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DEVELOPMENTS AT A GLANCE

- Belgium** Temporary dispensation from daily signing on is awarded to some categories of the unemployed so that they will have to sign on only twice a month. (p. 4)
Carrefour Formation is providing documentation on training, guidance and counselling, and courses for the French-speaking community in Belgium. (p. 6)
The Kempen Strategic Plan is aimed to create employment in Kempen for all those who are long-term unemployed or/and with low qualifications. (p. 17)
PRIME scheme for the Walloon Region aims to help LTUs to find a stable employment through wage cost subsidies and exempt of social contributions (p. 18).
From now on parents can ask for a career break of 12 weeks to 6 months in case of childbirth instead of a fixed period of 6 months. (p. 22)
- Denmark** Danish Parliament has adopted four new acts as an element of the Government's "debureaucratization" and decentralization efforts. (p. 20)
- Germany** Funds for the "250-million-programme" for long-term and difficult-to-place unemployed have nearly been doubled. (p. 21)
- Spain** In 1988-1989 the working population has increased by 3.2%, the number of persons employed by 7.5%, and unemployment levels have dropped by 13.3%. (p. 1)
In 1989 almost 2 million persons have benefited from direct unemployment protection and employment promotion schemes. (p. 5)
Plan *FIP*, the National Training and Vocational Integration Plan, will be raised to the level of Royal Decree in 1990. (p. 8)
- France** In 1989 the number of persons employed in the (non-agricultural) market sector has increased by 1.7%. and unemployment levels dropped by 2.3%. (p. 1)
A specific programme has been drawn up to improve the material conditions for receiving job-seekers in local employment offices. (p. 22)
- Ireland** A FAS study of school-leavers' participation in the labour market shows that the lower qualified continued to be at a disadvantage. (p. 10)
- Italy** The agreement between employers and trade unions on labour costs urges the Government to transfer excessive labour cost burdens to the state tax system. (p. 3)
A new Law pertaining to individual dismissals extends the application of "just cause" to all enterprises and workers can challenge their dismissal. (p. 4)
A new national committee will foster equality between the sexes by removing all direct or indirect discrimination of women. (p. 25)
- Netherlands** Most collective agreements for 1990 contain arrangements for training and employment, and, more and more, provisions in the field of emancipation. (p. 11)
A modified training grants scheme particularly supports the intake of women, ethnic minorities and handicapped people in the apprenticeship system. (p. 11)
An experiment introduces more flexible regulations on undertaking training while retaining unemployment benefits. (p. 11)
The Law on reducing the costs of minimum level wages aims to improve the labour market position of the lower qualified unemployed persons. (p. 1)
Financial support to local youth employment initiatives is being extended until the Youth Employment Guarantee Scheme will come into force. (p. 2)
The New Employment Act has been adopted. The Directorate-General for Manpower will officially become a public body on 1.1.91. (p. 25)
- Portugal** In 1989 three new programmes were implemented to revamp employment offices' activities in the field of careers guidance and orientation. (p. 24)
- United Kingdom** A new training credits scheme is set up by which approved training from an employer or specialist provider can be "bought". (p. 12)
A study has shown that the single market it is not likely to lead to rapid convergence between different national industrial relations traditions. (p. 26)

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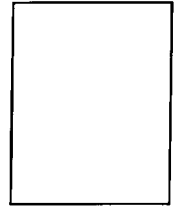
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OVERALL DEVELOPMENTS

Spain

The labour market in 1988-1989

During the two years 1988-1989 the Spanish economy has continued to grow. The Gross Domestic Product grew by about 5% on an annual basis, which is considerably higher than the average growth rate in the European Community. As a result, in 1988 and 1989, numbers of employed have, overall, increased by more than 850,000 persons (+7.5%) and the working population by more than 460,000 (+3.2%); unemployment levels have dropped: almost 400,000 fewer persons were out of work (-13.3%).

The data of the Labour Force Survey (*EPA*) of the last quarter of 1989 confirm these positive trends. Contrary to what could be observed until the second quarter of 1987, employment levels have been rising faster than the total labour force throughout 1988 and 1989, leading to successive drops in the number of unemployed.

In the last quarter of 1989 the working population and the number of persons employed amounted to 14,929,900 and 12,408,200 respectively; the number of jobless persons stood at 2,521,800. As a result of these developments the activity rate rose to 49.2%, while the unemployment rate dropped to 16.9% of the working population.

The development of the labour market in the years under consideration clearly shows that the sustained improvement of employment levels is starting to lead to significant reductions in both unemployment figures: the numbers registered at the Employment Offices as well as the estimates based on the Labour Force Survey. Looking in more detail at the changes that have been taking place the following can be observed:

Sectoral changes

Taking the annual averages as the basis for calculations, employment in the non-agricultural

sectors increased by 987,050 persons over the years 1988-89 (+10.2%). In agriculture, on the other hand, it dropped by 128,575 persons (-7.4%). The sectoral changes in the employment structure reveal a move toward services and the building industry, at the expense of agriculture and manufacturing industry.

Changes by gender

The analysis by gender shows that, in absolute numbers, the expansion of employment opportunities has benefited the male more than the female working population: the number of men employed grew by 477,150 and of women by 381,350. In relative figures, though, the situation is quite the reverse: female employment increased by 11.1%, male employment by 6%. As a result, by the end of 1989 (fourth quarter) the number of men who held a job had risen to 8,520,100 persons, while the equivalent number of women reached 3,888,100. Their proportions in the total number of persons employed at that time stood at 68.7% and 31.3% respectively.

Changes by age category

The increase in employment has favoured all age categories without exception. Nevertheless, the growth has been more rapid among workers between 25 and 54 years of age, where numbers of employed rose by 603,600 between the last quarters of 1987 and 1989. A significant increase also took place among the younger working population (+122,100), while the over-55 category experienced a more modest growth (+57,000).

Changes by professional status

Finally, as regards the professional status of the gainfully employed, there has been a significant increase of persons in dependent employment during the two year period under consideration. The number of wage-earners and salaried employees grew by 864,100 (+10.5%), while the non-salaried population declined by 81,300 persons (-2.3%).

France

The development of employment and unemployment in 1989

The growth of the French economy has continued in 1989 at the same rhythm as in 1988, with an increase of 3.7% in the gross domestic

traded product in 1989. The production of manufactured goods has increased by 4.4%. Within this context of a favourable economic environment, the French economy has continued to create employment: in the (non-agricultural) market sector, the number of persons employed

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rose by 231,000 compared with 1988, an increase of 1.7%.

In the tertiary sector 190,000 jobs were created and a rise of employment in industry was also recorded (+35,000). This reversal of the situation in industrial employment is all the more remarkable since this sector was still losing jobs in 1987 and 1988 and 120,000 jobs had disappeared on average from French industry between 1983 and 1987.

Employment increased most (+2.8%) in the intermediate goods sector. The growth was more moderate in the sector of capital goods (+1.2%). In the building and civil engineering sector

employment only increased by 0.5% after strong growth in 1988 (+2.7%). Finally, there was a slight reduction in the consumer goods sector (-0.3%).

As far as the tertiary sector is concerned, the rhythm of job creation has been high, particularly since 1987, above all in trade and services: of every ten jobs created in 1989, seven were in the tertiary market sector with almost one third in the corporate services sector where almost 60,000 new jobs have been created. The table below summarizes the development of employment in France between 1987 and 1989 (estimates of the *Institut National des Etudes et de la Statistique - INSEE*) on the basis of Ministry of Labour surveys.

Table: Development of employment from 1987 to 1989 in France

Branches of Industry	Estimated numbers 31.12.89 (gross)	Annual growth rates in %			Changes in thousands 1989
		1987	1988	1989	
Farm-produce	522.4	- 0.8	- 0.7	- 0.7	- 3
Energy	262.0	- 2.2	- 3.0	- 3.4	- 9
Intermediate goods	1,242.0	- 1.6	+ 0.5	+ 2.8	+ 34
Capital goods	1,494.5	- 3.4	- 1.0	+ 1.2	+ 17
Consumer goods	1,117.6	- 2.8	- 0.7	- 0.3	- 4
Building and civil engineering	1,240.0	+ 1.2	+ 2.7	+ 0.5	+ 6
Trade	2,108.4	+ 1.7	+ 1.7	+ 1.6	+ 33
Transport and telecommunications	1,329.9	+ 0.6	+ 0.3	+ 0.9	+ 12
Market services	4,037.4	+ 4.6	+ 5.0	+ 3.7	+ 144
Financial institutions	669.9	+ 0.3	- 0.7	+ 0.2	+ 1
Total of non-agricultural market sectors	14,024.1	+ 0.8	+ 1.6	+ 1.7	+ 231
of which: Industry	4,638.5	- 2.4	- 0.6	+ 0.8	+ 35
Tertiary market	8,145.6	+ 2.7	+ 2.8	+ 2.4	+ 190

In December there were about 2,500,000 job-seekers (seasonally adjusted figures).

Unemployment fell in 1989 by 60,000 (-2.3%), a significant improvement of the reduction of the previous years: -12,000 in 1987 and -30,000 in 1988. The drop in the rate of unemployment is, using the ILO definition, estimated to be 0.4% (from 9.8% of the working population at end 1988 to 9.4% at end 1989).

This drop can be explained, on the one hand, by the creation of recorded jobs in 1989 and, on the other, by a slight increase of the impact of employment policy instruments, which have led to either temporary (vocational training courses) or to permanent withdrawal from the labour

market (entering early retirement or exemption from job-search). The estimated number of beneficiaries of these measures rose from 563,000 to 588,000 between 1988 and 1989, an increase of 25,000.

The year 1989 did not turn out the same for all categories of unemployed persons. According to the age bracket to which they belong:

- the number of job-seekers less than 25 years old decreased by some 70,000 (- 8.6%), keeping the same pace as in previous years;
- contrariwise, an increase of almost 19,000 occurred in the age bracket of 25 to 49 years of age;
- finally, there was also a decrease in the age

bracket over the over 50s (-9,000).

It should be noted that the improvement of unemployment mainly benefits men, since they represent 54,000 of the decrease of 60,000 persons in 1989. Female unemployment, however, stopped growing, tending to stabilize

Italy

Agreement between employers and trade unions on labour costs

Earlier this year the employers' association *Confindustria*, and the three main union confederations (*CGIL*, *CISL* and *UIL*) reached agreement on labour costs. The agreement is aimed at improving the international competitiveness of Italian industry and reducing inflation so as to enhance Italian industry in Europe. The State does not have to take any new measures to put this agreement into effect, because in substance it is a "code of conduct" to which the signatories feel bound during the phase of renegotiating collective agreements. The Government has the sole obligation of reforming the tax system in order to transfer excessive labour cost burdens from companies to the state tax system.

The parties all accepted that their own behaviour in industrial relations at all levels must be in accordance with the objectives of economic policy and international competitiveness. To these ends they will endeavour:

- to bring the rate of inflation down towards that of other European countries, notably in view of the Lira entering the narrow band of the European Monetary System; labour costs rises must be consistent with this objective;
- to support balanced growth of the Gross

Netherlands

Trends in 1990 collective agreements

Nearly all collective agreements (*CAOs*), signed since the establishment of the Joint Policy Framework, contain arrangements for training and employment. To an increasing extent *CAOs* also contain provisions in the field of emancipation. But there are hardly any new arrangements concerning working time reduction and alteration in the early retirement age. This emerges from the provisional report on

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compared with the two previous years in which increases of almost 9% were noted.

Overall, the employment and unemployment situation is relatively positive in France compared with previous years, although significant numbers of jobs created have not led to any substantial drop in numbers unemployed.

Domestic Product in order to contribute to employment growth and smoothing out regional imbalances Italy, particularly as regards the problem of the Mezzogiorno;

- to achieve, as far as questions pertaining to trade union relations are concerned, greater overall competitiveness and productivity in the economic system in order to strengthen those industries which are most exposed to international competition, and improve workers' living and working conditions.

To this end, the parties agreed that:

- labour costs in Italy are overburdened with social charges. These are, on the one hand, excessive and, on the other, "improper": for one part of society -companies- alone finances services which benefit society as a whole. They therefore consider that the tax system beurgently revised -which is also consonant with the Government's recent formal commitment. The revision should provide for the transfer to the state tax system of those labour costs which finance services benefitting the whole of society. At the same time tax deductions at source should be reformed;
- increase in wages and other elements of the employment relationship must not, taking due account of all levels of the current structure of industrial relations, contravene the pursuit of the above mentioned objectives.

CAO-arrangements in the market sector for the contract year 1990 which has been presented to Parliament by the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment.

The report gives an overview of the most important arrangements in 61 major agreements. These *CAO* concern over 88% of the more than two million workers covered by major *CAOs*. The arrangements on training and employment vary from the concrete arrangements for the influx of

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTS

difficult-to-place job-seekers, to the individual right to training for workers already under contract. The arrangements on women's

emancipation concern child-care in particular. In addition there have been new arrangements on parental leave and positive action.

EMPLOYMENT MAINTENANCE

Italy

Regulations on individual dismissals

Law n° 108 of 11.5.90 pertaining to individual dismissals extends the application of "just cause" to all enterprises employing less than 16 workers (art.2, par.1); previously it had only applied to enterprises employing more than 15 workers. From now on workers belonging to smaller production units can challenge their dismissal and demand reinstatement in the company or claim damages if they can prove that the dismissal is illegal.

If the employer employs over 15 workers in each production unit or more than a total of 60 in small enterprises operating in the same municipality, the so-called "*tutela reale*", or "real protection" applies. This means that the worker is given the possibility of choosing between reinstatement or damages. In the case of damages, the dismissed worker is entitled to payment of compensation equivalent to 15 monthly payments of the total wages. In determining the number of employees, persons working under training-work contract and those working part-time are also counted (art.1, par.2).

Enterprises employing less than 16 workers are required to give notice of dismissal in writing. Within 15 days of the communication the worker can ask to be informed of the grounds which have led to his dismissal. The employer has to inform the worker of these grounds within seven days of the request, failing which the dismissal can be declared to be ineffective.

When it has been ascertained that the main condition for "just causes" has not been met, the employer is required to reinstate the worker or alternatively to pay damages. Damages take the form of compensation which, in the case of enterprises employing less than 16 employees, can vary from a minimum of 2.5 to a maximum of 6 months salary, depending on the length of service in the company.

Finally, to avoid, or at least restrict, possible massive recourse to the labour court, the law lays down that any action at law must be preceded by a compulsory attempt at reconciliation, failing which the action can be refused a hearing.

AID TO THE UNEMPLOYED

Belgium

Dispensation from daily signing on

Within the framework of humanizing unemployment checks (cfr. iM 24) the Ministerial Order of 25.5.90 (*Moniteur Belge* -M.B.- of 30.5.90), modifying Article 77 of the Ministerial Order of 4.6.64 concerning unemployment, awards temporary dispensation from daily signing on for some categories of the unemployed. During this dispensation period the

unemployed concerned will have to sign on only twice a month.

From now on fully unemployed persons, who do not belong to the categories for which particular hours for signing on have been fixed, are exempt from daily signing on during the month in which they submit a claim for benefits and the following 11 months, if they can prove to meet one of the following conditions:

- having been employed on an employment contract for an uninterrupted period of at least six months;
- having fulfilled military service or alternative service for conscientious objectors for an uninterrupted period of at least six months;
- having been admitted to the system of waiting allowance (*allocation d'attente*) or unemployment benefit on the basis of studying or training;
- having finished a training programme or having followed such a programme partially, under the condition, in the latter case, that the premature end was caused by circumstances beyond the unemployed person's control.

The following training programmes are taken into consideration:

Spain

Coverage of the unemployment protection system

Protection of the unemployed has improved substantially over recent years in Spain, both in a narrow sense, referring to the assistance per se, and in a wider sense, including the beneficiaries of active employment policies and vocational training measures.

1. Direct support

The Law on Unemployment Protection (Act 31/1984; cfr. BIR Spain Chap. 3.3) implied an extension of both the categories eligible for protection and the duration of its application. Since its approval on 2.8.84, important modifications have been introduced. These modifications aim to tackle the situation of those most in need of assistance, in particular elderly workers and the long-term unemployed, and include the following:

- the temporary extension, at the end of 1986, of unemployment benefit to certain categories of the long-term unemployed, (Decree 2394/1986 of 16.11.86; cfr. iM 17);
- the approval of Royal Decree 3/1989 of 31.3.89 on Additional Social Provisions which significantly raised the levels of protection of the long-term unemployed (with or without dependants) and, in particular, of those over 45 years of age (cfr. iM 26);
- the new structure of the unemployment protection scheme for casual agricultural workers which, launched in 1984 and modified in 1988, is now being thoroughly reformed so as to improve the protection of these workers and widen its coverage (cfr. iM 25 and 30).

- a vocational training programme organized or subsidized by a Belgian Community;
- a vocational integration programme organized in the framework of the Jobclubs scheme (cfr. iM 21);
- training provided for by a vocational integration agreement, as envisaged by the regulation on the Employment Fund (cfr. iM 26);
- social promotion courses which are recognized by the Ministry of Employment and Labour.

This new regulation only applies to benefit claims introduced from 1.6.90 onwards. If the unemployed person asks for dispensation on the grounds of having completed a training programme, this programme must have been completed after 31.5.90.

2. Employment Promotion Schemes

Other programmes have been put into operation on the assumption that there is an important connection between unemployment benefit systems (protective systems) and the active promotion of employment. In some cases a mechanism has been established which allows for the automatic transformation of benefits of a protective nature into an instrument of job creation. Illustrative of this line of action are:

- the scheme to capitalize unemployment benefits (Royal Decree 1044/1985 of 19.6.85) which allows workers to receive a one-off payment equal to the total amount of unemployment benefits they are entitled to in order to set up their own business or to become members of a cooperative or a workers' partnership (cfr. BIR Spain v.13 and iM 18; in 1989 82,097 persons benefited from this programme);
- the scheme to offer temporary employment in jobs of public interest through contracts which are based on agreements between the National Employment Institute (*INEM*) and the public administration (cfr. BIR Spain v.10; 259,886 beneficiaries in 1989);
- the development of Plan *FIP*, the National Training and Vocational Integration Plan, which enables, since its creation in 1985, participants in the different programmes to receive grants or allowances which may be equal to the unemployment benefit (cfr. iM 14,15,18,21,26,28,30). It has become a powerful instrument that exercises a positive attraction. In 1989 304,187 persons received a grant or allowance through Plan *FIP*.

AID TO THE UNEMPLOYED

Coverage of the systems

In order to get a clear picture of the development of the Spanish unemployment protection system the percentage of persons covered by the direct support programmes (described under 1.) can be examined.

A first such indicator is determined by relating the total number of beneficiaries to the total number of unemployed persons according to the Labour Force Survey. The number of beneficiaries is obtained by adding up those under the general scheme as well as under the special scheme for the agricultural sector and the claims which are under consideration but are expected to be approved. The development of this percentage has been seen to be remarkably positive since August 1984, when the Unemployment Protection Act was approved: from 36.68% in August 1984 it rose to 56.5% in May 1990. In absolute terms, as of May 1990 a total number of 1,418,352 persons enjoyed some form of unemployment support. Compared to a total of 1,003,601 beneficiaries in August 1984, this represents an increase of 414,751 persons, or 41.33%.

There are two other indicators, both of a more restricted nature than the first since they do not include all of the beneficiaries mentioned above. One is the so-called "effective coverage rate". It represents the relation between, on the one hand, the sum of the total number of beneficiaries of

forms of financial support and the claims which are under consideration but are expected to be approved and, on the other hand, the number of registered unemployed persons. This indicator also shows a positive development, increasing from 29.8% in August 1984 to 47.82% in May 1990. In absolute terms the latter percentage corresponds to a total of 1,114,677 persons assisted.

The other indicator that can be used is the "statistical coverage rate" or "gross coverage rate". It is the most restricted of all three, since it only relates the total number of beneficiaries of financial support for full unemployment to the number of registered unemployed; the claims under consideration, of which an estimated 95% will be approved, are not taken into account. This indicator shows a very significant growth, from 24.96% in August 1984 to 43.21% in May 1990. This is the highest recorded monthly growth level since the Act 31/1984 governing unemployment protection came into force.

As regards the coverage of employment promotion schemes mentioned under 2., 646,170 persons have benefited from them in 1989. Added to the 1,343,409 beneficiaries of the direct support programmes (listed under 1.) in that same year, that brings the total of persons covered by the complete range of unemployment protection schemes to almost two million (1,989,579).

TRAINING

Belgium

Carrefour Formation

The information and documentation centre *Carrefour Formation* (Training Forum) was established in 1987 by the Subregional Employment Office for Brussels of the National Employment Office (*ONEm*). Since 1989 this initiative has been operating within the framework of *FOREM*, the public body entrusted with the vocational training in the French-speaking Community. It is now offering four different services entirely free of charge.

Documentation centre

Carrefour Formation provides self-service documentation of various kinds:

— a series of guides, directories, listings and

reference books concerning the different training programmes in existence in the French-speaking Community;

— brochures and folders provided by the training centres themselves which give the most complete and precise picture of the French-speaking training scene.

Carrefour Formation covers, fully and up-to-date, the entire provision of training in the Brussels Region, both as regards documentation and the relationships their staff maintain with external partners.

For the other Regions it has contacts enabling it to rapidly provide precise and reliable information:

— books and a bibliography about experiences

TRAINING

and actions carried out in Belgium and abroad;

- occupational monographs;
- documents about social legislation and enterprise start-ups;
- specialized periodicals in the field of training;
- audio-visual documents about trades and training.

This information is continuously extended and updated.

Presenting equipment and methods applied in the *FOREM* training centres

The aim is to enable visitors to see and use the equipment and methods applied in the *FOREM* training centres, with the aid of specialized instructors.

Carrefour Formation equipment includes micro-computers and occupational soft-ware, mini language lab, video and audio language courses. This function of *Carrefour Formation* is first and foremost aimed at persons who have a clearly defined goal for vocational training and integration. The targets are to ensure initial contact and overall awareness, to provide evaluation and self-assessment of knowledge as well as to improve and provide initiation into certain techniques.

Tailor-made training is also run to meet specific, well-defined and urgent needs.

Guidance and counselling

This is unquestionably the major function of

Carrefour Formation. In most cases people really need guidance before starting a training programme. Visitors can meet training advisors, set out their needs, be guided in choosing and assisted in the approaches. They can also enrol directly for all training programmes which are organized by *FOREM*.

Requests for vocational training are listed, enabling gaps and shortcomings in certain fields to be detected. In general it can be said that users are looking for modular training courses which can be started at any time and that, for the training market to operate more effectively, it is necessary for flexible training systems to be designed which can respond exactly to the needs.

Language Space

In collaboration with the Language Training Centre (*Centre d'Animation en Langues*) the Language Space offers:

- exhaustive information on training, studies and linguistic exchanges in Belgium and abroad;
- an open multi-lingual library service.

The teachers of the Language Training Centre are contracted to provide tailor-made language training which is organized by *Carrefour Formation* for employed or unemployed trainees, training professionals, students, top managers and personnel managers.

Carrefour Formation in figures

— Short individual counselling (documentation, brief information, etc.)	1.412 persons
— Extensive individual counselling (advice, training plan, etc.)	3.833 persons
— Joint information on training possibilities provided by <i>FOREM</i> or partner bodies	1.754 persons
— Demonstrations of equipment and methods	627 persons
— Telephone inquiries	466 persons
— Training and awareness enhancement:	
Under vocational training contracts:	
— Word processing (124 x 8 persons x 5 days)	3.920 hours
— Demystifying the computer (18 persons x 5 days)	684 hours
— Remedial training in French and arithmetic for the secondary sector	896 hours
— Languages (60 hours Dutch modules to achieve FP III standard)	1.080 hours
— Data base (dBase III Plus)	560 hours
— Computerized book-keeping (COMPAC)	280 hours

TRAINING

Others: socio-professional integration	
– Social legislation: measures concerning alternance training (28 persons x 1 day)	168 hours
– Getting to know <i>ONEm</i> , <i>FOREM</i> , <i>ORBEM</i> (placement, unemployment, vocational training) (8 persons x 1 day)	48 hours
– Help in writing a CV (28 persons x 1 day)	140 hours
– Help in reconversion (5 persons x 3 days)	75 hours

Spain

Plan FIP receives Royal Decree status

Plan *FIP*, the National Training and Vocational Integration Plan, renewed annually by Ministerial Order since its launch in 1985, will be raised to the level of Royal Decree in 1990. This change, soon to be approved, marks the recognition by the Cabinet of the importance of the experiences during the last five years, since it ratifies the role assigned to vocational training and further training of the labour force within the whole range of national measures in the field of human resources.

The new regulation gives the Plan a permanent character, concluding the status of "transitional year", which 1989 had been assigned by Ministerial Order for three reasons:

- the reform of the vocational training foreseen in the Law on the General Regulation of the Education System (*LOGSE*; cfr. iM 30) which was approved at the same time;
- the reform of the European Social Fund;
- the drafting of the National Vocational Training Programme (*Programa Nacional de Formación Profesional*).

These aspects will also be taken into account in the forthcoming Royal Decree. Furthermore, the Decree will reflect the results of the agreements on vocational training that were reached in the social dialogue between the administration, the employers' organizations and the trade unions on 28.2.90 (cfr. iM 30).

The Royal Decree on Plan *FIP* includes the changes to be derived from the new regulations concerning the European Social Fund, in accordance with its five main objectives:

- promoting the development and structural adjustment of the less-developed regions;
- converting the regions and areas seriously affected by the industrial crisis;
- combating long-term unemployment;

- facilitating the occupational integration of young people; and
- promoting the development of rural areas.

Organizational changes

Compared with previous years, i.e. previous versions of the Plan *FIP*, the Royal Decree presents various changes. The most significant are listed below:

1. The establishment of a coherent set of measures, consisting of specific priority actions in the field of vocational training and guidance and professional integration, which are to benefit the most disadvantaged categories on the labour market. These categories include: young persons under 16 years of age who failed at school; young persons who have not obtained a primary school leaving certificate or a first level vocational training certificate; long-term unemployed persons who have not completed primary school; women with very low levels of qualification; and workers in the agricultural sector, with special attention being given to persons under 25 years of age (cfr. iM 30).
2. The creation of Provincial Monitoring Committees for Practical Vocational Training (*Comités Provinciales de Seguimiento de la Formación Profesional Ocupacional*) to enable the General Council of the National Employment Institute (*INEM*) and the General Council for Vocational Training (*CGFP*) to implement their institutional participation on the provincial level. The main functions of the Committees will be:
 - to monitor and analyze the development of practical vocational training, including that of the workshop schools and youth training centres;
 - to express their opinion on the current functioning of these programmes on the provincial level;
 - to put forward proposals and recommen-

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dations to the provincial bodies involved.

3. The collaboration of the social partners in carrying out and evaluating Plan *FIP* by means of triennial programme contracts.
4. The implementation of new mechanisms whereby the social partners may monitor, receive information on and participate in the programmes of further training for corporate personnel.
5. The introduction of new training programmes as well as important changes to existing programmes. These changes mainly affect young persons on a training contract, persons between 25 and 30 years of age, and women who want to return to working life.
6. The enhancement of knowledge of the functioning of the labour market through the Permanent Observatory for the Trends of Occupations. This observatory, together with the programme for vocational qualifications of job-seekers, will be integrated into the National Plan to Investigate the Needs of the Labour Market, soon to be launched by the government (cfr. iM 30).

National Vocational Training Programme

The new legal framework may be regarded as a forerunner to the drafting of the National Vocational Training Programme by the *CGFP*, which is made possible by the approval of *LOGSE*. This programme will link the provision of Basic Vocational Training and Specific Vocational Training. This, in turn, will take the place of the current "regulated" vocational training, provided by the educational system, and practical vocational training, managed by the labour administration (cfr. iM 30).

The future National Vocational Training Programme, into which the actual Plan *FIP* will be integrated, will furthermore provide the regulations by which knowledge acquired through practical vocational training and through work experience is regarded as being of equal value to knowledge acquired through the vocational training which is provided by the general educational system. This will be carried out in line with the European programme on comparability of vocational training qualifications, with a double purpose: to enable the free movement of workers and to facilitate adaptation to the technological and organizational changes that will result from the Single European Market.

Categories benefiting

Focusing in more detail on the programmes and categories that will benefit from the changes in

Plan *FIP*, the following major modifications are being made:

1. Young persons hired on a training contract will benefit by being guaranteed an additional training course, in accordance with labour market demands, in case they remain unemployed once their contract expires. Furthermore, the contracts demand that the training takes place on a full time basis, for a minimum of six months. Finally, if specified in a collective agreement or by mutual agreement between the company and the workers' representatives, young persons on a training contract will be able to participate in vocational training courses outside the company.
2. A new programme is being developed which offers practical vocational training to those young persons between the age of 25 and 30 who have not held a job for more than three months.
3. The periods of practical work for participants taking practical vocational training under the age of 25 will be subject to regulations which will guarantee improved control of the appropriate nature and quality of the training.
4. To the existing vocational training activities for the long-term unemployed measures will be added concerning their vocational guidance, entry into the labour market or social integration.
5. A new programme is also being developed for women over 25, wishing to return to working life after a long break.
6. A new article will govern distance-learning, a type of training which has to receive *INEM* recognition.

Concerning the allowance for course participants, the Royal Decree lays down the rules and general principles that will govern the different forms of support, to be fixed periodically by order of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

Participation of the social partners

The participation of the social partners will be increased by means of the above-mentioned Provincial Monitoring Committees and which will be set up as part of each of the Provincial Executive Committees of *INEM*. Their participation will also be enhanced by the possibility of concluding, in accordance with the agreements reached with the employers' organizations and the trade unions, triennial programme contracts which will lay down

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quantitative and financial arrangements as well as mechanisms for controlling and monitoring the training activities. These innovative changes mark an important step forward in both the development of tripartite structures at the regional level and the monitoring and control of the activities that are being undertaken as part of Plan *FIP*.

Ireland

FAS follow-up survey of school-leavers

FAS, the State Training and Employment Authority, has recently published a report entitled "School Leavers Survey - Five Years Later" which examines the early labour market experience of a sample of 2,000 students from 200 schools who left school in 1982. The report is a development of an annual survey conducted by the Department of Labour. It represents the first such longitudinal study of school-leavers' participation in the labour market and provides further information on the relationship between different levels of qualifications and subsequent labour market experiences. The main results of the survey are described below.

Educational qualifications

Of 1982 school-leavers 40% had completed the senior cycle of second-level education (Leaving Certificate), 29% of males and 51% of females. A further 20% of males and 15% of females had secured a third level qualification while 9% of males and 6% of females were either still in third-level education, or had attempted but not completed third-level education. The proportion of 1982 school-leavers still without any formal educational qualifications was the same for both sexes: 7%.

Economic status

The economic status of the sample in 1987/1988 showed 56% in employment, 22% emigrated, 15% unemployed, 4% unavailable for work and 3% in full-time education. The economic status of the school-leaver was strongly associated with his/her level of qualification: 36% of the unqualified were unemployed compared to only 9% of those with a Leaving Certificate or higher qualification.

Employment

Of those in employment, half of males were in the production industries (30% in Manufacturing/Public Utilities, 12% in Agriculture and 8% in Building/Construction) compared to only 25% of females. Over two-thirds of female employees were in service industries, 20% in Distribution,

Finally, the Royal Decree introduces a new element: an annual assessment of the results of Plan *FIP* by the Permanent Committee of *CGFP*. Whenever the outcome so requires, the Committee can put forward resulting recommendations and proposals.

19% in Professional Services, 14% in Personal Services and 14% in Banking. Unqualified males were concentrated in Agriculture (30%) and unqualified females in Personal Services (57%).

Unemployment

The unemployment rate among 1982 school-leavers (i.e. those unemployed, including first-time job-seekers, as a percentage of those who were employed plus unemployed) was 21%, with only a small variation overall between males and females. There was, however, a strong relationship between unemployment and qualification levels. There was a much greater risk of unemployment among the lesser qualified school-leavers, with 47% of those with no qualifications unemployed, compared to 12% among those with a Leaving Certificate or higher qualification.

Almost 40% of unemployed school-leavers had been out of work for over one year. Better qualified school-leavers tended to be unemployed for shorter lengths of time. In contrast, among unemployed unqualified persons, 68% had been unemployed for more than a year.

Emigration

Just under one-third (30%) of the 1982 school-leavers had lived abroad at some stage since they left school; 22% were still abroad. The percentage abroad increased consistently with higher qualification, rising from 12% of those with no qualifications to 28% of those with a third-level qualification.

The majority of those emigrating were aged 19 years or more when leaving Ireland; 69% went to the UK, 19% to the USA, 6% to other EC States and 4% to Australia; 32% had arranged jobs before leaving while 56% went in search of work. The vast majority (90%) of the emigrants were employed at the time of the survey and those who were unemployed (amounting to only 3%) tended to be the lesser qualified. This indicates that the lower qualified continued to be at a disadvantage relative to those better qualified even when they emigrated.

Netherlands

New apprenticeship vocational training grants scheme

The Youth Vocational Training Subsidy Scheme (*BVJ*) will be modified on several points (cfr. BIR Netherlands iv.3 and iM 27). The age limit (27 years) will be abolished and, besides women and ethnic minorities, extra subsidies can now be requested for handicapped persons. The *BVJ* scheme has also been renamed: Apprenticeship Vocational Training Grants Scheme (*Bijdrageregeling Vakopleiding Leerlingwezen - BVL*).

The *BVL* is intended to provide training and work experience for unemployed school-leavers, initially for those under 21 years, who have been unable to find a job by themselves within one year. In order to ensure that as many young people as possible find a regular job within that period of time the apprenticeship system (*Leerlingwezen*) will also be given prominence.

The amount of the grant which is paid to the training funds is the same as in 1989: HFL 3,500 for every new apprentice, which can be increased by HFL 3,000 if the apprentice undergoes

training within the framework of a joint training activity.

A new element in the scheme is the so-called "target groups component" which aims at a more efficient use of the extra monies in support of the intake of women, ethnic minorities and handicapped people in the apprenticeship system. The extra grants for these target groups will be grouped under the new *BVL* scheme. To qualify for the grants the training funds must draw up an annually adapted long-range plan which is aimed at a more systematic method of recruiting and counselling non-traditional target groups for the training programmes. This plan must include sections concerning one or more of the following categories of trainees: women in traditional male occupations, ethnic minorities and -the new target group- handicapped people. The additional grant for an apprentice from these categories amounts to HFL 3,000. This subsidy will only be granted once for every person. Accumulation of extra subsidies is not possible.

Netherlands

Easing of regulations on training while retaining benefits

As from 1.7.90 it will be easier for unemployed persons entitled to a benefit under the Unemployment Insurance Act (*WW*) to undertake training while retaining benefits. The Federation of Industrial Insurance Boards (*Federatie van Bedrijfsverenigingen*) and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment have jointly decided to carry out an experiment using more flexible regulations. The experiment expires on 31.3.91.

So far the approval of the awarding authority was needed to undertake training while retaining benefits. During the experiment the approval of the Employment Office will be sufficient in most cases. In any case the easing of regulations applies to the Vocational Training Centres for Adults (*CVV*) and the Centres for Vocational Orientation and Preparation (*CBB*), as well as to programmes of the Primary Vocationally Oriented Adult Education (*PBVE*) (cfr. BIR Netherlands iv.1, 4 and 7).

For certain categories of the unemployed the new regulations will also apply to other approved training programmes. As long as the training does not exceed six months the new regulations apply to:

- all job-seekers who have been unemployed for more than six months;
- job-seekers who have been unemployed for less than six months but belong to one of the following target groups: women, ethnic minorities and the partially incapacitated.

For other approved training programmes, which last between 6 and 12 months, the new regulations apply to:

- all job-seekers of 27 years and older who have been unemployed for more than six months;
- job-seekers of 27 years and older who have been unemployed for less than six months and belong to the above-mentioned target groups.

In all other cases the approval of the industrial insurance board will still be needed for training while retaining benefits.

United Kingdom

A new initiative: training credits

An experimental programme introducing training credits for young people was announced on 27.3.90 by the UK Secretary of State for Employment. The scheme is a third major initiative in the field of Youth Training.

The new Youth Training programme (YT) which started in May 1990 (cfr. iM 29) is building on the achievements of the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) and will lead to higher levels of training, and training more relevant to the needs of employers.

Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) in England and Wales and local enterprise companies in Scotland will have a key task of mobilizing local employers to offer more and better training in skills needed by industry.

The training credits scheme is aimed at increasing the motivation of young people to look for and expect continued training and education after they have left school. The idea of training credits is, however, untested and so the Secretary of State has asked for ten pilot schemes to be set up covering around 45,000 school-leavers.

How it will work

Training credits represent an entitlement to train to approved standards. All credits will have a monetary value shown on them. They will be issued to young people who choose to leave school at 16 or 17 and can be used to "buy" approved training from an employer or specialist provider.

TECs will submit proposals to the Secretary of State to run pilot credit schemes on a local basis from April 1991. The pilots will be selected to test the effectiveness of different approaches. Some will issue credits to all school-leavers in the TEC area; others will focus selectively for example on particular groups, skill shortages or higher level qualifications. A geographical spread will be looked for involving buoyant and less buoyant labour market conditions.

Enhanced careers guidance

A feature of the training credits scheme is the requirement for enhanced careers guidance. Young people will need sound careers advice to help them make wise choices in the use of training credits. TECs will be expected to ensure that arrangements are in place with schools and the Careers Service to provide quality careers education and information with on-going guidance available for those who need it.

Links with Youth Training

YT offers a very flexible framework for the training of young people and training credits are fully compatible with it. Training delivered under a credit pilot will have to conform with the minimum requirements for YT. For example training must be delivered by approved training organizations and to at least National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) level 2 or equivalent. The Government's guarantee of a training place for those young people under 18 who need one with a minimum training allowance must be met and special needs trainees must be catered for. Funding for training credits will come largely from the YT Budget, and there will be additional monies available including an element from local education authorities within the TEC area.

Evaluation of the scheme

All pilots will be subject to annual review. Rigorous evaluation of both TECs themselves and the Employment Department's Training Agency will measure the impact of different arrangements and the success of training credits in meeting their objectives. A national follow-up survey of all young people leaving credit schemes will be conducted to identify outcomes of jobs and skills obtained. Regular reports will inform the Secretary of State for Employment and other Ministries concerned for reconsideration of the scheme.

Training credits have the potential to:

- strengthen the motivation of the individual to train;
- allow training to reflect the choices and decisions of young people and their employers;
- help to create a more efficient and responsive market in training.

Centrefold

Aid to the unemployed: unemployment benefit (UB)

This comparative table presents a brief description of the different unemployment allowance systems in the Member States of the European Communities. The presentation is limited to unemployment insurance systems. For reasons of clarity and limited space other parts of the unemployment protection system (such as unemployment assistance schemes and supplementary benefits) are not included in the overview. These benefits have a different character and are generally speaking not financed by employers' and employees' contributions.

The following features have been selected:

- I. Name and financing
- II. Qualifying conditions
- III. Waiting period
- IV. Days for which UB is granted
- V. Earnings taken as a reference
- VI. Rates of benefits
- VII. Duration of payment
- VIII. Adjustments of rates
- IX. Special groups

Belgium

I.

- "Allocation de chômage": financed by employers' and employee's contributions and state subsidies.

II.

- Worker must be without work and earnings involuntarily, be and remain registered as job-seeker, be available for the labour market, be capable of working, and sign-on regularly at unemployment office. Furthermore, she/he must have been gainfully employed for a certain number of days during a certain period previous to the application for benefits (varies, according to age, from 75 days in the past 10 months to 600 days in the past 36 months).

III.

- None.

IV.

- All days of the week except Sundays.

V.

- The daily benefit is calculated on the basis of 1/26th of the last gross wage, with a ceiling (on 1.2.90: BFR 49,617 per month).

VI.

- Unemployed who receive family allowance and lost sole income: 60% of last gross wage (with a ceiling);
- Unemployed who lost sole income: 1st year 60%, thereafter 40%;
- Unemployed who neither receive family allowance nor lost sole income: 1st period (12 months): 55%; 2nd period (6 months + 3 months per year worked): 35%; 3rd period (indefinite duration): flat rate (BFR 428 per day).

VII.

- Benefit is granted for an indefinite duration. However, a suspension of the claim applies to persons up to 50 years who don't justify loss of sole income and are in 3rd unemployment period, in case their duration of unemployment exceeds double the average duration of unemployment in the area of the regional employment office to which he/she belongs, according to his/her age group and sex. This suspension only applies if the income of the household to which claimant belongs exceeds BFR 600,000 per year.

VIII.

- Linked to the consumer price index according to the system applied to adjust wages and other public expenditures of the Treasury.

IX.

- Part-time workers (voluntarily and avoiding unemployment) can receive benefits under special conditions and restrictions. Young persons (- 30 years), who have never worked, who are finishing school or perform an apprenticeship, can be entitled to claim UB or waiting allowance after having been registered as a job-seeker for a certain period (75, 150 or 300 days, according to age).

Germany

I.

- "Arbeitslosengeld": obligatory insurance system, administered by the Federal Employment Services (BA), covers all employees with the exception of those working less than 18 hours per week, the incapacitated and a few other categories.

II.

- The worker must have had at least 360 calendar days' contributory employment during the preceding 3 years (seasonal workers: 180 calendar days).

III.

- No waiting period, but where a worker has left his job voluntarily without good cause, has refused a suitable offer of employment or vocational training, or has been dismissed for misconduct etc., a period of disqualification of 8 to 12 weeks sets in.

IV.

- 6 days a week.

V.

- Net earnings of the last 60 days of employment.

VI.

- 68% of net earnings (63% for recipients having no dependent child). Ceiling: DM 649,50/month.

VII.

- Between 156 and 312 days depending on the length of previous contributory employment. Special conditions apply for seasonal workers and workers from the age of 42 (up to 65 years maximum).

VIII.

- Annual adjustment.

IX.

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Denmark

I.

- "Arbejdsledelsesforsikring": financed by membership contributions, employer contributions and reimbursement from the State. The system is secured through voluntary unemployment insurance funds which are private associations of wage- and/or salary earners and/or self-employed persons, closely connected with trade unions and under the overall supervision of the State. There are stringent conditions on membership of such funds.

II.

- Member of the fund for at least 12 months. Apprentices who have been excluded from membership and persons who have completed vocational training of at least 18 months' duration qualify for daily cash benefit after 1 month's membership, provided that the application for membership is filed within 2 weeks after the completion of such training. Only employment in membership periods counts. Entitlement to unemployment benefits is further conditional upon the members having been employed for the full normal working hours within the occupational field concerned for at least 26 weeks within the past 3 years or have been self-employed for a corresponding period. Members who engage in self-employment activities as their secondary occupation only qualify for daily cash benefit if they have been employed (main occupation) for 26 weeks within the past 18 months.

III.

- None.

IV.

- 6 days a week.

V.

- Gross earnings of the last 12 weeks/3 months of employment.

VI.

- 90% of the previous gross earnings with a ceiling of DKR 2,454 per week (DKR 409 per day).

VII.

- As a maximum: 2½ years

VIII.

- Annual adjustment in the context of the annual budget.

IX.

- Special provisions apply to part-time workers.

Spain

I.

- "Nivel contributivo": financed by employers' and employees' contributions and state subsidies. The State pays the unemployed persons' social security contributions.

II.

- Claimant must be affiliated to Social Security, have had a minimum period of contributory employment (6 months in last 4 years), be legally unemployed, not have reached age to be entitled to retirement pension or, although having reached the age, lack sufficient contributions.

III.

- No waiting period except where workers have lost their job for reasons attributable to themselves (6 months).

IV.

- All calendar days of the benefit period.

V.

- The average of the basis for social security contributions during the 6 months preceding unemployment.

VI.

- First 180 days: 80%; days 181 - 360: 70%; days 361 onwards: 60%. Minimum rate of benefit: the interprofessional minimum wage (SMI). Ceiling: 220%, 195% or 170% of SMI depending on whether the beneficiary has more than 2 children, 1 child or no child.

VII.

- Depends on period of contributory employment (CE) during the 4 years preceding unemployment: ranges from 3 months for 6 to 12 months CE to 24 months for 48 months CE. Duration = half lower limit of CE.

VIII.

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IX.

- Special regulation for casual agricultural workers (in Andalusia and Extremadura) who must have paid contribution for at least 60 days during last 12 months except for those older than 52. Duration of payment maximally 180 days in a period of 12 months, except for those over 52 years, who stay entitled until retirement age (maximum annual duration of payment equal to the one of previous year). The allowances are exclusively financed by the State. Amount: 75% of SMI + social security contributions.

France

I.

● "Allocation de base" (AB) and "Allocation de fin de droits" (AFD): financed by employees' and employers' contributions.

II.

● Entitlement to AB depends on the age of the claimant (under 50 years, from 50 to 55 and more than 55 years of age) and on the length of preceding insured employment. AFD is paid to those having used up their rights to AB provided they have been in insured employment for at least 6 months.

III.

● Depends on the number of paid holidays which are not yet taken.

IV.

● Every day.

V.

● Earnings on which contributions have been based for the last 12 months of employment.

VI.

● AB: FF 49.52/day + 40% of last reference earnings (with a ceiling of 75% and a floor of 57% of reference earnings) or FF 119.80/day. AFD: flat rate of FF 76.69/day (FF 106.23 after 55 years of age under certain conditions).

VII.

● AB depends on claimant's age and duration of previous insured employment. It ranges from 3 months, without possibility of prolongation, to 27 months with a maximum prolongation of 18 months. In case of prolongation, the amount of AB is degressive and depends on age. AFD: maximum duration of 6, without prolongation, to 18 months + 9 months possible prolongation for the over 55s.

VIII.

● Once a year, on 1 October.

IX.

● Special regulations apply to certain categories: Integration allowances (e.g. granted to the young, depending on qualifications) and Specific solidarity allowances (granted to long-term unemployed having used up their rights to UB, depending on resources).

Greece

I.

● "Ordinary" unemployment benefit: obligatory insurance for all employees in dependent employment. Financed by employers' and employee's contributions and state subsidies.

II.

● Workers must have contributed to the insurance for at least 125 days in the 14 months before becoming unemployed, excluding any days worked in the last 2 months. Seasonal workers must have contributed at least 100 days in the 12 months preceding unemployment. For a first claim, the person must have been employed 80 days in each of the 2 years preceding unemployment.

III.

● 6 days.

IV.

● 25 days a month.

V.

● Daily earnings at the time of loss of job.

VI.

● The daily allowance amounts to 40% of earnings in the wage class of manual workers without qualifications; for salaried employees: 50% of earnings, which are not to be less than 2/3 of the daily wages of manual workers without qualifications, + 10% of benefit for each dependant. The amount of allowance for young persons of 20 to 29 years of age is decided by ministerial decision: DRA 15,000 per month.

VII.

● According to number of days worked during the period of 12 or 14 months preceding unemployment. Between 125 and 149 days of employment: 4 months; between 150 and 179 days: 5 months; over 180 days: 7 months. People over 49 years with 210 days of employment: 10 months. Possible extension of above periods of 3 months. Young persons between 20-29 years of age who have been registered as young job-seeker for 6 months receive UB for 5 months.

VIII.

● Annually by decision of the board of the O.A.E.D. in line with changes in the minimum statutory wage.

IX.

● Extraordinary benefit for seasonal workers. Same rates as for UB.

Ireland

I.

● "Unemployment benefit" (UB) and "Pay-related benefit" (PRB). Most workers, with the exception of some public servants, are compulsorily covered under the Pay-Related Social Insurance (PRSI) contribution system. Contributions are payable by employers and employees and entitlement to the benefits depends on PRSI contributions reaching prescribed standards (contribution conditions).

II.

● Claimant must have at least 39 weeks PRSI contributions paid at any time, and at least 39 weeks PRSI contributions paid or credited in the governing contribution year (credited contributions are given for weeks of illness or unemployment). For maximum benefit, 48 weeks PRSI are needed in that year. PRB is a supplement to UB paid from the 4th week of unemployment.

III.

● UB: 3 days as a rule, 6 weeks if unemployment is voluntary or employment is lost through misconduct. PRB: 3 weeks.

IV.

● 6 days a week.

V.

● UB: flat rate only. PRB: average weekly earnings in the last complete tax year before the year in which the claim begins.

VI.

● UB: full flat rate benefit IRL 48 per week plus rates for dependants. PRB: 12% of weekly earnings over IRL 72 and below IRL 220. The combination of UB + PRB + income tax refunds may not exceed 85% of previous average weekly earnings.

VII.

● UB: for persons under 65 years of age up to 390 days; for persons under 18: 156 days; if 65 or over, paid up to 66 years. PRB can be paid for up to 375 days.

VIII.

● Benefits are normally increased once a year in the context of the annual budget.

IX.

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Italy

I.

● "Trattamento ordinario di disoccupazione": compulsory insurance scheme for all workers over 14 years of age (with certain categories excepted, such as artistic personnel, seasonal workers and apprentices).

II.

● A worker must have been insured for at least 2 years, one of them being in the 2 years preceding unemployment.

III.

● Normally 7 days but 30 days in case of workers giving up their job or in case of dismissal due to misconduct.

IV.

● Every day including Sundays and bank holidays.

V.

● Last salary.

VI.

● For 1988: 15% of last salary (N.B. UB of this kind is made use of only marginally. More often workers - through their firms - make use of the Wage Compensation Fund (CIG), originally intended as an earnings guarantee in the case of short-time working but which now is used in cases of threatening unemployment and thus prevents dismissals).

VII.

● Maximum of 180 days and 150 in case of workers giving up their job or in case of dismissal due to misconduct.

VIII.

● Made by Parliament.

IX.

● Special unemployment benefit paid to workers made redundant in industries other than construction by the closing down of their firm or department or through reduction of personnel, these being the result of regional crises which have been recognised by ministerial decree. The daily rate equals 1/30 of the 2/3 of the gross basic pay. Earning reference: gross pay for normal contractual hours during the last full month of employment. The duration is a maximum of 180 days, Sundays and bank holidays included. In cases of sectoral or local economic crisis, the duration of compensation can be extended by periods of 3 months by Order of the Ministry of Labour.

Luxembourg

I.

● "Indemnité de chômage complet". There is no unemployment insurance system. Unemployment benefit is paid by the Employment Fund (*fonds pour l'emploi*) which is financed by contributions from employers, the communes and income tax.

II.

● Claimant must have been employed on Luxembourg territory as a wage or salary earner for at least 26 weeks during the 12 months preceding his enrolment as a job-seeker at the employment office.

III.

● Normally no waiting period, but young persons who register as unemployed after completing their training or education must wait 39 weeks (under certain conditions 26 weeks) before receiving benefit.

IV.

● 6 days a week.

V.

● Gross earnings during the last 3 (or 6) months preceding unemployment.

VI.

● 80% of previous gross earnings but maximum 250% of statutory minimum wage (*SSM*). After 182 days' unemployment in 12 months: maximum 200% of *SSM*. Beyond 365 days: maximum 150% *SSM*. Rate of UB is increased by 5% for unemployed with dependant child(ren). If unemployed persons' spouse earns more than 250% of *SSM* applicable to workers with dependants, the rate of benefit is reduced by 50% of difference between spouse's earnings and 250% of *SSM*.

VII.

● 365 calendar days per period of 24 months. 2 types of extension:
1. the over 50s having exhausted 12 months entitlement can claim extension of up to 12 months for minimally 30 years compulsory pension insurance; up to 9 months for 25 years and up to 6 months for minimally 20 years pension insurance;
2. Particularly difficult-to-place unemployed who are over 55 years, are partially disabled (30%), or are over 50 years with 15% to 29% disablement can claim extension of 182 days.

VIII.

● Pegged to the cost-of-living index.

IX.

● Benefit is also granted to formerly self-employed persons, who had to give up their work and are seeking work as employees (they have to prove 5 years' contributions to the compulsory pension insurance), and to young persons up to 21 years of age (in exceptional cases 28 years of age).

Netherlands

I.

● "Werkloosheidsuitkering" (*WW*): compulsory unemployment insurance scheme is administered by the industrial insurance boards under the provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act.

II.

● Claimant must have worked at least 26 weeks during the 12 months preceding unemployment.

III.

● None.

IV.

● 5 days a week.

V.

● Daily earnings lost.

VI.

● 70% of the daily wage (maximum daily wage of HFL 270,60). When entitlement is exhausted, claimant receives a subsequent benefit at 70% of statutory minimum wage for 1 year irrespective of partner's income. The Supplements Act provides for incomes to be topped up if they drop below minimum social income.

VII.

● Between 6 months and 5 years according to the claimant's length of service and according to his/her age.

VIII.

● Twice annually according to the variations of the wage index.

IX.

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Portugal

I.

● "Subsidio de desemprego" (*SD*): granted to unemployed for a period directly linked to the age of the unemployed person.

II.

● The person must be involuntarily unemployed and have had at least 540 days of gainful contributory employment during the last 2 years immediately preceding unemployment.

III.

● None. Benefit is granted as soon as the claim is introduced, within 90 days from the beginning of unemployment.

IV.

● Work days.

V.

● The average wage of the workers is defined by $R/180$, where R is the total income registered in the first 6 months preceding the 2nd month before beginning of unemployment.

VI.

● 65% of the worker's average wage with a lower limit, the guaranteed minimum wage (*GMW*) (except when the worker's average wage is lower than the minimum wage). The upper limit is 3 times the *GMW*.

VII.

● Depends on the worker's age: scaled between 10 months when younger than 25 to 30 months when older than 55. Beneficiaries aged 55 or more having exhausted their entitlement to unemployment benefits, are given an extension of benefit until the age of 60, in anticipation of their entitlement to old age pension.

VIII.

● Linked to the annual revision of the guaranteed minimum wage.

IX.

● -

United Kingdom

I.

● "Unemployment benefit" (*UB*): the statutory unemployment insurance scheme covering most workers but excluding some groups, e.g. married women and widows who pay a reduced National Insurance (*NI*) contributions.

II.

● Qualification relies on *NI* contributions paid and credited in the two complete tax years immediately before the benefit year in which claim starts. Contributions must have been paid on earnings of at least 25 times the lower earnings limit in at least one of the two tax years. Contributions must also have been paid and/or credited on earnings of at least 50 times the lower earnings limit in both of the tax years. There are also special measures available to assist some widows and former students/trainees to qualify without satisfying the normal rules.

III.

● There are 3 statutory unpaid "waiting days" at the beginning of the claim unless it is made within 8 weeks of another claim to unemployment benefit, sickness related benefits or a government approved training scheme. Benefit payment can be further delayed by up to 6 months if the claimant left the job voluntarily, was dismissed for misconduct etc., and by up to 12 months if the employer made a compensatory payment on terminating the employment.

IV.

● 6 days a week.

V.

● A lower and an upper limit on which Class 1 employees' contributions have been paid/credited in the two tax years relevant to the claim.

VI.

● Flat rate *UB* of UKL 37.35. An adult dependants addition of UKL 23.05. There are higher rates available for people over normal state retirement age who continue to claim unemployment benefit.

VII.

● Payable for 312 days (a year excluding Sundays). Further benefit is not payable until a work test has been passed. This requires at least 16 hours work as an employee in each of 13 weeks. These 13 weeks must normally fall within the 26 weeks immediately preceding the week in which the new claim falls.

VIII.

● *UB* rates are reviewed annually in April on the basis of price inflation to the previous September.

IX.

● There are special rules that apply to some claimants over 55 years of age who receive occupational or personal pensions.

JOB CREATION

Netherlands

Wage costs reduction for minimum-wage earners

In the next four years employers will be compensated for part of the wage costs of minimum-wage earners. The Law on reducing the costs of minimum level wages (*Wet Loonkostenreductie op minimumloonniveau*) came into force on 1.4.90 and runs until 31.3.94. An evaluation will be made in the intervening period.

The law is aimed at improving the labour market position of the lower qualified unemployed persons by making it more attractive to hire them. To this end employers will receive a subsidy of about 10% of the wage costs (amounting to HFL 3,200 per year). The subsidy is granted for all minimum-wage earners of 23

years and older who are employed for an uninterrupted period of at least three months and work for at least one third of normal working time. Part-time workers are also covered by the law, proportionately to the number of hours worked.

It is expected that the law will create 19,000 new jobs, of which some 15,000 unemployed persons will benefit. The costs of the measure are estimated at HFL 365 million per year and will be borne by the funds under the General Disablement Benefits Act (*AAW*) and the Exceptional Medical Expenses Act (*AWBZ*). For this purpose the contributions to these social insurances will be increased by some 0.15%. The wage cost reductions can be set off against income tax and social insurance contributions.

SPECIAL CATEGORIES OF WORKERS

Belgium

Subregional scheme for the long-term unemployed

Born in 1987, the Kempen Strategic Plan (*Strategisch Plan Kempen*) was a result of an initiative of several business managers and political leaders from the Turnhout District (Province of Antwerp). The end goal of the Plan, which is based on broad collaboration between the public and private sectors, is to make Kempen into a model region in Europe through long-term integrated economic and social development. In February 1990 the management group of the Strategic Plan launched a scheme for the long-term unemployed and unemployed with limited qualifications.

Target group

The target group of the scheme has been defined broadly, adding to the 16,300 fully unemployed persons in receipt of benefit another 4,400 "other job-seekers". 83% of these 20,700 unemployed persons have limited qualifications or are long-term unemployed.

The specific opportunities and threats of the

local labour market have been examined. This analysis of strong and weak points was based on a series of data which included the demand for persons with low qualifications on the labour market, the unemployment rate, the economic structure of Kempen, the existing initiatives concerning help and assistance to the unemployed, the existing infrastructure and public opinion.

Surveys of the unemployed show significant readiness to work as well as a clear interest in supplementary training. These are the strong points. On the other hand, the persons concerned are only likely to follow training if they have a prospect of a job in advance. The prospect of a job, however, is connected with certain conditions concerning earnings, the type of enterprise, working conditions, etc., which can constitute weak points.

The objective

The ambitious objective of the Strategic Plan is to bring about full employment in Kempen for all those who, now and in the future, are long-term or/and with low qualifications. This necessitates

a curative as well as a preventive approach, the first, however, always taking priority; action must in the first place be towards those who are currently the long-term unemployed and with low qualifications; but training for the future must also be promoted.

The strategy

A strategy has been defined on the basis of an inventory of the actions of local authorities and organizations in the field of employment, training, infrastructural facilities and financial support. This strategy focuses on the level of supply and demand on the labour market. The main thrusts are: information and awareness, supervision and a project approach. Altogether 38 projects have been put forward to be able to achieve the goal set. The first commitments for carrying out the plan have already been made. Implementation is being carried out in a coordination centre which has been created at

SPECIAL CATEGORIES OF WORKERS

district level and is acting in close collaboration with the subregional employment committee.

Priority projects

Coordination actions have been given priority: namely the district coordination centre, the information and awareness campaign and supervision. Other priority actions are:

- reducing unemployment in an early stage by means of an active placement policy;
- creating a regional fund for supporting local initiatives;
- organizing technical training for female job-seekers;
- updating teachers' knowledge of business life;
- developing a day nursery network;
- creating a network of apprenticeship workshops and a system which helps job-seekers who are being trained to obtain prospects for placement in advance from employers.

Belgium

PRIME scheme for the Walloon Region

The Decree of the Regional Walloon Council of 31.5.90 (*M.B.* of 16.6.90) establishes an employment promotion scheme in the non-trading sector, in particular for the long-term unemployed (LTUs): Regional Projects for Integration into the Labour Market (*Projets Régionaux d'Insertion dans le Marché de l'Emploi - PRIME*).

Since the beginning of 1989 the regional authorities have been given wider competence in combating unemployment (cfr. iM 24). The measures inherited from the national government (in particular the Special Temporary Jobs scheme (*CST*) and the Third Work Circuit (*TCT*) - cfr. BIR Belgium iii.13 and v.1), were not too well adapted to the current unemployment situation in the Walloon Region. Wallonia has 154,398 unemployed persons, of which 75,700 are long-term unemployed. *PRIME* aims to help these 75,700 LTUs to find a stable employment.

Definitions and field of application

The *PRIME* scheme concerns the non-trading sector, i.e. the sector of activities which are of public interest, are non-profit and meet community needs which would not otherwise have been met. The jobs in question can only be filled by job-seekers who, on the day of their being presented by *FOREM's* placement service (the Community and Regional Vocational Training

and Employment Service), meet one of the conditions under 1 and 2 below:

1. persons must be:
 - fully unemployed in receipt of full unemployment benefit or waiting allowance pay for all days of the week;
 - fully unemployed and have agreed voluntarily not to draw unemployment benefits;
 - unemployed and have accepted part-time employment to avoid unemployment or are unemployed after having accepted part-time employment voluntarily;
 - unemployed and in receipt of unemployment payments on a provisional basis;
 - unemployed and working in a sheltered workshop;
 - beneficiaries of the minimum subsistence benefit;
 - workers on a *TCT* scheme under contract to the employer concerned.
2. persons who:
 - have been beneficiaries of the minimum subsistence benefit for an uninterrupted period of six months preceding the day of their presentation;
 - are or have been in one or more situations as described under 1. for an uninterrupted period of at least one year during the preceding two years.

These job-seekers can only carry out activities for the non-trading sector. Employers who can benefit from the *PRIME* scheme are non-profit

associations and institutions of public interest (with the exception of those where public authorities preponderate either in their establishment or their management), as well as de facto associations which have no profit motive.

Organization and functioning

1. Financial support of the Region

Participation in the *PRIME* scheme is paid for, within the budgetary limits, by the Region, which covers employee's remuneration and social contributions, for a period of either one to three years (renewable after evaluation), or one to twelve months.

In order to get the Region's financial support, applications must meet the following conditions:

- a. be submitted by employers who:
 - prove their capacity to pay the share as foreseen in article 6 or 17 or according to article 7 of the Decree of 31.5.90 (see below);
 - have no debt due for payment to *FOREM*, the Region or the Commission of the European Communities within the scope of programmes approved by the Region;
 - have the necessary authorizations, material and premises for properly carrying out the activities;
 - have not reduced their average number of employees during the three years preceding the application and who are committed not to undertake such reductions during the period of the programme;
 - did not conclude, as non-profit associations or institutions of public interest, agreements concerning activities the objective of which is incumbent on the public authority.
- b. be aimed at carrying out activities in the non-market sector;
- c. allow the hiring of available workers whose qualifications conform with the structure of regional unemployment;
- d. not have the effect of subsidizing employment which could benefit from another subsidy that evolved out of a law, decree or order.

The Region covers the employees' remuneration and social contributions after deduction of an employer's share. This participation varies according to the level of qualification of the unemployed person taken on (from 5% for primary education level to 20% for university level). An employer hiring a fully unemployed person who has been in receipt of benefits for an uninterrupted period of at least two years, is granted a reduction of his share for a maximum period of three years (from 0% to 10% according to the level of qualification). The Executive can

halve these rates for projects which it considers to contribute to a real return to employment in traditional types of work or satisfy unmet priority social needs.

Moreover, the Executive can grant a complete exemption from the employer's contribution for one level 1 or 2 job (i.e. jobs for which a university or higher secondary education diploma is required) for every five jobs assigned to the employer for autonomous projects which cannot benefit from other external funds and pertaining to activities aimed at raising literacy and guiding or supervising the disabled, persons who are socially isolated or those who have no means of support.

2. Procedure

The Executive will lay down the procedure for introducing, handling, and evaluating applications. The placement services of *FOREM* put forward the workers for employment under the *PRIME* scheme.

The workers are hired on a fixed-term or open-ended employment contract, full-time or part-time. They are paid according to the wage scale which applies to an officer of the Executive's service in the same or a similar function.

FOREM pays the wages of the workers employed under the *PRIME* scheme, with the exception of possible additional remuneration granted by the employer. Each quarter it claims from the employer for his share for the previous quarter. The Executive will specify the services to be entrusted with handling applications and the requests for renewal, as well as the monitoring and supervision of the projects.

Perspective for CST and TCT

As regards the Walloon Region the legal and regulative provisions concerning the *CST* and *TCT* schemes have been abrogated. But an employer who employed workers under *TCT* legislation on 1.5.90 can obtain the application of the provisions of the Decree of 31.5.90. To that end he is required to submit an application which is handled according to a special procedure laid down by the Executive.

Denmark

New measures to assist young unemployed persons

On 1.6.90 the *Folketing* (the Danish Parliament) adopted four new acts as an element of the Government's "debureaucratization" and decentralization efforts. The four acts are:

1. The Act on employment measures initiated by municipal and county authorities

This new Act replaces the Act on employment opportunities for young persons (cfr. BIR Denmark iii.2). Under the new Act the responsibility for employment measures for unemployed persons who belong to special risk groups, including young persons, is delegated to local/regional authorities, i.e. the municipalities and the counties.

The employment measures may take the form of employment projects, wage subsidies or training measures. Under the old legislation it was a condition for participation in employment projects or for employment with a wage subsidy for the person concerned to have been unemployed for at least three months and registered with the Public Employment Service. This requirement has not been abolished.

In connection with employment projects the local authorities must first try to establish an employment project in the private sector. But if this is not possible, the project may be set up by the municipal or county authorities. It is the duty of the local authorities to ensure that subsidized employment and production at employment projects do not lead to unfair competition in relation to existing undertakings.

The municipal authorities may decide that the working time for participants in employment projects and persons employed with a wage subsidy will be less than full weekly working hours. The wages paid will in that case be a proportional share of the wages paid for similar work at full time. Supervisors, teachers and other staff on employment projects still work at the normal contractual conditions and wages applying to such work.

Financing initiatives under the new Act takes place through a special pool which is set up and to which municipal and county authorities as well as the state contribute. The amounts paid to the local/regional authorities will depend upon the scope of the activities they initiate. The local tripartite Labour Market Boards have a

coordinating role as they are to draw up a report once a year which includes an evaluation of the needs for employment and training activities in the local area. Special appropriations will also be earmarked for pilot projects initiated by the Labour Market Boards.

This Act will be fully operative as from 1.1.91. Some of the new provisions, however, came into operation on 1.7.90.

2. The Act to amend the Act on the Public Employment Service and the unemployment insurance system, etc.

The municipal authorities will in the future be entitled to undertake placement activities as they may now refer persons who are receiving social assistance to a job. However, this does not apply to unemployed persons who are members of an unemployment insurance fund.

The idea is that regional/local cooperation agreements should be concluded between the municipal authorities and the public employment service/labour market boards which define the groups in respect of which the municipal authorities take over the responsibility for trying to find them a job.

This Act came into operation on 1.7.90.

3. Act to amend the Act on vocational education

This new Act transfers the responsibility for placements in apprenticeships and training places, activities to provide such apprenticeships and training places and guidance of young persons from the Public Employment Service to the vocational education schools.

This Act came into operation on 1.7.90.

4. Act to amend the social assistance Act

This Act introduced new rules for young persons under the age of 20 years who are seeking assistance from the social security offices due to unemployment. Instead of passive support in the form of cash benefits, active support should be given to help them obtain employment. A duty is imposed upon the municipal authorities to offer these young persons a job. The job must be offered within two weeks after the application for support and, if possible, the young person should be offered several jobs to choose among.

The job may be in form of participation in an employment project or in a private undertaking under the Act described under 1. The job offer may be supplemented by offers for training. The municipal authorities also have a duty to offer guidance and introduction programmes of up to 6

weeks' duration for young persons who have a need for vocational guidance. This programme is offered before the job offer is given.

The job offered must be for at least 20 hours per week. Until they receive their first wages and during the guidance and introduction

programmes the young persons receive a special youth allowance. Subject to certain ceilings, the state reimburses 50% of the expenditure of the municipal authorities on the youth allowances and the operational expenditure in connection with the job offer scheme.

This new Act came into operation on 1.7.90.

Germany

Scheme for difficult-to-place unemployed increased and extended

In the recently fixed 1991 budget the Federal Cabinet has increased and extended to 1994 the Federal Government's programme "Measures for the particularly impaired long-term unemployed and other most difficult-to-place unemployed". The scheme has hitherto be known under the name of "250-million-programme of the Federal Government" (cfr. iM 27).

An additional DM 240 million will now be allocated to the Programme (an amount of DM 60 million in each of the budget years 1991 to 1994). This implies that the funds for the scheme will be practically doubled. Thus is the Federal Government complying with the wishes of the participants of the "Round table on social responsibility" which was held on 31.5.89.

The funds for the scheme are made available to private and non-profit organizations which offer jobs to and/or care socially for long-term unemployed and the most difficult-to-place unemployed persons. The following actions are foreseen:

- subsidies for investments to set up schemes specifically for the target groups;
- subsidies for up to two years towards covering the operating expenses of implementing the schemes;
- personnel costs' subsidies, also for up to two years, to guarantee the recruitment of specially qualified trainers and supervisory personnel.

From its very beginning on 1.7.89, there has been great demand for this scheme. After an operating period of one year, some 7,000 persons are already participating.

For the main part of the programme "Employment Aids for LTUs" 36,400 applications have already been made and 32,800 approved. Since July 1989 the Employment Service has used this scheme to promote the recruitment of long-term unemployed persons in enterprises and public administration. DM 1.5 billion have been earmarked for wage cost subsidies to employers who conclude open-ended employment contracts. The subsidy is up to 80% for the first six months and up to 60% for the following six months (cfr. iM 27 and 30).

Netherlands

Municipal Employment Initiatives for young people extended

The Temporary Scheme of Municipal Employment Initiatives for young people (*TV-GWJ*) grants financial support to municipalities which offer unemployed youths aged up to 21 years a temporary part-time job (cfr. iM 25, 27, 28). The scheme is being extended to the date when the proposed law on the Youth Employment Guarantee Scheme (*JWG*) will come into force, but no later than 1.1.91 (cfr. iM 29).

The municipalities can continue to submit new proposals for "work experience places". At present over 500 municipalities and some 8,000 youths make use of the *TV-GWJ* every year.

WORKING TIME

Belgium

Career break in case of childbirth

In order to better attune working life and family life, Royal Decree of 7.5.90 (M.B. 15.5.90) has brought new rules for career breaks (in the private sector) in the case of childbirth. From now on fathers and mothers can ask for a career break of 12 weeks to 6 months when their child is born.

Reminder of principles

A career break enables a worker to suspend her/his occupational activities completely or partially for a limited period with the right to return to the job at the end of the break. As the new regulation only concerns full-time suspension, only this form of career break is presented in this article.

The general conditions which have to be met to be eligible for a complete career break are (cfr. iM 15):

- the worker has to have been under contract to the same employer for at least 12 months;
- the worker who wishes to benefit from a career break has to make a request; she/he must obtain her/his employer's agreement (unless there is a collective agreement which provides employees with a right to a career break);
- the employer has to replace the employee for the time of the career break by one or two fully unemployed person(s) in receipt of

unemployment benefit for all days of the week;

- the duration of the career break must be at least six months but no longer than one year.

Royal Decree of 7.5.90

The new decree provides for the parents to depart from the rule concerning the minimum duration of the full-time career break. The period of six months seemed to be too long for those mothers who did not want to return to their job immediately after their maternity leave. This is the reason why they are being given the possibility of taking a break of a minimum of 12 weeks. This possibility has also been opened to fathers.

To qualify under this regulation the claimant must meet the following conditions:

- for female workers the 12 weeks' career break must immediately follow the recovery period after the birth. This period of 12 weeks therefore commences after the statutory, postnatal maternity leave (of eight weeks), or after this period extended by that part of the period of six weeks of antenatal maternity leave which has not been taken;
- for male workers the career break must start at the latest on the first day following the period of eight weeks after the day of childbirth. The worker can only benefit from this regulation if his paternity has been established.

PLACEMENT

France

Improvement of help to job-search

Following the report to the government on the improvement of job-seekers' daily life (the "Du Foucault" Report), the Council of Ministers, in June 1989, drew up a specific programme for improving the material conditions for receiving job-seekers in local employment offices. The programme of three years provides for them to be able to use equipment and resources which enable them to raise the level of their information and facilitate their job-search. Job-seekers should thereby be able to draw on services in the

employment office which are adapted to their different situations and approaches.

The aim is to establish by 1992, properly managed reception facilities in each employment catchment area (*basins d'emploi*). These facilities will be composed of:

- a properly equipped self-service for information;
- documentation on local employment, enterprises and training bodies;
- a display of job offers;
- a telephone box which can be used free of

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- charge for calls to employers;
- a typewriter and a photocopier to produce or reproduce the documents necessary for job-searching (curriculum vitae, employment certificates, etc.);
- access to a minitel screen display for certain specialized services connected with employment and training.

Carrying out this programme constitutes a major thrust of the agreement, currently being drawn up, between the State and *ANPE*. This priority is indicated by *ANPE* being granted additional funds from 1990. Important changes as regards equipment, arrangements and lay-out will need to be carried out.

Conditions of implementation

ANPE intends to integrate these resources into an overall approach for servicing user. This approach is in integral part of its main development thrusts, in particular the quest for individualized services which are adapted to the needs of each user and the coordination of *ANPE*'s different services in one employment catchment area.

Taking local particularities into account, be they internal or external, responsibility for implementing the Programme has been given to the regional level. However, to ensure the coherence of the choices made and the harmonization of the solutions chosen, the central office has defined the general guidelines and principles for carrying out the programmes, which constitute the framework for the work of the local teams.

General guidelines

Improving the conditions for receiving clients implies not just providing them with physical facilities, but also developing more humanized contacts between *ANPE* and its users and enhanced effectiveness in reception procedures.

The aim in particular is to enable everyone entering a local agency:

- to meet directly an officer who is capable of answering questions or offering services;
- to consult reliable and updated information helping job-search (information not only on about employment, training, administrative procedures and regulations but also aimed at enabling the user to better understand and use *ANPE* services);
- to carry out, on her/his own and at no charge, the "material operations" connected with her/his own job-search;
- to learn the methods and techniques for job-search.

Beyond these services, which they can use on their own and without being required to turn to an employment officer, users must be able to carry out at once simple but, for them, important tasks without having to wait: administrative formalities, placement procedures, enrolments for training courses, making appointments, etc.

It is clear that improving the reception of job-seekers, in the broadest meaning as understood here, is heavily dependent on the development of the overall organization of the offices and the working conditions of the officers. Substantially enhancing the free access area will bring about new divisions of labour (between work at the front desk and in the back office) and changing balances (in performing different tasks, the breakdown of working time).

Receiving users, "enriched" as regards demands and contents, will no longer be the task of a single officer in a special position, but will from now on be a function shared by a team of persons capable of rendering the services described. This team could consist of a receptionist, an information officer, a placement officer, a vocational counsellor, a secretary, etc. Everything will depend on how the local office chooses to be organized. But the competence and behaviour available to the client should be the same everywhere: a team which welcomes her/him, asks questions, identifies and evaluates his/her needs, deals with her/his problems, proposes solutions and actions, refers her/him if necessary to other services, etc.

Implementation

Transforming the premises, bringing in equipment, changing structures, introducing new methods of work organization, changing competence and behaviour: the different implementation strategies must be aimed at developing all these parameters simultaneously.

558 offices should be converted by 1992. Inserting these service areas into the network will be designed and carried out in different ways depending on whether it concerns:

- completing the equipment of the units already equipped with an information self-service;
- converting and equipping the space available in certain units;
- creating common premises for several units in the same densely populated employment catchment area, possibly attached to one of these units;
- extending or rehousing certain units in order to create necessary space.

Project groups have been set up in every region which are now preparing regional programmes.

PLACEMENT

These programmes, a part of regional policy, are being established on a multi-annual basis. They will be sent to the central level for consolidation and validation after arbitration between the different regions.

A catalogue of material and equipment is being constituted. In certain cases the regions will have a right to draw on a national market. In other cases they can call on local suppliers, provided they conform with the specifications submitted to them. Through these material elements, with standardized forms and colours, users should

find common markers in all units.

But the proper functioning of the information and job-search support areas, presupposes above all genuine animation, which imbues the services delivered with quality. The commitment of the different staff members is therefore fundamental. Drawing up and implementing solutions will be carried out with full staff participation, involving the officers concerned in defining the operations which will specifically affect their unit or their group of units.

Portugal

New perspectives concerning placement

Career guidance and orientation

In 1989 three new programmes were brought in as part of the approach to revamp employment offices' activities in the field of careers guidance and orientation and, in particular, adapting them to the current problems concerning employment. Initially developed for the regional delegation of Lisboa e Val de Tejo, the programmes concern:

- Job search techniques (*Técnicas de Procura de Emprego*);
- Joint guidance sessions (*Sessões Colectivas de Orientação*);
- Joint orientation sessions (*Sessões Informação Colectiva*).

The programmes are implicitly innovative, in the sense that they are broadening the working area of careers guidance. Up till now the main focus was on individual cases, whereas now collective activities can be developed, with reference to the common characteristics of homogeneous groups consisting of persons with similar employment problems.

This new approach enables a broader public to be reached by the activities of the employment offices in the field of careers guidance, and thus the employment offices' mission of helping people to find employment to be fully achieved.

At the same time the new programmes are an attempt to break with the traditional view on careers guidance as a service merely reserved for young persons. This alteration was necessary because the major unemployment problems are adult unemployed and, in particular, long-term unemployment.

Information desks

To further the dissemination of information

concerning the activities and assistance of the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (*IEFP*) information desks (*balcões*) have been established. This service is provided in areas where access to employment and vocational training services is difficult.

The information desks are being run by non-profit associations, private institutions of social services, agricultural credit cooperatives, local authorities and other public bodies which mainly deal with small and medium sized enterprises and the agricultural sector.

Netherlands

Tripartite employment body

The First Chamber (Upper House) adopted the New Employment Act (*Arbeidsvoorzieningswet*) on 26.6.90 (cfr. iM 23 and 26). As a result, the Directorate-General for Manpower will officially become a public body on 1.1.91: the Employment Service (*Arbeidsvoorzieningsorganisatie*).

This body will be headed by the Central Employment Promotion Board (*CBA*) in which the public authorities, employers' organizations and trade unions are represented. Regional Employment Boards (*RBA*) will be set up following the same model in each of the 28 regions.

Anticipating the formal procedures, in which the Labour Foundation (*Stichting van de Arbeid*) will also be consulted, the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment has requested the chairman of the Central Assistance and Advisory Committee (*CCBA*) to take the necessary steps to form "boards in formation", as of 1.7.90. The Minister attaches great importance to the central and regional boards dealing with the administrative preparations for tripartization on 1.1.91 and with the tripartite approach to the design of employment policy.

MISCELLANEOUS

Italy

Committee on equal opportunities of men and women

On 22.6.90 the Italian Parliament passed Law n° 164 setting up under the prime minister's office the National Committee for Equality and Equal Opportunities between men and women. The Committee's task is to foster equality between the sexes by removing all direct or indirect discrimination of women in accordance with Art. 3 of the Constitution.

The Committee will:

- study and work out changes necessary to adapt legislation so as to bring about equality between the sexes;
- make proposals for coordinating social, economic and cultural policy;
- promote research into the state of implementation of equality and, subsequently, outline to the prime minister possible legislative initiatives which can be taken for implementing the government programme of equality.

The Committee will foster, ensure and press for the active participation of women in political, social and economic activities.

Furthermore, the committee will be represented in the advisory body for equality of opportunity of the Commission of the European Communities. The competence of the Committee does not extend to the matter of equality of sexes as regards access to work and at work.

The Committee will operate for three years. It consists of 29 women appointed by order of the prime minister. The members are chosen from among women's organizations (7), political parties (11), trade unions (3) and employers' organizations (4). Another four members are chosen from among those who have distinguished themselves in the world of science, letters or in society. In addition to its regular members, the Committee will be able to draw on experts and consultants for carrying out special activities; these will be appointed by the prime minister. The Committee must be set up within 90 days of the law coming into effect.

Corporate employment policies for the Single European Market

As part of the Department of Employment's programme of "manpower commentaries", the Institute of Manpower Studies has published a study of the various trans-European employment strategies used by large companies (IMS Manpower Report no. 179).

The aim of the study was to assess the problems and opportunities facing existing international employers in Europe, so that the much larger, and more disparate, group of firms which will start operating across national borders after 1992 would be able to avoid costly mistakes.

The main conclusion of the study was that, though the single market project was likely to lead to a great expansion of inter-European trade, it was not likely to lead to rapid convergence between different national industrial relations traditions. The vast majority of workers would

continue to work in one country, and wages and conditions of work were expected to continue to vary substantially between countries. None of the companies surveyed found this diversity a problem.

However, for a small group of senior managers international mobility is already an accepted part of the job. Their employment market is becoming progressively more internationalized with common pay systems and conditions of employment across countries. This process will be given a further boost by "1992". Middle managers and, to a lesser degree, new graduates are also increasingly likely to spend some time abroad in order to widen their experience.

In general, administrative barriers to mobility within Europe are now low. The barriers that do remain are primarily social ones (language problems, the effect of moving on a spouse's career, etc.) and these will continue to restrict international mobility to small groups of workers.

Rough currency conversion rates

One European Currency Unit (ECU) was roughly equivalent to the following amounts of national currencies in September 1990:

Belgium	BFR	42.6
Denmark	DKR	7.88
Germany	DM	2.07
Greece	DRA	203
Spain	PTA	127
France	FF	6.93
Ireland	IRL	0.77
Italy	LIT	1,515
Luxembourg	LFR	42.6
Netherlands	HFL	2.33
Portugal	ESC	182
United Kingdom	UKL	0.70

BASIC INFORMATION REPORTS

Comparable information on labour market operations and policies from the EC-Member States is published in Basic Information Reports. The following country reports are still available in English, French and/or German at the price of ECU 6 each, or ECU 50 for the set of 12.

Country	Published in	Languages
Belgium	1989	F
Denmark	1988	E / F
Germany	1988	E / G
Greece	1986	E
Spain	1988	E / F / G
France	1987	E / F
Ireland	1988	E
Italy	1988	E / F
Luxembourg	1986	E
Netherlands	1987	E / F / G
Portugal	1987	E / F / G
U.K.	1988	E / F

MISEP

InforMISEP is the quarterly newsletter of the Mutual Information System on Employment Policies (MISEP). MISEP was created to meet the need for an exchange of information on employment policies within the European Community. InforMISEP (iM) presents those measures, policies and actions adopted by the Member States which are aimed at promoting and improving employment within the European Community. It is compiled on the basis of information provided by national correspondents. The information serves to update the Basic Information Reports (BIRs).

InforMISEP is published in English, French and German.

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Italy	Teodosio Zeuli Ministero del Lavoro e della Previdenza Sociale
Luxembourg	Jean Hoffmann Administration de l'Emploi
Netherlands	Chris Smolders Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid
Portugal	Victor Viegas Ministério do Emprego e da Segurança Social
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The Commission is the primary provider of the Mutual Information System on
 Employment Vacancies (MISE) which was created in 1984 for the use of an
 exchange of information on employment vacancies within the European Community.
 MISE is a computerized system which provides information on vacancies in the
 Member States which are aimed at promoting and improving employment within
 the European Community. It is composed of the data of information provided by
 national correspondents. The information is updated on a regular basis.
 MISE is published in English, French and German.

Correspondents

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Germany	Directorate for Labour Market
Greece	Directorate for Labour Market
Ireland	Directorate for Labour Market
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United Kingdom	Directorate for Labour Market
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Spain	Directorate for Labour Market
Sweden	Directorate for Labour Market
Finland	Directorate for Labour Market
Austria	Directorate for Labour Market
Switzerland	Directorate for Labour Market
Poland	Directorate for Labour Market
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Slovakia	Directorate for Labour Market
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