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COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

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PRESS RELEASE

8773/89 (Presse 165)

1348th Council meeting

- SOCIAL AFFAIRS -

Brussels, 29 September 1989

President: Mr Claude EVIN

Minister for Solidarity
and for Health and Social Security
of the French Republic

Presse 165 - G

The Government of the Member States and the commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium

Mr Ph. BUSQUIN Minister for Social Affairs

Denmark

Mr Aase OLESEN Minister for Social Affairs

Germany

Mr Wolfgang VOGT Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Labour and Social Affairs

Greece

Mr J. VARTHOLOMEOS Secretary-General, Ministry of Health, Social Welfare and Social Security

Spain

Ms Matilde FERNANDEZ Minister for Social Affairs

France

Mr Claude EVIN Minister for Solidarity and for Health and Social Security

Mrs Hélène DORLHAC State Secretary for the Family (Ministry of Solidarity)

Mr Michel GILLIBERT State Secretary for the Disabled (Ministry of Solidarity)

Ireland

Mr Michael WOODS Minister for Social Affairs

Italy

Mr Ugo GRIPPO State Secretary, Ministry of Labour

Luxembourg

Mr Fernand BODEN

Minister for Family Affairs,
Solidarity, Women and Senior
Citizens

Mrs Mady DELVAUX-STEHRÉS

State Secretary for Social
Security, Health, Sport and YouthNetherlands

Mr Ch. R. van BEUGE

Deputy Permanent Representative

Portugal

Mr José Albino da SILVA PENEDA

Minister for Labour and Social
SecurityUnited Kingdom

Mrs Gillian SHEPHARD

Secretary of State, Department of
Social Security

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Commission

Mrs Vasso PAPANDEOU

Member

SOCIAL PROTECTION

At the close of a wide-ranging debate which the Council held on questions concerning the future of social protection from the point of view of the Internal Market, the President noted that all the Member States acknowledged the importance of social protection in the lives of European citizens.

He noted too that the Member States of the Community faced the same problems in the conduct of their social policies.

On these bases, the President noted very broad agreement on three main lines of approach:

1. Improve the rules governing the co-ordination of social protection schemes with a view to eliminating all obstacles to the free movement of workers and more generally, persons in the Community.

This improvement should principally concern students and additional retirement schemes.

The Commission should be encouraged to continue working to achieve that end.

2. Strive jointly to achieve three objectives concerning complementary welfare, which is not confined to retirement schemes:
 - guarantee, under the heading of complementary welfare, the acquired rights of persons moving from one Member State to another

- organize conditions of fair competition among the different arrangements which complementary welfare schemes can provide in the Member States
- finally, implement a minimum corpus of common rules guaranteeing insured persons free access to complementary welfare cover.

The Commission was accordingly invited speedily to extend its work to cover the guarantees such complementary welfare would provide.

3. Develop co-operation among Member States to improve their mutual knowledge of their social protection systems and to promote as far as possible the adoption of convergent national solutions on the subject.

To that end, the senior officials of the Member States will conduct, together with the Commission, regular exchanges of information and views on the future prospects for social protection; these could be given a first review by the Council under the Irish Presidency.

Naturally, this approach is not designed to bring about a standardization of social protection rules and must comply in full with the procedures for drafting these rules in the different Member States.

COMBATING SOCIAL EXCLUSION

The Council and Ministers for Social Affairs meeting within the Council held a debate on the problem of combating social exclusion on the basis of a note from the Presidency.

At the close of the debate, they approved the following resolution:

RESOLUTION
OF THE COUNCIL AND THE MINISTERS FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS
MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL
on combating social exclusion

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES AND THE MINISTERS FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS,
MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL,

1. Recall the efforts already undertaken by the Community and the Member States to combat poverty and to promote the economic and social integration of economically and socially disadvantaged groups of people, demonstrated specifically in the adoption of the third programme to combat poverty.

Emphasize that combating social exclusion may be regarded as an important part of the social dimension of the internal market;

2. Note that the process of social exclusion is spreading in a number of fields, resulting in many different types of situation affecting various individuals and groups of people in both rural and urban areas;
3. Note that the reasons for this process lie in structural changes in our societies and that, of these, difficulty of access to the labour market is a particularly decisive factor;
4. Urge the need for economic development policies to be accompanied by integration policies of a specific, systematic and coherent nature;

5. Affirm that the existence of a series of measures guaranteeing adequate services and resources adapted to the situation of each individual is a fundamental factor in combating social exclusion;
6. Emphasize that social exclusion is not simply a matter of inadequate resources, and that combating exclusion also involves access by individuals and families to decent living conditions by means of measures for social integration and integration into the labour market;
7. Accordingly request the Member States to implement or promote measures to enable everyone to have access to:
 - education, by acquiring proficiency in basic skills,
 - training,
 - employment,
 - housing,
 - community services,
 - medical care;
8. Point in this connection to the effectiveness of co-ordinated, coherent development policies based on active participation by local and national bodies and by the people involved;
9. Undertake to continue and, as necessary, to step up the efforts undertaken in common as well as those made by each Member State, and to pool their knowledge and assessments of the phenomena of exclusion;
10. Consequently call on the Commission:
 - taking account of the studies which exist or are still in progress, to study, together with the Member States, the measures they are taking to combat social exclusion;
 - to report on the measures taken by the Member States and by the Community in the spheres covered by this Resolution within three years of its adoption.

DEMOGRAPHY AND FAMILY POLICIES

The Council and Ministers responsible for Family Affairs, meeting within the Council, examined the Commission communication on family policies further to the meetings of the European Council (General Affairs) on 29 February 1988.

At the close of this examination, they approved the following conclusions:

CONCLUSIONS

OF THE COUNCIL AND THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR FAMILY AFFAIRS,
MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL,
regarding family policies

- I. The last decades have been marked by profound demographic and socio-economic changes.

No Community country is immune, even if the changes take place with certain time lags and at different rates.

The demographic outlook raises the question of Europe's political, economic and cultural future in the world.

- II. In short, the demographic trend is characterized by a lower fertility rate and an increase in life expectancy resulting in an ageing population, which will decline in the long term.

This change in age structure of the population will be accompanied by a change in family structure, a result of the decline in marriage and of the increase in the number of divorces.

The restructuring of the labour market, changes in working conditions and the increase in female employment are the principal factors in this new economic landscape.

- III. In view of the impact of these economic and demographic changes on the family, it is important to ask what are the prospects for and the objectives and methods of Community action at family level.

The legitimacy of such Community interest is based less on ideological grounds than on the acknowledgement of such objective facts as the economic role of the family, the responsibility of families in bringing up children, the importance of the family as the touchstone for solidarity between generations, the irreversible desire for equality between men and women and the wish of women to have complete access to working life in order to provide the family with a suitable environment in which it can develop harmoniously and in which its members can flourish, with due regard for freedom of choice in the number of their children.

Community action will have to be pragmatic in order to respect the special features of different national policies already created and the varying socio-economic contexts in which such policies operate.

- IV. In this context, the following activities will be started or continued at Community level:
1. continuation of information actions, particularly through the production and presentation of regular information on demography and measures concerning families (household structure, female employment rates, trend in birthrates, etc.), using to that effect the network of experts already set up by the Commission as well as thematic studies;
 2. inclusion of the family dimension in the establishment of appropriate Community policies, for example in the freedom of movement of persons and equality between men and women;

3. a regular exchange of information and views at Community level on major themes of common interest as regards family policy and demography, with particular emphasis on:

- (a) the impact of other Community policies on the family;
- (b) measures making it possible to implement policies on equal opportunities for men and women, in particular access for women to the labour market;
- (c) measures in favour of families, including measures tailored to the characteristics or difficulties of some families,

taking account of activities in other international organizations, to avoid any duplication of effort.

V. The activities would be monitored by:

1. regular assessment of the measures taken through regular consultation between the Commission and:
 - the working party of senior national officials with responsibility for family affairs;
 - organizations representing families at Community level on the basis of representative pluralist criteria;
2. periodic assessment in the Council.

SOCIAL SECURITY FOR MIGRANT WORKERS:PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION AMENDING REGULATIONS (EEC) Nos 1408/71 and 574/72(FAMILY BENEFITS)

The Council examined the compromise proposal submitted by the Presidency with a view to breaking the deadlock in the discussions on the present proposal, which is designed to bring about a uniform solution for all Member States as regards the payment of family benefits, as laid down in Article 99 of Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71, by making the country-of-employment principle generally applicable.

The President noted a general consensus on the Presidency's compromise proposal which also received the support of the Commission.

The Council agreed to return to this point at its meeting on 30 October with a view to arriving at a unanimous agreement on the compromise.

THE HANDICAPPED

The Council held a political debate on the basis of an introductory note from the Presidency containing proposals for a global European policy to assist the handicapped and the disabled.

At the close of the debate, the President emphasized the broad agreement reached on the need for:

- the twelve Member States and the Community to take account of the special situation of handicapped persons;
- a global policy to co-ordinate all measures affecting the daily lives of handicapped persons: education, housing, transport, lesiure;
- account to be taken in the different Community policies of the specific needs of the handicapped;
- a procedure for following up and giving impetus to these actions.

He concluded that the Commission should be able to make proposals on these points which could be examined in an ad hoc Working Party. Initially, this Working Party could continue the exchange of information initiated by the Council today.

EUROPEAN CARD FOR PROVISION OF IMMEDIATE CARE

The Council examined the note from the Presidency concerning a draft European card for provision of immediate care, intended to facilitate the provision of health care during a stay in another Member State of the Community.

At the close of the examination, the Council approved the following conclusions:

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

whereas it is important to promote freedom of movement for insured persons by any means capable of simplifying their everyday life when travelling within the Community;

whereas, to this end, access to the benefits offered by Community provisions on social security should be made easier;

whereas this objective could be attained, in particular by establishing a harmonized European social insurance card, using media that may change in line with modern administrative techniques;

whereas in 1983 the Commission considered simplification of the procedures required for provision of health care during a stay abroad;

whereas, as the first stage, access to treatment required during temporary stays in a Member State other than the competent State could be improved and simplified forthwith by taking existing national social insurance cards into account,

1. requests the Commission, with the long-term aim of establishing a European card for provision of immediate care, to conduct a survey initially of procedures whereby Member States could recognize national social insurance cards issued by other Member States.

This should enable cardholders staying temporarily in a Member State other than the competent Member State to have access, on the terms laid down by Article 22(1)(a) of Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71, to urgently needed treatment, on presentation of their national insurance card or form E 111;

2. is in favour, as of now, of any experiments in mutual recognition of national social insurance cards that Member States may engage in.

EUROPEAN COLLOQUIA

The Council took note of a statement by the French delegation to the effect that the French Government, assisted by the Commission, would be organizing the following European colloquia:

- Family and vocational strategies of women in the EEC (Paris, 27 and 28 November 1989);
- Families in a Europe without frontiers (Paris, 4 and 5 December 1989).

MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONSCoffee Agreement

The Council adopted the Decision on notification of application by the Community of the International Coffee Agreement 1983 as extended until 30 September 1991.

Research: EC-Iceland relations

The Council adopted the Decision on the conclusion on behalf of the European Economic Community of the Framework Agreement for scientific and technical co-operation between the European Communities and the Republic of Iceland.

Fisheries

The Council adopted the Decision on the conclusion of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters concerning the provisional application of the Protocol establishing for the period from 27 June 1989 to 26 June 1992 the fishing rights and financial compensation provided for in the Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea on fishing off the coast of Equatorial Guinea.

Bruxelles, le 28 septembre 1989

NOTE BIO(89) 275 AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX
CC. AUX MEMBRES DU SERVICE DU PORTE-PAROLE

433

PREPARATION CONSEIL AFFAIRES SOCIALES (C. Stathopoulos)

Le Conseil débutera ses travaux à 10h00

Un seul dossier fait l'objet d'une proposition législative par la Commission : le dossier "Prestations familiales". La Présidence attache une très grande importance à ce dossier, dans le but de régulariser le régime en vigueur en France devenu non conforme au droit communautaire suite à la jurisprudence de la Cour (Arrêts PINNA I et II de 1986 et 1989). Elle a soumis à cet effet une suggestion de compromis qui vise à éviter la généralisation -prévue par la proposition de la Commission- du critère du pays d'emploi (à savoir le paiement des prestations sur base de la législation du pays où est employé le travailleur) mais à maintenir en France, pour certaines prestations qui peuvent être considérées comme relevant davantage de la politique démographique de la famille, le critère du pays de résidence (à savoir paiement conformément à la législation du pays où réside la famille du travailleur).

Lors du dernier Conseil Affaires sociales, le 12 juin, la Commission a apporté son appui au compromis de la Présidence. L'examen du compromis par le COREPER a cependant révélé que des difficultés importantes subsistent pour atteindre l'unanimité nécessaire (réserve du Royaume-Uni).

Autres points de l'ordre du jour :

- Lutte contre l'exclusion sociale

La Présidence française a diffusé une note sur le problème de la lutte contre l'exclusion sociale et a présenté un projet de résolution "mixte" (Conseil et Ministres des Affaires sociales).

Le projet de résolution vise à promouvoir une meilleure connaissance réciproque des politiques et des méthodes mises en oeuvre contre l'exclusion sociale dans les Etats membres. D'une part, les Etats membres sont invités à promouvoir des actions visant à permettre aux groupes et aux individus marginalisés (chômeurs de longue durée, analphabètes, etc.) l'accès à l'éducation, à l'emploi, au logement, aux services collectifs, etc. D'autre part, la Commission est appelée à procéder, en liaison avec les Etats membres, à une analyse des actions mises en oeuvre au plan national, ainsi qu'à faire rapport sur les mesures prises par les Etats membres dans les domaines visés par la résolution.

Seule l'Espagne a émis une réserve sur ce projet de résolution "mixte" qui est acceptable par les autres délégations".

- Démographie et politique familiale

La Commission a remis au Conseil au mois d'août une communication sur les politiques familiales (COM(89)363 final). Cette communication fait suite aux conclusions du Conseil européen de Copenhague qui avait évoqué, à l'initiative de la France, la situation préoccupante de la démographie en Europe et avait invité les Ministres chargés de la Famille de soumettre en 1989 un rapport sur leurs travaux. La communication de la Commission analyse l'impact du contexte démographique et socio-économique sur la famille, et indique une approche communautaire possible des politiques familiales.

Se fondant sur la communication de la Commission, la Présidence a proposé un projet de conclusions du Conseil et des Ministres chargés de la Famille. Le texte prévoit au plan communautaire, d'une part, d'engager ou de poursuivre des actions d'information et de sensibilisation sur la démographie et sur les mesures concernant la famille; d'autre part, une concertation régulière, dans le cadre des articles 117 et 118 du Traité, concernant l'impact des politiques communautaires sur la famille et la protection de l'enfance, le partage des responsabilités familiales, la conciliation entre vie professionnelle et familiale, la garde des enfants, l'aménagement du temps de travail, etc. Ces activités seraient suivies par une évaluation régulière des actions par la Commission et une appréciation périodique au sein du Conseil.

- La protection sociale : un enjeu pour la réussite du marché
Intérieur

Un débat politique aura lieu sur la base d'une note de la Présidence intitulée "la protection sociale : un enjeu pour la réussite du Marché Intérieur". Ce document suggère essentiellement deux thèmes pour l'approfondissement de la réflexion communautaire :

- l'amélioration et l'extension des dispositifs de coordination des régimes de protection sociale ainsi que l'élaboration de règles communes protectrices des droits des travailleurs migrants;
- les convergences des politiques nationales de protection sociale afin de rapprocher à terme les niveaux des garanties dans les différents Etats membres.

- Personnes handicapées

La Présidence a présenté une note intitulée "Handicapés et accidents de la vie" - Propositions pour une politique européenne" pour servir de base à la discussion des Ministres. Les éléments de discussion proposés concernent notamment l'intégration scolaire des handicapés et le développement des soutiens en établissements spécialisés, les moyens et les conditions de transport, le logement, l'exercice des droits et des devoirs civiques, le soutien à la créativité et à la création des personnes handicapées, la prise en compte de leur condition dans la conception, la fabrication et l'utilisation du matériel de télécommunication et autres produits industriels.

- Etude d'une carte européenne de soins immédiats

Dans la Communauté les assurés ressortissants d'un Etat membre qui séjournent dans un autre Etat membre peuvent sur présentation du formulaire E111 recevoir dans cet Etat les soins qui leur sont immédiatement nécessaires et ce à la charge de l'Etat où ils sont assurés.

La Présidence souhaite améliorer ce système dans le sens que les cartes nationales d'assuré social puissent aussi être admises dans les autres Etats membres en tant qu'attestations du droit aux prestations de soins immédiatement nécessaires.

Elle propose donc que le Conseil adopte des conclusions demandant à la Commission de procéder à une étude sur les modalités de reconnaissance par chaque Etat membre des cartes nationales d'assuré social et qu'il se déclare favorable, dès maintenant, à toute reconnaissance mutuelle de ces cartes.

Amplifié
- J. H. S. —

C.D. EHLERMANN

Bruxelles, le 29 septembre 1989

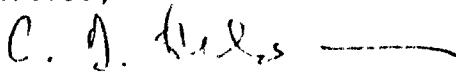
NOTE BIO(89)275 (suite 1) AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX
CC. AUX MEMBRES DU SERVICE DU PORTE-PAROLE

CONSEIL AFFAIRES SOCIALES (C. Stathopoulos)

"Une harmonisation des systèmes de sécurité sociale dans la Communauté n'est ni techniquement possible, ni politiquement souhaitable. Il y a en Europe communautaire une culture sociale. Il faut le reconnaître et concentrer donc l'action plutôt sur une convergence que sur une harmonisation de ces systèmes. Cette convergence viserait des objectifs bien précis. Le projet de la Charte des droits sociaux fondamentaux attribue une grande importance à la mobilité des personnes et cherche à faire face aux conséquences négatives par les différences entre ces systèmes de sécurité sociale. La Commission présentera en 1990 une proposition intégrée à ce sujet". Ceci était en quelques mots les grandes lignes de l'intervention de Madame PAPANDREOU lors du débat sur la sécurité sociale, examinée par les ministres au début de leur réunion. L'avis de la Commission est partagée par toutes les délégations. Aucune demande d'une harmonisation, toutes plaident en faveur de la convergence en indiquant certains objectifs tels que par ex. l'extension de la sécurité sociale aux étudiants et les régimes complémentaires de retraite. La délégation Irlandaise a indiqué que lors de la présidence de l'Irlande au premier semestre 1990, elle a l'intention de poursuivre ce débat.

Le Conseil vient d'adopter la résolution sur l'exclusion sociale et les conclusions concernant les politiques familiales.

Amitiés,


C.D. EHLERMANN

Bruxelles, le 29 septembre 1989

NOTE BIO(89) 275 (suite 2 et fin) AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX
CC. AUX MEMBRES DU SERVICE DU PORTE-PAROLE

CONSEIL AFFAIRES SOCIALES

Le Conseil n'a pas pu aboutir à un accord sur le dossier des prestations familiales.

La délégation italienne insistait, en cas de cumul de droits à prestations en vertu des législations du pays d'emploi et du pays de résidence de la famille, pour que les règles de priorité fassent davantage intervenir le pays d'emploi. Les autres délégations acceptaient par contre la proposition de compromis de la présidence, appuyée par la Commission, qui prévoyait la suspension du droit aux prestations provenant de l'Etat d'emploi (Jusqu'à concurrence du montant prévu par l'Etat de résidence) lorsque les prestations sont prévues par l'Etat de résidence.

Ainsi, le dossier des prestations familiales fera l'objet probablement d'un examen lors du prochain Conseil Affaires sociales du 30 octobre 1989.

Le Conseil a terminé ses travaux avec un débat politique général concernant la problématique des personnes handicapées et l'adoption de conclusions au sujet de l'étude d'une carte européenne de soins immédiats.

Intervenant au débat sur les personnes handicapées, Madame PAPANDREOU a souligné l'importance du programme HELIOS qui encadre le développement d'une politique globale et cohérente, couvrant plusieurs aspects de la vie quotidienne d'un handicapé. Elle a aussi reconnu l'utilité d'étudier la façon de simplifier l'accès aux soins médicaux en cas de séjour provisoire d'un citoyen européen dans un autre Etat membre.

Amitiés,

C. STATHOPOULOS