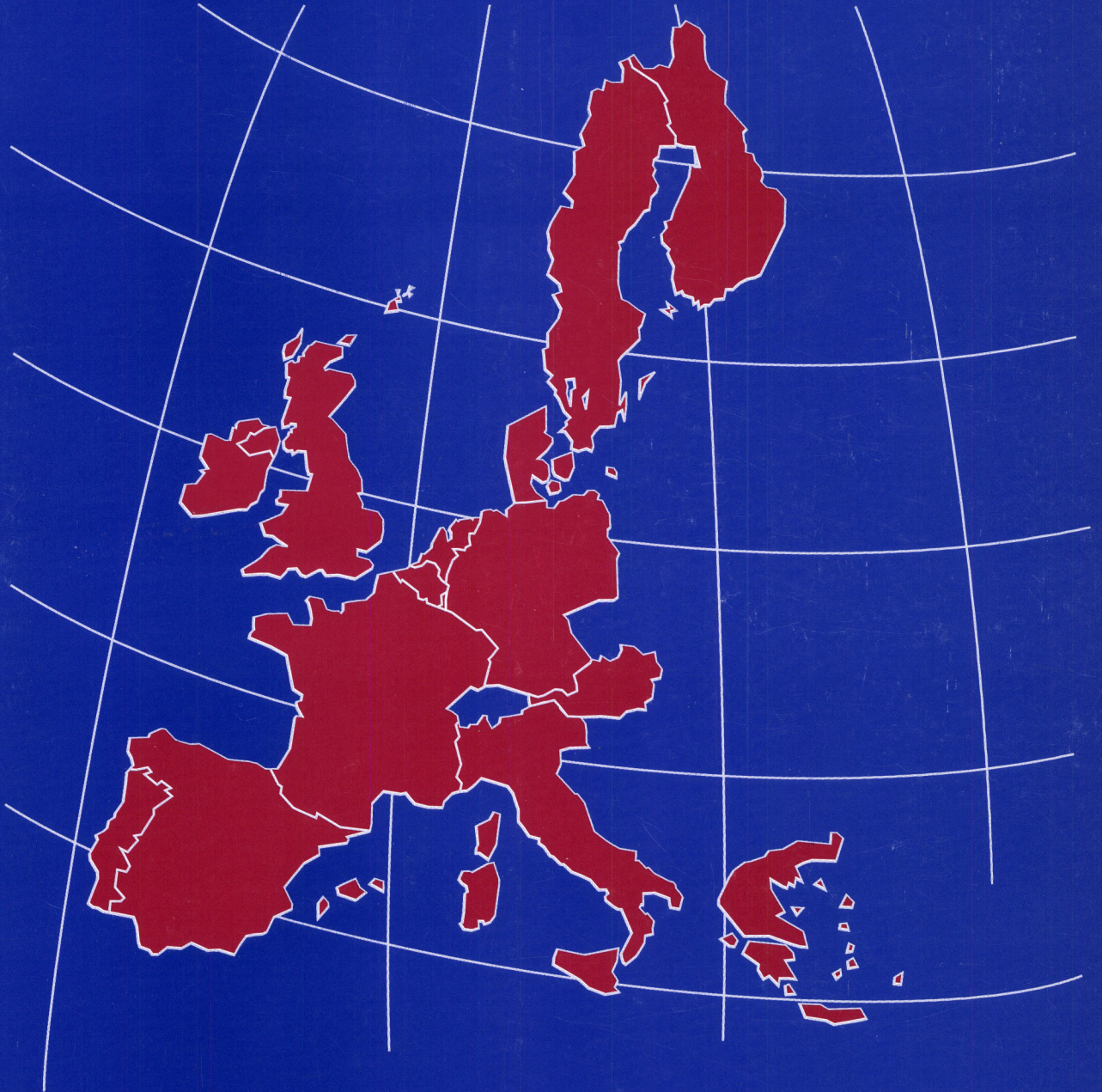


Employment Observatory

TABLEAU DE BORD 1997

Employment & labour market



Employment & social affairs



European Commission

European Commission

TABLEAU DE BORD 1997

Follow-up to the conclusions of the Essen European Council
on employment policies

Brussels, 1997

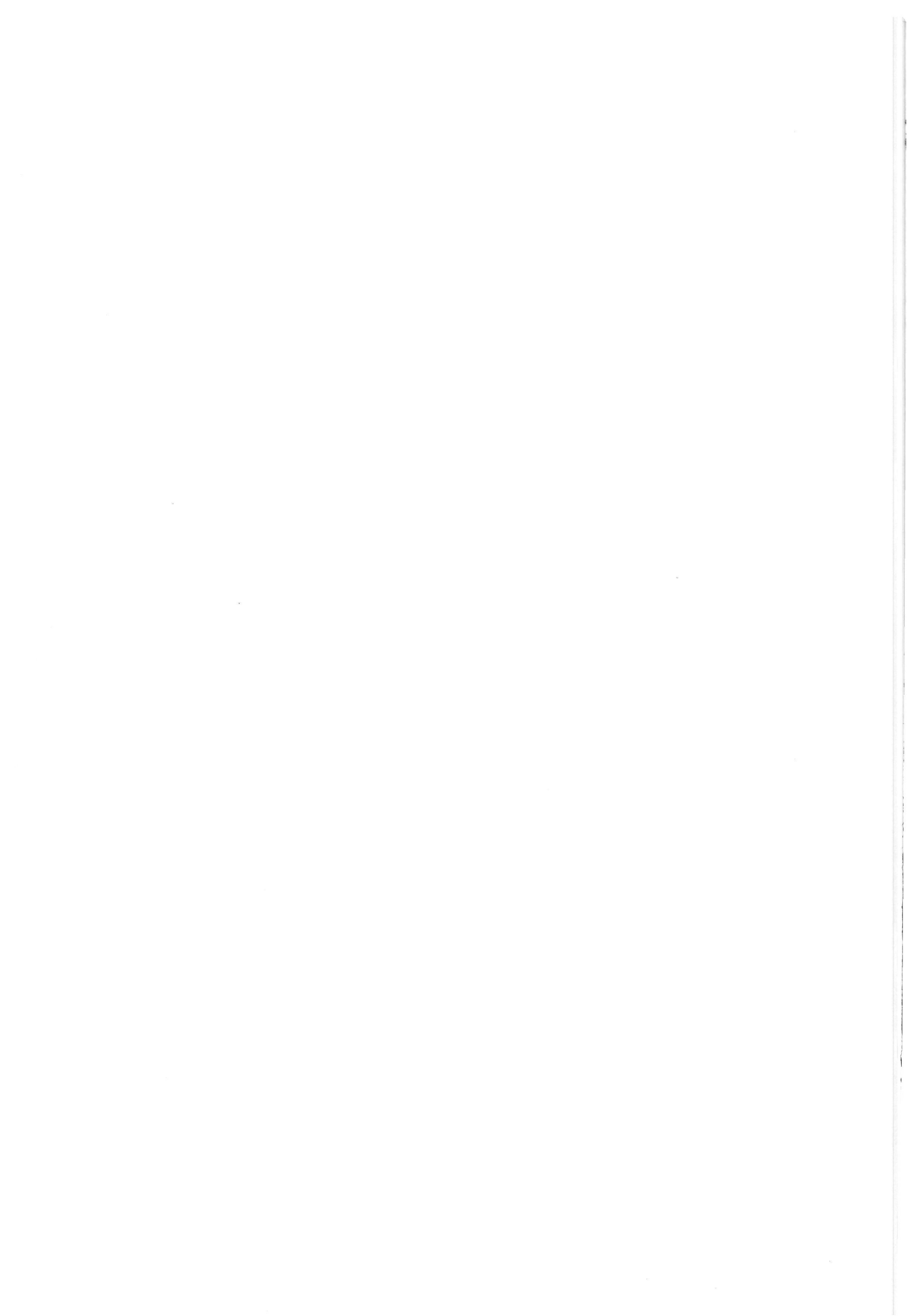


TABLEAU DE BORD 1997

This is the 1997 version of the **Tableau de bord** (synoptic table), which was first published in 1994. Its purpose is to give a synoptic overview of the main employment policies and labour market measures in the Member States of the European Union. Its structure is based on the framework of the follow-up to the Essen council decisions of December 1994.

The only structural modification to last year's **Tableau de bord** has been to add a new section providing information on training and other labour market policies in favour of people with disabilities. This is in line with the Commission Communication of 1996 on equality of opportunity for people with disabilities and the mainstreaming of disability policy.

As in previous years, the information contained in the **Tableau de bord** is updated by the Member States themselves through the European Employment Observatory's MISEP network. The sections on vocational training and education and reduction of non-wage labour costs were prepared by DG XXII and the Taskforce on Statutory Contributions at DG XXI, respectively, in collaboration with their correspondents in the Member States. The section on equal opportunities was produced with the help of the responsible unit in DG V. The coordinating role was played by unit A2 of DG V.

Given the constantly changing situation on the labour market, it is possible to provide only a snapshot of what is happening at one point in time. Thus, for most of the Member States, the information contained in the **Tableau de bord** reflects the situation towards the middle of 1997. The information on France refers to the situation up to May 1997 because substantial changes have taken place in labour market policy since then, which could not be taken into account in the present version. More detailed and recent information about labour market policies in the European Union can be obtained from MISEP publications, such as the 'Policies' quarterly bulletin or the Basic Information Reports on each of the Member States; many of the latter will be revised in the course of 1998. Information about ordering these publications can be found at the end of the **Tableau de bord**.

Brussels, November 1997

TABLEAU DE BORD 1997

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1. VOCATIONAL TRAINING

1.1 Improving education and training systems

- 1.1.1 Development of policies
- 1.1.2 Decentralisation
- 1.1.3 Social partners
- 1.1.4 Private sector
- 1.1.5 Quality
- 1.1.6 Equal opportunities in vocational training

1.2 Promotion of lifelong learning

- 1.2.1 Provision of training
- 1.2.2 Promoting access to training
- 1.2.3 Recognition of informal training or work experience

1.3 Adapting to change

- 1.3.1 Skill needs
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Annex to Chapter 1

Development of policies

The main aims of the Member States are to raise the level of vocational training in accordance with the requirements of competitive industrial activity and to provide key skills. It is extremely important that vocational training systems should be both compatible and flexible in order that they can react to changing labour market needs and lead to the best possible employment prospects. High unemployment among youth is to be combated by raising the level of education and vocational training for this target group and thus achieving improved vocational training (B, F, DK, I, P). In addition to youth, priority support is also given to low-skilled labour market groups.

The main actors in the design of vocational training are the state and the social partners.

DK

Measures concerning young people - persons under 25 years of age who have not completed a vocational education of a minimum of 18 months or initial vocational training may only receive daily allowances until they have been unemployed for 6 months within a 9-month period. Hereafter they will be offered training. Persons with 2 years' job experience acquired in a period of 3 years may however choose work experience instead of training or education. When they have completed a total of 18 months' work experience or education, they regain the right to receive daily allowances. All those in the labour market will have the possibility for adult and post-school education, so that they can retain their place in the labour market and ensure a qualified work force for all areas of working activity. Free access to adult and post-school education will be introduced and efforts will be targeted especially at those with low skills.

A

The strategic objectives are:

- continual adaptation of the contents of vocational training to working life;
- priority for the development of key skills and foreign language skills at technical and vocational schools and in apprenticeship (dual system);
- flexibility in curriculum design and administrative procedures;
- greater autonomy for individual schools;
- promotion of permeability within the various training segments of the vocational training landscape;
- expansion of Fachhochschulen (specialised higher education) to provide for continuing training for persons in employment.

E

Criteria and guidelines which will form the basis for the Second Nat. Vocational Training Programme (II PNFP) 1997-1999 are laid down in the framework agreement on vocational training policy signed in Dec. 1996. Negotiations will be carried out in the General Council for Vocational Training (comprising representatives from the public administration, the social partners and the autonomous communities). The main aims of II PNFP are: to place greater emphasis on the functions of and the territorial responsibilities within the vocational training system and thus to achieve full integration of the three subordinate systems of specialised vocational schools, retraining courses and in-company further training measures; to increase cooperation between enterprises and work centres; to achieve functional homogeneity between the vocational qualification systems created on the basis of collective bargaining and the nat. qualifications system; to promote first-time recruitments; to improve and guarantee the quality of training within public vocational training systems and the transparency of vocational qualifications. These aims are detailed more precisely in the 1997-2000 II PNFP.

B

The Medium-Term Plan of Oct. 1995 provides for an expansion of the alternating training system for low-skilled young people. Better opportunities for the unemployed to participate in full-time training while retaining their unemployment benefits will increase their prospects of reintegration. The Walloon Region's joint declaration on revitalising the economy and promoting employment stipulates that a plan for vocational training and vocational reintegration will be developed, which will aim to provide trainees with practical work experience in enterprises alongside vocational training. The measure will specifically target risk groups among the unemployed, such as the difficult to place, disabled workers and young people. An important objective of the Flemish Agreement on Employment is to increase efforts in the field of continuing training. The different training schemes for young people will be co-ordinated with a view to forming a coherent package of theoretical and practical elements. Training programmes for persons in employment (dependent employees and the self-employed) will be adapted to labour market needs.

F

Employment and training policies are developed around three axes:

- the integration of young people into working life, in particular through apprenticeships (dual system), and the reintegration of long-term unemployed into the labour market;
- support for industrial, economic and technological change;
- increasing the employment intensity of growth by reducing the cost of employment, in particular low-paid employment, and by developing local services.

D

Measures are being introduced under the "Vocational Training Reform Project - flexible structures and modern occupations" which was launched by the federal government to make the framework conditions for vocational training easier and more attractive for enterprises and to accelerate the adaptation of occupational profiles to structural and technological change. Another important development is the joint initiative "Training - Let's be in it" launched by the Federal Labour Office and the German business community with the aim of boosting the supply of training places.

FIN

The principal objective is to reform the structure of the education and vocational training system and to raise the levels of education throughout the system to meet the requirements of working life.

Development of policies

1

GR One of the most important aims concerning vocational training is to adapt it to labour market needs through the establishment of a National Body for Vocational Training Certification.

NL Strategic objectives are:

- to increase the participation in training of low-qualified workers and workers training in SMEs;
- to improve the transparency of the market for training provision,
- to stimulate the concept of lifelong learning. A combination of learning, work experience and work is regarded as a very effective way to gain and upgrade vocational qualifications. As a follow-up of the so-called "knowledge-debate", a task force will promote and realise the concept of lifelong learning;
- to coordinate the training infrastructure and facilities of the regional training centres, the Employment Service and sectoral training facilities.

I The main objective is to incorporate vocational training in labour market policy as the foremost instrument against inactivity and unemployment. The guidelines for the reform of the vocational training system are laid out in the "Agreement on Employment", signed on 24.9.1996 by the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education and the social partners. The agreement charges all providers of vocational training and vocational education (the regions and the labour and education ministries) with the following tasks:

- to identify and establish links between school education and regional vocational training and in-company training;
- to establish standard systems of training and certification which are useful for the consolidation of training provisions and reciprocal recognition of "training credits";
- to establish national models for regular monitoring of training needs and continuous adaptation of training provisions;
- to implement models to increase the flexibility of training and to adapt it to individual needs;
- to set up a national financing body for lifelong learning;
- to reform teaching such that greater emphasis is placed on vocational training.

P Strategic objectives are, in particular:

- the gradual increase of access to initial training, leading to a qualification for all young people entering the labour market (including measures in the context of the education system as well as vocational training linked to the labour market);
- the development of continuing training and the raising of the qualification level of the work force, in particular, workers who are low qualified, employees in SMEs, workers in sectors in decline and those affected by industrial restructuring (vocational retraining);
- guaranteeing equality of opportunity by respecting compulsory schooling and the conditions for attending the different levels of education.

IRL Objectives are:

- the proportion of 16-18 year-old age group completing the senior educational cycle will increase to at least 90% by the year 2000 and to facilitate this objective, a wider range of options are being provided within the Leaving Certificate structure in addition to increased emphasis being placed on the vocational orientation of all subjects;
- the third-level education institutions will inter alia meet the priorities for sectoral economic development and develop explicit policies for interaction with the economy, covering the diffusion of knowledge and innovation, the provision of opportunities for skills renewal and the establishment of cooperation arrangements;
- develop vocational education and training systems to ensure that the work force meets the qualification needs of competitive industries;
- implement training and employment programmes to provide more opportunities to reintegrate the unemployed into working life.

S The overall objective is to design a system with a high level of flexibility, enabling it to respond to the constantly changing demands of the labour market. Diminishing the gap between academic and vocational programmes in the upper-secondary school when it comes to future career options is another important aim. Subsequently, pupils attending vocational education in Sweden are obliged to take academic courses in Swedish, English, Mathematics, Civics, Religion and Natural Science. One distinguishing feature of the Swedish system is that initial vocational education provides general eligibility for university studies.

L Reference points are set for the development of training policy, including the duration of training and the definition of key qualifications.

UK In July 1995, the Departments for Education and Employment were merged into a new single Department. This has brought a new coherence and effectiveness to education, training and employment policies. National targets for training and education attainment have been drawn up by employers and endorsed by the government. They are measurable targets outlining challenging attainment levels for young people, adults and employers. The National Targets were revised in 1995 and raised and expanded to include objectives for acquiring key competences.

Decentralisation

Responsibility for vocational training policy lies at national level in most of the Member States. This is where occupational descriptions and regulations concerning training - agreed with the social partners in various advisory committees - are laid down in law. The regions have wider scope only in the area of general education in vocational schools and at the upper secondary level (A, D). In some countries, the standards for initial vocational training are also set at regional level (A, B, GR, gradually F and E), although here the regional authorities are also obliged to seek close agreement with the social partners. The implementation of vocational training measures is largely the responsibility of regional and local authorities, chambers, or institutions established by the social partners.

DK

Policy framework and aims are established at national and sectoral level by trade committees. Vocational training colleges and their local training committees have responsibility for the planning and delivery of training.

A

Responsibility for vocational education in schools is shared between the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Länder. Responsibility is also shared for apprenticeships. The Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs provides the apprenticeship regulations covering enterprises and defines job profiles and examinations. Suggestions and statements are made by the Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship on which the social partners sit. The regional apprenticeship offices, set up in the Chambers of Commerce in the nine Länder, are in charge of administrative matters and of supervising in-company training activities. At regional level, consultation is carried out with the Regional Advisory Board on Apprenticeship, on which the social partners are also represented. The BMAGS and the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs share the responsibility for that part of the Vocational Training Act which entitles apprentices to be kept in the company for a certain period after having passed the apprenticeship final examination. In the Fachhochschule sector (specialised higher education), the Federal Government has relinquished its monopoly on the provision and maintenance of vocational training.

E

Vocational training policy in Spain will be set out in the National Vocational Training Programme (PNFP), which is being formulated by the General Council for Vocational Training and will be submitted to the government for approval. The General Council is made up of representatives of the public administrations, the social partners and the autonomous communities. The autonomous communities are becoming increasingly involved in vocational training policy: responsibility for retraining measures has already been transferred to five autonomous communities, while seven autonomous communities have been given responsibility for specialised vocational schools. This process of decentralisation is now to be extended to all the autonomous communities.

B

The implementation of training policy is carried out by organisations at the community level.

F

The 1993 Five-Year Plan stipulates that the regions are the territorial entities with responsibility for vocational training. As regards training for young people, the state is in the process of gradually transferring to the regions - within the framework of agreements - the instruments it has used to implement such measures. This transfer is to be completed at the latest by the end of 1998. Priorities for training vary from region to region according to local needs. Various providers (educational establishments, public authorities, employers, social partners, professional associations and local authorities) are involved in the delivery of vocational training at local and regional level.

D

Responsibility for initial vocational training is divided between two training agencies (dual system): the enterprise and the vocational school. For initial training in companies, federal law is in force. The Länder are responsible for schools. The state-recognised occupations (about 370) are defined according to labour market needs in close cooperation between federal and Länder governments and the social partners.

FIN

The quantitative framework for vocational training provision is set at national level. For young people, the framework also covers the field and levels of training to be provided. The framework for the curricula and other matters concerning qualifications are also set at national level. Curricula are modular and stipulate objectives to be obtained, leaving the means of achieving these objectives up to the training providers. Responsibility for training provided by the labour market is the responsibility of the regions. Ownership of state vocational schools is being currently transferred from national government to the municipalities and to partners in the private sector with a view to creating local multidisciplinary training institutions which are able to participate in local development. Following the Essen European Council, a Presidential Committee has been established to propose ways of improving employment prospects.

Decentralisation

1

GR In accordance with Laws No. 2224/94 and 2334/96, responsibility for a number of functions has been transferred to local authorities and consequently to autonomous training centres run by the OAED (National Organisation for Labour Market Policy) (employment service), which work in cooperation with local institutions (trade unions, municipal and local administrations).

NL Decentralisation is currently a key issue in the Netherlands. Responsibility for vocational training policy is shared at national level by government, and the central federations of employers and employees. Regional training centres are responsible for the implementation of training policy and for training provision and are due to take on responsibility for the existing 500 secondary vocational education schools.

I Vocational training is essentially decentralised. It is organised by the regions, which plan and implement their own provisions in accordance with needs determined by local developments and employment growth. Under the terms of the Framework Law on Vocational Training (Law 845/78), the state is responsible for maintaining relations with the European Commission within the context of administration of the Structural Fund, for planning and implementing cross-regional intervention measures and for a few other functions concerning the coordination and standardisation of regional processes. The current trend is towards increasing decentralisation with a view to greater autonomy for the regions alongside rights for the state in the area of standardised certification of training courses and assessment of the effects of vocational training policy at national level.

P Responsibility for vocational training policy lies with central government and is implemented by the Ministry of Education (through the Department for Secondary-School Education, DES) and the Ministry of Qualifications and Employment (MQE) (through the IEFP, Institute for Employment and Vocational Training). The IEFP supervises a regional network of training centres, which it manages directly or jointly, and provides technical and financial support for training carried out by public bodies, cooperatives and the private sector. The regions are consulted on training policy through regional consultative councils. Training policy organised in the context of the labour market is the responsibility of the MQE in liaison with other ministries and the representatives of the social partners in the Economic and Social Council. The Ministry of Education is also involved in vocational training through vocational schools and technical courses within the context of regular school education. The largely privately run vocational schools are supported by local authorities, employers' associations and trade unions, in particular, and are oriented towards regional needs. The Regional Education Directorates monitor the content of technical courses provided at secondary schools.

IRL The Department of Education has responsibility for determining vocational education and training policy for young people under 18 years of age. Vocational Education Committees and the National Training and Employment Authority (FAS) have specific statutory remits in the delivery of vocational education and training. Continuing vocational training policy and implementation is the responsibility of FAS. Separate national authorities - CERT and TEAGASC - have responsibility for training in tourism and agriculture. Vocational Education Committees, the FAS, CERT and TEAGASC are administered centrally but have training centres throughout the country.

S National objectives are defined by parliament and the government whilst the municipalities have total responsibility for organising and implementing all activities within the public school system. Universities have been given greater autonomy.

L Vocational training policy (initial and continuing training) falls within the ambit of the National Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. Continuing training policy is implemented by the National Institute for the Development of Continuing Training, the professional chambers, the municipal authorities and private institutions which are approved by the Ministry.

UK Vocational training policy is at present defined at national level and implemented through locally based Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) in England and Wales and Local Enterprise Companies (LECs) in Scotland. There is also a wide range of private-sector provision, in addition to the extensive network of publicly funded colleges of further education, each of which is now independently managed. Integrated government offices at regional level promote a coherent approach to training competitiveness and sustainable economic development.

Social partners

The role of the social partners in the design of initial vocational training and continuing training is institutionalised in all Member States. They are involved through advisory bodies at the different levels (national, regional and sectoral) in the legal definition of training contents. In some Member States, the social partners run their own training establishments (D, DK, F, I, P) and are thus involved in the implementation of vocational training and continuing training. The social partners are also able to actively influence national, sectoral or company-level training policy through the formulation of collective agreements. They have an institutionalised role in the design of school education in S, where the school authorities must consult the social partners on important issues.

DK

The role of the social partners is institutionalised at the national, sectoral and local levels as well as in the firms themselves. They are involved in the planning, quality and practical content of training as well as apprenticeship exams and qualification needs. Some social partner organisations also deliver education and training courses for adults.

A

The social partners play a significant role, especially in the apprenticeship and adult training sectors. The social partners have equal representation on the Advisory Board on Apprenticeship. Occupational profiles are laid down in agreement with the social partners, who have joint responsibility. Apprenticeship remuneration and some initial and continuing training measures are regulated in collective agreements.

E

The social partner organisations at national level are consulted on training policy as members of the national General Council for Vocational Training. They also play an important role in the development and approval of training plans by enterprises. These plans are supported by public funds, but managed by the social partners. The relevant procedures were laid down in the Agreement on Continuing Vocational Training (1993-1996) and confirmed in the tripartite agreement on this area. The two agreements were amended in December 1996 following the enactment of the Second Agreement on Continuing Vocational Training (valid from 1.1.1997 to 31.12.1997).

B

The role of the social partners in training is institutionalised at federal, regional, sectoral and enterprise levels. Their role at all levels is to set objectives, plan financing and to implement and monitor training policies.

F

The social partners are involved in the development of vocational training policy at the national, sectoral and enterprise levels. They manage the organisations which collect a share of the employer contributions towards vocational training for young people and persons in employment.

D

The social partners' role in training policy is institutionalised through committee participation at federal, Länder and regional level, through works councils at company level and through collective agreements at sectoral level. Their role at all levels is advising on:

- the preparation and the implementation of the policy to ensure quality;
- the content and duration of training;
- the organisation of courses; and
- exam requirements.

Some trade associations and trade unions are also training providers.

FIN

The social partners execute their role through committees and expert bodies. At national level, the Committee for Educational Planning and the Committee for Labour Market Training estimate both the qualitative and quantitative long-term education and training needs. Curricular as well as structural questions are considered in education committees covering the 25 different branches of education which consist of experts, including the social partners. 130 examination boards comprise members nominated by the social partners and teacher organisations. Regional labour market bodies take part in labour market planning.

Social partners

1

GR	<p>The social partners are represented on national advisory councils with responsibility for vocational training policy and vocational training research. They are also represented on the certification committees. In addition, they are involved in the development and implementation of training and counselling programmes when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the training courses are innovative; - cooperation with national and transnational organisations is obligatory; - the trainees are required to contribute to the costs of training. 	NL	<p>The social partners are actively involved in defining/maintaining the national qualification structure through their representatives in the educational field and through sectoral bodies. Involvement of the social partners with vocational education is also reflected in collective agreements, which contain provisions related to initial and continuing training and training leave.</p> <p>In order to solve or diminish sectoral labour market problems, a subsidy scheme for sectoral training projects is being developed. Sectors will receive an amount of max. NLG 7,000 for each unemployed person recruited after having successfully completed training. Cooperation between the social partners and the Employment Service is necessary to this end.</p>
I	<p>Since 1993, the role of the social partners and the arrangements concerning educational policy have been considerably strengthened. The social partners are represented on all ESF monitoring commissions and usually involved in all policy discussions and decisions concerning vocational training. The social partners have also acquired an important function as direct participants in the following practical areas of vocational training policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - national studies on training needs (industrial and crafts sector), - the reform of "dual" contracts (training-cum-work contracts and apprenticeships), - conclusion of agreements at local level in order to deal with emergency employment situations (crisis areas, territorial alliances, etc.). 	P	<p>The social partners share with the government the responsibility for implementing the constitutional right to vocational training. Their role is institutionalised through representation at national level on the Economic and Social Council and the administrative council of the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP) as well as the National Education Council. They also develop their own initial and continuing training programmes for employees. At the sectoral level, they participate in the management of the national network of training centres. A tripartite employment and training observatory was set up in February 1993.</p>
IRL	<p>The social partners are involved in the strategic direction of training policy through representation on the boards of national employment and training authorities and on industrial training committees which direct national policy at industrial sector level. The 1992 Regional Technical Colleges Act and Dublin Institute of Technology Act provide for, inter alia, representation of industry, commerce, agriculture and the professions on the governing bodies of these institutions. The Universities Act, 1997, provides for the representation of organisations that are representative of employers, trade unions, agriculture, fisheries, the professions, business and industry on the governing authority of each university. TEASTAS, the Irish National Certification Authority, is a body established by the government to develop, implement, regulate and supervise the certification of all non-university third-level education programmes as well as all further and continuing education and training programmes. TEASTAS provides a structure for the formal involvement of business and the social partners and will ensure that the needs of business and industry for skilled personnel are met through improved links between these sectors and education and training providers.</p>	S	<p>The social partners have formed sectoral vocational councils at the national level in order to follow and provide a contribution to the consideration of the different issues concerning vocational education. The partners are also represented at the local level. Local school boards are obliged to consult the partners on important issues.</p>
L	<p>The involvement of the social partners is ensured through professional chambers, the members of which are elected. The chambers participate in the drafting of training policy and in its implementation.</p>	UK	<p>Employers are encouraged to take the responsibility for the training and development of their work force as they are best placed to determine their business needs. Trade unions are involved in sectoral working parties to develop standards and competencies, particularly with Modern Apprenticeships. In enterprises, the scope of bargaining and consultation varies.</p>

Private sector

Enterprises are the main providers of initial vocational training in all Member States, although some receive state funding to this end (SMEs, UK). As a rule, such training consists of a combination of work experience in the firm and theoretical education in vocational schools. In S, enterprises are also involved in the provision of practical work experience for university graduates.

Continuing training for employed workers which is funded by their employers exists in almost all Member States. It is provided either in the firm or by private-sector educational establishments. Private enterprises often provide training services within the framework of publicly funded vocational reintegration schemes promoting vocational training for the unemployed.

DK The private sector provides initial and continuing training within an alternance system for employees, young people and the unemployed.

A The private sector provides vocational training mainly within the framework of the in-company component of apprenticeships but also within the system of technical and vocational schools and the Fachhochschule sector. All courses taught in Fachhochschulen (specialised higher education) do, however, receive a federal subsidy, which covers most of the operating costs. Continuing vocational training is largely provided by private institutions, in particular by the social partners (including both in-company and external further training).

E The P.N.F.P. involves the private sector in line with its aim of linking vocational training policy to production needs. Experts from private-sector enterprises are also involved in the development of qualifications for initial and continuing training. Private-sector enterprises draw up plans for in-company training in accordance with the stipulations laid down in the above-mentioned National Agreement on Continuing Training.

B The private sector provides:

- initial training within a dual system;
- continuing training for dependent employees and instructors (public funding is provided for the latter); and
- facilities for adult education and continuing training for the unemployed.

F All socioeconomic actors can act as training providers for continuing training for adults. The private sector participates in initial and continuing training arrangements for young people, on an on-and-off-the-job (alternance) or full-time basis. Actors wishing to participate need only declare their willingness to the relevant authority. A new law regulating approval for organisations from the private sector is in preparation. Training providers will be subject to a probationary period of three years in order to ensure that they have satisfactory financial and administrative arrangements and capacities and that they provide quality services.

D The private sector provides initial training for young people through the dual system. Continuing vocational training is carried out in an open system with many suppliers (enterprises, associations, schools).

FIN The private sector is a provider of both institutional and apprenticeship training, in accordance with an agreement on training between municipal authorities and private companies. The training provided for young and unemployed people taking part in education can be carried out in vocational schools or at the workplace.

Private sector

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| <p>GR The private sector provides training for young people on the basis of an on-and-off-the-job (alternance) dual system and also for employees. Private-sector training may be financed from the public budget. The private sector also participates in research and in pilot projects.</p> | <p>NL The private sector is a provider of training for young people in an on-and-off-the-job (alternance) initial training system and of training for employees.</p> |
| <p>I Italy's further training system includes both enterprises which independently finance and design further training for their employees (mainly managers, middle-level managers and technicians) and enterprises which do so with the help of public (national and European) funding. The main source of funding in the latter case is Objective 4 of the ESF. An exclusively national order was recently introduced to the same end (Circular 174/96 on the application of Article 9, § 3, Law 236/93). The aims of these training initiatives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to adapt skills to the current changes in work organisation, - to prevent the labour market exclusion of employees with a low level of education or training. <p>One of the main problems is that there are only few small and medium-sized enterprises involved in vocational training, both as a whole and in particular in the south of Italy.</p> | <p>P The private sector provides initial training for young people through an on-and-off-the-job (alternance) apprenticeship system, as well as through vocational, technical and other types of schools. Private enterprises also provide continuing training for workers. The private sector receives financial and technical support from the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP) and the Ministry of Education.</p> |
| <p>IRL The private sector provides initial training for young employees through an on-and-off-the-job (alternance) apprenticeship system and continuing training for their own employees.</p> | <p>S The private sector provides initial as well as continuing training. This mainly takes the form of apprenticeship training for young people and on-and-off-the-job continuing training courses. Local resource and community development centres have been developed in some municipalities to stimulate cooperation between public and private organisers of education and training. Some larger enterprises have started in-company vocational education and training at the upper-secondary level in cooperation with municipal schools. Upper-secondary schools have been given the possibility of contracting companies to provide vocational training. A number of university colleges arrange so-called cooperation study programmes, offering a combination of academic studies and work experience in a private enterprise. Various forms of cooperation at the university level exist within the framework of "commissioned" education.</p> |
| <p>L The private sector participates in the training of young people through an on-and-off-the-job (alternance) initial training system and implements training for employees.</p> | <p>UK Private-sector employers take the lead in implementing training policy and the Confederation of British Industry sets the National Targets. TECs/LECs are also led by private-sector employers at the local level. At the sectoral level, the employers are well represented in leading industrial bodies and industrial training bodies. The private sector is also the principal training provider for: young people through the youth training scheme, soon to be replaced by national traineeships; their employees; and training and work experience for unemployed people through publicly funded programmes. The government targets funds to develop training in small firms.</p> |

Quality

The quality of vocational training is ensured by means of national regulations on training and by assessment and monitoring bodies made up of representatives of the social partners, chambers and public institutions. These bodies lay down standards and are responsible for the recognition of qualifications, which are usually uniform at the national level. In some countries, there is also a monitoring system for continuous evaluation of training and continuing training (FIN, NL, GR, S, UK).

The implementation of the international quality standard ISO 9000 constitutes a special system of quality assurance, for which specific bodies exist in some countries (D, F).

- A** Quality is assured in initial vocational training by continuous curriculum update carried out in consultation between the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, the social partners and the Länder. Legally set occupational profiles define the minimum requirements concerning knowledge and skills. The quality of in-company training is monitored by the apprenticeship offices. An accreditation and quality assurance body exists for the Fachhochschule sector. Involvement of the chambers of both sides of industry and the trade unions in the areas of control and monitoring as well as the participation by works councils and youth councils foreseen in constitutional labour law contributes towards the management of the quality and quantity of training supply.
- B** A range of measures are used to maintain quality, including: raising the quality of specialised knowledge; placing unemployed workers who have completed a training measure; quality certificates for training providers and education inspectors; auditing of training providers; vocational counselling.
- D** Standards for in-company vocational training are laid down in the form of minimum legal requirements governing traineeships in state-recognised occupations. Standards for school-based vocational training are laid down in federal state curricula. Quality is assured through a range of methods: the chambers hold statutory counselling and supervisory powers for traineeships and retraining; statutory consumer protection regulations for distance learning; statutory standards for continuing training delivered under the Employment Promotion Act; criteria in legislation at Länder level for the recognition of continuing training institutions; quality assurance systems implemented by training providers in compliance with DIN/ISO 9000; criteria laid down by regional bodies.
- DK** Projects by the national evaluation centre examine different aspects of education and training quality, including : objective factors (e.g. pass rates); organisation and delivery; user evaluation. Other measures include quality certification for training providers.
- E** One of the aims of the National Vocational Training Programme (P.N.F.P.) is to guarantee and improve the quality of vocational training and to ensure its usefulness to industry and society. To this end, the human and material resources invested in vocational training are being increased with a view to guaranteeing a high-quality system. The system of statistical evaluation is being improved through the use of databases and the further development of existing statistical facilities in order that the quality of training may be assessed. Thus maximum benefit can be gained from investment in training.
- F** The "Office professionnel de qualification des organismes de formation (OPQF)" can assess on training providers, taking into account the organisation's structure, the views of its clients and the competence of the trainers. AFNOR standards have just been introduced or are being prepared to provide the framework for the basic definition of a particular occupation. The certificate of quality assurance (AFAQ) is compatible with the international quality standard ISO 9000. AFAQ invites training organisations to put in place quality assurance systems to enable them to clarify their procedures and set up arrangements for ensuring quality. Criteria have been developed which take into account the target groups, the objectives to be achieved and the number of jobseekers. These aim to improve the quality of publicly funded training and the way it is financed.
- FIN** The contents and objectives for initial training are set at national level. An evaluation system is being developed by the National Board of Education which includes self-assessment, external evaluations and evaluations made within a specific educational branch. Adult education has a performance-based examination system for both initial and continuing education and training. This system also applies for all apprenticeship schemes. The overall quality, relevance and effectiveness of education and training is evaluated in a number of research programmes. Indicators, such as share of persons who completed a particular training course now in employment, are in development.

Quality

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| GR | <p>Applications from private enterprises for subsidies for training programmes are assessed on the basis of the following criteria: relevance of the training for enterprise goals; teaching materials, methods, content and duration; and availability of instructors. The quality of the training is improved through official recognition of the programmes by authorised organisations. Minimum standards for training providers have also been established. A national centre for vocational training has been set up to define - under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour - the criteria for the development of continuing training centres.</p> | NL | <p>Legal provisions and guidelines cover the quality and organisation of training, responsibility for which is devolved to the training institutes. In addition to traditional inspection, external expertise is sought to evaluate how training institutions manage quality. Trainers traditionally need to acquire a number of qualifications, defined by the Education Ministry. These qualification requirements are developed from the occupational profiles established by educationalists.</p> |
| I | <p>The quality of training in Italy must be looked at from two perspectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The general quality of training, i.e. the value of vocational training in relation to efforts to combat inactivity and unemployment and to continually adapt the skills of the active labour force. The "Agreement on Employment" lays down the guidelines for improving the overall quality of training in Italy. - The providers (public decision-makers, educational bodies, instructors, etc.) and the participants have a variety of quality requirements, ranging from the way the models are carried out to the implementation of training methods, and from the analysis of training needs to the design, administration and evaluation of intervention measures. The idea of awarding vocational training providers a "quality guarantee certificate" is currently being investigated. The responsible bodies are looking into the possibility of applying the various models covered by the ISO 9000 standard to vocational training. | P | <p>Quality is maintained through legal provisions and guidelines which set minimum standards. In particular for initial training, there are reference frameworks outlining quality criteria. Work has been started on identifying current needs to regulate the training market, with a view to introducing a certification system for vocational training.</p> |
| IRL | <p>A training programme specification standard ensures quality in training design and covers: objectives; instruction methods and materials; assessment systems. A national Standards Committee oversees quality management and policy. There is also some inspection and certification for external training procedures.</p> <p>Measures are being taken to enhance the quality of provision through an intensive and sustained investment in staff development at all levels of the education and training systems, investment in infrastructure, and the promotion of specific equality measures. Of particular importance is also the establishment of TEASTAS, the Irish National Certification Authority responsible for the certification of all non-university vocational education and training programmes provided in both the education and training sectors.</p> | S | <p>The maintenance and improvement of quality rests mainly on a system of monitoring and evaluating the education system. The national agencies and the local authorities, as well as the schools themselves, are important players in this respect.</p> |
| L | <p>The principle of "total quality" has been adopted for vocational training. Some training courses, in particular in the area of welding, adhere to ISO norms. New methods of training are under review, in particular with regard to training courses leading to key qualifications. Quality criteria are being defined by the Ministry of Education and Training in cooperation with the relevant vocational chambers.</p> | UK | <p>Providers of training for government programmes have to be approved and are monitored by TECs in terms of quality and financial contracts. The UK approach is characterised by a focus on outputs. There has been considerable effort to develop standards of competence which are reflected in vocational qualifications. Increased efforts are being made by the government to raise the standards and quality of training with the introduction of new Self Assessment Framework and External Inspection regimes for training providers. Increasingly, training for young people is geared to achieving qualifications, or credits towards them. Contracts for publicly funded provision contain specifications which assure that the process is of high quality and consistently leads to achievement of a qualification. There is, however, ring-fenced provision for those with special training needs.</p> |

Equal opportunities in vocational training

The improvement of employment opportunities for women is dealt with in different ways in the different Member States. Priority measures concern reintegration of women after career interruptions based on special information schemes (B, D, IRL) and targeted use of publicly funded continuing training (A, B, DK, E, F, I, IRL, L, NL, UK). Specific support for working women with children is provided in some countries (B, GR, IRL). Further-reaching legal stipulations, e.g. an obligation on enterprises to promote equal opportunities and positive discrimination, exist in F, FIN and S. Support is also provided to improve the access of women to traditionally male-dominated occupations, for example in B, E, P.

DK

Measures to promote equal opportunities include a one-year vocational education and training programme for adult women.

A

The Employment Service runs special training schemes to train women returning to work, for example employment foundations and employment projects leading to qualifications.

E

In the National Vocational Training Programme, priority is given to women returning to the labour market after a long absence, to disadvantaged persons with extreme difficulties reintegrating into the labour market, to young people without a vocational qualification, to the long-term unemployed and, especially, to the disabled. These groups are also given priority in the "Plan for Training and Continuing Training", which focuses on the unemployed. This plan applies the principle of equality in the selection of trainees. Support is provided or measures within the education system to facilitate the access of girls to traditionally male-dominated occupations.

B

Equal opportunities are promoted through positive action for women, including: information and advice; training in non-traditional occupations; and support for women with children.

F

Business training plans must indicate action being taken to promote equal opportunities. There is also modular training provision for women returning to the labour market. Pilot training projects, financed in part by the state, are currently being carried out to examine ways of diversifying employment for women.

D

Equal opportunities measures include support for women with low qualifications and advice and guidance to reintegrate them into working life after a long absence from the labour market. In addition, support may be provided for the care of family members of women wishing to return to work.

FIN

Equal opportunities are supported by means of positive discrimination in the general selection procedure.

Equal opportunities in vocational training

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- GR** Equal opportunities are promoted through increased support for women with children or other responsibilities. Training is also provided for people with disabilities.
- NL** Along with specific help directed at qualifying women for the labour market, educational policy also aims at equal opportunities within the initial education and training system. The policy on equal opportunities is not restricted to gender issues, but is also directed at opportunities for disadvantaged target groups such as migrants, the handicapped and people with insufficient qualifications.
- I** Training for women can be divided into the following categories:
 - "non-discriminatory" vocational training, the aim being equal participation by women in training courses provided by the Ministry of Labour and the regions;
 - vocational training tailored specifically to women and their particular needs and employment/reemployment prospects. Law 125/91 provides for the definition of a minimum standard of equal opportunities in ESF vocational training projects which are cofinanced by the regions.
 The action plan developed within the NOW programme (EU) also gives substantial consideration to gender differences; the Leonardo programme does so to a lesser extent and only for particularly innovative projects. Although equal opportunities have become more widespread, there is room for necessary improvements, especially as regards the formulation of specific proposals concerning content, types of management and employment opportunities through vocational training for women.
- P** Training measures target young and adult women to assist their personal and vocational development. Activities include: basic vocational training and education; training in management and new employment fields; training in traditional crafts; and training for women in traditional and male-dominated occupations.
- IRL** Positive action measures, in particular advice and retraining programmes, are provided to help women reintegrate into the labour market after a long period of absence. These measures are included in the Operational Programme for Human Resources 1994-1999. Two programmes of action have been introduced in the education sector, targeted at supporting Women's Education Groups and providing child-care support for participants on second-chance education and training programmes, particularly the Youthreach programme (early school leavers) and VTOS (long-term unemployed). Participation in EU pilot programmes and initiatives has also promoted equality of opportunity for women. A key objective of public policy is to maximise access to suitable programmes for persons who wish or need to update their occupational skills and to continue their personal development, irrespective of their educational and training attainments. Existing provision within the education sector includes general and continuing education and training and second-chance education, including the Vocational Training Opportunities scheme, Youthreach and the Adult Literacy Community Education scheme.
- S** The government has presented a bill aiming to improve equal opportunities within the entire field of education. The bill sets a number of goals, with the overall objective that gender equality should permeate all aspects of education.
- L** Public training provision seeks to help women to reintegrate into the labour market after a long period of absence.
- UK** TECs and LECs are required to implement an equal opportunities strategy across their activities. This includes choosing one performance target within youth training programmes and one for adult training programmes in terms of participation and outcomes either for people with disabilities, ethnic minority groups or by gender (either men or women). There is provision within TEC programmes for the benefit of women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, older workers and offenders. People with severe disabilities are trained at 15 centrally funded residential colleges. There is also funding for the extra cost of customised local training as an alternative to residential provision.

Provision of training

In the area of continuing training, special priority is given to the (re)integration of low-skilled workers. All the Member States have schemes seeking to furnish the unemployed and other target groups with qualifications. In addition to continuing training for all categories of the employed, there is also special support to promote continuing training in SMEs (B, D, F, IRL, UK).

In almost all countries, general education is provided and financed alongside initial training by public institutions.

DK Basic or advanced education and training is provided for adults, along with open education courses (part-time further, general and vocational education); public training provision for skilled and semi-skilled workers; enterprise-oriented courses to meet specific business needs; training provisions for unemployed people; self-employment support programmes.

A Initial vocational training is the basis of lifelong learning. A broad range of training programmes are available to adults. Both social partners have established their own continuing training institutions. Collective agreements and company promotion arrangements encourage the uptake of continuing training opportunities. There is a large number of training providers: private and public-sector agencies and institutions run by the social partners. Special support for measures for the long-term unemployed, disabled persons and those disadvantaged in the labour market. In the "second-chance" education and training sector (courses for persons in employment), instruction and examinations have been adapted to suit the needs of adults. A special code of instruction is used for adult education in vocational courses for persons in employment; distance-learning elements are used in the curricula.

E Individuals already integrated into working life can benefit from initial vocational training as well as vocational training, which are aimed both at unemployed people and those already employed in enterprises. The training courses available are listed in a catalogue of professional diplomas which can be acquired within the education system and in a directory of professional qualifications compiled by the Ministry of Labour. In addition to training provided under the National Accord for Continuing Vocational Training (Dec. 1996) by the public authorities, other informal training is also available.

B Basic education and initial training programmes for adults; adult education with an emphasis on personal development; training for social advancement (evening and weekend courses, general education and vocational training); training courses for dependent employees, the unemployed and the self-employed; support for training measures in SMEs.

F Continuing training schemes for employees and unemployed people; basic education and training for low-skilled adults; education for social and cultural advancement; training for workers in SMEs.

D Continuing training and general education measures are provided for adults with few qualifications. There is also: in-school continuing training for trade and technical specialisms; advanced and further training for employees; training measures for unemployed people; and support from public funds for training in SMEs.

FIN Initial, adult and labour market training is mainly provided by vocational institutes and universities. A second chance for basic vocational education is provided both through the institution-based programmes as well as through competence-based approaches. Short courses are provided on a large scale by different actors. Almost half of Finland's employees take part in training activities every year. A system of language tests has been established on the basis of the Act on Public Language Examinations (1994) to promote the linguistic skills of adults. Adult education systems are designed to take prior learning into account. The competence-based examination system has been devised to also make full use of prior work experience and informal learning.

Provision of training

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GR	General and vocational further education for adults: for employees, to improve their career prospects; for low-skilled employees; and for the unemployed. The training levy on employers has been fixed at 0.45% of the wage bill.	NL	The provision of adult education is divided between publicly funded and commercial educational services. A distinction is made between "second chance education and training" (disadvantaged target groups), training for the (long-term) unemployed and training of the active labour force, and adult education for personal development. Government policy is directed at increasing transparency of the market of publicly and privately funded educational services for adults.
I	1. TRAINING PROGRAMMES	P	Basic and secondary-school education for adults is provided by the Ministry of Education. Vocational training for both the employed and unemployed and manager training for SMEs and cooperatives are provided by the IEFP.
IRL	Training measures exist for: basic adult education; training of employees, in particular, those affected by industrial change; low-qualified employees; workers in SMEs; employees in new industries locating in Ireland; managers; unemployed people; and training for self-employment. The FAS Training Support Scheme (TSS) is designed to increase and improve training within Irish Business and it is aimed at improving the skills of existing employees at all levels in order to increase competitiveness, quality and productivity. TSS is open to firms engaged in manufacturing industry, internationally trading services (including non-manufacturing construction firms trading internationally), physical distribution, and in the wholesale, retail and motor sectors. The training need must be clearly identified and linked to a business plan or strategy within the firm's development and training plan framework. Training grants are targeted at smaller firms and priority is given to training pro-grammes where formally recognised certification exists.	S	Training programmes for employed and unemployed people are provided by different training units. Education for adults is provided by the municipalities covering compulsory and upper-secondary level, universities and university colleges, as well as the industrial and the commercial sector.
L	There are training programmes (basic education) for long-term unemployed people with no professional qualifications; jobseekers wishing to return to the labour market or change jobs; jobseekers with professional qualification who have difficulties in finding a job in line with their skills and expectations.	UK	Cf. 1.x: Resent measures. Employers are encouraged to develop their employees voluntarily: the Investors in People Standard sets the benchmark. There is extensive provision for training and vocational education for young people and adults, including the unemployed. This covers vocational skills, enterprise training and basic skills, through both traditional courses and open and flexible learning. The Small Firms Training Loans Scheme provides deferred repayment loans to help firms of up to 50 employees to improve their employees' skills in order to increase productivity and growth. Loans can be used for training costs or for consultancy advice on training matters. Assistance is available to small firms through TECs to meet skills, training and development needs.

Promoting access to training

Access to continuing training is subject to very different regulations in the different Member States. It is usually regulated via collective agreements for employees, with the social partners laying down the duration and remuneration of training leave. There is a standard legal basis for this in S and FIN.

Access to continuing training is facilitated through support provided within the framework of labour market policy, especially for persons threatened by unemployment or who have a reduced capacity to work. In-company continuing training measures are supported in some companies. Unemployed workers and other target groups in continuing training have a legal right to financial support from the employment service, which may be provided in the form of loans. In addition, tax concessions are a further incentive to participate in continuing training activities.

All in all, there are large differences between the Member States - but also between sectors and age groups - as regards the participation of employed workers and other target groups in continuing training.

- A** In the interest of providing a choice of vocational training, vocational counselling and information services are available in cooperation between school officials and the Employment Service during compulsory education. Access to public-sector schools and higher education institutions is usually free, including courses for persons in employment. Fees must only be paid for third-level programmes and courses. Cash benefits are provided to cover vital needs for unemployed persons in a retraining programme. Short-term assistance is available to employees seeking further qualifications via the "second-chance" route. Some companies finance continuing training for their employees.
- B** The object of paid training leave is to provide workers with an opportunity to participate in general educational or vocational training schemes. The costs to the employer are covered (in total or in part) from public funds. Tax relief is granted for individual training expenses, and benefits and supplements are available to unemployed persons undergoing training. There are also measures to promote training for "risk groups": disabled workers, workers threatened by unemployment, long-term unemployed and older workers. Employers who recruit workers requiring training benefit from reduced social security contributions. There is a training levy on employers of 0.15% of the wage bill (1993/94). The Brussels Region also provides grants for up to 12 months to employers recruiting unemployed people who face particular difficulties in finding a job.
- D** Ten Länder have educational leave laws implemented through collective agreements. Most provide 5 days per year. Federal and Länder grants are available for investments in training facilities and for individuals. Special "target groups" for training support are: the long-term unemployed; older workers; younger workers; and workers in SMEs. Payments are also made to unemployed people in training.
- DK** There is free access to many continuing training courses and programmes. Up to 1 year's leave for approved adult education or vocational training courses can be provided, during which trainees receive unemployment benefits (which can be supplemented by the employer). Adult employees with low educational attainment can take part in general and vocational education courses during working hours. Training is provided for "risk groups" - people with disabilities and ethnic minorities. Financial support for unemployed people whilst training.
- E** Access to initial training is ensured through the provision of information to those seeking training and through the growing number of training centres. The majority of secondary education institutes also provide vocational training. Access to continuing training is also guaranteed through collective agreements. To promote and stimulate these agreements, the Second National Agreement on Continuing Training in enterprises, signed in 1996, provides for cofinancing from public funds of the costs of training plans in enterprises or joint training plans (involving several enterprises) for SMEs with less than 100 people. The link between initial and continuing training is ensured by the connection between the diplomas for initial training and the certificates for adults participating in training at different stages throughout their working life. Under certain conditions of collective agreements, workers can also have the right to training leave for vocational education.
- F** Firms are required to indicate their training priorities (as determined by their needs) and to identify the measures they have planned for low-skilled workers. The government encourages enterprises to provide training for the low skilled and for older workers threatened by unemployment. Enterprises contribute 0.2% of their annual gross wage bill to the fund for financing training leave. The duration of training leave and its funding arrangements are legally regulated and vary from sector to sector. Publicly funded training programmes are also provided for jobseekers.
- FIN** Legal rights to study leave for employees were introduced in the 1980s. The adult study support system assists adults participating in education on their own initiative. Employers finance self-motivated vocational education for adult employees through a fund administered by the social partners. The unemployment assistance fund is used to finance employment-related training. A new experimental system to improve the long-term unemployed's access to training is being launched. In the new system, the unemployed can participate in all types of long-term vocational training without losing their unemployment benefit. A further increase for basic and further training was implemented by the government during 1994 in response to youth unemployment. This resulted in additional access to training for almost half of the age cohort.

Promoting access to training

GR	<p>Access to training is regulated on the basis of an agreement between the employer and the employee. Many vocational training programmes are free of charge and training allowances are also provided. Special target groups for training include: people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and the low skilled. Training programmes are currently being developed in traditional occupations (handicrafts, silversmiths, etc.) which lead to employment. Tax concessions are available for training leading to certain qualifications. Employers pay a training levy amounting to 0.45% of the wage bill, which is refunded when they organise approved training programmes. Further cooperation with the social partners is to result in access to continuing training throughout working life.</p>	NL	<p>Training leave is implemented through collective agreements. On average 1 to 3 days per year are granted, but in exceptional cases leave can be for between 8 and 10 days. Priority groups for publicly funded training measures are low-skilled workers; long-term unemployed people; ethnic minorities; people with disabilities; and workers in small and medium-sized enterprises. Grants are available for unemployed people whilst training. In order to stimulate (unpaid) leave for training, care or other reasons, a subsidy scheme for employees is under consideration by the government.</p>
I	<p>Persons in receipt of benefits from the Wage Compensation Fund or of mobility allowances may participate in retraining courses. The aim is to reintegrate the unemployed or to provide them with skills enabling them to enter self-employment.</p> <p>1. PROJECTS FINANCED BY VIRTUE OF LAW 236/93</p>	P	<p>Access to vocational training is a constitutional right. The legislation in force provides for training grants for workers, while unpaid training leave for training courses is provided within the framework of the social dialogue. Technical and financial aid (in the form of loans or grants) is provided to public and private training providers for training materials and equipment. Allowances are paid to unemployed people in training. Priority groups for public training programmes are: low-qualified workers, in particular those in SMEs, people with disabilities, the long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities and workers affected by industrial change. The aim is to facilitate the integration of vocational training objectives into the strategic human resources plans established by the enterprises.</p>
IRL	<p>There is a levy/grant system for some sectors of industry which involves a net payment of 0.1 % of payroll to FAS. Where a firm carries out satisfactory training to meet its own needs, refunds are given. Priority groups for publicly funded programmes are long-term unemployed people and people with disabilities. Payments are made to unemployed people in training. To encourage individuals to keep their skills and knowledge up to date, the White Paper on Human Resources Development has introduced a training tax allowance. This applies to approved training and development courses leading to a recognised qualification.</p>	S	<p>Access is promoted through legal rights to educational leave for the individual as well as a state-funded system of financial aid to students. This system applies to all types of education for people between 20 and 45 years of age. In order to facilitate access to higher education, experiments are currently being carried out to offer higher education using new technology, i.e. interactive video.</p>
L	<p>Some sectoral collective agreements provide for paid special leave for training to further the interests of the enterprise. Negotiations are under way at national level on regulating access and exercising the right to training. Priority groups for public training measures include the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities and workers affected by industrial change. Financial support is provided to unemployed people in training.</p>	UK	<p>The University for Industry will open up access to learning in the home, the workplace and the community through the use of new technologies. Its cornerstone will be a new national telephone helpline, "Learning Direct", which will help users to access information on learning and support issues such as paying for learning and child care. Access to training and to paid training leave are matters for agreement between employers and employees. Tax relief and subsidised loans are available to individuals paying for training leading to national vocational qualifications. The Investors in People initiative promotes the integration of training and development into company business plans and objectives. Allowances are paid to unemployed people whilst training. Those eligible for public training programmes include long-term unemployed people; people with disabilities; ethnic minorities; people affected by redundancy; and labour market returners.</p>

Recognition of informal training or work experience

Informally acquired vocational training and experience are recognised in many Member States. In some countries (e.g. DK, F, GR, L, UK), certificates are awarded when certain standards have been met or when a formal qualification may be proven on the basis of work experience. Certification is still in the development stage in some countries (IRL, NL), i.e. clear standards for recognition have yet to be laid down by the vocational training authorities.

DK Vocational Training for Adults (VTA) provides possibilities in nearly all vocational training courses to complete a vocational education with full recognition of training and work experience.

A People who have not spent the usual time at school or in apprenticeship can enter for the final apprenticeship examination if they are at least 20 and can submit evidence that the knowledge and skills required have been acquired in another way (work experience in a relevant field or attendance at relevant courses).
Persons with an upper-secondary vocational qualification who have completed three years of work experience are entitled to use the title "Ingenieur"; after three further years of work experience they can take an examination to qualify for the corresponding college diploma.
Access to the master craftsman qualification or the certificate of occupational competence (necessary for self-employment and business start-ups) generally presupposes that the candidate has gathered relevant work experience.

E Basic vocational education is part of secondary-level schooling between the ages of 12 and 16 and part of the "bachillerato" (16-18). Vocational education is also offered as part of post-compulsory "middle-level" (16-18) and "higher-level" (18-20) education. It is provided on a modular basis, with duration varying with the occupation concerned. Those over the age limit can obtain access to the relevant level by taking an entry examination.
Workers who have completed training under a training contract and passed the required examinations may apply to the authorities for a certificate confirming the fact that they have work experience, which they can use later on the labour market.

B

F New methods of recognition for informally acquired knowledge or experience fall into four categories:
- the individual right to skills assessment (bilan de compétences), enabling all persons in employment to obtain information concerning their abilities and potentials;
- the possibility to acquire many of the national qualifications as an "external candidate" in circumvention of the usual academic route;
- recognition of professional experience, enabling partial access to existing qualifications. Thus, persons who have worked for a minimum of 5 years can have their professional experience taken into account in order to satisfy some of the knowledge and skills requirements for certain qualifications;
- sector-related recognition.

D Informal work experience is not generally recognised or validated by the state. However, work experience is a statutory prerequisite for:
- participation in the external examination scheme;
- the acquisition of continuing training qualifications.
In all other cases, the definition, recognition and the account taken of work experience is left to the labour market.

FIN

Recognition of informal training or work experience

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| <p>GR A working group in the Greek Ministry of Education is investigating the question of recognition and certification for informal training or work experience. The target groups of the schools for continuing vocational training (founded in 1968) are a) employed adults and b) persons augmenting their training with additional specialisations. Informal training and practical work experience may be certified under certain conditions in the case of legally recognised occupations.</p> | <p>NL The decentralised and open character of the national qualification structure provides for a bottom-up definition of attainment targets by sectoral social partners and educationalists, resulting in a qualification structure applicable to any learning route leading up to these attainment targets. The government urges schools and national bodies to develop assessment procedures in pilot projects regarding the recognition of informal training or work experience, which are to be mainstreamed in their regular practice.</p> |
| <p>I The "Agreement on Employment" foresees the development of a system for recognising "training credits", regardless of their source, and stipulates that a system be established for the recognition of formally and informally acquired work experience. It is essential that the effects of skill recognition are not only considered from the point of view of reintegrating workers into the further training system, but also as regards the recognition of acquired skills in order to be able to determine appropriate wage levels. Experiments have been started with the recognition of work experience and informal vocational training, especially within the framework of the Leonardo programme and a national programme implemented by ISFOL and co-financed by the ESF which is to define training standards at national level.</p> | <p>P An academic and vocational qualification system is being implemented which incorporates the recognition of skills and experience gained outside the formal education and training system.</p> |
| <p>IRL The National Education and Training Certification Authority - TEASTAS - which was established in 1995, will be responsible for the establishment, direction, supervision and regulation of a national qualifications framework. The recognition of informal training and/or work experience will be considered by the Authority. FAS has utilised APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning) in respect of training in a number of pilot areas.</p> | <p>S</p> |
| <p>L Informal training and work experience are validated by the Ministry of Education and Training in consultation with the relevant vocational chambers. Validation is carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Training where it concerns the application of the minimum wage.</p> | <p>UK National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and their Scottish equivalents (SVQs) describe the standards required for an individual to become competent in an occupation, but not the route. They allow for the recognition of competence developed informally through experience gained in the workplace. Candidates must provide evidence that they meet the standards (which are set by employers) defined in the qualification. Competence may be demonstrated by written or oral evidence. Previously acquired achievements are recognized through Accreditation of Prior Learning. A candidate for such recognition is required to register with an approved NVQ centre, normally an employer or a college.</p> |

Skill needs

Regular studies on trends regarding skill needs are carried out in the Member States. National research programmes initiated and financed by the state and the social partners provide analyses of training needs which are then to be incorporated in the planning of training content. These usually long-term analyses and recommendations from expert commissions contrast with the Swedish model, which is seeking to set up an observation system which reacts directly to changes in labour market requirements. National surveys are augmented in some Member States by regional or local studies (e.g. A, F, GR, I, UK) and skills analyses by employers (F, P, UK).

DK

Trade and branch committees study training and qualification needs through qualification analysis and on the basis of close contact with companies on training and skill needs.

A

Future skills and training needs are identified on the basis of a series of studies carried out on the initiative of the social partners within the framework of the Advisory Council on Economic and Social Affairs. Constant communication between representatives of the two sides of industry makes it possible to update the knowledge and skills necessary for working life. Qualification needs surveys are also carried out by the Federal Ministry of Employment, Health and Social Affairs, the Employment Service and at regional level. Formal surveys of skill needs are carried out on an ongoing basis.

E

A system of skill needs analysis has been introduced which includes sectoral studies to examine the characteristics of production processes and the changes in occupations. On the basis of these studies, training provision is revised. Jobseekers pass a vocational skills test which shows the level of their skills and their training needs in the light of the type of work which is available and the vacancies offered in enterprises. Both the Framework Agreement on Vocational Training Policy and the Second National Vocational Training Programme provide for the establishment of a National Institute for Vocational Certification as a technical component of the Vocational Training Council. The functions of the Institute will be to set up decentralised observatories for skill developments - in cooperation with the social partners - and to compile a database on qualification trends.

B

Skill needs research undertaken by the Labour Ministries of the two language communities includes analysis of vacancies and programme take-up and study commissions on specific labour market and training issues.

F

Studies of skill needs are undertaken (and cofinanced by the government) in sectors identified in consultation with the social partners. These focus on future economic developments and their impact on skill needs. A network of regional employment and training observatories also provide statistical information on training activities and carry out studies on training, employment and skill needs. At local level, studies and activities may be carried out by representatives of the public authorities and enterprises to examine areas experiencing recruitment difficulties.

D

Skill needs and assessments are carried out by the Federal Government and the training authorities analysing training behaviour, qualification profiles and labour conditions. Other forecasts are commissioned examining demographic changes and labour needs.

FIN

The Ministry of Labour is responsible for describing developments in working structures, job classifications and qualifications. The Committee for Educational Planning publishes its opinion on long-term trends in the different economic sectors. Labour market training systematically anticipates regional labour market needs. Research efforts and database systems on core skills and qualification needs are being strengthened to establish systematic anticipation of required qualifications.

Skill needs

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| GR | <p>Skill needs are identified by a tripartite committee in each prefecture set up by the OEEK (Office for Vocational Further Training). Skill needs research is carried out by the OEEK within the framework of the EU's FORCE programme.</p> | NL | <p>Through active involvement of sectoral social partners in defining standards for qualifications, the national vocational qualification structure is updated to adapt to qualitative changes in skill needs.</p> |
| I | <p>Essential experience has been gained at the level of both basic education (school, university, regional training programmes) and further training. These can provide inputs for the entire training system which will help to forecast skill and training needs. Thus, the bilateral commissions in the industrial and crafts sectors were charged with carrying out two nationwide studies in order to establish the constituent parts of future comprehensive models. A third study is being coordinated by the Federated Chamber of Industry. The aim of all studies is to standardise procedures which will then constitute clear links, on the basis of which training provisions can be developed not only quantitatively but also qualitatively.</p> | P | <p>An analysis of qualification needs is being developed at national level for the medium and long term, taking into account: professional groupings, labour forecasts in different sectors and - especially - new occupational profiles. Short-term skill and training needs of businesses are established through data collected from companies (the latest information relates to 1993-95). The Employment and Training Observatory has been created with a view to identifying the qualification needs of the working population in the short and medium term.</p> |
| IRL | <p>Future skill needs are assessed through an occupational manpower forecasting model. This model currently provides forecasts for the period to 1998 and examines demographic trends, sectoral composition of employment, changing qualification needs, labour demand and occupational profiles. Other studies of skill shortages based on vacancy analysis are carried out. Sectoral manpower studies aim to identify manpower and training needs over a 5-10 year period.</p> | S | <p>The keyword is flexibility. The aim is to devise a system which is able to respond immediately response to changes in the environment, i.e. to adapt to new technologies and new demands from the labour market as well as from potential students, etc. Thus, this approach attaches less weight to long-term forecasting.</p> |
| L | <p>The National Institute for the Development of Continuing Training is currently carrying out an evaluation of skill needs, training measures and methodologies in cooperation with the professional chambers.</p> | UK | <p>An annual analysis of labour market skills trends looks at how skill needs are affected by the changing distribution of employment between occupations and also how skill needs are changing within occupations (for example, as a result of technological change). Skill needs at sector level are regularly analysed and fed into competence-based qualification standards. Local labour market research is carried out by TECs/LECs and shared with colleges of further education, while some employers undertake skills needs analysis. The government surveys the scale and pattern of medium and large employers' recruitment difficulties annually, including the specific occupations affected. The survey also looks at the incidence of training and employers' awareness of initiatives relating to training and skills.</p> |

Orientation of training towards the information society

During recent years, information and communication technology has become an object for vocational training reform in all Member States. The concrete realisation of vocational training oriented towards the information society has proceeded at a different pace in the different countries. In some countries, the content of vocational training has been redefined, in others the infrastructure for future vocational training has been improved in that schools or continuing training providers have been equipped accordingly (S, FIN, UK, NL, IRL, P). EU schemes play an important role in the implementation of national initiatives.

DK Computer-based training and interactive video materials are used by some employers and training providers in the public sector. New forms of learning and new teaching methods are also being implemented in the public sector.

A A foundation course in information and communication technologies is compulsory at all schools. Handling modern technologies is part of all curricula but is particularly important in the intermediate and upper-secondary vocational education sector and in the apprenticeship sector, where new technologies are encountered automatically but with different weightings during in-company training. A large number of continuing training measures concentrate on modern technology.

E Training courses incorporate both the theory and the use of new technology. New training techniques using new technology are tested in special centres, before being disseminated and applied more generally.

B

F New technological developments are taken into account when qualifications are reassessed. A research centre on the use of new technology is currently being set up.

D

New distance-learning materials are being developed, including multimedia learning programmes and interactive systems. New occupations are being developed and existing occupations brought up to date at a considerably faster pace than formerly. Of the 17 new occupations created in 1996 and 1997, seven were in the areas of media and information technology. Less restrictive regulations concerning the content of training do more justice than previously to the accelerated pace of technical change.

FIN Information technology is a compulsory part of vocational education and training. The focus of current development is on multimedia and telecommunications technology. A data network for teaching (Edu.fi) as well as an open electronic mail forum (Freenet) has been developed for schools. Internet is being widely used by schools and institutes. The government has published development targets for the information society. The information network also covers vocational education.

Orientation of training towards the information society

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GR During the last year, the use and application of new technology has been an integral part of secondary education. The OEEK is developing a distance-learning programme linking three vocational training institutes. Other measures include:

- computerisation and establishment of networks linking OAED (National Organisation for Labour Market Policy) training centres;
- a proposal to carry out pilot projects to combat social exclusion;
- distance-learning programmes for the population of the Cyclades islands; and
- training of instructors in multimedia teaching methods.

NL Links with associated European actions have been established, and will continue from 1995 onwards in synergy with the LEONARDO/community initiatives/R&D Programmes of the EU. Themes linked with new opportunities in telematics (such as the access of educational institutes to the electronic highway) are currently prioritised. Recently, the Dutch government published a plan concerning the intensified use of information and communication technology in initial and vocational education and teacher training.

I In accordance with the provisions of the white paper entitled "Teaching and learning. Towards the information society", vocational training is closely oriented towards the following goals:

- introduction of modules for the provision of basic skills in data-processing and telecommunications, with particular emphasis on the operation of databases and networks;
- production of multimedia aids for self-education and distance-learning with the aim of increasing the flexibility of the training on offer and adapting it to the requirements of individual learning;
- establishment of public centres which are to collect and distribute multimedia products at local level to allow the various users the best possible application of the products;
- development of models to control the quality of the available multimedia products and for adapting the skills of the personnel employed in implementing the training measures and projects.

P Particular importance is given to the integration of new technology into education and training programmes, as well as to specific training in new technology. Other initiatives which have been developed and implemented in educational establishments within the framework of EU programmes are:

- MINERVA (youth training);
- FORTA (teacher training);
- IVA (integrating students into working life).

A Council Resolution in March 1996 created a working group to set up general and sectoral measures to develop the information society. Schools are to be equipped with computers and Internet access within the framework of the Nónio XXI programme.

IRL Measures to improve the quality of training are included in the Operational Programme for Human Resources 1994-1999. They lay heavy emphasis on responding to technological change, both in the content of vocational training and in the delivery methods used.

A Schools IT 2000 Project has been approved. This will involve the support of all 4,000 schools in the state in acquiring, by the end of the year 2000, Information and Communication Technology, training and curriculum materials and an Internet connection. In particular, the project will focus on using ICTs to support the achievement of educational goals.

S A computer network has been organised and offered to all schools in Sweden by the National Agency for Education. The network aims at introducing the prospects of utilising computers in a more systematic and integrated way in educational activities. The National Agency for Education is running a project, embracing 40 schools, to this end. The Agency has been commissioned by the government to develop a policy for the use of computers in schools. A commission has been appointed with the task of promoting the widespread use of information technology.

L Research and development is promoted and carried out by public research centres. These centres are also responsible for organising transfer of technology between the public and private sectors. They advise enterprises on the use of new technology and on dissemination of information and offer training courses where executives can update their knowledge of modern technologies.

UK The UK's well-established open and flexible learning infrastructure increasingly uses new technology. More large companies and institutions are using electronic networks for learning, and private sector training suppliers are experimenting with the Internet to supply individuals as well as companies. The government is setting up an advisory service for employers on technology-based training and forming partnerships with industry to raise IT awareness, especially among excluded and disadvantaged people. The Further Education sector has embarked on a major IT training programme for all staff, and continues to develop the use and coverage of networks as part of its promotion of information and learning technologies. Broadcasting is used extensively by The Open University, and other education and training is available on the BBC's The Learning Zone. There is a steady increase in universities connecting to the SuperJANET broadband network, over which some high-level vocational training takes place.

Industrial change

In all Member States, workers affected by unemployment have access to adjustment aid in the form of publicly funded retraining schemes and financial support. Employees in industries undergoing structural change thus comprise the main target group. Efforts which begin at the point of threatened job loss constitute the main type of support, in order that unemployment may be prevented from the start through continuing training and retraining.

DK Workers affected by industrial change are a priority group for retraining through publicly funded measures and programmes.

A Government-supported schemes are available to retrain workers whose jobs are affected by and at risk because of industrial change. Companies, too, are also investing more in manpower resource development.

E The Framework Agreement on Vocational Training Policy also covers workers affected by industrial change. The Second National Agreement on Continuing Vocational Training provides for financial support for the retraining of workers threatened with unemployment. Funding to this end is also provided through EU initiatives and from the European Social Fund.

B Workers affected by industrial change are an "at risk" group and a priority for retraining through publicly funded measures and programmes.

F Workers threatened by industrial change are a priority group for publicly funded retraining programmes. In addition, the fact that the government, professional associations and enterprises have signed agreements committing themselves to developing training means that the skill needs of enterprises can be anticipated in advance and workers prepared in good time for changes to their working environment.

D Public funds are available for measures to retrain workers affected by industrial change, who are considered a priority group. An action plan for retraining workers has been implemented in the new Länder.

FIN Workers affected by industrial as well as other changes in the labour market are guided towards publicly funded labour market re-training programmes. Anticipation of industrial change in risk sectors gives companies the possibility of publicly funded training of personnel. Development projects for SMEs include investments in human resources.

Industrial change

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| <p>GR Workers affected by industrial change are a priority group for support from publicly funded training measures.</p> | <p>NL Policy regarding innovation in vocational training is moving towards an integral policy for further development of the national "knowledge infrastructure" in an international perspective. A priority issue is "transference" of R&D results to the labour force through initial and continuing training. Furthermore, the importance of "key qualifications" is being increasingly stressed in view of the need for lifelong learning.</p> |
| <p>I Consideration is given to industrial change in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - application of national/European measures and funds for early localisation of changes in occupational groups and of sectoral crises; - implementation of retraining for workers in order to guarantee their further employment in the event of foreseeable industrial change; - implementation of further training measures for workers who have left the labour market due to a low level of education with a view to their reintegration following participation in retraining courses; - use of further training to stimulate the establishment of new enterprises in certain regions which are severely affected by economic crises and large-scale industrial change, especially in the "new occupational fields designated by the European Commission. | <p>P Workers affected by industrial change are a priority group for support from publicly funded training programmes; similarly, they can take advantage of specific measures for social security and reintegration into employment.</p> |
| <p>IRL Workers affected by industrial change are a priority group for publicly funded training provision. The Operational Programme for Human Resources 1994-1999 includes measures to facilitate adaptation to industrial change.</p> | <p>S Workers affected by industrial change or "at risk" becoming unemployed are a priority group for retraining through publicly funded measures and programmes. In order to raise general qualifications in the labour force, the government has proposed a programme which aims at encouraging people with work experience to attend studies at university level. The programme includes the introduction of special eligibility requirements as well as a more generous financial aid for those concerned. This measure addresses people with additional needs in formal education as a precondition for further vocational development.</p> |
| <p>L Workers affected by industrial change are a priority group for publicly funded training measures. A particular target group for retraining and further training are employees in the iron and steel industry. In addition to external training, there is an in-company further training model with the aim of preparing employees for new jobs within their own company. Partial funding of the measure through the Employment Fund (Fond pour l'emploi) is contingent on the workers being retained on open-ended contracts and being transferred to a suitable job on completion of training. The Employment Fund covers two-thirds of the costs of such measures.</p> | <p>UK Consultancy and advice is available to companies undergoing industrial change. Workers in large-scale redundancies can receive immediate access to publicly funded training courses.</p> |

Transfer of innovation and good practice

Vocational training is in a permanent process of adjustment to new technology and labour market needs. The actors in the individual Member States implement innovations in vocational training in different ways. The common characteristics are continuous further training of instructors and the use of new technology. Methodological and didactic innovations are first introduced at the experimental and then at regional, national or Community level. Community schemes such as LEONARDO are particularly important for the small countries as regards knowledge transfer at EU level.

DK

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Common-core curricula for related fields of training, especially in secondary colleges for engineering, allow for flexibility in the choice of specialisms.

Staff teaching the theory of or developing skills in a given occupational field must themselves have several years of experience in industry or business (depending on the occupational field concerned).

Training for trainers and the aptitude test for trainers includes drawing up learning goals suitable for the occupational profile concerned, planning in-company training, preparing, implementing and monitoring the training, and conduct of the trainer vis-à-vis the trainee. Training manuals for trainers are developed by the training institutes.

Establishment of trainer circles to encourage the exchange of views and information on new training methods.

Experimentation of new training routes through school-based pilot projects, the establishment of initial and continuing training networks and special promotion for qualification schemes. Priority importance is given to training opportunities for persons in employment using modular part-time and distance-learning elements.

E

Based on internal and external data, the public employment service (INEM) has set up a Qualifications Observatory as an instrument for labour market analysis with a view to achieving three basic aims: a) an overview of (national, regional and local) labour markets and the factors which affect them; b) analysis of labour market trends; c) acquisition of sufficient information on the development and evaluation of plans and programmes related to employment.

B

Numerous actors at various levels (enterprises, social partners, training entities, school, government, etc.) are involved in EU-wide programmes to promote vocational training (LEONARDO, ADAPT, Telematic Application, MKP, Socrates, etc.). The extensive involvement of various actors both increases the transparency and provides a better overview of the range of measures and leads to improved possibilities for access.

F

Innovation is developed by "open learning" provided by different training providers and based on multimedia materials. Two campaigns have been undertaken to promote training using multimedia materials and open and distance-learning. Open learning is being developed for jobseekers in several regions on a trial basis, providing short-term and individualised courses, principally for training in information technology. The training authorities, and especially the Délégation à la Formation Professionnelle, have also improved training organisations' access to multi-media products.

D

Alongside policy-driven and practice-driven innovation in the field of vocational training, there is also a substantial element of innovation which originates in research. The innovation process is decentralised. The main contributors are private bodies engaged in initial and continuing vocational training, the social partners and government agencies. The main instruments available are state-subsidised pilot projects and programmes, regulations on initial and continuing training, multimedia projects and continuing training of training personnel.

FIN

Transfer of innovation and good practice

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| GR | <p>A law (2434/96) concerning the linking of training and employment through special vocational training programmes is one particularly innovative measure.</p> | NL | <p>The government launched a VOTEC 2000 Fund, to be implemented in coordination with European instruments aiming at Human Resources Development and industrial innovation such as LEONARDO, ADAPT and the 4th Framework Research & Development Programme. Mainstreaming of innovation is encouraged by an institutional setting which stimulates cooperation between different types of actors in the field. For instance, cooperation between schools and national bodies encourages the feedback of project results to update the qualification structure. Mainstreaming in policy is done by international comparison and policy-oriented research.</p> |
| I | <p>The Ministry of Labour is responsible for innovation and good practice transfer. ISFOL (Institute to Promote Vocational Training among Workers) has been commissioned by the Ministry of Labour to carry out research and comparative studies on good practice and to spread new developments with respect to content, methods and management of (vocational) training. The employment agencies, too, are playing a supportive role in monitoring activities. During the last three years, especially, the Ministry of Labour has assigned the role of "innovation laboratory" to the LEONARDO programme, while the INC-ISFOL was charged with the task of monitoring and reporting practices which would be suitable for transfer. Every complete implementation of new practices in the area of vocational training is subject to a legal or administrative framework and can only be carried out under the condition that it is accepted by all of the regions and approved by the social partners.</p> | P | <p>The Ministry of Education supports and promotes regional meetings and forums which aim to disseminate innovative and good practice in the fields of education and training. A programme of initiatives to improve the quality of education has also been set up. This supports innovative projects and the dissemination of results through meetings, exchanges and publications. In this context, experiences have also been gained at local level from pilot projects seeking closer relations between schools and "employment centres". Such partnerships between schools and employment centres are to be strengthened in the future.</p> |
| IRL | <p>Participation in EU programmes such as LEONARDO, Socrates, etc., together with European Social Fund initiatives which include YOUTHSTART, HORIZON, NOW and ADAPT, have enhanced the knowledge of best practice standards through transnational partnerships. A key policy objective in the third-level education sector is the development of explicit policies for interaction between the institutions and the economy, involving in particular the diffusion of knowledge and innovation.</p> | S | <p>This is mainly supposed to emerge through close cooperation between schools and the labour market. The emphasis is laid on informal exchanges of information and experiences. It is vital to develop a national policy for cooperation at local as well as central level.</p> |
| L | <p>Innovation in training policy and practice is the responsibility of the coordination service for pedagogy and technology (SCRIPT) of the Ministry of Education and Training.</p> | UK | <p>The government publishes annually its priorities and plans for supporting the development of national education and training systems. The work is taken forward primarily through partnership projects with a wide range of external organisations. Project outputs are disseminated through conferences, seminars, publicity and promotional events and reports. Evaluation and feedback help to formulate future development plans and policies. TECs and others are encouraged to liaise to ensure the spread of innovation and best practice. Such networking is supported by regional activities as well as national studies, publications and good practice guidance.</p> |

Recent measures

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Recent measures

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GR	Implementation of in-company training programmes (ELPEKE, Special Fund for Vocational Further Training Programmes; EKLA, Special Unemployment Fund). Creation of programmes to combat unemployment.	NL	
I	See 1.1.1, 1.1.4 and 1.2.2. A government bill containing employment-promotion measures ("Treu Package" - cf. inforMISEP "Policies" No. 59) is passing through the parliamentary approval process. This concerns a range of legal measures to introduce manpower transfer, to reform certain contracts (apprenticeship contracts and training-cum-work contracts), to standardise the regulation of in-company work experience and to reform the regulation of vocational training.	P	An action plan for the economic revitalisation of enterprises in financial difficulties will be developed (Ministerial Council Resolution No. 100/96 of 4.7.1996). The new Institute for Educational Innovations (INOFOR) will undertake planning and research in the area of production and will develop and publicise new models for vocational training (D.-L. No. 147/96 of 28.8.1996).
IRL		S	
L		UK	Provision of training: The Government plans to publish a White Paper on lifelong learning in the autumn of 1997. It will cover all lifelong learning issues for adults aged over 16. The new government has already announced several important new measures. These include the University for Industry, which will open up access to learning through new technologies; and Individual Learning Accounts to help people take control of their learning.

Provision of training

I

1 TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The following training programmes are provided in Italy:

- basic training (school and non-school education at levels I, II and III) with the aim of preparing young people for entry into working life (as a component of lifelong learning);
- in-company further training in order to adapt the skills of the work force to the needs and objectives of the enterprise;
- external further training for adult workers facing redundancy (workers in the Wage Compensation Fund) or who have already been laid off (workers on the mobility lists, long-term unemployed);
- vocational/adult education not necessarily oriented towards company needs, for workers and external parties with individual requirements.

While structures exist for the first three programmes (though they are not equally well developed), there are no provisions for adult education which can offer individuals an integrated and ongoing model to evaluate their abilities, provide orientation and training and the option of leave to participate in vocational training measures.

Promoting access to training

I

1 PROJECTS FINANCED BY VIRTUE OF LAW 236/93

The following projects can be financed by virtue of Law 236/93, Article 9, § 3 (validated by Regulatory Circular 174/96):

- projects which individualise and increase the flexibility of training courses;
- projects which integrate different training systems, thus facilitating recognised transfer from one system to another;
- implementation of a system of "training credits" (crediti formativi);
- activation of support measures for individual orientation, motivation, outplacement and education courses through the provision of training leave so that workers may participate in further training measures;
- administration of training periods within the framework of the reform of working time and experimentation with flexible forms of work;
- development of multimedia systems for distance learning;
- quality certificates for training providers. Plans are laid down in the "Agreement on Employment" to regulate individual holiday leave and other types of leave. The agreement provides for the possibility of "scholarships" to replace the wages lost by workers participating in further training measures, "honorary loans" for workers who intend to enter self-employment and increased use of part-time work in combination with further training.

2. INCREASING THE EMPLOYMENT-INTENSIVENESS OF GROWTH

2.1 More flexible work organisation

2.1.1 External flexibility

- 2.1.1.1 Hiring staff/Probationary periods
- 2.1.1.2 Individual redundancy
- 2.1.1.3 Mass redundancy
- 2.1.1.4 Fixed-term contracts
- 2.1.1.5 Retirement and early retirement

2.1.2 Flexible working time

- 2.1.2.1 Legal and contractual limitations on working time
- 2.1.2.2 Organisation of working time
- 2.1.2.3 Work-sharing
- 2.1.2.4 Part-time contracts
- 2.1.2.5 Short-time working
- 2.1.2.6 Partial retirement
- 2.1.2.7 Leave for family reasons or for education

2.2 Incomes policy

- 2.2.1 Minimum wage
- 2.2.2 Wage negotiation
- 2.2.3 Wage restraints

2.3 Promotion of initiatives

- 2.3.1 Framework measures
- 2.3.2 Local and household service
- 2.3.3 Social and environmental services

2.x Recent Measures

Annex to Chapter 2

Hiring staff / Probationary periods

Probationary periods give both parties to an employment contract considerable flexibility, as the contract may generally be terminated without notice and without penalties. Probationary periods vary in the Member States between two weeks and six months, but are usually longer for white-collar staff. In DK and D, 14 days' notice is required even during the probationary period.

DK**PROBATIONARY PERIODS:**

White-collar workers: 3 months, with 14 days' notice required. For certain types of jobs the probationary period is more than 3 months.

A**PROBATIONARY PERIODS:**

Blue-collar and white-collar workers: 1 month maximum (statutory limit). Both the worker and the employer may terminate the probationary employment relationship at any time without notice and without providing reasons.

E**PROBATIONARY PERIODS:**

The maximum period for probation is set out in collective agreements. In the absence of a collective agreement, the maximum cannot exceed:

- for technical staff with diploma: 6 months.
- for other workers: 2 months.

B**PROBATIONARY PERIODS:**

Blue-collar workers: 14 days;
White-collar workers: 6 months; if pay > BEF 1,094,000: 12 months.

F**PROBATIONARY PERIODS:**

Length depends on customary practices or collective or individual agreements.

Managerial staff: 3 months.

Others: 2 weeks or 1 month, depending on the length of the contract.

D**PROBATIONARY PERIODS:**

Not specified in legislation; in general not more than 6 months. 14 days' notice required during the probationary period.

FIN**PROBATIONARY PERIODS:**

In general, the maximum length is 4 months. If, however, the employer provides training, the probationary period can be extended to 6 months.

Hiring staff / Probationary periods

GR	<p>There is no statutory regulation concerning the duration of probationary periods; these are stipulated in individual employment contracts. However, the probationary period must be of a reasonable duration which the employer requires in order to determine the suitability or unsuitability of the new employee. This is necessary, on the one hand, in the interests of good faith, so that the worker is not left in uncertainty for an unreasonable period as regards the ultimate validity of the contract and, on the other hand, in order to prevent circumvention of the regulations concerning termination of open-ended contracts. Probationary periods are commonly included in the employment contracts of certain public enterprises. Their duration may vary between 6 months and 2 years.</p>	NL	<p>PROBATIONARY PERIODS: A maximum of 2 months. In 1996, a bill ("Flexibility and Security") was introduced. It intends, among other things, to establish a direct link between the duration of fixed-term contracts and the probationary period (varying from a max. of 2 weeks (contracts < 1 year) to a max. of 2 months (contracts > 2 years)).</p>
I	<p>PROBATIONARY PERIODS: Statutory provision: 6 months.</p>	P	<p>PROBATIONARY PERIODS: All workers: 60 or 90 days, depending on whether the company employs fewer or more than 20 workers. Managerial staff and senior white-collar workers: 240 days. Highly qualified workers: 180 days. Fixed-term contracts: 30 or 15 days, depending on whether the contract is for more than 6 months or not. Domestic staff: 90 days.</p>
IRL	<p>PROBATIONARY PERIODS: Not laid down in legislation. However, 6 months' notice is often required.</p>	S	<p>The law establishes the possibility of a 6-month probationary period at the request of the employer. Notification must be given in order to terminate the probationary period. Otherwise the probationary period shall become employment for an indefinite period. Deviations from these rules are possible through collective agreements.</p>
L	<p>PROBATIONARY PERIODS: Between 2 weeks and 6 months. Exceptions: may not exceed 3 months for low-skilled workers and 12 months for employees whose gross monthly earnings are at or over a certain level.</p>	UK	<p>PROBATIONARY PERIODS: Not specified in the legislation. Probationary periods are a contractual matter. Normal rights to notice apply to employees during the probationary period, i.e. 1 week's statutory notice (which increases to 2 weeks on completion of 2 years' service).</p>

2

Individual redundancy

Except in the event of serious misconduct, individual redundancy necessitates observance of a period of notice which normally depends on length of service. Redundancy pay depends on length of service and the worker's status (blue-collar or white-collar). In D, the periods of notice for the two categories have recently been aligned. There is considerable variation among the Member States as regards periods of notice and redundancy pay. In Italy, redundancy pay amounts to an average of 45 weeks' pay.

DK

Period of notice for blue-collar workers: laid down in collective agreements.
 Period of notice for white-collar workers: from 77 days to 6 months.
 Average redundancy pay: up to 13 weeks' pay.

A**1. INDIVIDUAL REDUNDANCY****E**

Redundancy for objective reasons must be based on one of the following: employee's incompetency; inability to adapt to technical changes at the workplace; economic, organisational or production reasons; or excessive absence.
 Period of notice: 30 days.
 Statutory redundancy pay: 20 days' pay for each year of service, to a maximum of 12 months. This does not affect the legislation on dismissal for gross misconduct.
 Average cost of redundancy in days: 231 days.

B

Blue-collar workers: between 1 week and 56 days.
 White-collar workers: 3 months for every 5 years of service.
 Where annual salary > BEF 1,822,000, the period of notice is specified in advance.
 Average redundancy pay: 22 weeks' pay (white-collar workers).
 The period of notice may be extended by collective agreement.

F

Period of notice for blue-collar and white-collar workers: 1 to 2 months.
 Average redundancy pay: 17 weeks' pay.

D

Period of notice for blue-collar and white-collar workers: between 1 and 7 months.
 Average redundancy pay: 13 weeks' pay.
 The period may be shortened or extended by collective agreement or extended by individual contracts. In principle, notice may only be given for objective reasons.

FIN

The period of notice must comply with either the Employment Contracts Act (Työsopimuslaki 320/70, as amended) or the contract. Termination of an open-ended contract of employment requires one of the parties to give notice or the contract to be annulled. The period of notice may alternatively be agreed upon in advance in employment contracts or collective agreements. The period of notice for the employer is between 1 and 6 months; for the employee between 14 days and 2 months. Failing a negotiated settlement, the statutory period of notice must be observed.

Individual redundancy

<p>GR The previous statutory period of notice has been transformed into compulsory severance payments for workers made redundant; thus, dismissal is now always immediate. The period of notice has been replaced by wages per day corresponding to the number of days of notice.</p>	<p>NL 1. INDIVIDUAL REDUNDANCY</p>
<p>I Period of notice for blue-collar and white-collar workers: no statutory period - covered by collective agreements. Average redundancy pay: 45 weeks' pay.</p>	<p>P Individual redundancy is only permitted where reasons are provided, in the event of jobs being lost for economic, cyclical, technological or structural reasons, or because of the worker's lack of suitability for the job. In these cases, the period of notices is 60 days. Average redundancy pay: 1 month's pay per year of service; minimum 3 months.</p>
<p>IRL Period of notice for blue-collar and white-collar workers: one week after 13 weeks' service up to 8 weeks after 15 years' service or more. Average redundancy pay: 10 weeks' pay.</p>	<p>S An employer may dismiss a worker owing to lack of work or for personal reasons. Dismissal must be justified by objective reasons. Periods of notice (statutory provisions) depend on the length of service: 1-6 months. Maximum period after 10 years' service. No statutory redundancy pay, but often regulated through collective agreements.</p>
<p>L Period of notice for blue-collar and white-collar workers: from 2 to 6 months. Average redundancy pay: from 1 to 12 months' pay.</p>	<p>UK Redundancy pay: guaranteed by law (depends on age, pay and length of service) and any provision in the employment contract or a collective agreement.</p>

Mass redundancy

Mass redundancies require notice to be given, generate redundancy pay (generally higher than for individual redundancy) and require consultation between the social partners. In some countries (e.g. D and F), the company is also required to draw up a social plan. In certain countries, including F, employers' obligations regarding procedures to be followed have been simplified (authorisation by the authorities no longer needed).

DK Mass redundancy is where, within a 30-day period, the following numbers of workers are made redundant for reasons not attributable to the workers themselves:

- at least 10 in companies which normally employ more than 20 but fewer than 100 persons;
- at least 10% of the work force in companies which normally employ more than 100 but fewer than 300 persons;
- at least 30 in companies which normally employ at least 300 persons.

Consultation: employees or their delegates. The Labour Market Office must be informed.
 Notice: 21 days - 6 months.
 Redundancy pay: not guaranteed (unemployment benefit).
 An amount is earmarked in the budget for special (vocational/employment-promotion) measures in areas where mass redundancies pose serious problems to the local community.

A Provisions based on Community directive.
 Consultation: works council to be informed in writing, consultation on measures to avoid, eliminate or alleviate adverse consequences for workers (social plan).
 Notice: companies must inform the Employment Service if they intend to terminate, within a period of 30 days, the employment of

1. at least 5 workers in companies with more than 20 and fewer than 100 employees, or
2. at least 5% of the workers in companies with 100 to 600 employees, or
3. at least 30 workers in companies with more than 600 employees, or
4. at least five workers who have reached the age of 50.

E Mass redundancy is defined as:

1. termination of the employment contract for economic, technical, organisational or production reasons when over a 90-day period the termination affects: a) 10 workers in a company of fewer than 100 employees; b) 10% of the workers in a company with between 100 and 300 employees; c) 30 workers in a company with more than 300 employees;
2. termination of contract for all employees in a company (at least 5 people) due to the complete cessation of the activities of the company;
3. termination of contract due to force majeure, whatever the number of employees.

Consultation: works council or work-force delegates and if need be trade unions;
 Redundancy pay: 20 days' pay for each year of service, to a maximum of 12 months.

B Belgian legislation defines mass redundancy as where a company with more than 20 employees, excluding those on fixed-term contracts during the previous year, proposes to dismiss within 60 days and on economic grounds: at least 10 employees, in the case of companies with more than 20 but fewer than 100 employees; at least 10% of employees, in the case of companies normally employing at least 100 but fewer than 300 persons; at least 30 employees, in the case of companies normally employing at least 300 persons.
 Consultation: the employer must inform and consult the staff representative in advance and must also notify the head of the local employment office about planned mass redundancies.
 Notice: between 1 week and 15 months (or longer for workers with more than 25 years' service).
 Redundancy pay: normally based on statutory provisions, length of service and collective agreements.

F Mass redundancy is defined as two or more workers being made redundant on economic grounds within a 30-day period. Different rules on information and consultation apply, depending on whether fewer or more than 10 persons are made redundant within a 30-day period.
 Consultation: works council or, in the absence of a works council, staff representatives.
 The regional employment department (Direction Départementale du Travail) must be informed.
 Notice: 1 to 2 months, or as stipulated in a collective agreement.
 Redundancy pay: a minimum sum is guaranteed after 2 years' continuous service.

D The 1969 Act on protection against dismissal defines mass redundancy as dismissal for urgent economic or operational reasons of the following numbers of employees (excluding managerial staff) during a 30-day period: more than 5 in an enterprise employing between 21 and 59 persons; more than 25, or 10% of the total work force, in an enterprise employing between 60 and 499 persons; at least 30 in an enterprise with 500 or more employees.
 Consultation: the works council must be informed and consulted in advance as to how redundancies may be avoided, limited or their consequences alleviated. The employment office must be informed.
 Notice: between 1 and 7 months (or as specified in collective agreement).
 Redundancy pay: not guaranteed, but stipulated in collective agreements or a social plan.

FIN The employer has the right to terminate an open-ended employment contract if the volume of work has diminished significantly and for the foreseeable future, for financial reasons, production reasons or other similar reasons, and the worker cannot reasonably be redeployed, taking account of his/her vocational skills and qualifications. Where the reason for a cutback is a reduction in the volume of work for financial or production reasons, the employer must give advance notice to the workers' representative and, where 10 or more workers are affected, the employment services.
 There is a special redundancy pay scheme managed by the Training and Redundancy Fund, which is financed by employers' contributions. It covers older workers who are made redundant for production or financial reasons after having been in the same job for many years. The redundancy payment is independent of unemployment benefit.

Mass redundancy

- | | | | |
|------------|--|-----------|---|
| GR | <p>Mass redundancy is defined in Law No. 1387 of August 1983 as the dismissal of up to 5 workers within 1 month in companies with between 20 and 50 employees, or 2-3% of the work force up to a maximum of 30 within 1 month in companies with over 50 workers, provided the reason for dismissal is not related to the individual contracts of the workers concerned.</p> <p>Consultation: staff representatives, trade unions, works council. The employment office must be notified.</p> <p>Notice: between 5 days' and 5 months' notice or corresponding remuneration (longer periods for workers with over 28 years of service).</p> <p>Redundancy pay: depends on length of service. Reduced by half if required period of notice is observed.</p> | NL | <p>The Notification of Redundancy Act (WMCO 1976) defines mass redundancy as the laying off, over a 3-month period, of at least 20 workers within the district covered by the Regional Employment Service (RBA). Under the WMCO, any employer who is proposing to dismiss more than 20 employees within a period of 3 months is required to send notification of that intention, stating the reasons, to the director of the RBAs and to the relevant trade unions. After notification the director must allow 1 month to elapse before processing the applications for permission to terminate employment in respect of the individual employees concerned. Mass redundancies may, however, be covered by collective agreements, in which case the definition may be more specific.</p> <p>Consultation: trade unions with members at the workplace in question, and the works council. The RBA is to be notified in all cases. The outcome of consultation with the trade unions (f.i. concerning severance pay) may influence the decision of the regional director of the Employment Service in granting authorisation for the dismissals.</p> <p>Notice: covered by the law: 1 week or 1 month to 26 weeks.</p> <p>Redundancy pay: no binding provisions; covered by col. agreements and depending on age and length of service.</p> |
| I | <p>Law No. 223/91 defines mass redundancy as redundancy due to a reduction or change in activities affecting at least 5 employees in a specific production unit over a 120-day period, or 5 employees in different units belonging to a single employer in a single province.</p> <p>The Law does not apply to managerial staff (dirigenti) or workers in companies with fewer than 15 employees. All redundancies in companies with fewer than 15 employees are covered by the laws on individual redundancies, even if they take place simultaneously.</p> <p>Consultation: staff representatives, trade unions and employment authorities.</p> <p>Notice: 1-12 months, or compensation, though usually regulated by collective agreements.</p> <p>Redundancy pay: guaranteed by law; depends on length of service and wage.</p> | P | <p>The law defines mass redundancy as the termination, within a 3-month period, of the individual contracts of at least 2 workers in an enterprise employing between 2 and 50 persons, or of at least 5 workers in an enterprise employing more than 50 persons, provided that such redundancies are linked to the closure of the enterprise or a part of it, or to a reduction in the work force owing to structural, technological or economic factors in general.</p> <p>Consultation: works council or trade union delegate. Ministry of Qualifications and Employment to be notified.</p> <p>Notice: 60 days.</p> <p>Redundancy pay: 1 month's pay per year of service; minimum 3 months. Higher amounts set out in collective agreements.</p> |
| IRL | <p>Mass redundancy is where, over a 30-day period, an employer plans to make redundant at least 5 employees in an establishment employing more than 20 but fewer than 50 persons, at least 10 employees in an establishment employing more than 50 but fewer than 100 persons, 10% of employees in an establishment employing more than 100 but fewer than 300 persons, or at least 30 employees in an establishment with more than 300 employees.</p> <p>Consultation: work-force delegates. Department of Enterprise and Employment to be notified.</p> <p>Notice: 1-8 weeks' notice or compensation, and in accordance with employment contract or collective agreement.</p> <p>Redundancy pay: guaranteed by the law; depends on length of service and age.</p> | S | <p>See 2.1.1.2.</p> |
| L | <p>Amendment to the legislation regarding mass redundancies by virtue of the law of 23.7.1993. This amendment strengthens the protection of workers against mass redundancies. The agreement of a social plan with the trade unions is also included.</p> <p>Consultation: work-force delegates, works council and trade unions recognised by collective agreement. The employment authorities must be notified.</p> <p>Notice: 75 to 165 days.</p> <p>Redundancy pay: as laid out in the social plan and respecting the guarantees detailed in law or collective agreements.</p> | UK | <p>Mass redundancy is defined as the dismissal of at least 20 employees at one establishment within a period of 90 days for a reason not related to the individuals concerned.</p> <p>Consultation: either recognised trade unions or elected representatives of the affected employees. Department of Trade and Industry to be informed.</p> <p>Notice: 1-12 weeks' notice or pay.</p> <p>Redundancy pay: guaranteed by the law (depends on length of service) and the employment contract.</p> |

Fixed-term contracts

The use of fixed-term contracts is regulated in all countries except IRL and the UK. Generally speaking, such contracts are allowed only for the performance of specific tasks, and there are restrictions on duration and renewal. In some countries, an allowance is payable at the end of the contract. In many countries, the rules on fixed-term contracts have become more flexible in recent years.

DK Regulation: no.
Restrictions: no.
Maximum duration: no.
Renewable: yes.
Allowance at end of contract: no.
Possibility of open-ended contract: no.

A Regulation: yes.
The date of expiry must be clear and not open to alteration by the parties to the contract. Fixed-term employment may be terminated prematurely by amicable agreement or for just cause.
Termination: termination is only possible if the right to give notice has been expressly agreed by the parties. While unlawful notice still terminates the employment relationship, the party giving notice is liable for damages. Only if the contract expressly denies the right to give notice or binds it to certain conditions is the employment relationship not terminated by unlawful notice.
A succession of fixed-term contracts is not permitted, except on objectively justified grounds.
Compensation is payable after a minimum period of 3 years' uninterrupted service.

E a) Fixed-term contracts:
Regulation: yes.
Restrictions: yes.
Maximum duration: variable.
Renewable: yes, within limits.
Redundancy pay at end of contract: no.
Possibility of open-ended contract: yes.

b) Fixed-term contracts as an employment-promotion measure (maximum duration: 36 months with compensation): restricted as of 17.5.1997 to disabled unemployed workers.

B Regulation: yes.
Restrictions: no.
Maximum duration: no (except for successive fixed-term contracts under Article 10a of the Law of 3.7.1978 on employment contracts).
Redundancy pay at end of contract: no.
Possibility of open-ended contract: yes.
Renewable: Article 10 of the Law of 3.7.1978 on employment contracts stipulates that when parties conclude several successive fixed-term employment contracts, without the employee being responsible for any interruption in the employment relationship, then they are deemed to have concluded an open-ended contract. However, a new Article 10a provides for two possibilities for concluding fixed-term employment contracts, whereby the legal presumption in Article 10 does not apply.

F Regulation: yes.
Restrictions: yes.
Maximum duration: 18 to 24 months, depending on reason for fixed-term contract.
Renewable: twice.
Severance pay at end of contract: yes.
Possibility of open-ended contract: yes.

D Legal regulation or regulation through judicial decision: yes.
Restrictions: yes (with objective reason or maximum 24 months until the year 2000).
Maximum duration: 18 months (unless objective reason).
Renewable: yes (with objective reason).
Compensation at end of contract: no.
No restrictions for workers aged over 60 (until the year 2000).

FIN The Employment Contracts Act (320/70), Section 2, sets out the circumstances in which fixed-term contracts are permitted, i.e. when required by the nature of the work, when the worker is replacing another worker, for apprenticeship or similar contracts, or for any other valid reason cited by the employer and related to the mode of operation of the enterprise, unforeseen high demand or the nature of the work to be performed. If a contract of this type is concluded for reasons other than those listed above, the contract will be re-garded as open ended (56/97).
The new wording entered into force on 1 February 1997. The ban on the so-called chain contracts has been abolished and it has become easier to conclude a fixed-term employment contract in the service sector.
As an exception, the Act on temporary derogations to Section 2 (2) of the Employment Contracts Act (1158/94) authorises the conclusion of fixed-term contracts with the long-term unemployed, notwithstanding the aforementioned reasons.

Fixed-term contracts

GR	<p>Regulation: yes. Restrictions: yes. Maximum duration: no. There is no general statutory regulation concerning the number of times a fixed-term contract may be renewed. However, the following is to be noted: 1) Conclusion of successive fixed-term contracts may not represent an endeavour to circumvent the protective regulations concerning termination of open-ended contracts. Suspected circumvention is an issue to be decided by the labour courts. 2) Tacit renewal of contracts is a particularly interesting issue. A contract is considered to have been tacitly renewed when the worker continues to perform his duties after expiry of the contract and this is tolerated by the employer. Such cases are covered by § 671 of the Civil Code, which considers such contracts to have been extended for an unlimited duration. Redundancy pay at end of contract: no. Possibility of open-ended contract: yes. The conditions concerning the renewal of contracts, esp. open-ended contracts (people employed under provisions of private law), and redundancy pay are currently under review.</p>	NL	<p>Regulation: yes. Restrictions: yes. Maximum duration: no. Renewable: yes, though with termination, unless there is a period of more than 31 days between contracts. Allowance at end of contract: no. Possibility of open-ended contract: yes. In 1996, a bill ("Flexibility and Security") was introduced. It intends, among other things, to flexibilise the rules on fixed-term contracts.</p>
I	<p>Regulation: yes. Restrictions: yes. Maximum duration: 6 months. Renewable: no. Allowance at end of contract: yes. Possibility of open-ended contract: yes.</p>	P	<p>Regulation: yes. Restrictions: yes. Maximum duration: 3 consecutive years. Renewable: twice. Severance pay at end of contract: yes, 2 days' pay per full month's work for the duration of the contract. Possibility of open-ended contract: yes.</p>
IRL	<p>Regulation: no. Restrictions: no. Maximum duration: no. Renewable: yes. Allowance at end of contract: no. Possibility of open-ended contract: no.</p>	S	<p>Regulation: yes. Restrictions: yes. Maximum duration: no general limit. Renewable: yes, up to a certain limit. Allowance at end of contract: no. Possibility of open-ended contract: yes. There are also restrictions as to the situations in which fixed-term contracts are allowed, i.e. the special nature of the work. Fixed-term contracts necessitated by the special nature of the work may only last up to 6 months within a period of 2 years. In addition to other types of fixed-term contracts, there exists as of 1.1.1997 a new type of fixed-term contract which can be used for a maximum of 12 months during a 3-year period. An employer may only recruit 5 employees at the same time with this kind of contract. No other restrictions exist.</p>
L	<p>Regulation: yes. Restrictions: yes. Maximum duration : 24 months. Renewable: twice. Allowance at end of contract: no. Possibility of open-ended contract: yes.</p>	UK	<p>Regulation: no. Restrictions: no. Maximum duration: no. Renewable: yes. Allowance at end of contract: no (an allowance may be included in the terms of the contract). Possibility of open-ended contract: yes.</p>

Retirement and early retirement

Statutory retirement age is normally 65 (60 in F, 67 in DK), but sometimes differs for women. The minimum period of contributions and pension amount vary considerably in the EU. During the 1970s and early 1980s retirement age came down, but has now stabilised or even gone up. In Germany and Italy, for example, the plan is for retirement age to gradually rise. Early retirement is available in all Member States, though age restrictions and pensions vary. Recently, the possibilities have been limited by raising ages or employers' contributions.

DK Minimum period of contributions: at least three years' residence.
 Statutory retirement age: 67.
 Amount: between 52% and 60% of earnings.
 Cumulation with earnings: subject to certain conditions.
 Early retirement: possible for persons over 50 for social or health reasons.
 Persons aged over 60 can, furthermore, take an interim pension until they reach pensionable age (67), as long as they have belonged to an unemployment fund for 20 years within the past 25 years or 10 years within the past 15 years and provided that membership has not been interrupted during the period between 31 March 1992 and the date on which the early retirement pension starts.

A 1. RETIREMENT AND EARLY RETIREMENT

E Minimum period of contributions: 15 years.
 Statutory retirement age: 65.
 Amount: between 60% and 100% of earnings.
 Cumulation with earnings: no.
 Early retirement: at 64, with 100% of entitlements and possibility of early retirement pension financed by conversion plans.

B Minimum period of contributions: none.
 Statutory retirement age: between 60 and 65.
 Amount: between 47% and 73% of earnings.
 Cumulation with earnings: subject to certain conditions.
 Early retirement: possible under collective agreements (minimum age: 58); the person taking early retirement is entitled to unemployment benefit and a supplementary amount paid by the last employer and must be replaced by a full-time unemployed person receiving unemployment benefit.

F Minimum period of contributions: none.
 Statutory retirement age: 60.
 Amount: between 46% and 88% of earnings.
 Cumulation with earnings: possible.
 Early retirement: funded by the state from the age of 57 (in special cases from the age of 56) and subject to certain conditions, principally with regard to the period of contributions.

D Minimum period of contributions: 60 months.
 Statutory retirement age: 65, in principle.
 Amount: depending on length of contributions.
 Cumulation with earnings: possible.
 Early retirement: men and women who have reached the age of 63 (or 60 in the event of severe disability, incapacity to work or occupational invalidity) and have paid insurance contributions for 35 years, or who have reached the age of 60 and have paid 180 months' contributions, provided they have either been unemployed for 1 year during the past 18 months or have been benefiting under the Elderly Employees Part-Time Employment Act for 24 months and have paid compulsory contributions for 8 of the past 10 years. For women aged 60 who have paid contributions for 180 months and have paid compulsory contributions for more than 10 years after the age of 40.

FIN 1. RETIREMENT AND EARLY RETIREMENT

Retirement and early retirement

GR	<p>Minimum period of contributions: 4,500 working days (invalidity: 1,500 days; death: 1,500 days; accident at work: as of first day).</p> <p>Statutory retirement age: 65 (60 for women insured before 31.12.1992) or 60 for persons in extremely strenuous or unhealthy employment (55 for women).</p> <p>Amount: between 30% and 80% of earnings.</p> <p>Cumulation with earnings: possible with monthly earnings not exceeding 50 times the daily minimum wage.</p> <p>Early retirement: on principle possible as of the age of 60 (55 for women) or 58 for construction workers.</p>	NL	<p>Minimum period of contributions: none.</p> <p>Statutory retirement age: 65.</p> <p>Amount: in addition to the statutory retirement pension (AOW), occupational pensions may bring total pensions up to a maximum of 70% of gross earnings (depending on number of years' service). Very often the pension amount is related to the final wage. Currently, the government is in favour of sectoral and company pension systems which calculate their benefits on the basis of the average wage during the working life.</p> <p>Cumulation with earnings: subject to certain conditions.</p> <p>Early retirement: may be provided for in sectoral or company collective agreements. The so called VUT schemes offer early retirement after the age of (on average) 60, with a benefit of approx. 80% of the gross final wage (up to the age of 65). There are provisions covering both full-time and part-time early retirement. Currently, there is a tendency (in collective bargaining at the sectoral and company level) to integrate early retirement provisions (VUT schemes) into flexible pension schemes (incl. actuarial adjustments).</p>
I	<p>1. PENSION REFORM, RETIREMENT AND EARLY RETIREMENT</p>	P	<p>Minimum period of contributions: 120 months.</p> <p>Statutory retirement age: men 65, women 63 (from 1.1.1994 gradual increase to 65 for women in steps of 6 months per year).</p> <p>Amount: between 30 and 80% of earnings.</p> <p>Cumulation with earnings: possible.</p> <p>Early retirement: from the age of 60 for the unemployed and workers in companies in a difficult economic situation or in sectors undergoing restructuring (textiles/clothing, shipbuilding, mining, customs). For ECSC, industry workers from the age of 55. Where early retirement follows prolonged unemployment, income based on contributions paid is assumed up to the age of 60 to avoid an adverse effect on pension (Article 45 of D.-L. No. 79-A of 13.13.1989, as amended by D.-L. No. 418 of 24.12.1993).</p>
IRL	<p>Minimum period of contributions: 156 weeks.</p> <p>Statutory retirement age: 65.</p> <p>Amount: between 35% and 42% of earnings.</p> <p>Cumulation with earnings: no.</p> <p>Early retirement: an allowance is paid to long-term unemployed persons aged 55 or over subject to certain conditions.</p>	S	<p>Pensionable age: 65.</p> <p>Entitlement to early retirement pension: workers aged 61-64, following illness or physical or mental disability affecting work capacity.</p> <p>Entitlement to partial retirement pension: workers aged 61-64 who are engaged in economic activity and reduce their working hours. The worker must reside in Sweden, must have worked at least 75 days over a minimum period of 4 months during the year immediately preceding retirement, and must have received, for 10 years since the age of 45, a sufficient level of income to give entitlement to a supplementary pension. Working time in this case must be between 17 and 35 hours per week. The rate of compensation from 1994 is 55% of the former wage.</p>
L	<p>Minimum period of contributions: 120 months of effective insurance.</p> <p>Statutory retirement age: 65.</p> <p>Amount: between 46% and 78% of earnings.</p> <p>Cumulation with earnings: possible.</p> <p>1. EARLY RETIREMENT</p>	UK	<p>Statutory retirement age: the state pension age is 60 for women and 65 for men.</p> <p>Amount: depending on length of contributions.</p> <p>Cumulation with earnings: possible through the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (SERPS).</p> <p>Minimum period of contributions: 2 contribution conditions must be satisfied: must have 1 qualifying year since 6 April 1975 derived from the actual payment of class 1, 2 or 3 National Insurance Contributions (NICs) OR have paid 50 flat-rate NICs at any time before 6 April 1975; to have 100% basic pension, must have qualifying years for about 90% of the working life.</p> <p>Early retirement: payment of the state pension is not made before state pension age is reached. Occupational and private pensions may be paid before state pension age depending on the agreement between the employee and pension provider.</p>

2

Legal and contractual limitations on working time

With the exception of UK and DK, Member States' legislation lays down a maximum weekly working time. However, effective working time and overtime are normally determined by collective agreements.

DK

Statutory limit: no legislation regarding number of hours per week, which is fixed in collective agreements.
Overtime: regulated by collective agreements.
Leave: 30 days.

A

Statutory normal working time: no more than 8 hours per day/40 hours per week.
Statutory limits: no more than 10 hours per day/50 hours per week.
Collectively agreed normal working time: as a rule, 36-40 hours per week. Normal weekly working time may be extended to up to 60 hours by collective agreement. Normal daily working time may be extended to up to 12 hours where it includes regular and lengthy periods of readiness time.
Exception: if special rest facilities are available, daily working time may be extended by company agreement - on the basis of a collective agreement - to up to 24 hours, 3 times a week, provided the health of the workers is not endangered to any great extent.
Overtime: 5 hours per week + maximum 60 hours per calendar year, though not exceeding a total of 10 hours per week. Additional overtime may be authorised by collective agreement or the labour inspectorate in exceptional cases.
New possibilities for flexible working time: see 2.x.

E

Statutory limit: covered by collective agreement or employment contract. The maximum length cannot exceed 40 hours per week averaged over the year.
Overtime: maximum 80 hours per year.
Leave: 30 calendar days.

B

Statutory limit: 40 hours per week. Collective agreements may stipulate shorter working times. The law on employment promotion and preventive measures to safeguard competitiveness stipulates that 39 working hours a week will be made the statutory norm from 1.1.1999.
Overtime: 65 hours per quarter, compensatory leave to be taken by the end of the quarter, except where there is a sectoral collective agreement stating that a maximum of 65 hours per quarter may be paid at overtime rates instead.
Leave: 20 calendar days + 10 public holidays.

F

Statutory limit: 39 hours per week. Many exceptions for the various sectors.
Overtime: 9 hours per week or 130 hours per year, or more if official approval has been obtained or if stipulated in a collective agreement.
Leave: 30 working days' standard holiday leave.

D

Statutory limit: 48 hours per week.
Possible extensions: 2 hours' overtime per day, provided that the average working day does not exceed 8 hours over a period of 6 months or 24 weeks.
Weekly working time has been reduced by collective agreement or in the employment contract in all sectors.
Statutory minimum leave: from January 1995 uniformly 24 days in all Länder; between 5 and 6 weeks under collective agreements.

FIN

Statutory limit: 40 hours per week. Possibility of derogations through national collective agreements, and within certain limits, also lower-level agreements if the national/sectoral collective agreement contains provisions for derogations.
Overtime: an annual maximum of 250 hours per calendar year. A maximum of 80 hours of overtime per calendar year can be agreed upon locally.
Leave: 2 days/month; after 1 year of service: 30 days.

Legal and contractual limitations on working time

GR	<p>(a) 5-day week: the hours worked in excess of contractually agreed working time (40 hours) up to the 45th hour are called extra working time. Hours worked between the 45th and 48th hours are called overtime. A bonus amounting to 25% of the daily wage is paid for extra working time. A bonus of 25% of the hourly wage is paid for every hour of overtime up to the 60th hour in one year; 50% is paid for each hour of overtime between 60 and 120 hours and 75% for overtime in excess of 120 hours, unless a higher premium is stipulated in the relevant collective agreement. The legal limit on overtime for clerical workers in joint-stock companies and non-industrial enterprises and for employees in banks and retail outlets is 120 hours per year. In industry, the maximum limit on overtime is fixed annually by resolution of the Minister of Labour for two 6-month periods.</p> <p>(b) As regards annual leave, employees working a 5-day week are entitled to 20 days' holiday leave after 1 year of service, 21 days after 2 years and 22 days after 3 years. Employees working a 6-day week are entitled to 24, 25 and 26 days' holiday leave, respectively (Law No. 1346/83). After 20 years of service, employees are entitled to an additional 3 (5-day week) or 4 (6-day week) days' leave.</p>	NL	<p>Statutory limits (Working Time Act): maximum working time of 520 hours per 13 weeks (an average of 40 hours per week), with a maximum of 9 hours per day and 45 hours per week. Changes possible by collective agreement or by decision of the works council, up to 10 hours per day, 200 hours per 4 weeks and 585 hours per 13 weeks. Compulsory rest period: 11 hours per day.</p> <p>Overtime: maximum working time including overtime (occasional) of 11 hours per day, 54 hours per week and 585 hours per 13 weeks (an average of 45 hours per week). Changes possible by collective agreement or by decision of the works council, up to 12 hours per day, 60 hours per week and 624 hours per 13 weeks (an average of 48 hours per week). Compulsory rest period: 11 hours per day.</p> <p>Leave: 4 calendar weeks; normally 5 weeks by collective agreement.</p>
I	<p>Statutory limit: 48 hours. Sectoral collective agreements generally stipulate a statutory limit of 40 hours in industry and 36 hours in the public service.</p> <p>Overtime: regulated by sectoral collective agreements.</p> <p>Leave: no specific number of calendar days; 4-6 weeks by collective agreement.</p>	P	<p>Statutory working time: the general statutory limit of 44 hours per week (42 hours for clerical workers) is to be reduced to 40 hours per week. In accordance with the relevant legislation, normal working hours are to be reduced by 1.12.1996 by 2 hours to a limit of 40, and any remaining hours in excess of 40 hours per week are to be abolished by 1.12.1997. In order to compensate for this reduction in working hours, flexible regulation of working time is to be introduced.</p> <p>Overtime: 2 hours per day or 200 hours per year (no limit in cases of force majeure or serious risk to the company).</p> <p>Holiday leave: 22 calendar days.</p>
IRL	<p>Statutory limit: 48 hours per week. Possibility of regulating working time by collective agreement.</p> <p>There are differences between certain sectors (retail trade, catering, etc.) and also for young people.</p> <p>Overtime: up to 60 hours per week by agreement.</p> <p>Leave: statutory limit is 16 days.</p>	S	<p>Statutory limit: 40 hours per week. Possibility of derogations through collective agreements.</p> <p>Overtime: 48 hours per 4-week period or 50 hours per calendar month, with a maximum of 200 hours per year.</p> <p>Leave: 25 calendar days (statutory provisions, possibility of additional days through collective agreements).</p>
L	<p>Statutory limit: 40 hours per week. Possibility of derogations by collective agreement (very rare).</p> <p>Overtime: 2 hours per day. Total daily working time may not exceed 10 hours, except for urgent work (e.g. accidents, force majeure).</p> <p>Leave: 25 calendar days; 26-28 days by collective agreement.</p>	UK	<p>Statutory limit: no general legislation on working time, which is currently a matter of agreement between employers and employees and their representatives.</p> <p>Overtime: by agreement between employers and employees and their representatives.</p> <p>Leave: at present, no legislation; for agreement between employers and employees or their representatives. Nearly 40% of full-time employees receive 20-25 days' annual leave.</p> <p>The UK Government is expecting to bring forward proposals to implement the EC Working Time Directive shortly which will set minimum break and rest periods, set weekly working time limits, place restrictions on night work and entitle workers to paid annual leave.</p>

Organisation of working time

The arrangement of working patterns has become an important issue in labour market flexibility policy. Both legislation and collective agreements already offer wide scope for working time flexibility. In D, for example, the reduction of working time in the steel industry to 35 hours goes hand in hand with greater flexibility. In F and UK annualisation is possible.

DK

A

The Working Time Act (Arbeitszeitgesetz) provides for a range of possibilities for alternative organisation of normal working time, which in many cases is also regulated by collective agreement. Statutory working hours may, for example, be increased or reduced within a given calculation period.

1. NEW WORKING-TIME REGULATIONS IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

E

Working day: flexibility can be collectively negotiated, covering annualisation of working time, irregular distribution of the working day and possibility of exceeding the maximum of 9 hours per day.

Overtime: the minimum supplement of 75% of the hourly rate has been abolished. In the absence of an agreement, remuneration of overtime is replaced by time off in lieu.

Weekly rest period: the weekly rest period of one and a half days can be accumulated to a maximum of 14 days. There are also special arrangements for working days, daily and weekly rest periods by sector and specific activities which allow flexible daily work patterns.

B

The Law on employment promotion and preventive measures to safeguard competitiveness provides that the calculation of working time on an annual basis will also be possible in large firms by means of a simple amendment to employment regulations (as is already the case in SMEs), provided there is no collective agreement.

F

The law authorises companies to introduce a wide range of measures to increase flexibility, provided they negotiate with the trade unions concerned. These include:

- increasing or reducing employees' working time in accordance with changes in the amount of work, while continuing to calculate pay on the basis of average working time;
- possibility of varying working time depending on the day of the week;
- possibility of shift work in order to increase the time during which work equipment is used;
- annualisation of part-time work;
- possibility of exemption from the ban on Sunday work in industry and the services sector.

D

The Working Time Act states that daily working time may be extended without special reason from 8 to 10 hours, as long as the average over 24 weeks does not exceed 8 hours (longer periods may be fixed by collective agreement). Longer calculation periods, usually of 12 months, are provided for in collective agreements on the basis of statutory regulations.

FIN

The Working Hours Act (605/96) lists the types of company and activity where the employer may decide to organise statutory working time on the basis of working in periods. In such cases statutory working time is either 80 hours per 2-week period or 120 hours per 3-week period.

The decision making powers at the level of the work-place have been increased. More than before collective agreements include possibilities according to which time arrangements may be agreed at the workplace.

Employers and workers may agree on flexible working time in a form which allows workers to decide when to start and finish work, within agreed limits. The employer must prepare a schedule for each workplace, listing starting and finishing times, rest and meal breaks, working time bands, reference periods, the maximum and minimum working day, accumulation of working hours, and periods when presence is compulsory. It is possible to save part of annual leave and accumulate it to be spent as longer leave period in a future time.

Organisation of working time

GR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fourth shift for full-time workers in enterprises. - Part-Time Employment Act (Law No. 1892/90). - Operation of enterprises and shops/tourist areas, especially with regard to summer regulations. - Reorganisation concerning the operation of enterprises, including weekends. 	NL	<p>The Working time act (see 2.1.2.1) offers more scope for agreement-based relations, combining the possibility of more flexible working time (night or weekend work etc.) with continued protection for workers (health and safety etc.). Flexibility measures include extension of shop opening times, extension of employer's obligation to provide information to explanation of the type of contract, a statutory ban on discrimination based on the length of working time, and a proposal for a minimum working time of three hours on request, and a proposal for flexibilisation of parental leave.</p>
I		P	<p>In order to compensate for the reduction in working hours to 40 hours per week, employers may offer flexible organisation of working time based on the average normal working time over a period of 4 months. Daily working hours may then be exceeded by up to 2 hours, provided the total number of hours worked in a day does not exceed 10 hours. The maximum limit on weekly working hours is between 45 and 50 hours.</p> <p>In enterprises which have already introduced the 40-hour week, flexible working time is still largely regulated by collective agreements.</p>
IRL	<p>Usually decided at company level, and largely dependent on the company's economic situation.</p> <p>A service responsible for company partnerships has been established within the Department of Enterprise and Employment to help employers and workers in every company create an environment providing for more flexibility in work organisation as well as ongoing development with a view to maintaining and boosting competitiveness.</p>	S	<p>Possibility of derogations from the provisions of the law on the arrangement of working patterns through collective agreements at national or local level.</p> <p>Possibility of derogations on overtime and night resting time for short periods (up to one month) through local collective agreements. Derogations covering a longer period require a collective agreement at national level.</p>
L	<p>In the tripartite agreement of 8.3.1994 on the maintaining of employment, price stability and business competitiveness, the social partners declared that future policy in respect of agreements to be concluded would be to encourage forms of work organisation likely to respond to the need to maintain and even create jobs.</p>	UK	<p>Working arrangements are a matter for employers and employees to agree in the light of their particular circumstances. They vary considerably and may be the subject of collective agreements. For example around 1 million workers are covered by annualised hours arrangements. The EC Working Time Directive, once implemented will set certain minimum provisions for the organisation of working time.</p>

Work-sharing

Work-sharing is an important feature of employment policy above all in B, F, FIN and DK. Different models exist: work-sharing grants, leave (e.g. sabbatical), part-time work, etc. Other countries are expecting to create new jobs by a general reduction of working time in certain sectors.

DK

All members of an unemployment insurance fund covered by a work-sharing plan are entitled to reduced (supplementary) allocations subject to certain conditions (collective agreement, minimum of two full days a week, etc.).

A

No statutory provisions.

E

B

The possibilities under the career breaks scheme have been broadened by means of new types of part-time career breaks and the introduction of arrangements benefiting the employer, whereby his contributions are reduced to compensate for the extra expense involved in taking on a replacement; the maximum duration for a career break in the public sector has also been extended.
A general right to a career break has recently been introduced for 1% of employees (in the private sector).

F

The law of 11.6.1996 provides for the payment of subsidies to companies which:

- reduce working time by at least 10% and at the same time recruit at least 10% more workers, with no staff cuts for at least 2 years;
- avoid redundancies dictated by economic considerations, by concluding a company agreement reducing working time by at least 10%.

If both requirements are fulfilled, the company is entitled to a variable and degressive reduction of social security contributions amounting to between 50% and 30% for a period of 7 years.

D

FIN

1. REDUCED DAILY ALLOWANCES
2. WORKING HOURS REORGANISATION PILOTS (INDUSTRY AND MUNICIPAL SECTOR)
3. JOB ROTATION SCHEME

Work-sharing

GR	Adjustments promoting work-sharing in accordance with Law No. 1892/90 are possible through collective agreements.	NL	Part-time work is the most common model of work-sharing. In many sectors (public as well as private) the number of working hours has been reduced to a maximum of 36 or 38 per week by collective agreement. Arrangements for paid and unpaid leave are incorporated in a growing number of collective agreements. In 1997 the government intends to introduce a bill concerning the interruption of working careers. The idea is to create a financial incentive to stimulate employees to take up periods of leave (for various reasons). In return, their employers will be required to hire (at least for the duration of the leave period) unemployed social security beneficiaries (or housewives looking for a job).
I		P	Possibility of recruiting unemployed persons to work alongside workers less than four years from retirement, in order to encourage recruitment and transfer of expertise (Decree No. 247 of 29.3.1995).
IRL	Work-sharing in the public service: the system allows two civil servants to share a post with the approval of management. They receive half pay and other benefits. The scheme is voluntary, and sharing arrangements must be for at least one year. A recent study of work-sharing has provided a basis for an assessment of the progress of certain initiatives.	S	
L		UK	There are no statutory restrictions in the UK, where some 150,000 employees share jobs. Work-sharing measures in the UK are a matter for agreement between employers and the individuals concerned. The UK Government policy aims to reduce barriers to flexible working which suit both employees and employers and to encourage the wide range of types and patterns of work available in the UK.

Part-time contracts

A general trend in the regulation of part-time contracts can be identified: although statutory provisions and definitions vary between Member States, equal rights with full-time workers (on a pro rata basis) is a universal objective.

DK

There is no legal definition of part-time work. Nor is it defined in collective agreements. Generally speaking, a part-time worker is anyone who works less than normal collectively-agreed working time.

The rules on part-time employment differ significantly from one collective agreement to another, making it impossible to give a general overview of how part-time employment is organised.

Nor does legislation contain rules specifically covering persons in part-time employment. Regulation is therefore by individual or collective agreement.

A

The Working Time Act (Arbeitszeitgesetz) defines part-time work or part-time employment as employment relationships with fewer weekly working hours than the statutory norm (see 2.1.2.1) or than the normal working time laid down in the relevant collective agreement.

Various rules set out in the law protect part-time workers against discrimination compared with full-time workers. The employer is not allowed to change a part-time worker's working time without his or her consent. Part-time workers also have the same rights as full-time workers in respect of pay, bonuses and all other conditions of employment.

A 5-year period of part-time employment has little or no effect on pensions, which in Austria are calculated on the basis of the best 15 years of contributions.

E

An employment contract is considered to be part time if it provides for a daily, weekly, monthly or annual length of working time less than the normal length for the job in question. A worker is also regarded as a part-time employee where he or she, being within 3 years of retirement, reduces daily working time by 50%, the rest of the job being done by another worker (job-sharing). A part-time contract must describe the nature of the contract, its duration and the number of hours or days to be worked, and must be registered with the public employment service. Remuneration is proportional to that of a full-time worker, and part-time workers enjoy the same rights and benefits laid down by the law or collective agreements as full-time workers. Social security contributions are calculated on the basis of working time.

B

Workers who have already availed of the part-time career break are now entitled to the right to part-time employment (under the same working arrangement); this right is coupled with protection against dismissal.

The position of part-time workers has been improved under unemployment insurance arrangements.

The Law on employment promotion and preventive measures to safeguard competitiveness provides for a simplification of administrative formalities concerning the employment of part-time workers with flexible working hours.

F

Part-time workers are defined as persons whose working hours are at least 1/5 shorter than statutory or collectively agreed weekly, monthly or annual working hours. A part-time contract may be concluded on the initiative of either the worker or the employer, must be in written form, and must contain specific regulations concerning remuneration, classification, working hours, etc. Remuneration is proportional to that of a full-time employee performing comparable work. Part-time workers enjoy full rights. Depending on the collective agreement, overtime must not exceed 1/10 or 1/3 of agreed working time.

Employers in the commercial sector who convert open-ended full-time contracts into fixed-term part-time contracts (between 16 and 32 weekly working hours) are entitled to a 30% reduction of their social security contributions.

D

Specific legal regulation in the 1985 Employment Promotion Act (e.g. the definition of and principle of equal treatment for full-time and part-time workers). Otherwise the general labour regulation is in force.

FIN

There is no definition of a part-time contract. Legislation on employment contracts, periods of notice, redundancy pay, etc. applies equally to full-time and part-time workers. Part-time workers do not suffer disadvantages in terms of health insurance or health care entitlement, as benefits are linked to residence. Retirement pension is calculated on the basis of the length of employment periods and level of earnings. The employer may, having given notice, unilaterally convert an employment contract into a part-time contract from the end of the period of notice, subject to conditions similar to those applicable to the termination of employment contracts (723/88).

Part-time contracts

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>GR Part-time work has recently been regulated by Law No. 1892/1990. A part-time contract must be in writing and may be open ended or fixed term. The law stipulates equal treatment for part-time and full-time workers, allowing for the difference in working hours. It does not stipulate a minimum or maximum working time, and the contracting parties have complete freedom in this matter.</p> <p>Replacement of a full-time job by a part-time one is subject to certain conditions: a) dismissal of a worker because he or she refuses to accept part-time employment is prohibited; b) a part-time worker must be given priority when full-time workers are to be recruited; c) a part-time worker has the right to refuse to work overtime if he or she has another job or family responsibilities. Collective autonomy is relatively important, given that all the statutory provisions on part-time employment laid down by the law may be modified or supplemented by collective agreements.</p> | <p>NL There is no legal definition of part-time work nor is it defined in collective agreements. Generally speaking, a part-time worker is anyone who works less than the normal (collectively agreed) working time for the sector or enterprise concerned. According to this description, the percentage of part-time workers is very high (approx. 37% in total, 60% of women). Legislation contains binding requirements regarding equal treatment for full-time and part-time workers, both with respect to the terms and conditions of employment and social security.</p> |
| <p>I Part-time work is very vaguely defined as where working time is less than that normally stipulated by collective agreement. It is subject to the general provisions of labour law and collective agreements. Employees willing to work part time may ask to be entered in special placement lists. Contracts must be in writing, describe the job and stipulate working hours. A copy must be sent to the provincial labour inspectorate. A change from full-time employment to part-time employment must be covered by a written agreement between the parties which has been ratified by the provincial employment office. A part-time contract may be converted into a full-time contract at the employer's request. Overtime is prohibited unless provided for by collective agreements. Recently, Law 451/94 has introduced certain advantages in terms of the contributions payable by companies offering part-time contracts. Law 608/96 introduces further reductions in the social security contributions of enterprises which enter so-called solidarity contracts with workers who are prepared to work part time. This regulation applies in particular to regions falling under Objectives 1 and 2 of EC Directive 2052/1988.</p> | <p>P Most labour legislation applies equally to both full-time and part-time work. However, the Working Time Act states that collective agreements should, if possible, include provisions on the subject and establish priorities for access to part-time work for women with family responsibilities, disabled workers and workers who are also students.</p> <p>In general, working time in part-time employment is equivalent to half of normal working time.</p> <p>The law also states that remuneration may not be less than the amount payable for full-time work of the same duration. The provisions on part-time employment are flexible. No special or official provisions are necessary for part-time contracts.</p> |
| <p>IRL The Worker Protection (Regular Part-Time Employees) Act 1991 defines regular part-time employees as persons working continuously for the same employer for at least 8 hours a week, for at least 13 weeks. Otherwise, what is meant by full-time or part-time employment depends on what is recognised or agreed by the company, sector or industry in question. Regular part-time employees are covered by legislative provisions on periods of notice, maternity leave, unfair dismissal, workforce participation, redundancy pay, protection in the event of the employer's insolvency and entitlement to leave. They are not at a disadvantage compared to full-time workers with regard to health and safety legislation, equality, remuneration and conditions of employment.</p> | <p>S There is no specific definition of a part-time contract, which is covered by the same rules on minimum periods of notice, redundancy pay and social insurance as a full-time contract, except that a part-time worker must work at least 17 hours a week to qualify for a partial pension and an average of 17 hours a week to be entitled to unemployment benefits.</p> |
| <p>L The law of 26.2.1993 specifically deals with part-time employment. A part-time worker's contract must contain the same details as that of a full-time worker.</p> <p>Part-time workers have the same statutory and agreement-based rights as full-time workers. Their remuneration is proportional to that of full-time employees performing comparable work. Redundancy pay is calculated proportionally on the basis of the number of years worked.</p> | <p>UK Part-time contracts are a matter for employers and employees to agree taking account of their individual preferences and possibilities. New regulations which entered into force in February 1995 give all part-time workers the same statutory rights as full-time workers.</p> |

Short-time working

As a means of contending with short-term economic crises, short-time working is particularly important in D, and also important in A, F and I. It is seen as a means of stabilising employment and safeguarding human capital during temporary economic difficulties, but is also used for structural adaptation purposes (e.g. in the former GDR). A long-term short-time working allowance exists in F.

DK

A In the event of involuntary and temporary reduction of workload: Short-time working allowance (Kurzarbeitsbeihilfe). If the social partners or parties to a collective agreement have agreed on the introduction of short-time working (4 consecutive weeks with working time at least 20% less than normal), and in order to safeguard jobs threatened by temporary difficulties, companies receive an amount with which they make up part of the income losses suffered by the workers concerned.

Bad-weather allowance (Schlechtwetterentschädigung): To avoid employment fluctuations in the construction industry, workers laid off as a result of bad weather (for a limited number of hours) receive an allowance equivalent to 60% of what they would otherwise have been paid. The builders' holiday and severance payments fund reimburses the sums concerned to the company.

E

Situation in which an employee loses a part-time job or sees his working time cut by at least 1/3 compared with normal working time, with a proportional cut in pay. In this latter case, the amount of the allowance is proportional to the reduction in working time.

B The regulations governing unemployment insurance provide for the granting of allowances to workers bound by a contract of employment which is temporarily, partially or wholly suspended for economic or technical reasons, or as a result of adverse conditions or force majeure (only the last of these concerns blue- and white-collar workers, the rest relate only to blue-collar workers).

F

Companies faced with temporary economic difficulties may reduce their employees' working time through a short-time working scheme.

Employees are paid an allowance of 50% of their gross hourly wage for each hour not worked. This allowance may in no case be lower than FRF 29 per hour.

Up to a quota of 600 hours per employee per year, the company is paid a specific allowance from the state equal to FRF 18 for each hour not worked.

D Short-time working allowance:
Workers who have to reduce their level of activity for economic reasons or as a result of unavoidable circumstances receive a short-time working allowance if, for example, at least a third of the work force is affected and working hours are cut by more than 10%. The allowance is equivalent to 60% (workers without children) or 67% (workers with children) of their net lump-sum remuneration.

FIN

A worker may take part-time leave (i.e. a reduction in the working week) for family reasons until his or her child enters primary education (at the age of 7), provided that both parents (or the single parent) have (has) been working outside the home, on a contract, for a continuous period of at least one year. Part-time leave for family reasons is granted to only one parent at a time.

Since 1994, anyone who does not work complete weeks (reduced week or day, part-time work, occasional full-time work for a period of less than one month, auxiliary work or activities compatible with receipt of unemployment benefit) may receive adjusted unemployment benefit.

The average number of those on reduced working week was some 9,200 in 1995 and 8,000 in 1996.

1. PROMOTION OF YEAR-ROUND EMPLOYMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Short-time working

GR	<p>On the basis of a mutual agreement, employers may pay compensation or a bonus calculated on the basis of the number of working days to workers moved to another job.</p>	NL	<p>No specific definition; where working time is less than normal full-time working.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction of working time: companies which, for reasons other than the normal risks of business, are confronted with a temporary reduction in activity may, subject to certain conditions, apply for dispensation from the ban on reducing the working time of employees. Workers then receive, for the hours not worked, unemployment benefit (WW) of up to 70% of their last wage. - Where insufficient work is available, employers and workers may agree on a suspension of wages. - Unemployment benefit (WW) for workers in the event of bad weather.
I	<p>Law No. 223/1991 on solidarity contracts constitutes an instrument for preventing redundancies and work-force reductions. A solidarity contract allows the social partners to sign a company agreement for a cut in hours and wages which may exceed 30% of collectively agreed levels. The reduction in working time may be on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. The public authorities (through the Cassa Integrazione Guadagni) make quarterly payments (based on the reduction in hours) which are distributed equally between companies and workers. Solidarity contracts may be signed with the company's management by the trade union delegates or the main trade union confederations at regional or national level. (Law No. 236/93; Law No. 451/94; Law No. 608/96.)</p>	P	<p>Employment contracts may be suspended or working time reduced for economic, technological or other reasons. Workers are then entitled to compensation guaranteeing them a monthly income of at least 2/3 of their gross wage (1/3 paid by social security, 1/3 by the employer) and in no case less than the guaranteed minimum.</p>
IRL	<p>Definition: where the number of days systematically worked during a working week is temporarily less than what is normal for the job concerned.</p>	S	<p>According to the Child Care Leave Act, employees can shorten their working hours when their children are young.</p>
L	<p>1. SHORT-TIME WORKING</p>	UK	<p>In particular circumstances, "guarantee payments" are available to certain employees who are not provided with work throughout a day during which they would normally be required to work under their contract of employment. The amount and duration of these statutory payments are subject to annually-reviewed limits.</p>

Partial retirement

The high cost of early retirement to the State, the desire of older workers not to break off from working life from one day to the next, and the fact that the retirement of experienced workers can be detrimental to their company have led to the introduction of partial early retirement schemes in many countries. The forerunners here are those countries in which work sharing plays a significant role in employment policy, e.g. France, Belgium and Denmark.

DK

A new partial early retirement programme (Delefterløsn) was introduced on 1 January 1995. It covers workers aged between 60 and 66 who meet the conditions for the voluntary early retirement programme, i.e. who are entitled to claim unemployment benefit and have contributed to an insurance fund for 20 out of the last 25 years. Partial early retirement benefit amounts to DKK 58 per hour by which working time is reduced.

Conditions: working time must be reduced by at least 1/4, but must not be less than 12 hours per week on average. The self-employed must not work more than 18.5 hours per week and must provide documentary evidence of their reduced working time.

The new scheme is administered by the unemployment insurance funds.

A

The gradual retirement scheme (Gleitpension) introduced on 1.7.1993 means that workers now have the opportunity to benefit from their pension entitlement earlier while continuing to work on a reduced scale. To do so they must meet all the specific conditions for early retirement after a long period of insurance (Vorzeitige Alterspension bei langer Versicherungsdauer). If they reduce their activity by at least 50% they are entitled to a graduated pension equivalent to 70% of their full pension. A reduction in working time of at least 30% gives entitlement to 50% of full pension. Written agreement on part-time work.

On reaching the age of 60 (women) or 65 (men), the graduated pension drawn to date becomes a full pension. It is subsequently increased for the duration of its receipt.

E

A worker aged over 62 and eligible for a pension (other than because of age) may cut his or her working time by 50%, with a corresponding cut in pay, subject to the agreement of the employer. The employer undertakes to recruit an unemployed person as a replacement until the worker reaches full retirement age.

B

Employers are entitled to a reduction in their contributions for the person replacing a worker who has taken partial early retirement.

Redistribution of work in the public sector (federal jurisdiction, Law of 10.4.1995).

Public-sector employees have the right to work part time for a continuous period of no more than five years before entering retirement (early or normal). During that period, in addition to their pay for part-time work, they are entitled to a monthly allowance of BEF 11,940. If two employees in the same department change to part-time work, they must be replaced by a full-time employee.

A general right to avail of part-time early retirement provisions from the age of 58 years has been introduced.

F

Gradual early retirement

Enables workers aged 55 or over to work part time until they are entitled to a full retirement pension. Working time must average 50% of previous working time, but may vary between 80 and 20%.

During this period, workers are paid by the company for the time they work and receive an allowance from the state equal to 30% of their previous wage.

An early retirement agreement may be concluded with a company which either is in economic difficulties and is seeking to cut back its work force or which desires a younger age pyramid; the aim of such agreements is recruitment of jobseekers (young people, priority target groups).

D

Pensions may be paid either in full or in part (1/3, 1/2 or 2/3 of full pension). In the case of partial pension, a supplementary income up to an amount depending on the previous contributions basis may be earned.

Support is provided for workers aged over 55 who reduce their working time to half of the collectively agreed full working hours (Elderly Employees Part-Time Employment Act). In order to benefit, the employer must increase the worker's wage for the part-time hours by at least 20% or increase the wage such that the worker earns at least 70% of the net wage he or she would receive for full-time employment.

Furthermore, the employer must pay additional contributions to the pension insurance system such that the worker is insured on the basis of at least 90% of the remuneration for full-time employment. The employment office reimburses the employer for the minimum contributions if the vacant (part-time) job is filled by an unemployed person or by a worker who has completed training.

FIN

Employed persons aged between 58 and 64 are by the Employment Pension Scheme entitled to a part-time pension provided they do not receive any other pension in their own right and they continue to work part-time (minimum 16 and maximum 28 hours a week, involving a pay cut between 35 and 70% of their average earnings). They must have been employed full-time for at least 12 of the 18 months preceding the beginning of the pension. They must also have earned the earnings-related pension for at least five years out of the previous fifteen years.

Partial retirement

GR		NL	<p>Partial retirement may be provided for by collective agreement (i.e. specific VUT-stipulations or flexible pension schemes).</p>
I	<p>Possible by virtue of Law No. 223/1991.</p>	P	<p>Workers aged at least 55 may conclude an early retirement agreement with their employer, under which they receive a sum not exceeding their last wage (minimum 25% thereof). Early retirement may take the form of a suspension or reduction of work. The person concerned remains attached to the company, but may also take up another paid activity. When the worker reaches statutory retirement age (65) and meets all the conditions for entitlement to a pension, early retirement status ends automatically and the worker is transferred to the old-age pension scheme.</p>
IRL		S	<p>See 2.1.1.5.</p>
L		UK	<p>No measures.</p>

2

Leave for family reasons or for education

Practically all countries offer leave for family reasons (maternity), but training or education leave is rarer. The conditions for the granting of leave are very diverse, extending from the simple possibility of leave at the employer's discretion without financial compensation to an entitlement with substantial financial compensation. Nowadays, both parents may normally share parental leave. Denmark in particular has made parental, training and sabbatical leave an important part of its active employment policy, in anticipation of the positive effects of job sharing.

DK 1. PARENTAL, SABBATICAL AND TRAINING LEAVE

- A**
1. PARENTAL LEAVE (KARENZURLAUB)
 2. PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT
 3. PARENTAL LEAVE ALLOWANCE (KARENZURLAUBSGELD)
 4. EDUCATIONAL LEAVE

E Unpaid leave of up to 3 years to take care of a child (natural or adopted). During this period, the worker maintains his right to take part in training organised by the employer. During the first year, return to his own job is guaranteed; after this there is the right to an equivalent post. Right to one hour (divisible in two parts) of leave of absence for breast-feeding of an infant up to 9 months or a reduction by half an hour of the working day. In cases where both parents work, the father also has the right to the reduction in the length of the working day. Workers employed in a company for 6 months (and 12 months in the economic sector in question) can request paid leave for training with a maximum of 150 hours. If the company refuses, it is obliged to justify its reason.

B The minimum duration of a career break has been reduced to 3 months (from 6 months). In the public sector, employees have the right to a career break; the maximum duration of a career break has been changed to 6 years. There is a limited right to a career break in the private sector. The arrangements for part-time career breaks have been broadened: working time may be reduced by 1/5, 1/4, 1/3 or 1/2 of normal full-time working hours. In addition, protection against dismissal, which already existed for workers taking a full-time career break, has been extended to cover workers taking a part-time career break. Employers are granted a reduction in their social security contributions for a worker replacing another worker on a career break.

Amount of the "career break allowance": BEF 11,830 a month for a complete career break or a proportionate amount for a reduction in working hours. The increased amount is paid if the break occurs during the 3 years after the birth of a second child.

F Until the child reaches the age of 36 months. Employers with fewer than 100 employees may refuse to grant leave, after consulting the works council, if they consider it detrimental to production and the running of the company. Leave may be taken by the father, mother or both in turn. No allowance, except for the third child, when a flat-rate sum of FRF 2,871 per month is paid, slightly more than the guaranteed minimum income (SMIC); this may be paid for half the year prior to the child's third birthday if the parent is working part time or attending a remunerated vocational training course.

D Per family, until the child reaches the age of 36 months (or for 36 months following adoption of a child under the age of eight). Payment of DM 600 per month for the first 6 months, then an earnings-linked allowance until the child reaches the age of 24 months. The parent taking leave may work up to 19 hours a week for any employer, provided the employer is in agreement. The leave may be taken by the father or mother, or may be shared between them, in which case they may alternate no more than 3 times (e.g. the mother may take the first year, the father the second, and the mother the third). For children born after the end of 1993, the parental leave allowance is income-related throughout the period of leave (previously all parents received DM 600 per month during the first 6 months of leave, regardless of income).

FIN 1. PARENTAL LEAVE
2. TRAINING LEAVE

Leave for family reasons or for education

GR	Each parent is entitled to up to three and a half months' full-time unpaid leave for children aged up to 3 years. This individual right cannot be transferred between the parents. Single parents are entitled to 6 months' leave. Employers may refuse to grant parental leave if more than 8% of their workers apply for it during the same year. Maternity allowance is paid by the IKA and a supplementary benefit up to the total amount of salary by the OAED. To qualify for maternity allowance, the parent must have worked a minimum of 200 days during the last 2 years. This right applies for each individual child (provided the parent has worked for the same employer for at least 1 year). The above regulations also apply to workers who have adopted a child.	NL	1. PARENTAL LEAVE 2. INTERRUPTION OF WORKING CAREERS
I	1. MATERNITY LEAVE	P	The working father or mother is entitled to 6-24 months' unpaid leave, to be taken immediately after maternity leave. Workers (but not managerial staff) with a child under 12 or a disabled child are entitled to work part time. There is no compensation for loss of earnings. Maternity leave: 98 days (Article 9 of Law No. 4/84 of 5.4.1984 and Law No. 17/95 of 9/6), 100% of average gross earnings. Training leave: unpaid.
IRL	The career break is well established in the public sector. The system allows civil servants to take special unpaid leave (min. 6 months, max. 5 years) to bring up children or for other domestic reasons, training or travel abroad. Civil servants wishing to return to work after a career break are assigned to the first available vacant post, with a guarantee that they will be re-employed within 12 months.	S	A parent is entitled to full leave for the care of a child until the child reaches 18 months, irrespective of whether the parent receives parental cash benefits. Parental leave with parental cash benefit is 450 days per family: 360 days at 75% of earnings, and 90 days with SEK 60 per day. 30 days of the 360 days may only be taken by the father and 30 only by the mother. The father is also entitled to 10 days in connection with the birth of a child. Paid leave may be taken on a full-time, three-quarter, half-time and quarter-time basis. For a multiple birth, paid leave is extended by 90 days at 75% of earnings and by another 90 days at SEK 60 per day. Parental benefit is also paid for parents taking care of a sick child (120 days per year). There is also a right to leave for the care of a seriously ill, close relative (60 days per year). A daily benefit is paid from the sickness fund. Individuals who have been employed for a minimum of 6 months are entitled to an educational leave of absence. The period for the leave of absence depends on the length of study, but there are no other restrictions.
L	None.	UK	Arrangements are determined by employers and employees in the light of their particular circumstances and needs. The Government is committed to implementing the EU Parental Leave Directive.

Minimum wage

A statutory minimum wage exists in five European Union countries (E, F, L, NL, P); the UK government has also recently committed itself to introducing relevant regulations. In most others minimum levels are laid down in agreements. Statutory systems may include automatic indexing. Introduced to boost incomes at the bottom end of the pay scale and avoid competition between firms based on "wage-dumping", the minimum wage is today sometimes seen as a barrier to the recruitment of low-skilled workers (particularly young people). This negative consequence of the minimum wage depends mainly on the effective proportion of the labour force it affects and the manner in which it develops with inflation.

DK No statutory minimum wage, but minimum wages are included in all collective agreements and apply to all workers aged 18 or over and all part-time workers regardless of whether they work more or less than 15 hours.

A The employment contract does not in itself establish a right to remuneration. The worker enjoys the right to a reasonable wage in the absence of any other agreement. No statutory minimum wage. Collective agreements lay down minimum standards.

E The constitution recognises the right to a minimum wage without discrimination between men and women. A national minimum wage exists, which is reviewed annually. It is lower for workers under 18.

B Collective Agreement No. 21 of 15.5.1975 defined a minimum wage for the first time. Since then, this agreement has been amended and coordinated several times, particularly by Collective Agreement No. 43(d) of 13.7.1993.

F The purpose of the statutory minimum wage (SMIC) is to uphold the purchasing power of the workers with the lowest wages and to ensure the participation of all employees in the nation's economic development. The SMIC is increased periodically either by Cabinet Resolutions or by Ministerial Order:

- obligatorily on 1 July each year, to ensure an annual increase in its purchasing power equivalent to at least half of the increased purchasing power of the hourly wage rate;
- automatically when the official consumer prices' index (excluding tobacco) increases by at least 2%; the SMIC is then adjusted upwards by the same proportion;
- whenever dictated by social and economic considerations: government resolution.

D No statutory minimum wage. Collectively agreed wages establish minimum standards. These are fixed for individual sectors through wage negotiations between employers' associations or individual employers, on the one hand, and trade unions, on the other. They can be extended by agreements on general applicability to employers and workers not bound by collective agreements. There are no indexing arrangements.

FIN There is no statutory minimum wage. Minimum terms of employment, including wages, are laid down in collective agreements. Where a generally applicable collective agreement is in force in a particular sector, all employers are bound to comply with the terms it lays down regarding wages and employment. This system was introduced by the Employment Contracts Act (Työsopimuslaki, 320/70, art. 17).

Minimum wage

- GR** The minimum basic wage in the private sector was increased in 1996, by 3.5% as of 1.1.1996 and by 4% as of 1.7.1996. The index fluctuated around a level of 7.5% during the same period (December 1995 - December 1996). Increases of the minimum basic wage have also been granted for 1997: 4.25% as of 1.1.1997 and 3.25% as of 1.7.1997. An expected inflation rate of 4.5% has been determined for the same period. The following salary increases were granted for employees in the civil service:
- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1st year 1995: | |
| January | increase 2.1%, |
| January | automatic indexing 3%, |
| July | automatic indexing 3%. |
| 2nd year 1996: | |
| January | automatic indexing 2.5%, |
| July | automatic indexing 2.5%. |
| 3rd year 1997: | |
| A new wage table is in force as of 1.1.1997. | |
- I** The minimum wage is laid down in collective agreements signed in each sector of industry every three to four years. Until July 1992, the "mobile scale" operated ('contigenza' or 'scala mobile'), providing automatic wage-indexing. Since its abolition a gap has developed between wage negotiations in small and very small undertakings on the one hand (no agreements) and large and medium-sized concerns on the other (where there is a long tradition of wage negotiations at company level). Law No. 608/96 makes provision for certain rules on contracts for the realignment of employees' pay to the levels laid down in the corresponding collective labour agreements.
- IRL** No statutory minimum wage. Certain jobs/sectors are covered by Joint Labour Committees consisting of employers' and trade-union representatives, with a chairman appointed by the State. JLCs fix binding wages and terms of employment for the sectors and jobs concerned. It is estimated that they cover 9% of the labour force, mostly women.
- L** The Grand-Ducal decree of 30/12/44 introduced the concept of a minimum social wage. Equality between women and men from the point of view of minimum wage has existed since 1963. The minimum social wage is adjusted on the basis of the consumer price index in the same way as wages. The law of 26/07/86, amended in 1989, introduced the right to a guaranteed monthly minimum wage, which is calculated taking account of the make-up of the applicant's household.
- NL** Standard statutory minimum wage; indexing on the basis of average trends in collectively-agreed wages in the public and private sectors, with the possibility of derogations in the event of a deterioration in the ratio between active and non-active persons. For young people, the minimum wage depends on age.
- P** Statutory national minimum wage. Lower rates apply to domestic staff, young people, apprentices and workers with reduced capacity.
- The statutory minimum wage is reviewed at the beginning of the year, taking account of inflation forecasts and anticipated increases in productivity.
- S** No statutory minimum wage. Minimum wages are in principle fixed in branch agreements concluded as part of collective bargaining.
- UK** The Government is committed to the introduction of legislation to set in place a national minimum wage. As a first step it has established the Low Pay Commission to advise the Government on the level at which the minimum wage might be set after undertaking a wide ranging consultation exercise. Statutory minimum rates for agricultural workers are fixed by three Agricultural Wages Boards, for England and Wales: The Scottish Office and the Northern Ireland Office perform a similar function for Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively.

Wage negotiation

There are various levels of wage negotiation in the Member States: centralised (national multi-sectoral level), branch level, company level and individual. There is a general trend (though with variations between countries) from centralised negotiations towards branch and especially company negotiations. The aim is to standardise wage trends within a sector or company. On the other hand, centralised wage restraint mechanisms have been introduced (see 2.2.3).

DK Legislation plays a relatively limited role, mainly because the majority of workers and employers are members of unions or associations. There are many collective agreements between workers' organisations and employers' associations or individual employers.

A As a general rule, the parties to collective agreements (the Wirtschaftskammer Österreichs for employers, the unions in the Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund for the workers) establish minimum wages for the various branches of activity, at either national or regional level.

E One of the main features of reform is the promotion of collective bargaining. The first aim is to help negotiating committees to conclude agreements, hence the new rules on the authority of the company to hold negotiations relating to a higher level than the company, the composition of the negotiating committee, and the prior conditions for the signing of an agreement. Another aspect of the reform is to give the social partners more scope to determine the content of collective agreements so that the results achieved are tailored to their area of application and the prevailing conditions. Agreements therefore include rules on non-application to wage matters, in particular with relation to companies (whose economic stability could be affected), to their termination and applicability of the previous agreement and the rights recognised under it, as well as the possibility of extending their validity for a longer period than initially agreed.

B The Law on employment promotion and preventive measures to safeguard competitiveness (26.7.1996) provides for a new wage-monitoring procedure which allows wage trends to be aligned with those of Belgium's main trading partners, namely France, Germany and the Netherlands. Each year, the Central Economic Council will issue a report on the maximum available margins for increases in wage costs in nominal terms; on the basis of this report, the social partners will then lay down the maximum available margin for increases as well as employment measures for the next two years under their national collective agreement. If the social partners are unable to reach consensus, the government will itself stipulate the margin. Finally, using the twin approach of minimum increases based on fixed wage scales and changes in the cost-of-living index, and maximum increases equivalent to the margin provided for in the national agreement, collective agreements will be concluded at sector and company level. Mechanisms for corrective changes along the way are planned. In addition, penalties may be imposed if the wage standard is not adhered to.

F The employers associations and the unions negotiate real wages at company level on an annual basis. Minimum wages are negotiated at sectoral level.

D In view of the problems associated with labour market policy, the social partners have made job security the main theme of collective bargaining. Collective agreements therefore include wage restraint arrangements, together with various options at company level (flexible working hours) and shorter working time without wage compensation in order to safeguard jobs. Special arrangements for newly recruited workers, in particular low initial pay rates for long-term unemployed persons, have been adopted in the chemical and paper industries.

Wage and salary trends: collective agreements 1996: average rise of 1.8% in the old Länder and 3.6% in the new Länder.

FIN Pay scales are fixed at national level by collective bargaining. The labour market organisations at central level conclude framework agreements which give rise to sectoral agreements. A collective agreement has to be in writing and must be available for consultation at the premises of the labour inspectorate districts and the labour market organisations.

The parties to a collective agreement may draw up binding conditions applicable to employment contracts and industrial relations. An employer bound by collective agreement must observe its minimum conditions. Legislation states that the provisions of collective agreements must be complied even with regard to non-unionised workers, unless they are specifically excluded.

Wage negotiation

2

GR	<p>Wages are fixed annually through negotiations and agreements between representatives from the public and private sectors and the government. Collective agreements between sectors and enterprises are also possible. In 1995, wages increased by 7% in the private sector and by 5.3% in the public sector.</p>	NL	<p>Branch or company negotiations are dominant. Multi-sectoral wage agreements contain recommendations covering a whole range of subjects, which are then put into more specific terms in sectoral and company collective agreements. Wage restraint is a central theme, as is the trend towards shorter and more flexible working time.</p>
I	<p>The situation has changed significantly since 1992, a historic first agreement having marked the abolition of the mobile scale system (automatic wage-indexing). In future, the mobile scale will be replaced by a dual system of sectoral and company agreements. The agreement of 3.7.1993 establishes the basis for a new system of industrial relations. In particular, contract renewals will have to make provision for pay increases for employees in line with the planned inflation ceiling.</p>	P	<p>Collective agreements lay down monthly minimum wages for occupational categories in sectors or companies. In principle, they are reviewed annually. They may, by ministerial order, be extended to companies and workers not affiliated to the signatory associations.</p>
IRL	<p>A system of voluntary collective bargaining exists whereby agreements can be concluded at local or national level. Since 1988 centralised agreements valid for three years have been negotiated, the trend being towards wage restraint. The present centralised agreement is called Partnership 2000, covering the years 1997 to 2000.</p>	S	<p>The government does not intervene. In principle, wages are fixed by agreements resulting from collective bargaining at central, sectoral or company level. Individual agreements are also possible, if they are not contrary to existing collective agreements.</p>
L	<p>Automatic adjustment of wages and salaries pegged to the consumer price index. Changes in the structure and weighting of the list of reference items are subject to a Grand-Ducal regulation. Wage negotiations between the social partners.</p>	UK	<p>Pay - General Beyond a National Minimum Wage, pay is a matter for employers and employees, or their representatives, to determine in the light of their particular circumstances. The Government believes that pay should be a focus for partnership, and not confrontation, within a flexible labour market that serves employers and employees alike. Pay - Public Sector The Government's election manifesto made clear that it would resist unreasonable public sector pay demands. The aim is to pursue a firm and fair approach to public sector pay, recognising the need to retain, recruit and motivate staff, within tough cash limits.</p>

Wage restraints

Several wage restraint mechanisms have been introduced through legislation or as part of agreements between the social partners. However, while the general tendency is towards moderation (even though wage trends follow short-term economic developments), it seems to be less obvious in decentralised systems.

DK

A

In 1996 gross wages for dependent employees rose by (an estimated) 1.4% on the previous year. Consumer prices rose by 1.9%. With a per capita productivity increase of (an estimated) 1.6%, real wage development lagged significantly behind productivity growth.

E

Collective bargaining takes place at both national and decentralised levels.

The wage increases negotiated in collective bargaining rounds in recent years have been very moderate. The wage increase agreed in 1995 was 3.9%, in 1996 3.8%; inflation rates were 4.3% in 1995 and 3.2% in 1996.

B

The Law on employment promotion and preventive measures to safeguard competitiveness provides for a new wage-monitoring procedure (see section 2.2.2). The freezing of wages and other income under the "Global Plan" will continue until the end of 1996. The margin provided for wage increases in 1997-1998 has been fixed at 6.1% (including automatic indexing and increases related to the wage scale).

F

According to a Ministry of Labour study, the slowing down of wage increases, which started in 1991, continued in 1993.

D

In general, if negotiations between employers and workers on the renewal of a collective agreement reach deadlock, a conciliation procedure is adopted. A distinction must be made between agreement-based conciliation and conciliation through the public authorities. In the first case, the social partners are themselves committed to start the conciliation process before the start of a dispute. The public authorities become involved only where there is no conciliation agreement between the social partners or if the agreement-based process fails to achieve a positive result and the social partners then turn to a state conciliation service.

FIN

A comprehensive and centralised incomes policy settlement, the essential elements of which include across-the-board low pay increases, reduction in interest rates and inflation suppression, was concluded on 29 September 1995 for two years. This covers all employees (public and private sector). In industry, wages and salaries were raised in November 1995 by 1.8% and in October 1996 the general pay rise was 1.3%.

Wage restraints

GR

The government presented its public-sector incomes policy in 1993, one of the main features being a 4% wage rise, which meant a cut in real income terms.

In March 1994, wage negotiations in the private sector resulted in the signing of a two-year collective agreement, with provision for a nominal wage increase of 5% on 1.1.1994, an additional rise of 6.5% on 1.7.1994, and a compensatory increase on 1.7.1995 if inflation exceeded 11.5% in 1994.

NL

Multi-sectoral recommendations on integrating the long-term unemployed and minorities. Wage restraint is regarded as an important factor in employment growth.

It is vital to maintain wage restraint. Unemployment is concentrated at the lower end of the labour market, which will also be the focal point of the reduction in social security contributions scheduled for 1996-1998.

Measures provided for in the 1994 government agreement:

- introduction of a statutory minimum wage exemption for the long-term unemployed;
- adaptation of the practice of giving general currency to binding collective agreements to bridge the gap between the statutory minimum wage and the lowest wages under collective agreements;
- non-application of indexing of statutory minimum wage and allowances on 1.1.1995.

I

[Empty box]

P

1. AGREEMENT ON STRATEGIC CONCERTED ACTION FOR THE PERIOD 1996-1999

IRL

The Partnership 2000 agreement allows for wage increases of 9.25% over the 1997-2000 period.

S

See 2.2.2.0

L

Wage restraint

In accordance with the tripartite agreement of 8.3.1994, the unions will take account of the need for a policy based on wage restraint in companies in difficulty. Employers will take account of the need to maintain and even create employment.

UK

[Empty box]

2

Framework measures

General measures designed to develop new employment areas, mainly in services, may be divided into two categories. First, measures to integrate or provide jobs for the unemployed, which are often implemented through intermediary organisations (integration enterprises, non-profit associations etc.). Such initiatives are found in practically all EU Member States and focus on certain themes (assistance, childcare, environment). Secondly, measures where the objective is more to develop new markets. Such measures are still rare, tending to be part of an approach designed to cut wage costs, owing to the negligible productivity increases associated with these activities.

DK

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTS

Designed to boost employment prospects for young people and other special risk groups through projects which would not otherwise have been implemented by local authorities or private organisations. Financing is from a central fund.

LOCAL ACTIVITY GENERATION ACT

See point 5.1.1

A

The Employment Service promotes job creation, on the one hand, by providing initial aid to cultural, social and ecological initiatives in the non-commercial sector, in particular, in the form of wage and material cost subsidies; however, the ultimate aim is for the unemployed to make the transition to the regular labour market through the assumption of the costs by other parties. On the other hand, transitional employment is also created for problem groups, with the ultimate aim of employment on the regular labour market. Wage cost subsidies to companies are, however, also intended to contribute to job creation.

1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPLOYMENT PROJECTS

E

Framework measures

a) Agreements between INEM and local organisations, public bodies and their autonomous public offices, autonomous regions, universities and non-profit organisations
The aim of such agreements is to create a possibility for the unemployed (and those threatened by long-term unemployment) to be employed carrying out work and services in the public interest.

b) Fixed-term employment of relevance for society
The aim of this measure is to keep recipients of unemployment benefits at work (without them having to forfeit these benefits), who are employed to carry out work for the public administration which is of use to society and of benefit for the local community.

B

See Chapter 5 for measures to help disadvantaged groups.

VOLUNTARY WORK BY THE UNEMPLOYED:
Subject to certain conditions, unemployed persons may perform voluntary work for non-profit organisations without losing their unemployment benefit.

MUNICIPAL RECRUITMENT PLAN (Walloon Region) :

To enable local authorities to recruit long-term unemployed young people for a maximum period of three years. Funding is provided by the Walloon regional authorities and the energy distribution companies (gas and electricity). Objective: 1,500 jobs.

SOCIAL WORKSHOPS (Flemish Region):

Unemployed persons who cannot be integrated into the open labour market are employed in social workshops, which are being subsidised on an experimental basis by the Flemish government.

F

At local level, the state and the local authorities provide financial support for institutions running social and occupational reintegration schemes for the long-term unemployed.

These programmes consist on the one hand of providing social support (rent allowances, etc.), and on the other hand of providing work experience in jobs of benefit to the community ("community-work contracts") or in economic integration enterprises and intermediary associations.

D

1. JOB-CREATION SCHEMES (ARBEITSBESCHAFFUNGSMASSNAHMEN - ABM)
2. PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION

FIN

Organisations working with the unemployed receive financial support. Cooperation between the authorities and these organisations is being developed.
Team work and orientated training activities are being further developed within the framework of guidance and information services for the long-term unemployed.

Framework measures

GR	<p>Subsidy to hotel businesses for the maintenance of their personnel even in the winter months; subsidy to industries and handicrafts located in border regions; subsidies to mining industries, livestock farms and enterprises located in certain regions of the country; programme of support for unemployed women providing training in areas such as child care, crafts workshops, tourism, restoration work, etc.</p>	NL	<p>By 1998, 40,000 public jobs are to be created for the long-term unemployed in the welfare, security and childcare sectors; pay starts at the statutory minimum wage and may rise to 20% above it. The cost up to 1998 will be NLG 1.8 billion. Experiments with allocating resources to innovative projects aimed at developing employment for the long-term unemployed.</p>
I	<p>Social cooperatives Laws No. 381/91 (8.11.1991) and 266/91 on voluntary organisations. Law No. 236/93: fund for the employment of young people in cultural activities, tourism and social services in the Mezzogiorno. Laws No. 451/94 and 608/96 on socially useful jobs. Special measures for promoting self-employment in the Mezzogiorno (Law No. 608/96). Framework Law on social services.</p>	P	<p>LOCAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES PROGRAMME (IDL), the objective of which is to create jobs, encourage people to remain in areas subject to exodus, and develop craft trades. There are basic-education programmes for adults organised on a municipal basis in cooperation with local authorities with the aim of establishing an integrated approach to the problems of local development. Support schemes for small businesses: the aim is to improve the competitive strength of small businesses in order to secure their survival on the market and to enable them to meet the challenges of technological advance (D.-L. No. 291/95 of 14.11.1995).</p>
IRL	<p>The government's Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development recognises the importance of a local dimension in business and job creation and of boosting resources to allow local communities to contribute to the fight against unemployment and the promotion of local development.</p>	S	
L	<p>In 1984, a subsidy was introduced to create jobs of "socioeconomic" use. Its scope is limited to recruitment of persons aged under 26 whose job is threatened or who are unemployed and to services and activities not provided by public authorities or enterprises. The jobs created must be year-round and permanent. The subsidy is paid for a maximum period of one year and amounts to a maximum of LFR 350,000 per full-time job created. The temporary assistance division (Division d'auxiliaires temporaires - DAT) aims to create temporary jobs in the area of socially useful activities and services. Recruitments are made from among young jobseekers (under 30 years of age) who are entitled to the minimum wage. The Employment Fund (Fonds pour l'emploi) reimburses employers for their social security contributions and 25% of the wage paid (except where the employer is the state).</p>	UK	<p>ELIMINATION OF BARRIERS TO JOB CREATION The government has made the removal of unnecessary regulations a priority, in order to encourage job creation, and its deregulation initiative is part of this policy. It has consulted businesses and re-examined all the regulations and is in the process of repealing or amending more than 1,000 regulations. All new proposals for regulations must be accompanied by an assessment of their probable impact on businesses.</p>

Local and household services

Aid designed to encourage job creation in everyday services is granted in several countries. Apart from framework measures (see 2.3.1) it consists of tax concessions and reductions in contributions, sometimes linked with new instruments such as service vouchers or, in Germany, with entitlement to a kindergarten place. In all cases State aid is designed to reestablish a balance between trends in wage costs and productivity without affecting net wages, above all in order to improve the ability to finance demand. One benefit of these policies is their limited windfall or substitution effects.

DK

INITIATIVE ON PRIVATE DOMESTIC SERVICES

Since 1.1.94, aid of DKK 65 per hour is given to householders declaring work done at their home (e.g. washing, cleaning, gardening). The scheme will run for three years.

A

Special provisions, within the framework of the "community-benefit integration subsidy" (gemeinnützige Eingliederungsbeihilfe), for job creation in child-care establishments which help working women (or parents) by staying open longer. The Employment Service supports the creation of new permanent jobs in this sector by covering a share of the wage costs for a period of up to four years.

E

B

1. PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE NON-COMMERCIAL SECTOR
2. EMPLOYMENT OF DOMESTIC STAFF
3. FAMILY HELP NOT SUBJECT TO SOCIAL SECURITY
4. LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AGENCY (Royal Decree of 10.5.1994)
5. SERVICE CHEQUE
6. TRANSITIONAL VOCATIONAL SCHEMES

F

1. DOMESTIC EMPLOYMENT AND SERVICE CHEQUES
2. ALLOWANCE FOR CHILD CARE AT HOME

D

CHILD-CARE

From 1.1.1996, introduction of the right to a kindergarten place.

FIN

As of the beginning of 1994, anyone who employs a person for household maintenance, cleaning, odd jobs, etc. is exempted from paying tax and social security contributions on wages up to FIM 5,000 per year. The National Service Centre for Small Employers gives help and advice on hiring employees. It assists households by drawing up insurance contracts, taking care of calculation of wages and any payments related to these. In addition, it advises the self-employed and other small businesses on employers' obligations and matters related to employment relationships.

Local and household services

GR

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NL

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I

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P

Following the IDL programme, experimental application of a series of measures to promote the development of local services, encourage very small businesses and control the population exodus from certain under-populated regions. Local and household services carried out on the basis of the service cheque and integration enterprises are now classified as belonging to the social labour market (Ministerial Council Resolution No. 104/96 of 9.7.1996).

IRL

1991 Childcare Act, on the organisation of childcare.

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S

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L

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UK

The 1990 Care in the Community Act, which entered into force in 1993, makes local authorities responsible for organising care for the elderly, the mentally and physically disabled and people with learning difficulties, more or less on the basis of market economy rules.

2

Social and environmental services

Job creation in other services too is sometimes boosted by aid and organised within intermediate structures. The primary concerns are conservation of the cultural heritage and environmental protection and sanitation. Measures are either directly linked to employment (subsidies, reduced contributions, etc.) or are indirect, e.g. regulations or taxation relating to dumping or recycling etc.

- A** The community-benefit integration subsidy (gemeinnützige Eingliederungsbeihilfe) encourages job creation in socially useful sectors such as social services, urban and rural regeneration, culture, environmental tourism, etc. As well as individual jobs, it also promotes projects, in which case funding may be used to fill key posts and finance material costs.
- The subsidy procedures (subsidies amounting up to 66.7% of wage costs for a period of up to 36 months) also apply to the creation of new, permanent jobs in waste management and environmental consultancy (environmental protection and sanitation, waste recycling and storage).

- B** In order to meet diverse needs concerning crime prevention and security in communes and large towns, local coordinators and prevention and security assistants will be introduced as provided for in the basic rules governing local employment agencies. A total of 29 contracted local coordinators will be taken on; the costs involved will be borne by the federal authorities. The communes and towns concerned will be able to use the local employment office to recruit the prevention and security assistants.

- D**

- DK** **IMPROVEMENT OF THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT**
 Programme launched in 1990. Subsidies amounting to 50% of wage costs payable by private householders or flatowners for repair work. Effect: approx. 5 000 jobs created. DKK 1 billion in public funds per year.
- WASTE AND RECYCLING**
 Adoption in 1993 of an Order on waste disposal and recycling. Subsidies are available for projects, and a tax on waste has been introduced.

- E** **SCHOOL-WORKSHOPS**
 A scheme providing both training and employment for young people within a dual system. Both theoretical training and work experience within this scheme serve the aim of preserving cultural heritage.
- Within the framework of this programme and by virtue of the Agreement of July 1996 between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of the Environment and the Spanish Urban Assembly, work has begun on developing a network of tree nurseries in the communes with a view to afforestation with indigenous species.
- The Programme for Industry and Environmental Technology (PITMA) promotes research and development and the adaptation of technology in enterprises to the legal requirements concerning environmental protection.

- F**
- FIN** An increasing amount of attention is being devoted to environmental issues in relation to all activities in society and in companies, with development of the necessary know-how and technology.
- A decree on subsidies to major repair projects on municipal property providing employment opportunities came into force in February 1997. Grants for this have been reserved for the years 1997 to 1999. The new subsidy will not be granted to repair projects covered by the general system of State subsidies. It is granted to help cover costs incurring from major repairs on buildings (not residential buildings or business premises) owned entirely by the community. The grant amounts to a maximum of 15% of the acceptable costs of the project.

Social and environmental services

GR

NL

I

Residential buildings programme (renovation).
1994/95 environmental programme implementing the law on environmental issues.
Law No. 451/94 introduces certain new provisions for work in the public interest in innovatory fields such as cultural heritage, protection of the environment, urban regeneration, support for SMEs in the services and commercial sectors, and services for individuals. The law emphasises the exceptional nature of such work, which must be of limited duration. The objective is recruitment of the unemployed.
Workers thus recruited have certain advantages. Recruitment in this way is not the same as recruitment on an employment contract and does not entail discontinuation of benefits from the Special Payments Fund, loss of the mobility allowance or deletion from placement or mobility lists.
Law No. 608/96 (Art. 1, § 18) allows projects on socially useful jobs to be submitted by social cooperatives.

P

Employment programme for persons receiving unemployment benefit, the aim being to provide temporary employment on projects of benefit to the community organised by non-profit associations. Supplementary allowance of up to 20% of unemployment benefit.
Environment:
Employment in environmental areas is covered by the support system for young entrepreneurs (SAJE) (D.-L. No. 22/97 of 23.1.1997 and Ministerial Council Resolution No. 13/97 of 23.1.1997).
One aspect of the Vocational Training Centres scheme is to provide vocational qualifications in the area of the environment (Ministerial Council Resolution No. 414/96 of 21.8.1996).

IRL

The Community Employment programme (CE) which offers 40,000 part-time jobs for the unemployed, covers a very wide range of social and public services, including health, education, community social measures, public information and housing.
The National Training and Employment Authority (FAS) makes a major contribution to creating jobs linked to the environment and national heritage, thus encouraging and supporting the development of tourism. It both assists the material development of measures and helps improve local authorities' ability to create and manage similar arrangements under the local enterprise programme.

S

In 1997 a special allowance is being granted for certain building refurbishment operations.

L

UK

RENOVATION: The Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) provides more than GBP 1.3 billion per year for urban and rural regeneration. Local partnerships which have already succeeded under the fund will receive more than GBP 3 billion before 2002 and a fourth series of challenge fund tenders has been launched in 1997. Partnerships design their own programmes to respond to specific local needs, for example in employment, education and training.
ENTERPRISE ZONES: 6 Enterprise Zones encourage vigorous private sector activity in their target zones by offering tax concessions, exemption from business rates and a simplified planning regime for 10 years.
ENGLISH PARTNERSHIPS: English Partnerships deliver economic development, job creation and environmental improvement by regenerating derelict, vacant and under-used land and buildings throughout England.

Recent measures

<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 150px; width: 100%;"></div>	<p>DK New early retirement programme from 1.1.95: workers aged between 60 and 65 receive a part-time early retirement benefit if their working time is cut by one quarter, as long as it is not less than 12 hours a week.</p> <p>The growing use of short-duration employment contracts made necessary by the recruitment of replacements for workers on special leave has boosted the external flexibility of the labour market.</p>
<p>A 1. AMENDMENTS TO THE WORKING TIME AND REST PERIODS ACTS</p>	<p>E 1. LABOUR MARKET REFORM LEGISLATION</p>
<p>B 1. LUMP-SUM REDUCTION OF EMPLOYER SOCIAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTIONS 2. SUBSIDIES FOR JOB CREATION 3. WORKING-TIME REDUCTION 4. SYSTEM OF FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS 5. USE OF TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT 6. ADDITIONAL SCHEME FOR WORKING-TIME REDUCTION 7. REDUCED CONTRIBUTIONS 8. INCENTIVE BONUS FOR REDUCED PERFORMANCE OR CAREER BREAKS (FLANDERS REGION) 9. FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME EARLY RETIREMENT</p>	<p>F A comprehensive system of flexibility has developed in recent years with which companies can adapt to fluctuations in work load: new forms of annualisation of working time with or without a reduction in working hours (in accordance with collective agreements), and new ways of limiting redundancies (short-time working, gradual early retirement). Major efforts have been made to promote employment in services, with the introduction of the service cheques and measures agreed between the state and companies to assist the development of new service vocations.</p> <p>In addition, the policy of reducing labour costs for low-paid employment has been stepped up. It consists of a reform of social welfare funding (proportional taxation of family allowances) and reduced contributions in the case of low wages.</p>
<p>D The objective of the initiative on part-time employment ("Teilzeitoffensive") is to encourage voluntary acceptance of part-time employment, with the social partners' support. Protection for part-time workers who become unemployed has been improved. The Working Time Act (1.7.1994) extended the possibilities for flexible working time. Sunday working remains banned, with a number of exceptions.</p> <p>The Elderly Employees Part-Time Employment Act, which came into force on 1 August 1996, created the framework conditions for employers and employees to conclude agreements on gradual retirement in the form of part-time employment for older employees.</p> <p>The law on foreign sub-contracted workers, which came into force on 1.3.1997, is intended to counteract the threat to domestic enterprises and existing jobs especially in the construction sector through the creation of fair conditions for competition.</p>	<p>FIN In order to intensify regional employment management, fifteen regions were selected to take part in a national partnership experiment that started from the beginning of 1997. The selected regions will attempt to promote a new kind of co-operation policy and partnership between private and public sector and NGOs with a special view to reducing long-term unemployment.</p>

Recent measures

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>GR Several measures have been introduced recently in a bid to improve flexibility, including a law approved by both employers and trade unions extending the scope for part-time employment, measures allowing statutory working time to be cut by 50%, and the possibility of continuous work in four shifts.</p> | <p>NL Minimum wage: the statutory minimum wage and allowances have been indexed in 1996 and 1997.
Redundancy: it is intended to shorten the obligatory authorisation procedure. This course can be followed if the employee concerned has no intention to raise any substantial objections.
Projects to reduce wage costs for firms supplying local services are planned for 1997.
Wage costs: Act on reduction of tax and social security contributions (WVA 1995). In addition to the WVA-based reduction in labour costs the government has implemented several other measures.</p> |
| <p>I Flexibility is being increased since the agreement of July 1993 (introduction of temporary employment contracts, part-time employment contracts, work-sharing, more flexible working time, etc.). Encouragement of local initiatives: law on work in the public interest (Laws No. 451/94 and 608/96), establishing of the Employment Fund and the Fund for the Development of Areas Eligible for Community Fund Support. Law No. 451/94 makes provision for temporary measures for the management of surplus workers (Article 3), experimental measures relating to employment (Article 6) and working-time flexibility with regard to maintaining or boosting employment levels (Article 7).</p> | <p>P A social labour market has been created by virtue of Ministerial Council Resolution No. 104/96 of 9.7.1996, which promotes social and local initiatives, the participation of the public, financial contributions and cooperation between a number of institutions on a partnership basis.
Vocational training centres (Escolas-Oficina) have been set up by virtue of Decree No. 414/96 of 21.8.1996, which are to help young people looking for their first job and adult long-term unemployed to acquire vocational qualifications in traditional and environment-related occupations with the ultimate aim of self-employment or dependent employment.</p> |
| <p>IRL A "Unit for Partnership in Enterprise" (UPE) was set up to help the social partners implement new flexible forms of work organisation at company level. The UPE is above all concerned with the information, consultation and participation of workers in the process of adaptation and organisation of work.</p> | <p>S In the Spring-Bill the government proposed a programme for local and national investment for sustainable growth. The local programmes amount to SEK 5.4 billion during the period of 1998-2000. The national investments include the energy policy programmes for adaption of the energy system and infrastructure investment.</p> |
| <p>L Changing of working patterns and in particular the extension of reference periods through collective agreements. Widening of the scope for part-time employment in the public sector. Job creation measures: aids for the creation of socio-economically beneficial jobs; business start-up aids. Introduction of a progressive early retirement scheme through the law of 31/7/95 which will be financed through the employment Fund if an unemployed person is taken on in substitution.
A tripartite working group (created in the framework of job creation initiatives) will examine the possible effects on employment and working conditions of the development in teleworking and working from home.</p> | <p>UK Legal coverage of external flexibility conditions and the length of working time is very limited, as these matters are normally settled in contracts.
The government is encouraging the decentralisation of pay agreements and the development of flexible pay systems tailored to local productivity and labour market conditions. A similar approach has been adopted with regard to the public sector (September 1994).
In order to promote new jobs, a deregulation initiative continues to remove administrative obstacles to job creation by companies.
The Government has agreed to end the UK's opt - out from the EU Agreement on Social Policy (the Social Chapter), and has undertaken to implement the two directives adopted under it. Discussions on how this might best be done are currently underway.</p> |

2

Individual redundancy

A

1 INDIVIDUAL REDUNDANCY

In principle, both parties to the employment contract are free to terminate the employment relationship as long as they observe certain periods of notice. Neither party is obliged to observe any specific formalities or provide any reason.

Periods of notice/White-collar workers: 1 to 6 months. Termination by the employer: minimum 6 weeks; the required period of notice increases with years of service to a maximum of 5 months after 25 years. These periods of notice may be extended by collective agreement or in the individual employment contract; however, the period of notice for termination by the employer may not be shorter than that agreed with the white-collar worker. The employer may terminate the employment relationship at the end of any quarter, provided that the 15th or the last day of the month has not been laid down as the date of termination.

Periods of notice and dates of termination/Blue-collar workers: 14 days to give or receive notice. This period of notice may be changed by collective agreement, company agreement or in individual employment contracts. Dates of termination are usually laid down in collective agreements.

Compensation: Entitlement to compensation in certain cases (2 to 12 monthly salaries).

NL

1 INDIVIDUAL REDUNDANCY

Period of notice for blue-collar and white-collar workers: at least 1 week for weekly wage-earners and 1 month for monthly wage-earners. This period is extended by 1 week (maximum 13 weeks) for each year of service for workers older than 18 years. An additional week is given (maximum 13 weeks) for each year in age a worker is over 45. In 1996, a bill ("Flexibility and Security") was introduced. It intends, among other things, to simplify the calculation and shorten the maximum period of notice to 4 months.

Average redundancy pay: 1 month's pay per year of service in case of termination of the contract by court ruling.

Procedure: authorisation from the relevant authorities required.

- 55% of the cases are handled by the director of the regional employment services (RBA).

On average, it takes 6-8 weeks to reach a decision. There is no compensation.

- 45% of the cases are handled by the cantonal courts. It takes an estimated 4 weeks to reach a decision. Compensation will be paid for (on average) a period of 11 weeks.

Retirement and early retirement

A

1 RETIREMENT AND EARLY RETIREMENT

Statutory retirement age: men: 65; women: 60.

Early retirement: 60 for men (57 for those with reduced working capacity) and 55 for women.

Amount: up to 80% of earnings.

Eligibility:

180 insured months within the last 360 calendar months prior to the key date, or 180 months of contributions to either compulsory or voluntary insurance, or 300 insured months prior to the key date, with substitute months counting only from 1.1.1956 onwards.

Early retirement for the unemployed after 240 insured months within the last 360 calendar months prior to the key date, or 240 months' contributions to compulsory insurance (irrespective of the time frame). At least 180 months' contributions to compulsory insurance are mandatory prior to the key date. If at least 120 months of compulsory insurance have been accumulated, child-care periods may be taken into account in order to meet the requirements. Receipt of unemployment or an equivalent benefit is mandatory for at least 52 weeks within the last 15 months prior to the key date.

Early retirement after a long period of insurance after 240 months' membership of the scheme within the last 360 calendar months prior to the key date, or 240 months' contributions (irrespective of the time frame). A further condition of eligibility is 450 months' membership of the scheme or 420 months' contributions to compulsory insurance.

As a special criterion for eligibility for early retirement for people with reduced working capacity, 24 months' contributions to compulsory insurance within the last 36 calendar months, or 36 months' contributions to compulsory insurance within the last 180 calendar months, must have been accumulated prior to the key date. In accordance with the General Social Insurance Act, the claimant must have worked in one or in related fields for at least half of the insured months during the last 15 years. On account of his/her physical or mental condition, the claimant must no longer be able to earn at least half the wage a physically or mentally healthy worker would normally earn for the same activity.

The law on structural adaptation will make access to early retirement more difficult from 1.1.1996. Any paid employment taken up before retirement proper will have negative effects on retirement pension. Measures will also be taken to discourage early retirement and bring de facto retirement age closer into line with statutory retirement age.

Retirement and early retirement

FIN

1 RETIREMENT AND EARLY RETIREMENT

Statutory retirement age: 65 years in both the residence-based National Pension Scheme and earnings-related Employment Pension Scheme.

Amount: maximum of 60% of earnings in Employment Pension Scheme. The amount of the national pension depends on a person's other pension income, period of residence in Finland and his/her family status.

Early retirement pension: may be awarded within both schemes to persons aged between 60 and 64 years; the amount is continuously reduced. Retirement may also be deferred beyond the normal age of retirement, in which case the amount of the pension is increased.

Persons under the age of 65 who are unable to work because of illness, a handicap or injury are entitled to invalidity pension or rehabilitation benefit within both schemes. An individual early retirement pension may be granted to a person aged between 58 and 64 who has been gainfully employed for a number of years. (The minimum age limit is 55 for those born before 1940.) An unemployment pension is paid within both schemes to an unemployed person over the age of 60 who is long-term unemployed and has accumulated pension entitlements for a minimum of 5 years within the preceding 15 years.

I

1 PENSION REFORM, RETIREMENT AND EARLY RETIREMENT

Law No. 335 of 8.8.1995 on reform of the pension system makes provision for the gradual abolition of retirement pension, the adoption of a new method of calculating payments (contributory), a mechanism linking age and contribution periods, incentives for persons who continue to work, approximation of the various management systems, and the reintroduction of pension funds.

Statutory retirement age: 62 for men, 57 for women, to be increased in stages to 65 for men and 60 for women by the year 2000.

Minimum contribution period: 17 years (1996).

For workers with more than 18 years' contributions on 31.12.1995, payments will be calculated on an earnings-related basis; for workers with fewer than 18 years' contributions on 31.12. 1995, payments will be earnings-related for previous years and contributions-related as of 1.1. 1996.

Early retirement: workers in companies in an economic crisis may apply for early retirement 5 years before the statutory age (10 years in the steel industry). Few sectors currently offer early retirement (Alitalia, iron industry, steel industry).

Retirement and early retirement

L

1 EARLY RETIREMENT

Early retirement: from the age of 57 (or 52 for blue- and white-collar employees in the mining industry) for persons who can show proof of 480 months' gainful employment. There are several types of early retirement:

- 1) Solidarity early retirement allows exits by older workers to be counterbalanced by the recruitment of replacement workers; the Employment Fund refunds the employer 70% of the early retirement allowance he has paid to the employee, including the employer's social security contributions.
- 2) Early retirement for employees on shift work or on permanent night shift (provided they can show proof of 20 years' employment).
- 3) So-called adjustment early retirement, which applies in the case of enterprise closure or enterprise restructuring.

In the cases of 2) and 3), the Employment Fund reimburses the employer for all outlay related to the payment of the early retirement allowance, including the employer's share of social security contributions. The monthly rate of the allowance is fixed for a period of 12 months for all three types of early retirement and amounts to 85% of the worker's gross monthly wage during the 3 months preceding receipt of early retirement allowance. The percentage share is reduced to 80 (75) for the duration of the second (third) 12-month period. Early retirement allowance can be drawn for a maximum of 3 years (early old-age pension is payable from the age of 60 onwards).

Organisation of working time

A

1 NEW WORKING-TIME REGULATIONS IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

New working-time regulations targeting an improvement in year-round employment in the construction sector came into force on 1 July 1996 at the collective level. The following core elements are most important:

- possible extension of normal working time in the summer months (April to November) to up to 45 hours per week; in this case no more than 36 hours may be worked every second or third week. Hours worked above the average of 39 hours are credited and can be used as compensation in time during the winter months.
- in addition, "in-between" days between the weekend and national holidays falling on Tuesdays or Thursdays and those between the Christmas holidays may be worked off during the remainder of the year.
- two weeks' holidays in the months of December and January.

All in all, these measures are intended to extend the employment of seasonal workers in the construction sector by up to six weeks. In the best case, this would mean a relief of ÖS 640 million for the labour market system.

In addition to the prolongation of employment, a Christmas holiday fund, financed by employer contributions, has been created within the framework of the builders' holiday and severance payments fund. Employers who keep their workers in employment during the Christmas holidays are reimbursed for a share of their wage costs.

Work-sharing

FIN

1 REDUCED DAILY ALLOWANCES

Measures have been introduced entitling all members of an unemployment fund working part-time to a reduced daily allowance, subject to certain conditions.

This pilot project of reduced daily allowances has been in force since 1 March 1994. The provisions in the Employment Decree regarding reduced daily allowances were made permanent in the 1996 decree on amendments to the Employment Decree (1330/1996). The provisions on the permanent status came into force as of the beginning of 1997. The purpose of reduced daily allowances is to increase part-time employment opportunities. The reduced daily allowance is paid as compensation for reduced earned income to an employee moving into part-time work in the event that their employer simultaneously employs for a part-time position an unemployed jobseeker registered at an employment office. The maximum period of payment of reduced daily allowance for one person is 12 months.

2 WORKING HOURS REORGANISATION PILOTS (INDUSTRY AND MUNICIPAL SECTOR)

Several working hours reorganisation pilots have been launched (in industry and the municipal sector) on 6+6 hours' shift work arrangements on voluntary basis. The Ministry of Labour has selected twenty municipalities to participate in a pilot. The municipalities use applications based on the concept of reduced working hours and employ unemployed jobseekers to complement those having reduced their working hours. The municipalities taking part in this pilot can be paid employment subsidy amounting to 50% of the labour costs of the new employees for a maximum of two years. The temporary amendment to the Employment Decree (567/96) regarding pilots on working hours will be in force until the end of 1998.

3 JOB ROTATION SCHEME

An experiment on an employee temporarily giving up his/her job for an unemployed person (job rotation) is taking place in 1996-98 (laki vuorotteluvapaa-kokeilusta 1663/95). In 1996 this possibility to obtain a leave was utilised by 5,525 persons.

Short-time working

D

1 PROMOTION OF YEAR-ROUND EMPLOYMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Workers in construction firms receive a winter allowance for any loss of work over and above 151 hours owing to adverse weather conditions during the "bad weather period" (1.1.-31.3. and 1.11.-31.12.). Compensation for the first 150 hours is regulated by collective agreement. The winter allowance is equivalent to 60 or 67% of their net lump-sum remuneration. During the allowance period (1.1.-28/29.2. and 15-31.12.), construction workers receive a winter allowance of DM 2 for each hour worked during collectively agreed working time.

L

1 SHORT-TIME WORKING

The regulations on compensatory payments for short-time workers apply to enterprises experiencing economic difficulties (and in some cases also to enterprises with structural difficulties). Agreement must be reached between the employer and his employees before these regulations can take effect. Working-time reduction may not exceed 50% of normal monthly working hours per month and worker. All workers aged under 65 are eligible for compensation (with the exception of workers drawing a pension and young apprentices). The compensatory allowance amounts to 80% of the normal gross hourly wage of the worker (but may not exceed a maximum rate of 250% of the minimum social wage taken as the reference amount). Workers and employers cover the first 16 hours in a month, while the state (Employment Fund) covers any remaining hours in the same month. In the construction sector, a compensatory wage is paid in the case of unintentional unemployment resulting directly from bad weather conditions for every working hour lost in excess of a basic amount of eight hours per calendar month. The rate of this wage-replacement payment corresponds to that of the compensatory allowance. The Minister of Labour may extend the regulation on compensation to enterprises whose operation has been suspended owing to damaging circumstances (force majeure, unemployment due to an accident or short-time working).

Leave for family reasons or for education

A

1 PARENTAL LEAVE (KARENZURLAUB)

Both fathers and mothers are entitled to parental leave up to their child's second birthday. However, fathers may only claim parental leave if the mother either waives her entitlement, has no entitlement, or is prevented by her employment from caring for the child. Parents may divide the parental leave between them, provided each parent takes only one period of leave of no less than three months' duration. Parents taking leave are protected against dismissal and redundancy during and for four weeks after the leave.

2 PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

Both fathers and mothers are entitled to reduce their working time by at least two-fifths of the statutory, collectively agreed or contractually agreed normal weekly working time. The start, duration, extent and organisation of the part-time employment must be agreed with the employer. Part-time employment may also be divided by the parents, provided each parent works part-time for only a single period of no less than three months' duration. If only one parent works part time, or if both parents work part-time on an alternating basis, part-time employment is possible - subject to the agreement of the employer - until the child's fourth birthday. If both parents work part-time simultaneously, part-time employment is permitted only until the child's second birthday. A combination of part-time employment and parental leave is also possible. (If parental leave is claimed before the child's first birthday, both parents may work part-time simultaneously until the child's second birthday, subject to the agreement of the employer. If, however, only one parent claims leave, or both parents claim leave consecutively, part-time employment is possible until the child's third birthday.) Parents working part-time are protected against dismissal and redundancy during and for four weeks after the part-time employment.

3 PARENTAL LEAVE ALLOWANCE (KARENZURLAUBSGELD)

For 22 months per family; six months' benefit are subject to the father taking parental leave for this minimum period. The benefit is independent of previous income; a condition for eligibility is that the parents have earned a prospective entitlement to unemployment benefit. Parental leave benefit currently amounts to ÖS 185.50 a day. Lone parents receive a supplement of ÖS 2,500 a month, which is repayable by the father.

4 EDUCATIONAL LEAVE

The legal right to educational leave (Bildungsfreistellung) is restricted to members of works councils, provided the object of the leave is participation in training or educational courses organised or recognised by the employees' or employers' associations. Maximum duration: three weeks; as an exceptional case, advanced educational leave of up to one year may be granted in enterprises with over 200 employees.

Leave for family reasons or for education

DK

1 PARENTAL, SABBATICAL AND TRAINING LEAVE

10 weeks per family, paid in the same way as maternity benefit. Each parent is also entitled to six months' leave, plus a second six-month period if the employer agrees. This individual leave entitlement cannot be transferred between the two parents. A flat-rate allowance equivalent to 70% of unemployment benefit is paid, which may be supplemented by the local authorities at their discretion. This leave, introduced in July 1992, is also available to workers for training or any other purposes (e.g. sabbatical leave). The allowance for training leave is the same as unemployment benefit.

For sabbatical leave it is 70% of unemployment benefit. Workers' jobs are not guaranteed in either case, unlike the jobs of workers taking parental leave. The minimum duration of sabbatical leave is 13 weeks, the maximum one year; it may be part of a work-sharing arrangement under which workers on leave are replaced by long-term unemployed persons (minimum 12 months' unemployment). These types of leave are financed by contributions paid by employed workers (later by employers) to the three labour market funds established in autumn 1993. The allowance in connection with parental leave and sabbatical leave will be reduced to 60 per cent as per 1 April 1997.

The sabbatical leave scheme will expire as from 1999, while the two other leave schemes have been made permanent. Sabbatical leave must now be taken for a minimum period of 13 weeks.

Statutory child-care leave is 13 or 26 weeks, according to the age of the child (26 weeks if the child is under one year old and 13 weeks if the child is older). Agreement may also be reached on leave of up to a total of one year.

FIN

1 PARENTAL LEAVE

An employee is entitled to maternity, paternity or parental leave, as well as leave for family reasons. Maternity allowance is paid for 105 days. It is then followed by parental allowance, which is paid for the following 158 days to the mother or the father. A father may take 6-12 days' paternity leave after the birth of his child. A father is entitled to an additional paternity allowance for 6-12 days provided that he takes care of the child and is not employed at that time. Leave for family reasons, to look after a child under the age of 3 years, is granted. For this period no benefit is paid. The minimum duration is two months.

2 TRAINING LEAVE

A full-time employee is entitled to training leave, during which he or she is not paid but may receive a training grant. Under the Training Leave Act (273/79), an employee who has been employed full-time by the same employer for one year in one or several periods is entitled to training leave. The employee has no right to pay during the leave. Training leave may not exceed two years during a five year period of work for the same employer.

Leave for family reasons or for education

I

1 MATERNITY LEAVE

Compulsory maternity leave: 2 months before and 3 months after the birth.

Remuneration: 80% (Law No. 1204/71) or 100% (collective agreements in certain sectors) of wage.

Optional leave: 6 months following maternity leave before the child's first birthday (Art. 7, Law No. 1204/71). Remuneration: 30% of wage.

Mothers who present a doctor's certificate are entitled to unpaid leave to care for sick children aged under 3 years.

Leave is primarily intended for the mother, but she may transfer all or part of it to the father (Art. 7, Law No. 903/77).

Moreover, employers are obliged to allow working mothers two 1-hour rest periods per working day until the child's first birthday. These periods may be accumulated. Mothers working less than 6 hours per day are entitled to only one rest period.

For parents of a severely disabled child, leave may be extended up to the child's third birthday, with an allowance of 30% of earnings, or may be taken in the form of 2 hours' paid leave per day.

NL

1 PARENTAL LEAVE

The Parental Leave act has been reviewed. From 1 July 1997, parental leave schemes are more flexible (in time and duration) are effective until the child is 8 years old (previously 4 years). Also part-timers who work less than 20 hours a week get the right to parental leave.

The number of hours' parental leave will be calculated on the basis of a formula (i.e. the individual working time per week calculated over a period of 13 weeks). The starting-point will be that the number of hours parental leave are at most 50% of the working time per week for a period of at most 6 months. The employee may request from the employer: a) a smaller number of hours leave, for a longer period than 6 months, or b) a higher number of hours parental leave (for instance full time), in a time span shorter than 6 months.

2 INTERRUPTION OF WORKING CAREERS

An Act on career breaks is being prepared. A proposal has been sent to the parliament in 1997. The idea is to create a financial incentive for working people to take leave period. In this proposal a possibility (no legal entitlement) is given to employees to take leave for care or educational purposes. If the person taking leave is replaced by an unemployed person, s/he receives a max. gross benefit of NLG 960 per month. The duration of the career break is a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 6 months. The person replacing the employee on leave can also be employed elsewhere in the organisation.

Wage restraints

P

1 AGREEMENT ON STRATEGIC CONCERTED ACTION FOR THE PERIOD 1996-1999

In December 1996, the government and the social partners signed an agreement on strategic concerted action for the period 1996-1999, which includes the following basic principles concerning adjustment of collectively agreed wages:

- the annual increase in collectively agreed wages should take account of the expected inflation rate in the same year, the anticipated increase in productivity in the respective sectors or enterprises and their economic and financial circumstances. The figures forecast for 1997 are as follows: inflation rate: 2.5%, productivity growth: 2.2%, average wage increase: 3.5%;
- the distribution of productivity growth among the individual sectors or enterprises should take the following aims into account: increasing real wages, promoting investment and employment, and improving the qualifications of the workers;
- where mean economic data are applied to sectors or enterprises, their respective economic and financial circumstances are to be taken into account;
- the expected inflation rate in a given year will be determined in September and October of the previous year for the purpose of wage negotiations;
- the statutory minimum wage will be adjusted annually in accordance with a higher rate of inflation than the average wage. The minimum wage in 1997 is equal, as a rule, to PTE 56,700 or PTE 51,450 for domestic staff.

The right of all workers with an employment contract to a Christmas bonus equal to one month's pay was legally confirmed in 1996.

Framework measures

A

1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPLOYMENT PROJECTS

"Socio-economic enterprises" (Sozialökonomische Betriebe) are a policy instrument intended to promote the labour market integration of the difficult to place (placement assistance) through the provision of commercial, but relatively sheltered, fixed-term employment. Socio-economic enterprises manufacture products or provide services and must compete in the normal fashion on the market. An essential characteristic of these enterprises is the fact that a certain proportion of the total costs must be covered by sales revenue. The financial input of the Employment Service is seen as payment for the service provided to it by the enterprises and encompasses: the costs for the provision of "relatively sheltered" jobs, the costs for qualifying the transitional workers, the costs of socio-pedagogical care and integration assistance for the workers, and the costs for the required specialist employees and instructors who supervise and train the workers.

D

1 JOB-CREATION SCHEMES (ARBEITSBESCHAFFUNGSMASSNAHMEN - ABM)

The employment offices use wage-cost subsidies to promote the creation of new jobs for difficult-to-place unemployed workers. ABM providers can be either public-law institutions or private-law enterprises or establishments. ABM work must be in the public interest and an activity that would not otherwise have been carried out. Most workers employed under the ABM scheme were previously in receipt of a wage-compensation benefit and had been unemployed for at least 12 months.

The wage-cost subsidies amount to between 50 and 70% of the calculable remuneration, and up to 100% in regions with above-average unemployment. Calculable remuneration is equal to 80% of the wage paid for equivalent non-funded activities. The duration of the subsidy is usually limited to one year; in exceptional cases an extension to two or three years is possible.

2 PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION

Under this scheme new employment is created for the unemployed in specific areas, e.g. environmental and social services and youth work. Providers of such measures receive a lump-sum subsidy towards the wages of the employed workers equal to the average amount of benefit they would receive if still unemployed. Thus, the employment offices are investing funds productively that would otherwise be spent on passive benefits.

Local and household services

B

1 PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE NON-COMMERCIAL SECTOR

The Belgian government has earmarked over BEF 3.3 million in 1997 to finance the so-called "Social Maribel" programme. "Social Maribel" constitutes a flat-rate reduction of employer contributions to funds for the areas of health and social activities (hospitals, convalescent and nursing homes, psychiatric institutions, sheltered residence projects, approved care for families and the elderly, sheltered workshops, child-care facilities, services for young people, medical training institutions and centres for the social and vocational integration of the disabled). A quarterly reduction in employer contributions of BEF 3,250 is granted under the condition that it is invested in full in net staff increases.

2 EMPLOYMENT OF DOMESTIC STAFF

Exemption from employer' contributions when a person who has been receiving full-time unemployment benefit for at least six months is recruited for domestic duties.

3 FAMILY HELP NOT SUBJECT TO SOCIAL SECURITY

For work not exceeding four hours a day.

4 LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AGENCY (Royal Decree of 10.5.1994)

The Decree makes provision for the automatic registration of the long-term unemployed with a local employment agency (ALE), which helps them find jobs (maximum 45 hours a month) working for private individuals, associations, local authorities or in agriculture/market gardening. The employers enjoy a 30-40% tax reduction, depending on the worker's remuneration.

5 SERVICE CHEQUE

Service cheques are being introduced for certain sectors where regular employment relationships are uncommon.

6 TRANSITIONAL VOCATIONAL SCHEMES

The object of these schemes is to increase expenditure on active measures for the unemployed. In future, certain unemployed people will be able to draw a flat-rate benefit while at the same time working for local authorities or non-commercial organisations. The difference between the benefit and the wage paid will be borne by both the local authority and the employer. These unemployed workers must be employed in activities for the public good which would otherwise not be carried out.

Provisional schemes (WEP and WEP Plus) are being carried out in the Flanders region within the framework of "work experience" programmes. Workers in all three regions who participate in provisional schemes benefit from special supplementary measures.

Local and household services

F

1 DOMESTIC EMPLOYMENT AND SERVICE CHEQUES

A tax reduction is granted to private individuals who employ domestic staff (50% of approved expenditure with a limit of FRF 90,000 per fiscal household). Result: 35,000 full-time jobs created each year.

Since the adoption of the Law of 29.1.1996 on the promotion of services for private households, the employment/services cheque-book scheme, which was introduced in 1994 and simplifies administrative procedures, has been made permanent. Cheques may also be used in employment relationships with normal working hours.

Additionally, works councils are able to help employees finance domestic employment.

2 ALLOWANCE FOR CHILD CARE AT HOME

Paid to parents employing a person for child care at home.

Both parents must be working, and the child must be under the age of six. Under the terms of the allowance for child care at home, the social security contributions for the domestic help are covered by the URSSAF (100% for children aged under three and 50% for children aged between three and six). The allowance amounts to FRF 12,000 per quarter for a child aged under three and FRF 6,000 for a child aged between three and six. This benefit may be received in conjunction with the tax reduction for domestic employment.

Recent measures

A

1 AMENDMENTS TO THE WORKING TIME AND REST PERIODS ACTS

The amendments to the Working Time and Rest Periods Acts were passed by Parliament and have been in force since 1.5.1997. The following new regulations now apply:

- Longer calculation periods (52 weeks or more) for normal weekly working time may be authorised by collective agreement. Thus, "annual working-time models" and cumulation of credit hours over a number of years are now possible.
- Normal daily working time of 10 hours given a 4-day week and compensation en bloc for time worked on the basis of distributed normal working time may be authorised by collective agreement.
- Authorisation is by collective agreement in both cases. If there no employer body with bargaining authority, authorisation may be granted by company agreement.
- Compensation in time for overtime is expressly permitted.
- Compensatory measures apply for long-term distribution of normal working time through restriction of the employer's authority as regards: organisation of working time, regulations concerning the clearance of credited time on termination of the employment relationship during the calculation period; one-sided clearance of credited time by the worker.

B

1 LUMP-SUM REDUCTION OF EMPLOYER SOCIAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTIONS

The lump-sum reduction of employer social security contributions in conjunction with the sectoral agreement on employment promotion provided for in the national agreement for 1995-1996 has been extended for the period 1997-1998. While the basic principles remain the same, it is emphasised that additional recruitments must be the consequence of measures for the redistribution of labour. Thus, employment-promotion agreements must include at least two measures for employment promotion, at least one of which must be listed in the proposed standard catalogue of measures. Accordingly, employers who are able to show proof in 1997-1998 of a net increase in their number of employees compared to 1996, which has resulted from the implementation of an employment-promotion agreement, are entitled to a reduction of their contributions amounting to BEF 37,500 per quarter.

2 SUBSIDIES FOR JOB CREATION

Instead of implementing employment-promotion measures, sectors or companies may also avail of subsidies for job creation. In this case, the employer's contributions are reduced by an amount equal to 20% of the average quarterly gross wage of the employees in the company. However, this sum may on no account exceed BEF 200,000 per annum and new recruit.

3 WORKING-TIME REDUCTION

Companies experiencing economic difficulties or undergoing restructuring which introduce working-time reduction in order to be able to retain the greatest possible number of employees are also entitled to a reduction in employer contributions. This reduction is highest when the average weekly working time amounts to 32 hours. The reduction is granted for a maximum period of four years.

Recent measures

4 SYSTEM OF FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

The normal limit on working hours may be exceeded on the basis of collective agreements (though nine hours per day and 45 hours per week remain the absolute limit) without the employer being obliged to pay a wage premium, provided that the weekly working time laid down in the collective agreement is maintained on average for a period of time not exceeding 12 successive months. In SMEs it has been possible to introduce this system of flexible working hours through an adjustment of working arrangements. However, because there are no other approved legal instruments at present, annualisation of working hours in large enterprises will also be possible through an adjustment of working arrangements.

5 USE OF TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT

Use of temporary employment, i.e. manpower transfer, is permitted in the event of a temporary increase in workload in a company.

6 ADDITIONAL SCHEME FOR WORKING-TIME REDUCTION

An additional scheme for working-time reduction will be introduced for all workers who are not covered as of 1.1.199 by a collective agreement which reduces weekly working time to 39 hours. Weekly working hours will be reduced on this date to 39 hours in all sectors where 40 hours still apply.

7 REDUCED CONTRIBUTIONS

Twenty enterprises are given the opportunity to participate in an experimental measure to redistribute work. They enjoy reduced contributions if they reduce working time to 32 hours on a general basis and recruit additional workers.

8 INCENTIVE BONUS FOR REDUCED PERFORMANCE OR CAREER BREAKS (FLANDERS REGION)

The Flanders region grants an incentive bonus to certain workers who take a career break or switch from full-time to part-time employment.

9 FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME EARLY RETIREMENT

The entry age for full-time early retirement pension on the basis of collective agreements at either sectoral or company level has been fixed as of 1.1.1997 at 58. As regards part-time early retirement, the general regulation now applies again in principle, allowing collective agreements on part-time early retirement to be concluded which stipulate an age limit either two years below that of the sectoral collective agreement on full-time early retirement or one year below that of a company collective agreement on full-time early retirement. The general possibility of taking part-time early retirement at 58 has also been introduced.

Recent measures

E

1 LABOUR MARKET REFORM LEGISLATION

Since the adoption of labour market reform legislation in May 1994, several measures have been introduced with a view to implementing or regulating the reform, the aim of which is to make the organisation of work and working time more flexible and boost the role of collective agreements in establishing conditions of employment and rates of pay. The measures implemented in May 1997 (Royal Decree-Law 8/97) - on the basis of the social pact signed by the social partners on improving the situation on the labour market - are expected to lead to a reduction in the costs related to redundancies (which had been an obstacle to the creation of permanent employment). The new agreement on promoting permanent employment will contain a looser definition of dismissals for objective reasons and will fix rates of compensation in the event of un-lawful dismissal (currently 27% less than stipulated in the relevant regulations). In addition, the social pact provides for more decentralisation in wage negotiations and, at the same time, improved social security for part-time workers. The collective agreements which have already been concluded and are effective in 1997 indicate a continuation of the policy of wage restraint (average annual wage increase: 3.1%).

3. REDUCTION OF NON-WAGE LABOUR COSTS

3.1 Reduction of statutory contributions to lower labour costs

- 3.1.1 General reductions to lower labour costs
- 3.1.2 Targeted reductions to lower labour costs

3.2 Reduction of statutory contributions to encourage recruitment

- 3.2.1 General reductions to encourage recruitment
- 3.2.2 Targeted reductions to encourage recruitment

3.x Recent measures

Annexe to Chapter 3

General reductions to lower labour costs

Various tax rates have been reduced in a number of Member States and several countries have extended the basis of assessment.

Other EU countries have introduced reductions in employer contributions; in some cases, the employee contributions were also reduced.

A

Reduced average wage and income taxation through an increase of the annual General Deductible Allowance from ATS 5,000 to 8,840 (as of 1994).

B

In 1994 a special social security contribution was introduced to balance the social security budget. Employer social security contributions have been reduced (see 3.1.2.0).

D

The federal government has presented two expert drafts on the implementation of the large-scale tax reform, which provides for a significant decrease in income-tax rates, an expansion of the basis of assessment for taxation and overall tax relief of up to DM 30 billion. As a first step, the solidarity tax for eastern Germany is to be reduced from 7.5 to 5.5% in 1998. The simultaneous reduction in corporate-tax rates will be financed by the expansion of the basis of assessment in the enterprise sector. In 1999, the large reductions in income-tax rates and a further reduction of the corporate-tax rate will come into force.

Some of the resulting gross relief will be compensated for by an increase in the area of indirect taxes. The tax reform will thus lead to relief in the area of direct taxes, while indirect taxes will account for a larger share of the state's tax revenue.

DK

Reductions in income tax financed by green taxes on households and a new pay-related labour market contribution. The labour market contribution is 5% in 1994 rising to 8.19% in 1997 and 8.33% in 1998 (including reductions mentioned below). The net effect of these changes will be a reduction of the combined marginal tax- and contribution rates by 6 to 9% at all levels of income.

Changing in the tax system: Introducing green taxes on business and recycling tax revenue to the enterprises in the period 1996-2000. The main elements of the recycling are: Reductions in employers' labour market contributions (0.11% in 1997 and 0.27% in 1998), subsidies for energy-saving investments and assistance for SMEs.

E

Reduction in 1995 in employers' and employees' social contributions. (0.8 percentage points for employers, 0.2 percentage points for employees) offset by a 1% increase in VAT.

The income-tax base was extended in 1994 to include unemployment benefit and certain invalidity pensions. Income tax: workers who are recruited on open-ended employment contracts up to 30 June 1997 are not considered as dependent employees in the calculation of their net earnings and income-tax base.

F

The policy of reducing labour costs is an essential element of economic and employment policy in France. So far, it has taken the form of a reduction in the health insurance contributions payable by employers in respect of low wages.

FIN

In accordance with the employment programme's taxation measures, the Government decided to lower income tax as of the beginning of 1997 by a total of FIM 5.5 billion, with the State contributing about FIM 3.5 billion of this. The structure of taxation will be changed by shifting the main focus from income tax to energy tax. One of the main aims of lightening taxation is to make earned income even more worthwhile than 'passive income'.

1. REFORM OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE
2. TAXATION OF EMPLOYMENT

General reductions to lower labour costs

GR	<p>5% reduction in taxation at source of wages and equivalent earnings.</p>	NL	<p>During 1995-1997 reductions of average employers and employees wedge, with an emphasis on low wage earners; The reduction consists of, among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reduction of the rate of the first tax bracket; - an increase in basic tax allowance; - an increase in the standard deduction for labour related costs; <p>These measures are accompanied by moderate wage developments, limiting wage costs.</p>
I	<p>The concession for employers who recruit workers from the mobility lists is equal to the social security contribution for a trainee (Article 8, Law 223/91).</p> <p>1. SOCIAL SECURITY AND PENSION REFORMS 2. REDUCTIONS IN SOCIAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTIONS</p>	P	<p>Reduction of 1% in employer contributions from the 1995 budget onwards. In order to finance this reduction, VAT has been increased by 1%.</p> <p>Social security contribution in respect of members of corporate boards has been reduced from 32 to 31.25% (the employer's share is 21.25% and the employee's 10%).</p>
IRL	<p>Several measures have been introduced to reduce charges on work income: the standard rate of income tax has been reduced by 1%; the rate of employee social security contributions has been reduced by 1% for most workers; significant increases in personal allowances, standard tax band and exemption limits; increase in the threshold at which income is liable for the health and the employment and training levies in order to exempt low earners.</p>	S	
L	<p>From 1.7.94 structural reduction of employers' social security contributions (1.70%), financed by increasing the "solidarity tax" on companies from 1% to 4% and a "social contribution" (additional excise) on energy consumption. Value: 0.5% of GDP.</p>	UK	

Targeted reductions to lower labour costs

Tax reductions for certain groups of individuals (low earners, young and disabled people) apply in 7 Member States, while SMEs (E, I and S) and sectors operating on particularly competitive markets also enjoy reduced taxation. Exceptional tax regulations for particular regions exist in D and GR. In some countries, reductions in employer contributions in the low-wage sector have also been introduced.

DK

A

Cut in tax rate for highest income brackets from 62% to 50% (1989 tax reform).

E

The 1995 and 1996 programmes for recruitment on fixed-term contracts, within the framework of the promotion of employment, provide for a reduction of 75% in employer social security contributions for recruitment of unemployed who are disabled or over 45 years (100% if it is the first recruitment in the enterprise since January 1995 or 1996). A reduction of 50% in employer social security contributions is allowed for enterprises employing less than 25 people which take on workers aged over 45 years or the long-term unemployed (75% if it is the first recruitment in the enterprise since January 1995 or 1996). The duration of these employment-promotion contracts and the resulting reductions in social security contributions is minimum 12 months and maximum 3 years. These schemes are, however, in expiry (with the exception of those for disabled workers), as they were abolished by virtue of Royal Decree-Law 8/97.

1. IMCOME TAX (IRPF)
 2. CORPORATE TAX
- See also 3.2.2.

B

1. MARIBEL PROGRAMME
2. REDUCTION OF EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS FOR LOW-WAGE EMPLOYMENT

F

The Law of 20 December 1993 introduced a progressive reduction of the family allowance contributions payable by employers in respect of wages between 1 and 1.33 times the statutory minimum wage (SMIC). In 1996, the five-year programme to reduce these contributions was stepped up, being extended to cover part of the employer's health insurance contributions and to embrace more employees (those earning up to 1.33 times the statutory minimum wage). This latest policy takes the form of a reduction of FRF 800 per month for a SMIC wage. In October 1996, the two measures were combined into one.

D

Workers with regular weekly working hours of less than 15 hours and earning no more than DM 610 (old Länder) or DM 520 (new Länder) are exempted from social security contributions.

FIN

When a functioning employment or wage register has been created, gradual removal of non-work related social security contributions will begin in a manner that will favour employability, taking into consideration the elderly long-term unemployed, among others. Proposals on the grading of social security contributions drafted in spring 1997 are under evaluation in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. According to the proposals, the new system of grading employers' social security contributions and employers' unemployment insurance contributions, and the related reform of the employment register will be ready for implementation in the beginning of 1999, at the earliest.

Targeted reductions to lower labour costs

GR	Reduction in income-tax rates for workers in certain regions.	NL	<p>Introduction of targeted reductions of employers' contributions by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a general tax deduction for low wage earners up to 115% of the legal minimum wage was introduced in 1996; in 1996 amounting to NLG 1,185, in 1997 NLG 1,830. Plans to increase this amount in 1998 are in preparation; - budgetary costs, this amounts to approx. NLG 1 billion in 1997. <p>As a result of these general and targeted measures, the average employers wedge (the difference between labour costs and gross wage) at the minimum level has fallen from 19% to 13% between 1995 and 1997.</p> <p>The total average wedge at the minimum level has fallen nearly 25% in 1995 to 18.6% in 1997; for the average production worker, the decline is from 41.3% to 40.2%.</p>
I	Reduction in employers' contributions for part-time work.	P	<p>Reductions or temporary exemptions from employers' social security contributions in cases of net job creation: through recruitment of young people (new entrants) and long-term unemployed (in the sense of D.-L. No. 89/95, Article 17, of 6.5.1995) (D.-L. No. 34/96, Article 7, of 18.4.1996).</p>
IRL	The threshold below which the lower rate of employers' contribution (8.5%) applies has been increased from IEP 13,000 to IEP 13,500.	S	<p>Employers' social insurance contributions are reduced to benefit SMEs. The reduction amounts to 5% of the wage bill. The maximum is SEK 30,000 per firm per year. Relief is given through lowering the social contribution on the first SEK 600,000 of the wage bill (SEK 850,000 per year after January 1998).</p> <p>Reduction in employers' social contributions by 8% of the wage bill for workers and self-employed persons in certain regions of the northern part of Sweden.</p>
L		UK	<p>Reduction in employers' national insurance contributions for low earners (20% of active population).</p> <p>Further cut of 0.6% for lower rates from April 1995. Value 1995-1996: 0.13% of GDP.</p> <p>Use of landfill tax to cut employers' NICs (National Insurance Contributions) by a further 0.2% from April 1997.</p>

General reductions to encourage recruitment

General reductions only in four countries; in three of them the aim is to encourage recruitment by reducing working time. Italy also grants reductions for job creation in certain sectors.

DK

Increased flexibility in labour market schemes, including job training, leave-of-absence and further training in order to upgrade the skills of the labour force through individual planning.
Wage support to long term unemployed conditional of net extra employment.

A

E

B

Reductions in social security contributions for new recruits in accordance with interprofessional agreements (accords interprofessionnels) or employment-promotion agreements (accords en faveur de l'emploi): In view of the absence of an interprofessional agreement for the period 1997-1998, the government has resolved to maintain the existing system with slight revisions and modifications. A lump-sum quarterly reduction in social security contributions amounting to BEF 37,500 is granted for every new recruitment in an enterprise which has concluded an employment-promotion agreement incorporating at least two employment-promotion measures (one of which belongs to the standard "menu").

1. SUPPORT FOR CAREER BREAKS
2. PART-TIME EARLY RETIREMENT
3. PLANS PLUS ONE, PLUS TWO AND PLUS THREE

F

Reductions in employers' contributions in order to encourage recruitment are granted in the following cases:

- recruitment of a first employee;
- contracts for first-time entrants to the labour market (training contracts) and for the long-term unemployed (employment-initiative contracts);
- enterprises which reduce their employees' working hours either through reducing total working hours by at least 10% or by promoting part-time employment.

D

FIN

See 3.1.1 and 3.1.2.

General reductions to encourage recruitment

GR Temporary reduction of employer contributions on recruitment of unemployed persons.

NL

I Reduction in employers' contributions for part-time work. Reduction of social contributions where unemployed young people are recruited on open-ended contracts following expiry of "employment scholarships" (Article 26, Law 196/97). Small and medium-sized enterprises which recruit workers in crisis areas may be fully or partially exempted (until 31.12.1995) or exempted on an experimental basis from insurance contributions (Article 6, Law 451/94).

P

IRL Employers may be exempted from social security contributions when unemployed persons are recruited.

S

L

UK

3

Targeted reductions to encourage recruitment

The target groups for reductions are young people, low earners, disabled people, the older age groups and, in some countries (e.g. B, E and F), also the long-term unemployed. Employers who recruit members of these target groups enjoy concessions amounting to up to 100% for a period normally of between 1 and 3 years.

DK

A

E

1. TRAINING CONTRACTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
2. NEW REGULATIONS ON JOB CREATION FOR VARIOUS TARGET GROUPS (ROYAL DECREE-LAW 9/97)

B

1. RECRUITMENT REDUCTIONS
2. RECRUITMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON WORK EXPERIENCE (AR 230); INITIAL WORK-EXPERIENCE CONTRACTS (P.E.P)

F

The employment-initiative contract (contrat initiative emploi) was introduced specifically for the difficult to place - especially the long-term unemployed - persons in receipt of RMI (minimum integration income), disabled workers, the over-50s and young people with difficulties. There is a statutory exemption from social security contributions up to the value of the SMIC for all of these cases. In addition, an allowance of between FRF 1,000 and 2,000 is paid to those persons who are most difficult to place (e.g. long-term unemployed for at least 24 months).

D

FIN

See the text in 3.x.

Targeted reductions to encourage recruitment

<p>GR Reduction of employer contributions on recruitment of unemployed persons.</p>	<p>NL - A temporary reduction of employers' contributions, amounting to NLG 4,500 on full-time basis, for a worker who has been unemployed for twelve months (in certain regions six months), earning up to 130% of the legal minimum wage; - a reduction of employers' contributions, introduced in 1996, amounting to NLG 4,500 for a worker being employed in the apprenticeship system and earning less than 130% of the legal minimum wage. For this scheme, NLG 385 million has been reserved, on a structural basis; - comparable measures exist for the child-care sector; - for R&D activities the reduction of employers' contributions was extended in 1996; - various tax measures for SME's.</p>
<p>I Tax credits of 25% in respect of the wage paid to the worker for firms which recruit young people (aged 19-35), unemployed persons or disabled persons on open-ended contracts (Decree No. 357/94, amended in August 1994). These measures expired at the end of 1996.</p>	<p>P 50% reduction in employers' contributions for the recruitment of disabled workers on open-ended contracts. Three-year exemption from employers' contributions on recruiting young people (16-30) to their first job or long-term unemployed persons on open-ended contracts. 50% reduction in the case of a fixed-term contract.</p>
<p>IRL Provision exists for the exemption of employers' social security contributions for 2 years where persons recruited are unemployed for more than 13 weeks or are under 23 years of age and are taking up their first job, and that this recruitment represents an overall increase in the company's workforce. Under the current scheme, in operation since April 1995, over 10,000 persons have been recruited.</p>	<p>S</p>
<p>L 1. Recruitment aid The Employment Fund covers employer social contributions for seven years on recruitment of an unemployed worker aged at least 50 who has been registered as unemployed with ADEM for at least one month. On recruitment of jobseekers aged at least 30 (or at least 40) who have been registered as unemployed with ADEM for at least 12 months, employers and employees are exempted from social security contributions for a maximum duration of two years (three years). 2. Tax benefits on recruitment of unemployed workers (Law of 24.12.1996): In order to facilitate the recruitment of the unemployed, employers may avail of a tax concession if they employ persons who have been unemployed for at least three months for a fixed term of at least 24 months or on open-ended contracts. Working hours must amount to at least 16 hours a week. The concession is equal to 10% of the gross monthly wage/salary and is granted for up to 36 months. This regulation is valid until 31 December 1999.</p>	<p>UK From April 1996, employers who recruit persons who have been unemployed for 2 or more years will be exempted from paying their NICs (National Insurance Contributions) for up to 12 months.</p>

Recent measures

<p>A</p> <p>The government programme makes provision for the reinforcement of the environmental objectives of the tax system; reduction of the importance of work as a source of income.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restrictions on the tax relief for overtime in the case of high incomes. - Possibility for apprentices to be reimbursed by the communes for wage-related municipal taxes. - Establishment within the framework of the tax reform commission of a specific expert committee for wage-related contributions, with the task of drafting proposals for reallocation. 	<p>DK</p>
<p>B</p> <p>Extension of the new Plan Plus One to social welfare recipients.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. REINTEGRATION OF THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED (JULY 1997) 2. REDISTRIBUTION OF WORK (SEPTEMBER 1997) 	<p>E</p> <p>The urgent Royal Decree-Law 7/96 of 7.6.1996 on tax legislation and on strengthening and liberalising the economy. 1995 budget: general reduction of social contributions by 1%, financed by increasing all VAT rates.</p> <p>Royal Decree-Laws 8/97 and 9/97 provide for a reorganisation of measures and incentives to promote employment.</p>
<p>D</p> <p>The government's aim is to reduce the social contributions paid equally by employee and employer from the current 41.1% of gross earnings to a quota under 40%. To contribute towards this, a law on the Programme for Increased Growth and Employment was passed in summer 1996, as well as the planned reform of the Employment Promotion Act. Recently, various bills have been introduced to lower taxes and enhance the competitiveness of the German economy.</p>	<p>F</p> <p>Law of 11.6.1996: state aid in the form of exemption from contributions for companies which reduce their employees' working hours by at least 10% in order to increase their work force by an equivalent proportion or to avoid redundancies on economic grounds.</p> <p>The amount of this reduction varies between 30% and 50%. It is granted to the company for a maximum duration of seven years.</p>
	<p>FIN</p> <p>On a tripartite basis it has been examined whether it is possible to lower employers' excess share of invalidity pension gradually, e.g. during a period of five years, in cases when an elderly long-term unemployed person is hired and gets a contract for an indefinite period. It has also been examined whether it would be appropriate to provide for a graduated payment of the excess share of unemployment pension, and whether the excess share of the unemployment pension should be made equal to the excess share of the invalidity pension. Furthermore, investigations have been made concerning the removal of other age gradings in employment pension contributions. A working group comprising representatives of the main social partners was unable to reach an understanding on the job-creating effect of the age grading but it stated that administrative and other costs resulting from the proposal would exceed the benefits of its implementation. At this point, the partners did not agree on changes in the excess share of the unemployment pension, either. The working group will present new proposals in due course.</p>

Recent measures

GR	Establishment of a cross-departmental committee for improving the labour market and for job-creation measures.	NL	<p>Among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The tax on small-scale consumption of energy, introduced from 1/1/96, has been extended to 1/7/97. The revenue has been returned to taxpayers in the form of various reliefs, primarily focused on lowering the tax burden on labour (e.g. increase of the basic tax allowance and reduction in the rate of the first tax bracket); - lengthening of the second tax bracket; - changes in the social security contributions of employees, due to measures in the social security schemes, e.g. privatisation in the Sickness Benefits Act.
I		P	Fiscal incentives to promote the creation of new very small and small enterprises (D.-L. No. 160/95 of 6.7.1995).
IRL	1997 Finance Act: Personal allowances increased by 9%, standard band widened by 5%, standard rate of income tax reduced from 27% to 26%, employee rate of social security contributions reduced by 1%, increase in the threshold at which lower rate of employers' social security contributions applies, increase in the threshold at which income is liable for the health and the employment and training levies in order to exempt low earners.	S	
L		UK	Cut in basic rate of income tax from 24% to 23% from 6 April 1997. Increases in personal allowance and lower rate band.

General reductions to lower labour costs

FIN

1 REFORM OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Employer unemployment insurance contributions were lowered as of the beginning of 1996 and employee contributions as of 1 March 1996. The issue of employers' unemployment insurance contributions in subsequent years has been dealt with as part of the general reform of unemployment insurance. The systems of taxation, income transfers and service changes are being coordinated so that taxation and the social security system provide incentives to work and study, and prevent the occurrence of 'incentive traps'.

2 TAXATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Taxation of employment will continue to be lightened in 1998-1999. According to the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee, in addition to the decisions already made as regards employment, it would be most important to reduce income taxation in the case of low and medium income groups and to lower employers' social security contributions gradually in accordance with the job-creation effect. Preparations in reducing taxation on the use of labour form part of the preparatory work when deciding the budget ceilings and drafting the budget for 1998.

I

1 SOCIAL SECURITY AND PENSION REFORMS

The social security and pension reforms approved in 1995 contain provisions which affect the tax treatment of social security contributions: with respect to contributions to pension funds, the bill provides that up to 6% of the annual gross remuneration of employees can be set aside in the fund for tax purposes; 2% may be deducted from the employee's taxable income, 2% from the employer's taxable income and 2% from the share of the annual contribution to statutory redundancy compensation.

Bonuses provided for in company agreements are excluded from taxable earnings in connection with insurance contributions (Article 2, Law 135/97). The payment and amount of such bonuses is uncertain and their structure is measured according to productivity growth and quality improvement as well as other competitive factors.

2 REDUCTIONS IN SOCIAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTIONS

Reductions in social security contributions are granted in the event that a worker is recruited on an employment-cum-training contract. The duration of the reduction may be extended if the contract is converted into an open-ended contract. Workers employed on training contracts may be classified at a level lower than that normally applicable (Article 16, Law 451/94).

By virtue of a ministerial decree, insurance contributions may be reduced or restructured in accordance with working-time reduction or new regulation of the working hours stipulated in the contract (Article 13, Law 196/97).

Reductions in social security contributions are granted for persons employed as tutors in training initiatives as are additional benefits in the case of apprenticeship contracts (Article 16, Law 196/97).

Targeted reductions to lower labour costs

B

1 MARIBEL PROGRAMME

New regulations introduced on 1 July 1997 stipulate that employers are entitled to a lump-sum reduction of BEF 5,000 per worker per quarter. Employers with a staff of less than ten are granted a reduction of BEF 8,500 per quarter for the first five employees. In addition, the employer is entitled to another variable reduction corresponding to the percentage share of blue-collar workers among the total employees in the enterprise.

Furthermore, the so-called "Social Maribel Programme" came into force on 1 June 1997. It provides for an annual lump-sum reduction in employer contributions of BEF 13,000 for blue-collar or white-collar workers in the non-commercial health and social sectors with an employment contract for at least half of normal working hours.

2 REDUCTION OF EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS FOR LOW-WAGE EMPLOYMENT

Since 1.4.1996 a reduction in contributions is granted for workers earning a gross wage of between BEF 33,820 and 60,840. The reduction amounts to either 50, 35, 20 or 10% if the wage bill does not exceed the daily maximum sums of BEF 1,960, 2,130, 2,290 or 2,810, respectively. Corresponding reductions are also granted for part-time workers.

E

1 INCOME TAX (IRPF)

Income tax (IRPF): unemployed workers aged under 30 over 45, long-term unemployed and workers whose fixed-term contracts have been converted into open-ended contracts are not considered dependent employees for 24 months in very small businesses which recruit them on open-ended contracts.

2 CORPORATE TAX

Corporate tax: ESP 800,000 reduction on recruitment of disabled workers (also applies to income tax in certain cases).

General reductions to encourage recruitment

B

1 SUPPORT FOR CAREER BREAKS

As of 1 January 1997 and for a period of two years, employers are obliged to approve applications for career breaks (of at least three months and no longer than one year) from 1% of the average work force of the enterprise (previous year's figures). This possibility is provided in addition to the right to a career break for family reasons. A reduction in social security contributions is granted in the event of a replacement worker being recruited. This scheme is an extension of a previously existing measure.

2 PART-TIME EARLY RETIREMENT

As of 1 January 1997, all full-time employees aged at least 58 can enter part-time early retirement subject to the agreement of the enterprise. A reduction in social security contributions is granted in the event that the early retirees are replaced by new recruits.

3 PLANS PLUS ONE, PLUS TWO AND PLUS THREE

On 1 January 1997, Plan Plus One was extended to include the recruitment of a second or third employee in enterprises which had no staff during the previous 12 months. The reductions for the second worker amount to 75, 50 and 25% for the first, second and third years, respectively. The reduction is only granted for two years for the third worker and amounts to 50 and 25%, respectively.

Targeted reductions to encourage recruitment

2 NEW REGULATIONS ON JOB CREATION FOR VARIOUS TARGET GROUPS (ROYAL DECREE-LAW 9/97)

New regulations to promote the creation of jobs for various target groups have been introduced by virtue of Royal Decree-Law 9/97:

a) The following reductions of employer social security contributions are granted when unemployed persons from the various disadvantaged groups are recruited on open-ended contracts:

- 40% for the first two years for long-term unemployed or other workers aged under 30;
- 60% for the first two years and 50% for the remainder of the employment relationship for persons aged over 45;
- 60% for the first two years for long-term unemployed women recruited for tasks and in occupations in which women are under-represented;
- the employer's social security contribution is reduced by 70% for disabled workers (or by 90% if the disabled employee is aged over 45); this reduction is granted for the entire duration of the employment relationship, in addition to a subsidy of ESP 500,000.

b) Conversion of fixed-term contracts into open-ended contracts

The following regulations apply where fixed-term contracts are converted into open-ended contracts:

- The employer's social security contributions are reduced by 50% for 24 months for contracts valid on 17 May 1997 and, irrespective of the date on which they were concluded, for apprenticeship, work-experience, training and early retirement contracts.
- Where the fixed-term contracts of workers aged over 45, women working in occupations in which they are under-represented and disabled workers are converted into open-ended contracts, the same reductions apply as to the open-ended recruitment of these target groups (cf. a) above).
- Where the fixed-term contracts of disabled workers are converted into open-ended contracts, a 50% reduction of the employer's social security contribution is granted for the entire duration of the employment relationship, provided the new contract is for full-time employment.

c) Fixed-term employment of disabled workers

Where disabled workers are recruited within the framework of employment promotion on fixed-term contracts (of at least 12 months' and not less than 3 years' duration), the employer's social security contribution is reduced by 75% (100% if there are no other employees in the company).

- cf. 3.1.2.

Targeted reductions to encourage recruitment

B

1 RECRUITMENT REDUCTIONS

A reduction of 100% in the first year and 75% in the second year is granted for persons who have been unemployed on a full-time basis or in receipt of the minimex (minimum subsistence allowance) for at least two years. The reduction amounts to 75% in the first year and 50% in the second year for those unemployed on a full-time basis or drawing the minimex for at least one year.

A reduction in social security contributions has also been granted since 1 January 1996 for new recruits who were previously unemployed for at least six months, are entitled to unemployment benefit, and are over the age of 50. This reduction amounts to 50% for one year and then 25% for an unlimited period. The reduction is not granted for recruitments made to replace workers who have been laid off and only in the interests of benefiting from the recruitment reduction.

2 RECRUITMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON WORK EXPERIENCE (AR 230); INITIAL WORK-EXPERIENCE CONTRACTS (P.E.P)

Since 1 January 1996, half of the young people on work experience must be under the age of 30, have been seeking work for at least nine months, never have worked and thus be eligible for a P.E.P contract. The contracts have a limited duration of six months and may not be extended.

If the P.E.P contract is a part-time contract, the employer may subtract the young person's unemployment benefit from the wage (i.e. the unemployment insurance system finances this share). If the young person is recruited on expiry of the practical work experience and P.E.P contract, the employer contributions are reduced by 10% of the gross wage for the second year after the practical work experience, provided the young person is recruited on a permanent contract and this leads to a net increase in the size of the work force.

E

1 TRAINING CONTRACTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Training contracts for young people are subject to lower social security contributions (1997: ESP 3,994 per month for the employer - 50% for disabled employees; ESP 632 per month for the worker).

Recent measures

B

1 REINTEGRATION OF THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED (JULY 1997)

An employer who recruits a person who has been unemployed for at least five years or in receipt of the minimex for at least three years for a job not carried out previously or no longer carried out receives a sum of BEF 17,500 from the unemployment insurance system for each job of at least half of normal working hours or BEF 22,000 for each job of at least four-fifths of normal working hours.

In addition to the recruitment reduction (see 3.2.2.0), the employer is granted a monthly allowance of BEF 6,000 for one year for each new recruit who has been unemployed for at least five years or a minimex recipient for at least three years.

2 REDISTRIBUTION OF WORK (SEPTEMBER 1997)

A current experiment grants 20 enterprises with over 50 employees a reduction in social security contributions until 31.12.1997 for every worker whose working hours are reduced to 32 hours if at least 20% of the employees are affected by the measure, if wage compensation is paid and if additional recruitments are made so that the volume of work remains the same as in 1996.

The reduction in social security contributions amounts to a maximum of BEF 97,000 for a period of two years when working hours are reduced from 38 to 32 hours. In the third year the reduction may not exceed BEF 64,500; in the fourth year the maximum is BEF 32,250.

4. IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LABOUR MARKET POLICY

4.1 Passive measures

4.2 Active measures

4.2.1 General financial incentives to employers

4.2.2 In-work benefits

4.2.3 Assistance for business start-up

4.2.4 Placement services

4.2.5 Counselling, information and assessment

4.2.6 Financial assistance to jobseekers

4.2.7 Geographical mobility

4.2.8 Private employment agencies

4.x Recent measures

Annex to Chapter 4

Passive measures

Member States often have a dual unemployment benefit system: an insurance scheme based on the duration of employment and previous pay (financed by contributions) and an assistance scheme based on means testing (usually financed by the national budget). With a few exceptions, today's trend is towards lower benefit levels and/or a shorter benefit period, often combined with increased obligation to seek employment.

DK UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE: During the period 1 July 1996 to 1 January 1999, the overall benefit period is to be reduced from 7 to 5 years ("benefit" period of 2 years and "active" period of 3 years). During the "benefit" period, which is reduced from four to two years, unemployed persons will be entitled to reasonable leave of 12 months on request. The regional labour market boards lay down guidelines for assessing groups of unemployed persons who are at special risk of becoming long-term unemployed and who should be offered measures at an earlier stage. During the "active" period of 3 years, they will be obliged/entitled to take part in an activity-generation scheme for the whole period on a full-time basis.

A UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE: The duration of benefits depends on the length of previous employment and the person's age. Minimum duration is 20 weeks, or 30 weeks if the person has been employed for 3 out of the last 5 years. The rate depends on earnings (basis: gross wage in past calendar year, up to a specified maximum) and amounts to around 56% of the previous net income. Subject to certain conditions, unemployed persons whose entitlement has expired receive emergency assistance (Notstandshilfe) for an unlimited period, granted on an annual basis for as long as the person continues to meet the conditions. In the case of women aged over 54 and men aged over 59 claiming emergency assistance, the income of the spouse or live-in partner is deducted at a considerably reduced rate.

E UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE: Unemployment insurance benefits are based on the length of contribution periods during the past 6 years. 70% of reference earnings during the first 180 days and 60% thereafter. Benefits between 75% and 220% of the minimum wage. UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE: Subsequently, according to the number of dependants and the amount of income, unemployment assistance for a maximum of 18 months, with a possibility of extension for certain categories of unemployed. Unemployment assistance for other worker categories. Amount of assistance: 75% of the minimum wage. The concept of dependant has been changed and is now limited to the spouse and children. Assistance is limited to unemployed persons whose incomes are less than the equivalent of 75% of the national minimum wage. As of 1994, unemployment benefits are subject to personal income tax.

B UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE: To be entitled to unemployment benefit, a person must have worked for between 312 days in the previous 18 months and 624 days in the previous 36 months, depending on age. However, young people who have just completed training but have not yet found employment may draw a tideover allowance after a qualifying period. In principle, unemployment insurance benefits are open ended; nevertheless, a "cohabiting" unemployed person aged less than 50 will lose his/her right to unemployment benefit if the duration of his/her unemployment exceeds 1.5 times the average duration for the region for the category (by sex and age) to which (s)he belongs. UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT (Royal Decree of 27.12.1993): Extension of the waiting period for young people after training. Reduction in the duration of flat-rate benefit for unemployed persons cohabiting with another person (15 months instead of 18 months). Extension of the required duration of employment (from 6 to 12 months) for renewed entitlement to benefit based on lost earnings rather than on a flat rate or decreasing sum.

F UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE: In December 1996, the relevant social partners renewed their agreement on the administration of unemployment insurance for a further 3 years. The duration of this degressive benefit, which has nine different levels based on length of insurance and age, varies from 4 to 60 months. The rate of benefit is calculated by taking a percentage of the daily reference wage plus a supplement. The full rate is reduced every 6 months, though a minimum allowance is guaranteed (FRF 101.92 per day). Contribution rates have been reduced from 6.60% to 6.18% of the wage. Solidarity scheme (government programme):
- long-term unemployed: allowances are staggered and paid for individual periods of 6 months' duration; total duration unlimited.
- special categories: maximum one year.

D UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE: In accordance with the principle of insurance, benefit from the unemployment insurance scheme depends on the contribution rate and on the person's age and length of employment (from 156 days for a person under the age of 42 who has worked for 12 months to 832 days for a person aged 57 or over who has worked at least 64 months). UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE: Unemployed persons who have drawn unemployment benefit within the last year and who are in need are entitled to unemployment assistance. Unemployment assistance is payable for an unlimited period, though granted for one year at a time. Unemployed persons who were previously in insured employment for 150 calendar days in accordance with the Employment Promotion Act or fulfil an equivalent requirement and who are in need are also entitled to unemployment assistance. This entitlement is limited to 312 working days.

FIN 1. UNEMPLOYMENT ALLOWANCE
2. LABOUR MARKET SUPPORT

Passive measures

GR 1. UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

NL 1. UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

I UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE: Standard benefit (30% of normal pay) is paid for a maximum of 180 days in a year to unemployed persons who have paid contributions for at least 2 years. There is also a special benefit (Law No. 223/91) for workers with at least 12 months' service with their employer, which is paid for 12-36 months (depending on age) and for up to 48 months in southern regions. Until the end of 1994, the amount was 40% of reference pay.
Workers in companies going through a crisis period, undergoing restructuring or affected by a temporary suspension of work may register with the Special Wage-Compensation Fund (CIGS). See 4.2.4

P UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE: Duration of benefit payments depending on age. Minimum of 10 months for unemployed persons under 25. Maximum of 30 months for those aged 55 or over.
Unemployment benefit: 65% of average earnings during the 12 months preceding unemployment.
UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE: Social assistance for unemployed persons: 70-100% of minimum wage for the sector of activity, depending on number of dependants. If unemployment assistance follows on from unemployment benefit, the duration of payments is reduced by half except for beneficiaries aged between 45 and 54, who draw the benefit for 15 months (D-L. No. 57/96 of 22.5.1996). To qualify for unemployment assistance, the per capita income of the household must not exceed 80% of the minimum wage. Control and anti-fraud provisions relating to unemployment benefit have been made more efficient.

IRL UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE: Full rate unemployment benefit initially limited to 390 days (156 days if applicant is under 18).
UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE: Those not entitled to unemployment benefit, or those who have exhausted their entitlement to it, receive unemployment assistance, subject to means testing, for an indefinite period.

S UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE: An unemployed person who has worked at least 80 days out of five months during a reference period of 12 months and who has been a member of an unemployment insurance fund for at least one year (self-employed 2 years) is entitled to unemployment benefits amounting to 75% of previous income, subject to a ceiling of SEK 564 per working day.
Unemployed persons not entitled to the above may receive a different type of unemployment benefit, the KAS, subject to having worked at least 75 hours a month for at least five months during a reference period of 12 months. This amounts to SEK 230 per working day. The benefit is suspended for 40 days following termination of the employment by the employee without a due cause and 60 days upon rejection of an offer of a suitable work or labour market programme. Any person who is found to have been working and in receipt of unemployment benefits has their benefits suspended for 130 days.

L 1. UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE
2. UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT FOR OLDER UNEMPLOYED/EARLY RETIREMENT ALLOWANCE

UK

4

General financial incentives to employers

This type of assistance takes the form of loans at preferential rates to encourage recruitment or recruitment grants of a general nature. A shift towards more targeted grants (e.g. for disadvantaged groups), also to avoid the "windfall effect", means that general grants are becoming less common.

DK

RECRUITMENT GRANTS

Grants given by local authorities to encourage recruitment by private companies.

A

Granting of subsidies to support:

- investment projects to secure and create jobs and
- restructuring measures designed to secure jobs in the form of:
 - interest-bearing/interest-free loans
 - grants, interest subsidies and
 - sureties (guarantees).

Promotion of apprenticeship and continuing training in firms. Firms which offer their workers training which is also relevant to other establishments may be granted aid for personnel development amounting to up to 66.7% of the total costs (wage/salary costs, course fees, costs for accommodation and travel).

1. ENTERPRISE INTEGRATION SUBSIDIES

E

See 3.1.1., 3.1.2. and 3.2.2.

B

MUNICIPAL EMPLOYMENT PLAN (Walloon Region)
Possibility for local authorities to employ long-term unemployed young people for a maximum period of 3 years. Funded by the Walloon Region and the energy distribution companies (see 2.3.1).

F

Employers recruiting their first employee are exempted from employer social security contributions. The Five-Year Plan provides for recruitment subsidies for the first employee. This subsidy is paid for a duration of 2 years. The employee must be recruited on an open-ended contract or a fixed-term contract of at least 12 months' duration.

D

FIN

The state, municipalities, federations of municipalities, local authorities, companies and private employers may obtain assistance for a specific period (maximum 10 months) on recruiting an unemployed person.

The Employment Decree (työllisyysasetus 130/93) and Government Resolution 196/94 state that municipalities and other local authorities, as well as companies, may be granted assistance for projects of a structural nature leading to the creation of permanent jobs, maintenance of employment levels or adaptation of companies and regions to structural change. Such assistance may take the form of investment aid. Companies may obtain grants for projects based on local initiative and designed to help regions adapt to structural change. Grants are limited to 2 years and may not exceed 50% of the approved total cost.

General financial incentives to employers

- GR** Subsidy programme for employers in the private sector for the creation of new jobs. Such employers receive subsidies to maintain personnel for 16 months (12 months subsidised, 4 months unsubsidised).
Subsidies to employers for the recruitment of students from technical colleges (TEI) and schools which train vocational and technical instructors (SELETE).
Subsidies to hotels in order that personnel may be retained during the winter months.
Subsidies of between 1% and 20% to manufacturing and mining enterprises in order to promote employment. These subsidies are dependent on the location of the enterprise in certain regions of the country.
Subsidies to manufacturing and crafts enterprises in border regions for the recruitment of graduates.
- NL** General financial incentives are targeted at employers employing workers at a low wage (i.e. not exceeding 115% of the statutory minimum wage). It offers a reduction of the tax- and social security burden (WVA 1996). Furthermore, financial assistance to employers is targeted at the long-term unemployed.
- I**
- P** Companies which recruit long-term unemployed or young jobseekers (16 to 30 years) on open-ended contracts under this plan receive aid equivalent to 12 times the national minimum wage per net job created. (D.-L. No. 34/96 of 18.4.1996).

Training and employment programme:
Employers who offer training, then employ trainees on open-ended contracts, receive non-reimbursable financial aid for each job created.

Special aid arrangements encourage recruitment of former customs workers, miners, and workers in the textiles and clothing and iron and steel sectors.
- IRL** The operational Programme for Industrial Development (1994-1996) includes measures designed to encourage investment in indigenous industry and increase output and employment as a result.
Forbairt, a state-funded development agency, manages programmes to cofinance investment by industry in (A) improving competitiveness, (B) developing human resource capability, (C) expanding capacity. The programme also includes elements to stimulate the development of the venture capital market as it applies to small firms and to assist traditional industries to adjust to modern market conditions. The indigenous industry sector is expected to increase employment by about 2.5% in 1996.

The Community Employment programme makes provision for subsidies for temporary part-time work undertaken by public, voluntary and community bodies. Training and vocational counselling operations are also subsidised. Number of beneficiaries in 1996: 41,000.
- S** In-company training programmes may be used by firms which have difficulty in finding work for their employees, allowing them to avoid temporary lay-offs or permanent redundancies. The maximum subsidy is SEK 60 per hour up to 920 hours.
- L** Reemployment aid:
May be paid to workers who have been laid off on economic grounds or are threatened with redundancy, to workers who have been transferred to another enterprise on economic grounds (in accordance with a collective agreement) and to workers entitled to benefits who accept employment at a lower wage/salary. The measure guarantees such workers 90% of their previous earnings for a maximum duration of 4 years (which may not, however, exceed 350% of the social minimum wage taken as the basic amount).
Cf. 4.2.6, "Financial assistance to jobseekers".
- UK** Workstart - an employment subsidy to help very long-term unemployed people (i.e. more than 2 years) obtain jobs - has been tested in a number of forms since 1993. In April 1997, Workstart was introduced as part of the package of measures available in most areas running Project Work Pilots. Employers who recruit Project Work participants into new jobs can qualify for a subsidy of GBP 1,500.

In-work benefits

	DK	
<p>A</p> <p>Short-time working allowance (Kurzarbeitsbeihilfe) (See 2.1.2.5). EMPLOYMENT FOUNDATIONS (enterprise, sector, insolvency and regional foundations): Employment foundations facilitate the labour market reintegration of workers affected by large-scale lay-offs at regional level through a variety of specifically tailored measures. They thus work to prevent workers moving out of structurally weak regions and, by training the workers, encourage new economic activity in the region in the medium and long term. Members of employment foundations are provided with an opportunity to participate in training and further training measures in order to acquire vocational qualifications and thus improve their prospects on the labour market. For the duration of their membership (max. 4 years), participants receive unemployment or "unemployment and training" benefit ([Schulungs-]Arbeitslosengeld) from the Employment Service. The involvement of local and regional political actors in employment foundations means that links can be established with the decision-makers responsible for regional, structural and economic policy.</p>	E	
<p>B</p>	F	<p>Workers who have contributed to the pension insurance scheme for at least 40 years and are aged over 60 may receive a benefit from the unemployment insurance scheme until they reach statutory retirement age. This allowance is known as ARPE (allocation de remplacement pour l'emploi - compensatory employment-promotion allowance). Payment of the allowance is conditional upon the worker giving up employment and a young person being recruited in his place.</p>
<p>D</p>	FIN	

In-work benefits

GR

NL

I

Direct subsidies for workers in the event of shorter working hours (Law No. 223/91).

P

Income compensation is paid to redundant workers from ECSC firms and textiles/clothing firms in the Vale do Ave who have found a job in which basic pay is less than what they were previously earning.

IRL

BACK TO WORK ALLOWANCE enables unemployed persons to receive 75% of unemployment assistance (50% during the second year and 25% in third year) while working in certain sectors.

AREA ENTERPRISE ALLOWANCE is a similar scheme which operates in designated disadvantaged areas and allows unemployed persons to retain 100% of unemployment assistance for one year, followed by back to work allowance.

FAMILY INCOME SUPPLEMENT is payable to low income workers with families, in certain circumstances.

PART-TIME JOB INCENTIVE SCHEME provides a special income supplement to long-term unemployed people who take up a part-time job. The amount of the supplement is not affected by the wages from the part-time job.

S

L

UK

1. FAMILY CREDIT
2. EARNINGS TOP-UP
3. DISABILITY WORKING ALLOWANCE (DWA)

4

Assistance for business start-up

Most countries now grant assistance for a limited period to encourage self-employment. Benefits are either capitalised or continue to be paid for a certain length of time.

DK Insured unemployed persons who wish to set up their own business as their main activity can be offered a start-up grant, after 5 months' unemployment in a period of 8 months, if they have their business plan approved by the Danish Agency for Development of Industry and Trade. The grant is 50% of the maximum unemployment benefit and can be awarded for up to 2½ years.

A Start-up assistance for the establishment or take-over of companies in the form of cooperatives or self-managed enterprises.
The Employment Service supports the establishment or take-over of companies with cooperative decision-making structures where new jobs are created or endangered jobs safeguarded. The once-off assistance is provided in the form of a non-refundable grant and/or an interest-free loan (following investigation of the economic viability and legal arrangements).

E There are measures to support and promote self-employment and the creation or maintenance of employment in cooperatives or in companies which are owned in part by the workers, and measures to promote local employment initiatives.

B Reduction of social security contributions for SMEs. Proportional flat-rate reductions.
An unemployed person who terminates his/her unemployed status in order to set up in business nevertheless retains an entitlement to unemployment benefit for a period of 9 years (previously 6 years).
Loans to unemployed persons for a specific purpose, which have given many unemployed the opportunity to become self-employed or set up their own business, have gained a new dynamic through: an increase in the maximum possible loan, access to the scheme by persons in receipt of transitional allowance, a 50% reduction of the personal funding provided by the applicant, the extension of the approved areas of activity and the possibility of cofinancing of training and supervision for the beneficiary.

F ASSISTANCE FOR UNEMPLOYED PERSONS STARTING UP A BUSINESS (ACCRES)
This instrument was revised by virtue of the first 1997 Budget Act. Financial assistance from the state has been abolished, and all that now remains is the 12-month exemption from social security contributions and the possibility of availing of counselling services (chèque conseil). The scheme targets jobseekers in receipt of benefits, jobseekers who are not entitled to benefits who have been registered as such for at least 6 of the last 18 months, and persons in receipt of RMI (minimum integration income).
Special conditions apply to persons entitled to the "special solidarity allowance" and RMI, who receive their benefit for an additional 6 months after starting up business.

D BRIDGING ALLOWANCE (Überbrückungsgeld):
This allowance can be granted in lieu of unemployment benefit or unemployment assistance, as a rule for 6 months, to unemployed persons setting up their own business.

FIN The Employment Service provides business training for unemployed persons planning to start up a business. It includes training in entrepreneurship, evaluating and developing the business idea and the training required for setting up and developing a business. The trainees are selected by the employment office, and they receive a training allowance equal to the amount of unemployment allowance. A start-up grant (Employment Decree 130/93) is there to help create permanent jobs. At the moment the demand exceeds the resources available. A survey conducted on this measure showed that 69% of recipients of start-up grants would in any case have started the business so the deadweight effect is high.
Action plans include reinforcement of preconditions for the start-up and activities of labour-intensive SMEs.

Assistance for business start-up

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>GR Subsidy programme for young unemployed people who start up their own business. Financial support for the first year, which is considered to be the most difficult and risky as regards the viability of the enterprise.</p> | <p>NL Loans are available to persons (those in receipt of a social security benefit) who start up a new business and are in need of working capital. They may receive a loan or guarantee up to a maximum of NLG 41,000. If necessary, they will receive a supplement to their income (for at most 1.5 years) up to the level of the social assistance benefit (Bbz 1995).</p> |
| <p>I The Development Fund (Law No. 236/93) covers the financing of local reindustrialisation and initiative programmes in Objective 1 and 2 areas.</p> | <p>P Business start-up by persons on unemployment benefit (CPE): Grants to enable the unemployed to create their own jobs.
Self-employment start-up assistance (ACPE): To help young people aged between 18 and 25 and long-term unemployed adults with the vocational qualifications required for self-employment (including craft trades) to create their own jobs. 20% increase in the supplementary incentive for the long-term unemployed to cover the cost of renting premises and equipment.
Business start-up assistance (NACE): To encourage the creation of small businesses by private individuals over 18, associations or cooperatives.
Support system for very small businesses (RIME): To promote the creation of very small and small enterprises through financial incentives and technical assistance (D.-L. No. 154/96 of 17.9.1996).</p> |
| <p>IRL FAS offers a local enterprise service in conjunction with other organisations, in particular the County Enterprise Boards and local partnership associations. This service offers a full, integrated and flexible set of options for individuals and local groups, including a consultancy service operated by local development specialists, training modules and business aids. A training programme on business project appraisal will help participants assess the scope for setting up a business. Small firms with fewer than 50 employees are offered advice and financial incentives through a series of specific programmes. Forbairt can help develop ideas and management skills; grants are also available in connection with employment, improvement of management methods, capital, feasibility studies and manufacturing processes.</p> | <p>S Grants equivalent to unemployment benefit are available to previously unemployed persons setting up their own businesses (payable during the first 6 months). Unemployed women who have been registered with an employment office for at least 6 months and who start their own business or cooperative are to be provided with start-up grants for up to 12 months.</p> |
| <p>L Assistance for business start-up is granted to jobseekers aged under 40 who have paid compulsory contributions for at least 6 months, to jobseekers aged over 40 who have paid compulsory contributions for at least 3 months and to jobseekers not entitled to unemployment benefit who have been registered as unemployed with the Employment Service (ADEM) for at least 8 months and have been employed in Luxembourg for at least 6 years. The grant is paid in the form of an accumulation of the unemployment benefit which would have been payable to the jobseeker during the first 6 months of unemployment had he/she not started or taken over a business. The scope of the business start-up grants was extended in July 1995. Since then, "difficult-to-place" jobseekers (older and long-term unemployed persons) are also eligible.</p> | <p>UK Business start-up is one of the objectives of the SRB (Single Regeneration Budget) challenge fund for urban and rural regeneration. The start-up of some 80,000 businesses will be supported by the SRB over the next 7 years, with the nature and extent of support varying locally.
Under the programme "Training for Work" (the principal government training programme for the long-term unemployed), persons planning to set up a business can obtain enterprise training and advice.</p> |

Placement services

Some countries are attempting to make their public placement service more efficient while retaining a monopoly; many others are trying to achieve the same by partial privatisation of the service. Decentralisation/deconcentration of the public service and/or opening up of the market to private firms are the main features of recent reforms.

DK The National Labour Market Authority (Arbejdsmarkedsstyrelsen) is in charge of the practical administration of the public placement service. The employment service has 14 regional offices, each of which has several local offices (total around 96). According to the law, persons on unemployment benefit and other jobseekers are entitled to certain forms of assistance from the public placement service, including information, vocational counselling, registration for unemployment benefit and vocational training. Each region has a labour market council which is composed of representatives of the social partners and regional and local authorities. They are responsible for organising local measures for the unemployed and are also involved in managing job vacancies and training programmes.

A The Employment Service (Arbeitsmarktservice - AMS) is responsible for the provision of information, counselling, guidance and placement services and for measures targeting the qualification, vocational orientation and employment of the unemployed. Since July 1994, the services provided by the AMS have been devolved from the central administration, the AMS having been transformed into a tripartite organisation. It is managed by a council on which the social partners and the state are represented and has a staff of 4,200. Duties not directly related to the labour market, such as payment of other social benefits (with the exception of unemployment benefit and emergency assistance), have been transferred to other departments or social security institutions. The AMS will apply a more rigorous policy of decentralised decision-making and cooperation with local and regional authorities in the future.

E The National Employment Institute (INEM) is responsible for the public placement service in Spain. It is an autonomous administrative body under the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. It has a General Council (tripartite), an Executive Committee (tripartite) and a Director-General appointed by the Council of Ministers. The INEM has 52 provincial delegations and around 700 local employment offices. It also offers ancillary services such as vocational guidance and job classification and is responsible for management of the unemployment insurance scheme. The provincial delegations process applications for benefits and administer payments. Discussions are currently taking place on the transformation of INEM into a new type of public placement service which will adhere to the following principles: a) it will be a state institution and the only placement service working free of charge; b) it will be organised on a decentral basis with territorial responsibility lying with the autonomous regions, while the role of the social partners will be increased.

B There are three public employment services in Belgium: the Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding (VDAB), the Office communautaire et régional de la formation professionnelle et l'emploi (FOREM) and the Office régional bruxellois de l'Emploi (ORBEM). These three services are administered by bipartite management committees, and both the VDAB and FOREM have subregional services (18 and 12, respectively). They also offer support services (psychological, social and medical) and provide information on vacancies ("Job Service", permanent information forums, etc.). The VDAB and ORBEM have set up an outplacement service, which is available at the employer's request and subject to the prior agreement of the workers concerned. The VDAB has set up a freely accessible information system (WIS - werkinformatiesysteem).

F The National Employment Agency (ANPE) is responsible for the public placement service in France. It is a national public legal entity under the authority of the Employment Ministry and is financially autonomous. The ANPE has a tripartite Board of Administration and a Director-General appointed by the Council of Ministers. There are 22 regional directorates, 100 department directorates and 7,000 local employment agencies. The ANPE helps people looking for work, training or vocational guidance and helps employers recruit or redeploy workers. It also manages the register of jobseekers, produces statistics and constitutes one of the instruments of employment policy.

D The Federal Employment Service (Bundesanstalt für Arbeit) has 181 main offices and 651 suboffices providing country-wide job placement and guidance for all categories of job and employment, free of charge.

FIN The Ministry of Labour is responsible for public job placement services. The country is divided into 13 regional districts and there are 183 employment offices. The employment offices also provide labour market training, vocational training, vocational guidance, an information service regarding training and occupations, and vocational rehabilitation for the disabled. All services are free of charge to employees, and almost all, except some special services, are free for employers. A number of universities, with financial support from the state, have recently started to develop placement services in cooperation with public employment offices to help their graduates find employment. In addition to universities, vocational colleges have also begun developing recruitment services in cooperation with the local employment offices.

Placement services

- GR** The National Organisation for Labour Market Policy (OAED) is responsible for the public placement service in Greece. It is an autonomous public-law body under the authority of the Ministry of Labour. The OAED is managed by a governor who presides over a tripartite administrative board. It runs a network of 152 local employment offices and manages its own training centres. The OAED is also responsible for vocational guidance and training (including apprenticeships), management of unemployment benefit and family allowances, and implementation of programmes to promote employment.
- NL** On 1.1.1997, a new law on the Employment Service came into effect. Under this new law the Employment Service is responsible for: placing jobseekers, particularly those at a disadvantage in the labour market; the improvement of the employability of jobseekers; filling vacancies and supplying information and advice about labour market developments and training opportunities.
The CBA (Central Board) consist of 9 members, appointed by royal decree. The government (ministries) is not represented in the CBA. However, 3 members (incl. the chairman) are nominated for appointment by the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment. The new law makes a clear distinction between the role and position of the CBA and the management. The new law sets out new rules about financing the Employment Services.
Early in 1996, the Employment Service ended its statutory relationship with the START manpower agency. The START target group (difficult-to-place jobseekers) remained unchanged.
- I** 1. PUBLIC PLACEMENT SERVICES
- P** The Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP) is responsible for placement. Administratively and financially independent, it is run by an executive committee assisted by an administrative board and a supervisory board (tripartite) with advisory functions. The same structure exists at regional level, where there are 5 regional IEFP delegations. At local level, there are 82 employment centres and 25 vocational training centres, as well as 2 employment/training centres. The IEFP is also responsible for job information, vocational guidance, and employment programmes and studies. Jobseekers who wish to receive unemployment benefit have to register at an employment centre.
In addition to the government employment service, there are also temporary employment agencies and private placement agencies.
- IRL** The authority responsible for employment and training (FAS) runs a public placement service through a network of 54 offices around the country. These offices provide the interface between jobseekers and vacancies and are also linked up to the EURES vacancy management system operated by the European Union. FAS is responsible for the implementation of training, retraining and vocational guidance. Responsibility for payment of unemployment benefit lies with the Department of Social Welfare.
- S** Throughout Sweden there are 360 public placement offices managed by the AMS and open to anyone. Jobseekers have access, free of charge, to all services offered by public offices and private agencies. Employers are required to notify the public employment service of any vacancies.
- L** The Employment Administration (ADEM), run by a Director-General and directly subordinate to the Ministry of Labour, is responsible for the public employment service in Luxembourg. It has a monopoly on placement activities, and offers vocational guidance services. It also has responsibilities for vocational training, especially for long-term unemployed young people and the disabled. The ADEM is also responsible for managing the unemployment insurance fund, including benefit payments and eligibility checks. It has 3 regional offices.
There are a number of recruitment consultancy firms, and also non-profit associations which, as an extension of their counselling and social reintegration activities, may also find jobs for the people with whom they are concerned.
- UK** Employers are encouraged to notify 'Jobcentres' of any vacancies, especially those which could be filled by the unemployed. Jobseekers select vacancies from the noticeboards in Jobcentres and are seen by Jobcentre staff to confirm their suitability. The Employment Service found jobs for over 1.5 million people last year (1995/96) through its national network of 1,028 Jobcentres. The Employment Service is a public agency which agrees performance targets with the Secretary of State for Employment through an Annual Performance Agreement.
The Employment Service is responsible for labour market checks for those in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) i.e. making sure that those receiving JSA are available and actively seeking work. Responsibility for payment and fraud checks rests with the Benefits Agency.

Counselling, information and assessment

The trend is towards more emphasis on counselling, information and monitoring, both in general terms and after jobseekers have been registered with employment agencies for a certain length of time. In most countries, self-service (job clubs, etc.) is also playing a greater role, one of the factors here being the increasing computerisation of placement services.

DK In 1994, the public placement service introduced a system of individual action plans (individuel handlingsplan), which must be drawn up for persons who have been unemployed for 6 months. The plan involves an interview with a placement service official, who gives advice on active labour market measures and helps analyse the person's career development and employment prospects. The action plan is revised and updated when needed.

A The Employment Service provides information on labour market trends and needs and on its own services. It also publishes details of vacancies and jobs sought, as well as statistics and research findings. Manual and computerised self-service systems encourage personal initiative on the part of the clients. Radio, television and other media cooperate with the Employment Service on a regular basis to disseminate information about the situation on the labour market and about placement services.

E The public employment service (INEM) offers jobseekers integrated employment services, either through its own employment offices or other bodies with which it has contractual relations. The services include labour market analysis, jobsearch assistance and placement services, i.e. professional information on the employment situation, retraining interviews, personal employment and training profiles, active jobsearch, dual schemes for employment and retraining, special schemes for the acquisition of work experience and information and counselling for the self-employed.

B **MONITORING OF THE UNEMPLOYED**
The public employment services are obliged to monitor persons who have been unemployed for 9 months (under the age of 46) and who do not have a university degree. The FOREM centres offer supervision, information, documentation and guidance to help jobseekers choose a suitable occupation, taking account of labour market needs. COISP (social and vocational guidance and preparation) centres offer courses lasting between 7 and 12 weeks designed to help participants make the correct choice of career or training.

F Comprehensive use of telematic instruments: the spread of telematic tools (Minitel system, servers, voice mail, interactive terminals, etc.) will provide jobseekers with access to information on vacancies, remote services, and assistance with CV preparation and simple administrative operations.

D Vocational guidance for young persons is offered in all employment service offices. This takes the form of a free and unbiased guidance service in the choice of first career. Furthermore, all employment service offices are equipped with vocational information centres, in which an extensive self-service computer information service is available to all. The guidance service is also a point of access to special guidance services such as medical, psychological and technical counselling. The unemployed and jobseekers can also make use of the employment guidance service, which gives advice in all matters relating to qualifications (continuous training, retraining) and vocational reintegration.

FIN The employment offices are responsible for counselling, placement services, information services and providing labour market training, active employment measures and special services for the disabled. The computerised data system covers the whole country and provides information on jobseekers, vacancies, training courses and education. The main types of employment services comprise individual services, information services and group services. There is a tendency to concentrate the individual service on placement and vocational guidance in the most demanding client situations and otherwise to increase the use of information services and group services. The jobseekers can get information about vacancies and training via the self-service terminals, from special journals and from a nationwide telephone information system.

Counselling, information and assessment

GR	<p>The OAED organises vocational guidance by encouraging specific studies of labour market trends and perspectives, and of occupations which are growing or declining in importance. Vocational guidance is the responsibility of special services, which provide information on career and training options for all workers, but particularly for young people joining the labour market. The OAED is also responsible for vocational retraining for the disabled; it is charged with organising any necessary measures and has a number of special offices for this purpose.</p>	NL	<p>1. INFORMATION AND ADVICE</p>
I		P	<p>In addition to the information and advisory services provided by the IEFPP, the following instruments are used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual monitoring plans, with the aim of preventing long-term unemployment among the under-45s. - Job clubs offering the unemployed a personalised follow-up through the organisation of support activities in which they participate directly. - UNIVAs (see 5.1.1). <p>Schools run by the Ministry of Education offer psychological counselling and career guidance services.</p>
IRL	<p>"JOB FACILITATORS"</p> <p>"Job facilitators" are appointed by the Department of Social Welfare and work in its regional offices. Their task is to take stock of measures undertaken with regard to local employment, teaching, training and work experience in order to advise the unemployed (particularly the long-term unemployed) and help them make use of the available possibilities.</p> <p>FAS has a computerised system which ensures that details of all vacancies are available in all its offices. There is also a self-service system for information on vacancies.</p>	S	<p>Jobseekers looking for information on their employment prospects and (where applicable) necessary qualifications can obtain personal advice from the public employment services. Those who need to attend vocational retraining and/or require additional advice can contact the Vocational Skills Institute (AMI), which has at its disposal a wide range of resources in respect to traineeships, practical guidance, adaptation to the working environment, etc.</p> <p>Activities aimed at jobseekers last at least 5 days (full time). Participants learn to draft a job application and to contact employers directly on their own initiative. Programmes may also include mock interviews.</p>
L	<p>The employment service's (ADEM) vocational guidance service is charged with assisting young people in their choice of career and adults who wish to undergo continuing training during working life, change jobs or complete a further training course. The vocational guidance service provides group or individual information through the Vocational Information Centres. It collaborates with the Centre for School Psychology and Counselling, organises preparatory work experience and provides individual counselling and apprenticeship placement services.</p>	UK	<p>All Employment Service offices provide a structured and coherent advisory and information service which starts on the first day a person makes a claim for benefit and is more concentrated as the period of unemployment lengthens and getting back to work becomes more difficult. The service is based on regular fortnightly reviews and periodic interviews with an adviser, at which the jobseeker is able to discuss his or her situation, consider the options available and agree a course of action which will offer the best prospects of getting a job.</p>

Financial assistance to jobseekers

Assistance to enable the unemployed to join the labour market takes various forms, e.g. allowances for the purchase of clothing, placing newspaper advertisements, training, travel to interviews, etc. Following the shift from passive to active measures, these more or less "conventional" types of assistance are becoming more important in certain Member States.

DK

Financial assistance can be provided by decision of the regional labour market council for the travelling expenses, overnight stays, etc. of persons travelling in connection with a job application and of job seekers attending company information meetings.

A

The Employment Service gives financial assistance to persons and companies or organisations which apply measures promoting the following: removal of financial barriers to employment; preparation of access to employment and training or apprenticeship training; integration or reintegration into the labour market; safeguarding of existing jobs.

The following instruments exist: allowances for expenses relating to job applications and interviews and the purchase of work clothing and tools.

Allowances for subsistence and participation expenses: for travel, accommodation and meals; for vocational training.

Promotion of employment in companies: allowances for integration of problem groups into companies; for reintegration after parental leave.

E

B

F

Cooperation agreement (Convention de coopération). The agreement of 8 June 1994 between the social partners led to the introduction of cooperation agreements, under which enterprises which recruit jobseekers in receipt of benefits for longer than 8 months are paid a subsidy from the unemployment insurance scheme. Employers signing these agreements are paid, for a maximum of one year, a recruitment subsidy based on the amount of benefit which the jobseeker would have drawn if he had remained unemployed.

D

Financial assistance is available for entry into dependent employment with the objective of avoiding and ending unemployment through increased geographical and occupational mobility. Grants are offered to assist with the costs connected with job applications, job interviews, moving home and work tools; bridging grants are also available. Training measures are provided to improve jobseekers' integration prospects.

Furthermore, the assistance outlined in point 5.2.1 for labour market reintegration is also available.

FIN

Financial assistance for labour market training consists of a training allowance, a subsistence allowance and reimbursement of accommodation costs. It is granted to applicants selected for labour market training. The amount of the training allowance is the same as unemployment benefit. The employment services cover the cost of submitting an application for training. Applicants may receive help with travel expenses incurred in obtaining information on the training offered and the associated conditions and in attending selection and aptitude tests and medical examinations. Students selected may also obtain a grant for travel to the training venue where it is outside their own area.

Financial assistance to jobseekers

GR

NL

The framework regulation on integration into working life (KRA) aims to advance the (re)integration of the unemployed (>12 months) into the labour process by way of creating additional jobs (so called "work-experience jobs"). The financial assistance consists of a substantial (once only) grant to the employer and often a reduced level of tax and social security contributions (in accordance with WVA 1996).

I

ASSISTANCE FOR JOBSEEKERS

Jobseekers registered with the CIGS or on mobility lists may be given financial assistance for guidance and support services, to help them become reintegrated into the labour market, including cooperatives or self-employment.

P

- Payment of the costs of advertisements in the regional press.
- Financial assistance for self-placement, to encourage the long-term unemployed (at least 2 years) to find employment themselves.

IRL

Under the new work-experience programme WORKPLACE, unemployed persons or lone parents (or travellers, Rehabilitation Board referrals) in receipt of payment for at least 6 months will be eligible for a work placement of up to 5 weeks with an employer. The participants will continue to be paid their welfare entitlements and a premium will be provided to assist towards costs of travel and meal expenses. The focus on WORKPLACE will be on those who are ready for employment.

S

L

Extension of reemployment aid in 1995 allowing an income supplement for 4 years to those persons who have been made redundant or are in danger of redundancy who are prepared to take a less well-paid job.
There are several recruitment aids for the older and long-term unemployed (reimbursement of social contributions by the Employment Fund) which were introduced in July 1993. These assistance schemes depend on age and the length of unemployment and stipulate certain conditions regarding employment contracts.

UK

1. JOBSEEKER'S ALLOWANCE
2. JOBFINDER'S GRANTS
3. BACK TO WORK BONUS
4. TRAVEL TO INTERVIEW SCHEME
5. CAREER DEVELOPMENT LOANS
6. "JOBMATCH" PROGRAMME
7. ADDITIONAL BENEFITS FOR THOSE RETURNING TO WORK

Geographical mobility

Geographic mobility allowances are designed to facilitate the placement of jobseekers outside their own region, possibly even abroad. Assistance is also available for foreign workers to return home. Some countries, e.g. NL, have placed restrictions on the recruitment of foreigners from outside the EU.

DK

Measures to encourage mobility:
Payment of travel expenses and an installation allowance to encourage employment of jobseekers in regions where there is a shortage of workers with specific skills.

A

The aim of measures promoting regional mobility is to help persons find work, keep their job or attend a training or educational course provided by the Employment Service (AMS) at some location other than their place of residence. Allowances are granted to cover the costs of travel to work, training or an interview, and child-care costs.

Occupational mobility:

The aim of measures promoting occupational mobility is to enable persons to participate in training or educational courses provided by the Employment Service in order to enhance or renew their vocational qualification and thus to considerably improve their prospects for reintegration. Allowances are granted to cover the costs of participation (course fees, auxiliary costs) and living expenses for the duration of the course.

E

The law introduces new forms of vocational classification and encourages mobility between equivalent categories. The transfer of workers which requires a change of residence is justified if due to economic, technical, organisational or production reasons. The transfer can be individual or collective. A collective transfer must be negotiated with worker representatives. In the absence of agreement, the transfer can be undertaken but the worker can take the matter before the court. Workers who accept the transfer have the right to compensation to cover personal and family expenses arising through the transfer. The period of notice is 30 days. Temporary posting of workers which do not exceed 12 months over a period of 3 years are also permissible.

B

Assistance towards unemployed persons' resettlement costs: Financial aid for unemployed persons who have to move in order to take up a new job.

F

In the case of companies in economic difficulties, the state may provide financial assistance on the basis of a mutual agreement with workers who are willing to move at least 50 km to find another job.

In addition, jobseekers who are willing to travel long distances in order to seek work are entitled to a travel allowance, financial compensation for extended stays away from home and, where applicable, a grant towards removal costs.

FOREIGN COMPANIES: French social legislation will in future apply to employees of foreign companies providing services in France.

EMPLOYMENT ABROAD - ENCOURAGING YOUNG PEOPLE: Companies employing French citizens under the age of 26 abroad can obtain a temporary exemption from social security contributions. The contributions are paid by the French employees' own social security fund.

D

INTEGRATION OF FOREIGN WORKERS

Language courses and courses in preparing for working life, aimed mainly at workers and training-course participants from former countries of recruitment. Reintegration of foreigners returning to their own country. Grants for workers returning home. Employment incentives. Financial assistance to encourage geographical mobility.

EUROPEAN GUIDANCE CENTRES

Establishing of several programmes to encourage mobility at European level (12 centres, electronic mail and training of advisers).

Employment incentives: cf. 4.2.6.

FIN

Travel expenses may be reimbursed to unemployed jobseekers to enable them to attend an interview, sign a contract or start a new job. Assistance is designed to encourage such persons to seek employment outside their own area, thus promoting geographical mobility within the country.

Geographical mobility

GR	<p>- Subsidy of GDR 1,000 per worker per day to encourage geographical mobility.</p> <p>- Relocation grant for Greeks who have lived abroad for at least two years and who are repatriated with a view to living and working permanently in Greece. Age: 20-60 years.</p> <p>- Further measures are to be implemented this year to improve the mobility incentives for workers in regions particularly affected by unemployment who wish to work in areas with low unemployment or which are sparsely populated.</p>	NL	<p>In 1995 the Aliens employment act came into force. The essential part of this act is a restriction on the granting of work permits to non-EEA (European Economic Area) labour supply. Work permits are refused if a priority job seeker (NL citizen, foreign worker legally resident in NL or EEA-citizens) is available.</p>
I		P	<p>Geographical mobility incentives aimed at the full-time or part-time unemployed and part-time workers willing to accept job offers involving relocation. The Lisbon and Oporto districts are excluded. Housing allowance increased by 10%.</p>
IRL	<p>1. Ireland is actively involved in the EURES programme.</p> <p>2. The FAS employment services promote mobility within Ireland by operating a register of jobseekers and vacancies together with a matching-up service. Rural Resettlement Ireland Ltd (RRI), an organisation supported by the Department of the Environment, helps to resettle families from the larger urban areas into depopulated rural areas, usually in private rented housing. To help make home ownership a viable option, a low-interest mortgage scheme jointly funded by the Housing Finance Agency (through the local authority), Bank of Ireland and RRI and specifically aimed at low-income households was launched in July 1996.</p> <p>1. NEW PILOT RURAL RESETTLEMENT SCHEME</p>	S	<p>Allowances for travel expenses may be granted to persons seeking or accepting work outside their own region. Grants are paid to employers in certain regions who create a new job and employ a member of the family of the person who has relocated.</p> <p>Grants of up to SEK 10,000 are available to unemployed persons who leave their own region to work elsewhere (though it cannot be their first job after completing studies). They must stay in the job for at least 6 months.</p>
L	<p>Creation of incentives through three types of aid for jobseekers, unemployed workers entitled to unemployment benefit and first-time jobseekers to change their place of residence in order to find work:</p> <p>1. Monthly lump-sum allowance to cover travel costs: granted to workers who accept a job located over 15 km away from their home. The amount of the allowance depends on the distance travelled and is equal to between LFR 2,500 and 5,500. The allowance is paid for maximum 18 months.</p> <p>2. Monthly lump-sum allowance for dual residence: granted to jobseekers with families who take up work located over 30 km from their home. The allowance is equal to 50% of the minimum wage and is paid for maximum 12 months.</p> <p>3. One-off lump-sum allowance for change of residence and removal to a location over 30 km from the home. This allowance is payable when workers change their place of residence within one year after recruitment. The amount of the allowance is equal to the minimum wage.</p> <p>1. EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGNERS</p>	UK	<p>The Employment Service (ES) assists geographic mobility through the Labour Market System (LMS), its computer system which is available in every Jobcentre and gives vacancy information over a wide geographical area. The ES Overseas Placing Unit and Euroadvisers (who are based in every region) also help jobseekers to look further afield for job opportunities.</p> <p>The Travel to Interview scheme encourages jobseeker mobility as it helps with the cost of attending an interview away from the jobseekers place of residence.</p> <p>The Back to Work Bonus (cf. 4.2.6.(3)) can also be used to encourage mobility. It is intended to help cover the additional expenditure associated with returning to work and can be used to help cover the cost of resettlement in another region.</p>

Private employment agencies

Private employment agencies are now permitted in practically all Member States. They already existed in the past as temporary employment agencies, but may now also offer a regular placement service (subject to certain conditions which vary from country to country).

DK Since July 1990 private employment agencies have been able to operate without prior authorisation by the authorities. The public employment service pays private agencies for certain specific services.

A Private, commercial placement has been permitted since July 1994. In order to operate, employment agencies must obtain a business licence and authorisation from the responsible Federal Office for Social Affairs, which checks compliance with certain requirements. Only employers may be charged a placement fee. Manpower transfer: authorisation required from the trade supervisory authorities. The main contract between the agency and the worker must meet minimum statutory requirements. The period of notice is at least 14 days. Remuneration must be appropriate and customary for the location concerned and be at least the minimum laid down by the collective agreement for the relevant sector. It is not permissible for the wages and employment conditions of workers in the host company to be adversely affected or their jobs put at risk due to the use of temporary workers. Even if the temporary worker cannot be given as much work as anticipated, the remuneration agreed in the main contract must be paid. Agencies are prohibited from carrying out both placement and manpower transfer.

E Up to the end of 1993, Spanish legislation did not allow private employment agencies. Law No. 10/94 of 19 May removed the obligation on employers to recruit only via the public placement service (INEM). Non-profit employment agencies may now be established on the basis of a cooperation contract with the INEM. However, the employer remains obliged to notify the INEM of all employment contracts entered into. The public employment offices may only undertake activities in connection with employment contracts which they have processed themselves. Law No. 14/94 of 1 June regulates the activities of temporary employment agencies, as well as the conditions applicable to temporary employment. The Agreement on Employment Stability, which was signed in April 1997 by the social partners and has the support of the government, provides for the establishment of a tripartite working group which is to formulate proposals for the operation of temporary employment agencies.

B The Decree of the Flemish Council of 19.4.1995 concerning job placement in the Flemish Region forbids the running of employment agencies for profit. The Decree does, however, allow charges for such job-placement services with respect to categories of persons among whom the demand for jobs can clearly not be met by public-sector employment offices. These categories are defined by the government of the Flemish Region in line with the opinions or proposals of the Flemish Social and Economic Council. The Decree also provides for the setting up of a supervisory committee for a given area of activity. Other important regulations applying in Flanders: placement agencies may not request any payment from jobseekers; these activities are reimbursed by the government of the Flemish Region according to a fixed scale of charges, and registered agencies must sign a cooperation agreement with the Flemish Employment and Placement Service (VDAB). The Decree covers the following occupational groups: executives with an annual salary above BEF 1,200,000, artists and professional sportspersons.

F Certain public establishments or jointly administered organisations may engage in public placement activities. To do so, they must be approved by, or sign an agreement with, the ANPE. This means that even if private organisations are authorised to operate on the market, they remain under the control of the public service. A bond in the form of a bank guarantee must be provided by establishments operating as temporary employment agencies. Other operators offer placement-related services, while some firms provide a placement advisory service, but it is difficult to assess the latter's importance.

D Private agencies have been authorised since 1994. They require a licence issued by the Employment Service. Issue of a licence is guaranteed by the law as long as the necessary conditions are met, i.e. personal reputation and qualifications, sound financial circumstances, and adequate premises. These conditions for authorisation apply equally to nationals of all EU Member States. Authorisations for placement from and to countries outside the EU are granted for a limited number of occupations.

FIN Before the new Employment Act came into force, only certain occupational and social organisations could provide placement services free of charge. The Employment Services Act of 1994 abolished the state monopoly. Thus, private firms are also allowed to provide employment services. No licence is required. The only restriction is that these firms are not allowed to charge employees for placement services. There is no organised cooperation between private firms and public employment services yet, and the public sector has an important role in providing services.

Private employment agencies

- GR** Since 1931, Greek law has banned private employment agencies operating on a commercial basis. Infringements are punishable by fines or imprisonment. Employers are required to report all recruitment and redundancies, but not vacancies. Nevertheless, studies have revealed the existence of illegal private agencies, which operate under a variety of guises (as insurance agencies etc.). The ban does not cover non-profit operations.
- NL** The 1997 law on the Employment Service recognises the existence of private employment agencies offering a full range of services and acting as intermediaries between jobseekers and employers. The law prescribes that the Employment Service should perform its tasks/services whenever possible through or in cooperation with private employment agencies (i.e. contracting out). These agencies must obtain a licence before starting operations. The law states that their activities must not be detrimental to workers' interests or to good relations between labour market players. These general requirements may be supplemented by instructions from the Central Board (CBA). The government has proposed the abolition of this system of permits.
- I** In Italy there is a state monopoly on placement, and private employment agencies are prohibited. Various decree-laws which were amended and finally converted into Law No. 608/96 have led to a simplification of recruitment procedures in that they created the possibility for employers to notify recruitments to the placement service ex post, as opposed to the prior notification which was previously required. A draft law covers the limited and controlled creation of private employment agencies.
- P** Private employment agencies must have prior authorisation from the Ministry of Qualifications and Employment, based on the opinion of the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training. Legally, a distinction has been made between placement agencies and temporary employment agencies only since 1989.
- IRL** Private employment agencies have been permitted in Ireland since 1971. They must have prior authorisation from the Minister for Enterprise and Employment. This authorisation must be renewed every year. Agencies may not charge a fee merely for agreeing to seek employment for another person or for agreeing to seek persons who will give or accept employment.
- S** Private placement agencies (except those for seamen) have been authorised since July 1993. Jobseekers have free access to all services offered by such agencies. Employers have to pay a fee for the service to the agency.
- L** The Law of 21.2.1976 makes placement the exclusive responsibility of the Employment Administration, whose services are free of charge. Employers are required to notify the public employment service of any vacancies. Infringements are punishable by a fine. Several recruitment consultancy firms are active in Luxembourg, but are required to observe the 1976 Law, especially with regard to vacancies. There are also a number of non-profit associations.
- UK** Agencies providing placement and temporary work services are regulated under the Employment Agencies Act 1973. There is no licensing requirement, but all agencies must by law meet certain minimum standards of conduct designed to protect users, both workers and hirers. Inspectors from the Department of Trade and Industry investigate all complaints and other information about agencies and undertake random checks. Breaches of the law are liable to prosecution in a magistrate's court and are subject to a maximum fine of GBP 5,000. Agencies may also be prohibited from operating by order of an industrial tribunal.

Recent measures

	<p>DK The transitional allowance for persons aged 50-59 to take them up to early-retirement age has been abolished because of changes in the labour force (older labour force).</p>
<p>A</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ABOLITION OF SPECIAL BENEFIT FOR WOMEN AGED 54 AND OVER AND MEN AGED 59 AND OVER 2. INTRODUCTION OF A BONUS/PENALTY SYSTEM IN UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE IN ORDER TO PROTECT OLDER EMPLOYEES 3. MORE PRECISE WORDING OF CONDITIONS OF ELIGIBILITY FOR BENEFIT 4. COMBATING BENEFIT FRAUD BY IMPOSING TOUGHER PENALTIES AND RESTRICTING OPPORTUNITIES TO EARN INCOME WHILE RECEIVING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT 5. LIMITATION OF PARENTAL LEAVE BENEFIT 6. NEW TRAINING SCHEME FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION SERVICE 7. SPECIAL INTEGRATION SUBSIDY 	<p>E In order to reduce passive expenditure and encourage active jobsearch by the unemployed, several changes have been made to the contributions system. The period of eligibility has been raised to 12 months; the rate of replacement has been reduced; benefits have been made conditional upon active jobsearch; minimum allowance: 75% of minimum wage for an unemployed person without children and 100% for an unemployed person with children.</p> <p>The Integrated Employment Services Plan (SIPES) makes provision for agreements with public or private non-profit institutions (placement agencies, etc.), the aim being to make it easier for unemployed persons to seek and obtain work.</p>
<p>B The plan introducing individual monitoring of jobseekers who have been unemployed for more than 10 months has been extended until 1998 and will focus more on unemployed workers with low qualifications.</p>	<p>F The state and the ANPE have concluded an agreement for the period 1994-1998. One of the priority aims is for the ANPE to target its activities towards identifying vacancies in enterprises. To this end, the ANPE may sign agreements with organisations such as professional associations of temporary employment agencies. Another aim is better coordination with those authorities in the unemployment insurance scheme who are responsible for payment of benefits to jobseekers.</p> <p>The agreement of 8 June 1994 introduced cooperation agreements under which the unemployment insurance scheme grants aid to companies which recruit jobseekers who have been on unemployment benefit for more than 8 months. The amount corresponds to the total benefit which workers would have received had they remained unemployed, and is payable for a maximum period of 12 months.</p>
<p>D 1. LAW ON REFORMING THE LEGISLATION ON UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE</p>	<p>FIN</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UNEMPLOYMENT SECURITY REFORM 2. AMENDMENT TO THE LABOUR MARKET SUPPORT ACT 3. SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL TRAINING OF THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED

Recent measures

GR	<p>UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT On the basis of a resolution by the Minister of Labour, unemployment benefit was increased by 10% as of 1.1.1997 (minimum GDR 78,000, maximum GDR 82,500).</p>	NL	<p>The Employment Service has signed an agreement with two temporary work agencies, Vedior/ASB and START, whereby these agencies will place 30,000 jobseekers in 1997. 50% of this target consists of persons who are made employable by the Employment Service. Under this agreement, the temporary work agencies have access to the register of jobseekers. This agreement will be evaluated in late 1997.</p>
I		P	<p>GUARANTEED MINIMUM INCOME The guaranteed minimum income is granted to persons in need and their dependants with a view to helping them satisfy their basic needs and achieve social and vocational integration (Law No. 19-A/96 of 29.6.1996).</p> <p>LOCAL EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES (ILE) The aim of the ILE scheme is to support small-scale initiatives which lead to the creation of economically and socially secure jobs at local level within the framework of local economic development (D.-L. No. 189/96 of 8.10.1996).</p>
IRL	<p>Establishment of the Local Employment Service continued throughout 1997, with 14 offices now operational. The Community Employment scheme was restructured, putting more focus on the long-term unemployed. The Youth Progression Programme (YPP) was established to track 18/19 year-olds who passed the 6 months unemployed threshold with a view to placing them in training/work and breaking the cycle of long-term unemployment.</p>	S	<p>The Swedish Government has proposed additional resources of SEK 100 million for the temporary recruitment of officials to the employment offices during the second half of 1997.</p>
L	<p>The operation of the public employment service is being improved. To this end, a series of decisions has been taken, i.e. notification of every vacancy; reassessment of job-brokering and the operation of placements; consolidation of structures needed to take stock of people with difficulties; an information and publicity campaign to promote available measures. The improved operation of public employment services forms a central focus in employment policy.</p> <p>A permanent employment committee was created through the law of 31.5.1995 in order to ensure the monitoring of the labour market, notably in conjunction with the Multi-Annual Programme for Employment. The law of 31.7.1995 created a pool of qualified instructors to develop the psycho-socio-pedagogical framework for jobseekers. The concept of sponsoring individuals in cooperation between the employment administration and potential beneficiaries was developed.</p>	UK	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CHILD MAINTENANCE BONUS 2. JOBSEEKER'S ALLOWANCE 3. DISCRETIONARY FUND FOR THE TECs 4. PROJECT WORK PILOTS 5. EMPLOYMENT ZONES 6. WORKSKILL PILOTS

Passive measures

FIN

1 UNEMPLOYMENT ALLOWANCE

Unemployment allowance is paid either by the Social Insurance Institution in the form of a basic daily allowance or by an unemployment fund in the form of an income-based allowance calculated on the basis of proven monthly salary/wages for the 10 months preceding unemployment. Membership of an unemployment fund is voluntary. Unemployment allowance may be paid to persons who have been employed or self-employed for a certain period preceding unemployment. The qualifying period of work to receive unemployment allowance was extended from 6 to 10 months as of the beginning of 1997.

2 LABOUR MARKET SUPPORT

Labour market support is a means-tested benefit equal to the basic unemployment allowance. An unemployed person is entitled to labour market support if he/she has received unemployment allowance because of not meeting the conditions related to employment. The amendment to the Labour Market Support Act that came into force as of the beginning of 1997 stipulates that under-25s without a vocational qualification are not entitled to receive labour market support unless they are participating in an active employment measure such as industrial training.

GR

1 UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Benefit limited on the basis of duration of employment, with a maximum of 12 months and a minimum of 5 months. Benefit amounts to 40% of earnings for blue-collar workers and 50% for white-collar workers (minimum of 2/3 of the minimum wage) plus 10% per dependant. At the end of the period of entitlement, there is a supplementary benefit equal to 50% of the principal benefit. In addition to the existing measures, special assistance can be given to persons who have worked in the last 12 months for at least 60 days and have paid the statutory contributions. This assistance is equal to 50% of the main benefit and is granted for a maximum of three payments in a year.

Legislative steps were taken last year to cater for persons who were dismissed from enterprises due to falling profits or closure (recession) and are thus difficult to place. These special steps affect persons aged over 55. They receive higher benefits for a period of 2 to 3 years until they reach statutory retirement age. It is expected that an integrated framework law will be passed within the course of this year.

Passive measures

L

1 UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Unemployment insurance benefit is limited to 12 months (plus an additional 6 months for the difficult to place) for jobseekers aged between 16 and 64 who were in employment for at least 26 weeks during the 12 months prior to registration as unemployed. The amount of benefit payable is equal to 80% of the last gross wage

Unemployment benefit is subject to social security contributions and taxation. Young unemployed persons who have completed training receive unemployment benefit amounting to 70% of the minimum wage they would be entitled to as unskilled workers. The benefit paid to those without training is equal to 40% of the minimum wage for unskilled workers.

The duration of unemployment benefit may be extended by 6, 9 or 12 months if an individual has paid pension insurance contributions for 20, 25 or 30 years, respectively.

The unemployed person subsequently receives compensation for a limited period in accordance with the regulations on guaranteed income, taking account, however, of the conditions relating to income.

2 UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT FOR OLDER UNEMPLOYED/EARLY RETIREMENT ALLOWANCE

Under special conditions, older workers are entitled to unemployment benefit within the framework of unemployment insurance and the regulations pertaining to early retirement (cf. 5.3.0).

NL

1 UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Unemployment insurance benefit (WW-Act) is payable for between 6 and 60 months depending on age and the duration of previous employment. There are two WW-benefits: If a person has worked in 26 weeks in the 39 weeks preceding the first day of unemployment he will be entitled to at least a short WW flat rate benefit (70% of the statutory minimum wage). In order to qualify for the wage-related WW-benefit (70% of the daily wage) a person has to meet the additional requirement of having worked at least 52 days in 4 out of 5 calendar years preceding unemployment. After the expiry of the wage related WW-benefit unemployed persons may receive a flat rate follow up benefit (Vervolguittkering; 70% of the statutory minimum wage) for 2 - 3½ years, depending on age. Subsequently, unemployed persons (50 years and over on the first day of unemployment) may apply to a specific (income tested) unemployment scheme for older workers (IOAW). Others can submit a claim under the (income and means tested) National Assistance Act (ABW). In principle IOAW- and ABW-benefits can be paid till the statutory retirement age (65).

General financial incentives to employers

A

1 ENTERPRISE INTEGRATION SUBSIDIES

The aim of the "enterprise integration subsidy" and the "special enterprise integration subsidy" ([Besondere] Betriebliche Eingliederungsbeihilfe) is to promote the integration of problem groups by supporting employment in enterprises (placement assistance) and to reduce the job deficit through the creation of new jobs. The immediate objective of the subsidy is to encourage companies to employ long-term unemployed persons belonging to a problem group. Barriers to recruitment, especially those based on a disablement, the age, the duration of unemployment or the gender of the applicant, and other apparent obstacles are thus to be removed.

In-work benefits**UK****1 FAMILY CREDIT**

From April 1996, existing help with the cost of child care in FC was increased to GBP 60 a week. Worth up to GBP 42 a week extra in FC.

From July 1996, additional help in FC for those working 30 hours or more a week. Currently worth GBP 10.55 a week.

Faster service introduced summer 1996 which means that most new claims from employed people are cleared within one week.

2 EARNINGS TOP-UP

A new in-work benefit for people without dependent children - "Earnings Top-up" is being piloted in 8 areas of the country for 3 years from October 1996 (cf. Family Credit at 4.2.2).

The scope of a scheme for workers of this type and the use of regional trials before a decision on national implementation are innovative.

3 DISABILITY WORKING ALLOWANCE (DWA)

Cf. 5.5.1.

Placement services

I

1 PUBLIC PLACEMENT SERVICES

Public placement is carried out by regional, provincial and local offices. The latter (Uffici Circonsenzionali) are primarily responsible for placement services.

During 1996/97 - in expectation of the reform of employment services and on the basis of Art. 1, § 13, of Decree-Law No. 511/96 - experiments have been carried out with "integrated" services on the basis of agreements between the regional, provincial and job-creation offices and other public bodies and bilateral providers, etc. These services (which were provided only in a few regions: Latium, Emilia Romagna, Piedmont, etc.) concerned labour market monitoring, educational and vocational guidance, pre-selection, matching labour supply and demand, and practical work experience. The above scheme has now expired, but the consequences of the Decree-Law are provided for in Law No. 608/96, so that they can continue to take effect in 1997.

As regards the overall reform of the placement system, Law No. 59/87 entrusts regional and local offices with the power to allocate functions and tasks of the public administration to third parties. The government is charged with enacting the relevant decree-laws nine months after the Law has come into force. Thus, the role and the activities of the placement services must be redefined.

Law No. 608/96 has fully abolished the prior authorisation for recruitment previously required in connection with placement procedures. Private employers and public bodies can therefore recruit directly (ordinary placement, agriculture or entertainment). The system is currently organised on the basis of the following conditions. The provincial offices concern themselves among other things with collective redundancy procedures, advise the Uffici Circonsenzionali and help settle industrial disputes. The regional offices coordinate provincial activities and assess applications for allowances from workers registered with the Special Wage-Compensation Fund (Cassa Integrazione Guadagni straordinaria - CIGS). They also administer the mobility lists, the aim of which is to promote employment for certain target groups (women, workers registered with the CIGS). There are also technical project bodies which coordinate supply and demand on the labour market, encourage employment promotion initiatives, promote employment for disadvantaged groups and devise employment policy programmes to harmonise national and regional authority operations on the labour market.

Counselling, information and assessment

NL

1 INFORMATION AND ADVICE

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible for guidance of school-goers. Difficult cases are referred to private agencies, and the persons concerned can obtain financial aid from the Vocational Guidance Programme. The new law on the Employment Service (1997) explicitly mentions "giving information and advice with respect to career guidance and training to any jobseeker" as a central task of the Job Centres.

Since 1993, (pupils from) secondary schools, (clients from) employment services and other individuals may receive additional services concerning career guidance and training from the Regional Services Centres (RDC/AOB). The centres are (contractually) financed by schools and the regional employment service (RBA). So far the RBAs have been obliged to spend earmarked percentages of their budgets on the centres. In the near future, this obligation will be relaxed (i.e. market conformity/external autonomy of RDC/AOBs).

In 1997, the Employment Service introduced a system of individual action plans to be drawn up for persons with a (large) distance to the labour market. The plan involves an interview with the labour office official, who analyses the persons' employment prospects and advises on extra help to increase the chance of finding work. This extra help can take the form of, e.g.: counselling on choice of profession or career counselling; (vocational) training; training on how to apply for a job.

Financial assistance to jobseekers

UK

1 **JOBSEEKER'S ALLOWANCE**

In October 1996, the Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) came into effect - simplifying benefits for unemployed people.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance, limited to 182 days (including Sundays), is available to people who work less than 16 hours a week and who have an adequate National Insurance record in each of the 2 tax years preceding the claim. It is payable at a flat rate for the claimant only, and can be reduced by earnings or an occupational pension.

UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance is available to people who work less than 16 hours a week, and whose income and capital are below prescribed levels. Provided the entitlement conditions remain satisfied, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance is payable on an indefinite basis to those who are not entitled to contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance or whose family's needs are not met by it.

The labour market conditions of entitlement are common to both elements of Jobseeker's Allowance. Jobseekers must be available for work and be actively seeking it, and must enter into a Jobseeker's Agreement which sets out the steps they intend to take in order to get back to work.

2 **JOBFINDER'S GRANTS**

- Target group: people who have been unemployed for more than 2 years.
- Objective: to encourage unemployed people to find and accept a wider range of jobs by covering some of the expenses they incur before receiving their first wage.
- Procedure: persons who accept a low-paid full-time job after being unemployed for at least 2 years are entitled to a single jobfinder grant to help them cope with reintegration. 20,000 grants are available in 1997/98 at a cost of GBP 4 million.

3 **BACK TO WORK BONUS**

Introduced in October 1996, this bonus enables those receiving Jobseeker's Allowance or income support and working part time to build up a credit of up to GBP 1,000. The sum is paid when they increase the number of hours they work or increase the amount of their earnings and are no longer entitled to benefit.

Back to Work Bonus recipients are not subject to restrictions on how they spend the money. However, it is principally intended to help overcome the financial uncertainty of moving into work, which could include the cost of resettlement in another region.

4 **TRAVEL TO INTERVIEW SCHEME**

This scheme provides financial support to people who have been unemployed for more than 13 weeks and have to travel away from their place of residence for a job interview. During 1997/98, 38,500 opportunities are available at a cost of GBP 1.6 million.

Financial assistance to jobseekers

5 CAREER DEVELOPMENT LOANS

Individuals looking to finance vocational training of their own choice may apply to one of four commercial banks for a loan. The government pays the interest on the loan for the duration of the training or study undertaken, and for up to a further month afterwards. If, one month after completing training, the borrower is registered unemployed and in receipt of benefit, they may apply to the bank to defer repayments for up to a further 5 months. CDLs can support up to 2 years of education or training plus, where relevant, up to one year's practical work experience. In 1996/97, CDLs helped more than 12,000 people invest GBP 44.3 million in their own vocational education and training.

6 "JOBMATCH" PROGRAMME

This programme was launched nationally in 1997 and is designed to encourage long-term unemployed Jobseekers to consider a part-time job as a stepping stone back towards full-time employment. An allowance of GBP 50 a week for 26 weeks is paid to those aged 18-24 years, who have been unemployed for more than 2 years, take a part-time job (between 16-30 hours a week) and leave the unemployment register. Participants are encouraged to take up vocational training and are given training vouchers to the value of GBP 300 which can be exchanged for appropriate training.

7 ADDITIONAL BENEFITS FOR THOSE RETURNING TO WORK

From April 1996, persons who have been unemployed for more than 6 months have continued to receive the same rate of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit for 4 weeks after returning to work.

Geographical mobility

IRL

1 NEW PILOT RURAL RESETTLEMENT SCHEME

In April 1997, a new pilot local authority rural resettlement scheme was launched which enables local authorities to build or acquire houses to rent to persons moving to rural areas under the RRI programme. Housing will be provided in villages and will target derelict sites and vacant houses integrated with village improvement under the Local Urban and Rural Development programme.

L

1 EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGNERS

Provisions governing the employment of foreigners (tripartite agreement of 8.3.1994). Aid for geographic mobility (pursuant to the tripartite agreement), covering allowances for travel, dual residence and resettlement.

Recent measures

A

1 **ABOLITION OF SPECIAL BENEFIT FOR WOMEN AGED 54 AND OVER AND MEN AGED 59 AND OVER**

Special benefit used to be paid to unemployed men aged 59 and over and to unemployed women aged 54 and over who had been in employment subject to unemployment insurance contributions for at least 180 months within the last 25 years. The benefit consisted of unemployment benefit plus a 25% supplement. This special benefit has now been abolished. To partially compensate for this, the income of spouses or live-in partners will be deducted at a considerably reduced rate from emergency assistance (Notstandshilfe) for women aged 54 and over and men aged 59 and over.

2 **INTRODUCTION OF A BONUS/PENALTY SYSTEM IN UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE IN ORDER TO PROTECT OLDER EMPLOYEES**

If an employer takes on a worker aged 50 or over, his or her unemployment insurance contributions are reduced by half; if a worker is at least 55 years old when taken on, the employer's unemployment insurance contribution is dispensed with altogether.

If, however, an employer terminates the employment of such a worker, he or she must make a one-off payment ("penalty") to the unemployment insurance scheme. The amount of such payment is derived from a specific percentage of the unemployment benefit payable multiplied by the number of months up until the date the employee concerned would in theory be eligible to take early retirement. This one-off payment may not exceed 126% of 7/6 of an employee's annual salary.

3 **MORE PRECISE WORDING OF CONDITIONS OF ELIGIBILITY FOR BENEFIT**

A new condition of eligibility for benefit has been introduced in the Unemployment Insurance Act (Arbeitslosenversicherungsgesetz), or rather a condition of eligibility intrinsic to the Act has been set out in greater detail. The only persons still entitled to benefit are those who, among other things, are available for work. This means that they can and may take up a job, and that they are willing and able to work and are unemployed. A job can and may be taken up by anyone who is available for any employment normally offered on the labour market which complies with statutory provisions and any relevant collective agreements, which the unemployed person can be reasonably expected to carry out and which is subject to social insurance contributions. The unemployed person must be entitled to reside in Austria and take up paid employment (aliens).

4 **COMBATING BENEFIT FRAUD BY IMPOSING TOUGHER PENALTIES AND RESTRICTING OPPORTUNITIES TO EARN INCOME WHILE RECEIVING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT**

If unemployed persons refuse to accept a job which they could be reasonably expected to do, they will lose their benefit entitlement for 6 (previously four) weeks, and for 8 weeks if they repeatedly refuse to accept such a job.

If a person receiving benefit is caught working in an undeclared job, he or she must pay back at least 2 weeks' unemployment benefit and will lose a further 8 weeks' entitlement. If an unemployed person in receipt of benefit earns more than ATS 3,740 in a temporary job, he or she then receives no unemployment benefit for the whole of the month concerned.

Recent measures

5 LIMITATION OF PARENTAL LEAVE BENEFIT

Under the previous arrangements, parental leave benefit was paid until a child reached the age of 2 years, but will now be paid only until the child is 18 months old. Benefit may, however, be granted for 2 years if the other parent (usually the father) also takes parental leave.

6 NEW TRAINING SCHEME FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION SERVICE

A new scheme is being developed for more intensive preparatory instruction for employees of the Employment Promotion Service (Arbeitsmarktservice), which will give them a high level of initial training. The first group completed this training at the beginning of 1995. It is intended that, in the medium term, this new scheme will replace the current training arrangements.

7 SPECIAL INTEGRATION SUBSIDY

A new instrument (Besondere Eingliederungshilfe) enabling funds normally used for emergency assistance to be transformed into wage-cost subsidies has been introduced under § 34a of the Employment Service Act. The aim is to reduce the number of recipients of emergency assistance (who have been registered as unemployed for 6 months or longer) making the transition to long-term unemployment by integrating them into the labour market. This objective is achieved by promoting the employment of such beneficiaries in enterprises (placement assistance). The enterprises receive a wage-cost subsidy amounting to up to the rate of emergency assistance for a maximum duration of 365 days.

A new scheme is being developed for more intensive preparatory instruction for employees of the Employment Service, which will give them a high level of initial training. The first group completed this training at the beginning of 1995. It is intended that, in the medium term, this new scheme will replace the current training arrangements.

Recent measures**D****1 LAW ON REFORMING THE LEGISLATION ON UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE**

This law has the following main elements:

1. Increased eligibility for ABM schemes for recipients of unemployment assistance
The general ABM schemes are now targeted at long-term recipients of unemployment benefits. Thus, the required duration of previous unemployment has been raised from 6 to 12 months. As a result of this change in the legal requirements, recipients of unemployment assistance now have greater access to ABM schemes.

Due to the shift in focus, at least some of those persons drawing unemployment benefits who are participating in productive employment schemes (§§ 242s, 249h Employment Promotion Act) should be recipients of unemployment assistance.

2. Introduction of job-training measures

In these training measures, the suitability of recipients of unemployment assistance for certain work is established, the acquisition of additional qualifications supported and job-application assistance provided. Unemployment assistance is paid for the duration of training. The costs of the measures are borne by the Employment Service. This provision improves the chances of beneficiaries to find work on the regular labour market.

3. Introduction of Worker's Allowance

A so-called worker's allowance is to be granted in particular to young recipients of unemployment assistance. It is intended as an incentive to take up fixed-term and low-paid work. Workers who were previously in receipt of unemployment assistance may be paid DM 25 per day by the employment office to top up their wages for such activities, in particular seasonal work.

FIN**1 UNEMPLOYMENT SECURITY REFORM**

The unemployment security reform came into effect as of the beginning of 1997. The aim of this reform is to encourage more active jobseeking, to make it worthwhile to accept short-term employment and to prevent undeclared work.

2 AMENDMENT TO THE LABOUR MARKET SUPPORT ACT

From the beginning of 1997, under-25s without vocational qualifications who refuse a job, training or industrial training without an acceptable reason, or who fail to apply for vocational training suitable for them, shall not be entitled to labour market support other than that paid during active employment measures. The amendment to the Labour Market Support Act (665/96) aims to reduce youth unemployment due to lack of vocational training.

Recent measures

3 SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL TRAINING OF THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED

The Government has submitted to parliament a bill on supporting individual training of the long-term unemployed. The proposed system would give the long-term unemployed a chance to participate in individual training which promotes occupational abilities while receiving a grant equal to the amount of unemployment allowance or labour market support. A minimum of twelve years of work or entrepreneurial experience is required to qualify for this grant. The main aim of the proposal is to encourage the long-term unemployed without any vocational training to obtain a basic vocational degree. The training grant for the long-term unemployed is a fixed 2-year special scheme. The Act is due to come into force in August 1997.

UK

1 CHILD MAINTENANCE BONUS

From April 1997, a Person With Care who receives child maintenance while in receipt of Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance can build up a bonus at up to GBP 5 a week. The bonus is payable as a tax-free lump sum of up to GBP 1,000 when they leave benefit because they or their partner start work or increase existing part-time earnings or the number of hours worked.

2 JOBSEEKER'S ALLOWANCE

Benefits for the unemployed have been simplified with the introduction in October 1996 of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) to replace Unemployment Benefit and Income Support for the unemployed. People are able to qualify for JSA on the basis of their National Insurance contribution record or on income grounds, where possible rates and benefit rules have been aligned. The aims of the JSA are to improve the operation of the labour market, secure improved administration and better value for money, and improve the service to unemployed people.

3 DISCRETIONARY FUND FOR THE TECs

In November 1995, the government announced the creation of a GBP 55 million challenge fund over the next three years for TECs to use on local projects at their discretion. All 73 TECs in England have participated in the first round of the Discretionary Fund and are now participating in the second round. There are currently around 200 Round 2 projects running. In the first round, projects worth GBP 75 million ran, of which 67% (nearly GBP 50 million) is anticipated private finance. The government announced, in November 1996, a new element of the TEC Discretionary Fund, an additional GBP 9 million over 3 years, for major inward investment projects with a significant training dimension. TECs will bid for funds when they see inward investment activity in their area.

4 PROJECT WORK PILOTS

Project Work has been piloted in Maidstone and Hull since April 1996. It aims to give extra help to those people who have been unemployed and claiming benefit for 2 years or more. Project Work combines an initial 13-week period of voluntary jobsearch and a further mandatory 13 weeks' work experience and jobsearch. Participants are expected to attend 21 hours per week and are paid an allowance equal to their benefit plus GBP 10. During the spring of 1997, the pilots were expanded to cover a further 28 areas nationally. This expansion has included variations to the basic model, which includes the involvement of the private sector and the addition of extra help for participants with basic skills.

Recent measures

5 EMPLOYMENT ZONES

The Government intends to introduce Employment Zones in areas of high unemployment. Within these, new and innovative approaches to tackling unemployment will be encouraged. The broad intention is that people unemployed for a year or more will be able to open a 'personal job account' which pools money equivalent to the individuals' likely benefit entitlement and other costs attributable to them, such as some of the costs of employment, education and training programmes. The provision in Employment Zones will be delivered by partnerships of public, voluntary and private-sector organisations.

6 WORKSKILL PILOTS

The Government has introduced pilots which allow variations to the rules for undertaking education and training while receiving JSA. Under JSA, people are only able to undertake part time education and training, provided they remain available for and are actively seeking work. Four pilots were introduced in April 1997. In two of these, people are able to undertake education and training part time, while restricting their availability to part-time work which they can fit around their course. In the other two, people are able to undertake full-time education and training and are excused from the requirements to be available for and actively seek work. From September this year the government intends to extend the Workskill Pilots to four more areas.

5. IMPROVING MEASURES TO HELP GROUPS WHICH ARE PARTICULARLY AFFECTED BY UNEMPLOYMENT

5.1 Measures for the young

- 5.1.1 Integration into the labour market
- 5.1.2 Vocational training in the education system
- 5.1.3 Transition from school to work
- 5.1.4 Parity of esteem for vocational training
- 5.1.5 Second chance
- 5.1.6 Employment - training - apprenticeship
- 5.1.7 Access to initial training

5.2 Measures for the long-term unemployed

- 5.2.1 Reintegration into the labour market
- 5.2.2 Special training programmes

5.3 Measures for older workers

5.4 Measures to promote equal opportunities

- 5.4.1 Equal pay and equal treatment
- 5.4.2 Equality audits
- 5.4.3 Positive action
- 5.4.4 Measures for unemployed women
- 5.4.5 Child-care services (system, provisions)
- 5.4.6 Individualisation of rights in 1. Tax and 2. Social protection systems

5.5 Measures for disabled persons

- 5.5.1 Measures to promote the training of disabled persons
- 5.5.2 Other measures for disabled persons

5.x Recent measures

Annex to Chapter 5

Integration into the labour market

One of the priorities of employment policy in Europe, the integration of young people into the job market, is usually reflected by various types of sandwich training (practical traineeships, integration contracts, etc.), with employment and training grants. In some countries (NL, DK), there is a form of guarantee of employment (temporary) for young people. Intermediary organisations (integration enterprises) play an important part.

DK

1. ASSISTANCE TO YOUNG PEOPLE
2. LOCAL ACTIVITY GENERATION ACT

A

1. COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AUTHORITIES AND THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
2. VOCATIONAL INFORMATION CENTRES (BERUFSINFORMATIONSZENTREN)
3. VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE COURSES (BERUFSORIENTIERUNGSKURSE)

E

The "Escuelas taller" (school workshops) and "casas de oficios" programme have the objective of providing on-and-off-the-job training leading to a qualification for young unemployed people under 24 years.

1. TRAINING CONTRACT
2. PRACTICAL TRAINING CONTRACT
3. CONTRACT TO PROMOTE OPEN-ENDED EMPLOYMENT
4. CONVERSION OF FIXED-TERM CONTRACTS INTO OPEN-ENDED CONTRACTS

B

1. PRACTICAL TRAINEESHIPS AND LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION
2. PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR RISK GROUPS
3. INTEGRATION CONTRACTS ("stepping-stone" jobs) (Global plan)
4. BRUSSELS REGION - VOCATIONAL TRANSITION PREMIUM
5. WALLOON REGION - MUNICIPAL EMPLOYMENT PLAN
6. INITIAL WORK-EXPERIENCE CONTRACTS
7. INDIVIDUALISED CONTRACT FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION

F

1. CES (Community-Work Contracts)
2. URBAN EMPLOYMENT (EMPLOIS DE VILLE)
3. EMPLOYMENT-INITIATIVE CONTRACT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (CIE-jeunes)
4. TEMPORARY INTEGRATION ENTERPRISES
5. JOB SEEKERS' CLUB
6. FROM GRADUATION TO EMPLOYMENT
7. INFORMATION CENTRES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (espace jeunes)

D

Sociopedagogical care for disadvantaged young people who have successfully completed training.

FIN

1. YOUTH PROGRAMME
2. NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR REDUCING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT
3. INNOVATIVE WORKSHOPS

Integration into the labour market

GR	<p>FIRST JOB ALLOWANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Special programme (ESPA) for young (aged 20-29), first-time entrants to the labour market who have been registered as unemployed for 12 months. Allowance: GDR 25,000 for a maximum period of 5 months. - Special schemes for young graduates aged under 30, who may acquire practical work experience for a maximum period of 6 months. <p>Aim: provision of initial training for young people without a specialisation. Possibility for unemployed young people with previous training to participate in continuing training.</p> <p>Procedure: cooperation between the responsible ministries (Ministry of Labour, of Education and of Health and Social Security).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incentive for employers to recruit young workers aged 20-29 through special subsidies covering a share of their social security contributions (Law No. 2434, § 11). 	NL	<p>Youth Work Guarantee Act (Jeugdwerkgarantiewet, JWG 1991). Within the framework of the JWG, any member of the target group will be offered an additional workplace and/or training. The target group consists of: unemployed young people aged under 21 who have been unemployed for at least 6 months, and of unemployed school-leavers aged under 23 who have been unemployed for at least 6 months after leaving school/training.</p>
I	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. JOB EXPERIENCE 2. MEZZOGIORNO - EMPLOYMENT IN THE REGIONS 	P	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE 2. INITIAL SKILL TRAINING 3. TECHNICAL SPECIALISATION MEASURES 4. UNIVAs - INSTITUTIONS TO PROMOTE INTEGRATION INTO WORKING LIFE 5. CREATION OF JOBS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE 6. INTEGRATION INTO THE LABOUR MARKET 7. BUSINESS START-UP INCENTIVES 8. PROGRAMME TO INTEGRATE YOUNG PEOPLE INTO WORKING LIFE
IRL	<p>Employers recruiting young people under 23 into their first full-time job are exempted from their share of social security contributions (12% for 2 full years).</p>	S	<p>The municipalities have to take responsibility for young people between 18 and 20 years of age. They will, according to the local conditions, arrange for them to participate in vocational training or education. They can also have periods of work experience arranged by the local authority, which are subsidised for this activity from the state.</p> <p>Labour market policy: unemployed persons aged 20 years or over can participate in workplace introduction. The unemployed person is given the opportunity to work in a company or organisation for a period of up to 6 months. Other labour market policy measures are placement services, jobsearch activities, vocational counselling, various kinds of employment training, temporary public work and recruitment subsidies.</p>
L	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PREPARATORY WORK-EXPERIENCE CONTRACT 2. PREPARATORY WORK EXPERIENCE 3. SUBSIDIES AND PREMIUMS TO PROMOTE APPRENTICESHIP 4. THE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE DIVISION (DAT) 	UK	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CHANGES AND IMPROVEMENTS 2. TRAINING AND APPRENTICESHIP MEASURES

Vocational training in the education system

Many countries have integrated vocational courses into their general education curricula. It is important to distinguish between countries with apprenticeship or dual initial training systems (for example A, D, NL, DK - see 5.1.7) with school-based vocational training principally for technicians/engineers etc. and those which have school-based vocational training systems (like France and Italy) where all types of training are carried out in vocational schools.

DK

Compulsory education from 6-16. Secondary education contains core and optional subjects. Vocational education is an option (14-16). Post-compulsory vocational education is provided through vocational gymnasiums which offer 3 to 4-year courses leading to higher-level commercial and technical qualifications, which can provide access to higher education. The universities provide degree courses in vocational subjects. The course content is adjusted to meet the needs of the private business sector in fields of job growth.

A

Compulsory education is of 9 years' duration. Vocational training is highly regarded in Austria - only between 9% and 10% of school-leavers leave the education system after compulsory schooling. Vocational guidance is part of the curriculum for students aged 11 years and over. Vocational training starts at 14 years of age in intermediate and upper-secondary vocational schools and at 15 years of age in an apprenticeship (dual system). More than 3/4 of all 15 year-olds are in the vocational training system. Upper-secondary vocational schools provide students with a post-compulsory general and vocational education to a standard allowing them to pursue an intermediate-level occupation or proceed to university or a specialised institute of higher education. From the academic year 1997/98 onwards, apprentices and students in specialised institutes will be entitled to enter higher education on the basis of a vocational leaving certificate (Berufsreifeprüfung). In the post-secondary sector, vocational training is provided by institutes of higher education, colleges and academies.

E

Basic vocational education is part of secondary-level schooling between the ages of 12 and 16 and part of the "bachillerato" (16-18). Vocational education is also offered as part of post-compulsory "middle-level" (from 16-18) and "higher-level" (over 18) education. It is provided on a modular basis with duration varying with the occupation concerned. From a certain age, persons who have not completed the previous stage of education or do not possess the relevant qualification may gain access to individual training courses by sitting an entry examination.

B

Compulsory education between 6 and 18 years. Compulsory part-time attendance up to 18 either in school or within the context of training. There are general, technical and artistic streams which can lead to higher education, and a vocational stream which is aimed directly at employment. The status of vocational education is being progressively raised through closer links between technical and general education. Part-time education and/or training can be combined with employment. The universities focus on academic education and scientific research. Higher education outside universities offers vocational courses of between 2 and 4 years' duration. Following higher education, post-graduate courses are also available.

F

School education is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16. School-goers choose between either general or vocational education at the age of 11-13. At 15, there is another choice between: a 1-year alternance-based preparatory vocational training course; transfer to a vocational school and a 3-year course leading to a specialised qualification; or study at a general or technical college with a view to entering higher education. The final year of university degrees can include training for a profession. University institutes of technology and technical colleges specialise in scientific and technological studies.

D

Compulsory education from 6-15. Compulsory part-time education up to 18. The education system is streamed according to ability and provides both general and technical education options. Vocational studies at school also provide access to higher education. Higher technical colleges provide 3 to 4-year courses geared towards practical application, particularly in engineering and commerce. Universities offer a range of degree courses in vocational subjects. Technical universities specialise in technology and science-based degrees.

FIN

Compulsory education is from 7-16. Vocational education is an option and seeks to provide a basis for vocational competence and continuing further studies. University level institutions have continuing education centres which include vocational courses. Polytechnics provide higher vocational education.

Increased opportunities for vocational training are offered as an alternative to unemployment. Labour market support is not given to under-25s without a vocational education and who refuse an offer of training (or subsidised jobs).

Vocational training in the education system

- GR** School education is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16. Up to 16, education has a mainly academic orientation, and students can then choose between a technical-vocational or general education. Vocational education is provided to school-leaving level at comprehensive schools, vocational grammar schools and vocational schools. General vocational education is provided in the first year and specific training for one occupation in the second and third years. Alternatively, students may receive a technical vocational qualification at technical institutes. The Technical University in Athens provides 5-year courses in technical and science subjects.
- NL** Compulsory schooling: 5-16. Two mainstreams: general and pre-university; pre-vocational and vocational. There are 2 to 4-year secondary vocational training courses for the 16+ based either on apprenticeship or a school curriculum including work placement. The systems of (upper) secondary vocational education, apprenticeship, informal education for young people and adult education are in reform since the Act on Education and Vocational Training (WEB) came into force on 1.1.1996. In addition to the revision of courses and training schemes, a major reorganisation of schools will result in 46 Regional Education and Training Centres (ROCs) by 1.1.1998.
1. NEW QUALIFICATION STRUCTUR FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING
- I** Compulsory education 6-14 years. There are plans to raise the school-leaving age to 16 and to introduce a new curriculum. The upper-secondary phase (14-18) provides general and technical streams. Technical training courses last 5 years; the first 3 years lead to a general qualification, the second 2 years to a vocational qualification at a higher level. The vocational schools provide general vocational qualifications to facilitate the integration of young people into the labour market, a final qualification through a regionally based training course, or access to university. Universities provide degree-I-level courses in vocational subjects. So-called free universities offer the same degrees as state universities but are privately funded and have no legal status.
- P** Compulsory education between the ages of 6 and 15. In compulsory education, schools can set up alternative curricula for young people who have difficulties integrating socially or academically. Such curricula include vocational, technical or artistic training. Vocational training is offered to young people between the seventh and ninth school grades, enabling them to complete primary schooling and at the same time to acquire a vocational qualification. After the compulsory stage, there are three streams of vocational training:
- apprenticeship training for school-goers in the tenth to twelfth grades at secondary level;
 - vocational schools for 15-18 year-olds, which were founded in 1989 with a view to expanding vocational training provisions;
 - technical courses at secondary level within the framework of the ordinary school curriculum.
- IRL** Compulsory education from 6-15 years (although most start at 4).
1. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING
- S** Compulsory education covers the age group 6/7-16. Of the 16 nationally determined 3-year programmes in the upper-secondary school, 14 are vocationally oriented. Upper-secondary education also includes an apprenticeship training programme combining vocational training in a company with education in general subjects.
- L** 7th to 9th classes offer vocational guidance for students according to their aptitudes and interests. 12-15 year olds who have difficulty in following the theoretical courses follow a preparatory course of technical secondary education. The technical secondary education leads to a technical and vocational aptitude certificate, to the degree of technician and technical "baccalaureat". The technical post-secondary level provides education on alternance or full-time basis. Higher technical education provides technical engineering degrees. Responsibility for paramedical training has been transferred from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Education and Training.
- UK** Compulsory education from 5-16. The Technical and Vocational Education Initiative aimed to increase the number of 14 to 19 year-olds studying work-related subjects. General vocational qualifications (GNVQs) are being developed for entry into employment or progression to higher education. Much of further education is vocationally oriented and available on a part-time or full-time basis. Universities provide degree courses in vocational subjects which in some cases are alternance-based.

Transition from school to work

In accordance with what has been said in 5.1.2., it should be noted that transition from school to work is more difficult in countries without apprenticeship systems. All countries have strengthened links between education and the world of work through closer contacts between schools and enterprises.

DK

95% of each age cohort participates in post-compulsory education, i.e. a course of education building on the 9-10 years' basic schooling. The vocational education option also includes vocational guidance incorporating visits to and work experience in firms and organisations.

A

Vocational information centres, vocational information fairs, education counsellors and vocational counsellors all provide information on employment opportunities. Periods of in-company training are part of the training offered at many intermediate and upper-secondary vocational schools and at Fachhochschulen (specialised higher education). The greater part of the training provided in the apprenticeship sector is in-company training.

E

The school curriculum includes periods spent on training in work centres or in enterprises, which account for 25% of school hours. To promote integration and recruitment, training contracts have been agreed. They combine work experience and training in the theory of the occupation chosen, leading to a vocational qualification. At the regional level, the social partners and the educational authorities are involved in planning the provision of training to assist the transition from school to work.

B

Methods are being developed to draw up school curricula taking account of occupational profiles. Work placements also form part of schooling.

F

Each young person leaving the education system, whatever their level of education, must be offered vocational training leading to a general qualification either in the form of vocational education or through one of the measures to integrate young people into working life. Enterprises and vocational organisations are involved in developing training content. Over the last two years, the government has encouraged young people to opt for alternance (on-and-off-the-job) training or apprenticeship contracts.

D

In contrast to other European countries, youth unemployment in Germany is not higher than adult unemployment. The reason is the high rate of participation of young people in the dual training system, which enables a relatively easy transition to working life.

Closer cooperation between schools and employers and employers' associations is being developed to enable young people to make informed choices about vocational options.

FIN

The link between school and working life is fostered through special projects, project learning and technology transfer based on evaluations. Vocational curricula include practical training. Access to apprenticeship has been expanded. It is used as a further education route after initial vocational training to support transition into working life. Placement and counselling services are being strengthened by the labour market and education authorities.

Transition from school to work

GR		NL	<p>Work placements are available for young people who have been unemployed for 6 months (Youth Work Guarantee Act). Vocational information centres also help school-leavers to integrate into working life through counselling and guidance. Regarding the underqualified target group, the government uses a mix of preventive measures to reduce the numbers leaving the educational system without qualifications and additional schooling facilities linked to job placement are provided for this category (see also 5.1.5).</p>
I	<p>The basic function of vocational training is to facilitate the transition from school to working life by providing a better link between basic knowledge acquired in school and the skills required by production systems. The current priority in the training endeavours of the regions and the Ministry of Labour is to provide training leading to vocational integration for young people. This commitment is being funded to a large extent by the ESF under Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 5b. The following possibilities are open: initial training for young people who have completed compulsory schooling; on average they receive at least 2 years' training leading to a qualification; the Second Training Level for young people who have already completed initial training or upper-level schooling: the courses vary in duration (though last less than a year) and are intended to provide a vocational qualification building on existing knowledge and corresponding to the innovation needs of enterprises and markets; the Third Training Level for academics, offering modules of a higher standard. Both the Ministry and the regions have a special interest in providing vocational training for disadvantaged young people.</p>	P	<p>Training has been introduced as part of all vocational courses aiming to provide a work-like context. This has been almost completed in technical and vocational schools. Vocational introduction measures provide training for a year which also includes practical experience for young people aged 15-21 who did not complete their education or who have not obtained a vocational qualification. In addition, courses with a technical specialisation are also available, which correspond to vocational training leading to further qualifications outside third-level education (Decree No. 1227/95 of 10.10.1995).</p>
IRL	<p>Vocational schools are run by vocational education committees on which business, industry and the wider community are represented. At the end of the Junior Cycle in second-level education, students have the option of following a Transition Year programme which is an inter-disciplinary and student-centred option for students prior to entering the Senior Cycle. Programmes at Senior Cycle are characterised by continuity with and progression from Junior Cycle, with an appropriate balance between personal and social development, vocational studies and preparation for work. Work experience is provided for 16-18 year-olds studying for the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. The Youthreach programme specifically targets young people in the 15-17 age group who find it most difficult to make the transition from school to work, i.e. early school-leavers with little or no formal educational qualifications. Youthreach provides up to 2 years of coordinated foundation training, education and work experience.</p>	S	<p>A reform of the upper-secondary schools took place five years ago (1992). All study programmes at upper-secondary schools were extended to 3 years. At least 15 weeks of workplace training was introduced for the vocational study programmes. In order to upgrade the qualifications of those who have completed a 2-year programme, an option to study for a third year was given. The municipalities have responsibility for young people aged between 18 and 20 years. They will, according to the local conditions, arrange for the young people to participate in vocational training or education and work-experience programmes.</p>
L	<p>Various projects aim to raise pupils' awareness of the world of work and help them to reach informed choices about vocational education. To help integrate young people over the age of 16 into working life, vocational guidance and introduction programmes have been re-launched to provide a better basis for work and training.</p>	UK	<p>Over 90% of secondary schools and just under 60% of primary schools have links with business. The UK government intends to maintain these links through a range of activities for pupils, including mentoring and work experience (every young person will have the opportunity to undertake 2 weeks' work experience in their final year of compulsory education). Placements in business will offer teachers the opportunity to incorporate the world of work into the curriculum and offer more up-to-date careers guidance. A national network of Education Business Partnerships (EBPs) has been established across England, Wales and Northern Ireland to raise awareness of activities, promote good practice and provide a forum for debate and communication.</p>

Parity of esteem for vocational training

Concerned over the greater value attached to general compared to vocational education, member states have sought to raise the value and reputation of vocational education in a number of ways: by making the passage between general and vocational education easier, through publicity campaigns and through the introduction of qualifications which recognise training "on-the-job".

DK

A

Publicity campaigns and information fairs are frequent and publications on vocational training are widely distributed. The following measures are used to sustain and strengthen the attractiveness of vocational training:

- promotion of access to higher education for persons without the conventionally required upper-secondary education certificate;
- upgrading apprenticeship and vocational education at intermediate school by associating these with entitlements to proceed to more advanced training routes (e.g. courses preparing students for entering a Fachhochschule (specialised higher education); possibility of planning careers beyond the initial vocational training phase to take account of continuing training and other qualification opportunities).

E

Vocational training certificates from initial training have the same status as other certificates from general training. Persons who complete intermediate vocational training are awarded the „bachillerato“ for their area, which is also recognised in other areas. Persons who complete advanced vocational training have direct access to university. It is possible to have vocational qualifications recognised within the framework of the school education system.

B

F

The education system has revised and diversified its qualifications, in particular with the creation of the vocational school-leaving certificate. The universities have also sought to provide training related more closely to economic needs. The developments in apprenticeships are also leading to a reappraisal of vocational education. Work preparation classes at vocational colleges are open to young people from the age of 14.

Apprenticeships are being developed through greater involvement of enterprises to re-inforce their role as trainers and the development of apprenticeships in the public sector. All technical qualifications can be studied in the context of apprenticeships.

D

Parity of esteem is promoted through:

- facilitating access to higher education for persons holding a vocational qualification;
- intensifying training for promotion;
- expanding the range of continuing training qualifications;
- tax-funded training for promotion;
- creating transparency via counselling on training tracks in the vocational sector;
- promoting personnel development schemes (career paths), e.g. on the basis of pilot projects;
- expanding the range of additional qualifications obtainable during a traineeship;
- special promotion measures for the particularly talented;
- exchange schemes.

FIN

Attention is given to the time of transition from completing vocational training to finding employment. Later these follow-up studies might give indications for resource allocations.

Parity of esteem for vocational training

GR		NL	<p>Graduates of vocational training have a very high success rate on the labour market. Some academic diplomas have considerably less effect. Flexibility to change jobs during a lifetime is stimulated by the inclusion of key qualifications in training curricula. A point of concern is the validation of vocational diplomas in view of possibilities for recurrent education. In line with the Council Resolution on quality, attractiveness and innovation capacity of vocational training (1994), current policy pays attention to the link between vocational training and tertiary education. Higher Professional Education (HBO) currently has an influx of 30% from Secondary Vocational Education (MBO).</p>
I	<p>Qualifications acquired in regional vocational training courses do not enjoy the same value and esteem as school education. One problem is the variation between classifications and course durations in the regions. Each region has its own system which interacts badly with all the others. In accordance with the "Agreement on Employment", a national system to identify equivalent education standards and to establish a system incorporating "training credits" is now under development. Recognised transfers from one training system to another are thus to be made possible. Only the completion of this process will be able to guarantee parity of esteem for vocational training and school education.</p>	P	<p>There is a system of equivalence for vocational training and traditional schooling up to university level. The different training and education routes are interchangeable (school or vocational routes). Vocational training qualifications are being given a higher status in society. Considerable investments are being made in equipment for schools which offer vocational training.</p>
IRL	<p>The establishment of TEASTAS referred to under 1.1.3 will, through its responsibility for the implementation, regulation and supervision of the certification of all non-university third-level education programmes as well as all further continuation education and training programmes, ensure a greater strategic coherence in the approach to the recognition of vocational training and its parity of esteem with the mainstream education sector.</p>	S	
L	<p>The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training promotes the equal status of academic education and vocational training. The Law of 4.9.1990 provides for the establishment of a technical training course and a technical apprenticeship which are equal in status to classical educational courses and which lead either directly to the labour market or to advanced specialised training.</p>	UK	<p>The UK's framework of qualifications - academic qualifications gained in schools and colleges (e.g. GCE "A" levels), broad vocational qualifications (e.g. GNVQs) and work-based training leading to NVQs or equivalents - allows young people to choose a pathway suited to their abilities and aspirations. These three main pathways offer clear progression routes into and between all qualifications. All can provide effective routes into further training, education and employment. The government plans to consult this year on measures to broaden A-levels, upgrade vocational qualifications, encourage young people to gain key skills for employment and introduce an overarching certificate to include academic and vocational awards at advanced level. These will be part of a single clear national framework of qualifications. A new national record of achievement is also being introduced.</p>

Second chance

For young people without academic or vocational qualifications, some countries have specific programmes to bring them back into the training systems, often linking school, training and work.

DK New courses have been developed to cater especially for young drop-outs and young people who are not inclined towards school-type training and education, and who for that reason might prefer a more practical line of vocational training. The objective is to provide vocational, social and personal qualifications which will enable them to gain a foothold in the labour market or access to further training or education. See also 1.2.1.

A A number of schemes are provided, involving preparation for work, retraining, acquisition of new skills and meeting special needs. There is also the possibility of obtaining school qualifications via the "second-chance" learning opportunities open to persons already in employment. The final apprenticeship examination can also be taken after appropriate training in the "second-chance" track.

E Young people who have left school without a qualification have the possibility of attaining a minimum vocational qualification through the „Garantia Social“ schemes, which have a duration of between 1 and 2 years and may take the form of supplementary training, practical activities or introduction to an occupation. Young people without a qualification receive vocational training aimed at enabling labour market entry in school-workshops and youth training centres. General training programmes for adults provide a possibility to repeat compulsory schooling or acquire an initial qualification.

B All three communities have second-chance schemes which allow adults to return to school studies.
National level: industrial apprenticeship - the objective is to permit young people aged between 16 and 18 years (except in the case of exceptions allowing the inclusion of over-18s) to learn the profession of an employed worker. This is done through dual training: practical vocational training in the enterprise and at the same time theoretical training in a school or a training centre.
The joint declaration on revitalising the economy and promoting employment in the Walloon Region lays down that a vocational training and integration plan is to be developed with the aim of offering trainees employment in an enterprise alongside vocational training. The trainees will be guaranteed employment at least for the duration of the prescribed practical training term. The Flemish Agreement on Employment stipulates that the different training schemes for young people will be coordinated with a view to forming a coherent package of theoretical and practical elements.

F There is a commitment to provide support measures or training for young people aged under 25 who have been unemployed for 6 months, in order to facilitate their entry into working life. Young people without a qualification who do not take up employment immediately may avail of a personal "training account" to gain access to preparatory vocational training. Vocational guidance is also provided.

D In the German system, a "basic vocational qualification" is generally understood to involve a vocational traineeship leading to a recognised qualification. Schemes exist to prepare specific target groups for undertaking a vocational traineeship, for example, providing guidance counselling and motivation schemes, and schemes allowing people no longer at school to obtain school-leaving qualifications. For disadvantaged young people (those without the lower-secondary education certificate are deemed to belong to this category), special support measures are available during the vocational traineeship to help them obtain a "basic vocational qualification". Other possibilities whereby young people can obtain a basic vocational qualification are:

- retraining,
- external examination,
- schemes to integrate work and training.

FIN Labour market training and tighter labour market support measures try to catch young drop-outs and those without vocational training.

Second chance

GR		NL	<p>Dutch policy aims at an initial qualification for all so that they can participate in society and specifically on the labour market (at SEDOC level II). Early school-leavers are monitored and motivated through special measures to attain at least a minimum qualification in order to reduce the number of people without a formal diploma. This is done through a combination of prevention, reintegration in initial training and extra schemes for persistent drop-outs. Each pupil who leaves the education system without a craft-level qualification must be reported by the school to the local government so action can be undertaken to lead the youngster back to school or apprenticeship. Schools receive additional facilities to give additional support to 'pupils at risk' to (re-)enter vocational education and to graduate successfully.</p>
I	<p>There are currently no provisions in school education for so-called second chance as defined in the Cresson white paper. The activities of the regions and the Ministry of Labour to accommodate drop-outs from the education system are not characterised by efforts to allow them to return to school, rather the aim is to enable them to acquire basic skills and technical abilities with a view to labour market integration.</p>	P	<p>In compulsory education, schools can set up alternative curricula for young people finding it difficult to integrate socially or academically. Such curricula include vocational, technical or artistic training. A second-chance school system has been developed for young people over 15 years and working students at all stages of initial and secondary education in the form of modules/units which are available from the third stage of initial education.</p>
IRL	<p>YOUTHREACH: Aimed at providing early school-leavers (15/17 years) with another opportunity of coordinated training/education. VOCATIONAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES SCHEME: Enables adults (21+ years) who are long-term unemployed to pursue a range of education and vocational training options. THIRD-LEVEL ALLOWANCE SCHEME: Allows adults (23 + years) who are in receipt of unemployment payment for at least 6 months to pursue a third-level course whilst retaining their unemployment payments.</p>	S	<p>Every young person is entitled to an education at upper-secondary level up to 20 years of age. Any person in this age group not having accomplished a programme at upper-secondary level has the right to be admitted to a programme and to follow an adult education course organised by the municipality. All Swedish municipalities provide adult education covering compulsory and upper-secondary level. To a large extent these programmes include training in companies. Training for young people from 20-24 seeks to give them training and practical experience. Employers provide an introduction, guidance and relevant practice for a 6-month period.</p>
L		UK	<p>All 16 and 17 year-olds who are not in education or employment are guaranteed the offer of a suitable Youth Training (YT) place. This guarantee is extended to those aged 18-24 (provided they can complete training by their 25th birthday) who have been prevented from completing or taking up a YT because of disability, ill health, pregnancy, custodial sentence, remand in custody, language difficulties or as a result of a care order. In England and Wales, the Further Education Funding Councils have an obligation to provide sufficient and suitable full-time education for 16-18 year-olds.</p>

Employment - training - apprenticeship

Mainly as a result of the better integration of apprenticeship training in countries such as Germany and Austria, the extension of apprenticeship training systems is being promoted in many countries. Ireland and UK have introduced new assistance programmes, and France has made apprenticeship training a main feature of its integration and training policy.

DK See 5.1.1

- A**
1. PROMOTION OF VOCATIONAL AND CONTINUING TRAINING
 2. PROMOTION OF APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING
 3. PROMOTION OF SUPPLEMENTARY IN-COMPANY TRAINING

- E**
1. Apprenticeship contracts (see 5.1.1).
 2. Practical Training contracts (see 5.1.1).

- B**
1. NATIONAL - DUAL TRAINING
 2. NATIONAL - INDUSTRIAL APPRENTICESHIPS

- F**
1. TRAINING CONTRACTS
 2. SKILL TRAINING CONTRACTS
 3. FAMILIARISATION CONTRACTS
 4. VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION CONTRACTS
 5. ALTERNANCE-BASED TRAINING COURSES
 6. QUALIFYING MEASURES AT REGIONAL LEVEL

- D**
- NATIONAL**
1. Part-time instruction for workers up to the age of 25.
 2. Vocational training for unemployed persons aged under 25.
 3. Employment preparation training measures.
 4. ABM programme (objective: intensive promotion of vocational training for young people).
 5. Integration of disabled persons (support is provided under §§ 97 ff. of the Employment Promotion Reform Act within the framework of Employment Service measures; beneficiaries must fulfil certain requirements).
- REGIONAL**
6. Training programme for the East (objective: to provide a training opportunity for every young person in the new Länder):
 - regional programmes,
 - federal and regional programmes: support for 15,000 training places in 1997 at a cost of approx. DM 200 million.

FIN Apprenticeships have been on a steady increase in recent years, being particularly common in commerce and administration. This year's target is 19,500 apprenticeship contracts. In 1996, there were 18,600 apprenticeship trainees. This method of training is used to provide basic vocational training for young people without qualifications and to facilitate transition to working life (through supplementary apprenticeship training). Apprenticeship contracts in new sectors and at higher levels of education are a major objective to be achieved in the near future.

Information and awareness-raising campaigns aimed at businesses are organised to boost the efficiency of apprenticeship training. In January 1997, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education organised an information campaign entitled 'Apprenticeship is the Bridge to the Future', which employers found useful. The campaign created interest among many employers offering apprenticeships.

Employment - training - apprenticeship

<p>GR</p> <p>The following measures are available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - initial training (and apprenticeship contracts); - financial support for continuing training; - inter-company vocational schools; - trainee allowance financed by employers' contributions; - ELPEKE (Special Fund for Vocational Further Training Programmes): where for certain vocations training has been acquired through experience, short vocational theory courses are offered. 	<p>NL</p> <p>The Act on Education and Vocational Training (WEB 1996) regulates the apprenticeship system. The system combines both training within the enterprise and instruction in a training institution. Training under the system is based on a contract of apprenticeship, which is concluded (under the auspices of the national training body) between the employer and the apprentice (or his legal representative). The length of the contract and hence the duration of the training may vary between 1 and 4 years (or even longer) and differs by sector. Collectively bargained agreements between the social partners sometimes contain provisions stipulating the number of apprenticeship contracts which must be concluded in a given period.</p>
<p>I</p> <p>Training-cum-work contracts and apprenticeships offer opportunities for employment where the workers alternate between work and training (and vice versa). Apprenticeship contracts have a maximum duration of 5 years and are regulated by the national collective agreements for specific occupational groups.</p> <p>Since 1984, young people can also avail of training-cum-work contracts, which have a maximum duration of 2 years. The contracts oblige the employer to allow the young worker time off for training (minimum hours for off-the-job training are laid down for each occupational group). Consideration is currently being given to a possible improvement of the training component of the contracts by introducing a structure for alternance between training modules (basic and refresher modules) and work. The "Agreement on Employment" emphasises the importance of the alternance system and incorporates it in a broad uniform strategy for revitalising and supporting employment.</p> <p>1. TRAINING-CUM-WORK CONTRACTS/APPRENTICESHIPS</p>	<p>P</p> <p>NEW DUAL TRAINING SYSTEM</p> <p>TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Target group: young people and managers. <p>DEVELOPMENT OF A PROGRAMME TO INTEGRATE YOUNG PEOPLE INTO WORKING LIFE</p>
<p>IRL</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. YOUTHREACH 2. COMMUNITY YOUTH TRAINING PROGRAMME 3. OPTIONS INITIATIVES FOR SCHOOL-LEAVERS 4. APPRENTICESHIP CONTRACTS (Standards-Based Apprenticeship) 5. YOUTH PROGRESSION PROGRAMME 	<p>S</p>
<p>L</p> <p>Various forms of counselling, guidance, assistance and labour force integration for young people: introductory traineeships, temporary auxiliary work, in-company preparatory traineeships.</p>	<p>UK</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MODERN APPRENTICESHIP 2. TRAINING FOR WORK

Access to initial training

All countries provide access to either school-based or work-based initial vocational training, according to the education and training system. Three broad approaches can be distinguished: the dual-system apprenticeship, school-based systems, "on-the-job" systems. The trend is clearly towards the introduction of forms of on-and-off-the-job training.

DK The "Education and Training for All" initiative aims to guarantee all young people a course of education on completion of basic schooling. Initial vocational training courses last 2-5 years and are alternance based. The college-based element includes teaching general and basic subjects. Vocational training by technical and commercial colleges can be delivered on the basis of a training contract between a trainee and an employer.

A There are two types of initial training for young people: full-time vocational school (approx. 38% of 15-16 year-olds) or an apprenticeship (approx. 42% of 15-16 year-olds). Approx. 18% continue general education in a third-level institute. The requirements for beginning an apprenticeship are completion of the compulsory 9 years of education and an apprenticeship contract. Austria currently has approximately 230 apprenticeship occupations in the trade, industry and commerce sectors and 14 in the agriculture and forestry sectors. Generally, four-fifths of the training provided on an apprenticeship basis takes place within a company and one-fifth at a vocational school. The average duration for apprenticeships is 3 (maximum 4) years. The apprenticeship ends with a final examination.

E Young people of compulsory school age receive initial vocational training within the framework of the school curriculum for their respective age group. They have access to vocational training of different levels and types. 726,000 young people were trained in vocational training courses administered by the education system during the academic year 1996/97. The so-called "Garantia Social" schemes were established in order that young people do not leave the education system without a qualification. Young people aged under 25 with insufficient qualifications may participate in vocational training offered within the school education system.

B Apprenticeships for young people between 15 and 18 years can last between 6 months and 2 years and are provided by firms who must obtain approval for the content of the training. Longer apprenticeships of up to 4 years can be arranged and must provide a combination of general education and vocational training. Training-employment contracts are open to young people aged between 18 and 25. These contracts have a duration of between 1 and 3 years and are the regulatory basis for dual training. Young people leaving school with insufficient qualifications may avail of so-called "measures for social advancement". These are designed to provide trainees with training suited to their individual abilities and with appropriate skills for working life.

F Young people have the right to vocational training after leaving school. Preparatory vocational training has a duration of between 1 and 3 years and is open to all 16-24 year-olds. There is a wide range of employment and training contracts offering dual vocational training of between 2 and 8 months to young people aged between 16 and 25. Some of these provisions specifically target young people without any qualification. In addition, there are longer-term training contracts of between 6 months' and 2 years' duration. Young people can undergo between 1 and 3 years' training in state training centres. The personal "training account" allows trainees to combine different course components to acquire a recognised qualification.

D All young people from 16 onwards not in general secondary education must enrol in vocational school. Different vocational schools provide different types of vocational education depending upon the qualifications level from school. The alternance-based dual apprenticeship system lasts for 3 years (although this can be shortened following studies at the vocational schools). One or two days a week are spent at vocational training colleges providing a combination of vocational and general education. Young people who leave the education system with a poor qualification can benefit from a range of supportive counselling measures. For those who do meet the demands of recognised occupations requiring formal qualifications, alternative training offers are made to suit their abilities.

FIN Around 90% of people continue their studies after compulsory education, 35% going into secondary-level vocational education and 55% into upper-secondary education. Initial vocational training is provided for 75% of the age cohort. Higher vocational education (post-secondary min. 3 years) is provided for 25% and university education for 20% of the age cohort. Access to apprenticeship has been expanded such that it is open to all young people, including school-leavers, as an initial vocational education.

Access to initial training

- GR** 3-year training courses are available after compulsory education. The first year is spent in an apprenticeship training centre, the second and third years are alternance based. In addition, intensive training courses lasting between 6 and 9 months are provided for young people (aged 18-26) who have no qualification or who are low skilled.
- NL** A monitoring network has been set up to provide advice and support to young people aged up to 23 who have not obtained at least a craft-level qualification. Additional basic education, literacy and numeracy and vocational preparation courses are available to young people with few qualifications. To promote the apprenticeship training, a reduction in labour costs will be granted to employers for each apprentice in their company.
- P** Young people who are no longer of compulsory school age receive comprehensive training leading to a vocational qualification, educational progress and a school-leaving certificate. Initial vocational training is provided in the vocational schools and technical centres run by the Ministry of Education. Measures in this area are also provided within the framework of apprenticeship training. In 1991, the government and the social partners signed an agreement guaranteeing young people initial training of one year's duration. This agreement is oriented in particular towards young people who have left school with insufficient education or without a school-leaving certificate.
- IRL** Apprenticeship usually lasts 4 years with 7 phases; 3 off-the-job and 4 on-the-job. The off-the-job phases total 40 weeks. The social guarantee for young people has developed training programmes for: low-qualified school-leavers and those whose skills are inadequate for the labour market; young people completing the leaving certificate as a preparatory course for employment. The Vocational Preparation and Training Programme within the education sector is an initial education and training programme which aims to equip young people with the vocational and technical skills necessary for employment and if necessary for progression to further education and training.
- S** Initial training is mainly provided within the framework of the upper-secondary school and all of the applicants are accepted. Every young person is entitled to education at upper-secondary level up to 20 years of age. However, many of the pupils have to attend programmes which are their second or third choice. The geographic structure of Sweden, which embraces many remote areas, is a matter of concern in this respect. The system of financial aid to pupils at upper-secondary schools aims to level out various imbalances of a geographical or social nature.
- L** Apprenticeships last from 2-4 years and are based on a contract between trainee and employer. Unemployed young people leaving school without qualification participate in vocational orientation and initiation courses which provide vocational education in accordance with the individuals' needs and may include some in-firm training. Jobsearch support and advice are also provided.
- UK** All 16-17 year-old young people are guaranteed a youth training place leading to a national vocational qualification or other appropriate goals for those with special learning difficulties. Youth credits have been introduced for 16-17 year-olds. They have a financial value and trigger payment for training leading to a recognised qualification. Modern apprenticeships for 16-24 year-olds (with a particular focus on 16-17 year-olds) provide employer-based training leading to high-level nationally recognised qualifications.

Reintegration into the labour market

Reintegration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market is usually achieved by priority placement activities or employment subsidies. Some countries (e.g. B and F) have set up intermediary structures (integration enterprises, specialised placement agencies, etc.).

DK 1. ASSISTANCE TO THE UNEMPLOYED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE UNEMPLOYMENT SYSTEM

A

1. COMMUNITY-BENEFIT INTEGRATION SUBSIDY (Gemeinnützige Eingliederungsbeihilfe)
2. ENTERPRISE INTEGRATION SUBSIDY (Betriebliche Eingliederungsbeihilfe)
3. SPECIAL ENTERPRISE INTEGRATION SUBSIDY (Besondere Betriebliche Eingliederungsbeihilfe)

E 1. PROMOTION OF OPEN-ENDED EMPLOYMENT FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

B

1. PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR RISK GROUPS
2. MONITORING OF THE UNEMPLOYED
3. "THIRD EMPLOYMENT CIRCUIT" (TCT)
4. INTEGRATION ENTERPRISES
5. RECRUITMENT BENEFIT PLAN (Law MB 23.12.1994 - Plan avantage à l'embauche)
6. JOBCLUBS
7. RECRUITMENT PREMIUM (BRUSSELS REGION)
8. "WEER-WERK" (BACK-TO-WORK) SCHEME (FLEMISH COMMUNITY)
9. REINTEGRATION OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED WORKERS

F

1. CES (Employment and Solidarity Contracts)
2. FUNDED-EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS (CEC - Contrat Emploi Consolidé)
3. INTEGRATION ENTERPRISES (Enterprises d'Insertion)
4. TEMPORARY INTEGRATION ENTERPRISES (Entreprise d'Interim d'Insertion)
5. INTERMEDIARY ASSOCIATIONS (Associations Intermédiaires)
6. SIFE: INTEGRATION AND TRAINING-FOR-EMPLOYMENT COURSES (Stage d'Insertion et de Formation à l'Emploi)
7. FURTHER GUIDANCE MODULE (MOA - Module d'Orientation approfondie)
8. MOBILITY AID (Aide à la Mobilité)
9. EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE CONTRACT (Contrat Initiative Emploi)

D

1. WAGE SUBSIDIES FOR THE PROMOTION OF PERMANENT RECRUITMENT OF THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED (SPECIAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME)
2. PROMOTION OF PROJECTS FOR EMPLOYMENT, QUALIFICATION AND SOCIAL CARE
3. INTEGRATION SUBSIDY FOR THE DIFFICULT TO PLACE
4. WAGE-COST SUBSIDY FOR NEW SMALL BUSINESSES
5. SUBSIDISED INTEGRATION CONTRACT

FIN Labour market support measures (with ESF assistance) are targeting the long-term unemployed as a priority group and individually tailored "pathways" to employment have been designed which incorporate a combination of different measures including training and work spells.

Act No 1158/94:

- Objective: to improve the employment prospects of the long-term unemployed by encouraging employers to offer them fixed-term contracts.
- Procedures: temporary derogations from the provisions of the law on employment contracts.

Reintegration into the labour market

<p>GR Creation of private-law bodies which organise vocational training for workers employed in the construction, protection and maintenance of public building projects (Law No. 2434, § 8).</p> <p>Incentives for employers to recruit unemployed workers.</p> <p>Incentives for the reintegration of the unemployed through self-employment. Obligatory recruitment of 1/3 of the participants in the schemes who were trained by employers in receipt of subsidies (Law No. 2434, § 5).</p> <p>Employers receive a 1-year subsidy within the framework of an employment scheme for the recruitment of registered long-term unemployed persons aged 55 or older (Law No. 2434, § 10).</p>	<p>NL</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WORK POOLS (Banenpools) 2. FRAMEWORK REGULATION ON INTEGRATION INTO WORKING LIFE (KRA) 3. REGULATION CONCERNING ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT FOR THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED 4. REGULATION ON SUBSIDIES FOR EXPERIMENTS ON ACTIVATION OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS 5. WORK WHILE RETAINING SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BENEFIT
<p>I Special further training programmes</p> <p>The most recent industrial changes have exacerbated the problem of exclusion of adult workers, in particular, but also of young people with a low level of education or training. Further training is considered to play an important role in the efforts to reemploy these unemployed workers, often in conjunction with social welfare measures such as registration in the Wage Compensation Fund or on mobility lists. Numerous further training courses for the unemployed have been carried out on the basis of EU and regional funding. The further training courses usually seek to refresh basic qualifications, to give new motivation, to assess skills and to provide orientation. They usually have the following aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reintegration into dependent employment following inquiries in local enterprises and identification of the qualification the unemployed person is to acquire in further training; - entry into self-employment in accordance with the service needs or new production activities identified in the region. 	<p>P</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EMPLOYMENT INCENTIVES TO PRESERVE CULTURAL HERITAGE 2. SELF-PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE 3. PLACEMENT INCENTIVES 4. SELF-EMPLOYMENT INCENTIVE FOR THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED 5. LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME 6. ADULT EDUCATION (PRODEP)
<p>IRL</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BACK TO WORK ALLOWANCE 2. RECRUITMENT ASSISTANCE 3. COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME 4. PILOT WHOLE-TIME JOBS OPTION 5. JOBSTART 6. WORKPLACE PROGRAMME 	<p>S</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RECRUITMENT AID 2. PROGRAMME FOR THE ACQUISITION OF VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCE
<p>L See 3.2.2: Recruitment Aid.</p>	<p>UK</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TRAINING FOR WORK (main training programme for unemployed adults) 2. JOBCLUBS 3. JOB INTERVIEW GUARANTEES 4. RESTART INTERVIEWS 5. JOBPLAN WORKSHOPS 6. RESTART COURSES 7. WORK TRIALS 8. WORKWISE 9. JOBSEARCH PLUS 10. 1-2-1 11. JOBFINDER

Special training programmes

Specific training programmes for the long-term unemployed are rarer than employment subsidy programmes, also because of the specific difficulties associated with this group. However, the long-term unemployed receive priority under the existing training programmes which form part of active employment policy.

DK

PROVISION OF TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT ACTS

Procedures:

Duration: max. 2 years.

Allowance: the education allowance for young insured unemployed people under 25 years is 50% of the unemployment benefits that they would otherwise be entitled to (for insured unemployed persons over 25 years it is the same as the unemployment benefit to which the person concerned would otherwise be entitled).

Training of unemployed person's choice.

A

Employment/training combination - specific form of integration subsidy (gemeinnützige Eingliederungsbeihilfe). This subsidy is currently supporting projects which combine employment with vocational and continuing training, in order to improve participants' prospects of reintegration.

E

Priority for participation in training schemes foreseen in the FIP is given to the following groups: long-term unemployed, persons in receipt of unemployment benefits, unemployed persons aged under 25 who were previously in employment for at least 6 months, unemployed persons with severe difficulties integrating or reintegrating into working life - especially women wishing to return to work, disabled persons and immigrants.

First-time labour market entrants have priority access to training schemes, provided their employers apply for such training and commit themselves to employing at least 60% of the trainees.

B

F

D

Promotion of vocational training for disadvantaged young people through:
 - auxiliary assistance during in-company vocational training,
 - full training in an external training establishment.

FIN

The objective of labour market training for adults, financed mainly by the Ministry of Labour, is to help the unemployed find work and avoid the threat of unemployment. Trainees are selected by the employment offices. Most courses consist of supplementary training leading to specialisation. Trainees receive a training allowance equal to unemployment benefit. The government has submitted to parliament a bill on supporting individual training of the long-term unemployed. The proposed system would give the long-term unemployed a chance to participate in individual training promoting occupational abilities while receiving a grant equal to the amount of unemployment allowance or labour market support. A minimum of 12 years of work or entrepreneurial experience is required to qualify for this grant. The main aim of the proposal is to encourage the long-term unemployed without any vocational training to obtain a basic vocational qualification. The training grant for the long-term unemployed is a fixed 2-year special scheme. The Act is proposed to come into force in August 1997.

Special training programmes

GR		NL	<p>There are no training programmes targeted in particular at the long-term unemployed. However, the long-term unemployed can also participate within the following training schemes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FRAMEWORK REGULATION FOR TRAINING 2. CONTRIBUTION SCHEME FOR TRAINING THE UNEMPLOYED 3. CENTRES FOR VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION AND PREPARATION
I		P	<p>Training and employment programmes offer long-term unemployed adults vocational skill training to help them adapt to and reintegrate into the labour market.</p> <p>Special vocational training assistance promotes skill training and social and labour market integration for persons in particularly difficult situations and members of particularly disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>Employment incentives in connection with conservation of the cultural heritage:</p> <p>to give long-term unemployed persons aged 25 or over access to the labour market through vocational training programmes designed to enable them to find steady employment or create their own jobs.</p>
IRL	<p>Second Chance Educational Programme for the long-term unemployed.</p> <p>This sandwich programme is aimed at people aged 25 or over who have been unemployed for more than a year. Periods of theoretical training alternate with periods of practical training in a work environment. It also includes training opportunities for the long-term unemployed and offers access to all the training programmes managed by FAS. In addition, long-term unemployed adults can access the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS), which has 5,000 places and is administered by the Department of Education in conjunction with the Department of Social Welfare. This programme focuses on the development of employment, related skills, including technical and business skills, as well as personal development.</p> <p>Long-term unemployed persons may also be eligible for a third-level education allowance and to pursue second-level education whilst retaining their welfare entitlements.</p>	S	
L	<p>Extension of training-placement actions targeted at certain groups of jobseekers and on the basis of a partnership between involved actors. These actions have had good results (e.g. 95% placement rate for those who were engineers). Other actions target industrial planning, are being planned for young university students in the area of natural sciences, and are being considered for other levels of qualifications (e.g. refrigeration technicians). In agreement with the Ministry of Education, specific continuing and retraining programmes for the unemployed are being set up, in which the Employment Service negotiates for targeted unemployed persons. The Employment Fund will bear the costs.</p>	UK	<p>Training for Work - The main UK training programme for unemployed adults.</p> <p>The aim is to help unemployed people get jobs, including self-employment, as quickly as possible through an appropriate mix of training, approved qualifications and/or structured work experience.</p> <p>Delivery of programmes is local through a network of Training and Enterprise Councils in England and Wales and Local Enterprise Companies in Scotland; training according to individual needs and the needs of the labour market to gain the skills and/or qualifications necessary to help people get jobs. Building on the experience of pilots in pre-vocational training held in 1996/97, in 1997/98 30,000 people with motivational, attitudinal and basic skill needs will be helped by training available in TfW. Overall in 1997/98, over 180,000 people will benefit.</p>

Measures for older workers

There are few active measures for older workers, as priority is given to reducing their demand for work, e.g. through early retirement or partial early retirement (see 2.1.2.6). Measures aimed at the long-term unemployed also cover the older long-term unemployed, who in certain regions account for a large proportion of the total (see also 5.1 and 5.2).

DK After the abolition of the Transitional Allowance Scheme for the age group 50-59 years, this group of workers now has access to the same activation measures as younger groups of workers. See 5.1.1.

A **BONUS/PENALTY SYSTEM IN UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**
If an employer takes on a worker aged 50 or over, his or her unemployment insurance contributions are reduced by half; if a worker is at least 55 years old when taken on, the employer's unemployment insurance contribution is dispensed with altogether.
If, however, an employer terminates the employment of such a worker, he or she must make a one-off payment ("penalty") to the unemployment insurance scheme.
ENTERPRISE INTEGRATION SUBSIDY
- Target group: unemployed over-45s.
- Procedures: see 5.2.1(2).
EXTENDED MEASURES
Where integration measures fail to help long-term unemployed persons, such persons may benefit from extended measures such as unemployment and training benefit (Schulungsarbeitslosengeld) or end-of-entitlement allowances.

E Subsidy of ESP 500,000 for the recruitment of older workers (> 45 years).
See 5.2.1.
The reductions listed under 5.2.1. are available when the fixed-term contracts of workers aged over 45 are converted into open-ended contracts and the workers are thus recruited on an open-ended basis.

B **PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR RISK GROUPS**
See 5.1.1(2)
EMPLOYMENT FOR REINTEGRATION
See 3.2.2.

F 1. CES (Employment and Solidarity Contracts)
2. "DELALANDE" CONTRIBUTION
3. INTERMEDIARY ASSOCIATIONS
4. COMPENSATORY EMPLOYMENT REPLACEMENT ALLOWANCE (Allocation de Remplacement pour l'Emploi)

D **Wage subsidies for older workers (Lohnkostenzuschuß)**
Target group: unemployed persons aged 55 or over who have been unemployed for at least 12 months.
Conditions:
- Duration of subsidy: up to 24 months; up to 36 months for the particularly difficult to place.
- Amount: as a rule, up to 50% of the wage; increase to 70% possible in individual cases.
- The subsidy is reduced by 10 percentage points after each 12-month period.
In addition, older employees are promoted in the course of the measures for reintegration into the labour market (cf. 5.2.1).

FIN In general, long-term unemployment particularly affects older workers, whose number is rapidly increasing. In the next 15 years, the share of the employed labour force over 50 will increase almost by half. More than half of the unemployed over the age of 55 are classified as long-term unemployed. The active population over the age of 45 is a risk group, as their level of training is lower, their vocational training is out of date and their working ability weaker. Employment offices deal with each case individually. The larger employment offices conduct assessments of working capacity and rehabilitation needs. The National Programme for Ageing Workers, which aims at improving employment opportunities for the ageing, was launched by the government in spring 1997. From 1997 to 2001, the programme will provide, among other things, information and training, improvements in adult education, increasingly efficient measures to improve the working abilities of ageing workers as well as improvements in employment services and measures targeted at lowering barriers to employment.

Measures for older workers

GR	<p>Special subsidies for employers who recruit older workers aged up to 64 years. Special subsidies for older unemployed persons aged up to 64 years who start up their own business. Measures for the provision of medical care for older (over 55) unemployed workers (Law No. 2434, § 10).</p>	NL	<p>Employment protection: In the event of individual lay-offs because of economical and/or organisational considerations, all workers are protected by the principles of "last in first out" and proportionality by age group. However, employers are only allowed to apply the principle of proportionality by age group (as a context for "last in first out") in the event of mass redundancies (10 lay-offs or more).</p>
I		P	<p>INDIVIDUAL MONITORING PLANS - Target group: persons over 45 who have been unemployed for 9 months. - Procedure: personalised support. RECRUITMENT AND BUSINESS START-UP ASSISTANCE - Target group: long-term unemployed persons over 45. - Procedures: recruitment subsidy or business start-up grant (increase of 20%). EARLY RETIREMENT FOR OLDER WORKERS ON UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT (see 2.1.1.5). - Allows older workers on unemployment benefit to apply for a retirement pension at the age of 60. REDUCTION IN SOCIAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTIONS from 11% to 9.5% for workers receiving an invalidity or retirement pension. IN-COMPANY TRAINING INCENTIVE: exemption from training costs for workers over 45 for companies participating in training and employment programmes.</p>
IRL	<p>The Community Employment programme is now split into two distinct options: - Part Time Integration Option; - Part Time Job Option. The Part Time Job Option, introduced in the 1996 budget, specifically targets the long-term unemployed over 35 years of age. A target of 10,000 places for this option will be phased in by the end of 1997.</p>	S	<p>Employers who recruit unemployed persons aged over 60 in a specific region may be entitled to wage subsidies of up to 50% of wage costs. Unemployed persons aged 55 years or more who have been unemployed for more than 24 months have the possibility to participate in public temporary work for the elderly unemployed. The scheme is available until the end of 1998 and the target group can, during that time, be an element of the quality enhancement of the public sector.</p>
L	<p>Gradual early retirement (cf. 2.1.1.5 "Retirement and early retirement"): This scheme is open only to workers who are aged at least 57 (52 for industrial workers and miners), who agree to the conversion of their full-time job into a part-time job and who have been in employment for at least 480 months. The working hours of workers in gradual early retirement are at least 40% and no more than 60% of full-time working hours. The monthly early retirement allowance amounts to 85% of the last gross wage in the first year, 80% in the second year and 75% in the third year. The Employment Fund reimburses the employer for all outlay in connection with payment of the early retirement allowance, including social security contributions, if the employer recruits a replacement worker and both the job of the worker in gradual retirement and the job of the replacement are maintained for at least 5 years after the end of the gradual retirement period. See 3.2.2 "Recruitment aid".</p>	UK	

Equal pay and equal treatment (1. Legislation 2. Collective agreements)

1. Most countries rely on national regulations to implement the principle of equal treatment.
2. In some countries, collective agreements are required to implement the principle of equal treatment, but few specific measures are evident. Decentralisation of collective bargaining has raised concerns that women are often employed in less well-organised firms and occupations, and may be less able to benefit from the more locally based bargaining. Job evaluation has only been applied in a limited number of countries, and only a few sectors, as a means of reducing sex segregation. The need to remove gender specific terminology in job classifications and to use the same criteria for assessing male and female jobs has been reconsidered in Portugal and Spain, respectively.

DK

1. The right to equal pay for equal work or work of equal value is contained in the Act on Remuneration for Men and Women (1976) - consolidated in 1992. Equal treatment is ensured under the Act on Equal Treatment of Men and Women regarding Employment and Maternity Leave (1989), which prohibits direct or indirect differences in treatment, especially on the basis of pregnancy, matrimonial or family circumstances.
2. Equal pay for work of equal value is stipulated in all collective agreements. Since 1985, most collective agreements have been negotiated at the local level and this has increased the variation in wage agreements. Female-dominated job categories often do not receive the same bonuses and supplementary wages as male-dominated job categories. The 1995 collective agreements have opened up opportunities for significantly greater flexibility in working-time arrangements and this may increase the gender wage gap even more as women are often less able to work overtime.

A

Legal regulation: yes.
Under § 2 of the Equal Treatment Act (Gleichbehandlungsgesetz), direct or indirect discrimination against women or men in connection with an employment relationship is prohibited, especially as regards justification of the employment relationship and in the areas of remuneration, provision of voluntary social benefits, training and further training, promotion, general working conditions and termination of the employment relationship. Sexual harassment at the workplace is a form of discrimination. Compensation can be claimed on the basis of § 2a of this Act. A special law exists for farm workers. Federal civil servants, employees and blue-collar workers have similar - sometimes more far-reaching - rights under the Bundesgleichbehandlungsgesetz, which was changed, in view of Austrian accession to the EU, in 1994. Comparable legislation exists for the regional (Länder) public services.

E

1. LEGISLATION
2. COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

B

1. Equality in law is guaranteed by the Constitution (Articles 10 and 11). The right to equal pay is contained and defined in Collective Agreement No. 25 of 15.10.1975 and covers both equal work and work of equal value. The right to equal treatment is laid down in the Law of 4.8.1978 and covers direct and indirect discrimination as well as positive action.
2. Collective Agreement No. 25, made compulsory by the Royal Decree of 9.12.1975, began the process of eliminating any discrimination based on gender in the structure of payment and in job evaluation systems. Equality of remuneration must be implemented at the point at which pay is determined. All collective agreements, including those on job definition and evaluation, must conform to this principle. In addition, the Law of 4.8.1978 makes it compulsory for employers to ensure equality of treatment between men and women in respect of working conditions.

F

1. The law prohibits any discrimination against women in the exercise of their work or in recruitment (Law No. 83-635 of 13.7.83 and Decree No. 84-395 of 25.5.84) as well as in remuneration arrangements (Law No. 72-1143 of 22.12.72 and Decree No. 73-360 of 27.3.73). Persons found guilty of such discrimination may be fined or imprisoned.

D

1. The principle of equal pay and equal treatment at the workplace is implemented in German civil law, covering all private work contracts, in § 611a Civil Code (Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch). According to § 1, inequality is forbidden unless justified by special reasons that are gender-neutral. The burden of proof shifts to the employer once an evidential difference is proved by the employee. Compensation for illegal discrimination in access to and promotion at work is foreseen in Article 2.
2. No measures by the federal government as wage policy is regulated by the employers and trade unions.

FIN

1. The Finnish Act on Equality between Women and Men of 1986 was amended, on 1 March 1995, in the light of accession to the EU. Besides the clarification of the prohibition of direct and indirect discrimination, the provisions concerning discrimination in working life (§§ 7, 8) and a provision on compensation (§§ 11, 12, 13), the duty of both authorities and employers to promote equality and the obligation of the employer to report on his/her procedure upon request were reinforced (§§ 4, 6, 10).
2. The central labour market organisations set up a joint working group in May 1990 to investigate ways of evaluating work and developing these, particularly with a view to fields and jobs dominated by women. The working group presented its final report in February 1994. It proposed that job demands should be the main criterion for setting wages. Now there are efforts to create a job evaluation system in various branches. If a collective agreement is in contradiction with the Act on Equality, the court can prohibit the implementation of the discriminatory agreement.

Equal pay and equal treatment (1. Legislation 2. Collective agreements)

<p>GR</p> <p>2. The National Collective Agreement promotes the application of the principle of equality of the sexes in particular with respect to employment, remuneration and vocational training. A bipartite committee has been established to monitor the application of legislation on equal opportunities. Law No. 1876/90 extended the right to collective bargaining to all employees working in the private and public sector under private-law employment contracts and established five levels of bargaining and five kinds of collective agreement: national framework agreements, sectoral agreements, national agreements, regional agreements and company agreements. This comprehensive regulation of employment conditions will guarantee increased protection, from which women will also benefit. Measures on job assessment have not been implemented. Assessment schemes exist only at company level in enterprises operating performance-linked remuneration systems.</p>	<p>NL</p> <p>1. LEGISLATION 2. COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS</p>
<p>I</p> <p>1. Equal pay in Italy is enshrined in the Equal Treatment of Male and Female Workers Act 903/77. Through its enactment, Directives 75/117/EEC on equal pay and 76/207/EEC on equal treatment have been transposed into national legislation. No specific measures have been introduced. Law No. 125/91 does not include any specific policy measures, but simply promotes "positive actions" (through public funding) to favour the employment of women and the realisation of substantial equality between men and women at work.</p>	<p>P</p> <p>1. The Constitution (1976) contains guarantees of equality, notably Article 59.1, which provides for equal pay for equal work. Law No. 392/79 (20.9.1979) applies the principles of equal pay and equal treatment. The 1979 law defines the concept of pay (Art. 2) and provides for equal pay for equal work or work of equal value (Art. 9). Collective agreements which violate the principle shall be invalid (Art. 12). The right to equality of treatment is contained in Law No. 392/79. The notion of discrimination is defined in Article 2. 2. Both the social partners and the Economic and Social Council have decided to avoid the use of gender specific terminology in the new occupational definitions and labels.</p>
<p>IRL</p> <p>1. The right to equal pay is contained in the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act 1974, which provides that this right is part of every employment contract. The Act provides for special equality officers to investigate disputes. It applies expressly to men also. The right to equal treatment is laid down in the Employment Equality Act 1977. The Act applies to employment, the professions and vocational training. It forbids discriminatory job advertisements. 2. The Employment Equality Agency and the Report of the 2nd Commission on the Status of Women have proposed an amending statute which would allow for (a) "hypothetical" male rather than an actual male comparator to be used in equal pay claims, (b) stronger powers of enforcement, (c) "indirect discrimination" to be used in questions of pay and (d) review of job classification and evaluation systems.</p>	<p>S</p> <p>1. In 1980, the Equal Opportunity Act (EOA) came into force. The Act promotes equality between women and men with respect to employment, conditions of employment and opportunities for development at work. A revised Act with two parts was adopted in 1991: a ban on discrimination (pay, etc.), and rules obliging employers to work actively for equality at the workplace (incl. preparing an annual plan for equality). In 1994, the new Act was amended to strengthen the provision on equal pay. 2. Each year an employer who employs 10 or more employees is required to carry out a survey of pay differentials between women and men at the workplace. The survey has to include an annual plan of action which the employer must draw up and submit to the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman on request. Most employers carry out a survey and produce a plan. The survey must include analysis of different types of work and different categories of employees. The central and local collective agreements include criteria for wage-setting and different wage groups.</p>
<p>L</p> <p>1. Law on the reform of the minimal social wage (1973) as amended in 1976, 1982 and 1986 - no social group is excluded. Law on the pay system for state officials (1963) - for identical services, the salary of a female official is equal to that of a male official. Regulation on equal remuneration between men and women (1974) - all employers are required to provide equal pay for work of equal value. Equal treatment is enshrined in the Law of 8.12.1981 on equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions (1981), as amended in 1986. The law on collective agreements (1965) requires that collective agreements should contain provisions for implementing the principle of equal pay on a non-discriminatory basis.</p>	<p>UK</p> <p>1. LEGISLATION 2. COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS</p>

Equality audits

An equality audit is a process of evaluation undertaken by organisations in order to assess how far their internal employment policies, structures and practices have progressed towards gender equality. The audits take place on a regular basis, for example annually, and the employment issues covered by the process may vary from country to country and from establishment to establishment. It usually covers the comparative number of men and women employed in total, by grade and salary and hours of work. The audit may also - particularly over a period of time - cover other areas, such as terms and conditions of employment, recruitment and promotion rates, access to training and the take-up of measures to facilitate the reconciliation of working and family life etc. Specific legal requirements to carry out audits exist in three Member States (B, F and I). In other Member States, however, there are examples of governments and/or equality bodies which actively encourage organisations to draw up equality plans.

DK In Denmark, there are no legally binding requirements regarding equality audits. Since 1987, the Equal Status Council has coordinated the work of public institutions through the government's plan of action for equal opportunity. In 1991, the Danish parliament adopted a motivated agenda which sharpens the obligation to draw up annual plans, including target figures and a report to the Equal Status Council. The evaluation in 1993 showed that the efforts made by the public institutions were unsatisfactory. The Danish parliament therefore adopted yet another motivated agenda, which enjoins state institutions to immediately draw up plans of action containing target figures for women in managerial positions and the reconciliation between family and working life. This demand has been followed up by a personal recommendation from the Prime Minister.

A**E**

There is no legal requirement to carry out equality audits in Spain. However, INI-TENEO, a large public group of companies, has signed an agreement with the Instituto de la Mujer (Institute for Women's Affairs) to undertake a positive action program. The first aim is to study the human resources of the group, with special attention given to the situation of women, their capabilities and their training opportunities, and also to analyse the collective agreements signed in all the companies of the group for aspects of equality of opportunity.

B

The Royal Decree of 12.8.1993 requires all enterprises to present an annual report to the works council or trade union delegate. This report must give a general outline of employment conditions, work arrangements, functions, and training for men and women in the enterprise, an analysis and evaluation for each work category for men and women, and, in particular, the conditions of recruitment and training, promotion and qualification opportunities, as well as working and pay conditions. Under the terms of the Royal Decree, the public sector is required to produce an analytical report on positive action.

F

See 5.4.3 "Positive action".

D

Women are given support within the framework of existing labour market instruments in proportion to their number amongst the unemployed. The state promotes the realisation of equal opportunities and removes existing disadvantages. Most of the "Länder" of the German Federal Republic have introduced an Equal Opportunity Law for the public sector (measures: women's promotion plan, women's representative; issues: recruitment, leave, part-time work, career break, sexual harassment, etc.). Equal opportunities laws or statutory positive actions for the private sector do not exist. In many sectors collective agreements exist, including measures to promote women. In addition, promotion plans for women are increasingly being developed within companies.

FIN

See also 5.4.3 "Positive action". When employers are preparing measures to further equality between women and men, they are required to undertake a basic study of the workplace. The audit will include issues such as pay differentials between men and women; recruiting practices; and provision of vocational training organised by the employer.

Equality audits

GR	<p>There is no legal requirement to carry out equality audits. However, under the terms of the 1993 National Collective Agreement, which applies to all workers in an employment relationship governed by private law, a bipartite commission comprising employer and employee representatives is to be set up, which will monitor the application of legislation on equal treatment and on workers with family responsibilities. This commission has not been established to date.</p>	NL	<p>The state of equality in government departments is published yearly in explanatory memoranda by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, and the Central Bureau of Statistics. The labour inspectorate regularly researches the incomes of men and women and examines the Collective Labour Agreements on emancipation aspects. From 1997, an Emancipation Yearbook will be published every year by the Direction for Coordination of Emancipation Policy and the Central Bureau of Statistics.</p>
I		P	<p>The law which guarantees equal opportunities and treatment for women in employment (D.-L. No. 392/79 of 20.9.1979 and D.-L. No. 426/88 of 18.9.1988 - public service) provides for the existence of a commission (CITE - Commission for Equality in Work and Employment) with a tripartite composition (Labour Ministry and social partners) which is responsible for: advising on equality matters; promoting visits to workplaces; and requesting the inspection of workplaces to look for the existence of discriminatory practices. The purpose of this commission is to try to identify, clarify and possibly resolve disputes with resort to judiciary. Thus, in a broad sense, the intervention of the commission can be seen as an 'audit'.</p>
IRL		S	
L		UK	<p>In the UK a large number of employers in both the public and private sectors have voluntarily committed themselves to improving the gender balance of their work force at all levels and across job categories. These organisations regularly undertake a process of monitoring in order to assess progress towards this goal. Procedures used for assessing the effectiveness of equal opportunities policies cover: awareness-raising; information gathering and monitoring; implementation, policy and procedures; reviewing and up-dating. The assessments include issues such as recruitment and promotion; grading and salary; hours of work; take-up of training; and dealing with sexual harassment.</p>

Positive action

There is no official definition of 'positive action' at European level. There is, however, widespread agreement across the European Union that the concept of positive action embraces any measure or set of measures which aim to make up for effects of past discrimination; to eliminate existing discrimination; and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women - particularly in relation to types or levels of jobs, where members of one sex are significantly under-represented. The 1994 Council Recommendation on Positive Action identifies a wide range of measures which should be taken in this context.

No Member State makes it compulsory for employers to take positive action in the private sector, and in the majority of Member States there is no legal requirement placed upon the public sector to institute positive action measures. There are only two Member States (B and I) where some form of positive action is mandatory in the public sector by virtue of national law.

A

B

The Royal Decree of 14.7.1987 regarding measures to promote equality between men and women in the private sector allows companies to adopt positive action plans and details their format. This voluntary legal instrument is part of the structural policy followed since 1985, which is based on sensitising and supporting enterprises by means of a group of experts and on consolidation through the creation of a network of enterprises. Most initiatives result from collective agreements. The Royal Decree of 27.2.1990 on equal opportunities for men and women in the public sector is binding for national, regional and local administrations. It defines positive action and specifies procedures. A network of coordinators provides special assistance in order to ensure effective implementation. The Decree was recently modified in order to extend the time frame for planning in certain administrations.

D

DK

Danish legislation regarding equal opportunities between men and women provides for exceptions - possibilities for positive action - for certain forms of jobs and training. The law is applicable both to the public and the private sector. Activities which come under this provision are as follows:

- advertisements which explicitly declare that female applicants are desired;
- training reserved for women;
- guidance courses for women who are returning to the labour market or making non-traditional career choices.

The public sector has provided for activities for more women in managerial positions, developing women's job functions, work organisation to allow family and working life together as well as changes in organisation culture.

E

The Third Plan for Equality for the period 1997-2001 was passed by the Council of Ministers in 1997 (First Plan: 1988-1990, Second Plan: 1993-1995). The aims are: a) to give women the possibility to fully avail of their social and economic rights, b) to facilitate the labour market integration of women, c) to promote women's employment, d) to encourage structural changes and reforms with a view to the integration, maintenance and support of women in the labour market, e) to remove differences between the working lives of men and women. There are schemes for employment policy actors, personnel managers and for society as a whole with a view to directly realising the aims for the women concerned.

F

The law of 13 July 1989 on equality at the workplace outlines the requirement for businesses to produce a report comparing general conditions of employment for men and women, and the possibility for the social partners to negotiate "equality plans" in businesses which are reserved for the training, recruitment, career development, equality of pay and qualification of female workers. Equality plans usually deal principally with training, but do cover other areas. In France, it has tended to be the management rather than the trade unions which has initiated such positive actions. In 1987, these measures were extended through the introduction of a contract for equal treatment in employment ("mixité des emplois"), which is aimed at businesses with less than 200 employees and seeks to improve recruitment, career change and promotion in jobs which are primarily held by men or characterised by modern technology.

FIN

According to the Act on Equality, every employer who has at least 30 employees is required to include measures to further equality between women and men at the workplace in the annual personnel and training plan or the action programme for labour protection. In practice, the measures can also be incorporated into a separate equality plan. The measures should improve equality at the workplace, promote women's recruitment, improve working conditions and facilitate the reconciliation of working and family life. The equality plan can also include measures to decrease pay differentials between women and men and to deal with sexual harassment.

Positive action

GR	<p>There is no legal requirement to undertake positive action, but under the terms of Law No. 1414/85, positive action is not considered discriminatory. In October 1992, a legal requirement was introduced that at least one woman must be among the members of any "departmental advisory council". This requirement was abolished in 1994 by virtue of Law No. 2190/94.</p>	NL	<p>Positive action for women is possible in the case of under-representation of women in certain functions or occupations. Most widely used method in companies: the general rule for the recruitment of staff is that, given equal abilities, preference must be given to a woman, or that for a specified period of time only women will be hired. Positive action is not mandatory. Nevertheless, the government pursues a positive action policy in relation to women.</p> <p>WBEEA: Act on the Promotion of Equal Participation of ethnic minorities in Employment. Proportional participation in the labour market and the reduction of career problems are the aim of this law.</p> <p>In collective agreements, more general measures are made to improve the position of women within the framework of women-friendly personnel policy (child-care facilities, leave possibilities, part-time work, mentorships, networks for women etc.).</p>
I	<p>Law 125/91 of April 1991 introduced positive action as the essential instrument for guaranteeing equal opportunities for men and women in the labour market. It is compulsory in the civil service (following union consultation) and voluntary in the private sector. Positive action can be promoted either unilaterally by companies, cooperatives, consortia, public-interest enterprises, unions and training centres, or by means of collective agreements between unions and employers. The law provides for total or partial reimbursement of the costs of the initiatives. Financial priority is given to projects agreed by means of collective bargaining between unions and employers. Law No. 215/92 on positive action (training courses, counselling and technical support) to promote business start-ups by women simplifies the latter procedure where certain criteria (by order of the Ministry for Industry, Trade and Crafts of 20.12.1996) are met: e.g. the share of women in the enterprise, type of activity proposed (new initiatives, actual services, etc.), prospect of job creation, etc.</p>	P	<p>The Law of 20.9.1979 (D.-L. No. 392/79) mentions in one of its articles that temporary measures are not considered discriminatory if they give preference on the basis of sex in order to correct inequality, or are designed to protect the social importance of motherhood.</p>
IRL	<p>The Employment Equality Act of 1977 (section 15) provides that a person may provide training for persons of one sex to prepare them for a type of work or to take advantage of opportunities for doing that work where it can be shown that during the previous 12 months there were no persons of that sex, or comparatively few, doing that type of work.</p>	S	<p>Positive action is permitted both in the Constitution and in the Equal Opportunities Act. It is an important instrument of equality policy.</p>
L		UK	<p>There is no legal requirement within the UK for organisations to undertake positive action. However, three UK equality networks provide the impetus for action in many cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) Equality Exchange is a National Forum for practitioners committed to achieving equal opportunities for women in employment. - The joint government and EOC Fair Play for Women scheme: the Regional Partnerships for Equality initiative facilities a regional approach to identifying the factors preventing women from contributing fully to economic and social life in England. - Opportunity 2000 is an independent campaign to increase the quality and quantity of women's participation in the work force, especially at managerial level.

Measures for unemployed women

Several countries have introduced specific measures to help women reintegrate into the labour market, including training programmes, wage-cost subsidies, training subsidies for employers, and job-creation programmes. In some cases, measures are part of an equal opportunities programme, while in others they reflect a more general commitment towards helping risk groups. These specific programmes can only partly compensate for the discrimination against women reflected by the targeting of labour market programmes at the registered unemployed (women are over-represented among the non-registered unemployed) and those who are not receiving benefits.

Measures for unemployed women mainly consist of employment and training subsidies. Sometimes child care is also subsidised. Finally, there are special programmes to promote the recruitment of (unemployed) women into typically male occupations.

A

FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

In principle, Employment Service subsidies are not provided on a gender-specific basis, that is, all regulations apply equally to men and women. One exception is apprenticeship aid, where the duration of support is longer for girls training for an occupation where women are under-represented.

1. INNOVATORY TRAINING MEASURES
2. CHILD-CARE ALLOWANCE (Kinderbetreuungsbeihilfe)
3. CHILD-MINDERS AND CHILD-CARE PROJECTS
4. REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING PARENTAL LEAVE
5. ENTERPRISE INTEGRATION SUBSIDY (Betriebliche Eingliederungsbeihilfe)

B

PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR RISK GROUPS

See 5.1.1(2).

Under the 1988 framework law, the state set up an employment fund financed by a social security contribution of 0.18% of wage costs imposed on employers. This fund provides financial support for projects designed to help persons with difficulty finding a job, e.g. women returning to the labour market. The Royal Decrees of 2.2.1989 and 28.5.1991 define the terms "persons returning to the labour market" and "women returning to the labour market". Since 1988, biannual national agreements between employers and trade unions have required a certain percentage of wage costs (ranging from 0.18% in 1988 to 0.25% in 1995-96) to be allocated to projects to improve the situations of the target groups, particularly women returning to the labour market.

D

1. JOB INTRODUCTION ALLOWANCE FOR WOMEN RETURNING TO WORK
2. SPECIAL QUALIFICATION ASSISTANCE (ESF cofinancing)
3. REGIONAL ADVISORY AGENCIES

DK

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTS: See Annex to 5.2.1(1).

Nearly all Danish women with young children continue to work, but although women with children aged up to 6 are more likely to be involved in the labour market than other groups, they are also more likely to lose their jobs. Mothers bringing up children alone are more likely to be unemployed than other women, and more than 40% of them are on social assistance (primarily social benefits or unemployment benefit). Women who have been without a job for a long time qualify for retraining or employment programmes introduced during the 1980s. These programmes have benefited from the active reform of the labour market implemented in January 1994.

E

60% reduction in employer social security contributions for the first 2 years of the contract where long-term unemployed women are recruited on open-ended contracts in occupations where they are under-represented. Unemployed women who wish to return to the labour market are given priority in measures within the framework of the National Plan for Training and Vocational Integration.

The 60% reduction for 24 months also applies where fixed-term contracts are converted into open-ended contracts for women in occupations where they are under-represented.

F

EMPLOYMENT DESEGREGATION CONTRACTS

For individual female employees.

- Maximum: 50% of teaching costs involved in training.
 - 50% of other costs (fitting out of workplaces and/or premises).
 - 30% of wage costs during the training period. Cannot be combined with other state assistance for companies.
- SIFE (Integration and training-for-employment courses): See 5.2.1(6).
- #### VOCATIONAL EQUALITY PLAN
- Company agreement.
- All female employees except temporary workers, domestic staff, concierges and caretakers.
 - Maximum: 50% of training costs.
 - 50% of other costs relating to the plan.
 - 30% of wages paid during training.

FIN

The employment agencies treat each case individually. Personalised training programmes may be organised by the employment agencies or training establishments as part of preparatory training for working life. Where women are placed with the help of wage subsidies, an attempt is made to offer them jobs in which the experience acquired will boost their chances of finding permanent employment. A project entitled "Women and in-company vocational training" has been designed to encourage employers to make full use of women's skills. Cooperation between the labour and education authorities has been intensified in order to fight female unemployment. Regional cooperation networks have been established to provide innovation in the field of employment for women. The emphasis is on the creation of businesses and self-employment.

Measures for unemployed women

GR	<p>- Following a resolution by the Minister of Labour (No. 33126 of 5.2.1997), a new special subsidy scheme for employers has been introduced with a view to creating 4,000 new jobs for unemployed women aged between 15 and 64 who are either first-time entrants or who are to be reintegrated into the labour market after an absence of at least 12 months.</p> <p>- Following a resolution by the Minister of Labour (No. 33125 of 5.2.1997), a special scheme for first-time self-employed has been introduced under which 1,000 women aged between 15 and 64 are to be granted a subsidy. The subsidy amounts to GRD 900,000 for every reintegrated unemployed woman or first-time entrant.</p>	NL	<p>Support for women who wish to return to work is the responsibility of the Employment Services (Arbeidsvoorziening), which focus their activities on the "Women and Work" centres (information, counselling and support for women returning to work) and training establishments specifically for this category of women.</p> <p>The government has provided a structural budget of NLG 85 million for child care and school-aged child care for single parent families, who receive a welfare benefit to increase their chances in the labour market. The measure stems from the new Welfare Act (nABW 1995) which states that single parents whose youngest child is older than 5 are obliged to apply for work.</p>
I	<p>Italy has no specific measures for the reintegration of women into the labour market. However, since the end of 1990 (following ratification of Law No. 407/1990 adopted on 31 December), a coordinated system of employment incentives has operated, to assist the reintegration of disadvantaged groups of workers. The main features of this system are reduced social security contributions and tax credits for firms which recruit additional workers from the specified disadvantaged groups.</p>	P	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED WOMEN 2. TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME 3. EXEMPTION FROM VOCATIONAL TRAINING COSTS 4. TRAINING INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN
IRL	<p>COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME</p> <p>A new provision also allows recipients of single-parent benefit (mainly women) to benefit from the scheme. In 1996, 43% of participants were women.</p> <p>TRAINING</p> <p>In 1990, FAS introduced a system of reserved places for women on specific training courses. The aim was to reduce segregation on the labour market. Preparatory training for non-traditional occupations has also been introduced.</p>	S	<p>Swedish labour market policy has always focused on those who are either already unemployed or in danger of losing their jobs, with completely equal treatment for both sexes. Each regional labour market office has two persons responsible for the implementation of training programmes, with due regard for the principle of equality in all respects. The parental leave scheme means that most women do not stop working after they have a child. However, they do work fewer hours when they return to work, as parents are entitled to do as long as their child is aged under 7. There are no special measures for persons wishing to return to work at the end of this period. Assistance available for women wishing to start a business includes a national help network, special loans for rural areas, and support during a 6-month preparatory period. Unemployed women who have been registered at an employment office for at least six months and who have started up their own business are entitled to start-up grants for up to 12 months. Around 30% of those setting up new businesses are women.</p>
L	<p>Since the early 1990s, the non-profit organisation "Initiativ Rem Schaffen" has been offering guidance, advice and assistance to women who want to return to work, particularly those who have difficulties in finding a job.</p> <p>The NAXI-ATELIER project, in conjunction with NOW, provides women (often long-term unemployed) with an opportunity to acquire the experience and basic training they need in order to achieve reintegration.</p> <p>There are also other specific training actions for women returners, and information and consultation services. Luxembourg also has a Ministry for the promotion of women and a quadripartite committee on women's work.</p>	UK	<p>The UK's diverse and flexible working patterns provide women with options to find a job that suits their particular circumstances. The UK is committed to extending the opportunities for women across a broad spectrum, affording them the opportunity to progress at all levels of the career ladder and in public life. Fair Play for Women, launched in April 1994, builds on the success of New Horizons and aims to help women realise their full capabilities so they can make their full contribution to the local economy and the local community. Ten regional partnerships have been established - one in each of the regions covered by integrated regional Government Offices. Consortia models and membership vary and they are free to set their own agenda for action based on local priorities. Government programmes are available equally to men and women, with special provision for women returning to the labour force.</p>

Child-care services (system, provisions)

<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 200px; width: 100%;"></div>	<p>DK Publicly funded services for children under 7 years are mainly provided within one integrated system, within the welfare system. The Ministry of Social Affairs has responsibility at national level, with local authorities (communes) responsible at local level. There are several types of centre and organised family day care. These services are available throughout the year and on a full-day basis.</p> <p>Publicly funded services providing care and education for school-age children are mainly provided in centres. Some of these centres also take younger children not attending school, but most children now use school-based centres mainly run by the education system.</p> <p>Private, unsubsidised services are not common and consist mainly of family day care; there are no private, unsubsidised centres.</p>
<p>A Family day care exists in four different forms. The carers can be: employed by a private organisation; self-employed, but affiliated to an organisation; self-employed, with approval from the relevant local authority; or working illegally, without this approval.</p> <p>In order to promote more family day care, the regional governments fund half of the wage costs of newly employed carers during the first 3 years.</p>	<p>E Publicly funded services are mainly provided within one integrated system, which is the responsibility of the Education Ministries of the 6 autonomous communities. All publicly funded services for children under 3 years are provided in centres. These services are generally available throughout the year and on a full-day basis. Most provision for children aged 3 to 5 years is in schools. Most schools are managed by public authorities, mainly by the Education Ministries in the autonomous communities. There are a few private schools which receive public subsidies. Publicly funded services for children outside school hours are uncommon, although there is increasing provision of play schemes during the long summer holidays, mostly for children over 6 years.</p>
<p>B There are two types of publicly funded care for children aged under 6 years, one organised by the social welfare system and one by the education system.</p> <p>The three autonomous communities are responsible for child-care facilities and operate both private and public services for family day care (the latter administered by the local authorities) at community level. Both the private facilities and the local authorities receive financial aid from the community for administrative costs and payment for child-minders.</p> <p>Within the education system, pre-school care is provided for children from 2.5 years until compulsory school age. This service is the responsibility of Education Ministries at the community level. It is available throughout the school term during primary school hours. Private unsubsidised services are provided in centres and by child-minders. These services are indirectly subsidised through tax relief for parents' costs.</p>	<p>F Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 6. Publicly funded care for children under 6 years is provided both within the education and the welfare systems. The two systems overlap for children aged between 24 and 26 months.</p> <p>Within the welfare system, services are the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Towns at national level and of local authorities (communes) at local level. The services are available throughout most of the year and on a full-day basis. Two-thirds of publicly funded facilities are managed by local authorities, the remainder by private organisations.</p> <p>Within the education system, pre-primary schooling is provided for children from 2 years to compulsory school age. This service is the responsibility of the national Ministry of Education. It is available during the school term and is open during primary school hours.</p>
<p>D Publicly funded services for children under 6.5 years are usually in the welfare system and are the responsibility of the Ministry for Family, the Aged, Women and Youth at federal level and the Social Ministries in the Länder.</p> <p>Publicly funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children (i.e. from 6.5 years) are mainly provided in centres, separate from schools, some of which are age-integrated. These centres are usually managed by local authorities.</p> <p>Private unsubsidised services are mainly provided by child-minders. There is a subsidy for low-income families using child-minders and other private services approved by public authorities.</p>	<p>FIN Most family day care is provided in organised schemes by carers employed by local authorities. There are also some independent, self-employed carers approved by local authorities. Family day care is mostly used for children under 3 years, but is also common for children from 3 to 6 years and for out-of-school care. Statistics from 1992 showed that Finland had a small surplus of child-care places, mainly because of growing unemployment, in all public child-care services.</p> <p>Most of the costs of organised family day-care schemes are funded by national and local government (each pays 42% of costs).</p>

Child-care services (system, provisions)

GR	<p>The age for beginning compulsory schooling was raised from 5.5 to 6 years in September 1995. There are two publicly funded child-care systems for pre-school children, one within the framework of the education system and the other within the framework of the social welfare system. These two systems overlap for children aged between 4.5 and 5.5 years. Within the welfare system, child-care facilities are the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Welfare, which also manages most of them. The remaining facilities are run by local authorities or private organisations. Within the education system, pre-primary schooling is provided for children from 3.5 years to compulsory school age. These facilities are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and are open for a certain number of hours each morning during the school term. Publicly funded care facilities for school-age children are very uncommon. The Ministry of Education has announced that such provisions are to be financed in some nursery and primary schools from September 1995.</p>	NL	<p>1. CHILD-CARE SERVICES</p>
I	<p>There are two main types of publicly funded services for children under 6 years. Services for children under 3 years are mainly provided in centres which are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, and therefore part of the welfare system at national level. Within the education system, pre-primary schooling is provided as part of standard education. Publicly funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children can take various forms, including school-based services and external centres. School-based services are generally not staffed by teachers, although some pilot projects involving teachers working extended hours are now taking place in primary schools. They are generally managed by local authorities and are mostly found in larger towns.</p>	P	<p>There are two systems of publicly funded services for children under 6 years - welfare and education. These two systems overlap for children aged 36-72 months. Within the welfare system, services are the responsibility of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security at national level. There are several types of centres and also organised family day care. These services are available throughout the year and on a full-day basis. Publicly funded services providing care and education for school-age children are mainly provided in centres. One of the current priorities of the Ministry of Education concerns improving access to pre-school education.</p>
IRL	<p>1. CHILD-CARE SERVICES</p>	S	<p>Almost all carers are employed by their local authorities, but recently it has become possible for self-employed carers to obtain public funding if they set up their own business. It is up to each local authority to decide whether to permit this arrangement and, if so, under what conditions. So far, only a few carers have set up their own business, but interest is growing. In general, the costs of organised family day care had been divided between the state, the local authorities and the parents, so that the state paid 50% of the costs, the local authorities 35% and the parents 15%. In 1993, the whole system of funding was changed. Now the local authorities receive a lump sum for all costs to use as they wish, with no money specifically earmarked for family day care (or any other services for young children) and with no conditions. In most communities, the parents' payment is income related and a contribution to general costs.</p>
L	<p>Publicly funded services for children under 4 years are provided in the welfare system, where they are the responsibility of the Ministry of Family and Solidarity at national level. There is also a small amount of organised family day care. These services are available throughout the year and on a full-day basis. Most publicly funded services are provided by private organisations, who make agreements with the Ministry of Family and Solidarity, but some provision is also made by local authorities. Publicly funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children are provided in centres which are usually independent of schools and most of which also take younger children not attending school (see above).</p>	UK	<p>1. CHILD-CARE SERVICES</p>

Individualisation of rights in 1. Tax and 2. Social protection systems

1. In many EU states there is still a higher effective tax rate for the second income-earner than for the first or highest income-earner. Only a minority of Member States have moved to fully individualised tax systems and little progress has been made towards individualisation in recent years.

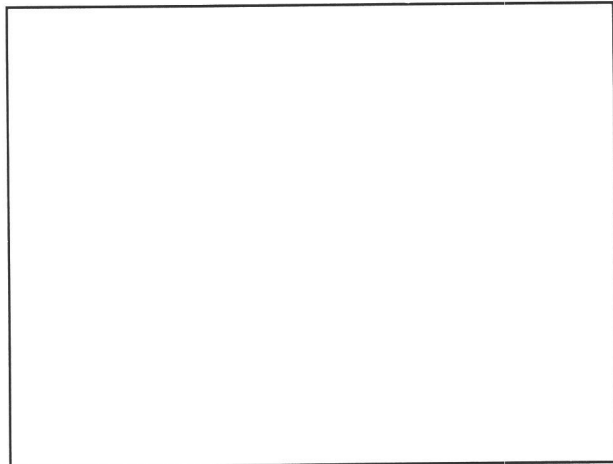
2. Under most systems women have the same rights in principle to receive unemployment benefits as men, but in practice they may face more difficulty in acquiring entitlement if they have more career interruptions or work in jobs where entitlement is not accumulated. In some Member States, the qualifying period for benefit entitlement may be reduced, thus shortening the time period before budget circumstances may affect access to benefits. There has been some progress towards improving women's pension rights in a number of Member States. Not all changes have been advantageous for women; lengthening of contribution requirements for pensions may adversely affect women, for example if they have interrupted careers. In some states, however, differences in retirement ages have still been maintained in favour of women.

DK

1. Wage income and other sources of income are taxed separately for individuals.

2. The same principle applies in the provision of the most important income-compensating benefits. Only some welfare benefits are means-tested against family income; these are restricted to families with very low income and mainly concern families with only one income-earner and lone parents, i.e. lone mothers living without regular wage income. In the labour force, 75% of men and 80% of women are covered by unemployment insurance. All employees and self-employed aged 18-65 are eligible to become members of a UI fund and they are eligible for unemployment benefits after one year of membership and if they have worked 26 weeks (52 from 1 January 1997) during a period of 3 years. The number of years required to be member of a UI fund has been increased several times during the 1980s, but more women are now able to meet these conditions.

A



E

1. Married couples may opt for either joint or individual tax returns. Under current tax regulations, a joint return may be more advantageous than individual returns for low-income households or when one spouse has a much higher income level than the other. These advantages are not available, however, to unmarried couples. Parents caring alone for their children may likewise not submit a joint tax return with their spouses.

2. The system of unemployment insurance guarantees payments to substitute earned income for workers who find themselves legally unemployed (partially or totally), as well as a minimum level of subsistence by means of unemployment benefit. There is no discrimination between men and women. The proportion of women amongst all recipients of unemployment benefit is 38% (the female activity rate is 37%).

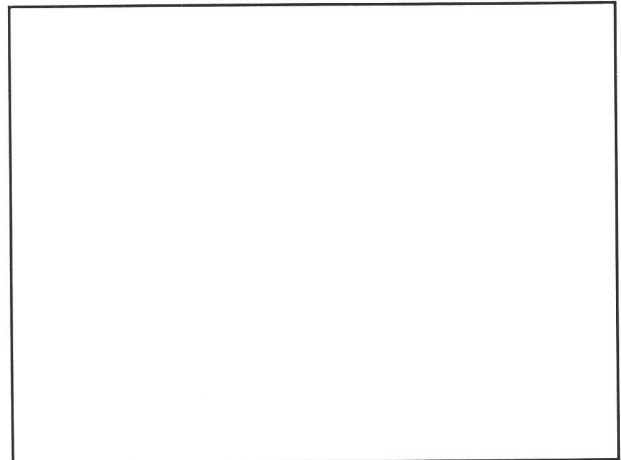
B

1. In Belgium, personal taxation is implemented through a progressive tax levied on individual incomes. The unit of taxation is the household; however, the Law of 7.12.1988 introduced two changes into the system:

- Separate taxation: households with two earned incomes are subject to separate taxation, but only in respect of earned income.
- Household quotient.

2. The Belgian social security system is an insurance-based system financed largely by contributions made by individual workers and employers. Problems and discrimination arise due to the concurrent existence of personal and derived entitlements. The only effective solution would be to individualise entitlement to social security benefits; however, such a reform of the system is not planned at present.

F



D

1. There have been no steps towards the individualisation proposed by the federal government, although there is a far-reaching tax reform proposed. The tax-splitting system for married couples, which results in a high effective tax rate for married women, remains untouched.

2. There is a personal right to unemployment benefit based on the principle of insurance (although unemployed persons with children are entitled to a higher rate). Unemployment assistance is paid within the framework of public social welfare in order to guarantee a source of livelihood.

FIN

1. In 1976, Finland adopted an individualised tax system. Since 1993, both earned income and capital income are taxed separately for individuals. Business income is divided between the spouses if both are working in the enterprise. Most of the tax allowances are also individual. Nonetheless, it is possible to choose which of the spouses uses the pension premium allowance (eläkevakuutusmaksu). In 1995, child-care and child allowances were removed from the tax system. Only wealth is taxed jointly for married couples.

2. Unemployment benefits comprise two elements: a basic allowance which is the same for all, adjusted to take account of the number of children and the spouse's income; and an earnings-related allowance with child supplement. There are two types of pensions: the state pension, which is available to all, and the employment pension, which depends on working history and salary.

Individualisation of rights in 1. Tax and 2. Social protection systems

- GR** 1. Taxation is carried out on an individual basis, but married couples submit a joint tax return. There is an additional tax reduction of 10% for spouses and tax relief of between 15% and 55% for children, both of which are offset against the husband's income unless he is unemployed.
2. Law No. 2084/92 introduced equal treatment for men and women as regards retirement age. The retirement age for women whose insurance commenced after 1.1.1993 has been raised from 60 to 65 years. At the same time, the right of both women and men in the public and private sector to early retirement after 35 years of tenure has been abolished. The retirement age for women with young or disabled children is reduced to 55 or, in the case of a reduced pension, to 50, provided they can show proof of at least 20 years' insurance.
- NL** There is separate taxation, but any unused part of the individual tax allowance can be transferred and set against the income of a spouse or cohabiting partner. Thus the total deduction per household is independent of the number of wage-earners. This system means that a second earner levy operates if the second earner's wage absorbs all the basic allowance. In this situation the "breadwinner" can no longer take advantage of the transferred basic allowance and is thus confronted with a higher tax bill. The greater the discrepancy in marginal tax rates faced by the two partners, the higher the levy. Full individualisation of the taxation system has been a subject of discussion for some time. It was the subject of a private members' bill in 1993, but at the time of going to press the bill had been deferred.
- I** 1. Income tax is individually based. There is a tax deduction for a dependent partner (i.e. one who has a low taxable income), which is also extended to single parents. Each spouse receives a deduction for dependent children, and when one spouse is dependent (i.e. low taxable income) then the other spouse receives a double deduction. Single parents receive a double deduction for dependent children.
2. Unemployed women are more likely to have been employed in service-oriented sectors with resultant lower benefits than men, or to be seeking first jobs or returning after a period of inactivity, where no benefits are payable. Recent measures have raised the retirement age for both men and women, but the difference in retirement ages has been retained. Men will retire at 65 instead of 61 and women at 60 instead of 56.
- P** 1. In the Portuguese fiscal system, the assessment unit is the family, and the method of calculation of taxable income is the aggregation of all the incomes which make up the household. Such aggregation is optional. The negative effect of this taxation system is that it increases the effective tax rate for the second earner.
2. Under the Portuguese social security system, the right to unemployment benefit and pensions is the same for men and women, whether they are married or not (except for the surviving dependant's pension). This pension is paid to the spouse, ex-spouse or the person cohabiting with the beneficiary. It is a condition of entitlement to have been married for at least one year except in cases of death caused by accident or illness arising after the marriage or in the case of entitlement to alimony (ex-spouse).
- IRL** 1. Since 1980 Joint Assessment of the income of married couples has been automatic unless either spouse requests otherwise. Joint Assessment is based on allocating double tax allowances and double tax bands to a married couple, which are then attributed to the highest earner. Married couples may opt for separate assessment or single assessment. Cohabiting persons are not entitled to transfer tax allowances.
2. For unemployment payments married women or women cohabiting with husbands/partners not in paid employment are categorised as dependants. An adult dependant allowance (0.6 adult claimant payment) is paid on her behalf to her husband/partner. The adult woman receives no direct payment. Married women homemakers are only eligible for a contributory pension through their husband's entitlements.
- S** 1. A separate taxation system was introduced in 1971. Married women and men are thereby taxed separately.
2. Unemployment insurance is individual and voluntary, administered by unemployment insurance funds linked to the trade unions. The benefit is based on previous income, independent of the income of the spouse. The national supplementary pension ATP and negotiated pensions are based on paid work and the main wage-earner norm; no pension rights are given for household work. Low-paid persons who have worked part time during periods of their working life get the least out of both ATP and the negotiated pension systems. Proposals are being discussed for reform which may include taking into account the whole life cycle income, and suggestions have been made for how to supplement the income of a parent with young children. A proposal has also been made to make it possible for spouses to share the pension between them.
- L** 1. There is a family quotient system of tax splitting, which means that the tax is shared by the couple irrespective of the salary breakdown. This produces a higher effective tax rate for married women.
2. The employment insurance system is still based on the principle of household aggregation: the benefit received may be up to 80% of gross salary, depending on the partner's income (and with a ceiling of 2.5 times the minimum legal salary). A further 5% of gross salary is payable when there are dependent children, and when both spouses claim unemployment this extra addition is paid to the elder partner.
- UK** 1. Separate taxation for husbands and wives is now universally applied (previously couples were able to opt for separate taxation). An additional tax allowance is granted to married couples. Couples can choose who holds the allowance or whether to split the allowance equally.
2. Proposed changes to the unemployment benefit system from October 1996 will halve the time over which individuals can claim insurance-based benefit on grounds of unemployment, although income-based benefits are available without a time limit. Basic state pensions are based upon years of national insurance contributions; men and women with caring responsibilities at home may have their basic state pension protected under the Home Responsibilities Protection (HRP) scheme: those who earn below the minimum earnings limit and do not qualify for HRP can pay voluntary contributions to protect their basic state pension. Recently the government brought in legislation to equalise the pension ages of men and women at age 65 from 2020.

Measures to promote the training of disabled persons

	DK
A	E
<p>1. FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS 2. TRAINING BONUS 3. SUBSIDIES FOR THE CREATION OF APPRENTICESHIP AND OTHER REGULAR TRAINING PLACES FOR DISABLED PERSONS BENEFITING UNDER THE ACT</p>	<p>See 5.2.1.</p>
B	F
<p>1. Vocational adaptation contract (Walloon Region and Fonds bruxellois francophone pour l'intégration sociale et professionnelle des personnes handicapées): through in-plant training, disabled persons are to be provided with vocational training in a real working environment and their prospects for employment thus improved. 2. Training with a view to vocational integration for disabled workers (Flemish Community): the aim of this training scheme is to prepare the disabled worker for placement under normal working conditions. 3. In-plant training and work experience (German-speaking Community): the aim of training and work experience in enterprises is to prepare disabled jobseekers for work under normal conditions.</p>	<p>See 5.5.2 ('Other measures for disabled persons').</p>
D	FIN
<p>In principle, disabled people have the same entitlement to measures promoting employment and vocational training as the non-disabled. The following are specific measures to promote employment and vocational training of the disabled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - training subsidy, - subsidy towards training allowance or other vocational training allowance for the severely disabled, - costs of measures, - bridging allowance, - training allowance, - fees for distance learning, - learning materials, - working clothes, - board and lodging, - travel costs, - house help, - health insurance, - grants towards expenses for participation in measures towards sustaining and expanding vocational knowledge and skills. 	<p>The long-standing national programme for employment promotion will substantially increase vocational training opportunities and employment measures - also for disabled persons - between 1996 and 1999.</p>

Measures to promote the training of disabled persons

GR	See 5.5.2.	NL	
I		P	
IRL		S	
L	<p>1. Training, rehabilitation and retraining measures: The employment service (Administration de l'emploi - ADEM) covers the costs of these measures either partially or totally. It can pay applicants monthly premiums and allowances of up to the full rate of unemployment benefit.</p> <p>2. Vocational integration or reintegration measures: The employment service (Administration de l'emploi - ADEM) can grant subsidies to enterprises, usually in the form of a wage-cost subsidy (between 40% and 60% of the wage paid to the disabled employee, depending on the degree of disability, and including employer social contributions), a familiarisation subsidy (compensation for reduced performance) or reimbursement of social security contributions (paid to employers who recruit more disabled workers than are required by law).</p>	UK	<p>MEASURES TO ASSIST DISABLED PEOPLE INTO EMPLOYMENT</p> <p>LEGISLATION: The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 provides new rights for disabled people in the areas of: employment; education; public transport; access to goods, facilities and services and the sale and letting of land or property. The main employment provisions came into force on 2.12.1996, and apply to employers with 20 or more employees.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING INITIATIVES 2. EMPLOYMENT REHABILITATION 3. ACCESS TO WORK 4. JOB INTRODUCTION SCHEME 5. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT (SEP) 6. RESIDENTIAL TRAINING COLLEGES 7. DISABILITY WORKING ALLOWANCE (DWA)

Other measures for disabled persons

<p>A</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WAGE-COST SUBSIDIES TO ENTERPRISES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF REGULAR AID TO DISABLED PERSONS 2. PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT IN SHELTERED WORKSHOPS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF REGULAR AID TO DISABLED PERSONS 3. SUBSIDY TOWARDS FITTING OUT THE WORKPLACE FOR DISABLED PERSONS BENEFITING UNDER THE DISABLED WORKERS RECRUITMENT ACT 4. BONUS FOR EMPLOYERS EMPLOYING MORE THAN THE REQUIRED NUMBER OF DISABLED WORKERS 5. CONTRACT BONUS 6. RECRUITMENT SUBSIDY TO PRIVATE ENTERPRISES TO PROMOTE THE RECRUITMENT OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED DISABLED PERSONS 7. SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL PROGRAMMES IN PRIVATE ENTERPRISES TO CREATE JOBS FOR DISABLED PERSONS 8. CREATION OF JOBS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE IN PUBLIC AUTHORITIES 	<p>DK</p>	
<p>B</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. REINTEGRATION INTO NORMAL WORKING LIFE 2. PATH TO INTEGRATION (FLEMISH COMMUNITY) 3. STATE BENEFITS 	<p>E</p>	
<p>D</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BENEFITS FOR DISABLED WORKERS TO HELP THEM FIND WORK 2. BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS RECRUITING DISABLED WORKERS 3. OTHER BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS AND (SEVERELY) DISABLED WORKERS 	<p>F</p>	<p>Under the terms of the Law of 10 July 1987, enterprises with over 20 employees are obliged to employ at least 6% disabled workers (workers recognised as being disabled by COTOREP, victims of accidents at work with a permanent incapacity to work of at least 10%, persons drawing an invalidity pension, war veterans and persons of equivalent status). In 1995, 266,000 disabled workers were employed in 86,000 enterprises, i.e. an average approximately 4% of the work force).</p> <p>Employers who fail to comply with this obligation must pay a contribution to the AGEFIPH fund, which is administered by the social partners and from which measures towards the vocational integration of disabled persons are financed (e.g. training, recruitment assistance, accessibility).</p>
<p>D</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BENEFITS FOR DISABLED WORKERS TO HELP THEM FIND WORK 2. BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS RECRUITING DISABLED WORKERS 3. OTHER BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS AND (SEVERELY) DISABLED WORKERS 	<p>FIN</p>	<p>1. MEASURES FOR THE DISABLED</p>

Other measures for disabled persons

GR The Minister of Labour and Social Welfare and the OAED are currently implementing innovative, multidimensional measures, which are accompanied by complementary social and psychological support activities and are not only oriented towards users, but also towards the entire spectrum of the sociopolitical and institutional framework. The measures include:

Vocational guidance, lifelong learning and information about jobs offered at regional, national and international level. As regards employment prospects, in accordance with the ministerial resolution of the Minister for Labour, employers who recruit and employ disabled workers receive subsidies. The duration of the scheme for the creation of new jobs is 30 months (including 6 months without subsidies). Job placement achieved within the framework of the above-mentioned 30-month scheme are subsidised by up to 80%. In accordance with the scheme, new self-employed individuals intending to start their own business receive subsidies. Finally, subsidies are provided to finance the costs of an ergonomic working environment for the participants.

1. LAW NO. 1648/86

NL
I
P
IRL
S
L

1. Full or partial exemption from social security contributions for self-employed persons recognised as disabled workers who wish to continue working (in dependent employment) (Grand-Ducal Decree-Law of 25.11.1992).

2. Costs for the adaptation of a workplace to suit for a disabled person will be completely or partially reimbursed, in addition to any medical supplies.

3. The disabled can claim an additional holiday entitlement (6 days per year). The costs of these claims are reimbursed by the state.

UK

Recent measures

	DK	
A	<p>SPECIAL INTEGRATION SUBSIDY: See 5.2.1(2). SPECIAL SCHEME FOR THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED: This scheme expired in September 1996.</p> <p>1. APPRENTICESHIP PACKAGE 2. SPECIAL SCHEME FOR WOMEN RETURNING TO WORK</p>	E
<p>The urgent Royal-Decree Law 8/97 on improving the situation on the labour market and promoting open-ended employment abolishes all former employment-promotion schemes (except for those concerning the disabled). New types of contractual procedures have been introduced to promote open-ended employment for groups which are particularly affected by unemployment and instability on the labour market (young people aged 18-29, persons aged over 45, disabled persons and the long-term unemployed) - see 5.1.1. In addition, the regulations on training contracts have been modified (training and practical training contracts) - see 5.1.1. Royal Decree-Law 9/97 regulates incentives to promote open-ended employment and employment stability through reductions in social security contributions and taxation. The various reductions available are described under 3.1.2. (income tax - very small businesses), 3.2.2. (reduction in social security contributions) and 5.1.1. (unemployed persons aged under 30 or over 45 and long-term unemployed).</p>	<p>The Resolution of 22 May 1996 extended the employment-initiative contract scheme to certain low-qualified young persons in difficulties. There are no minimum requirements concerning duration of registration as unemployed.</p>	
B		F
D		<p>FIN In order to help their graduates find employment, a number of universities have recently started to develop placement services with financial support from the state and in cooperation with the public employment offices. Likewise vocational colleges have begun to develop recruitment services in cooperation with local employment offices. Some employment offices are experimenting with hiring out of labour.</p> <p>1. AMENDMENTS TO THE LEGISLATION</p>

Recent measures

<p>GR Consideration is being given to the implementation of training programmes between factories (ELPEKE, EKLA), and the creation of further programmes for the unemployed.</p>	<p>NL Promoting part-time work is the primary goal of a bill initiated by the Green Left Party which proposes a legal entitlement to part-time work. The core concept behind the bill is that every employee who has worked for longer than one year with the same employer would be entitled to reduce working hours by a maximum of 20%. The bill has been accepted by the Second Chamber, but will not necessarily pass the First.</p>
<p>I</p>	<p>P PROGRAMME TO INTEGRATE YOUNG PEOPLE INTO WORKING LIFE (Ministerial Council Resolution No. 44/97 of 21.3.1997) The programme to integrate young people into working life provides for measures in the following four basic areas: - educational and vocational guidance; - education and vocational training; - support for vocational integration; - employment take-up. As regards support for vocational integration, the plan for the nationwide provision of work experience for young people with a university degree or a Level II or III vocational qualification deserves special mention. The young people concerned are first-time jobseekers and enjoy additional training in a working environment by virtue of this plan.</p>
<p>IRL The initiatives such as Jobstart, the Pilot Whole Time Jobs Option, and enhancements to the Community Employment Scheme which were implemented in 1996 were continued through 1997. The Workplace Programme, introduced at the end of May 1996 was continued in 1997 (cf. 5.2.1.(6)). The Youth Progression Programme (cf. 5.1.6.(5)) attempts to break the drift into long-term unemployment. The Part-Time Job Opportunity Programme within CE has been further enhanced. From September 1997 the "rate for the job" will be applied on a phased basis subject to minimum of 12 hours per week. At least 3,000 participants are targeted to be paid on a "rate for the job" basis by September 1998, a further 3,000 by September 1999 and the remainder by September 2000. Social Welfare entitlement swaps have been introduced whereby a married person can transfer their entitlement to a spouse who is not on the Live Register so that the spouse can qualify for CE participation.</p>	<p>S</p>
<p>L</p>	<p>UK The first phase of a New Deal for Lone Parents will be launched in July 1997. This will involve 40,000 lone parents on Income Support, in eight locations, being invited to attend local Jobcentres to meet with specially trained caseload advisers. It will become available nationally from October 1998 when all lone parents on Income Support will be contacted when their youngest child reaches the second term of full-time education. Advisers will offer lone parents: places on ES programmes designed to help them to develop essential jobsearch skills; advice on the benefits that they may be entitled to once they are in work; help, for those who request it, to find places on training programmes; and help with child-care costs and to find places for their children in after-school care. 1. NATIONAL TRAINEESHIPS 2. NEW START</p>

Integration into the labour market

A

1 COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AUTHORITIES AND THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Because most young people make a decision about career or training options while still at school, they need appropriate support at this time. The Employment Service thus works in close cooperation with schools. The employees of the Employment Service's vocational information centres (Berufsinformationszentren) provide careers information for interested classes of school pupils. These information sessions usually take place in the vocational information centres, where the school-goers have an opportunity to investigate the relevant information for their career choice on their own initiative. In addition, further training for teachers and consultancy in the field of teacher training and further training are provided.

2 VOCATIONAL INFORMATION CENTRES (BERUFSINFORMATIONSZENTREN)

These centres are agencies of the Employment Service offering careers information and guidance. Young people and adults are given the opportunity to investigate questions concerning training and career options in an informal and unbureaucratic atmosphere. The centres are equipped with a large range of informative material in written, audio-visual and computerised form. There are currently 48 vocational information centres in Austria. In addition to career-guidance activities for school-goers, there are also numerous information sessions held on specific topics (e.g. careers in tourism or in the health sector) and for specific target groups (e.g. careers afternoons for girls or young foreigners). Information sessions are also organised for all those involved in the career choice (e.g. parents' and teachers' evenings).

3 VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE COURSES (BERUFSORIENTIERUNGSKURSE)

These courses, which are subsidised by the Employment Service, help participants to shape their future career path. They are also geared towards young people with problems gaining entry to the labour market. Most of the courses have a modular structure: in addition to developing realistic and viable perspectives, the participants complete a practical traineeship.

B

1 PRACTICAL TRAINEESHIPS AND LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION

- Target group: young people aged under 30 without vocational experience.
- Procedures: the practical traineeship lasts 6 months and may be extended once. Employers who recruit young people on an open-ended employment contract following completion of a practical traineeship are entitled to financial support.

2 PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR RISK GROUPS

Efforts in this area amount to 0.10% of the wage bill (1997-1998) (0.2% in 1996) for the support of integration initiatives (by means of collective agreement) for risk groups and persons who are eligible to use the accompanying plan for the unemployed.

Integration into the labour market

3 INTEGRATION CONTRACTS ("stepping-stone" jobs) (Global plan)

- Procedures: open-ended employment contract which may include the following non-standard stipulations:
 - during the first 12 months of employment, the worker is entitled to a wage equal to 90% of the standard wage;
 - during the first 3 years of employment, reduced periods of notice apply.

4 BRUSSELS REGION - VOCATIONAL TRANSITION PREMIUM

- Target group: unemployed people under 26 without an upper-secondary school-leaving certificate.
- Procedures:
 - + duration: one year;
 - + employer: monthly grant of BEF 10,000 (20,000 in the event of a full-time open-ended contract combined with in-company training).

5 WALLOON REGION - MUNICIPAL EMPLOYMENT PLAN

- Objective: job creation.
- Target group: under-25s who have been unemployed for longer than the regional average.
- Procedures:
 - + duration: max. 3 years;
 - + worker: fixed-term contract in the local services field (public hygiene, sociocultural or sporting activities, heritage department, child care);
 - + employer: wage subsidy of BEF 689,000 per employee per year paid by the Walloon Region and energy distribution companies.
 - + Condition: the employer must be a local authority.

6 INITIAL WORK-EXPERIENCE CONTRACTS

Initial work experience contracts (contrats de première expérience professionnelle - PEP) are offered to young people under 30 who have been looking for work for 9 months. In the private sector, PEP contracts take the form of 6-month work-experience contracts (on a full- or part-time basis). Half of all existing work-experience arrangements are provided by PEP contracts. The regulations applying to work-experience contracts also cover PEP contracts.

A young person taking up work under a full-time PEP contract is entitled to payment equivalent to at least 90% of the salary drawn by a worker carrying out the same functions in accordance with the wage scale at the firm concerned. In the case of part-time workers, the above-mentioned salary is reduced in proportion to the number of working hours. However, young people employed part time under a PEP contract receive a flat-rate tideover allowance of BEF 6,000 a month from the National Employment and Placement Service. Administrations in the public sector are obliged to employ 1% of trainees on a PEP contract.

7 INDIVIDUALISED CONTRACT FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Under the terms of this contract, eligibility for and payment of the minimum subsistence allowance is dependent on the beneficiary being in training or employment. Such contracts are obligatory for beneficiaries aged under 25.

Integration into the labour market

DK

1 ASSISTANCE TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Unemployed persons aged under 25 in receipt of unemployment benefit who have not undergone qualifying vocational training courses are entitled to, or obliged to accept, a minimum of 18 months' training after a total of 6 months' unemployment in a 9-month period. Unemployed persons of under 25 in receipt of social assistance are also entitled to an offer after 13 weeks' social assistance at the latest. This training may take the form of:

- normal youth education courses,
- newly established 18-month courses at vocational training schools and AMU (labour market training) centres,
- other state-subsidised vocational guidance or technical programmes (e.g. at technical or day-time institutes).

The benefit payable during training depends on the choice of course.

"Benefit" period (2 years): Offers to the unemployed during this period are based on assessment of regional needs.

"Active" period (3 years): The unemployed are both entitled to and obliged to accept offers throughout the "active" period. Their rights and obligations have been phased in as of 1 July 1996 and will be fully operational by the end of 1998.

Unemployed persons who participate in job training or "pool" job schemes are guaranteed a benefit corresponding to the maximum unemployment benefit and this amount constitutes an income ceiling. There is no income ceiling for private job training which is therefore full time. Unemployed persons on training courses receive the unemployment benefit to which they would otherwise have been entitled.

2 LOCAL ACTIVITY GENERATION ACT

- Target group: young people under 25 who have been unemployed for 13 weeks
- Procedures:
 - + duration: at least 20 hours a week for 6 months;
 - + worker: contract for at least 20 hours a week; possibility of combination with other activity generation programmes, training or voluntary activities.
- Note: the employer is a municipal authority which can also offer the beneficiary a guidance and introduction project before the start of the activity generation programme. This project (maximum duration: 6 weeks) will in most cases result in the preparation of a personalised action plan.

Integration into the labour market

E

1 TRAINING CONTRACT

- Aim: to provide young people without a qualification which would entitle them to enter into practical training contracts (contratos en prácticas) with the necessary theoretical and practical training to be able to take up employment.
- Target group: young people aged between 16 and 21 (no upper age limit for disabled workers).
- Procedures:
 - + duration: minimum 6 months, maximum 2 years (the maximum duration may be extended to 3 years on the basis of collective agreements).
- Social security contributions: ESP 4,626 per month (employer share: ESP 3,994 or 50% in the case of a disabled worker; employee share: ESP 632).
- Hours of training: as set out in the relevant collective agreement (on no account less than 15% of collectively agreed maximum working time).
- Wage: in accordance with the relevant collective agreement (not under the national minimum wage - SMI) on the basis of hours worked. This type of contract certifies interesting new social security regulations, such as benefits in the event of temporary inability to work, which were not included previously.

2 PRACTICAL TRAINING CONTRACT

- Aim: acquisition of work experience corresponding to the trainee's third-level degree.
- Target group: persons who have completed a university degree or a higher or middle-level vocational qualification within the last 4 years.
- Procedures:
 - + duration: minimum 6 months, maximum 2 years;
 - + wage: in accordance with the relevant collective agreement, but not less than 60% or 70% (in the first and second years, respectively) of the collectively agreed wage for equivalent work.

3 CONTRACT TO PROMOTE OPEN-ENDED EMPLOYMENT

- Aim: to provide stable employment for young unemployed people and other target groups (long-term unemployed, disabled persons, persons aged over 45) and for workers on fixed-term contracts.
- Target group: young people aged under 18 and persons aged under 30.
- Procedures: 40% reduction in employer social security contributions for the first 2 years of the contract.
- Note: severance pay per year of service in the event of (unlawful) dismissal is 26.6% lower for this type of contract than for a regular open-ended contract. The maximum amount of severance pay is 42.9% lower: 33 days per year of service, with a maximum of 24 months.

4 CONVERSION OF FIXED-TERM CONTRACTS INTO OPEN-ENDED CONTRACTS

- Aim: to create permanent jobs.
- Target group: young people on fixed-term contracts (apprenticeship contracts, practical training contracts, training contracts, etc.).
- Procedures: 50% reduction in employer social security contributions for the first 2 years of the contract.

Integration into the labour market

F

1 CES (Community-Work Contracts)

- Target group: young people aged between 18-25 who are difficult to place.
- Procedures: see 5.2.1(1).

2 URBAN EMPLOYMENT (EMPLOIS DE VILLE)

- Target group: young people aged between 18 and 26;
 - + maximum qualification: Level IV; priority for Levels IV, V bis and V;
 - + residence in certain urban problem areas;
 - + previous employment under a CES not a requirement.
- Procedures:
 - + duration: open-ended contract or fixed-term contract for 12 months, which can be renewed for a total duration of 60 months;
 - + employers:
 - local authorities;
 - non-commercial bodies in the private sector: associations, social security organisations, works councils, etc.;
 - enterprises governed by public law.
 - + Financial support:
 - 100% exemption from social security contributions up to 120% of the SMIC and 30 hours per week;
 - partial reimbursement of wages by the state on the basis of 30 hours per week and up to 120% of the SMIC:
 - either at a fixed rate: 55% of the maximum amount for five years;
 - or degressively staggered: 75% in the first year and in the subsequent years 65, 55, 45 and 35% of the maximum amount.

3 EMPLOYMENT-INITIATIVE CONTRACT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (CIE-jeunes)

- Target group: young people aged between 18 and 25.
 - + maximum qualification: Level VI and V bis;
 - + young people with integration difficulties.
- Procedures:
 - + duration: open-ended contract or fixed-term contract for 12-24 months;
 - + exemption from employer social security contributions;
 - + monthly bonus: FRF 2,000.

4 TEMPORARY INTEGRATION ENTERPRISES

- Target group: young people under 26 with serious difficulties.
- Procedures:
 - + duration: contract with a maximum duration of 24 months;
 - + employer:
 - ° subsidy of FRF 180,000 per full-time job;
 - ° aid from a loan guarantee fund (for working capital and investments);
 - ° cumulative public subsidies must not exceed FRF 300,000 per job per year.

Integration into the labour market

5 JOB SEEKERS' CLUB

Target group: priority is given to young jobseekers under 26 (at least secondary school-leaving certificate plus 2 years' study), with no professional experience and with a precise career objective.

- Content: the ANPE offers job club members:
 - + training on how to identify vacancies in enterprises;
 - + information on companies;
 - + logistical support (provision of equipment);
 - + contribution towards the costs incurred.

6 FROM GRADUATION TO EMPLOYMENT

- Aim: development of a career plan based on the skills acquired at university and in the individual's own environment; enhancement through practical work experience in an enterprise.
- Target group: young people (maximum secondary school-leaving certificate plus 2 years' study) all subjects; precise career objective.
- Procedures:
 - + duration: 7-12 weeks;
 - + content: alternating between group work, personal interviews and periods of actual employment. Ends with a practical period in a company. This includes an analysis, information on company operation, and work on negotiating and jobsearch techniques.

7 INFORMATION CENTRES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (*espace jeunes*)

The creation of "youth centres" (*espaces jeunes*), on the basis of a joint initiative between the ANPE, local providers and local authorities to help young people find their first job, has provided young people with information and advice centres where they can find assistance with any difficulties they may encounter (vocational counselling, labour market integration, assistance with health and accommodation problems, etc).

FIN

1 YOUTH PROGRAMME

- Objective:
 - + to provide basic or vocational training for young people without qualifications,
 - + to allow young people with previous training but no job to continue vocational training,
 - + to procure temporary employment for unemployed young people with qualifications or university degrees.
- Procedures: cooperation between the ministries responsible for employment, education, social affairs and health.
- Note: this programme also encourages the organisation of seminars for young people. An agreed line of action at local level between the employment offices and the municipalities is to try to identify target groups and pool resources for action to prevent long-term unemployment.

Integration into the labour market

2 NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR REDUCING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

At the beginning of 1996, the passive labour market support paid to teenagers was discontinued. In May 1996, the government decided to boost training of the young (and thus also to prevent LTU emergence among the young) by excluding those under the age of 20 from labour market support if they refuse training or subsidised employment. At the beginning of 1997, the discontinuation of labour market support to young people without a degree was extended to those aged between 20 and 24 unless they enter vocational or industrial training. The national strategy for reducing youth unemployment (and thus also preventing LTU) continues to involve increasing amounts of training. In 1996-98, the number of students will be increased by about 5,000 annually, and the social partners have agreed to increase student intake by 4,000.

It is also to be noted that Finnish industry plans to give a summer job to about 60,000 young people in 1997. Though this is not a targeted LTU measure, it could also contribute to LTU prevention.

Educational measures and an increase in the demand for young employees has led to a decrease of over 30% in youth unemployment in the past three years. There has been a special rise in demand for young people with vocational or academic degrees.

3 INNOVATIVE WORKSHOPS

An initiative of "innovative workshops" for young people has recently been launched. It is targeted especially at young people threatened by exclusion. The idea is to combine the training system with working life. The task of innovative workshops is to teach young people how to manage their lives and develop their abilities, and to give guidance on how to proceed after the workshop period in order to get work, establish their own firm or undergo vocational training. The innovative workshops are based on local needs and requirements, and the role of municipalities has been crucial. There are more than 300 youth workshops (of which 250 are run by municipalities). The European Social Fund provides financing for 85 of them. These development activities aim at increased versatility and improved educational effects. Some 6,000 unemployed under-25s work and train in these workshops every year for a period of 6 months.

1 JOB EXPERIENCE

Job-experience schemes have been introduced to help young people and workers with serious difficulties in reintegrating into the labour market. Young people aged 19-32 (and long-term unemployed persons on placement lists up to the age of 35) are assigned to jobs benefiting the community and training projects at various levels ("plans for the vocational reintegration of young people without work", Art. 15 of Law No. 451/94).

Integration into the labour market

2 MEZZOGIORNO - EMPLOYMENT IN THE REGIONS

Law No. 6/93: fund for the employment of young people in cultural activities, tourism and social services in the Mezzogiorno. Law No. 44 on the promotion and development of employment for young people in the Mezzogiorno has been in force since 1986 and has been amended by Decree No. 695 of 24.11.1994, which introduces a number of new aspects concerning eligible expenditure, aid, etc., and also by Law No. 95/95. The new provisions include financial support for investments to promote business start-ups by young people aged under 35. The financial aid may be used to cover up to 90% of the costs of enterprises in the Mezzogiorno and up to 60% of the costs of enterprises in the central and northern regions. Applications for "feasible" projects are submitted to the Association of Young Entrepreneurs PLC (Società per l'imprenditorialità giovanile, SpA). The following projects are eligible for aid: goods production in the agricultural, crafts and industrial sectors and services to enterprises in all sectors (excluding services to individuals and public authorities).

L

1 PREPARATORY WORK-EXPERIENCE CONTRACT

This measure is designed to provide young jobseekers with a practical career introduction during working hours. The contract targets young people aged under 30 and has a duration of between 26 and 52 weeks. The employer pays the practical trainee remuneration amounting to 85% of the social minimum wage. The Employment Fund covers the employer's social security contributions and reimburses 25% of the remuneration paid. Enterprises in the scheme which recruit new employees are obliged to give priority to practical trainees.

2 PREPARATORY WORK EXPERIENCE

This scheme consists of alternating periods of practical and theoretical training for unemployed jobseekers not yet aged over 30. In accordance with the law, jobseekers in the scheme may only be placed with employers who have concluded a respective agreement with the employment service (Administration de l'emploi - ADEM). The trainee receives an allowance amounting to 70% of the minimum wage (of which half is paid by the employer), an additional allowance amounting to 10% of the minimum wage and, where applicable, a wage premium paid by the enterprise.

3 SUBSIDIES AND PREMIUMS TO PROMOTE APPRENTICESHIP

The Grand-Ducal Decree-Law of 29.8.1988 introduced a standard regulation governing subsidies and premiums to promote apprenticeship. Employers recruiting apprentices are entitled to a subsidy amounting to 8% (12% in the crafts sector) of the training allowance paid to the apprentice and to reimbursement of their social security contributions. In addition, enterprises receive an additional subsidy amounting to 12% of the training allowance if they recruit apprentices in occupations where there is a shortage of trainees. Apprentices are entitled to a monthly premium of LFR 1,500 (LFR 2,400 in occupations where there is a shortage of trainees).

4 THE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE DIVISION (DAT)

Cf. 2.3.1.

Integration into the labour market

P

1 APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people who are no longer of compulsory school age are provided with comprehensive training which not only leads to a vocational qualification but also to educational advancement and a school-leaving certificate.

Apprenticeship training comprises orientation courses at Level I, vocational training courses at Levels II and III, and courses which will enable further vocational training (D.-L. No. 205/96 of 25.10.1996).

2 INITIAL SKILL TRAINING

Training (of at least 1 year's duration) for over-15s who have completed compulsory education and are looking for their first job (D.-L. No. 401 of 16.10.1991).

3 TECHNICAL SPECIALISATION MEASURES

Post-secondary training aimed mainly at people with a secondary education certificate or Level III vocational qualification looking for their first job (D.-L. No. 401 of 16.10.1991).

4 UNIVAs - INSTITUTIONS TO PROMOTE INTEGRATION INTO WORKING LIFE

These institutions have been set up in a bid to facilitate integration and improve the link between training and working life by helping young people seeking their first job (as well as other persons). They offer placement and other services to help the persons concerned integrate into working life (Ordinance No. 87 of 8.6.1992, Decree of 24.7.1992 - Series II, Decree of 15.12.1993 - Series II and Decree of 26.8.1994 - Series II).

They have been set up within schools, training centres, public administrations and professional associations in order to facilitate integration and improve the link between training and working life, etc.

5 CREATION OF JOBS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Creation of jobs for young people aged 16-30 seeking their first job, by exempting employers from social security contributions (see 3.2).

6 INTEGRATION INTO THE LABOUR MARKET

Integration allowance.

7 BUSINESS START-UP INCENTIVES

See 4.2.3.

Integration into the labour market

8 PROGRAMME TO INTEGRATE YOUNG PEOPLE INTO WORKING LIFE

- Objective: to improve preparation for working life.
- Target group: young people registered as unemployed.
- Procedures:
 - + duration: max. 6 months;
 - + content: practical vocational training;
 - + trainee: monthly allowance equal to twice the national minimum wage if the trainee's previous training is at higher level, otherwise 1.3 times the minimum wage.

UK

1 CHANGES AND IMPROVEMENTS

The UK has made changes and improvements to ease the transition from school to work by helping young people gain the skills they need for entry to the work force. The proportion of young people staying on in education after compulsory schooling has increased significantly in recent years; and the proportion of young people who enter higher education has increased from one in seven in 1987 to almost one in three now. Measures include:

- in education, the national Curriculum has raised levels of achievement. From September 1995 a revised Curriculum increased flexibility and became more responsive to school pupils' needs;
- General National Vocational Qualifications are being developed to broaden the range of vocational qualifications for pupils of all abilities. They will provide routes into employment or progression to higher education;
- the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) has helped improve the vocational relevance of schools' curricula and prepare young people better for working life.

2 TRAINING AND APPRENTICESHIP MEASURES

Cf. 5.1.6.

Vocational training in the education system

IRL

1 DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

With significantly increasing participation levels in the education system between the ages of 15-18, government policy, as enunciated in the White Paper "Charting our Education Future", is focused on ensuring that students are prepared for life in a rapidly changing society with a recognition also that developments in the area of vocational training need to be integrated with general education policy. In order to meet its objective of ensuring that 90% of the 15-18 age group complete senior cycle education by the year 2000, the government recognised that there is a need to provide a combination of an effective foundation of general education and a strengthened and expanded vocational orientation through the development of the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the Leaving Certificate Applied to complement the traditional Leaving Certificate programme.

In addition, the Regional Technical Colleges, the Dublin Institute of Technology and the universities provide programmes which aim to meet the technical, higher technical and business skills needs of the economy. These Regional Technical Colleges and the Dublin Institute of Technology also provide off-the-job education and training for apprentices. A wide range of vocational education and training courses are offered within the further education sector for young people who need specific, occupationally oriented education and training to enable them to access the labour market.

NL

1 NEW QUALIFICATION STRUCTUR FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING

A new national qualification structure for vocational training will be introduced on 1.8.1998. The social partners at the sectoral level are actively involved in defining qualification standards on the basis of job profiles. Policy is currently directed at strengthening the workplace component as a whole within secondary vocational training. At the higher-education level, in addition to academic education in universities, higher vocational education is provided in multisectoral institutes called "hogescholen". The alternance-based apprenticeship system (1-2 days off-the-job training/education) is based on a contract between trainee and employer.

Employment - training - apprenticeship

A

1 PROMOTION OF VOCATIONAL AND CONTINUING TRAINING

- Target group: young people with difficulties finding a job.
- Objective: to offer vocational and continuing training and preparation for employment.
- Procedures:
 - + organisation: continuing training establishments set up by social partners, firms, training bodies and public-interest associations;
 - + young people: °allowance towards costs of participation;
°health/accident insurance.

2 PROMOTION OF APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

- Target group: young people with disadvantages on the labour market (mentally or physically disabled, those with social adaptation problems, those who have dropped out of education, second-generation immigrants, young women in occupations in which women are under-represented, etc.).
- Procedures:
 - + Support is provided in the form of a lump-sum subsidy towards the costs of apprenticeship training in order to better integrate problem groups into the labour market (placement assistance) and to combat the deficit of training places by creating new ones.

The vocational integration of young people is facilitated by the promotion of additional training measures in training workshops (lump-sum subsidy towards the costs of apprenticeship training).

 - + Beneficiaries: firms concerned.

3 PROMOTION OF SUPPLEMENTARY IN-COMPANY TRAINING

- Target group: apprentices.
- Objective: to improve apprenticeship training quality and encourage multidisciplinary expertise through supplementary training which not all apprenticeship training establishments can offer.
- Procedures: aid paid to firms or establishments covers around 50% of costs; it is limited to 3 months per apprentice per year of apprenticeship training.

B

1 NATIONAL - DUAL TRAINING

- Target group: low-skilled young people aged 18-25.
- Procedures:
 - + duration: max. 3 years;
 - + employer: 100% exemption from social contributions during productive period.

Employment - training - apprenticeship

2 NATIONAL - INDUSTRIAL APPRENTICESHIPS

Industrial apprenticeships - the aim is to allow young people aged 16 to 18 (except where special dispensations are granted for persons over 18) to learn an occupation. This involves alternation between work experience and study: practical work experience is organised at the firm concerned and at the same time theoretical work is done at a school or training centre. The Walloon joint declaration on economic revitalisation and employment promotion provides for the creation of a training and integration scheme aimed at offering trainees practical work experience alongside vocational training, plus the guarantee of a job for a period equivalent to no less than the duration of the traineeship.

In the Flemish agreement on employment, it is stipulated that the various "strands" of training for young people will be drawn together to form a coherent whole consisting of both theory and practice.

F

1 TRAINING CONTRACTS

- Procedures:

+ duration: 1-3 years;

+ worker: exemption from social contributions;

+ employer:

° For apprenticeship, a new mechanism of aid for the employers has been set up by the law of 6.5.1996.

Pre-existing aid (recruitment, tax credit, aid premium for training, apprenticeship tax exemption) has been discontinued and replaced by a premium FRF 26,000 the minimum amount of which is for a 2-year-contract. This amount can be raised according to the age of the apprentice and the duration of training. The cost should be FRF 3 billion in 1996. This premium is added to the exemption from social security contributions from which any employer of apprentices benefits (FRF 3.7 billion in the original Finance Act of 1996).

2 SKILL TRAINING CONTRACTS

- Target group: young people aged 16-25, without a diploma, with an obsolete or inadequate diploma, or not at school or university.

- Procedures:

+ duration: 6 months - 2 years,

+ employer:

° 100% exemption from social contributions on the amount of remuneration above the minimum wage (SMIC);

° partial coverage of training costs: FRF 60 per hour of training, paid by a supplementary resources order (OMA) or tax exemption (0.1% and 0.3% or 0.4%) and reimbursement of FRF 100 per hour of instructor training (maximum: 40 hours);

° flat-rate state grant:

FRF 5,000 per contract with a duration not exceeding 18 months;

FRF 7,000 per contract with a duration of more than 18 months.

Employment - training - apprenticeship

3 FAMILIARISATION CONTRACTS

- Target group: young people aged between 16 and 25.
 - + skilled and unskilled;
 - + immediate employment possible.
- Procedures:
 - + duration: between 6 and 12 months;
 - + employer:
- partial financing of training costs: FRF 50 per hour of training are covered by an OPCA;
- bonus from the AGEFIPH on recruitment of a disabled young person.

4 VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION CONTRACTS

- Target group: young people aged between 16 and 22
 - + who have not gained a qualification from a technical or training facility;
 - + who have a secondary-level leaving certificate but not their desired qualification.
- Procedures:
 - + duration: 6 months, non-renewable;
 - + employer:
- 100% exemption from employer contributions;
- partial financing of training costs: FRF 50 per hour are paid by an OPCA (0.1% and 0.3% or 0.4%);
- partial financing of supervision costs by an OPCA: up to FRF 1,500 per month and young person.

5 ALTERNANCE-BASED TRAINING COURSES

- Target group: young people aged 16-25 who have left school without a technical education certificate.
- Procedure:
 - + duration: between 300 and 1.200 hours;
 - + financing: state.

6 QUALIFYING MEASURES AT REGIONAL LEVEL

- Target group: young people aged 16-25 who have left school with on leaving-certificate-level or have completed the first year at university or have completed sandwich training.
- Procedures:
 - + duration: 800 hours (average);
 - + training organised and implemented on the initiative of the regional authorities.

Employment - training - apprenticeship

I

1 TRAINING-CUM-WORK CONTRACTS/APPRENTICESHIPS

- Target group:
 - + apprenticeships: young people aged between 16 and 25 (29 for handicrafts);
 - + training-cum-work contracts: the age limit is now set at 32 (the maximum age may be raised to 45 in southern regions).
- Procedures:
 - + apprenticeships: reduction of employer social security contributions if they commit themselves to training the young person in a skill; duration of training: between 2 and 5 years, depending on the contract in question;
 - + training-cum-work contracts: relief for the employer in the form of reduced social security contributions; the employer is obliged to allow the young worker a minimum amount of time off for off-the-job training (depending on the occupational group); some regions pay premiums to employers who convert these contracts into open-ended contracts.
- Beneficiaries:
 - + young people and enterprises.
- Developments:
 - + extension to include all sectors;
 - + age group to be limited to 16-24 (26 in the south);
 - + duration between 18 months and 4 years;
 - + three-stage apprenticeship (1. training for work in training centres, 2. alternating training and work, 3. evaluation and certification of acquired skills);
 - + improvement of incentives for enterprises;
 - + monitoring by the social partners of the overall process and the certification procedure.

IRL

1 YOUTHREACH

- Target group: young people aged 15-17 whose education is inadequate or was not acquired at an official school.
- Procedures:
 - + duration: 2 years;
 - + objective: basic training, teaching and vocational experience.

2 COMMUNITY YOUTH TRAINING PROGRAMME

- Target group: young people who have dropped out of secondary education.
- Procedure: the projects must be of benefit to the community, for example, the renovation of old peoples' homes, decoration of community centres, extension of community halls, etc. Since 1984, this programme has served as support vehicle for local communities wishing to undertake major construction projects. FAS pays standard training allowance to the trainees and for the instructor costs. The community organisation sponsoring the project must pay for the costs of materials.

Employment - training - apprenticeship

3 OPTIONS INITIATIVES FOR SCHOOL-LEAVERS

- Target group: all recent school-leavers aged 18 or over with an underlying entitlement to unemployment assistance of at least IEP 15 per week.
- Procedure: The scheme is at present at the pilot stage. Participation for 2 and a half days a week (including a half-day's training) is required in return for a payment of IEP 40 a week. Participation is limited to a maximum of 12 months. The participant may take up any other available part-time work without restriction on the remaining days of the week.

4 APPRENTICESHIP CONTRACTS (Standards-Based Apprenticeship)

The overall objective of the scheme is to ensure that apprentices are trained in sufficient numbers and to an appropriate level of skill to meet the existing and projected needs of the economy for skilled workers.

A new apprenticeship system was introduced in September 1993. The new system is partly funded by a payroll levy and is based on standards achieved rather than time served. It ensures a satisfactory balance between supply and demand for apprentices, and reduces the financial cost to the state while maintaining quality.

5 YOUTH PROGRESSION PROGRAMME

The Youth Progression Programme tracks all 18/19 year-olds who pass the 6 months unemployed threshold via the FAS training/employment agency with a view to screening such persons and placing them in appropriate training work. This programme attempts to break the drift into long-term unemployment.

UK

1 MODERN APPRENTICESHIP

- Target group: mainly 16 and 17 year-old school- and college-leavers with the ability to gain high-level skills and qualifications. Also available for 18-24 year-olds.
- Procedures: high quality, employer-based training; leads to nationally recognised qualifications at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 or above; available in over 60 industry sectors; Modern Apprentices have employed status wherever possible; training period depends on individual circumstances, but commonly around 3 years.

2 TRAINING FOR WORK

- Target group: people unemployed for more than 6 months.
- Procedures: Training according to individual needs to gain the skills and/or qualifications needed to help people get jobs.

Reintegration into the labour market

A

1 **COMMUNITY-BENEFIT INTEGRATION SUBSIDY (Gemeinnützige Eingliederungsbeihilfe)**

Objective: to integrate the long-term unemployed and other labour market problem groups by promoting employment in public-interest establishments.

Target group: long-term unemployed, women caring for children, women returning to work, older people, disabled people and people with social adaptation problems.

Amount: the subsidy amounts to up to 66.7% of wage and non-wage labour costs for both public and private public-interest establishments.

Duration: maximum 1 year (2 years for persons aged over 45; 3 years for disabled persons).

2 **ENTERPRISE INTEGRATION SUBSIDY (Betriebliche Eingliederungsbeihilfe)**

Objective: to integrate labour market problem groups by supporting employment in enterprises (placement assistance) and to reduce the job deficit through the creation of new jobs.

Target group: long-term unemployed, the physically and mentally disabled and mentally ill, people with social adaptation problems and older unemployed (aged over 45).

Duration: maximum 24 months (36 months for the disabled).

Amount: the maximum subsidy may amount to up to 50% of the basis of assessment (gross remuneration of up to ATS 39,702 + 50% of non-wage labour costs) for the relevant subsidy period.

3 **SPECIAL ENTERPRISE INTEGRATION SUBSIDY (Besondere Betriebliche Eingliederungsbeihilfe)**

Objective: the labour market policy aim is to reduce the number of recipients of emergency assistance making the transition into long-term unemployment by integrating long-term unemployed beneficiaries into the labour market.

Target group: recipients of emergency assistance who have been unemployed for 6 months or longer.

Amount: a wage-cost subsidy amounting to up to the rate of emergency assistance.

Duration: maximum 365 days

B

1 **PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR RISK GROUPS**

See 5.1.1(2).

2 **MONITORING OF THE UNEMPLOYED**

Compulsory monitoring, by the public employment services, of persons under the age of 46 who have been unemployed for 9 months and who do not have a secondary school leaving certificate.

Reintegration into the labour market

3 "THIRD EMPLOYMENT CIRCUIT" (TCT)

- Conditions: non-commercial sector, meeting public needs which otherwise would not have been met.
- Procedures:
 - + employer: subsidy amounting to 95% of remuneration and social contributions; retention of 10% of the subsidy in the case of paid services.

4 INTEGRATION ENTERPRISES

- Target group: unemployed persons who are particularly isolated from the labour market.
 - Conditions: performance of work in the third sector; provision of vocational training for workers.
 - Procedures: state aid in various forms.
- Reduction in social security contributions for integration enterprises and organisations with a social orientation which recruit difficult-to-place jobseekers.

5 RECRUITMENT BENEFIT PLAN (Law MB 23.12.1994 - Plan avantage à l'embauche)

Recruitment aid:

- Procedures:
 - + employer: reduction in employer's social security contributions:
 - 75% in the first year and 50% in the second year for persons unemployed for over 1 year;
 - 100% in the first year and 75% in the second year for persons unemployed for over 2 years.
 - + Condition: full-time employment contract (or part-time if at least 50% of full-time).

6 JOBCLUBS

The three regional employment and placement offices (FOREM, ORBEM and VDAB) have set up "jobclubs" for the purpose of helping jobseekers organise their "job-hunting" more efficiently.

7 RECRUITMENT PREMIUM (BRUSSELS REGION)

Private enterprises employing less than 250 workers which increase the number of staff by employing a long-term unemployed jobseeker receive a monthly premium of BEF 15,000 (for a full-time job) or BEF 7,500 (for a part-time job).

8 "WEER-WERK" (BACK-TO-WORK) SCHEME (FLEMISH COMMUNITY)

The aim of this scheme is to help low-skilled long-term unemployed in their search for work through vocational training or a work-experience project.

9 REINTEGRATION OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED WORKERS

The aim of this measure is to create as many jobs as possible for long-term unemployed workers (all workers who have been unemployed for over 5 years and have been in receipt of minimex for at least 3 years). The unemployed workers recruited under this scheme are given a normal open-ended or fixed-term contract for at least half of normal working hours. The new jobs concern tasks which are generally not or no longer carried out. A share of unemployment insurance benefits are retained in order that such jobs may be created.

Reintegration into the labour market

D

1 WAGE SUBSIDIES FOR THE PROMOTION OF PERMANENT RECRUITMENT OF THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED (SPECIAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME)

Promotion of permanent recruitment of the long-term unemployed through wage subsidies to employers.

- Target group: those who have been registered unemployed for at least 12 months before recruitment.

- Procedure:

+ duration: 1 year;

+ employer: receives a wage subsidy amounting to between 60% and 80% of the wage for the first 6 months and between 40% and 60% for the following 6 months depending on the length of unemployment of the person recruited.

The programme has been extended until the end of 1999 (cf. 5.x).

2 PROMOTION OF PROJECTS FOR EMPLOYMENT, QUALIFICATION AND SOCIAL CARE

- Target group: difficult-to-place long-term unemployed.

- Procedures:

+ employer: subsidy of up to 80% towards investment, general costs and costs for training and care staff.

3 INTEGRATION SUBSIDY FOR THE DIFFICULT TO PLACE

With a view to reintegrating difficult-to-place unemployed, wage-cost subsidies are paid to employers to compensate for performance shortfalls.

- Target group: in particular, long-term unemployed and disabled people.

- Conditions:

+ duration of subsidy: as a rule, 1 year; an extension to maximum 2 years is possible where the worker is particularly difficult to place;

+ amount: as a rule, 50% of the wage; increase to 70% possible in individual cases;

+ the subsidy is reduced by at least 10 percentage points after 1 year.

4 WAGE-COST SUBSIDY FOR NEW SMALL BUSINESSES

Employers who have been self-employed for less than 2 years and employ no more than 5 workers are entitled to a fixed-term wage-cost subsidy for unemployed workers recruited for a new job. The aim is to encourage the recruitment of unemployed persons.

- Target group: unemployed persons in need of support.

- Conditions:

+ amount: 50% of the wage;

+ duration of subsidy: maximum 12 months;

+ maximum 2 workers may be subsidised at the same time;

+ recruitment must be for a new job;

+ the viability of the enterprise must be confirmed by an expert body.

5 SUBSIDISED INTEGRATION CONTRACT

Subsidised integration contract between an employer and a difficult-to-place unemployed person for a probationary period with the ultimate aim of permanent employment.

Reintegration into the labour market

DK

1 ASSISTANCE TO THE UNEMPLOYED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE UNEMPLOYMENT SYSTEM

For more information on the framework of the unemployment systems, see 5.1.1. Measures to find work for unemployed persons in receipt of unemployment benefit include the following:

- Placement in non-subsidised jobs
- Information and guidance
- Individual action plan (see 4.2.5)

- JOB TRAINING in both public and private sectors. In the private sector, wages are governed by the relevant collective agreement. Unemployed persons taken on for job training in the public sector may earn a maximum of DKK 83 per hour. Employers who take on an unemployed person for job training receive a wage subsidy of approx. DKK 43 per hour. If the total period during which the subsidy is being paid exceeds 6 months, private employers must continue to employ the unemployed person without a subsidy or offer him or her training.
- INDIVIDUAL JOB TRAINING for unemployed persons who cannot be recruited for job training at ordinary workplaces. Wages, which may be lower than those paid for normal job-training schemes, are agreed by the organisations empowered to negotiate. The employer's wage subsidy may exceed DKK 43 per hour and the subsidy period may be more than one year. There is therefore more scope for taking the individual person's qualifications into account.
- "POOL" JOBS are new jobs for people who have been unemployed for a total of 2 years in a 3-year period. They last for up to 3 years and are in areas of public service which the government wishes to upgrade, such as care, nature and environment, culture, energy, education, labour market, housing, public transport and health. The length of time these jobs last means that they represent more meaningful employment for the individual, not least because employers have an incentive to provide proper training for "pool" employees. This may take the form of supplementary courses and/or real in-house training programmes and may count towards any subsequent training. During a "pool" job a benefit is payable corresponding to the maximum unemployment benefit. The hourly wage is approx. DKK 83.
- TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES, either in the mainstream educational system or as part of a specially designed course adapted to the background of the unemployed person concerned. During training an allowance is payable which corresponds to unemployment benefit in the case of unemployed persons aged over 25 and half the maximum unemployment benefit in the case of young persons aged under 25. Young persons eligible for a state student grant (SU) or who are already undergoing training which entitles them to same are not entitled to a training allowance.
- START-UP GRANT for unemployed persons in receipt of unemployment benefit who want to set up and run their own business. The start-up grant corresponds to 50% of the maximum unemployment benefit and is payable for up to 2½ years.
- TRAVELLING EXPENSES payable for participation in training courses, individual job-training schemes or "pool" jobs.

The recruitment of unemployed persons to ordinary or individual job-training schemes or "pool" jobs must result in an increase in the staffing level and not give rise to unfair competition with private enterprises.

Reintegration into the labour market

E

1 PROMOTION OF OPEN-ENDED EMPLOYMENT FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

- Long-term unemployed (40% reduction in employer social security contributions for the first two years of the contract).
- Persons aged over 45 (60% reduction for the first two years and 50% for the remainder of the employment relationship).
- Long-term unemployed women in occupations in which they are under-represented (60% reduction during the first two years of service).
- Disabled people (subsidy of ESP 500,000 and reduction in employer social security contributions of 70% or 90%, depending on whether the worker is younger or older than 45).
- In the case of fixed-term contracts, reductions are only available for disabled workers (50% reduction in employer social security contributions per fixed-term contract - with a duration of between 12 months and 3 years - on a full-time basis).

Reductions of up to 50% of employers' social security contributions for a period of 24 months where fixed-term contracts are converted into open-ended contracts are provided for in the Agreement on Employment Stability, which has universal applicability.

F

1 CES (Employment and Solidarity Contracts)

- Target group: long-term jobseekers who have been registered as such for at least 12 of the 18 months prior to recruitment.
- Employers: local authorities, enterprises governed under public law, non-profit organisations in the private sector (mainly associations).
- Procedures:
 - + duration: between 3 and 12 months (up to 36 months for persons in severe difficulties);
 - + worker: fixed-term part-time employment contract (20 hours per week);
 - + employer: 100% exemption from statutory or collectively agreed social security contributions (with the exception of contributions to unemployment insurance) within the framework of a wage based on the statutory minimum hourly wage. Remuneration is based on the SMIC (statutory minimum wage); 65% of the wage is paid by the state (85% for persons in extreme difficulties or for certain employers who receive support from a compensation fund). A compensation fund may finance between 50% and 100% of the employer's remaining costs.

Reintegration into the labour market

2 FUNDED-EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS (CEC - Contrat Emploi Consolidé)

- Target group: persons who benefited from a community-work contract (CES) and have no prospect of employment or training on expiry of the CES; mainly long-term unemployed and persons in receipt of RMI (minimum integration income) who have been unemployed for at least one year.
- + Employers: as for CES.
- Procedures:
 - + duration: open-ended or fixed-term contract (12 months, renewable 4 times);
 - + employer: subsidy on the basis of 30 working hours per week to a maximum of 120% of the SMIC.
- 100% exemption from all statutory or collectively agreed social security contributions (with the exception of contributions to unemployment insurance, additional pension insurance and, where applicable, travel costs).
- Reimbursement of remuneration: 60% of the maximum amount in the first year, 50% in the second year, 40% in the third year, 30% in the fourth year and 20% in the fifth year; 50% each year for 5 years for persons in extreme difficulties.

3 INTEGRATION ENTERPRISES (Enterprises d'Insertion)

Two aims:

- to help people in extreme difficulties or those who have repeatedly failed to gain entry to the labour market by providing them with the best possible conditions;
- goods and services are to be produced according to the same regulations and of the same quality as in other enterprises.

- Target group: long-term unemployed, young people in extremely difficult situations.

- Procedures:

- + duration: fixed-term contract for maximum 24 months;
 - + employer: bonus of FRF 38,000 per recruitment of a person seeking reintegration.
- 50% reduction of employer contributions to social security, family allowance and accident insurance.
- Grants from a loan guarantee fund (for working capital and investments).

4 TEMPORARY INTEGRATION ENTERPRISES (Entreprise d'Interim d'Insertion)

- Target group: long-term unemployed.
- Procedures:
 - + duration: contract with a maximum term of 24 months;
 - + employer:
 - bonus of FRF 180,000 per full-time supervised job;
 - aid from the loan guarantee fund (for working capital and investments);
 - the cumulation of public benefits may not exceed FRF 300,000 per job and year.

Reintegration into the labour market

5 INTERMEDIARY ASSOCIATIONS (Associations Intermédiaires)

- Aim:

To place persons experiencing difficulty with reintegration (especially long-term unemployed and RMI beneficiaries) with individuals, associations or companies in order that they may carry out activities which are not undertaken by private initiatives or local authorities in view of the local economic situation. The employers receive initial aid of between FRF 50,000 and 100,000. Part of their task is to support and supervise the workers in their efforts to re-enter the labour market.

- Procedures:

+ open-ended or fixed-term contract.

+ 100% exemption from employer contributions to social security and family allowance.

The exemption concerns that part of the wage paid for activities carried out over 750 hours in one year or during one uninterrupted year. That part of the wage paid for activities carried out in excess of 750 hours is subject to the usual statutory contributions.

6 SIFE: INTEGRATION AND TRAINING-FOR-EMPLOYMENT COURSES (Stage d'Insertion et de Formation à l'Emploi)

- Procedures:

+ duration: minimum 40 hours/maximum 1,200 hours;

+ average: individual course (150 hours) or group course (430 hours);

+ content: individualised training in the form of modules in accordance with the needs of the trainees; some in-plant training.

Status: practical vocational trainee.

7 FURTHER GUIDANCE MODULE (MOA - Module d'Orientation approfondie)

- Aim:

To offer persons who have been excluded from the labour market for a considerable length of time the possibility of analysing their personal and vocational situation and thus to develop new motivation in order to facilitate their participation in reintegration measures.

- Target group: persons who are extremely difficult to place, for example due to the long duration of their unemployment.

- Procedures:

+ duration: 50-200 hours over a period of 3 months;

+ content: several modules which are combined according to the individual's needs.

Reintegration into the labour market

8 MOBILITY AID (Aide à la Mobilité)

- Aim:

To encourage mobility among long-term jobseekers.

- Procedures:

+ lump-sum travel allowance of FRF 1,000 plus removal grant of FRF 5,000 (FRF 7,000 in exceptional cases).

Conditions:

- The jobseeker must take up employment which is at a distance from his place of residence. The contract must be either open ended or have a fixed term of not less than 12 months.
- Resettlement due to employment located at some distance from the previous place of residence.

9 EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE CONTRACT (Contrat Initiative Emploi)

- Target group: long-term jobseekers and persons in extreme difficulties who are recruited on an open-ended contract or fixed-term contract with a duration of between 12 and 24 months.

- Procedures:

These contracts entail the right to total exemption from social security contributions up to the value of the SMIC. In the case of some target groups, the employer receives a lump-sum subsidy of FRF 2,000 or FRF 1,000 per month for 2 years in the case of an open-ended contract and for the term of the contract in the case of a fixed-term contract. The amount of the subsidy is staggered, depending on the duration of previous unemployment and the degree of difficulty in reintegrating the person concerned.

Where applicable, a training subsidy of FRF 50 per hour may be provided for between 200 and 400 hours.

Possibility of subsidies for assistants and additional bonuses in the case of disabled workers.

IRL

1 BACK TO WORK ALLOWANCE

- Procedure:

- + duration: 3 years,
- + worker: continuation of unemployment benefit (75% in the first year, 50% in the second year and 25% in the third year),
- + condition: recruitment into certain specified sectors, or self-employment.

Since being launched, the programme has encouraged 13,000 persons to return to activity.

2 RECRUITMENT ASSISTANCE

- Target group: workers unemployed for at least 13 weeks.

- Procedure:

- + duration: 2 years,
- + employer: exemption from social security contributions.

Reintegration into the labour market

3 COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

- Target group: people unemployed for more than 1 year, people on single-parent benefit and those referred by the Rehabilitation Board.
 - Procedure: financing of projects of benefit to the community, organised by public or voluntary or community bodies.
- In 1996, a total of IEP 267.7 million was allocated to CE. The programme was split into two options, Part Time Integration Option and Part Time Job Option, with 30,000 and 10,000 places available under each option respectively.

4 PILOT WHOLE-TIME JOBS OPTION

- Target group: long-term unemployed in receipt of UA/UB, Lone Parents Allowance for over 5 years. Must be over 35 years of age and live in a designated disadvantaged area.
- Procedure:
 - + duration: 3 years; the pilot will finish in December 1999;
 - + employer: local "not for profit" sponsors provide 3 years full-time work-employers are exempt from employers' PRSI contribution.

The aim of the scheme is to provide 1,000 people with full-time work for 3 years. It specifically targets those long-term unemployed for whom access to the labour market is extremely limited now and for the foreseeable future.

5 JOBSTART

- Target group: long-term unemployed, Rehabilitation Board referrals, travelling community in receipt of welfare payments for 3 years or longer.
- Procedure: a subsidy of IEP 80 per week is paid to the employer in respect of 52 weeks continuous employment of Jobstart participant. Jobstart worker may keep secondary benefits subject to earnings. Any registered employer will be eligible to apply. The target is to cater for 5,000 people. The jobs must be full time and must not displace an existing worker.

6 WORKPLACE PROGRAMME

The Workplace Programme, introduced at the end of May 1996, was continued in 1997. It gives persons who are more than 6 months unemployed a 5-week work placement during which the unemployed party maintains all social welfare entitlement and is paid travel and meal costs.

NL

1 WORK POOLS (Banenpools)

Objective: to offer work to the very long-term unemployed (> 3 years) for whom a job placement is very hard to realise. This is done by creating additional jobs in the collective and non-profit sector (in health care, education, culture, welfare and social services, control and maintenance).

Terms of Employment of those participating:

- + They will receive a fixed-term contract for at least 2 years or an open-ended contract with the Work Pool organisation. This organisation will lend them out to different employers;
- + Their remuneration will be the statutory minimum wage (WML, 36-hour working week as the norm) and a refund for job-related expenses (travel expenses, etc.).

Reintegration into the labour market

2 **FRAMEWORK REGULATION ON INTEGRATION INTO WORKING LIFE (KRA)**

Objective: aimed at stimulating a sustainable (re)integration of the long-term unemployed (> 1 year) into the labour process. This is done by creating additional jobs ("job-experience placements"). As a rule, KRA and the application of the "Act on the Reduction of Tax and Social Security Contributions (WVA)" go together. In this case, the allowance for the employer consists of a grant (once only) and a reduction in tax/social security contributions. The term of a subsidised "job-experience placement" varies between 6 and 12 months.

3 **REGULATION CONCERNING ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT FOR THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED**

Objective: up to and including 1998, the government will finance 40,000 new jobs in parts of the collective sector. Gradually these jobs will be spread out over a limited number of local communities on behalf of their residential long-term unemployed (> 1 year). With regard to the distribution of the new jobs, local communities with a cumulation of social problems will receive preferential treatment. Until January 1997, new jobs had been awarded to 79 local communities. Work pool participants (see 5.2.1(1)) residential in these communities may also apply for the new jobs.

The new jobs ought to be realised in specified subsectors of the collective sector and in addition to already existing jobs. The specified subsectors are: local communities: public security, surveillance, child care, maintenance of the environment and of public monuments, education and the sports sector; health sector: hospitals, nurseries, day-care centres, homes for handicapped and for aged persons and home care, social care, youth care, medical and child-care centres.

Terms of Employment:

In principle, the unemployed enter into a temporary contract of 1 year, for at most 32 hours per week. Participants emanating from a Work Pool (and generally already working 36 hours) may retain their original weekly working hours. After 1 year, the temporary contract may be converted into a permanent contract. In principle, in the first year the remuneration is equal to 100% of the statutory minimum wage (WML, 36-hour working week as the norm). Thereafter, in a few years remuneration may rise to a maximum of 120% WML. Participants emanating from a Work Pool may sometimes receive a slightly higher wage.

4 **REGULATION ON SUBSIDIES FOR EXPERIMENTS ON ACTIVATION OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS**

This regulation creates the possibility to convert, on an experimental basis, social assistance benefits into a fixed amount of money. Ultimately, the objective of the experiments is to gain knowledge of effective methods to reintegrate the long-term unemployed (> 1 year) into the labour process, and to apply these methods on a nationwide scale. For local community initiatives to obtain a state subsidy, it is important that the approach be innovative. The experiments will expire on 31 December 1998.

Terms of Employment:

- + Remuneration will be at most 120% of the statutory minimum wage (WML).
- + Working time per week will be (on average) 32 hours.

Reintegration into the labour market

5 WORK WHILE RETAINING SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BENEFIT

The objective of the regulation is to test out, on an experimental basis, alternative measures for any possible form of reintegration of people who will probably not be able to succeed in acquiring a paid job on their own (or with the help of the usual provisions) or are threatened with social exclusion. The target group consists of social assistance beneficiaries (> 1 year without a job). This regulation creates more flexibility for social assistance beneficiaries in regard to work (on the basis of Art. 144 ABW).

P

1 EMPLOYMENT INCENTIVES TO PRESERVE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Employment incentives in connection with conservation of cultural heritage (CPC) (Decree No. 247 of 29.3.1995).

2 SELF-PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE

Self-placement assistance (Decree No. 247 of 29.3.1995)
Grants to encourage the very long-term unemployed (2 years and over) to find jobs themselves.

3 PLACEMENT INCENTIVES

Placement incentives (payment of advertising costs) (Decree No. 247 of 29.3.1997).
To encourage initiatives on the part of the long-term and very long-term unemployed to find employment via newspaper advertisements.

4 SELF-EMPLOYMENT INCENTIVE FOR THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED

Self-employment incentive for the long-term unemployed and older workers, in the form of a 20% increase in the relevant allowance (12 times the minimum wage).

5 LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

An integrated programme to combat long-term unemployment: stimulation and processing of job offers, vocational guidance, personalised training programmes and support for various forms of job placement.

6 ADULT EDUCATION (PRODEP)

The adult-education programme focuses particularly on long-term unemployed persons with poor training and educational qualifications.

S

1 RECRUITMENT AID

- Target group: the long-term unemployed.
- Procedures:
 - + employer: subsidy of up to 50% of wage costs, with a ceiling of SEK 14,300 per month;
 - + duration: maximum 6 months (extension possible up to 12 months).
- Conditions:
 - + employers: private sector, local authorities, etc.

Reintegration into the labour market

2 PROGRAMME FOR THE ACQUISITION OF VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Target group: unemployed.
- Objective: to provide an opportunity to participate in activities benefiting the community or local companies which otherwise would not have taken place.
- Procedures:
 - + duration: 6 months;
 - + conditions: regular workers must not be replaced.

UK

1 TRAINING FOR WORK (main training programme for unemployed adults)

- Target group: people unemployed for more than 6 months.
- Procedures: training according to individual needs to provide the skills and/or qualifications needed to help people to find jobs. In 1997/98 over 180,000 people will benefit.

2 JOBCLUBS

- Target group: people unemployed for more than 6 months.
- Procedures: advice and training in jobseeking techniques. Jobclubs provide resources such as stamps, stationery, access to telephones and word processors as well as information about jobs. They also provide a forum for mutual support among jobseekers. In 1997/98 there are 156,633 opportunities at a cost of GBP 28.043 million.

3 JOB INTERVIEW GUARANTEES

- Target group: people unemployed for more than 6 months.
- Procedures: in exchange for a matching and pre-interview screening service, employers guarantee an interview for people selected from the target group. People in the target group are given advice and help with jobseeking. There are 300,000 opportunities in 1997/98.

4 RESTART INTERVIEWS

- Target group: compulsory for people unemployed for 6 months and every 6 months thereafter.
- Procedures: the aim of these interviews is to look afresh at the jobseeker's situation; review their work goals and the steps they have been taking to find work; re-emphasise the conditions under which Jobseeker's Allowance is paid; give information about the opportunities available to help the jobseeker back to work; and revise the Jobseeker's Agreement, if appropriate. More than GBP 2.38 million interviews are forecast for 1997/98 and GBP 23 million has been allocated for this measure.

5 JOBPLAN WORKSHOPS

- Target group: people aged 25 and over who have been unemployed for at least 12 months and who decline the offer of a place on other government employment or training programmes.
- Procedures: compulsory 1-week course, individual assessment and guidance with a view to developing a strategy for reintegration into working life (around 89,000 opportunities available in 1997/98 at a cost of GBP 9.27 million).

Reintegration into the labour market

6 RESTART COURSES

- Target group: people who have been unemployed for at least 24 months and decline the offer of a place on other government employment or training programmes. They will normally have been on a Jobfinder caseload prior to referral to a Restart course.
- Procedures: compulsory 2-week programme (part-time) to help people with their jobsearch (around 47,000 places available in 1997/98 at a cost of GBP 4.5 million).

7 WORK TRIALS

- Target group: people unemployed more than 6 months.
- Procedures: lasts up to 3 weeks and the jobseeker continues to draw Jobseeker's Allowance. It gives them the opportunity to show the employer that they are suitable for the job. The employer does not pay a wage during this time and is under no obligation to recruit the individual at the end of the work trial. In 1997/98, there are 30,000 opportunities at a cost of GBP 3.5 million.

8 WORKWISE

- Target group: people aged 18-24 who have been unemployed at least 12 months and decline the offer of a place on another government employment or training programme. They will normally have been on a 1-2-1 caseload prior to referral.
- Procedures: compulsory 4-week part-time programme. Provides guidance and help with jobsearch. There are 22,000 opportunities available in 1997/98 at a cost of GBP 4.9 million.

9 JOBSEARCH PLUS

- Target group: people unemployed for more than 13 weeks.
- Procedures: training and advice on effective jobsearch including defining clear and realistic job goals and developing jobsearch techniques. In 1997/98, 79,000 people are expected to benefit at a cost of GBP 5.32 million.

10 1-2-1

- Target group: jobseekers unemployed for 12 and 18 months.
- Procedures: a series of intensive interviews for long-term unemployed jobseekers. In 1997/98, 179,250 people are expected to benefit.

11 JOBFINDER

- Target group: jobseekers unemployed for 2 years or more.
- Procedures: series of 7 interviews for very long-term unemployed jobseekers. In 1997/98, 250,000 jobseekers are expected to benefit.

Special training programmes

NL

1 FRAMEWORK REGULATION FOR TRAINING

The Framework Regulation for Training (KRS Kaderregeling Scholing) provides a national framework by means of which Regional Boards can support and encourage vocational training of unemployed workers and workers whose jobs are under threat and who without training cannot be adapted to or retained in the labour process.

2 CONTRIBUTION SCHEME FOR TRAINING THE UNEMPLOYED

The sector-based statutory contribution scheme for training the unemployed (BBSW 1996) seeks to encourage the training of the registered unemployed by financially assisting the cooperative associations of employers' and workers' organisations in the various industrial sectors at national level by providing subsidies per participant. The Regional Employment Board assesses the training programme and declares its own level of involvement in the training activities.

3 CENTRES FOR VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION AND PREPARATION

The Centres for Vocational Orientation and Preparation (CBB) aim to improve the labour market position of those who are at a disadvantage due to social-cultural factors and for whom any other available training course is still inadequate. CBB courses are directed at the removal of deficits concerning knowledge, qualification and social preparedness. There is no minimum requirement with respect to the duration of unemployment. In practice, approx. 75% of the participants are > 1 year unemployed and about 40% > 3 years.

Measures for older workers

F

1 **CES (Employment and Solidarity Contracts)**

- Target group: jobseekers aged over 50.
- Procedures: see 5.2.1(1).

2 **"DELALANDE" CONTRIBUTION**

- Target group: employees aged 50 or over.
- Procedures:
 - + employer: additional contribution (equivalent to between 1 and 6 months' gross pay) to the unemployment insurance fund in the case of termination of an employment contract leading to entitlement to unemployment benefit.

3 **INTERMEDIARY ASSOCIATIONS**

- Target group: unemployed over 50 years.
- Procedures:
 - + duration: open-ended or fixed-term contract;
 - + employer: 100% exemption from employer's social insurance and family allowance contributions; the exemption relates to employees' remuneration for working time up to 750 hours per calendar year or over a continuous period of one year. Remuneration for hours worked in excess of 750 hours per annum is subject to the usual statutory contributions.

4 **COMPENSATORY EMPLOYMENT REPLACEMENT ALLOWANCE (Allocation de Remplacement pour l'Emploi)**

- Beneficiaries: workers who have contributed for 40 years to old-age pension insurance.
- Procedures:
- payment from the unemployment insurance scheme of an allowance equal to 65% of the retiree's former wage up to the age of 60;
 - the beneficiary must quit work and an unemployed person (preferably a young person aged under 26) be recruited in his place.

Equal pay and equal treatment (1. Legislation 2. Collective agreements)

E

1 LEGISLATION

Article 17 of the Workers' Statute guarantees non-discrimination in labour relations, as does the Spanish constitution, which states that all Spaniards are equal before the law, without discrimination on the basis of gender. Article 28 of the Workers' Statute stipulates equal pay for work of equal value, without discrimination based on gender; Article 96 defines sexual discrimination by the employer in matters of pay as an offence. Law 7/89 legalises the principle of transfer of the burden of proof to the employer where a worker claims discrimination on grounds of gender. The Second Action Plan for Equal Opportunities was approved in January 1993. It includes provisions for equal pay for work of equal value.

2 COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

The new Article 22 of the Workers' Statute regulates job classification, based on the variety of functions, levels of remuneration and job categories by creating the concept of equivalent categories and leaving scope for collective negotiation. Criteria for classifying workers in groups and categories must be based on the rules of common law applicable to male and female workers, while ensuring non-discrimination on grounds of gender.

NL

1 LEGISLATION

The Equal Treatment Act of 1 March 1980 was improved in 1989 and replaced in 1994 by the General Act on Equal Treatment. The Commission for Equal Treatment was established with the main task of judging whether a person (or group of persons) has been unequally treated (direct or indirect discrimination) incl. on the basis of gender. Individuals, interest groups and works councils may ask the Commission for a judgement. These judgements are not absolute, but the Supreme Court has decreed that judges are obliged to give consideration to the judgement of the Commission.

A law which prohibits employers from introducing differences in working conditions based on working hours came into force on 1 November 1996. The act give part-timers an explicit right to equal treatment in areas negotiated by the social partners, such as (above-minimum) wages, holiday pay and entitlements, overtime payments, bonuses and training.

2 COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

The policy is to give social partners more scope to shape employment relations. This means that regulations on payment and working hours tend to be seen as matters to be determined through decentralised consultation by the parties concerned, and not by compulsory legislation. Nevertheless, provisions concerning measures to promote equal treatment are featuring to a growing extent in collective agreements (especially in sectors with a relatively high number of female workers). These provisions cover, in particular, rules on child-care arrangements, parental leave, sexual harassment and positive action programmes.

Equal pay and equal treatment (1. Legislation 2. Collective agreements)**UK****1 LEGISLATION**

In British law, the right to equal pay is laid down in the 1970 Equal Pay Act (as amended). In Northern Ireland, the Equal Pay Act (Northern Ireland) 1970 applies. The Act provides for an equality clause in employment contracts and applies to situations of like work, work rated as equivalent and work of equal value (cf. 1.2). The right to equal pay does not arise where there is a genuinely material difference in the work (cf. 1.3). In 1996, the Equal Opportunities Commission issued a Code of Practice concerning the implementation of equal pay, which came into force as a statutory Code in March 1997.

2 COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

The right to equal treatment is laid down in the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended). Section 1 defines discrimination. Section 2 applies this definition to men as well. Discrimination on grounds of marital status is forbidden (cf. 3). Discrimination is forbidden as regards general access to employment or working conditions such as transfer, promotion or training (cf. 6). An exception is made for jobs where sex is a genuine occupational qualification (cf. 7). The Act provides for the creation of the Equal Opportunities Commission (Part IV) and defines its powers: research and education, codes of practice, formal investigations, issuing non-discrimination notices, assisting claimants. The Act covers direct and indirect discrimination, and (via case law) sexual harassment.

Measures for unemployed women

A

1 INNOVATORY TRAINING MEASURES

- Objective: to reduce labour market segregation based on gender.
- Content: training leading to a qualification in new or modern occupational fields which is geared, on the one hand, towards the needs of enterprises and the specific needs of the target group (e.g. women returning to work) and, on the other hand, towards improving the employment prospects of women.

2 CHILD-CARE ALLOWANCE (Kinderbetreuungsbeihilfe)

Target group: persons on low incomes who wish to take up employment or participate in a training course offered by the Employment Service.

Objective: Employment or participation in employment-related training.

Amount: the amount of the subsidy towards child-care costs depends on the income of the recipient and the kind and duration of child care.

Duration: up to 3 years per child (the application must be renewed every 6 months).

3 CHILD-MINDERS AND CHILD-CARE PROJECTS

Objective:

1) A contribution by the Employment Service towards reducing the job deficit through the creation of new jobs in the area of child care.

2) Labour market integration of persons with child-care obligations and employment maintenance through increased numbers of child-care facilities.

Target group:

1) Unemployed persons with child-care obligations.

2) Persons employed in private child-care establishments (parent's initiatives, children's groups, child-minder projects, company crèches, private crèches, etc.).

Amount: the subsidy amounts to 50% of wage and non-wage labour costs.

Duration: up to 4 years for each child-minder.

4 REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING PARENTAL LEAVE

- Target group: recipients of parental leave benefit (Karenzurlaubsgeld) who have interrupted their occupational activity to look after a child.

- Procedures:

+ duration: 3 months,

+ employers: grant amounting to 66% of the employee's gross pay in firms with no more than 10 employees (40% in firms with up to 50 employees); larger companies are not eligible unless they organise special training measures for reintegrated workers (this type of aid is not a statutory entitlement).

5 ENTERPRISE INTEGRATION SUBSIDY (Betriebliche Eingliederungsbeihilfe)

- Target group: women experiencing difficulties in the labour market following a long career break or as a result of sexual discrimination.

- Procedures: see 5.2.1(2).

Measures for unemployed women

D

1 JOB INTRODUCTION ALLOWANCE FOR WOMEN RETURNING TO WORK

Subsidies are paid to the employers of employees who return to working life after periods spent caring for children or family members if these employees are able to work to full capacity only after a familiarisation phase.

Rate and duration of the familiarisation subsidy: 30% of the collectively agreed or usual wage for the location for up to 6 months. In certain justified exceptional cases, up to 50% of the employee's wage for up to 1 year.

2 SPECIAL QUALIFICATION ASSISTANCE (ESF cofinancing)

The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is introducing smaller-scale programmes, e.g. special qualification assistance. These programmes are limited in terms of both funding and time and are sometimes cofinanced by the European Social Fund.

3 REGIONAL ADVISORY AGENCIES

Regional advisory agencies have been set up in all Länder to provide training and employment advice for women returning to the labour market. In addition, women are given support within the framework of existing labour market instruments in proportion to their number amongst the unemployed. Support for women returning to the labour market is a priority area.

P

1 VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED WOMEN

Employment and vocational training for women (D.-L. No. 445 of 4.10.1980). Support for vocational training for unemployed women in order to help them reintegrate into the labour market; the focus is on innovatory areas, traditionally male occupations and self-employment. Also support for the establishment of "exchange and assistance networks" comprising organisations and individuals concerned with training for women, with a view to promoting cooperation and exchanges of information and experience.

2 TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

Training and employment programmes (D.-L. No. 445 of 4.10.1980 and D.-L. No. 247 of 12.7.1985). 20% increase in subsidies for recruitment of women in occupations where they are under-represented and business start-up aid for women.

3 EXEMPTION FROM VOCATIONAL TRAINING COSTS

By virtue of Decree No. 8/95 (13.2.1995), employers and vocational training establishments are reimbursed their training costs for women. Previous measures promoting training and reintegration for women in traditionally male occupations remain in force.

Measures for unemployed women

4 TRAINING INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN

Resolution No. 32/94 (17.5.1994) establishes vocational training initiatives for women as a priority objective. A special information network for long-term unemployed women and women returning to the labour market is also planned. There is a proposal concerning company expansion and job creation at local level in conjunction with local/regional development plans. These initiatives will mainly cover traditional activities (craft trades) and "local services" (tourism, protection of heritage and the environment). All these sectors should have a positive impact on the reintegration of women, as they mainly offer jobs for women.

Child-care services (system, provisions)

IRL

1 CHILD-CARE SERVICES

Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 6 years. There are two systems of publicly funded services for children under 6 years - welfare and education; these systems overlap for children aged 3-5 years. Within the welfare system, services are the responsibility of the Department of Health and there are two types of centre. Publicly funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children are uncommon; where found, they are usually provided in nurseries and community playgroups which have extended their service to take some school-age children. Private unsubsidised services are provided by child-minders and in centres. Public funding is provided to start child-care facilities in areas of social and economic disadvantage.

A programme of action has recently been approved by the Minister for Education aimed at providing child-care support for participants in second-chance education and training programmes, particularly the Youthreach Programme (early school-leavers) and the VTOS (long-term unemployed).

NL

1 CHILD-CARE SERVICES

There are two systems of publicly funded services for children under 5 - welfare and education. Within the welfare system, services are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and local authorities. There are several types of centre, generally available throughout the year. In addition, there are local publicly funded offices which liaise between family day carers and parents wanting to use this service who do not themselves employ carers. Children aged 4 years can be admitted early to primary school. Publicly funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children are provided in centres which are independent of schools and some of which also take younger pre-school children. All these services are publicly funded and managed by private organisations. The government has substantially contributed to child care through the stimulatory measure on Child Care 1990-1993, which was extended until 1996. A new measure was introduced by the government to help provide school-age child care with an investment of NLG 160 million in the period 1997-2000.

UK

1 CHILD-CARE SERVICES

There is a range of services - both publicly and privately funded - providing day care or education for young children. These systems overlap for children aged 36-60 months. In the welfare system, services are the responsibility of the English Department of Health and the welfare sections of the Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh Offices at national level, with local authorities responsible at local level (except in NI). There are several types of centre and a small number of family day carers. Pre-school education, for children aged mainly 3-5 years, is provided in publicly funded nursery schools and classes attached to primary schools, in private nurseries and nursery schools and in voluntary playgroups. A central government initiative has created 74,000 additional child-care places in England alone for school-age children since its launch in 1993, and is expected to create an additional 6,800 places by 1997. The government is in the process of drawing up a national child-care strategy, which will help parents, especially women, to balance family and working life. An announcement will be made by the end of 1997.

Measures to promote the training of disabled persons

A

1 FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

Under the terms of the Disabled Workers Recruitment Act (Behinderteneinstellungsgesetz), every employer with 25 or more employees is obliged to recruit one disabled worker benefiting under the said Act for every 25 other workers. An employer who fails to comply or fails to comply fully with this legal obligation is liable pay a compensatory tax for every job not obligatorily filled with a disabled person. The taxes are imposed by the federal social welfare offices at the end of each year and are paid into a Compensatory Tax Fund administered by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs. These funds are earmarked for benefits granted directly to disabled people and to employers who employ disabled people. All the labour market policy measures provided by the Employment Service and listed above are also open to the physically and mentally disabled and the mentally ill, although more generous rates and durations may apply, depending on the degree of disability.

This applies in particular to the following measures:

Enterprise integration subsidy (see 5.2.1);

Special integration subsidy (see 5.2.1);

Community-benefit integration subsidy (see 5.2.1);

Subsidy to socioeconomic enterprises (see 2.3.1).

The federal social welfare offices are responsible for long-term measures and measures for disabled persons with a reduced capacity of over 50%.

2 TRAINING BONUS

Employers receive a bonus for every disabled employee benefiting under the Act who is undergoing training.

Target group: disabled persons with at least 50% disability benefiting under the Disabled Workers Recruitment Act.

3 SUBSIDIES FOR THE CREATION OF APPRENTICESHIP AND OTHER REGULAR TRAINING PLACES FOR DISABLED PERSONS BENEFITING UNDER THE ACT

The prerequisite for receipt of a subsidy is proof that the apprenticeship or training could not have taken place without support. The amount and the duration of the subsidy depend on the needs in the individual case.

Target group: disabled persons with at least 50% disability benefiting under the Disabled Workers Recruitment Act.

UK

1 EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING INITIATIVES

The majority of disabled people are assisted through mainstream services provided by the Department for Education and Employment, its agency, the Employment Service, and Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs). Many mainstream programmes have reduced eligibility criteria for disabled people, who have priority on the main programmes for which they are eligible and suitable. Where specialist help over and above this is necessary, it is provided through the Employment Service's Placing Assessment and Counselling Teams (PACTs). Programmes specifically for disabled people are the following.

Measures to promote the training of disabled persons

2 EMPLOYMENT REHABILITATION

Addresses specific, employment-related needs that result from a person's disability, preventing them from immediately being able to enter employment or take up vocational training of a type which would otherwise be suitable for them.

- Aims to help 12,250 people in 1997/98 at a cost of GBP 9.4 million.

3 ACCESS TO WORK

Provides practical help to assist disabled people find jobs, retain employment and reach their potential at work.

- Aims to help around 10,500 people in 1997/98 at a cost of GBP 19 million.

4 JOB INTRODUCTION SCHEME

Enables a disabled jobseeker to try out a job when they or the employer are unsure of their suitability.

- Aims to help around 1,700 people in 1997/98 at a cost of GBP 0.5 million.

5 SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT (SEP)

Helps around 22,000 people with severe disabilities who are unable to work in open employment. Includes Remploy's network of factories, Supported Placements and Supported Workshops.

- Aims to help 9,782 Remploy employees (including people in factories and on placements with host employers) in 1997/98 at a total cost of GBP 94.2 million.

- Aims to provide 12,250 places (excluding Remploy) in 1997/98, on either Supported Placements or in Supported Workshops at a total cost of GBP 60.9 million.

6 RESIDENTIAL TRAINING COLLEGES

Help around 1,000 people a year with severe disabilities for whom residential vocational training provision is appropriate.

7 DISABILITY WORKING ALLOWANCE (DWA)

A non-contributory, income-related, tax-free social security benefit for some disabled people who work for 16 hours a week or more and who have an illness or disability which puts them at a disadvantage in getting a job. It aims to provide an incentive for disabled people who wish to return to work. To be eligible, disabled people must be working 16 hours a week or more, have a relevant qualifying benefit and have GBP 16,000 or less in capital. In October 1996, there were 11,300 people receiving the benefit. Expenditure on DWA was expected to reach GBP 25 million by the end of 1996/97.

Other measures for disabled persons

A

1 **WAGE-COST SUBSIDIES TO ENTERPRISES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF REGULAR AID TO DISABLED PERSONS**

Under the terms of the Disabled Workers Recruitment Act and within the framework of regular aid to disabled persons, wage-cost subsidies amounting to up to 50% of wage costs are provided from the Compensatory Tax Fund to private enterprises for the duration of one year. The intention is to compensate for shortfalls in performance due to the employment of disabled persons benefiting under the Act (at least 50% disability). An extension of the subsidy is possible for a further year if the shortfall continues. As a rule, the wage-cost subsidies were cofinanced to date by the Compensatory Tax Fund and the Länder and occasionally also by the Employment Service. However, following a transitional regulation on the part of the Employment Service, permanent financing will no longer be provided from its Shortfall Allowance Fund.

Target group: disabled persons with at least 50% disability benefiting under the Disabled Workers Recruitment Act.

2 **PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT IN SHELTERED WORKSHOPS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF REGULAR AID TO DISABLED PERSONS**

As in the model described above, wage-cost subsidies are provided by the Länder from regional funds in order to compensate for performance shortfalls due to the employment of disabled workers in sheltered workshops. The Employment Service currently cofinances this subsidy in some Länder but, following a transitional regulation, will no longer do so in future.

Sheltered workshops receive subsidies from the Compensatory Tax Fund in order to cover additional costs incurred through the employment of disabled people (e.g. care by social workers for those employed in sheltered workshops).

In addition, costs for fitting out, equipping and extending sheltered workshops may be subsidised from the Compensatory Tax Fund and from regional funds.

Target group: disabled persons with at least 50% disability benefiting under the Disabled Workers Recruitment Act.

3 **SUBSIDY TOWARDS FITTING OUT THE WORKPLACE FOR DISABLED PERSONS BENEFITING UNDER THE DISABLED WORKERS RECRUITMENT ACT**

Subsidies may be granted by the bodies sponsoring the rehabilitation (as a rule, the Compensatory Tax Fund, the Länder, the social security institutions and the Employment Service) to private enterprises for purchasing or adapting the necessary facilities at the workplace (technical aids) for disabled persons benefiting under the Act. As of 1.1.1997, no further subsidies are provided by the Employment Service. The state, the Länder, the social security institutions and sheltered workshops are not eligible for such subsidies under § 11 of the Disabled Workers Recruitment Act.

Target group: disabled persons with at least 50% disability benefiting under the Disabled Workers Recruitment Act.

Other measures for disabled persons

4 BONUS FOR EMPLOYERS EMPLOYING MORE THAN THE REQUIRED NUMBER OF DISABLED WORKERS

Employers who employ more disabled workers benefiting under the Act than the statutory requirement are legally entitled to a bonus from the Compensatory Tax Fund for each extra disabled worker.

Target group: disabled persons with at least 50% disability benefiting under the Disabled Workers Recruitment Act.

5 CONTRACT BONUS

Employers who within the framework of their entrepreneurial activity commission establishments mainly employing disabled people with at least 50% disability to undertake work for them are legally entitled to a bonus from the Compensatory Tax Fund amounting to 15% of the invoiced fee for the contract (minus VAT and discounts).

Target group: disabled persons with at least 50% disability benefiting under the Disabled Workers Recruitment Act.

6 RECRUITMENT SUBSIDY TO PRIVATE ENTERPRISES TO PROMOTE THE RECRUITMENT OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED DISABLED PERSONS

(Under-25s: unemployed for a minimum duration of 6 months; over-25s: unemployed for a minimum duration of 1 year), cofinanced by the European Social Fund; 1st year: 80% of wage costs, 2nd year: 50% of wage costs, 3rd year: compensation for actually existing performance shortfall of up to maximum 50% of wage costs. Austria's share of the subsidy is usually financed from the Compensatory Tax Fund and by the Länder. As of 1997, there is no longer any differentiation as regards the duration of long-term unemployment. The recruitment subsidy can also be granted for disabled persons benefiting under the Act (severe disability) who have been unemployed for less than 6 months.

Target group: disabled persons with at least 50% disability benefiting under the Disabled Workers Recruitment Act.

7 SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL PROGRAMMES IN PRIVATE ENTERPRISES TO CREATE JOBS FOR DISABLED PERSONS

Support for special programmes in private enterprises to create jobs for disabled persons (in teams consisting of at least three disabled workers). Up to ATS 500,000 can be provided for fitting out a workplace for a duration of up to 3 years. Subsidies are provided towards the costs of the personnel who care for the disabled workers, for material costs related to the programme such as rent, leasing of equipment, administrative costs and energy costs. In addition, recruitment subsidies in accordance with the measures described above may also be granted.

Target group: disabled persons with at least 50% disability benefiting under the Disabled Workers Recruitment Act.

Other measures for disabled persons

8 CREATION OF JOBS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE IN PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Since 1996 additional jobs for disabled people in public authorities are being cofinanced by the ESF for a maximum duration of 3 years. The share of the wage costs borne by the ESF amounts to 42.78%. Austria's share is provided from national budgetary funds. Around 50-60 additional jobs for disabled people in public authorities are to be created annually. In principle, additional jobs for disabled people in regional authorities can also be cofinanced from ESF funds. In this case, Austria's share is paid out of regional funds (this model has not yet been implemented).

Target group: disabled persons with at least 50% disability benefiting under the Disabled Workers Recruitment Act.

B

1 REINTEGRATION INTO NORMAL WORKING LIFE

Employers recruiting disabled workers who are registered with the responsible community or regional fund may receive a lump-sum grant from the fund towards remuneration, social security contributions and functional adaptation of the workplace. The fund may also cover additional costs for tools and working clothes.

2 PATH TO INTEGRATION (FLEMISH COMMUNITY)

The Flemish Fund for the Social Integration of the Disabled may approve and support models for integration in order to improve the chances of disabled jobseekers finding first or renewed employment in the regular economy. The individual path to integration may comprise different stages, e.g. counselling, training and supportive measures for integration into working life.

3 STATE BENEFITS

Damages paid and wage supplements granted on the basis of training or a vocational rehabilitation or retraining measure are not taken into account in the assessment of claims for benefits (wage-replacement benefits and integration subsidies). Earned income of up to BEF 519,816 per year is not taken into account in the calculation of integration subsidies for disabled workers.

Disabled workers who are employed for a period of less than 6 months retain their right to benefits.

D

1 BENEFITS FOR DISABLED WORKERS TO HELP THEM FIND WORK

- Health aids,
- technical aids at work,
- travel costs,
- working clothes,
- vehicle aids,
- driving licence,
- loss of earnings,
- accommodation costs,
- benefits in cases of hardship,
- support towards creation and maintenance of self-employment,
- grants towards maintaining ability to work,
- benefits in situations which present particular difficulties.

Other measures for disabled persons

2 BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS RECRUITING DISABLED WORKERS

- Integration aid,
- subsidy for fixed-term probationary employment,
- subsidy for technical aids at work,
- wage subsidy,
- investment subsidy for the creation of new jobs and training places for disabled workers,
- benefits in the event of extraordinary costs incurred by employers recruiting severely disabled workers,
- benefits from the European Social Fund (Employment Promotion Act "Plus").

3 OTHER BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS AND (SEVERELY) DISABLED WORKERS

- Vocational counselling and information,
- job placement, training placement,
- employment counselling,
- obligation to employ disabled workers (Severely Disabled Workers Act),
- employment and career assistance,
- equivalent status with the severely disabled,
- multiple credit,
- special protection against dismissal,
- special, elected representation for the severely disabled in companies and administrations.

FIN

1 MEASURES FOR THE DISABLED

The main strategy of employment and social policy is to integrate disabled persons into the regular labour market and into the mainstream employment services and mainstream training. In addition, Finnish legislation has a special statute on the arrangement of special services for disabled people. Labour authorities prefer to integrate disabled persons into mainstream employment and training programmes. The access of unemployed disabled persons into open labour market is first and foremost promoted by means of employment services, training and vocational rehabilitation. People with disabilities are entitled to use as necessary all employment services available. In addition, the labour administration carries the responsibility for providing and developing vocational rehabilitation services, such as vocational guidance, including aptitude tests, medical examination and rehabilitation assessments, job trials and training trials, guidance on employment and training, labour market training for adults, and support for adaptation to working conditions.

An employment subsidy can be granted to an employer for a maximum of 2 years to hire a disabled jobseeker who cannot be placed through employment services or other employment-promotion measures, including vocational rehabilitation. The opportunities for disabled persons to receive rehabilitation have been improved since 1991 through the introduction of a specific obligation on the Social Insurance Institution (SII) to provide medical and vocational rehabilitation for persons with severe disabilities.

Other measures for disabled persons**GR****1 LAW NO. 1648/86**

1. Both Greek and foreign enterprises operating in any form in Greece and non-commercial enterprises are obliged to provide employment for persons protected under Law No. 1648/86, which includes persons with a degree of disability of at least 40%. Enterprises obliged to carry out such recruitments under the terms of the Law must ensure that 2% of their total staff are persons covered by the Law. An enterprise is considered to be obliged to carry out compulsory recruitment if it employs over 50 workers.
2. The public services, juristic persons covered by public law and local self-administering bodies are obliged to employ a share of 5% of persons protected under Law No. 1648/86, which also covers disabled people, when they are recruiting workers via competitive bidding or via a selection procedure without competitive bidding, which nowadays is the responsibility of the Higher Personnel Selection Council.
3. Under the terms of § 5 of Law No. 1648/86, statutory paid annual leave may be extended by up to 6 days for disabled workers.

Recent measures

A

1 APPRENTICESHIP PACKAGE

Intensive efforts are currently being made to implement a comprehensive package of measures to safeguard the quality of training, to establish more comprehensive training measures, to develop new, innovative apprenticeship occupations, to facilitate access to apprenticeship both for young people and training companies, to improve access to other educational systems (e.g. through the vocational leaving certificate, see 5.1.2.0), to adapt the regulations on protection of children and young people in practical terms while maintaining necessary protection stipulations, and to reduce costs for training companies. The aim is to increase the number of young people participating in the dual system and to create new, high-quality training places for the young.

2 SPECIAL SCHEME FOR WOMEN RETURNING TO WORK

As of 1997, the Employment Service is again giving priority to support for women returning to work after interrupting their career to care for their families. Within the framework of this special scheme, measures which are not otherwise available (or only to a limited extent), in particular, are to be initiated and implemented. The new provisions encompass vocational guidance courses, various measures leading to a qualification, additional child-care facilities and the improvement of employment prospects through the use of enterprise integration subsidies and the promotion of transitional employment in employment projects for the community benefit.

FIN

1 AMENDMENTS TO THE LEGISLATION

In March 1997, the Finnish government submitted a proposal to parliament concerning certain amendments to the legislation covering atypical work. The Employment Contracts Act will be amended to extend the obligation to pay wages and salaries during sick leave to employment lasting less than one month (subject to certain restrictions). The Accident Insurance Act will also be revised, while the Annual Leave Act will be amended to provide employees in short-term employment with considerably more extensive rights to annual holiday pay. In addition, the Occupational Safety Act will be amended such that employers give greater consideration to the necessity for rest periods, especially in the case of work which is strenuous or requires uninterrupted standing or sitting.

The Working Group on Women's Employment, which was established by the Ministry of Labour in 1996, presented its report in January 1997. The working group investigated unemployment among women and men and proposed several measures which conform with general employment policy in Finland.

In February 1997, the Council of State approved the Finnish government's Plan of Action for the Promotion of Gender Equality, which promotes the general application of the principle of equal opportunities.

Recent measures**UK****1 NATIONAL TRAINEESHIPS**

The White Paper "Learning to Compete - Education and Training for 14-19 Year Olds" published in December 1996 announced the introduction, from September 1997, of National Traineeships to provide new opportunities for young people to train for qualifications required by industry and employers with the focus on achievement of NVQ and Key Skills at Level 2.

2 NEW START

This strategy reflects the views of respondents to the wide-ranging consultation on "National Entry Provision" proposed by Sir Ron Dearing. The new strategy will be introduced from September 1997 to drive up the participation and motivation levels of young people in projects to build on and draw together existing initiatives. Seventeen partnership projects will be funded.

For enquiries about the European Employment Observatory and its publications, please contact:

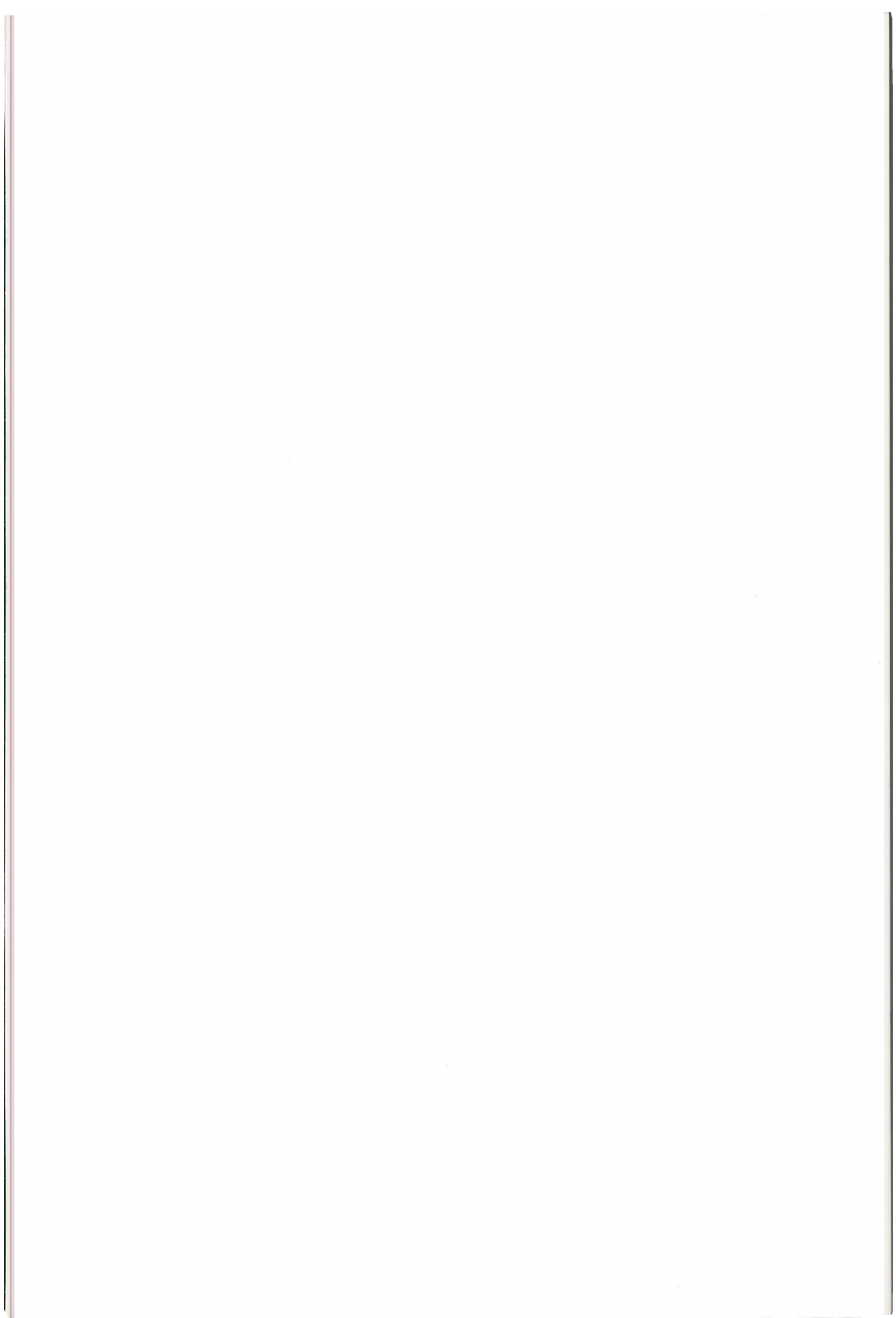
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