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PRESS RELEASE

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

THE MOVEMENT OF LABOR IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY - 1970

WASHINGTON, D.C., November 18 -- Common Market law is designed to encourage the free movement of workers within the six member countries. Yet today, migrant workers from third countries fill more jobs in the Common Market than migrant workers from Community nations.

Although a total of 1.4 million persons (less than 2 per cent of the total working population) were unemployed in Community countries, only 23,714 Common Market workers sought employment outside their own country in 1970. When steady economic activity that year spurred the number of job openings in the Community to a record 1 million, Community employers resorted to bringing in 741,042 third country workers.

Workers from Community countries accounted for only 15.8 per cent of migrant labor in the Community in 1970, compared to 20 per cent in 1969.

In a 1970 report to the Council of Ministers, the Commission of the European Communities tried to explain the gradual increase of non-Community workers working in the Community. The Commission stated that positions offered in the Community and positions desired by Community workers were often incompatible. It also cited the preference of Italian workers to work only in certain Common Market countries and Switzerland as another factor inhibiting intra-Community movement of labor.

The trend toward more non-Community labor in the Community has continued during the past year. The number of Community migrant workers working in other member countries decreased from 24,780 in 1969 to 23,714 in 1970 (-4 per cent), while the number of non-Community workers increased from 692,101 in 1969 to 741,042 in 1970 (+7.1 per cent).

The greatest proportion (83 per cent) of migrant workers from Community countries were from Italy in 1970.

Non-member countries supplied 84.2 per cent of the total migrant

working force in the Community. Broken down by nationality, Yugoslavia provided the greatest proportion with 25 per cent of the total, followed by Turkey with 16 per cent and Portugal with 13 per cent. By comparison, Italians made up only 13 per cent of the total movement of labor in the Community.

More than 73 per cent of non-member migrant workers went to work in Germany and 20 per cent went to France.

Statistics are available only for the inflow of workers. Because of the lack of information on the outflow of labor, it is impossible to determine how much of the movement of labor is due to resettlement or workers returning home. It is known, however, that this type of mobility is quite substantial, possibly amounting to 50 per cent annually.

Although it may increase Community production costs, the inflow of non-Community migrant workers does have positive aspects. Upon their return, migrant workers make the skills learned during their stay in Community countries available to their native countries. Thus, the Community contributes to a trained labor force in countries facing the problems of industrial development.

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