

PRESS RELEASE

11794/82 (Presse 188)

811th meeting of the Council  
- Labour and Social Affairs -  
Brussels, 10 December 1982

President: Mrs Grethe FENDER MØLLER,  
Minister for Labour  
of the Kingdom of Denmark



The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Firmin AERTS  
State Secretary for  
Public Health and the Environment

Denmark:

Mrs Grethe FENGER MØLLER  
Minister for Labour

Germany:

Mr Norbert BLUM  
Federal Minister for Labour and  
Social Affairs

Greece:

Mr Evangelos YANNOPOULOS  
Minister for Labour

France:

Mr Jean AUROUX  
Minister responsible for Social  
Affairs, with responsibility for  
Labour

Ireland:

Mr Gene FITZGERALD  
Minister of Labour and  
Minister of the Public Service

Italy:

Mr Vincenzo SCOTTI  
Minister for Labour

Luxembourg:

Mr Jacques SANTER  
Minister for Labour and  
Social Security

Netherlands:

Mr J. de KONING  
State Secretary  
Ministry of Social Affairs

United Kingdom:

Mr Norman TEBBIT  
Secretary of State for Employment

Commission:

Mr Ivor RICHARD - Member

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

The Council heard an introductory statement by its President on the progress of proceedings for the review of the European Social Fund, a dossier which is before the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee for an Opinion.

The Council held an exchange of views on this subject, in particular on ways of implementing the conclusions of the European Council meeting in Copenhagen on 3 and 4 December 1982 concerning measures on behalf of young people. The Council affirmed that it intended to do its utmost to ensure that tangible progress was achieved on the reform of the European Social Fund and on the communications which the Commission had submitted or would soon be submitting to it on vocational training policies and on measures to combat youth unemployment. The Council emphasized that it was giving top priority to these measures.

Pending the implementation of the new provisions applicable to the Fund, the Council decided to extend the Decisions concerning aid from the Fund for young people, workers in the textile and clothing industries, migrant workers and women.

The Council also took note of the Commission report on the activities of the European Social Fund in the financial year 1981 and of the various comments made on this report.

NEW COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR THE PERIOD 1983-1987 IN NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The Council held a policy debate on a Commission communication concerning new Community initiatives for the period 1983-1987 in new information technologies and vocational training and on a draft Resolution on this subject.

The Council declared itself favourably disposed towards the draft resolution and asked the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue discussing it, so that the Council could adopt it at a future meeting after learning the Opinions of the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee.

PROTECTION OF WORKERS EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS

The Council continued its discussions on a proposal for a Directive on the protection of workers exposed to asbestos. It first noted the progress made on numerous aspects of the proposal for a Directive since the last Council meeting on 27 May 1982.

Discussions then centred on the two key problems raised by the proposal, namely:

- action levels, i.e. exposure values which, if exceeded, trigger application of the Directive in its entirety;
- limit values for the concentration of asbestos in the air which may not be exceeded under any circumstances when workers are exposed to asbestos at their place of work.

At the close of its discussions, the Council noted that broad measures of agreement had been reached on the proposal for a Directive. It asked the Permanent Representatives to continue its work so that final agreement could be reached at a forthcoming Council meeting.

VOLUNTARY PART-TIME WORK AND TEMPORARY WORK

The Council held a policy debate on two proposals for Directives on voluntary part-time work and on temporary work. It recalled that these proposals were a follow-up to the Council Resolution of 18 December 1979 (see Press Release 11782/79 (Presse 171)) on the adaptation of working time and to the proceedings of the Standing Committee on Employment in 1980 and 1981.

Winding up its debate, the Council agreed to instruct the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue its work in the light of the guidelines which had been evolved and of the new elements to be submitted (amended Commission proposal for a Directive on part-time work and Opinions of the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee on the Directive concerning temporary work).

PRINCIPLES OF A COMMUNITY POLICY ON RETIREMENT AGE

Following the agreement reached at its meeting on 27 May 1982, the Council adopted in the official languages of the Communities a Recommendation on the principles of a Community policy on retirement age. The operative part of the Recommendation is annexed hereto.

MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

Other social questions

Taking note of the Commission report on the programme to combat poverty and of delegations' comments on that report, the Council adopted a set of conclusions stating in particular that more specific Community action is necessary and indicated some guidelines which might shape such action and serve as a basis for the proposals which the Commission is to submit on this subject.

In addition, the Council, having received the European Parliament's Opinion, confirmed its approval of the Commission communication on medium-term social expenditure projections and the financing of such expenditure (see Press Release 7307/82 (Presse 69) of 27 May 1982).

Lastly, the Council took note of:

- the second Commission report to the Council on the action programme of the European Communities on health and safety at work;
- the sixth progress report by the Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at work (1981);
- the Commission report to the Council on the exchange programme for young workers and of the comments made on the subject by the delegations of the Member States and of the Community.

Textiles

The Council adopted in the official languages of the Communities the Regulation on the conclusion of the Additional Protocol to the Agreement between the European Economic Community and Malaysia on trade in textile products consequent on the accession of the Hellenic Republic to the Community.

The Council also decided to sign, subject to conclusion, the Additional Protocol to the Agreement between the European Economic Community and Argentina on trade in textile products consequent on the accession of the Hellenic Republic to the Community.

Relations with Mediterranean countries

The Council adopted in the official languages of the Communities the Regulations on the conclusion of the Agreements in the form of Exchanges of Letters between the EEC and Israel, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia respectively concerning fruit salads and between the EEC and Algeria concerning tomato concentrates (extension of current arrangements).

The Council also adopted in the official languages of the Communities the Regulations on the conclusion and application of the Agreements in the form of Exchanges of Letters between the EEC of the one part and Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Turkey of the other concerning untreated olive oil (extension of the current arrangements).



Lastly, the Council adopted in the official languages of the Communities the Regulations:

- on the total or partial suspension of Common Customs Tariff duties on certain products falling within Chapters 1 to 24 of the Common Customs Tariff and originating in Malta (1983);
- opening, allocating and providing for the administration of Community tariff quotas for certain textile products falling within heading Nos 55.05 and 55.09 and subheading ex 58.01 A of the Common Customs Tariff originating in Turkey (1983);
- on the total or partial suspension of Common Customs Tariff duties on certain agricultural products originating in Turkey (1983);
- opening, allocating and providing for the administration of a Community tariff quota for sweet peppers falling within subheading 07.01 S of the Common Customs Tariff and originating in Cyprus (1983).

Commercial policy

The Council adopted in the official languages of the Communities:

- the Decision authorizing extension or tacit renewal of certain trade agreements concluded between the Member States and third countries;
- the Regulation maintaining the Danish export regime for aluminium waste and scrap;
- the Decision on the rules applicable, in the fields of export guarantees and finance for export, to certain subcontracts with parties in other Member States of the Communities or in non-member countries.

### Energy

The Council adopted in the official languages of the Communities the Directive amending Directive 78/170/EEC on the performance of heat generators for space heating and the production of hot water in new or existing non-industrial buildings and on the insulation of heat and domestic hot-water distribution in new non-industrial buildings.

### Agriculture

The Council adopted in the official languages of the Communities the Regulation opening a Community tariff quota for 29,800 tonnes of high-quality fresh, chilled or frozen beef and veal for 1983.

### Appointments

On a proposal from the Irish Government, the Council appointed, Mr Brendan O'RIORDAN, Principal Officer, Department of Labour, as a full member of the Advisory Committee on Freedom of Movement for Workers to replace Mr C. O'FEINNEADHA, who has resigned, for the remainder of the latter's term of office, which runs until 20 September 1984.

On a proposal from the Commission, the Council also appointed, Mr A. WOLTMEIJER, Christelijke Nationaal Vakverbond, as an alternate member of the Administrative Board of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions to replace Mr J.C. LOOISE, who has resigned, for the remainder of the latter's term of office, which runs until 16 March 1983.

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THE COUNCIL

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES:

to acknowledge flexible retirement, i.e. freedom for employed persons within the meaning of their domestic legislation to choose under the conditions prescribed by such legislation when they will take their retirement pension, as one of the aims of their social policy.

RECOMMENDS THE MEMBER STATES:

(A) to be guided by the following principles in order to achieve the progressive introduction of flexible retirement, within the framework of different retirement pension systems and taking particular account of the freedom of collective bargaining:

1. To ensure that retirement is voluntary, the rules governing the age from which a retirement pension may normally be drawn should be made flexible. To this end:
  - as from a specified age, and if necessary within an age limit, employed persons should be free to choose the age from which they could take their retirement pensions;
  - failing that, and provided that the system stipulates a specific age for the granting of a pension, employed persons should have the right, during a specified period, to apply for a pension in advance of the prescribed age or to defer it beyond that age. Reductions to pensions taken early should not be such as to make it pointless to exercise this right;
  - furthermore, flexibility as regards the age of entitlement to a retirement pension can also be achieved by a system under which entitlement to a retirement pension arises after a given number of years of occupational activity or membership of an insurance scheme.

2. The measures referred to in point 1 should not stand in the way of existing or future opportunities for employed persons to obtain a gradual reduction in their working hours during the years immediately preceding their retirement.

3. Financial incentives to promote the early departure of elderly workers which have been introduced for a limited period only and because of exceptional economic circumstances may not, nonetheless, be regarded as forming part of a flexible retirement system.

The Member States shall also determine what schemes cannot be regarded as forming part of a flexible retirement system.

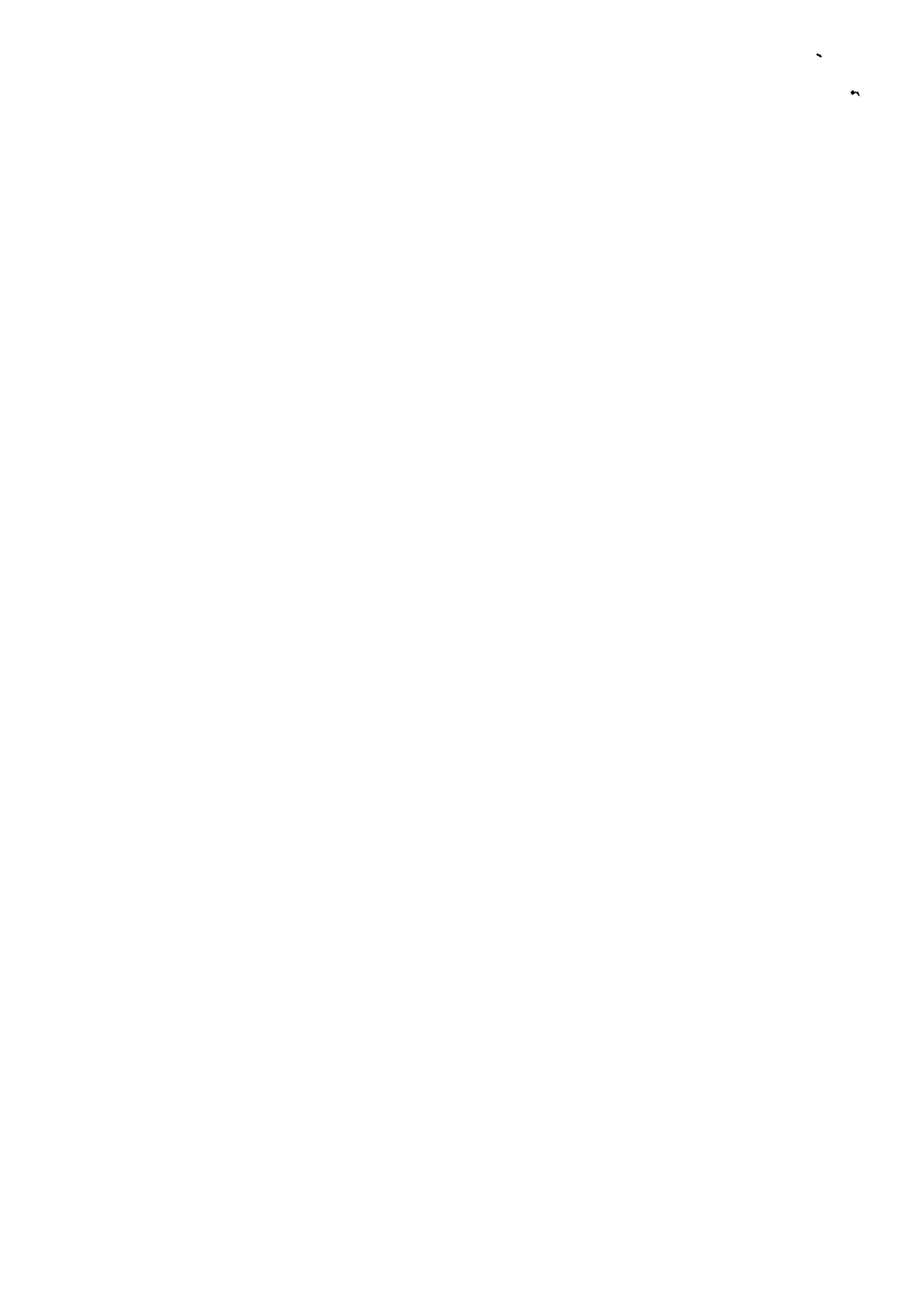
4. Employed workers receiving a retirement pension cannot be excluded from any form of paid employment.

5. Retirement preparation programmes should be started during the years preceding the end of working life with the participation of organizations representing employers and employed persons and of other interested bodies.

(B) to undertake, as a first stage, an examination of their retirement pension systems in the light of these principles over the next two years and to examine also the feasibility of generalizing opportunities for phased retirement with a view to easing the passage from full-time employment to retirement.

Member States shall communicate the results of these examinations to the Commission within two and a half years following the adoption of this Recommendation, to enable it to draw up a report for submission to the Council on the progress made and the obstacles encountered in applying flexible retirement and phased retirement, and if necessary to propose any other measures needed to achieve common objectives and to make the transition from full-time employment to retirement easier for employed persons.

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Bruxelles, le 9 decembre 1982  
Note Bio(82) 525 aux Bureaux Nationaux  
cc: aux Membres du Groupe du Porte-Parole

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Preparation du Conseil Affaires Sociales du 10 decembre  
(J. Robinson)  
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Le Conseil des Ministres des Affaires Sociales tiendra demain au Charlemagne sa reunion habituelle du deuxieme semestre de l'annee. Elle commencera a 10.00 h. sous la presidence du Ministre danois des Affaires Sociales, Mme. Fenger-Moller et avec la participation du Commissaire Ivor Richard. Il y aura une serie de points a l'ordre du jour, a savoir :

1. Le reexamen du Fonds Social  
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Ce sera demain la premiere occasion que cette question se trouve a l'ordre du jour du Conseil Social, depuis que la Commission a finalise ses propositions en la matiere - au mois d'octobre. On s'attend donc principalement a une declaration de la presidence a ce sujet, la decision elle-meme du Conseil sur les nouvelles regles du Fonds devant intervenir pendant la prochaine presidence. Toujours sur la question du Fonds Social, le Conseil aura a prendre une simple decision de gestion permettant l'application continue du Fonds a 3 categories de beneficiaires: les migrants, les femmes et les jeunes.

2. Un projet de resolution du Conseil sur les nouvelles technologies de l'information, y compris les nouvelles initiatives communautaires a prendre pour la periode 1983-1987. Le but de cette action, que la Commission avait proposee en mai dernier, est d'adapter et de renforcer les politiques des Etats membres en matiere de formation professionnelle pour tenir compte de l'impact des nouvelles technologies.

3. Amiante: le Conseil aura a considerer la proposition de directive pour la protection des travailleurs contre l'amiante. Une premiere directive dans cette serie - la directive plomb - a deja ete adoptee au mois de mai. Il n'est pas certain que les discussions sur l'amiante - dossier d'une complexite technique soient suffisamment mures pour aboutir demain.

4. L'aménagement du temps de travail :
  - proposition sur travail volontaire a temps partiel : instrument juridique
  - proposition de travail temporaire : meme genre de question mais moins mure (PE encore a donner son avis)
5. Retraite flexible : adoption definitive
6. Pauvrete : suites au premier programme de lutte contre la pauvrete.  
Amities  
M. Santarelli COMEUR // // // //



Bruxelles, le 10 decembre 1982  
Note Bio(82) 525 (suite 1 et fin) aux Bureaux Nationaux  
cc. aux Membres du Groupe du Porte Parole

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Conseil Affaires Sociales du 10 decembre (J.Robinson)  
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Le Conseil des Affaires Sociales, reuni a Bruxelles  
aujourd'hui sous la presidence de Mme. Fenger-Moller (Ministre  
danois des affaires sociales) et avec la participation du  
Commissaire Ivor Richard, a debute vers 10h 15 pour terminer ses  
travaux a 13h 30. Les points traites etaient les suivants :

#### 1. Fonds Social

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Le Conseil a entendu une declaration de la presidence sur  
l'etat des travaux en ce qui concerne le reexamen du Fonds.  
Celui-ci a ete l'objet de propositions de la Commission (faites  
au mois d'octobre - COM(82)485 final). Suite en particulier aux  
interventions du Ministre francais Anroux - qui a invoque le  
texte recent Conseil Europeen, notamment "priorite" a la  
formation des jeunes) - et de M. Richard, qui lui aussi a  
insiste sur l'urgence, le Conseil etait unanime pour qu'une  
decision sur le reexamen soit prise avant la fin de la prochaine  
presidence (allemande).

Le Conseil a aussi adopte une decision de gestion,  
permettant au Fonds Social de continuer a aider quatre  
categories de beneficiaires : migrants, jeunes, femmes et  
travailleurs dans le secteur textile. Il a par la suite pris  
acte du dixieme rapport d'activite du Fonds Social Europeen  
(COM(82)420).

#### 2. Nouvelles technologies de l'information et formation professionnelle

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Le Conseil a approuve avec certaines modifications le projet  
de resolution a cet egard qui lui a ete soumis par la Commission  
au mois de juin (resolution annexee au COM(82) 296 final). Le  
but de cette resolution - et le programme de projet de  
demonstration 1983-1987 auquel elle est liee - est d'adapter et  
de renforcer les politiques des Etats membres en matiere de  
formation professionnelle pour tenir compte de l'impact des  
nouvelles technologies.

### 3. L'amiante

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Le Conseil a eu un tour de table sur le projet de directive qui lui a été présenté par la Commission il y a deux ans et dont le but est de protéger les travailleurs contre les risques de l'amiante. En dépit de la quasi-unanimité - toutes les délégations sauf la RFA semblaient prêtes à adopter la directive - la question a été de nouveau renvoyée au Coreper. Et ceci malgré une intervention très musclée de la part de M. Richard qui a invité la délégation allemande à réévaluer son attitude à l'égard de l'évidence scientifique. Celle-ci, a-t-il souligné, soutenait pleinement les propositions de la Commission et l'avis quasi-unanime du Conseil.

### 4. L'aménagement du temps de travail

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Le Conseil a adopté le texte final de la "recommandation relative aux principes de l'âge de retraite". En ce qui concerne la proposition de directive sur le travail volontaire à temps partiel, le Conseil reste divisé entre partisans d'une directive (plusieurs délégations y compris celle de la Commission) et ceux qui cherchent un instrument juridique plus simple. Sur la gestion du projet de directive concernant le travail temporaire il reste des divergences très marquées quant au contenu et à la forme de l'instrument en discussion. M. Richard a souligné que la Commission tenait fermement à ses propositions.

### 5. Divers

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Sous "divers", M. Richard a fait diffuser "le memorandum sur la réduction et la reorganisation du temps de travail", document que la Commission a approuvé le 8 décembre (COM(82)809) - voir aussi note P-77. Il a invoqué à cet égard les conclusions et du Conseil Jumbo et du Conseil Européen de Copenhague, et a indiqué l'intention de la Commission de présenter au Conseil les propositions spécifiques en la matière avant la fin de la présidence allemande.

6. A signaler, finalement, que parmi les points "A" - qui tous ont été adoptés - figurait celui concernant les suites à donner au programme CEE de lutte contre la pauvreté. La Commission est invitée par le Conseil de présenter ses propositions pour un deuxième programme.

Amitiés  
M. Santarelli Conseur