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- Standing Committee on Employment -

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PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 7 November 1986

10305/86 (Presse 163)

The Standing Committee on Employment held its 32nd meeting on Friday 7 November 1986 with Mr Kenneth CLARKE, Minister for Employment of the United Kingdom, in the chair. (*)

Discussions of the meeting were devoted to the topic : "The Growth of Employment and Priority Actions in the Fight against Unemployment".

At the end of the meeting, the Chairman drew the following conclusions:

(*) A list of participants is given in the Annex

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CONCLUSIONS OF THE CHAIRMAN

1. The Committee had a wide-ranging discussion based on the paper tabled by the Commission "The Growth of Employment and Priority Actions in the Fight against Unemployment". The discussion covered aspects of the labour market which gave rise to particular concern and lines of action to follow in order to promote the growth of employment and to intensify the fight against unemployment.

2. There was recognition that the persistence of large-scale unemployment has reinforced and was accompanied by rigidities in the labour market and that this worked against the greater dynamism and better adaptability in the labour market which are necessary for economic and technological advance.

3. The Committee stated that economic growth was the essential condition for creating a higher more dynamic demand for labour. The Committee noted that the cooperative strategy for growth and employment, proposed for the first time by the Commission in its 1985-86 annual economic report, had been supported by the Council and by the social partners. The Committee also noted that in its 1986-87 report the Commission had stated that the strategy had not thus far been implemented sufficiently to achieve the objectives.

That was why the concrete proposals made by the Commission in its latest report sought greater cooperation at Community level as well as greater coherence in the economic policies including the mobility of capital to be followed. The results of discussions in the social dialogue formed part of this cooperation exercise. The Committee noted that the Council would be addressing the latest report before the end of 1986.

4. The participating parties, while expressing differences of views of some the issues for discussion, underlined the imperative need for stronger action and closer cooperation with a view to accelerating the creation of new jobs and to reducing substantially the rate of unemployment.
5. The Committee thought that the commitments concerning specific actions for employment and training, as undertaken by the Community through extensive resolutions of the Council, should be brought up to date and strengthened, not least to assist structural and socio-economic changes and competitiveness and to restore employment opportunities for workers whose opportunities have worsened.
6. The Committee noted that the Council, in cooperation with the Commission, intended to identify priorities for action concerning specific employment and labour market matters.
7. The discussions on new priorities for action concerning the labour market were aimed inter alia at an effective response to the process of restructuring and adaptation to change, in response to increased international competition and the needs of new technologies. Against this background, the following lines of action were identified:
 - I. (i) The priorities for action should respond as effectively as possible to the needs of change on the labour market and to facilitate a more dynamic development of employment. It would therefore be appropriate to stimulate the

potential for employment at all levels and to develop the spirit of enterprise. The status of cooperatives and the self-employed should be furthered. The Committee noted with approval the programme for small and medium sized enterprises, as presented recently by the Commission and endorsed by the Council, and invited the Commission in particular to put into effect the proposals which would have a positive effect on employment and training.

(ii) To improve the content and provision of training throughout the Community. This implied improvement of occupational qualifications through their extension and better links with the current needs of the labour market. This also implied comprehensive systems of vocational training for young people and systematic development of opportunities for training and retraining for adults. It was emphasised that the mutual recognition of qualifications would have a positive effect on increasing the mobility of workers which was more and more desirable. The Committee also recalled the conclusions reached on 14 May 1986 concerning forward looking labour market management.

(iii) Identify and examine new forms of work activities which offer opportunities for real employment. This might include possibilities offered by work which is only partially paid or voluntary.

II. A substantial immediate attack on long-term unemployment with a view to a substantial reduction in its current rate and with a particular emphasis on those who have been unemployed

for a very long period (for example at least two years) and who are in areas where the general rate of unemployment is very high. This would include improving the employment services and systematic and effective follow up intended to help unemployed people. This also implied a greater emphasis on the problem of long-term unemployment in the guidelines of the European Social Fund.

III. In order to achieve a more effective labour market, the Committee agreed on the need for more adaptable patterns of work and at the same time to increase the access to the labour market of all those seeking a job. The parties present recognised that the need for greater adaptability, both internal and external to the enterprise, should not put at risk hard-won fundamental rights in the areas of social security, social protection and conditions of work.

It was felt that the promotion of the social dialogue - cooperation between the social partners - at all appropriate levels should be encouraged with a view to finding satisfactory solutions to today's problems such as working conditions, working time and its organisation and other matters connected with new forms of production and the introduction of new technologies.

IV. The Committee emphasised the importance of identifying, over the longer term, key elements and problems in social security systems as addressed in the Commission's recent memorandum on this subject.

8. Some of the participants underlined that certain other concrete actions were needed as follows:

- important infrastructure projects of european-wide interest;
- increase of public investment;
- reduction and reorganisation of working time;
- reorganisation of the labour market based on regional and local structures of forward looking labour market management;
- creation of work of social interest;
- local employment initiatives.

9. The Committee noted that the internal market would bring about on important growth potential. The achievement of the internal market should go hand in hand with taking into account social policies and with the development of structural policies in order to strengthen the cohesion of the Community as defined in the Single European Act.

10. Finally, the Committee noted the important results recently achieved in the Group "Macro-Economics" of Val-Duchesse in the framework of the social dialogue and expressed the wish that it achieved also other concrete results.

ANNEXE

32ème SESSION DU COMITE PERMANENT DE L'EMPLOI

Liste des Participants

BELGIQUE

M. HANSENNE

Ministre de l'Emploi et du Travail

DANEMARK

M. ANDERSEN

Chef de Division

ALLEMAGNE

M. BADEN

Secrétaire d'Etat
Ministère fédéral du Travail
et des Affaires sociales

GRECE

M. PAPANAYOTOU

Ministre du Travail

ESPAGNE

M. ESPINA

Secrétaire Général de l'Emploi

FRANCE

M. ARTHUIS

Secrétaire d'Etat au Ministère
des Affaires sociales et de l'Emploi

IRLANDE

M. QUINN

Ministre du Travail

ITALIE

M. CONTI-PERSINI

Secrétaire d'Etat au Ministère
du Travail

LUXEMBOURG

M. GLODT

Attaché de Gouvernement,
Ministère du Travail

PAYS-BAS

M. DE GRAAF

Secrétaire d'Etat,
Ministre des Affaires sociales
et de l'Emploi

PORTUGAL

M. FERNADES MARQUES

Secrétaire d'Etat à l'Emploi
et à la Formation professionnelle

ROYAUME-UNI

M. CLARKE

Ministre de l'Emploi

COMMISSION

M. MARIN

Vice-Président

REPRESENTANTS DES ORGANISATIONS DES TRAVAILLEURS

C E S

M. DASSIS
M. CREA
M. HINTERSCHIED
M. MASUCCI
M. LEA
L. VAN DEN BROUCKE
Mme GROZELIER
M. COLDRICK
M. NIELSEN
M. BO

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REPRESENTANTS DES ORGANISATIONS DES EMPLOYEURS

C L E

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M. Mc AULEY
Mme ROCHE
M. MONDELLO
M. HUNTJENS
M. PRICE
M. RENDLE
M. TYSZKIEWICZ
M. MEYER

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M. PERCEVAL

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M. SAMPIETRO
M. HOLROYD