



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION**  
**TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

**ON THE**  
**ESTABLISHMENT OF A EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR INDUSTRIAL**  
**RELATIONS**  
**(ECIR)**



**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION ON THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF A EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR INDUSTRIAL  
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**I. INTRODUCTION**

- 1 In its Communication on the medium-term social action programme, the Commission undertook to present a communication to support the operation of the European Centre for Industrial Relations recently established at the initiative of the social partners at European level.
  
- 2 On this subject it should be remembered that, at the beginning of 1994, the European Secretariats of three European interprofessional organisations participating in the European social dialogue, the UNICE, CEEP and ETUC, informed the Commission within the context of the social dialogue of their wish to establish, with the support of the Commission and in cooperation with the European University Institute, a "European Centre for Industrial Relations", with the aim of building on the richness and diversity of national situations and business practices to encourage the emergence of a European social relations culture by working to raise awareness among, and educate, employers' and trade union representatives appointed by the European social partners.

In application of Article 118b of the Treaty and in accordance with Article 3.1 of the Agreement on social policy, under which the Commission is responsible for any suitable measures to facilitate dialogue between the social partners, ensuring balanced support for both sides and taking account of the various measures by which the Commission proposes to facilitate this dialogue, as set out in its Communication concerning the application of the Agreement on social policy<sup>1</sup>, the competent departments of the Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial

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<sup>1</sup> COM(93) 600 final of 14 December 1993



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Article 118b of the Treaty and Article 3 of the Agreement on social policy have shown the need for awareness-raising and education within each member organisation of the UNICE, CEEP and ETUC in order to pass on the results of the social dialogue and disseminate a true European social relations culture based on a mutual understanding of national realities and a common understanding of Community realities.

With this in mind, the Commission proposes to maintain, continue and reinforce as much as possible its support, particularly financial support, for training the main social partners for the European social dialogue.

- 8 The introduction of European-level training for employers' and trade union representatives appointed by their respective organisations meets this need. The aim of this joint initiative by the social partners is to make trade union and employers' representatives more aware of the problems associated with the social dialogue at national and European levels. Significant efforts must still be made in terms of explanations and training to reinforce mutual understanding of the realities of Member States and the European social dialogue.
- What is required, in order for an understanding of a European dimension to industrial relations to emerge, is to combine at high level input from university teachers and social relations practitioners.

It should be pointed out, however, that this joint training, due to its innovative and experimental nature, is in no way intended to be a substitute for management training programmes already organised by the UNICE and CEEP on the one hand and the ETUC and its sector-based organisations on the other, aimed at ensuring improved qualifications and more dynamic participation within the various bodies established to conduct a dialogue at Community level.

A partnership with the *European University Institute in Florence* could be based on the establishing of a Chair at this Institute.

- 9 Training must take into account the historical development of social relations and provide specific prospects for their development, for the social dialogue and for the different social cultures both at national and European levels. This training must enable the employers' and workers' representatives appointed by their organisations to use tailor-made methods to acquire appropriate knowledge and the ability to use analytical instruments in order to:
- acquire a general awareness of the culture underlying the construction of the European Union and of how its institutions operate;
  - assess and study in depth information relating to socio-economic scenarios in their various dimensions and in the context of the internationalisation of markets and production, economic and monetary integration and the prospects offered by the Treaty on European Union;

- [REDACTED]**
- identify, by comparing industrial relations models and structures in the European countries, the instruments, levels and content of collective bargaining and practices and the economic and social structure for encouraging the social dialogue, particularly in its Community dimension deriving from the implementation of the Treaty, the Social Protocol and the Agreement by 11 Member States on the role of the social partners based mainly on the Agreement of 31 October 1991;

10 The Centre will also make it possible for participants to exchange information and views on:

- industrial relations systems in the different Member States;
- forms of economic and social regulation and the respective role of the State and the social partners;
- the structure and operation of employers' and trade union organisations;
- Community policies and new instruments for economic and social regulation and intervention.

11 The aim is to bring together information in order to enrich the content of training. Research will be conducted at the Centre in liaison with the EUI by:

- those taking part in long courses;
- rapporteurs from conferences, meetings, seminars and long courses (specific or thematic) organised at the Centre.

Research will therefore be directly related to education and training activities at the Centre or elsewhere within the context of the social dialogue at national and European levels.

12 The EUI, having full scientific autonomy, will carry out the basic research necessary for enhancing the work of the Centre and for analysing trends in social relations at Member State and European Union levels without restricting the opportunity for the social partners to call upon other institutes or universities.

The European social partners also consider that it would be worthwhile establishing a permanent chair of industrial relations at the EUI and ask the Commission to take the necessary initiatives.

The incumbent would be an ex officio member of the Scientific Council.

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13 The Centre is aimed at three different target groups:

- employers' and trade union officials and representatives appointed by their organisations coming to gain more in-depth knowledge of each other and of certain aspects of the Europeanisation of their tasks within their national environment (eight-week courses);
- employers' and employees' representatives on committees and consultative bodies at European Union level (specific or thematic one-week courses);
- senior employers' and trade union officials appointed by their organisations coming to reinforce their knowledge of the European dimension, of other Member States and of economic and social relations (short courses and conferences).

14 Training takes the form of long and short courses. Long courses will comprise approximately 20 officials appointed by their respective employers' and trade union organisations in accordance with their responsibilities and professional experience.

The short courses will primarily comprise middle-ranking or senior officials appointed by their employers' and trade union organisations.

In addition to these, there are also plans for thematic and specific courses aimed at representatives of employers' and trade union organisations within committees and advisory bodies at European level.

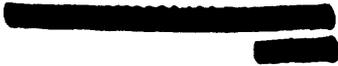
Finally, an annual conference will provide a link between the courses held during a year and for an exchange of views between the social partners, politicians, economists and intellectuals.

### III. STRUCTURE OF THE CENTRE

#### 15 MANAGEMENT BOARD

A streamlined structure appointed by the founder members from the three constitutive organisations.

It may co-opt further members by a unanimous decision of the founder members. The Management Board has already co-opted a member representing the EUI and is prepared to co-opt a member representing the Commission if the Commission expresses an interest.



**16 SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL**

This is to comprise 16 full members and 16 alternates, all academic representatives and senior practitioners appointed by the members of the Management Board, the FUI and the Commission. It has an advisory role.

**17 COMMITTEE OF HONOUR**

This is to comprise politicians, intellectuals and personalities from the world of business and from the trade union environment with a European and international reputation. This committee would lend the Institute considerable moral support.

**18 EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT**

This is to comprise a Director and the necessary staff.  
The Executive Secretariat would be responsible, under the Management Board, for the staffing, administration and management of the Centre.

**IV CONCLUSIONS**

- 19 Taking into account all the considerations set out above, the Commission informs the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament of its interest in the rapid establishment of the European Centre for Industrial Relations and of its intention to finance the Centre's work.  
Relations between the Commission and the ECIR will be the subject of an agreement.



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