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REPORT

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Social
Affairs and Employment

on the situation and problems of the aged in the
European Community

Rapporteur: Mrs V. SQUARCIALUPI

On 15 September 1980 and 17 September 1980 the Bureau of the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution on a policy for senior citizens (Doc. 1-325/80) and the motion for a resolution on a Community Programme for the Aged (Doc. 1-394/80) pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure respectively to the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport and the Committee on Budgets for their opinions.

At its meeting on 2 December 1980 the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment appointed Mrs Squarcialupi rapporteur.

At its meetings on 25 and 26 May 1981, 9 and 10 November 1981 and 3 and 4 December 1981 the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment discussed a working document and a draft report and adopted the draft report unanimously at its meeting of 3 and 4 December 1981.

Present : Mr Van der Gun, chairman; Mr Didò and Mr Peters, vice-chairmen; Mrs Squarcialupi, rapporteur; Mr Abens, Mr Barbagli, Mr Boyes, Mrs Clwyd, Mr Dalsass (deputizing for Mr Brok), Mr Delmotte (deputizing for Mrs Charzat), Mr Duport, Mr Estgen, Mr Ghergo (deputizing for Mrs Cassanmagnago Cerretti), Mr Glinne (deputizing for Mr Van Minnen), Mrs Maij-Weggen (deputizing for Mr Vandewiele), Mrs T. Nielsen, Mr Patterson, Mrs Salisch, Mr Spencer and Mr Tuckman.

The opinion of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport is attached. The opinion of the Committee on Budgets will be published separately.

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The Committee on Social Affairs and employment hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on the situation and problems of the aged in the European Community

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the motion for a resolution by Mrs Carettoni Romagnoli and others on a policy for senior citizens (Doc. 1-325/80),
 - having regard to the motion for a resolution by Mrs Clwyd and others on a Community programme for the aged (Doc. 1-394/80),
 - having regard to its resolution on the position of women in the European Community¹,
 - having regard to its resolution on employment and the adaptation of working time²,
 - having noted the new demographical situation which has arisen in the countries of the European Community with the increase in the numbers and percentage of the aged due to their longer life expectancy and the falling birthrate,
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- having regard to the report of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment, the opinion of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport (Doc. 1-848/81) and the opinion of the Committee on Budgets,
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1. Notes that Community action to help the aged has hitherto been inadequate and sporadic;
 2. Notes with concern that Member States vary in the priority which they assign to the services provided for the elderly, and to the question of pensions; deplores the inefficient way in which some Member States approach this problem and the delays in setting up services which are vital to the aged, for example in the payment of pensions;
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3. Considers that the European Community, too, has a responsibility to take measures and allocate budget appropriations to help these citizens, in accordance with the spirit and letter of the Treaty of Rome which sets the task of promoting an accelerated raising of the standard of living of the people of Europe;
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4. Affirms that the aged are citizens with equal and full rights; steps must be taken to prevent the aged from gradually losing the rights they acquired while employed, in particular the appropriate provision must be made in all Member States to ensure that elderly people are fully informed of their rights to benefits, services and concessions and that they are aided wherever necessary in obtaining them ;
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¹ See Resolution of 11.2.1981: OJ No C 50 of 9.3.1981, pp.35 ff.

² See Resolution of 17.9.1981: Minutes of the sitting of 17.9.1981: PE 74.712, pp.26 ff.

5. Considers it vital to re-examine the concept of the rigid allocation of roles by present-day society to the different age-groups - the age of study for young people, the age of work for adults and the age of retirement for old people; study, work and leisure should be distributed throughout the span of human life;
6. Is convinced that in a democratic and progressive society all citizens, including the aged, have a specific role to play in society and can offer new cultural contributions which are both independent of and complementary to those offered by other age groups; is convinced, moreover that a public opinion campaign is necessary to emphasize this idea, considers therefore that there is an urgent need for the media and education systems to make people, in particular young people, more aware of the specific problems of the elderly so as to facilitate communication and understanding between the generations;
7. Deplores the fact that our society, in which economic factors prevail, tends to isolate old people on the fringes of society because in general it no longer enables the large family to form a cohesive social unit and takes the elderly into account only from the point of view of their economic activity;
8. Considers that fixing the retirement age should not automatically imply the removal of these men and women from the labour market; such a procedure is unacceptable in a democratic society in which every citizen must be able to choose the solution most appropriate to him; considers, instead, that to choose not to work must be regarded as a legitimate right and not as an obligation imposed by the state of the labour market; considers also that flexible arrangements should be made so that those over pension age can continue to work if they wish, with no loss of state pension rights;
9. Affirms that society must make an adequate response to the problem of the aged, even if this proves very costly, given the complex physical psychological and social needs of senior citizens;
10. Is aware that age is not a disease but a stage of physical life which does not impair the faculties of every individual or every organ in the same way or at the same time, and that preventive measures may slow down or reduce the effects of the ageing process; recognizes at the same time that there is a significant and increasing group of people aged over 75 who suffer from specific ailments of old age which require special provision;

11. Considers it of foremost importance to ensure that the aged lead a life of dignity and independence, based on an income which ensures self-sufficiency, whereas at present a large number of the aged live on the verge of poverty and at times below the poverty line; the pension system must also take account of the harmful effects of inflation on purchasing power;
12. Affirms that retired persons must not be isolated on the fringes of society but must be involved like other citizens in the problems of the community in accordance with their true capacity, acquiring new responsibilities with the transition from economic productivity to social productivity, and in awareness of their rights;
13. Regards it as essential, with a view to ensuring the progress of the social group of the aged and of society as a whole, to introduce a comprehensive system of continuous education, on a voluntary learning basis, in order to cope effectively with the new situations facing the individual and society;
14. Considers it necessary also to ensure that retired people should not be isolated from society by their leisure time but that this time should be given a useful cultural content and offer new opportunities; steps must also be taken to prevent those nearing retirement age from resigning themselves to becoming second-class citizens;
15. Draws the following conclusions from the above considerations:
 - (a) in 1982, during which the World Assembly on Aging, organized by the United Nations will take place in Vienna, the Commission and Council must focus attention on the problems of the aged and take the necessary decisions with a view to solving them;
 - (b) the problem of the aged must in fact be regarded as a major problem of mankind and society and one which the Commission and Council must take into account by making all the appropriate proposals;
 - (c) the social expenditure cuts in the budgets of some Member States mainly affect the weakest groups, among them the aged, who become the victims of the economic crisis;
 - (d) social services for senior citizens are a vital means of preventing obligations being imposed on the family alone, i.e. in practice on women, which, for a variety of reasons - including the physical or mental incapacity of the elderly person concerned - the family may not be able to fulfil;

16. Also points out that among the numerous problems facing the aged, priority must be given to the following measures:

- (a) their general and widespread economic insecurity can be remedied by fixing a minimum pension rate based on average wages and salaries;
- (b) a flexible pension system must be implemented at Community level, so that every worker can choose between:
 - retiring at retirement age;
 - an adjustment of his working conditions (for example a reduction in working hours and greater flexibility) enabling him to prepare himself gradually for retirement;
- early retirement in sectors in crisis or in the event of chronic illness or accidents outside work, or of disablement not due to occupational reasons but which reduce working capacity;
- (c) the problem of financing pensions in the future must be solved since the present employment situation may adversely affect social security systems based on employees' contributions;
- (d) the possibility of including in pensions all the contributions paid into various schemes by employees during their working life which, in some countries and in cases of professional mobility, are lost;
- (e) the differences in the treatment of men and women, which become accentuated in the case of elderly women, can be resolved only by taking the following measures at the very least:
 - amending the directive on equal treatment for men and women as regards social security so that it includes transferability of pensions to the other partner;
 - demanding that the concept of equality be extended to include the option of equal pensions for men and women, to be based on equal contributions;
 - improving the legal, financial and social position of women who were involved in the management of family undertakings, including farms, and who are subsequently penalized if they become widowed or when they reach old age;
- (f) in the case of housing the following measures should be introduced:
 - subsidized rents for the poorest senior citizens;
 - quotas of flats reserved for the aged in subsidized housing schemes;
 - adaptation of new houses to the needs of the aged and the handicapped by the removal of any structural impediments;
 - conversion of old houses in order to avoid old people being uprooted from their living environment;
 - integration of housing for the aged into the general community to prevent the formation of ghettos;

- loans to finance housing schemes for the elderly which will include warden accommodation and certain shared facilities;

Therefore the Commission is asked to consider the possibility of launching a pilot housing programme for the elderly;

- (g) assistance to the old which, though comprehensive, respects their dignity and enables them to remain within their own environment as long as possible by providing them with all possible services (from telephones to home help, rent subsidies to heating subsidies) and avoids where possible their hospitalization or removal to specialized institutions;
- (h) vocational training for persons required to carry on employment in institutions for the elderly;
- (i) the necessary initiatives, particularly in the housing and services sector and in the tax system, to ensure that the aged are not compelled to leave the basic family unit where several generations live together, with whom the aged can continue to maintain an effective, educational and cultural relationship;
- (j) coordination and information on gerontological research by means of:
 - greater cooperation between Member States on health matters, in the field of research or that of proven preventive measures;
 - wider implementation of the principle of the free movement of medical and paramedical staff, as one way of making information more widely available;
- (k) measures to avoid the isolation of aged immigrants which increases when they leave their job, either because of their economic insecurity coupled with bureaucratic difficulties or because they find it difficult to adapt to the new situation facing them in that age group;

17. Also requests the Commission :

- (a) to report on the implementation of the Community rules on payments of pensions to immigrants under schemes to which two or more Community Member States contribute; these are often paid only after humiliating delays, which is a particularly serious situation for these people who have suffered greatly from tiring and low-paid work and have been uprooted from their original living environment;
- (b) to put forward proposals for a transport policy which takes due account of the specific needs of the aged and the handicapped;
- (c) to present within one year a comparative survey of the situation of the aged in the Community Member States;
- (d) to take part as actively and effectively as possible in the World Assembly organized by the United Nations which will take place in Vienna and will in particular deal with the problem of the elderly in the developing countries;

- (e) to promote Community action in the field of public health, with particular reference to preventive measures at the place of work;
 - (f) to put forward, in the medium term, proposals on the priority aspects referred to above;
 - (g) to prepare, in the long term, overall proposals for a global policy for the aged and a five-year action programme;
18. Also requests that this report be forwarded to the appropriate committees of the European Parliament so that the various problems concerning the aged and connected with the improvement of their life, i.e. social, legal, cultural, transport, consumer, housing and health problems may be studied in greater depth.
 19. Is convinced, however, that the existing budget structure does not make it possible to devise a realistic Community policy for the aged - or any other realistic social policy - and therefore requests the Commission to propose in the preliminary draft Budget for 1983 adequate appropriations for the policies mentioned in this resolution, and also to ensure that appropriations are made available in future years as part of the restructuring of the Budget;
 20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the parliaments of the Member States for detailed examination and to request them to inform Parliament of the results;
 21. Instructs its President also to request the Commission to undertake to examine, at a full meeting of the Members of the Commission, this own-initiative resolution by Parliament and to publish its decision on the follow-up legislative action to be taken;
 22. Lastly, requests that, should the Commission refuse the above request, it give its reasons before the European Parliament and that the text be published in the Official Journal.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTI - INTRODUCTION

1. Being old in Europe means, in all 10 countries making up the European Community, marginalization, isolation and often poverty in addition, accompanied by natural physical deterioration and the ensuing dependence on other people. However, added to this there is also the suspicion and mistrust very often expressed by society towards the huge increase in the percentage of elderly people in the populations of all Community countries. In the case of Italy it is estimated that in 10 years' time old people will form 20% of the population and according to data on Western Europe in general it is predicted that by the year 2000 pensions will have to be paid to a non-active population representing 46% of the active work-force. In addition, in the next 20 years the number of old people will double and their children will be unable to provide for them because they will in their turn be retired.
2. There is therefore an urgent need for the problem of the increase in the average age of the population to be dealt with by the political institutions at the same time as the responsibility for giving more self respect to an age-group and generation which has been overwhelmed by the change in relationships in society and the crisis in the family and patriarchal society and which has not yet been able to find its place in a changing and unstable society. In addition this generation is particularly hit by inflation and the hostile developments in urban centres.
3. The situation of old people in Europe is uniformly characterized by marginalization and spiritual and material poverty. However, when we come down to details considerable differences may be noticed, particularly as regards pensions and the social solutions adopted some time ago by the more considerate governments and more efficient national authorities.
4. Even these achievements are now seriously threatened by the mounting crisis in capitalist State assistance, which is known as the 'welfare State', and by the cuts in expenditure on social services made in many European countries.
5. Even where the situation of old people may appear more fortunate, as in Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands, they are generally psychologically and culturally isolated. In Belgium, for example, according to a survey children (whether Flemish or Walloon) would not consider taking their elderly parents into their own homes. On the other hand, Danish grandmothers are not prepared to take care of their grandchildren and few

French grandparents would be prepared to do this. In Germany, only in two cases out of 100 do all three generations live together in the same house. In France one-fifth of the older generation live with their children but chiefly in country districts. In Northern European countries it is unusual to see grandparents with their grandchildren but very common to see groups of old people at cafes, concerts and lectures.

6. Many solutions to the isolation which weighs upon the minds of old people (though in many cases they share responsibility for this) have been investigated, but these solutions are only partial. In Belgium the government has telephones installed at the bedside of elderly people who are alone and in ill health. In Great Britain hot meals are taken to the homes of old people several times a week and a special laundry service washes and replaces underwear for those who are incontinent. Since the war there are in addition various other forms of public assistance owing to the creation of the National Health Service. These have been supplemented by measures taken by local authorities and effective voluntary services such as the Elderly Invalid Fund which, by telephone, takes action in cases of short-term illness and a whole range of requests even including help in crossing streets where there is heavy traffic.

7. In every country efforts have been made to abolish or make far-reaching changes in old-fashioned old people's homes and geriatric hospitals and to take action against putting old people into homes against their will through more efficient home help. In a geriatric hospital in Nuremberg it was discovered that 75% of those admitted with chronic illnesses had been admitted without the consent of the old people concerned and this phenomenon has been found to be so widespread that a request was made to introduce a new law in 1975 to control admissions of old people and those with incurable diseases.

8. One of the most dramatic problems for all old people in Europe is that of housing. In Denmark where housing is in short supply old people are requested to move from houses with several rooms in which they live alone. To give them accommodation the Ministry of Public Works is building new houses with special facilities for dealing with cases in which old people have difficulty moving about. The Federal Republic of Germany allocates to old people a third of the money paid by the State in cases in which rents are too high in relation to income and also gives old people 40% of public housing. In spite of these steps, it has been estimated that only 17% of old people in Germany have homes with the essential services, including central heating. However for many years solutions to the housing problem have been devised composed of 3 blocks of buildings: an accommodation block for independent elderly people, another to lodge those who need looking after and a third for meals and leisure activities.

9. In France 20% of the small accommodation units forming part of public housing are reserved for old people and in the cities a network of

infrastructures is being created to include consultants and medical treatment centres, home help for the neediest, meeting rooms and low-priced restaurants.

10. However no country has yet dealt with the cultural situation of old people in a society which has suddenly changed from extended to nuclear families. At the moment only consumerism is taking a great deal of interest in old people.

11. Following the baby boom and the weakening in the drive to attract youth, industry, commerce and advertising have discovered old people as potential consumers of goods and services. It is true that they are difficult customers because they cling to outmoded ideas of thrift and they are mostly in a precarious financial state, but the task of attracting them has been made easier by the lack of competition from other cultural sources. Thus consumerism may well become the new culture of the elderly if there is no alternative new way of living to counter this which regards old people as important figures even in a capitalist society ruled by the principle of maximum profit which makes those who are not productive second-class citizens and shows them that it needs them less and less.

12. However, certain solutions which put to use the large amount of free time of old people, such as story-tellers in France or Wednesday baby-sitters (the day on which schools are closed), should be noted with interest, as also the traffic wardens in front of Turin schools or the university for the elderly in Toulouse and 25 other towns in which old people finally learn to know their own minds and bodies and follow with awareness and as those actually undergoing the experience their own ageing process, a process which will be all the more happy the less they feel that they intrude in society but feel that they are still individuals needed by society.

13. Old age is therefore a test not only for the Member States but also for the European Parliament which was elected by their citizens. It must request the executive body of the European Community and the Council of Ministers to show that businessmen's Europe is increasingly becoming Europe of the people, and that this includes old people.

II - THE INCREASE IN THE AVERAGE AGE OF THE POPULATION IN EUROPE

14. The increase in the average age of the population in the countries of the European Community is a phenomenon which is already noticeable. The death rate has in fact reached the lowest level in the world and in history. This is the combined effect of advances in medicine (which have reduced infant mortality to a quarter of what it was during the years between the two World Wars), economic development and social welfare in general, although much still remains to be done.

15. The average life expectancy, in particular for women, is now close to what are considered to be the physiological limits. In the Netherlands, for example, life expectancy is 77.2 years for women and 71.2 for men. In other countries, too, the upper limit of 75 years for women has almost been reached and in some cases exceeded. The life expectancy of men fluctuates between 68 and 70 years everywhere.

16. The increase in the average age of the population generally is produced by two factors:

- (a) the increase in the number of elderly people;
- (b) the decrease in the number of young people in the same population;

The population under 15 years of age will probably fall until 1990 (8 million children less than in 1975) and then increase again by approximately 0.7 % per annum in the following five years, that is, from 1990 to 1995. The population over 65 years of age is expected to increase from 34.3 million in 1975 to 37.5 million in 1995.

17. In the European Community, except in the British Isles, both phenomena have occurred at the same time. In almost all countries the percentage of elderly people (over 65 years of age) has risen from 11% in 1960 to 14 % in 1977 whilst the number of people under 15 years of age has fallen from 24 % in 1950 to 22.6 % in 1977.

These data appear in the tables taken from the Social Indices for the European Community 1960 to 1978 - EUROSTAT 1980 (Annex I).

III - SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF OLD AGE

The elderly in pre-industrial society

18. In traditional patriarchal families the elderly were respected and venerated because they had wisdom and experience. In peasant families the aged gradually gave up work and, although remaining at the head of the family structure, were 'by degrees' replaced by their children. In rural patriarchal families at least three generations lived together, which enabled experiences to be exchanged and roles to be distributed more satisfactorily.

The elderly in industrial society

19. The process of industrialization and urban society, which favour the nuclear family, have disrupted the authority of the old ~~pater~~ families which is illadapted to an economic and social structure which places at an advantage occupations based on productivity. Thus elderly people find themselves becoming second-class citizens because they are not productive,

consume little, create social welfare problems and do not conform to the values of strength, beauty and health which form part of the consumer model. The elderly in industrial society therefore find themselves excluded both as individuals in society and also from the issues dealt with by the mass media.

The elderly and movement to the towns

20. In many European countries millions of people have been uprooted from the country and have gone to live in huge urban centres and suburban areas which are not conducive to human relations. This accentuates the loss of identity of the aged.

In addition, there is the problem of large towns and cities and the sense of isolation and loneliness which affects the elderly living particularly in the old historical centres of towns and cities. Capital cities also form focal points for the imbalances, contradictions and pockets of underprivilege and poverty which are linked with the disorderly aspects of capitalist development. The situation of the elderly is made more dramatic by the appreciable loss of role on the part of the aged and the high cost of mere survival. The phenomena of violence against old people in the form of bag-snatching, mugging and hooliganism are also more noticeable in the big cities.

The composition of families

21. The average number of members of a nuclear family is tending to fall in every country. In one region of Italy, Liguria, which has the lowest national birth-rate, single-person families outnumbered those considered to be 'typical', in other words, four-person families. According to the latest general census, which dates back to 1971, in Genoa, the capital of Liguria, there were 61,000 single-person families and 51,000 four-person families. In many of the major Italian cities, particularly in the historical centres, the over-sixties already form a quarter of the population and in some cases it is necessary to convert child welfare services into welfare services for the elderly.

The elderly in Europe and their grandchildren

22. The survey 'Europeans and their children' carried out in the countries of the European Community and published in October 1979 states that nearly two out of three people regret that their children have no contact with their grandparents. This regret is, moreover, expressed more forcefully by parents of large families and by the elderly who, as grandparents, are more directly concerned. On the other hand, the desire for more frequent contact between children and grandparents increases in proportion to age, rising from 53-55 %

amongst young people of between 15 and 24 years of age to 69-72 % amongst persons of both sexes of between 40 and 54 years of age.

This desire for a return to closer contact between children and grandparents is held by a majority in each of the Member States of the Community but in rather different proportions: the French, Luxembourgers and Italians are the most in favour, followed by the Danes. The Dutch differ in having a more divided attitude; 49 % would like to see closer contact between children and grandchildren, whilst 43 % would not.

The elderly and leisure time

23. As a result of retirement and even more of early retirement a person has before him fifteen years of life on average and free or unoccupied time which he finds it difficult to enjoy. People of 65 years of age do not form a homogeneous group as regards the use of leisure because of the difference in income and culture. In urban industrial societies the use of free time almost always involves spending money. Since the income of pensioners is usually lower than the average income of the working population, the result is that the elderly tend to be excluded from this type of activity. Everywhere in the countries of the European Community steps are being taken to provide the aged with answers to their free time problem. The most interesting are those which enable their culture to be passed on, in other words to be society's memory, as in the case of story-tellers or teachers of dying crafts, or those which offer the possibility of rediscovering new forms of culture, such as allotting small plots of land to pensioners to cultivate as vegetable or flower gardens. In addition steps are being taken to enrich the cultural interests of the elderly, such as films, plays, visits to museums, excursions, rediscovery tours of their own city and many other measures to make the elderly feel useful in society.

Culture and participation by old people

24. To ensure the development of old people as a social group and of society as a whole a complete process of permanent education is essential as a voluntary learning process to deal efficiently with every new situation. In fact, every age group has a specific function to perform within the social structure.

However, retired people must not be kept out of and alienated from social life and must be invited to take part in the functioning of society just like all other citizens on the basis of their actual capabilities which, although perhaps reduced from a physical point of view, are however particularly great because of their store of experience. The retirement period is a distinct period which involves a different type of social productivity which is no longer evaluated in relation to the production processes or normal services but in relation to the cultural contribution to a common pool of services which cannot be quantified from an economic point of view.

The retirement period must not therefore be a period of enforced passive recreation. People who have worked for decades may have a right to a different daily pace of life but the participation of old people in the maintenance and creation of common values must be ensured by preferential means of access to certain activities and means of participation.

The elderly and housing

25. The gradual abandonment of the city centres compels the elderly to leave the old urban centres for the suburbs or for old people's homes. This is very serious because the permanence of the place in which they live means for old people security and continuity of human relations with shop-keepers, neighbours, the parish or the café. For this reason the trend to give old people help at home is becoming increasingly wide-spread.

Because of the disintegration of the nuclear family the demand for accommodation is very high in all countries. However, the new demand for housing from elderly single people or, at most, elderly couples, must tend to improve the quality of the way of life in the cities. These changes relate to the quality and size of homes and the kinds of public services, but above all to the abolition of the architectural barriers which would, by means of additional ramps on stairs, extra handrails and wide lifts capable of accommodating invalid chairs, help the elderly without interfering in the least with the lives of other people.

Starting with the needs of the elderly, an effort can be made to help change the relationship between man and his environment and man and cities, thus also giving substance to what is described as 'the quality of life'.

As far as the problem of housing is concerned, both the grants given to the elderly in certain countries towards the payment of rent and the quotas of public housing intended for pensioners are of great importance.

The elderly and consumption

26. The elderly have never been a target for the production sector because of their poor income and reduced consumption. However, nowadays the 'elderly' market is one of those in expansion precisely because of the increase in the elderly population and because of the improvement in the rate of pensions. After the end of the 'baby boom' many industries have diversified their range of products and turned to products which might be attractive and interesting to the elderly.

Advertising is also starting to try to attract elderly consumers - sometimes old people are put into advertising pictures full of teenagers, whilst sprightly little old men are used to advertise foodstuffs where it is desired to emphasize their authenticity and energy value.

However, industry and commerce do not for example take into consideration old people in the case of the small print on labels or in the packaging sizes of fresh and preserved products which are often too large and unsuited to one-person families and to very reduced appetites.

The tourist sector is reviewing its programmes, which have hitherto been designed with youth in mind. Everywhere the low season in tourist regions is receiving a fresh boost thanks to the elderly.

In order to make travelling easier for the elderly in many European countries steps are being taken to grant the aged reductions on the railways in the national territory. It is to be hoped that the scheme known as 'Inter-Rail-S' will be revived; male pensioners of 65 years of age and female pensioners of 60 years of age were given the benefit not only of 50 % reductions on railway travel in their own country but also free travel on the European network.

IV - THE ELDERLY AND EMPLOYMENT

Elderly people still in employment

27. According to the data provided by a sample survey on the forms of work within the European Community (EUROSTAT 1980) in the Community countries in 1977 there were 6,288,000 elderly people aged 60 or over with a main occupation, 4,448,000 men and 1,840,000 women.

The service industries account for the majority of working men and women of over 60 years of age : 47 % of the men and 70 % of the women.

The great social achievement of the right to a pension, the old-age pension and other forms of early retirement often create conflicts between the need for retirement and, at the same time, the realization that stopping work often coincides with cutting short a function in society. For many people in fact work is the centre of all their personal relationships and interests. At the same time elderly people very often have occupational skills which they are unable to pass on in the present state of production and in many cases therefore old people stop work very late because there is nobody who can do their job.

In many cases however financial need forces old people to take up employment again and to accept lowly and humiliating jobs in which they are underemployed and do not use the skills acquired in their work; these are cases of genuine exploitation.

The problem of bringing the employment of old people out into the open also arises. In fact in some countries, such as Italy, the old-age pension cannot be drawn at the same time as other wages or salary, and the meagreness of many pensions forces large sections of elderly workers to pursue illicit employment.

The concept of roles rigidly assigned by our present society to the various age-groups - youth as the period of study, adulthood as the period of employment and old age as the period of retirement - must therefore be thoroughly re-examined. Instead, it is necessary to combine study, work and retirement in an integrated whole throughout the different phases of life.

Re-integration of the elderly into employment

28. Very often after retirement old people are faced with a new job which is very different from the one by which they earned their livelihood and therefore their pension. Often a worker who has spent 35 years on the assembly line doing a repetitive and unsatisfactory job can, as a pensioner, find a satisfying job. The retirement period may therefore be a time for examining one's previous employment and for obtaining fresh satisfaction from one's occupation.

This argument applies particularly to women who have been housewives all their lives. The University of Manchester has, with the assistance of the European Social Fund, started a pilot project on this to examine the integration of middle-aged women into employment; this has enabled inter alia a study to be made of the impact on family life of a return to work. One of the points it made is the need to prepare the members of the family psychologically for the unaccustomed situation of seeing their wife, mother and grandmother, hitherto a housewife, employed in work outside the home.

In Italy several local authorities have for some time been carrying out a policy of re-employing old people in jobs which might be of interest to the community. They control the traffic in front of schools and are employed by some social services departments as park-keepers and custodians of art treasures and museums.

Gradual reduction of work

29. So that the transition from work to retirement is not too abrupt some firms adopt a reduction in the working day or week before final retirement. This form of part-time work, although not approved by the management of small undertakings where a reduction in working hours for a few individuals would upset the internal balance of production, would probably be easier to implement in large firms which have more effective means of programming.

Part-time work as an introduction to the stage of early retirement would however be desirable in the case of many elderly workers so as to ease their withdrawal from the production sector and their replacement by young people who in many cases seek forms of casual and part-time work.

Preparation for retirement must not however be an attempt to obtain agreement for downgrading.

V - THE ELDERLY AND RETIREMENT

The ratio of pensioners to workers

30. According to data relating to Western Europe, by the year 2000 or to towards the end of the working life of the young people who are now entering the labour market it will be necessary to pay pensions to a retired population estimated at 46 % of the active labour force. Present-day Sweden, for example, already provides a pointer to what will happen in all Community countries. The situation there is that 4,300,000 Swedish workers 'support' 1,200,000 pensioners. A committee on the subject has reported, following a governmental inquiry into employment in the long term, that in the next twenty years the number of persons of between 80 and 90 years of age will double and that it will be impossible for their children to support them since at that age their children will be pensioners too.

Retirement age in the countries of the European Community

31. The official time at which old age is reached is laid down by legal provisions and rules and coincides in fact and in theory with the date of retirement. There is however a contradiction between the time defined by society on the basis of general population statistics as the biological period of old age and the time at which that society, for reasons of economic and social expediency, decides to remove men and women from the labour market.

Retirement ages vary widely in the countries of the European Community, as may be seen from the table taken from 'The reduction of working hours in Western Europe - European Trade Union Institute - 1979'

Retirement age - men and women

Country	Men	Women
Belgium	65	60
Denmark	67	67
France	65	60
Federal Republic of Germany	65	65
Italy	60-65	55-65
Luxembourg	65	60
Netherlands	65	65
Great Britain	65	60
Greece ¹		

Italy and Luxembourg are the countries in which people retire the earliest. In Italy, for example, 61 % of workers retire at the age of 60 or even earlier, followed by the Belgians, 46 % of whom retire at that age although continuing to work.

The average retirement age in Europe is, however, 62½ years of age, in other words, 63 in the case of men and 61 in the case of women.

Acceptance of applications for pensions

32. According to a survey carried out by the Commission of the European Communities Italy is the country at the bottom of the list in Europe as regards the acceptance of applications for pensions, and also at the bottom owing to the inadequate amount of the pensions and the length of the procedures for obtaining them which are particularly deplorable. The average period for the grant of an old-age pension is approximately 8 months, 7 months for a retirement pension and 5 months for a pension for surviving dependants. There are however many categories of workers who are obliged to wait years for their pension to be determined.

The most fortunate pensioners are however the elderly in Benelux, with regard both to the high rate of social security pensions and to the services designed for them.

Early retirement

33. In the countries of the European Community there is widespread discussion between workers and management as to the redistribution of working time, including also early retirement. In many cases in fact this is desired in order to slow down social tensions caused by sectors of industry in recession. However, early retirement is viewed unfavourably in that it means a drastic transition from work to retirement in the case of individuals capable of working who then become available to the illegal labour market. Besides experience has shown that early retirement in sectors of industry in recession cannot create the same number of jobs and certainly not of the same level of qualifications. All forms of early retirement should be voluntary.

¹ The minimum retirement age is fixed generally at 56 years of age for the private and public sectors and at 65 years of age for men and 60 years of age for women in the agricultural sector. In general entitlement to a pension arises after a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 35 years of work. There are numerous pension schemes for self-employed workers.

It should be noted however that early retirement may on the other hand free some professional people from normal work routines. In many cases, therefore, a worker who has retired early may ultimately do highly skilled work of which a young person would be incapable. In this case early retirement would release jobs, at the same time enabling the pensioner to pursue a satisfying and productive occupation.

Voluntary early retirement might, moreover, be envisaged not only so as to facilitate the restructuring of industry but also in cases of chronic illness or accidents not occurring at work or at any rate where factors not caused by occupational activities give rise to invalidity and lead to reduced output in addition to a health risk (people suffering from heart disease).

As to the discussions relating to flexible retirement which arose within the Standing Committee on Employment, both workers and management recognize that it would be necessary gradually to grant all workers the right to choose, as from a certain age, the amount of their pension, provided that the financial effect of flexible retirement is neutral.

The cost of early retirement

34. The introduction of early retirement does not produce an increase in costs when the posts are filled by younger workers. Social security expenditure may in any case decrease since the wages or salary of a young worker will be lower than those of an older worker. In this case the finance must be sought in the social security schemes.

Where, however, private pensions schemes are involved, the question of finance and of the burden thereof has a direct effect on the sources of the finance itself.

The introduction of such measures would therefore make it necessary to reform the system of the financing of the social security schemes, in particular the pension scheme. In many countries the system of financing is already being investigated and discussed precisely with a view to its reform.

As regards then, the case of the reduction of the retirement age, it should be emphasized that where workers are pensioned off and as a result others are taken on to compensate for this, this helps to reduce public expenditure on unemployment benefits. The bulk of the savings made in this way might be used to finance the pension schemes.

There is no escaping the fact that these contributions have the same function as indirect taxation, just as if they were an employment tax; they do not therefore encourage but, on the contrary, harm the policy of greater employment. A correct balance will have to be reached between

the financing which has to be borne by undertakings and the support which needs to be given to the policy of full employment, as well as a correct balance between the financing which must fall to individual units and that which should be supported by state intervention.

Nevertheless, since it would be unrealistic to take the view that each time a worker was pensioned off another would be taken on as a result, and, as, in addition, the population forecasts indicate a proportional increase in the retired population in relation to the working population, other ways of funding must be found.

The elderly and economic insecurity

35. Pensioners who do not have their own income turn from producers of wealth as they were when they were working into recipients of income and if they are not engaged in other activities become dependants.

Retirement should not in any case mean an economic, social or personal decline for workers but retirement often in fact goes hand in hand with a sharp economic recession. In Italy, for example, the average income falls by approximately 50% upon retirement (according to 1977 figures) and often drops below the minimum living wage.

In Italy, once again, pensioners with low pensions are still in the majority. At the end of 1979 there were 9 million pensioners with social security pensions and on minimum pensions. The economic level of the regions affects the circumstances of the elderly. In two regions in the Italian industrial triangle, Piedmont and Liguria, 30 % of all pensioners have pensions above the minimum, and in Lombardy 40 %. In Basilicata, however, which is one of the poorest regions, only 4.4 % of pensions are above the minimum and in Calabria only 3.5 % of the total. Everywhere, women are among those with the lowest pensions. A recent survey on poverty has shown that 54% of poor people are old women.

An economic problem however arises, in other words the need to give workers, by means of appropriate arrangements, a real opportunity to live the last part of their lives in dignity. This prospect would enable those persons who leave work not to have subsequently to continue working (if they do not wish to) but it would not constitute any incentive to leave it for those people who are still interested in working.

Elderly immigrants - second-class citizens twice over

36. Delays in the payment of pensions and their annual adjustment to the sliding scale create serious problems for immigrant pensioners. These inconveniences mainly affect Italians who have emigrated to Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany. In Luxembourg, for example, Italian workers have been waiting as long as 7 years for settlement and the annual adjustment stopped at 1978. These methods create discontent and inconvenience because many pensioners die before receiving the payments to which they are entitled. It is, moreover, necessary to emphasize the disparities between the pensions in the various Community countries. In this respect action by the Commission of the European Communities is urgently needed so as to abolish the further discrimination which occurs upon retirement. For elderly immigrants, in fact, it is a very awkward moment because retirement from work breaks the sole link with people at work, other immigrants and productive life.

VI - ELDERLY WOMEN

The situation of women as regards population

37. Women, on the average, form approximately half the population everywhere but in populations in which the average age is increasing they tend to be in the majority. Of people of over 65 years of age, there are in fact no less than 154 women to every 100 men. Life expectancy for European women is thus nearly 75 years, indeed even higher in the Netherlands, Great Britain and France. In the case of men, however, life expectancy is not yet as much as 70 years in the Netherlands or Denmark.

In Italy women live on average six years longer than men: in other words women live 75 years and men 69 years. These results are important bearing in mind the fact that in many African countries the average life expectancy is still less than 40 years.

The breakdown of the population in the countries of the European Community by age-group and sex is summarized in Annex II which is taken from the Social Indices for the European Community - 1960 to 1978 - Eurostat 1980.

Social factors relating to elderly women

38. Women have an important place in the problem of the elderly because they have to face difficulties peculiar to women and those of the aged in addition.

The past has a strong influence on their old age - years of being a housewife, two jobs, human and cultural isolation and motherhood superseded when the children become independent. The greater longevity of women often means more years of solitude.

In France there are 4.2 million women of 65 years of age or more as against 2.3 men of the same age-group. In France, too, there are another 3 million widows and 175,000 women lose their husbands each year. A quarter of those women are under 55 years old.

According to the last census in 1971 there were 2,900,000 widows in Italy compared with 700,000 widowers, a ratio of four to one.

Widowhood is very hard for women since when they lose their husband they very often lose their essential economic support and also the role of wife which they have hitherto fulfilled.

These and other factors are pointed out by many widows' associations in the various European countries. In Great Britain the National Association of Widows has been in operation since 1971; it has numerous local branches which are concerned with both the moral crisis and the financial situation of widows, of whom there are 3 million in the United Kingdom. The 1980 Widows' Charter presses in particular for the remission of tax on the survivor's pension.

There is no doubt, besides, that the persistence of the concept of women as objects makes it harder and more difficult for women to adjust to old age, when they are considered to have lost the womanly qualities regarded as important in the present organization of society, such as beauty and youth.

The domestic life to which women have been relegated all their lives may however become, paradoxically, a safeguard against the trauma of retirement; women are considered 'fortunate' by sociologists because they have domestic responsibilities and interests.

It is necessary, in addition, to take seriously into consideration the problem of the survivor's pension for women when the man with whom they are living dies leaving them without any means of support. This problem was examined by the Council of Europe at the 11th Conference on European Law on 'Legal aspects of de facto families'.

Preventing the consequences of old age

39. Old age is not an illness but a stage in physiological development. As the organs of the body are not all affected at the same time, a person's physical age rarely corresponds to a given number of years.

Old age results in a general lowering of immunity levels and lower resistance means that old people are more likely to fall ill with contagious diseases. Furthermore, some illnesses more frequently affect the elderly, causing invalidity: decalcification of the bones, degenerative diseases of the circulatory and respiratory systems, disorders of the locomotive functions and also chronic disorders of the metabolism. Old age also brings an increase in psychological disorders, whose causes may be organic and social.

It is therefore necessary to implement a genuine policy of prevention which will involve more than early diagnosis of an illness in order to cure it in its initial stages and avoid more serious complications. Indeed, the aim of prevention should be to slow down the ageing process as far as possible.

Life, death and health have however strong class connotations. A table published in France on the mortality indexes for those over 35 years of age according to occupational groups shows that a person of 35 years of age has a life expectancy of a further 40 years if he is a teacher or a member of liberal professions but only a further 34 years if he is an agricultural employee and 33½ years if he is a manual worker.

The improvement in working and living conditions must therefore be considered as a means not only to improve the physical and mental state of European citizens today but also to prepare them for a longer and healthier life.

Prevention policy should therefore operate through sport, treatment, diet, the involvement of mind and emotions, which may enable the elderly to live longer and under conditions which are more satisfactory both for them and for other people. There should therefore be various stages at which action is taken.

Primary prevention will include education in health and hygiene, diet and dietary matters, health protection at home and at work, climatotherapy by the sea or in the mountains, better use of thermotherapy, preparation for retirement, social arrangements which do not involve removing the elderly from their usual surroundings.

Secondary prevention should tackle, through local health institutions, the psychological problems of the elderly, such as family conflict, the environment, sexuality and the menopause. This aim should be combined with measures to stimulate cultural, social and political interests, hobbies, voluntary service and with rehabilitation services, day-hospitals, centres open to all ages and periodic medical check-ups.

Tertiary prevention relates to the involvement with society of elderly inmates of hospitals and other institutions and to rehabilitation courses even where results are minimal, limiting the time spent in hospital and returning the patient to his own home under the care of local geriatric services.

High intake of drugs

40. The elderly frequently suffer from a greater number of illnesses than younger people. Indeed, we refer to the poly pathology of the elderly, which usually goes hand in hand with the supply of excessive quantities of drugs. Furthermore, old people are more susceptible to iatrogenous illnesses, i.e. illnesses caused by medicines to which they are more sensitive, because the liver and kidneys of old people are less efficient than those of young people and this means that drugs are not digested and assimilated as quickly.

Consideration should also be given to providing pharmaceutical containers for the elderly. Just as we have child-proof containers, we should also introduce containers for the use of old people (even if this is frowned on by the psychologists) with labels in legible print, tops which are easy to remove and clear instructions. Pills should be easy to swallow but not so small that they are difficult to take out of the container.

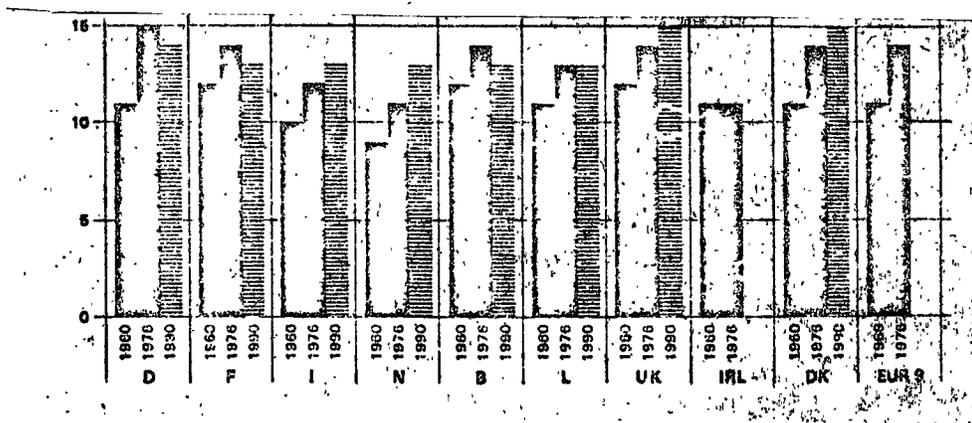
Hospitalization

41. The hospital is often the only solution available to meet the needs of the elderly citizen. In Italy, the over-seventies account for 20% of the overall population but for 40% of the hospital population. A survey carried out in 1970 showed that at least one-fifth of the days spent by the over-seventies in general hospitals were due to social factors. Women, for example, remained in hospital longer than men. This is because the men can rely on the women of the family to care for them, whilst the women have to care for themselves. There is also a greater number of women who live alone and who therefore cannot go home until they are completely cured. Many European countries have found successful solutions to the problem of hospitalization, such as the provision of open services offering alternative facilities which make it possible to avoid hospitalization or to discharge the patient in a short time. Furthermore, an ever greater measure of integration between health and social services is essential.

The alternative solutions which have been tried out over many years include day-centres, whose facilities are geared more to social than to medical needs, and day-hospitals - usually established within geriatric hospitals - from which the patients go home very evening. The elderly can spend from one to five days a week there and enjoy the same range of services as the in-patients but with more recreation and therapy facilities, in addition to rehabilitation treatment.

ANNEX I

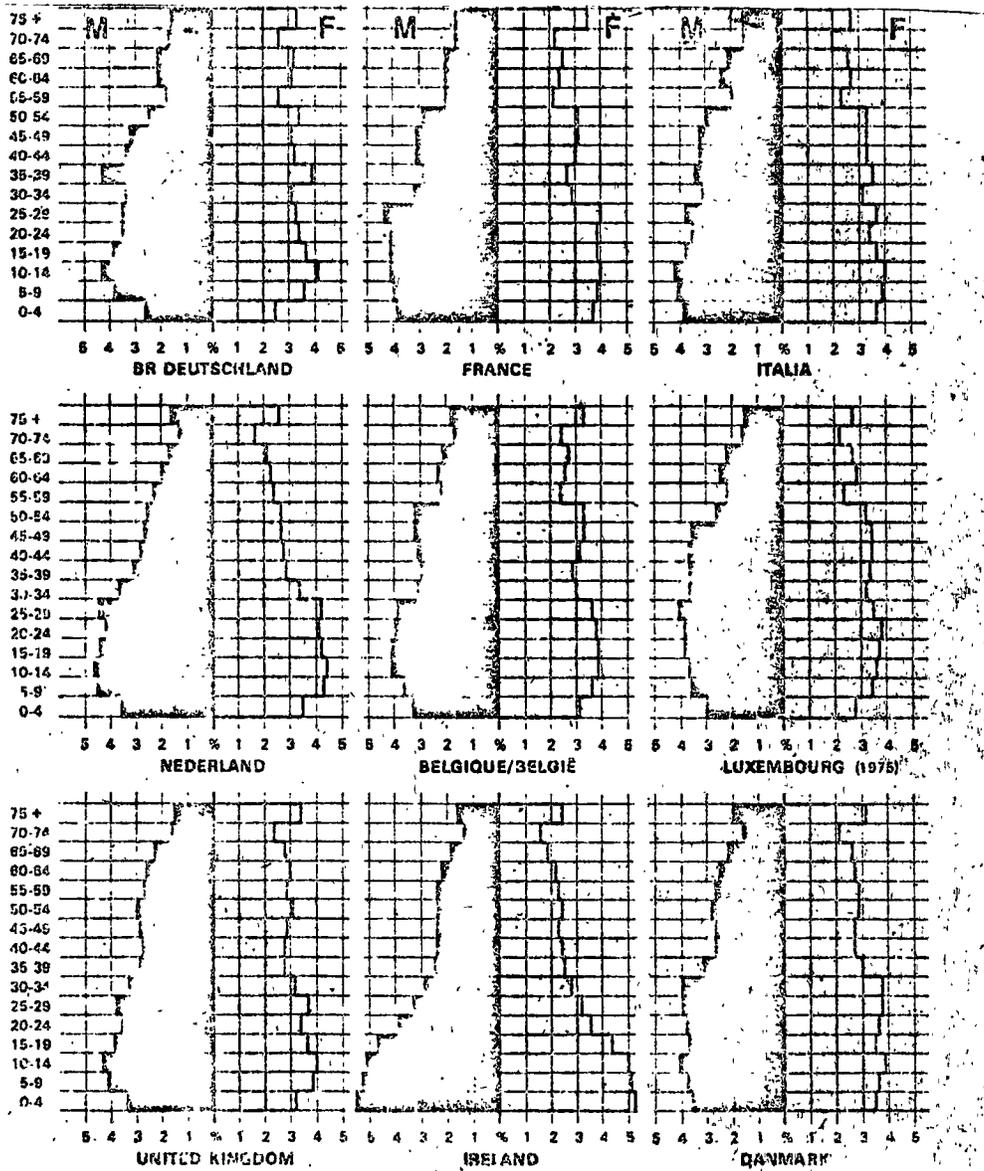
Persons aged 65 or more as a percentage of the total population



Population by sex and age-group

1976

Age



MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOCUMENT 1-325/80)
tabled by Mrs CARETONI ROMAGNOLI, Mr DIDO,
Mrs GHERGO, Mrs AGNELLI, Mrs SQUARCIALUPI,
Mr LEGA and Mr GIAVAZZI

pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure on a policy
for senior citizens

The European Parliament

- whereas the problem of senior citizens is becoming increasingly important, particularly as a result of longer life expectancy;
- whereas certain Member States have already introduced specific policies;
- whereas the General Assembly of the United Nations at its 33rd session convened a World Assembly of senior citizens;
- whereas the problems of the elderly have not so far been taken into account in the Community's social policy;

1. Calls on the Commission of the European Communities to become involved in this area and to
 - (a) carry out the relevant research into statistical data and the above-mentioned policies to gain an accurate picture of the current situation in the various Member States,
 - (b) make known what specific measures it intends to propose,
 - (c) enter in the 1981 budget a first batch of appropriations to tackle the problem of senior citizens in the framework of the various Community policies beginning with social, health and cultural policies;
2. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission of the European Communities.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOCUMENT 1-394/80)

tabled by Mrs CLWYD, Mr DIDÒ, Mr HUME, Mr ALBERS,
Mr KAVANAGH, Mrs DESMOND, Mrs SALISCH, Mr PETERS,
Mrs VAYSSADE, Mr OEHLER, Mrs KROUWEL-VLAM,
Mr VIEHOFF, Mr ABENS and Mr VERNIMMEN

pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure

on a Community Programme for the Aged

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the resolution 33/52 of the 33rd General Assembly of the U.N. in which it was decided to organize a World Convention of the Aged in 1982,
 - having regard to the progress being made by the I.L.O. in the preparation of policies dealing with the problems of older workers in work and in retirement,
 - noting that there are now some 27,500,000 people over 65 in the Community - over 11% of its population,
 - concerned also by the problems of former migrant and frontier workers,
1. Is of the opinion that provision should exist for gradual retirement and appropriate retirement preparation programmes should be implemented;
 2. Welcomes the proposals made by the Commission on the subject of flexible retirement but insists that social objectives must have priority;
 3. Considers however that the aged face problems additional to those of retirement, which require a comprehensive approach at both national and Community level;
 4. Believes that every pensioner has the right to choice, dignity, independence and security as an integral and valued member of society,
 5. These rights require an adequate retirement pension, and as of right, a pensioner should :
 - live in accommodation which is appropriate to personal need and circumstances with a reasonable degree of choice;
 - be able to call on the full range of community and personal social services;
 - be able to use a scheme of substantial concessionary facilities on all public transport;
 - have ready access to comprehensive free health care and adequate heating allowances;

- have full access to a varied and extensive range of education and leisure facilities;
- 6. Calls on the Commission to prepare a Programme for the Aged, which would necessitate a survey of the policies being pursued in favour of the elderly, and of the rights and benefits available to them, in the Member States; it should include proposals for comprehensive policies for Community cooperation towards the elimination of existing disparities and problems;
- 7. Suggests that such a programme could serve as the Community's contribution to the U.N. Convention on the Aged, and asks the Commission to state what contribution it had envisaged making on behalf of the Community;
- 8. Calls on its appropriate committees to consider the problems of the aged, and solutions thereto, in the context of their committees' competence;
- 9. Calls on its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and Council.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH, CULTURE, EDUCATION, INFORMATION
AND SPORT

Draftsman : Mr VANDEMEULEBROUCKE

The European Parliament, at its sittings of 15 and 17 September 1980, referred the motion for a resolution tabled by Mrs CARETONI ROMAGNOLI and others on a policy for senior citizens (Doc. 1-325/80) and the motion for a resolution tabled by Mrs CLWYD and others on a Community Programme for the Aged (Doc. 1-394/80) to the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport for its opinion.

At its meeting on 22 October 1980, the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport appointed Mr COPPIETERS draftsman and subsequently, at its meeting on 20 October 1981, Mr VANDEMEULEBROUCKE draftsman to replace Mr COPPIETERS.

It considered this opinion at its meeting on 1 and 2 December 1981 and adopted it unanimously with two abstentions.

Present : Mr PEDINI, chairman; Mr HAHN, vice-chairman;
Mr VANDEMEULEBROUCKE, draftsman; Mr BEYER DE RYKE, Mrs BROOKES, Mrs CINCIARI-RODANO (deputizing for Mr PAPAPIETRO); Mr MARCK, Mrs PRUVOT, Mr SELIGMAN (deputizing for Mr HUTTON) and Mrs VIEHOFF.

1. Consideration of the cultural aspects of the situation and problems of the aged in the European Community should not be based exclusively on a narrow definition of culture as the development of the mind (education, training, modes of expression, art). The problems of the aged must also be considered in terms of physical health, housing, environment and the social aspects of attitudes in the Community. In this broader-based view the isolationist approach to the care of the elderly is replaced by a socially integrated policy providing for the greatest possible participation.

2. The problems of the elderly can be tackled in various ways in addition to those suggested in the Committee on Social Affairs' report and the approach should therefore be tailored to meet specific requirements:

(a) Older persons who are no longer actively involved in economic life fall into various age groups corresponding to:

- the period prior to actual retirement, when there can be a very abrupt transition from active to non-active life. This affects a growing number of people as unemployment figures rise and, in a period of economic decline, there is often no prospect of older persons, not yet of pensionable age, obtaining new employment.
- the post-retirement period when people do not feel old and are not mentally ready to withdraw from society.
- advanced old age when the ageing process increasingly restricts social activities.

(b) The care of the elderly must take account of whether the elderly person lives in the country, a town, a city or a suburb which is purely a dormitory town in social and economic terms.

(c) Family situations are very diverse, ranging from elderly married couples to people living alone, elderly people without children and those fortunate elderly people who have maintained family links with children and grandchildren.

3. The elderly suffer more from income disparities than the employed. In the case of the employed the average income disparity in the European Community lies between 1 and 9, whereas in over-65 age group the disparity lies between 1 and 20. The problems of the elderly also differ in extent depending on social class. For the well-off ageing is just another stage in the individual's

life whilst those classes in society who are less well-off suffer from considerable income difficulties. The disparity is far greater for elderly women whose life expectancy is statistically higher. The fact that women may not have worked, or may have worked for an insufficient period, the fact that they receive lower survivor's pensions and the fact that the housework they do is not financially rewarded explains why they account for roughly 80% of those entitled to only minimum pensions.

4. The care of the elderly has improved in recent decades; however, the situation is still unsatisfactory. Formerly, the charities dealt with this problem by housing the elderly separately in large centres and homes but there has been a move away from these types of ghettos and the approach now favoured is that of better integration into local society. In particular, the rapid growth in associations for the elderly has helped to combat social isolation. In France, old people's organizations increased in number from 500 in 1973 to 15,000 in 1980. The original, purely social aim of providing contact between contemporaries has expanded to cover new fields (permanent training, summer schools, child care, cultural activities) and in some communities the activities of the associations for the elderly have given fresh impetus to local community life. The most progressive associations organize discussion evenings regularly on the social implications of ageing and the problems of retirement and loneliness; they also take positive steps towards integration into local society through projects for service flats, meal distribution, home visits, library services etc.

5. The Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport therefore considers that local old people's committees should be set up to advise local authorities on all aspects of growing old. In this way every part of local life (e.g. recreation, hobbies, permanent training, a pensioner's pass for social and cultural activities, local transport, services centres, town planning, part-time work, child care run by old people for the local community, the handing down of local culture traditions, revival of traditional customs and trades, utilization of communications technology at favourable rates) can be evaluated with a view to helping the elderly to become more integrated into local society.

The local authorities should provide more finance which is at least proportional to the number of elderly people in their area. These local authority funds should, inter alia, enable the old people's committee to give better advice by providing it with information through a multi-disciplinary team of experts investigating the needs of the elderly and helping to formulate practical solutions. The primary concern must be with those without families and those who live alone.

6. Particular attention should be paid to the major problem of the transition from employment to retirement. In this connection consideration must also be given to the older unemployed who are not yet of pensionable age. It should be remembered that the sudden transition to retirement is most difficult for the less privileged in society for whom a meaningful use of leisure time has already caused problems during their working lives. Thus permanent training should no longer be the exclusive privilege of younger people and the employed.

7. New initiatives in the creation of part-time work are needed to facilitate the transition from active to non-active life. A study must be made of occupations which are either linked to sectors where jobs are governed less by strict working patterns and profitability (e.g. office, supervisory and stores work) or which could be reserved for the elderly in this transitional period (e.g. part-time teaching, social and cultural activities in schools, supervision of school-children and apprentices, part-time work in the social, cultural and services sectors and in the quaternary sector).

8. In some Member States (e.g. Belgium) there is a system of permanent education whereby free time is granted on a weekly basis for additional courses about technical matters or as general education. This system, which is at present reserved for young workers for further training, retraining and for general development, must be extended to all those who are within five years of pensionable age to provide a profitable preparation for retirement. The hourly credit system for the pre-retirement period should be organized and subsidized through consultation between government and industry and it will also help create part-time work for young people. Older people who are unemployed for long periods must also be admitted to this credit system by the authorities as part of permanent training.

9. The Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport requests the Commission of the European Communities to obtain information on all Member States' positive experiences and to use this as a basis for a wide-ranging report on the opportunities offered by an integrated policy on the elderly in terms of all aspects of culture.

