



COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT



PRESS RELEASE

11543/81 (Presse 162)

744th meeting of the Council

- Labour and Social Affairs

Brussels, 8 December 1981

President: Mr Norman TEBBIT,
Secretary of State for Employment
of the United Kingdom

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

Belgium:

Mr Roger DEWULF
Minister for Labour
and Employment

Denmark:

Mr Jens WANDALL
State Secretary,
Ministry of Labour

Germany:

Ms Anke FUCHS
Parliamentary State Secretary,
Ministry of Labour and
Social Welfare

Greece:

Mr Eleftherios SARRIS
Embassy Counsellor,
Social Affairs

France:

Mr Jean AUROUX
Minister of Labour

Ireland:

Ms Eileen DESMOND
Minister for Health and
Social Welfare
Mr Liam KAVANAGH
Minister of Labour and
Minister of the Public Service

Italy:

Mr Mario COSTA
State Secretary,
Ministry of Labour

Luxembourg:

Mr Jacques SANTER
Minister for Labour and
Social Security

Netherlands:

Mr Joop den UYL
Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister for Social Security
and Employment

United Kingdom:

Mr Norman TEBBIT
Secretary of State for Employment
Mr Hugh ROSSI
Minister of State,
Department of Health and
Social Security
Mr Michael ALISON
Minister of State,
Department of Employment

Commission:

Mr Ivor RICHARD
Member

PROTECTION OF WORKERS FROM RISKS CONNECTED WITH LEAD

The Council held a thorough discussion of the proposal for a Directive on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to metallic lead. It will be remembered that this proposal for a Directive falls within the framework of the Directive adopted on 27 November 1980 ⁽¹⁾, which included a series of framework measures which were to serve as a basis for future legislation in the field of the protection of workers from harmful agents at both national and Community level.

The discussion centred on the levels of action and the limit values to be envisaged and also on the protection of female workers from risks during pregnancy.

At the close of its discussion, the Council agreed to return to this question at the next meeting of the Ministers for Labour and Social Affairs.

⁽¹⁾ see Presse release 11743/80 (Presse 178).

SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF DISABLED PEOPLE

The Council held an exchange of views on the basis of a Commission communication laying down a framework for the development of Community action for the social integration of disabled people. The Council welcomed the communication which, in the International Year of Disabled Persons, marked the interest which the Community and its Member States attached to these problems.

At the close of its discussion, the Council and the Ministers for Labour and Social Affairs meeting within the Council adopted the Resolution given in the Annex which provides inter alia for the continuation or strengthening of action by Member States to promote the economic and social integration of handicapped people in order to enable them to make a productive and creative contribution to society.

EXTENSION OF REGULATION (EEC) No 574/72 (SOCIAL SECURITY) TO SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS AND MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILIES

The Council adopted in the official languages of the Communities the Regulation extending Regulation (EEC) No 574/72 to self-employed persons and members of their families. The aim of this Regulation is to apply to self-employed persons the social security measures already applied since 1972 to wage-earners.

The adoption of this Regulation represents an important step towards improving the situation of self-employed persons in the Community. The complex task of co-ordinating the social security arrangements applicable to self-employed persons has now been completed and all the Community rules concerning them will enter into force seven months after the publication of this Regulation in the Official Journal.

SOCIAL SECURITY FOR EMPLOYED PERSONS

The Council had an exchange of views on the proposal for a Regulation on the application of social security schemes to employed persons and their families moving within the Community. The Commission submitted this proposal in view of the present situation on the Community employment market where there is high unemployment and no prospect of improvement in the short term, so that periods of considerable length elapse before fresh employment is found. In this context, the Commission proposed provisions enabling the right to unemployment benefits and pre-retirement benefits to be maintained in the event of the transfer of residence from one Member State to another.

At the close of its discussion, the Council asked the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue its work on this question in the light of the approach worked out during the discussion.

COMMUNITY SOCIAL POLICY

The Council had an exchange of views on the main guidelines for the review of the European Social Fund due in 1982.

The importance was acknowledged of ensuring that in the present climate of economic recession and unemployment the limited resources of the Social Fund should be concentrated on the most acute problems. The discussion confirmed in particular the priority which should be given to measures in favour of young people, to specific action under programmes affecting employment and vocational training and to problems connected with the introduction of new technology. Certain delegations emphasized the need to develop an integrated strategy for the creation of jobs.

The Council also heard a statement by Mr AUROUX, the French Minister for Labour on the chapter entitled "Employment policy - European Social Area" from the French Government memorandum. The French Representative emphasized the French Government's desire to encourage all efforts to resolve the problems currently arising in connection with social policy and employment within the Community and in particular to put employment at the heart of Community policies. In particular, he underlined the possibilities offered by the adaptation of working time, the intensification of the dialogue between management and labour and the improvement of co-operation and concertation in social protection.

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND (FINANCIAL YEAR 1980)

The Council took note of the report on the activities of the European Social Fund (financial year 1980).

PROTECTION OF WORKERS FROM THE RISKS RELATED TO ASBESTOS

The Council noted the overall progress achieved in this area and in particular the substantial progress on certain important problems arising from the proposal for a Directive on the protection of workers from the risks due to exposure to asbestos. It will be remembered that this proposal for a Directive comes within the framework of the Directive adopted on 27 November 1980 (see page 3 - item on the protection of workers from risks related to lead).

The Council confirmed its interest and its political will to adopt the Directive as soon as possible, since it is of considerable importance for the protection of a large number of workers exposed to asbestos.

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CONCLUSIONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM PRESIDENCY

At the close of the Council's discussions, Mr TEBBIT drew a number of conclusions regarding the activities of the Presidency in the social and labour field, a summary of which is given in Annex II.

**RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL AND THE MINISTERS FOR LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS,
MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL, ON THE SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF DISABLED PEOPLE**

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

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Articles 118 and 128 thereof,

Having regard to the Council Resolution of 21 January 1974 concerning a social action programme ⁽¹⁾,

Having regard to the Council Resolution of 27 June 1974 establishing the initial Community action programme for the vocational rehabilitation of handicapped persons ⁽²⁾,

Having regard to the Commission's report on the initial action programme for the vocational rehabilitation of handicapped persons (1974-1979) and to the conclusions of the Council, adopted at its meeting on 9 June 1980, concerning the further implementation of this programme,

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 13/1, 12.2.1974
⁽²⁾ OJ No C 80/30, 9.7.1974

Having regard to the Commission's communication of 29 October 1981 on the social integration of disabled people and the comments made by the various delegations within the Council on that communication,

Having regard to the importance attached by the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee and to the economic and social integration of disabled people,

Noting that the United Nations Organization has designated 1981 as the International Year of Disabled People and that this initiative has been supported by the Community and its Member States;

Considering that disabled people should have the same right as other people to participate in and contribute to all aspects of economic and social life, and conscious of the difficulties they face in exercising that right in periods of economic recession;

Considering that the Community and the Member States have a responsibility to promote better living and working conditions for disabled people;

Taking account of the fact that all Member States have made the economic and social integration of disabled people a goal, and taking account of the steps that have already been taken in Member States to promote such integration;

Taking into account also the diversity of systems and structures in the Member States,

HAS AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

- I. Member States are urged to continue, and if possible intensify, their measures to promote the economic and social integration of disabled people, in order to enable them to make a productive and creative contribution to society, and in particular to:
- ensure that due account is taken, in the development of all policies affecting the living and working environment of disabled people, of the need to remove barriers to the full participation of disabled people in society;
 - facilitate the co-ordination, at national, regional and local levels, of services concerned with the disabled, and to encourage co-operation in this respect between the different bodies active in the field, including associations of disabled people and the social partners;
 - promote the participation of disabled people, their representative organizations and where appropriate their families in the framing and implementation of measures which directly affect them;
 - ensure that disabled people may lead as independent a way of life as possible;
 - ensure that disabled people do not shoulder an unfair burden of the effects, on both employment and resources, of economic difficulties;
 - promote measures to prepare disabled people for an active life, in particular by integrating them in normal education and training systems wherever possible;

- develop and implement measures on the housing and mobility of disabled people and improved access to public buildings, transport and other public facilities, so as to promote their fullest possible integration and participation;
- encourage information activities designed to enable the public to understand the contribution it can make to the integration of disabled people, and those activities directed at disabled people themselves;
- promote the development and availability of technical aids, the pooling of information and experience in the field and the application of new technologies, so as to facilitate the communication, mobility and employment of disabled people.

II. In order to complement and support the efforts of the Member States, the Commission is invited, within the limits of the financial resources available under the Social Fund, to set up, in close co-operation with the Member States a network of selected development actions to promote model co-ordination of the actions undertaken, especially at local level. This network will be based broadly on the guidelines set out in the Commission's communication and will operate for four years beginning early in 1983;

In addition, the Commission is invited to continue its efforts, in particular by:

- (a) further developing existing activity at Community level based on the network of rehabilitation centres in order to promote and disseminate good practice and to restructure the network, taking into consideration the institutions and associations that are especially well-placed to carry out the tasks of the network, so that all such institutions and associations are included in the information issued by the network and can benefit from the outcome of such work;
- (b) continuing to promote pilot projects on the housing of disabled people in order to identify those experiences which are worthy of Community application;
- (c) pooling information, taking into account existing national information systems, and ensuring an exchange of information between the services involved in framing and implementing social integration measures including representatives of disabled people.

III. The Commission is requested to prepare a progress report on measures taken by the Community by the end of 1984, and a final report by the end of 1986.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM PRESIDENCY

Speaking after the conclusion of the Social Affairs Council, Mr Norman Tebbit the UK Secretary of State for Employment in his role as President pointed out that the further growth in the appalling levels of unemployment in the community over recent months had made Ministers, the Commission, and the European Parliament acutely aware of the need for a coherent European response to the challenge it presents. It was not a matter of choice. The twin evils of inflation and unemployment together demanded a response.

Reviewing his term as President of the Social Affairs Council, Mr Tebbit said that the UK had concentrated attention on the major instrument available to ameliorate the worst effects of unemployment - the European Social Fund - and he hoped that the foundations had been laid for a thorough going review of the fund next year. Ministers, Commission and the Parliament all agree that the fund should be better directed to respond to today's problems and it should be concentrated on the areas of greatest need.

He hoped that one result of the UK Presidency would be that the Commission was now fully aware of Ministers' views on the fund before the review started at official level. A naive response to rising unemployment might be to say "Make more jobs available" but there was a limit to what could be done without distorting competition and diverting resources from investments. He looked therefore to other areas of the labour market where community action could ease the difficulties. Also at the problems of labour supply and particularly at the possibility of increasing it through training relevant to employers' needs.

Mr Tebbit was particularly pleased to have seen a positive response from Member States and the social partners to the Commission's proposals on the social aspects of new technology which had been discussed at the November meeting of the Standing Employment Committee on Employment. He also was pleased on the progress that had been made in discussions on hazards in the work place.

During the Presidency the UK had tried to ensure close contact between the Presidency and the European Parliament. In September, Mr Tebbit has spent a day with members of the Parliament and addressed the plenary session. In November, Michael Alison, his Minister of State had attended a session of the Parliament's Social Affairs and Employment Committee and had had a wide ranging discussion with them on the programme of social affairs work under the Presidency. Both of these contacts had been extremely useful for the Presidency as a means of complementing and re-enforcing the formal procedures by which the Parliament could bring its Opinion to bear on the Community's work.

The Presidency had also confirmed his feeling that Member States have much to learn from one another through exchanges of information and experience especially about innovative developments which need to be more widely known. He had had a particularly useful exchange of this kind at the informal meeting of Employment Ministers in London in September. This meeting had covered the problems of youth unemployment across the Community and the various remedies which Member States were applying. He was pleased to see this aspect featuring more prominently in Commission proposals. He was sure that succeeding Presidencies would wish, each in its own way, to continue to develop further this invaluable task of exchanging views and information on the most pressing problems.

Bruxelles, le 7 decembre 1981
Note BIO(81)486 aux Bureaux Nationaux
cc. aux Membres du Groupe

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Conseil Affaires Sociales (John Robinson)

Le Conseil des Affaires Sociales se reunira demain le 8 decembre a partir de 10h sous la presidence du Ministre britannique de l'emploi, M. Norman Tebbit. Les points suivants sont a l'ordre du jour:

- plomb: il s'agit d'une proposition de directive du Conseil pour proteger les travailleurs contre les risques liees a l'exposition au plomb dans les lieux de travail. Cette proposition s'inscrit dans le cadre de la mise en application detaillee de la directive cadre sur la protection des travailleurs, adoptee par le Conseil le 27 novembre 1980, et est la plus avancee au point de vue travaux du Conseil. D'autres propositions concernent l'amiante, le cadmium et le nickel. Le point des negociations sur la proposition concernant l'amiante fera aussi l'objet de debats au Conseil.
- l'integration sociale des handicapes: le Conseil devrait adopter un projet de resolution qui a ete propose par la Commission dans le cadre de son nouveau programme pour les handicapes approuve par la Commission au mois d'octobre (voir note P-75). L'acueil que les Etats membres ont reserve a cette proposition a ete largement favorable.
- modification du reglement de base CEE sur la securite sociale: le but de la modification proposee par la CCE est de permettre la continuation du paiement des prestations de chomage aux travailleurs qui transferent leur residence d'un pays a l'autre.
- echange de vues sur la politique sociale: cet echange de vues aura deux volets
 - . reexamen du Fonds Social - le follow-up des debats entames lors du Conseil informel le 24/25 septembre a Londres;
 - . une discussion des idees contenues dans le memorandum francais en ce qui concerne la politique sociale.
- le Conseil devrait aussi prendre acte du rapport d'activite du Fonds Social en 1980.

Amities,
M. Santarelli COMEUR

