social dimension to the internal market they have expressed some disappointment in the first proposals announced by the Commission. In a resolution adopted by the ETUC Executive Committee in October, changes in the proposals are called for and concrete proposals in a number of areas are called for. These include:-

1. After making an inventory of national practices as regards social policy in order to clarify what is covered by legislation and what is covered by collective agreement in each country, and after discussions with the social partners, a legislative basis should be drawn up to guarantee all workers fundamental rights in order to prevent any competition based on undercutting in the social field.
2. Economic democracy should be developed along the lines of the ETUC's Stockholm Congress resolution since this is essential for the harmonious development of the internal market.
3. The social dialogue should be intensified and decentralised at the sectoral level and at the level of European companies.
4. The role to be played by the social partners in European standardisation procedures connected with the Community's "new approach" should be defined and the appropriate means should be provided.
5. A European right to educational leave should be established for all workers of Europe. The details of the procedures relating to that right could be negotiated by the social partners at the appropriate level.
6. The draft directives on safety, health and hygiene at the workplace should be improved and adopted, and limit values should be laid down for dangerous substances.
7. A Community framework should be created with full trade union participation at all levels for mastering the industrial and regional changes brought about by the internal market's completion.
8. Rules should be laid down pertaining to atypical and insecure forms of employment such as part-time work, temporary work, fixed-term employment contracts and home-work in order to guarantee workers in these forms of employment equal rights.

The resolution calls for work to be started immediately on these priorities in order to ensure their rapid realisation. The resolution also asks the ETUC Secretariat to prepare a document setting out concrete proposals for the charter of Community social rights. It is hoped that such a document can be considered by the ETUC Executive Committee meeting in December 1988.

A second resolution adopted at the same meeting calls for changes in the way the social partners are involved in the determination of European standards which form part of the internal market programme. The resolution stresses the importance of social partner involvement in standardisation and calls for the establishment of a new tripartite body at Community level to ensure the full involvement of the social partners. With reference to the standardisation of health and safety rules, the resolution calls for additional resources to be made available to the social partners and the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work to ensure competent intervention at the European level. The ETUC have also announced their intention to establish a "European Institute for the Protection of Health and Safety" and have called on the Commission to contribute towards the financing of such a body.

JEAN MONNET CONFERENCE

"Jean Monnet and the trade union movement" was the theme of a commemorative conference which took place in Brussels on the 30th November 1988 on the initiative of the Information Division for Trade Unions and Social Affairs of the Commission of the European Communities. More than 120 trade unionists from all 12 EC countries as well as from Poland, Austria and Turkey gathered together to honour a statesman whom the former French President de Gaulle had called the "inspirer of Europe", but who remains virtually unknown to the majority of the European population. In acknowledgement of the paramount role Monnet played in the construction of Europe, the European summit of June 1987 declared the year 1988, the centenary of his birth, the "European Jean Monnet Year". It was marked by the transfer of Monnet's ashes to the Pantheon in Paris on the 9th November 1988.

Born in 1888, the son of a brandy merchant in Cognac, Monnet was responsible for the coordination of the French and British war economies during the First World War, and was again entrusted with the task of coordinating the Franco-British war effort as member of the British Supply Council in Washington where he won the trust and esteem of President Roosevelt. Monnet realised that only a union of the European nations could lead to lasting peace and economic and social progress. The European Community of Coal and Steel was Monnet's brainchild and it was only fitting that he became the first president of its executive body, the High Authority in Luxemburg. In 1955 Monnet founded the "Action Committee for the United States of Europe" (1955-1975). It included prominent European politicians and trade union leaders and can be regarded as the driving force behind the creation of the European Economic Community in 1957. Three years before his death in 1975, Monnet was honoured with the title of "Honorary Citizen of Europe".

Former close colleagues of Jean Monnet stressed that tolerance, trust and objectivity were the key words in Monnet's political vocabulary. Jacques Rabier, former Director-General of the Information Directorate of the Commission emphasised that Monnet had always insisted on involving workers in the process of European integration, and that he had been responsible for the creation of a trade union information bureau in Luxemburg. François Staedelin, the president of the workers' group in the Economic and Social Committee, recalled that it was due to Monnet that the Treaties of Rome had foreseen a forum for the representation of the social forces in the Community. Matthias Hinterscheid, general-secretary of the ETUC, reminded his audience that after World War II there had been a convergence of viewpoints and interests between Jean Monnet and the trade unions. Monnet had always been conscious of the fact that European integration could not be achieved without or against working people. This remains valid today. Hinterscheid underlined the fact that the current president of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, shared Monnet's conviction that a unified Europe could only be realised on the basis of social and economic cohesion. The ETUC had welcomed the internal market from the start, but on condition that it was to be accompanied by a coherent social policy.

Jacques Delors, who delivered the final speech of the Conference, considered the life of Jean Monnet to have been crucial for the construction of Europe. Delors argued that it was not the Treaty of Rome but the Single European Act of 1986 which was the true successor of the ECSC treaty since it followed the same principles: necessity, consensus and realism. Articles 118a and 118b of the Act deal specifically with the social dimension of the internal market. Delors warned that the Community would not introduce a uniform social policy for all the member states. The President emphasised that he had taken on five commitments vis-à-vis the trade unions:

- a) to implement a structural policy
- b) to draw up a European company statute which would include provision for worker participation
- c) to draw up a charter of workers' rights
- d) to pursue the social dialogue
- 5) the upward harmonisation of safety and health at work standards.

Finally, the President said that the social dialogue had to be approached on the basis of compromise in order to achieve the social dimension.

NEWS FROM EUROPE

Court of 1st Instance

The General Affairs Council of the European Community has approved the establishment of a court of first instance to relieve the work pressure of the European Court of Justice. It was in September 1987 that the Court of Justice asked the Council to establish such a court to hear cases brought by physical or legal persons, especially those cases requiring in-depth examination of facts. Over the last ten years the number of cases coming before the Court of Justice has increased significantly and the average time required to deal with cases has more than trebled. The new court of first instance should relieve some of the pressure on the Court of Justice by allowing the Court to concentrate on ensuring that Community law is applied in a uniform fashion.

The new court of first instance is competent to hear:-

- * disputes between the Communities and their agents (such as officials and other staff)
- * cases concerning the implementation of competition laws applicable to companies.
- * cases brought against the Commission by companies and associations of companies in the area of the European Coal and Steel Community Treaty

The 12 member court will elect its presidents for three year renewable mandates and members may be called upon to act as advocate-general. Parties losing all or part of their cases before the court of first instance will be allowed to appeal to the full Court of Justice on questions of law.

Ecological Laws

The European Court of Justice in a recent decision has recognised Denmark's right to impose certain "ecological" national legislation despite accusations that it interfered with the free movement of goods. The case concerned the Danish law on re-usable containers, and the Court of Justice supported Denmark's right to impose a deposit on bottles used by importers and retailers. However the Court decided that certain elements of the law

concerning the limitation on non standard sized bottles were in contravention of the free movement of goods and therefore incompatible with the Treaty of Rome.

Flexibility

The European Confederation of Food Workers recently commissioned a study of flexible working arrangements within five Member States of the European Community. The study examined flexible working arrangements within the food and allied industries and came to a number of conclusions, including the following:-

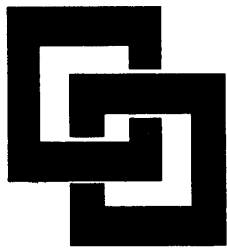
- * There is an overwhelming preference amongst workers for working time reductions in the form of extra days of paid leave.
- * It was felt that further reductions in working time were not possible without an accompanying introduction of flexibility.
- * The trend towards further flexibility in working hours was evident in all countries examined in the study. Nightwork for women, Saturday and Sunday working, and 12 hour shifts are increasingly becoming commonplace.
- * There is a large increase in part-time work and fixed term employment contracts. There is also increasing evidence of the deregulation of existing worker protection standards.

The study found that the common declared aim of trade unions throughout Europe is the reduction of working time as a means of combating existing unemployment and the social impact of technological change.

The Executive Committee of the ECF will discuss the findings of the study at their December 1988 meeting and take any necessary decisions regarding the bargaining policy of unions in the sector.

The study was carried out in Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Italy and the United Kingdom. The companies included in the study came from the confectionery, brewing, dairy, sugar and tobacco sectors.

Further information concerning the study can be obtained from the ECF, 38, rue Fosse-aux-Loups, B-1000, Brussels, Belgium.



EUROPEAN FOUNDATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS

In 1987 a group of representatives of trade unions, employers and governments from the twelve Member States of the Community met in Brussels to discuss the problems of commuting. The meeting had been organised by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions and it formed the culmination of a wide ranging research programme which had commenced in 1981.

The statistics on European commuting are in themselves interesting. Between a quarter and a third of all journeys undertaken in Europe are concerned with travelling to or from work. About one in every two European workers now travels to work by car, as either a driver or a passenger. Over the years the average length of a commuting journey has increased although the average journey time has been reduced. Behind the statistics lie a host of other problems and challenges. The relative decline of public transport systems has in many cases led to an increased use of private cars for work journeys and this has led to increased traffic congestion. Research has indicated that commuting can have an adverse effect on the health and safety of workers as well as an effect on the quality of their working lives and home lives. There is also the whole question of whether the employer is partly responsible for the period of time the worker has to spend in getting to work, and the repercussions of such a responsibility in terms of collective bargaining.

The evaluation meeting held in Brussels in March 1987 examined these and many other issues and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions has now published a report summarising the main conclusions of the extensive research and the views put forward at the evaluation meeting. The report - "Commuting in the European Community" - has been published as Booklet No. 5 in the Foundations Information Booklet series, and is available in all Community languages (ECU 4.60).

Commuting in the European Community

Trade union representatives at the evaluation meeting emphasised the need for more investment in public transport and for increased attention to be paid to the health and safety of commuting workers, especially female commuting workers. They felt that workers and trade unions should not only be informed and consulted, but should become an active and decisive party in the decision-making processes and formulation of policies on commuting.

Research carried out by the Foundation has shown that most commuters find commuting a tiring and stressful activity. As an activity, commuting was found to be equivalent in energy expenditure to undertaking a moderate work load. Workers commuting for over 45 minutes each way rose earlier, slept less, were absent from work more often and arrived late at work more often than did workers making shorter journeys to work. A number of stress-related symptoms were identified with commuting over long distances, these included tiredness, irritability, lack of concentration, palpitations, indigestion and anxiety. The research found little evidence of trade unions being actively involved in establishing policies on commuting. The obvious importance of the subject revealed by this booklet should encourage trade unions to become more involved in the future.

THE ANNUAL ECONOMIC REPORT



Each year the European Commission produces a report on the state of the Community economy, looking back at economic performance during the previous twelve months and looking forward to likely trends in the coming year. The annual report for 1988-89 has just been published, and the reports' subtitle "Preparing for 1992" gives an indication of the likely importance of the completion of the internal market to the immediate prospects for the European economy. The report is prepared by the Commission after consultation with the representative organisations of employers and trade unions at the Community level. The full report is available in two volumes: Volume 1, Text and Volume 2, Statistical Annex [Com (88) 591, October 1988]. The report will be discussed by the Council of Ministers and provide the basis for a set of economic policy guidelines to be followed by each Member State. The following brief survey looks at some of the main findings of the report.

FAVOURABLE ECONOMIC PROSPECTS

The economic prospects for the Community have significantly improved in recent months and economic growth, currently 3.5%, is likely to be the strongest since the end of the 1970s. Even more importantly the increase in investment (7%) is the highest for over two decades and the inflation rate (3.5%) is equal to that of the 1960s. The forecast for the coming year remains good with only a small fall in the rate of growth and a slight increase in inflation. Although the rate of Community unemployment has started to fall it remains at a too high level.

ENCOURAGING ELEMENTS

The report identifies three specific aspects of the European economy which it finds encouraging:

1. The dynamism of the economies of Spain, Portugal, Italy and the United Kingdom is spreading to their other Community partners. Economic growth in France and Germany should be about 3% in 1988 and only slightly lower in 1989.
2. Growth is increasingly being led by investment. One of the key factors accounting for this is the increased investment resulting from firms beginning to prepare for the 1992 deadline for the completion of the internal market.
3. The Community has achieved a degree of stability and convergence of inflation rates unequalled since the 1960s. Progress is still necessary, however, especially in Portugal and Greece.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Despite these satisfactory economic trends the report does identify a number of areas of concern. These include the risk of renewed inflation, the existence of excessive budgetary deficits in some countries, an increase in intra-Community disequilibria in external balances and the continued high rate of unemployment. The average unemployment rate in the Community is still more than 11% of the active working population. The strengthening of potential growth must remain a priority in all Member States.

MEDIUM-TERM OBJECTIVES

Faster growth is now giving the Community the chance to realise in the best conditions its major objectives. These remain:-

1. To obtain the full economic benefits of the completion of the internal market.
2. The strengthening of economic and social cohesion.
3. The reduction of unemployment.

THE INTERNAL MARKET

The report emphasises that although significant progress has been achieved in translating the ideas put forward in the Commission White Paper "Completing the Internal Market" into legislative reality, it is essential that this progress is maintained and that the programme is completed in time. To produce its full effects the completion of the internal market needs to be accompanied by structural policies. The success of the internal market will also have significant macroeconomic effects. The research published earlier this year in the Cecchini Report suggest that the completion of the internal market will in the medium-term improve significantly economic growth, budgetary and external positions and it will also have a favourable effect on inflation.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COHESION

The report notes that with the reform and increase in the structural funds, already under way, and the increased activity of the Community financial instruments, the Community has acquired a means of strengthening economic and social cohesion. The report calls for the creation of a new model of "partnership" between the Community and beneficiary countries in order to make the best use of the resources available.

THE SOCIAL DIMENSION

Although the completion of the internal market will, in the medium and long-term, result in substantial economic gains, the restructuring which will accompany the transitional stages gives rise to some anxiety. The report stresses that the social dimension to the completion of the internal market needs to be given attention, and in particular there must be:-

1. The implementation of policies to facilitate re-employment.
2. The convergence towards the higher social standards by, for instance, minimum security and health regulations in the workplace.
3. The strengthening of the social dialogue at Community level.

THE FIGHT AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

The reduction in unemployment remains the priority task common to all Member States. The report notes that currently employment is increasing at a historically high rate, but stresses that this trend needs to be reinforced. The direction of the co-operative growth strategy for employment remains valid and such a strategy involves elements such as increases in capacity increasing and employment increasing investment and the concentration of sustained training efforts.

CO-ORDINATION OF ECONOMIC POLICY

The increasing interdependence between Member States makes greater co-ordination of economic policy essential. The report also points out that an increasingly high degree of stability in exchange rates would improve the functioning of the internal market. The strengthening of monetary cohesion could be realised by the enlargement of the European Monetary system to include those countries which are not yet participating. There is also a need for greater co-operation in the management of monetary policies and the strengthening of the role of the ECU. The report however recognises that monetary cohesion cannot be permanently ensured unless Member States follow compatible policies in other areas, particularly budgetary policy. It is therefore important to strengthen the consensus on the principle economic policy objectives, which remain:-

- A] Stable prices and convergence of inflation rates.
- B] Medium-term compatibility of balance of payments.
- C] The contribution of internal and external stability to the growth and employment objectives of the Community and its Member States.

The report contains an analysis of the current economic situation and the outlook for 1989. It examines the problems, opportunities and challenges facing the Community economy and it reviews a practical policy designed for growth and greater economic confidence. It also includes an examination of the current economic situation, economic policies and prospects for each of the twelve Member States. The statistical annex contains a wealth of economic information relating to the overall Community economy and the situation in individual Member States.

Economic and Social Committee

ESC ELECTIONS

At the 259th Plenary Session of the Economic and Social Committee, held in Brussels on the 26 and 27 October 1988, elections were held for Committee officials who will serve for the next two years. Mr Alberto Masprone was elected Chairman of the Committee. For many years he has been Deputy Director of the Italian Confederation of Industry (Confindustria). The two new Vice-Chairman are Mr Thomas Jenkins and Mr Erik Jakobsen. Mr Jakobsen represents the Various Interests Group on the Committee and holds a senior post with the Danish Council for Agriculture. Thomas Jenkins is the Assistant Secretary of the International Department of the British Trades Union Congress and he represents the Workers Group on the Committee.

The outgoing Chairman of the Committee, Mr Fons Margot, reflected on the achievements of the Committee during his two year period of office. The Committee had been closely associated with the evolution of the Community from a period of hesitation and stagnation. The attentions of the Committee had become centred on the social dimension of European integration and the need to find, via the social dialogue, solutions to the imbalances between regions and sectors as well as the high rate of unemployment that Europe will be faced with in the short-term.

DISCRIMINATION

The Economic and Social Committee has issued an Opinion supporting the European Commissions' proposal for a Council Directive on the burden of proof in the area of equal pay and equal treatment for women. Indeed the Commission proposals come as a direct result of an earlier recommendation by the Committee. The new Directive will make two changes to the Directive on Equal Pay and Equal Treatment.

*** Modification of the Burden of Proof:** Once a complainant has established a presumption of discrimination it will be up to the respondent to rebut it. The benefit of the doubt as to the proper interpretation of the facts will be given to the complainant.

*** Interpretation of Indirect Discrimination:** A new definition will be provided to help national courts and tribunals to better understand and apply this concept, particularly with regard to the evidence required of either party.

TRANSPORT

The European Commission is in the process of amending its rules on the social regulation of transport. These rules were last amended in 1985 and they refer to the European controls on the maximum lengths of time road transport workers can drive without breaks and also the means by which driving times can be monitored by recording equipment. The new proposal for a Council Directive submitted by the Commission provides new definitions for driving periods, breaks and rest periods.

In its Opinion the Economic and Social Committee rejected the new amendments. They said that they were unlikely to be of any use in eliminating or even alleviating the problems involved in observing and monitoring the social legislation. The Committee Opinion stated that even though the Economic and Social Committee had on many occasions called for the simplification, streamlining and standardisation of the legislation on the social regulation of road transport, the current proposals were unacceptable as a means of achieving this.

The Committee's comments on certain points of detail in the proposals were focused on the proposed definition of "week" as a movable working week of seven consecutive days which no longer would coincide with the calendar week. It believed that the introduction of such a movable working week would merely create further confusion. The Opinion was adopted with no votes against and with one abstention.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The 258th Plenary session of the Economic and Social Committee, meeting in September, considered a number of Opinions on occupational health and safety. These had been submitted to the Committee as part of the process of harmonisation in preparation of the creation of the single market by the end of 1992. Opinions were issued on for proposals.

USE OF MACHINERY, EQUIPMENT AND INSTALLATIONS:

The Opinion of the Committee on the Commission's proposals on the safety of machinery calls for the regulations to go further than at present envisaged on a number of issues. The Committee advises the Commission to lay down rules and regulations not only for machinery manufactured after the directive's entry into force but also for machinery already on the market in order to prevent the emergence of a "grey market" in machines which do not comply with minimum safety requirements. The Committee also thought that the directive should apply not only to firms and undertakings but also to sites and assembly and repair shops. The Committee also called for the extension of the right of workers to be consulted to all aspects relating to health and safety and not just to those covered in the annex of the directive.

INDIVIDUAL PROTECTION OF WORKERS:

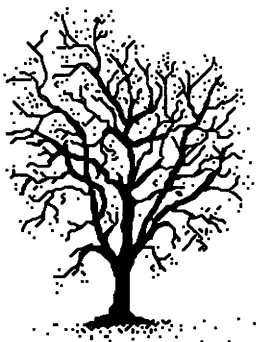
The Opinion on individual protective equipment stresses that information and training on minimum health and safety requirements is essential in ensuring that workers are protected from risks. Small and medium-sized enterprises were particularly singled out for attention by the Committee. The Opinion calls on the Commission to introduce a specific directive dealing with services and agencies which are currently excluded from the proposals.

THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH VISUAL DISPLAY UNIT SCREENS:

In their Opinion on proposals relating to the risks associated with VDU screens the Committee identified a number of shortcomings in the current proposals. They called for a clearer definition of the amount of time which had to be spent in proximity to VDU screens before it was considered to be a decisive part of the job. They also called for the specific dangers of VDU's in open plan offices to be investigated.

HANDLING OF HEAVY LOADS:

In their Opinion on proposals for a directive on standards for the handling of heavy loads the Committee suggested a "table of equivalence" of ergonomic conditions for handling loads in all Member States. They also called for measures to ensure that workers received all the requisite information and the introduction of a programme of training in schools.



THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT

The European Commission has adopted a proposition for a directive to be presented to the Council of Ministers which will give citizens of the Community an automatic right of access to information on the environment in the possession of local, regional and national public authorities. The proposals also require Member States to publish regular reports on the environment.

Launching the initiative, Commissioner Stanley Clinton Davis said: "The environment belongs to everybody. The citizens of the Community have a fundamental right to be informed about the solutions. The Council of Ministers and the Member States are committed from now on to apply the principle of freedom of access regarding information about the environment. The Commission believes that an open approach is the key to the development of the Community policy on environmental policies". Citizens living in border areas will have a right to information from neighbouring Member States under the proposals.

Alvarez de Paz Report

A major report on the role of the social partners in the Community was discussed at the plenary session of the European Parliament held in late October. The report, entitled "The Role of the Social Partners in the Community" was prepared by the Spanish socialist MEP, Mr Jose Alvarez de Paz. It stressed that if the Community is to carry through its programme of industrial, technological and social change it must develop a true system of social relations. Such a programme must allow for more training, more social protection and, above all, more worker participation in decisions at all levels. The report makes a number of concrete suggestions as to necessary reforms at Community level.

INFORMING AND CONSULTING WORKERS: Although the European Parliament still supports the Vredeling directive proposals, Mr Alvarez de Paz, suggests that these should be incorporated into the proposed new European Company statute. He also calls for a revision of existing Community rules on mergers, collective dismissals and restructuring to provide a greater degree of security for workers. He refers in the report to several examples where existing Community rules have been broken by multinational companies and suggests this is in itself evidence of the need for tighter regulations and a system of sanctions for those who fail to comply.

THE SOCIAL DIALOGUE: The report calls for an extension of the social dialogue. In noting the success of the social dialogue and the Val Duchesse meetings at Community level, Mr Alvarez de Paz calls for its decentralisation to sectoral level. Also the scope of the dialogue should be enlarged to include themes more directly related to the internal market such as the free movement of workers, equal treatment, social protection and the equivalence of training and qualifications.

EUROPEAN COLLECTIVE CONVENTIONS: The report recognises that giving the current differences between Member States it is "illusory" to envisage European collective conventions as yet. Nevertheless the Commission should produce a directive on the role of the social partners in the completion of the internal market as a matter of urgency, the report states. The report also calls for the creation of a mechanism ("an institutional place") where social problems associated with the single market can be discussed.

BASIC SOCIAL RIGHTS: The report also calls for a Commission directive establishing a set of basic minimum social provisions which would be applicable throughout the Community.

Parliamentary Reform

The only way of creating a social Europe in 1992 will be to democratise the decision-making structures of the Community. This is the view of British socialist MEP, David Martin, who is calling for reform in the way in which the European Parliament considers the increasing number of legislative proposals that come before it. Mr Martin suggests that the number of plenary sessions of Parliament needs to be doubled and that ultimately the European Parliament should take total control of all legislative matters. Mr Martin has also suggested that it will be necessary within the next few years to call a constitutional conference to clarify the relationship between the European Parliament and the various national parliaments. A further reform suggested by Mr Martin is the creation of a special committee, chaired by the European Parliament President, to carry out the day to day scrutiny of Commission decisions. Such reforms will create a more efficient decision-making structure and ensure that the views of the people of Europe are adequately represented.

NEWS FROM EUROPE

Regional Development

In October the European Commission approved the eight allocation of grants for 1988 by the European Regional Development Fund. The total allocation is almost 290 million ECU and it is distributed as follows:-

SPAIN 89.28 million ECU for infrastructure projects including road construction, energy, water and environmental services.

PORTUGAL 81.88 million ECU for a variety of infrastructure projects and the creation of a materials science centre at the University of Porto.

ITALY 79.6 million ECU for industrial and infrastructure projects.

UNITED KINGDOM 13.76 million ECU, the majority of which will be allocated to infrastructure projects connected with the tourist industry.

FRANCE 12.3 million ECU for infrastructure projects, especially in Aquitaine, including the construction of two new university institutes in Pao for thermal engineering and energy.

IRELAND 10.8 million ECU, half of which will be used for infrastructure projects (including the modernisation of the ports of Cork and Dublin) and half of which will be used for industrial projects to create over 1,000 long-term jobs.

BELGIUM 1.52 million ECU, about a third of which will be used for a variety of industry projects and the rest for infrastructure (water distribution and treatment)

Health & Safety

The Council of Ministers have signalled an accelerated approach to the adoption of basic, harmonised health and safety standards as part of the internal market programme. A number of important decisions are expected to be taken in December 1988 and it is proposed that the remaining directives will be approved in the first half of 1989. These health and safety measures form an important part of the "social dimension" to the internal market.

Building Industry

The European Parliament adopted a report by the Spanish Socialist MEP, Mr Bueno Vicente, calling for the European Commission to produce a Community strategy for the building industry. The report, which was adopted during the October plenary session, points out the importance of the building and construction industry to economic activity, employment and living conditions within the Community. It specifically calls for action on the following issues:-

1. **HARMONISATION AND THE INTERNAL MARKET:** The Report points out that action is still required to eliminate disparities between regulations applicable in Member states in such areas as insurance and the right of establishment. Action is also required to promote greater social cohesion between Member states.

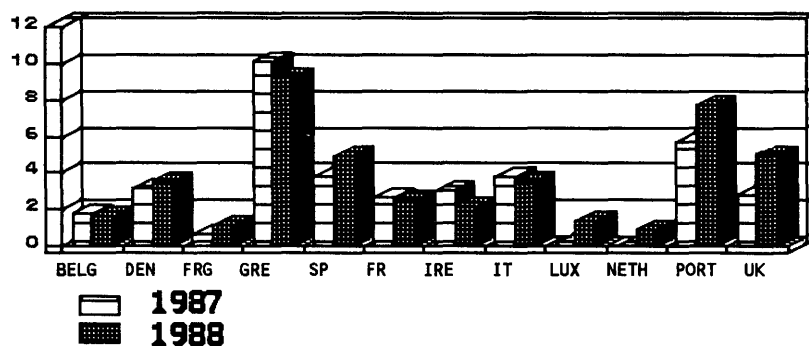
2. **MODERNISATION:** The European building industry is still in need of modernisation in such areas as management technique, new technology, research and development and training.

3. **HOUSING:** The report calls on Member States to expand their programmes designed to create additional housing by restoring old buildings in urban areas which have been listed as important to the areas historic, artistic or cultural heritage.

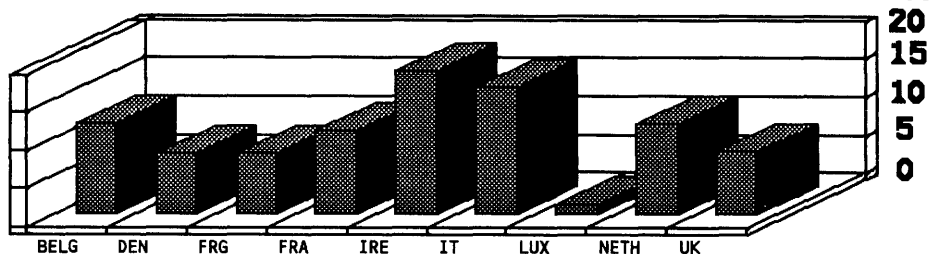
Women and 1992

The European Parliament Committee on Women's rights held a meeting with the Greek associate Minister for Trade, Mrs Papandreou. Mrs Papandreou, who has been nominated by the Greek Government as a European Commissioner as from January 1989, stressed the need to promote women's education and training with a view to the 1992 deadline for the completion of the internal market. The members of the Committee also discussed the organisation of a special forum, to be held in Brussels on the 22 and 23 February 1989, which will examine the effects of the single market on the role and problems of women. The forum is entitled "The 1992 Market - A Challenge for Women"

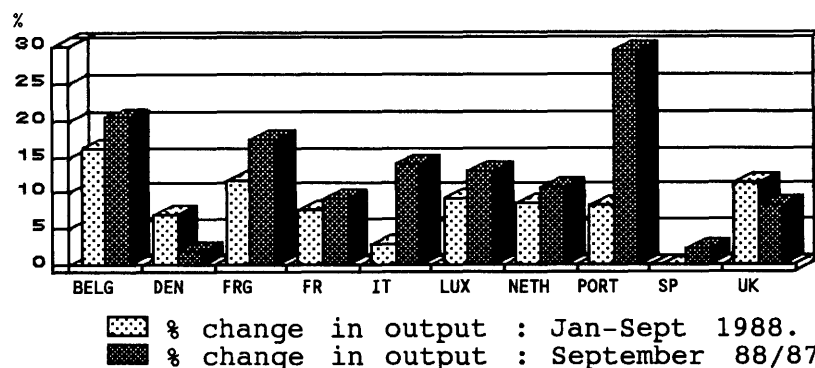
CONSUMER PRICES IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY % increase in prices for first nine months - 1987 / 1988



UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. Unemployment rate in selected Member States : Aug 1988



CRUDE STEEL PRODUCTION IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY % increase in crude steel production - 1987/88



MISEP (the Mutual Information System on Employment Policy) was set up by the European Commission to provide a means by which information on the policies and practices of individual Member States in the sphere of promoting and improving employment could be freely exchanged. Each quarter the Commission (DGV) publishes an update of developments within the Community (InforMISEP) and the following information has been taken from Issue No 23, Autumn 1988. Copies of InforMISEP can be obtained from:- InforMISEP, PO Box 3073 NL-6202, NB Maastricht.

THE NETHERLANDS - EMPLOYMENT POOLS

The Government of the Netherlands has decided to streamline a number of schemes aimed at providing the long-term unemployed with work experience. A number of schemes are involved in the policy review, including the MOA (the scheme to support integration into working life) and JOB (the temporary work experience programme for long-term unemployed youths. The Government has stated that the social partners must be fully involved in the policy review. They have suggested that it is important for both the public authorities and the social partners to jointly bear responsibility for labour market policy when the new law on the administration of the labour market comes into force.

One approach being considered is the establishment of "employment pools" in a number of industries or regions. Unemployed workers would be able to enter the services of an employment pool and could be hired out by the pool to local employers to meet the need for temporary workers (due to sickness, peak period demand etc). The advantages of an employment pool is that the participating workers are provided with reasonable legal security as regards income and legal status whereas the individual employer retains flexibility.

BELGIUM - MINIMUM WAGE CHANGES

The current system of minimum wage legislation has been operating in Belgium since 1975. The system has recently been overhauled by the introduction of a new collective labour agreement (CCT No. 43) which provides a new unified method of operation and a new average monthly minimum wage (revenu minimum mensuel moyen - RMMM) of BF 34,050.

The agreement applies to all full-time workers over the age of 21. The RMMM of BF 34,050 is an average monthly account and this means that detailed accounts have to be drawn up by the employer, and that where a workers pay is variable the RMMM is calculated on the basis of the average monthly pay for a calendar year. The amount of RMMM is linked to the consumer price index. The precise method of indexing is determined by joint committees of workers and managers within each enterprise.

SPAIN - YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

The Spanish Government have introduced for the first time a scheme to encourage the employment of young workers on open-ended contracts. Under the terms of the new decree, the State will meet 50% of the employer's social security contributions in cases where an enterprise hires a person under 26, full-time, on an open-ended contract. The payments also apply to cases where a co-operative takes on as a member worker a young person under 26, where a fixed term contract for a young person is converted into an open-ended contract and where such a contract is provided for a young person at the end of a period of training.

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