

European TRADE UNION Information Bulletin

ISSUE 3 of 1994

European Social Policy A Way Forward For The European Union

The New Commission White Paper

A framework for European Union action in the field of social policy until the end of the century is provided by the new White Paper on social policy. Following on from last November's Green Paper - and reflecting the many responses to the Green Paper which were submitted by national governments, social partner organisations and voluntary organisations - the White Paper contributes towards the creation of a blueprint for the management of change. This issue of the Bulletin is largely devoted to a detailed summary of the White Paper. As well as this opening analysis of the main themes reflected in the White Paper, a detailed list of the main proposals for action at European Union level can be found on pages 5 to 12. In addition, a brief overview of the White Paper is provided on pages 9 and 10.

SOCIAL POLICY IN AN ERA OF CHANGE

The White Paper starts by reflecting on the challenges and changes facing social policy in the European Union at the end of the twentieth century. These are essentially the same as formed a backdrop to the earlier Green Paper and include:

- the globalisation of trade and production;
- the huge impact of new technologies on work, society and individuals;
- the ageing of the population;
- the persistent high levels of unemployment.

The White Paper emphasises that Europe needs a "blueprint for the management of change". Part of such a blueprint was provided by the 1993 White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment. The new White Paper on social policy provides a further essential component. Whilst many of the challenges are for the individual Member States to face, social policy at European level has a vital part to play in underpinning the process of change. Consequently, the White Paper seeks to set out the main lines of action at Union level for the coming years.

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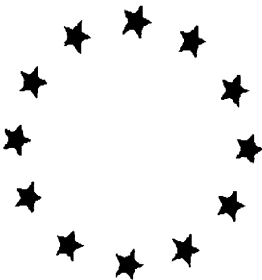
COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITIES

EUROPEAN
SOCIAL POLICY
A way Forward For
The Union
A WHITE PAPER

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European Social Policy - A Way Forward For The Union

BASIC PRINCIPLES

The White Paper is based around the principle that Europe needs a broadly based, innovative and forward looking social policy if it is successfully to meet the challenges ahead. The White Paper clearly states that "jobs must continue to come top of the agenda", but adds that "social policy goes beyond employment". It affects people when they are at work but also when they are not - their family life, their health and their old age. It is clear that the profound changes facing society mean that this complex interaction of policies that make up social policy in its widest sense, will need to develop in new ways in the future.

The White Paper aims to:-

- consolidate and build on the achievements of the past
- particularly with respect to labour law, health and safety, free movement and equal treatment between men and women;
- create a new dynamic by putting forward new proposals in these and other areas such as social protection, equal opportunities for all and public health;
- stimulate a new co-operative partnership between Member States, social partners, voluntary and civic organisations, European citizens and international bodies.

The White Paper emphasises "the objective in the coming period must be to preserve and develop the European social model as we move towards the 21st century, to give to the people of Europe the unique blend of economic well-being, social cohesiveness and high overall quality of life which was achieved in the post-war period".

PRESERVING AND DEVELOPING THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODEL

The concept of the "European Social Model" is one which pervades the whole White Paper. A start towards defining this model is provided by Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (the Maastricht Treaty):

"to promote throughout the Community a harmonious and balanced development of economic activities, sustainable and non-inflationary growth respecting the environment, a high degree of convergence of economic performance, a high level of employment and of social protection, the raising of the standard of living and quality of life, and economic and social cohesion and solidarity among Member States."

The White Paper accepts that Europe has not yet been able to provide all these benefits for everyone, but claims that "nowhere else in the world has so much progress been made towards such goals".

The responses to the Social Policy Green Paper have confirmed that there are a number of shared values which form the basis of the European social model. These include

democracy and individual rights, free collective bargaining, the market economy, equality of opportunity for all and social welfare and solidarity. Such values are held together by the conviction that economic and social progress must go hand in hand. The White Paper states that all Member States have reaffirmed their commitment to the social dimension as an indispensable element of building an ever closer Union. There is a widespread agreement that these shared values have to be preserved, even if radical changes are required in the way in which they are applied in practice.

The link between economic growth and social policy is a critical one. The efficiency of our societies as a whole governs how competitive they may be and the growth they can deliver. If economic growth is to increase human well-being, it must also take into account social and environmental concerns. Equally, the pursuit of high social standards should not only be seen as a cost but also as a key element in the competitive formula. "It is for these essential reasons", the White Paper declares, that the Union's social policy cannot be second string to economic development or to the functioning of the internal market.

The White Paper seeks to set out the Commission's approach to the next phase of social policy development (1995-9). The issue of the White Paper six months prior to the forthcoming enlargement of the European Union is also designed to facilitate the entry of the new members into the Union on the basis of a clear overall vision of the future

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Social progress can be achieved only through a co-operative partnership between the European union, the Member States, the social partners and European citizens. The key to this partnership must be a positive and active conception of subsidiarity. The White Paper defines this as meaning "that the Union shall take action only if, and in so far as, the objectives cannot be sufficiently achieved by or within the Member States themselves and can, therefore, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved by the Union. Activities should be selected on the basis of prior appraisal and should yield a Union added value while achieving maximum cost efficiency".

Over recent times, employment growth in the European union has been weak compared with Japan and the United States. Nevertheless, levels of social solidarity have been high. The White Paper suggests that such solidarity has been mainly passive - devoted to maintaining the incomes of large groups in society by providing cash benefits through the redistribution of income (shouldered by an ever declining active population), without preparing them, encouraging them, or providing them with an opportunity to contribute to economic activity. The White Paper believes that this resources transfer must be gradually supplemented and substituted by a better distribution of opportunities. The accent has to be shifted from the objective of assistance to the objective of employment generation.

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The principles and objectives which should inspire the action of the Union in achieving this are:-

Social and economic integration : employment is the key.

Unacceptably high levels of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion are in conflict with the Union's commonly agreed goals in relation to employment, social protection and equal opportunities. The financing of social policy systems across the Union depends on jobs. For the Union to reconcile high social standards with the capacity to compete in world markets, it is therefore necessary to give the highest priority to creating new jobs, enabling everyone to integrate into the economy and society.

Competitiveness and social progress : two sides of the same coin.

Continuing social progress can be built only on economic prosperity and therefore on the competitiveness of the European economy. The White Paper expresses the belief that the key to this is continuing productivity gains, which will enable the Union to reconcile high social standards with the capacity to compete in global markets. In moving towards an efficient, quality-based economy with a high rate of investment in new technologies, the key resource will be a well-educated and highly motivated and adaptable working population. While wealth creation is essential for social progress, the social environment is also an essential factor in determining economic growth.

Convergence which respects diversity.

Comments in response to the Green Paper stressed the need to respect the diversity of European societies. The future development of the Union needs to build on the richness of its diversity, which adds to the quality of life and to the vigour of socio-economic systems in the face of new and unforeseen challenges. This diversity means that total harmonisation of social policies is not an objective of the Union. However, the convergence of goals and policies over a period of time by fixing common objectives is vital.

A level playing field of common minimum standards.

Minimum standards are needed to preserve the cohesion of the Union. They should not over-stretch the economically weaker Member States, and they should not prevent the more developed Member States from implementing higher standards. The establishment of a framework of basic minimum standards provides a bulwark against using low social standards as an instrument of unfair economic competition and protection against reducing social standards to gain competitiveness, and is also an expression of the political will to maintain the momentum of social progress. The continuing aim should be to develop and improve standards for all the Members of the Union.

THE INSTRUMENTS FOR ACTION

In seeking to put these principles and objectives into practice, the Union must intervene in a variety of different ways.

Legislation and Community-level collective agreements.

The Treaties provide for a range of legislative powers to achieve common goals. The Union must propose the form of legislation most compatible with the aims to be achieved whilst respecting Member States' choices about how to achieve their goals. Given the solid base of European social legislation that has already been achieved, the Commission considers that there is not a need for a wide ranging programme of new legislative proposals in the coming period. Legislation will be considered only when strictly necessary to achieve the objectives of the Union and when the issues addressed cannot be solved at Member State level. The Agreement on Social Policy introduced by the Maastricht Treaty on European Union provides a new basis for Union action, and the Commission intends to use both this and the other Treaty provisions to ensure a dynamic social dimension of the Union.

The Commission will decide on a case by case basis whether or not to make use of the procedures set out in the Social Policy Agreement. The Commission has noted the strong desire of all Member States to proceed as 12 wherever possible and it hopes that Union social policy action will in the future once again be founded on a single legal framework. This is vital if the integrity of the law and the principle of equal opportunities for all in the Union are to be upheld. However, the White Paper states, "the desire to act as 12 cannot be used as an excuse for standing still". Given the new possibilities which the Maastricht Treaty opens up for collective agreements, it is also clear that a new balance needs to be struck between the legislator at Community level and collective agreements between the social partners.

Financial support and incentives.

Action in the form of financial support (via the structural funds) will be developed as part of an integrated and comprehensive approach. Most aspects of social policy will be affected by such actions - the combating of unemployment, promoting equal opportunities, supporting the integration of young people, promoting the mobility of workers and their adaption to industrial change and, in the regions lagging behind, strengthening education, science and technology services and training for the health sector.

Mobilisation and co-operation.

The Commission believes that it has an important role to play in the mobilisation of efforts to achieve common goals within an agreed framework, which would lead to a convergence of objectives and policies, such as in the fields of employment and social protection. For this mobilisation role to be effective, it will increasingly be necessary to define the agreed goals with more precision, and for Member States to take action to meet the agreed objectives. Furthermore, social policy depends for its success on a wide variety of actors and organisations, especially at local and regional level. The Commission intends to assist these groups to establish stronger co-operation via networks across the Union, and to stimulate their contribution to achieving the goals of the Union.

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Information.

The provision of clear and accessible information on developments in the social field is essential if social policy is to have a real impact on people's everyday lives. The Commission will therefore seek to provide more and better information to European citizens concerning their social rights and opportunities and developments in the social sphere, to help achieve transparency and better understanding of the Union's actions.

Analysing future trends.

The White Paper emphasises that it is increasingly clear that the process of change requires collective reflection and co-ordinated action across a whole range of issues. Important questions are being raised about the future of work itself, and the impact that the information society will have on work and on people's everyday lives. The process of managing these changes will need to be taken forward in synergy with the social science elements of the Union's research programme, and the Commission will seek to develop its medium term research capacity in the social field.

JOBS - THE TOP PRIORITY

"The pursuit of more good, stable jobs is both a central objective of the Union and a means of addressing more effectively many of the Union's wider social objectives... For too long, Europe has focused on the management of unemployment instead of promoting job creation as a top priority"

Unemployment in the European Union now stands at 11%. It is seen as the gravest social problem throughout the Union. Overall EU employment performance is markedly worse than in the US or Japan - the Union's employment rate has declined steadily since 1960 and is now less than 60% of the working age population. Policy initiatives within the Union with regard to employment have been developing progressively over the past year, reflecting the shared preoccupation of all Member States to find new ways of creating and preserving employment. The major step forward came in December 1993 with the publication of the Commission's White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment. The December 1993 European Council in Brussels identified seven areas for particular attention by the Member States in its action plan resulting from the Commission's White Paper:

- (i) improving education and training systems, especially continuing education;
- (ii) improving flexibility within enterprises and in the labour market;
- (iii) the reorganisation of work at enterprise level;
- (iv) targeted reductions in the indirect costs of labour (statutory contributions), particularly of less skilled work;
- (v) better use of public funds set aside for combating unemployment;
- (vi) specific measures concerning young people without

adequate training;

- (vii) developing employment in connection with new requirements.

According to a Commission report submitted to the June 1994 European Council, although almost all Member States have undertaken reforms of their employment systems in recent years, such actions do not go far enough to meet the current employment challenge. Although over recent months the economic outlook of the European union has improved, the unemployment rate is not expected to stabilise until 1995 at a level of about 11.6% of the labour force. Indeed, as the Corfu European Council in June 1994 recognised, there is a danger that increased economic growth may offer an illusion of relief from the pressures for structural change, rather than being harnessed to work systematically towards the economic changes required.

The White Paper draws a number of conclusions on the subject of employment and job creation from the responses received to the earlier Social Policy Green Paper. These include:-

- All Member States, in their different ways, are seeking to introduce changes to their labour market policies, directly or indirectly related to the Growth, Competitiveness and Employment White Paper's suggestions.
- Most Member States now recognise the need to build a long-term social consensus in favour of structural changes, especially where they affect people's living and working conditions.
- Member states generally recognise that greater labour market efficiency is best sought, not through a dilution of the European model of social protection, but through the adaption, rationalisation and simplification of regulations, so as to establish a better balance between social protection, competitiveness and employment creation.
- Increased labour market flexibility means different things to different Member States, and needs to be analysed carefully, as the term "deregulation" is often used with differing connotations.
- Most Member States stress the need for a more dynamic role from the social partners at local and sectoral level, and a stronger partnership between them and public authorities at those levels.

INVESTING IN A WORLD CLASS LABOUR FORCE:

"Investment in education and training is now recognised as one of the essential requirements for the competitiveness of the Union as well as for the cohesion of our societies"

In their responses to the Social policy Green Paper, all Member States have expressed their determination to improve the quality of their education and training systems to better meet the challenge of long-term competitiveness, and to provide the supply of a highly skilled and adaptable workforce. Other responses to the Green Paper include:-

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- Most Member States emphasised the need to put a higher premium on the importance of vocational qualifications, and to place them on a par with academic qualifications within the framework of a unified national system of certification.
- Most Member States stressed the importance of a much closer association of the social partners with the design, management and delivery of training, especially at local, regional and sectoral levels.
- Most Member States have recently committed themselves to steps aimed at revitalising their apprenticeship systems, developing the links between the worlds of school and work, improving foreign language teaching, and encouraging management training for potential entrepreneurs.
- All Member States appear concerned to improve and extend access to and participation in continuing training. At European level, trade unions have offered to take up the suggestion made in the Growth, Competitiveness and Employment White Paper and negotiate a collective agreement on continuing training so as to extend access and participation.

ENCOURAGING HIGH LABOUR STANDARDS AS PART OF A COMPETITIVE EUROPE

Legislation for higher labour standards and employee rights has been an important part of the Union's achievements in the social field. Since the adoption of the Single European act the emphasis has shifted from harmonisation to the adoption of minimum standards. Although some success has been achieved in translating the proposals contained in the Social Charter Action Programme into legislative effect, a number of proposals remain outstanding. Four proposals in particular have yet to be adopted at European level:-

- Draft Directive on information and consultation of workers in European-scale companies.
- Draft Directives on "Atypical Contracts" in relation to:
 - working conditions,
 - distortion of competition.
- Draft Directive on the posting of workers.

"In the next phase of social policy, the Commission believes that the highest possible priority must be given to bringing these proposals to a successful conclusion."

The Social Policy White Paper Recommendations

	JOBS - THE TOP PRIORITY
UNION ACTION PLAN : THE FIGHT AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Preparing, during the second half of 1994, in close consultation with the Member States, a more specific action plan at the level of the Union and of the Member States. This will be directed in the short term at reversing the trend of unemployment and, by the end of the century, significantly reducing the numbers of unemployed. The action plan will consist of:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the general framework concentrating on fixing more specific objectives for the implementation of the seven points identified by the Brussels European Council, leaving to Member States the choice of means; - specific accompanying measures to be co-ordinated or adopted at the level of the Union; - a monitoring procedure underpinned by closer co-operation between Member States on employment issues and by the intensification of the process of exchange of information and best practice.
STRENGTHENING CO-OPERATION BETWEEN MEMBER STATES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthening of existing co-operation with Member State authorities regarding policy development; ● Developing Union-level co-operation between the national Directors-General whose responsibilities concern or affect employment;
EMPLOYMENT IN EUROPE REPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expanding the policy content of its annual Employment in Europe Report and extending the policy debate at its annual Employment in Europe Conference;
EMPLOYMENT OBSERVATORY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthening its Employment Observatory system and databases on labour market measures;
EURES SYSTEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consolidating the European Employment Service (EURES) set up to inform, counsel and place job seekers across Europe;
STREAMLINING ACTION RESEARCH ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supporting successful job creation policies and practices by publishing, in early 1995, a Communication streamlining the existing policy-centred action research activities (ERGO, LEDA, SPEC, LEI and MISEP).

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INVESTING IN A WORLD CLASS LABOUR FORCE

DEVELOPING VOCATIONAL TRAINING POLICY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In accordance with Article 127 of the Treaty, the Commission will continue to develop a vocational training policy building on the various achievements to date at the level of the Union. In recognising that Member States have responsibility for policy implementation, the Commission will concentrate its efforts on the definition of objectives so as to set a policy framework at the level of the Union.
GUARANTEE OF EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING FOR ALL UNDER 18s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The introduction of a Union-wide guarantee that no young persons can be unemployed under the age of 18: they should be guaranteed a place in the education and training system or in a linked work and training placement. The contribution of the Union will be to underpin this with the Youthstart initiative.
COMBATING ILLITERACY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission intends to set progressive targets up to the year 2000 for the elimination of basic illiteracy, and lack of other basic skills, on the part of school leavers.
RAISING THE STATUS OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will present proposals designed to raise the status of initial vocational education and training and encourage the development of entrepreneurial skills of young people and their capacity to exploit the new technologies.
APPRENTICESHIP SCHEMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proposals to extend the scope and range of existing apprenticeship schemes and/or other forms of linked work and training will be put forward in active co-operation with the social partners.
GUIDANCE AND PLACEMENT SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proposals to improve the co-ordinated provision of guidance and placement services, notably at local level, will be considered.
CONTINUING TRAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will examine ways of introducing tax incentives for firms and individuals to invest in their continuing training as an expression of public policy commitment to the development of life-long learning opportunities for adults.

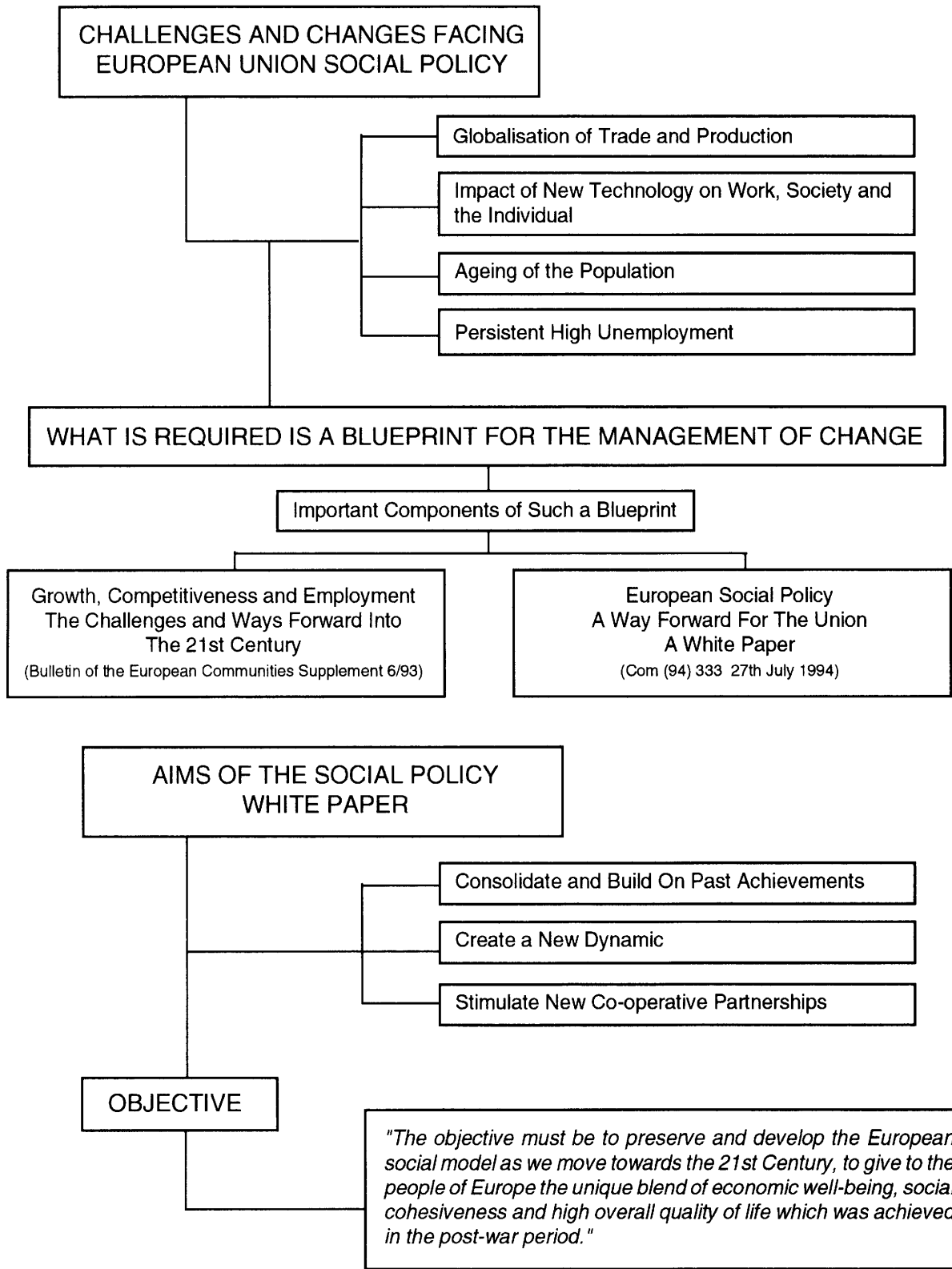
ENCOURAGING HIGH LABOUR STANDARDS

INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Once it is adopted, the Commission will examine the impact of the information and consultation directive on the various other proposals before the Council which relate in one way or another to information and the consultation of employees.
POSTING OF WORKERS TO OTHER MEMBER STATES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If no success has been achieved in the Council by the end of 1994 with the draft directive on the posting of workers, the Commission will initiate further discussions with the social partners and, in the light of their opinion, consider further whether this problem can be resolved by new proposals for action in this field.
ATYPICAL CONTRACTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A similar approach will be taken with the existing proposals on atypical contracts (part-time and temporary work contracts). The Commission will examine the possibility of a new directive on part-time work.
PARENTAL LEAVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will examine the possibility of a framework directive covering the issues of reconciling professional and family life, including career breaks such as parental leave. In the event of such a draft directive being brought forward, the existing proposals on parental leave would be withdrawn.
WORKING TIME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will continue consultations with the social partners on ways of complementing the existing Directive on working time in order to extend it to cover all workers. The Commission believes that agreement between the social partners would be the best solution, but if no agreement can be reached during 1995, proposals for a Directive based on Article 118A will be considered.
THE "INFORMAL ECONOMY"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will present proposals to address the problem of the "informal economy" (illegal work), including its links with illegal immigration.

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SOCIAL CHARTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will organise during the course of 1995 a joint hearing with the European parliament to assess the achievements, problems and perspectives five years on from the adoption of the Social Charter.
HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● During 1995, the Commission will propose a fourth programme of action on safety and health at work. The key features of this programme will be:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the appropriate development of Union legislation in the light of new knowledge and technical progress; - consolidation of existing provisions in order to reflect advances in science; - the promotion of information, education and training activities; - the promotion and development of preventive measures and protective services; - a study of the problems encountered in undertakings and enterprises such as small and medium-sized enterprises; - the development of non-legislative accompanying measures in order to promote and supplement legislative objectives
SAFETY ACTION FOR EUROPE PROGRAMME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will also make proposals to develop and formalise the role of the Senior Labour Inspectors Group as part of the development of the Safety Action For Europe (SAFE) programme.
BUILDING A EUROPEAN LABOUR MARKET	
FREE MOVEMENT OF EU CITIZENS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will review all aspects of the operation of the single market with regard to the free movement of people and establish a high level panel to assess the problems faced and to propose possible solutions. ● The Commission will use all available means to ensure real and effective implementation of the rules on free movement.
MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will evaluate the measures already taken at Union level on the mutual recognition of diplomas and comparability of qualifications. Proposals to extend the general system of recognition of diplomas to professions not yet covered will be brought forward.
TAXATION AND FREE MOVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will make further proposals (following on from its Recommendation of 21 December 1993) to solve the taxation problems of workers who exercise free movement, in particular frontier workers.
SOCIAL SECURITY AND FREE MOVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will undertake a wide-ranging technical revision and restructuring of the co-ordination of social security provisions in order to keep pace with developments and the needs of people, and simplify the existing rules.
WELFARE BENEFITS AND FREE MOVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will bring forward legislative proposals covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the need to maintain adequate protection of supplementary social security schemes for people moving across borders; - the co-ordinated provision of new benefits created by some Member States such as education benefits and benefits for long-term care; - the rights to social welfare benefits of third country nationals legally employed and resident within the Union; - the need to adapt Union rules on unemployment benefits for persons looking for work in another Member State; - the problems created by early retirement schemes based on industrial agreements not covered by the co-ordination regulations.
PROTECTION OF MIGRANT WORKERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● By the end of 1994, the Commission will make a proposal recommending the ratification by Member States of the International Convention of the protection of migrant workers.
WORK CONDITIONS OF THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will encourage the social partners to examine the conditions of employment for third country nationals legally residing in the Union.

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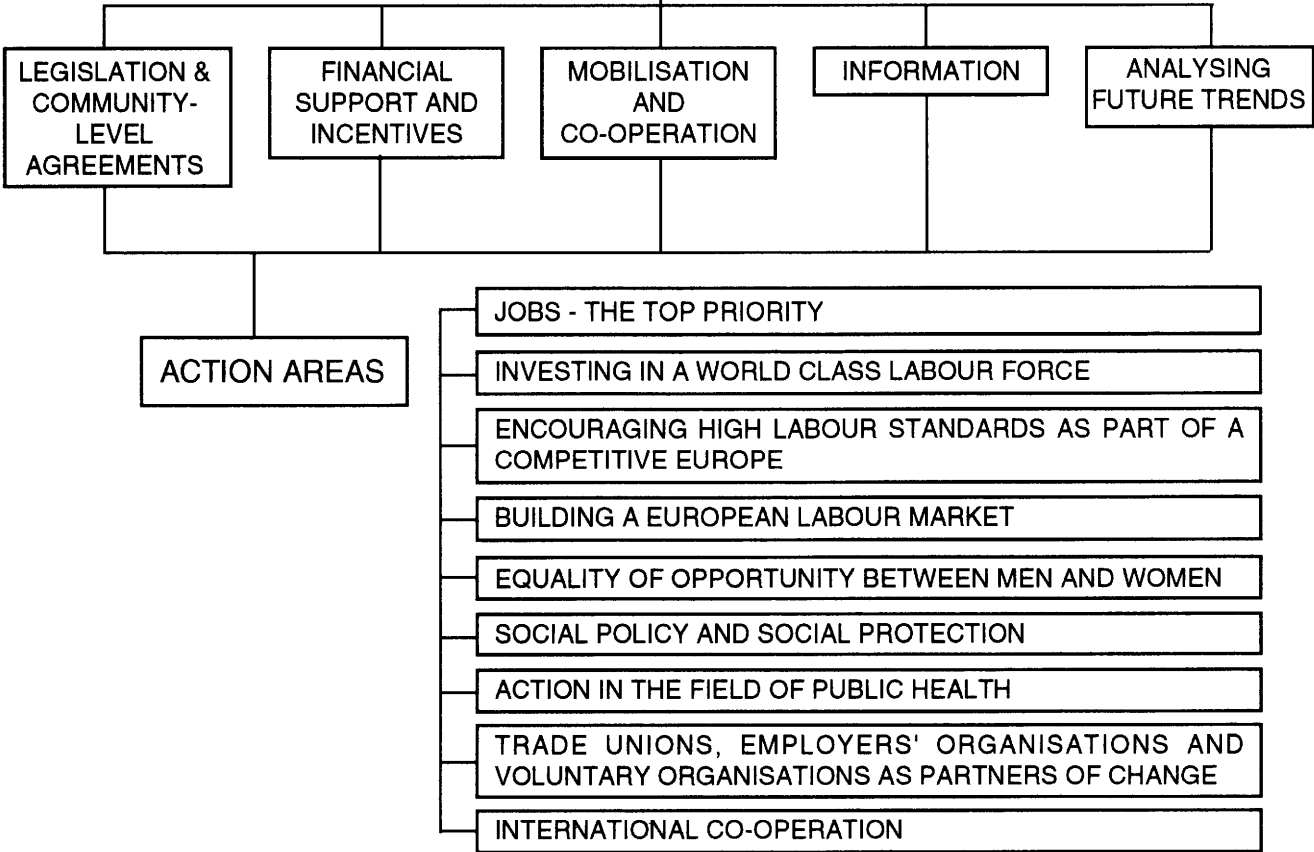


A Way Forward For The Union

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE UNION

- EMPLOYMENT:
A high priority must be given to creating new jobs
- COMPETITIVENESS:
Continuing social progress can only be built on economic prosperity and therefore on the competitiveness of the European economy. But the key to economic success is a well educated and highly motivated and adjustable working population. Therefore competitiveness and social progress are two sides of the same coin.
- CONVERGENCE AND DIVERSITY:
Convergence of goals and policies must also respect the richness of diversity.
- THE CREATION OF A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD:
The creation of minimum standards will contribute to preserving cohesion whilst at the same time enabling the more developed Member States to implement higher standards if they wish.

INSTRUMENTS FOR ACTION



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TURKISH WORKERS IN THE COMMUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will finalise its review of the implementation by Member States of the Decision of the EC-Turkey Association Council on the situation of Turkish workers employed in the Union.
RIGHTS OF THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will present a proposal during 1995 to ensure that Member States give priority to third country nationals permanently and legally resident in another Member State, when job vacancies cannot be filled by EU nationals or nationals of third countries legally resident in the Member State concerned.
FIGHTING RACIAL HARASSMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will continue to encourage the development of systems to monitor incidents of racial harassment. ● The Commission will increase financial support for anti-racism projects with the purpose of pump-priming national and other efforts in this field. The Commission will also consult the social partners at European level during 1994 on the possible adoption of a code of good employment practice against racial discrimination. ● The Commission will press for specific powers to combat racial discrimination to be included in the Treaty.
EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN	
EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will introduce codes of practice on equal pay for work of equal value, on training, and on vertical desegregation.
PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Measures will be developed to encourage the development of professional qualifications of women, including measures designed to help women set up small businesses.
DISCRIMINATORY FISCAL POLICIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will make proposals for the removal of discriminatory fiscal and social protection policies.
CHILDCARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will assess the implementation of the 1992 Recommendation on Childcare and undertake an economic assessment of the job-creation potential of child and dependent care infrastructures and services.
THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research into, information on, training for and proposals for action on the increased participation of women in decision-making in both the public and private sector will be continued by the Commission.
FOURTH EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ACTION PROGRAMME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● During 1995, the Commission will publish a Fourth Action Programme on equal opportunities between women and men which will come into force in 1996. Also, beginning in 1996, they will publish an annual "Equality Report" which will review developments at Member State and Union level.
PARENTAL LEAVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will press for the adoption of the proposed Directive on parental leave and/or other legislation on leave arrangement.
BURDEN OF PROOF IN SEX DISCRIMINATION CASES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Council will be encouraged to adopt the outstanding proposal for a directive on the burden of proof in sex discrimination cases. If it is not adopted by the end of 1994, the Commission will consider withdrawing the proposal and issuing a Communication in relation to Treaty obligations and directives on equality, building on the existing case law of the European Court of Justice.
EQUALITY AND THE STRUCTURAL FUNDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In relation to the structural funds, the Commission will develop mechanisms to integrate the equality dimension in the operation of the Funds, including the Community initiatives, through the use of more precise targets, data collection and monitoring of the participation of women/
MONITORING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will examine how to build monitoring by gender into all relevant Union policies and make it a requirement of their evaluation.

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SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

SOCIAL PROTECTION IN EUROPE REPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will continue to monitor the social changes and challenges that Member States face and publish the regular Social Protection in Europe report.
SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will give consideration to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a complementary Recommendation on the adaptation of social protection systems to changing family structures, in particular through the individualisation of rights; - a Recommendation on the financing of social security setting out common guidelines to promote better adaptation of social security to employment promotion; - a Recommendation on long-term care insurance for people who become dependent.
OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will propose a modification to the Directive on equal treatment in occupational social security schemes in line with the Barber judgement, clarifying the application of Article 119 in the field of occupational social security.
THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will continue its efforts in the fight against poverty and social exclusion and will make every effort to ensure the Council adopts the next programme of Union action in this field and the basis of the Commission proposals of September 1993. ● The possibility of further Union action on the integration of those excluded from the labour market will be examined by the Commission.
MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE DISABLED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will build on the experience of the European Disability Forum to ensure that the needs of disabled people are taken into account in relevant legislation, programmes and initiatives. This includes ensuring that, to the maximum extent possible, Union programmes are accessible to disabled people and that they are actively encouraged to participate in them.
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DISABLED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commission will also prepare an appropriate instrument endorsing the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.
CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE ON DISABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A code of good practice in relation to its own personnel policies and practices will be drawn up by the Commission and discussions will take place with the social partners on how such a model could be extended more widely.
THE ROLE OF THE ELDERLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A Decision for further Union-wide actions to help meet the challenges of an ageing population will be proposed. In particular this will look at the role and contribution of the active retired population.

TRADE UNIONS, EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS AS PARTNERS IN THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

REFORMING SOCIAL DIALOGUE STRUCTURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In terms of social dialogue structures, the Commission will bring forward proposals for Decisions designed to re-examine:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the mandate and composition of the Standing Employment Committee in the light of the implementation of the Agreement on social policy. Consideration will be given to providing it with a new role so that it would become a Standing Committee on Employment and Social policy; - the number, mandate, coverage and composition of the sectoral social dialogue committees will be re-examined and their linkage with existing and/or strengthened interprofessional Consultative Committees will be improved.
DEVELOPING THE SOCIAL DIALOGUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A discussion document on the development of the social dialogue will be published by the Commission.

European Social Policy - A Way Forward For The Union

PRODUCTIVITY AND HIGH LABOUR STANDARDS	● The Commission will make proposals to encourage the social partners at European level to consider how the search for high labour standards can be pursued as an integral part of improved productivity.
SOCIAL PARTNERS AND THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS	● Proposals designed to stimulate the involvement of the social partners at European level in actions to address the question of the conditions of employment of third country nationals legally resident in the Union will also be brought forward.
SOCIAL POLICY FORUM	● The commission propose to institute a Forum for debate and discussion on social policy issues. The Forum would be convened every 18 months and would involve the widest possible range of interested bodies. The first meeting will be held in October 1995.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

CO-OPERATING WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS	● The Commission will systematise exchange and contacts with other industrialised countries. The Commission also intends to strengthen links with international organisations such as the OECD, the ILO, the Council of Europe and the United Nations.
WORLD SUMMIT ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	● The Commission will make a special contribution to the World Summit on Social Development to be held in March 1995. The Commission also intends to continue its long-standing co-operation with the ILO and continue to ensure co-operation on social policy within the European Economic Area Agreement.
CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE	● With regards to Central and Eastern Europe, making full use of the existing structures and mechanisms established by the European Agreements, it will be one of the Commission's tasks to help formulate responses to the most acute social difficulties and to organise co-operation with the help and support of Member States.

Towards A More Effective Application of European Law

The White Paper makes clear that much has already been achieved by the European Union in terms of social legislation. Equally, it points out that if such legislation is to have an impact on the situation of individuals in Europe it is essential that it is properly applied by the Member States.

The Commission considers that the current level of compliance and transposition of Union legislation - as shown in the table - needs to be improved. The transposition situation is particularly serious in relation to health and safety legislation introduced under the 1989 Framework Directive. At the end of June 1994, only one Member State (France) has transposed all the directives which were in force.

The White paper also points out that the participation of the social partners in implementation of social legislation is also

PROGRESS IN TRANSPOSING DIRECTIVES APPLICABLE TO EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY

Source: Social Policy White Paper : 1994

Member State	Directives Applicable on 31 Dec 1993	Directives For Which Measures Have Been Notified as at 31 Dec 1993	%
BELGIUM	37	28	76
DENMARK	37	32	86
GERMANY	38	27	71
GREECE	36	24	67
SPAIN	37	25	68
FRANCE	37	29	78
IRELAND	37	32	86
ITALY	37	21	57
LUXEMBOURG	37	22	59
NETHERLANDS	37	26	70
PORTUGAL	36	33	92
UNITED KINGDOM	37	34	92

essential. The Commission will continue to pursue, as necessary, infringement procedures in cases where Member States have either failed to implement legislation in national law or where such laws are considered by the Commission, to be defective.

Common Position on Information and Consultation Directive Adopted

On Monday 18th July the Social Affairs Council formally adopted its Common Position on the draft directive on information and consultation rights in European-scale undertakings. The Common Position has been adopted under the Maastricht Treaty Social Policy Agreement and Protocol arrangements and therefore when it finally is approved (following a second reading in the European Parliament) it will apply in all Member States other than the United Kingdom.

In the vote at the Social Affairs Council the Common position was approved by all Member States other than Portugal (in line with the Social Policy Protocol and Agreement, the United Kingdom did not take part in the vote). The Portuguese delegation abstained in the vote saying that it was a subject "requiring the greatest consensus between the social partners at Community level, which unfortunately was not the case". The Portuguese considered that the draft directive "clearly oversteps what would be necessary to adequately ensure worker consultation and information". They felt that the wording of the directive compromised the development of the social dialogue at Community level and could lead to a diminution of its role. Nevertheless, the Portuguese delegation said that they preferred to abstain rather than vote against the proposal as they had always fully supported the principle of worker consultation and information.

Amended Proposal On Ionising Radiation

The European Commission has published a modified amended proposal for a Council Directive (EURATOM) laying down the basic safety standards for the protection of the health of workers and the general public against the dangers arising from ionising radiation. The new proposal takes account of the opinion of the European Parliament on the amended proposal for a directive first published by the Commission in July 1993. That proposal was intended to revise the current standards which are based on a 1980 Directive by introducing radiation protection standards which are based on the most up-to-date scientific knowledge, and expand provisions concerning measures to be taken in the event of radiological accidents. Amongst the EP amendments accepted by the Commission and incorporated into the new proposals are -

- (1) A clearer distinction between dose limits and intervention levels in Article 1;
- (2) A modification to Article 5 prohibiting the export out of the Community of consumer goods containing radioactive substances, whose placing on the market is prohibited in the Community;

- (3) Modifications to Article 13 designed to reinforce the social protection of workers who exceed dose limits as a consequence of a specially authorised exposure;
- (4) A modification to Article 30 which stipulates that the results of monitoring of the exposure of workers are available to their representatives.

Eurobarometer Survey Spring 1994

The latest results from the European Commission sponsored "Eurobarometer" public opinion survey suggests that support for European unification may have begun to lift out of the trough it sunk into during 1993. Eurobarometer regularly surveys more than 13,000 citizens of the European Union (based in all 12 Member States). The latest Eurobarometer survey (interviews for which took place in April and early May 1994) also indicates a small increase in the proportion of citizens who believe their country has benefited from EU membership (up from 45% to 47%) and a corresponding reduction in those who believe it has not (down from 35% to 34%). In the run-up to the June elections, the survey also questioned people about their knowledge of, and attitudes to the European Parliament.

There were surprising differences in attitude between Member States when people were asked whether the European Parliament should have more power or not. Over 70% of Italians were in favour of more power for the EP and there also were majorities in favour of granting more powers in Greece and France. The situation was very different in Denmark (18% in favour of more power, 73% against), Ireland (37% in favour, 44% against) and the UK (27% in favour, 58% against) however. When asked whether their vote in the European elections would be influenced by national issues or European issues, there were clear majorities in every country except one for national issues. The exception was the Netherlands where some 53% said it would be their opinions on European issues that would determine their vote.

Amended Proposal For Physical Agents Directive

The European Commission has published an amended proposal for a Council Directive on the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents. The original Commission proposal for a directive (which will, when adopted, form an individual directive under the 1989 Health and Safety Framework Directive) was published in March 1993 and has since been the subject of opinions of both the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee. The proposed directive covers the risks resulting from acoustic fields (i.e. noise), vibration and electric or magnetic fields.

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Of the 41 amendments adopted during the first reading of the proposal by the EP, 31 have been accepted by the Commission and incorporated into the new text. Many of the amendments introduce useful textual changes whilst others seek to extend the level of protection provided by the draft directive. The concept of a "ceiling level" incorporated into the original proposal has been changed into "an exposure limit value" although the meaning remains roughly the same. A number of other amendments relate to the granting of derogations to Member States and individual workplaces. A new paragraph will require Member states to forward to the Commission every two years a survey of the derogations granted to individual workplaces.

ETUC Statement On Employment And Immigration

The ETUC has criticised the Judicial and Home affairs Council's endorsement of, what it calls, "a restrictive policy on third country workers" on employment ground. By so doing, the ETUC believes, it is creating a false impression that third country workers are in competition with those of the Union and EFTA countries on the European job market. The ETUC believes that "the struggle for employment demands much more than that". The ETUC states that it does not share the Council's approach which does not reflect the reality of the situation and may simply encourage "fortress-Europe", anti-democratic and extreme right-wing tendencies. In its own interests, the ETUC says, Europe must remain an open, tolerant and united society.

The ETUC feels that the European Union must establish instruments to manage and control migratory flows which take account of the complex and multi-dimensional nature of immigration. Leaving matters in the hands of Home Affairs Ministries is not the way to solve the problem, according to the ETUC statement. The ETUC's position is that measures which address immigration necessarily place added responsibility on, and a demand for more sustained and united action from the Union and European countries to develop employment and social progress in immigrants' home countries. The ETUC is therefore calling for the European Union and European countries to take an overall approach to North/South relations of which migration is only an expression and a part.

Commission Memorandum On Equal Pay

The European Commission has adopted a Memorandum on equal pay for work of equal value. The Memorandum reveals that little progress has been made within Member States towards the goal of equal pay for work of equal value.

The overall gap between the pay of women and men in the EU is still wide and in the case of some Member States it is still increasing. The Memorandum contains a review of recent legislation and, of particular importance, recent decisions made by the European Court of Justice. This is divided into three sections -

- (1) the meaning of work of equal value,
- (2) job classification, job evaluation and discrimination,
- (3) pay for the purposes of Article 119 of the EC Treaty.

A further section of the Memorandum looks at the need for further measures to promote the practical achievement of equal pay for work of equal value.

Speaking at a press conference to launch the Memorandum, Social Affairs Commissioner, Padraig Flynn, welcomed the new Memorandum and said that he hoped it would help make equal pay between men and women a reality and not merely a law.

Community Initiatives

The European Commission has decided on the breakdown of funding between Member States for nine of the thirteen Community Initiative programmes. The nine Initiatives concerned are - Interreg (inter-regional co-operation and energy networks), Regis (most remote regions), SME (small and medium sized enterprises, Urban (Urban areas), Human Resources (Now, Horizon and Youthstart), Adapt (Adaption of workforce to industrial change), Portuguese textile programme, Leader (Rural Development) and Pesca (fisheries conversion). The breakdown for these nine programmes is:-

Belgium	177.9mECU	Denmark	86.6mECU
Germany	1.26bECU	Greece	1.19bECU
Spain	2.32bECU	France	1.23bECU
Ireland	374.4mECU	Italy	1.58bECU
Luxembourg	5.9mECU	Netherlands	211.9mECU
Portugal	1.37bECU	U.K.	814.3mECU

The allocations for the RECHAR, RESIDER, KONVER and RETEX programmes have not yet been decided. The total budget for the initiatives is 13.467bECU of which 8.16bECU is reserved for Objective 1 regions.

Chemical Agents At Work

The European Commission has released an amended proposal for a Council Directive on the protection of the health and safety of workers from the risks relating to chemical agents at work. The Commission first published a draft directive on chemical agents in June 1993 and the amended proposal follows the Opinion of the European Parliament adopted at its April 1994 plenary session. The new proposals incorporate all but 5 of the 38 amendments

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put forward in the EP Opinion. The accepted amendments fall into two categories -

- (1) Amendments which add precision to and provide useful clarification of the initial proposal;
- (2) Amendments of a more general kind which aim to strengthen the improvement of the health and safety of workers at work from risks related to chemical agents.

The Commission's amended proposal conserves the structure and objectives of the initial proposal but clarifies and amplifies certain provisions. In particular, the amended proposal extends Article 8 on Occupational Exposure Limits and clarifies the relationship between Community and national occupational exposure limits. A new section dealing with the minimum requirements for measuring procedures is added to the Annex of the proposed directive. Amongst the amendments put forward by the EP but not accepted by the Commission were the proposals to (1) extend the scope of the directive to include the self-employed, and (2) Introduce a lower biological limit value for exposure to lead for women.

Information, Communication, Openness

Information, communication and openness have become key issues in the European Commission and the European Union. Recent events have served to underline that ensuring a flow of appropriate information is essential if public support for the aims of European unification is to be maintained. At the same time we are seeing a revolution in telecommunications, and Europe must be at the heart of not only fostering the new forms of mass communication, but also exploiting them to ensure that European citizens are kept aware of developments in the Union. A third strand is represented by the increasing demands for openness. As the Union gets more complex, the dangers of it being seen as a remote and distant bureaucracy increase. The most effective weapon against such a misconception is the principle of transparency - ensuring that ordinary people have access to the policies and decisions being pursued by the Union.

Over the last two years, the Directorate-General for Information, Communication, Culture and Audiovisual Media have been involved in preparing a new approach to information policy. The approach has been based on a series of internal communications covering all aspects of information policy. These have now been collectively published in a report "Information, Communication, Openness" which is now available, in all the official Community languages, from the Office for Official Publications (ISBN 92-826-7653). The Report also contains the text of the 1993 Commission Communication on Public Access to the Institutions' Documents.

Bargaining In Recession ETUI Report

The effects of Europe's worst post-war recession on the pay and conditions of workers is illustrated in a new report from the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) : "Bargaining in Recession - Trends in Collective Bargaining in Western Europe 1993-94". The report - the fifteenth annual report on collective bargaining in Western Europe to be published by the ETUI - provides both information on general developments in collective bargaining for 20 European countries, and detailed reports, focusing particularly on efforts to create and preserve jobs, for 8 countries.

The first chapter of the report provides an overview of economic and social developments (including economic indicators, changes in wages, purchasing power and working time) for 20 countries. The information is based on replies from national trade union confederations to an ETUI questionnaire. The responses clearly indicate the decline in real wages which has been a feature in many European countries over the last two years.

WAGE GROWTH (REAL) 1993-1994		
Country	1993	1994
Austria	0.0	0.8
Belgium	1 - 1.5	0 - 0.1
Cyprus	4.2	3.6
Denmark	1.2	0.1
Finland	-4.5	-4.0
France	0.4	n.a.
Germany (East)	7 - 8	n.a.
Germany (West)	-1.1	n.a.
Greece	-1.7	0.9
Iceland	-1.0	-2.0
Ireland	(increased)	0.0
Italy	General -1.1 Manuf. -0.4	General -0.6 Manuf. 0.0
Luxembourg	(increased)	n.a.
Netherlands	0.7	-0.5
Norway	0.5	1.0
Portugal	0.0	(decreased)
Spain	1.0	-1.0
Sweden	-3.4	1.0
Switzerland	-0.7 - -1.8	0.5
United Kingdom	1.0	-1.0

Source: "Bargaining In Recession" ETUI

The second chapter provides a more detailed analysis of current collective bargaining trends in eight countries - Germany, Belgium, Spain, France, the UK, Ireland, Italy and Sweden. In particular it looks at the role of trade unions in efforts to create and maintain employment.

The report is available in English, French and German and is available from the ETUI (for address see page 16), priced 1,000 Belgian Francs, although special price reductions are available for trade unions and trade unionists.

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EUROPEAN TRADE UNION INFORMATION BULLETIN

Produced by MBO Education & Training Ltd 3, Dorchester Road, Fixby, Huddersfield, UK.
with the support of the Commission of the European Communities (DGX)