



*European Communities
Commission
Press Release*

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NEW PRIORITIES FOR AID IN RE-TRAINING WORKERS

Motor vehicle, Building, Textile and Chemical Industries

The Commission has approved and sent to the Council of Ministers for decision a new kind of intervention by the Social Fund help Member States tackle current employment difficulties.

In particular the scheme is aimed at helping to retrain and re-settle workers in the motor vehicle, building, textile and certain sectors of the chemical industries, as well as some associated or sub-contracted activities.

It is also proposed to give special help in two sectors traditionally most vulnerable in times of crisis or recession - young persons under 25 and women who are unemployed or seeking employment.

The proposed new intervention would be made under Article 4 of the Social Fund which says that the Fund can take action when the employment situation "calls for specific joint action to improve the balance between the supply and demand for manpower within the Community".

The draft Council decision which the Commission proposes would allow the Social Fund to grant assistance for certain schemes to help people seeking stable employment to acquire new skills and to change their place of employment if that were necessary.

Re-Training Schemes

The re-training schemes which would benefit from aid from the Social Fund (the Social Fund normally contributes 50 per cent of the cost of government retraining) would be those which encouraged:

1. The development of activities linked to structural changes in the energy sector.
2. The promotion of other priority Community needs.

3. The necessary changes in sectors or branches with structural problems seriously affecting employment. (Unless unemployment trends and sectoral employment prospects are suddenly reversed, the Commission expects that these sectors and branches will be found among those often referred to in recent consultations held at Community level, namely, motor vehicle, building, textile and certain sectors of the chemical industries as well as certain associated or sub-contracted activities).

Special Regions and Categories

It is also proposed that within the limits set out above, priority should be given to operations carried out in regions most affected by unemployment and benefitting persons in the sectors where the unemployment has risen sharply, for instance, young persons under 25 and women who are unemployed or seeking employment. These last two categories are traditionally the most vulnerable in times of crisis or recession. This priority corresponds to the desire expressed at the "Summit" meeting of Heads of Government held in Paris in December 1974 that the Council would at the appropriate time study the possibility of increasing the resources of the Social Fund while taking account of "the problems of the regions and categories of workers most affected by employment difficulties".

It should be emphasised that this new opening up of Article 4 will not affect the intervention methods already used by the Social Fund under Article 5 to support re-training operations in regions in difficulty, particularly those with an under-developed industrial structure. Likewise the Social Fund already has the power under Article 4 to help in the retraining of migrant workers, those in textiles and leaving textiles, and those leaving agriculture.