

SOCIAL EUROPE

Youth training in
the European Community

SUPPLEMENT 3/86



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR EMPLOYMENT,
SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND EDUCATION

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YOUTH TRAINING IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Report prepared by the Commission following the Council
Resolution of 11 July 1983

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Council Resolution of 11 July 1983 "concerning vocational training policies in the European Community in the 1980s" (OJ no. C193 of 20.7.1983) committed the Member States as follows:

"during the next five years, taking account of the responsibilities of the two sides of industry in this area, Member States:

-will do their utmost to ensure that all young people who so wish, and particularly those without educational or vocational qualifications, can benefit over a period of at least six months and if possible one year following full-time compulsory education from a full-time programme involving basic training and/or an initial work experience to prepare them for an occupation,

-moreover, will pursue their efforts, in the context of their national policies and practices, to see that for young people without sufficient qualifications, including particularly those who are looking for work, adequate opportunities of vocational training to improve their skills and qualifications are available".

2. The Commission, for its part, was asked "to prepare a comparative analysis of the progress made by Member States on specific measures to assist young people, in time for submission during International Youth Year in 1985".
3. This is the Commission's report. It has been prepared in co-operation with the national authorities of the Member States, and with the technical assistance of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP). The report concentrates, as requested, on policies to improve the vocational preparation of young people after the minimum school-leaving age. (Note: throughout this report, all references to the minimum school-leaving age should be understood as referring to the age when young people are legally entitled to move out of full-time schooling). However, it is impossible not to make some mention of related developments within other areas of education and training, including the period

of compulsory schooling. Similarly, vocational training policies need to be seen in the context of other aspects of manpower policy.

4. Although the report focuses on the specific commitments of Member States towards young people following the period of compulsory schooling, the 11 July Resolution also called upon Member States to extend provision for vocational training to young people under 25, especially the unemployed. Such policies are also covered by the report, though not in detail. In general most Member States have given the greatest attention to the 15-19 age-group.
5. The report is a summary of a considerable volume of material, often quite complex. The national authorities of the Member States were invited to prepare detailed accounts of national policies in this area. These reports were most helpful in the preparation of this report and, because of the wealth of authoritative information which they contain, are being published separately by the Commission.
6. The main conclusions suggested by the Commission's review of developments in the Member States are as follows:
 - a) most Member States have met - or will shortly meet - the minimum commitment set out in the Council Resolution of 11 July 1983 to offer some basic vocational preparation to all young people at the end of the period of compulsory schooling;
 - b) in some cases this has necessitated major efforts to expand the number of training places available;
 - c) Member States have also taken welcome steps to involve enterprises more fully in the planning and delivery of youth training programmes;
 - d) having said this, there is still cause for concern over the extent to which current provision meets the challenges arising from technological and economic change and the needs of individual young people, especially those from disadvantaged groups and regions.
7. The report is structured as follows:
 - I Introduction: paragraphs 1 - 7
 - II The scale and nature of the challenge: paragraphs 8 - 15
 - III Progress made since 1983: paragraphs 16 - 69
 - IV Key issues: paragraphs 70 - 94
 - V Conclusion: paragraphs 95 - 97.

II. THE SCALE AND NATURE OF THE CHALLENGE

8. There are some 46 million 14 - 24 year-olds in the European Community. Of these, about 20 million are undertaking full-time education or vocational training; 18 million are employed; and 4.5 million are unemployed. (The remaining 3.5 million are economically inactive for various reasons.) Every year, some 4.25 million young people reach the minimum age for leaving school in the Community. Each year, around 4.25 million actually leave school or higher education and enter the labour market. There are of course major differences both between and within Member States. However, the following table seeks to give a simple overview of the situation in 1983.

Principal activities of 14 - 24 year-olds in 1983 (%)

	Employed	Unemployed	In education/training
D	45.1	5.3	44.6
F	38.7	9.6	44.1
I	31.3	12.9	47.7
NL	35.0	9.4	51.4
B	30.6	9.6	55.9
L	48.2	3.0	42.4
UK	46.7	11.8	32.1
IRL	43.0	11.8	40.8
DK	48.4	11.2	36.5
GR	30.1	8.9	45.5
EUR 10	39.9	9.8	43.0

source: EC Labour Force Sample Survey 1983

9. Most young people in the Community stay in the educational/training system well after the minimum school-leaving age. The table below shows the participation rates in full-time education in the Member States.

Educational Participation Rates in the European Community (%)

age	15		19		24	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
D	94.9	96.9	19.2	24.3	19.0	10.8
F	97.1	98.9	25.8	31.3	7.0	6.4
I	61.0	54.1	24.2*	14.1*	(1)	(1)
NL	98.9	98.6	40.9	28.4	12.2	5.9
B	92.4	92.6	31.6	34.6	5.2	2.3
L	74.3	77.0	28.5	25.3	(1)	(1)
UK	100.0	100.0	15.0	12.4	(1)	(1)
IRL	88.0	90.8	18.6	18.2	2.8	1.4
DK	97.3	98.7	54.8	44.9	17.6	17.3
GR	60.2	56.7	22.1	16.1	4.7	1.4
EUR	88.3	87.5	21.1	20.5	(1)	(1)

source: EUROSTAT

Notes: All figures for 1982 - 1983, except D (1981 - 1982), I (1975 - 1976) and GR (1980 - 1981)

* estimates

(1) figure not available.

There have of course been major changes since 1981. Youth unemployment in the Community has worsened considerably. Most governments in the Community have introduced a range of new programmes for young people in response to rising youth unemployment and the demands of technological and economic change. One consequence of these developments is that more recent educational participation rates will tend to be higher.

10. Towards the end of the period of compulsory full-time schooling, young Europeans have to decide whether or not to leave the education/training system; in practice, the great majority do not leave. At this stage - in some Member States even earlier - young people also need to decide whether to remain in general or technical education leading on (for some) to advanced general or technical study, or whether to undertake vocational education or training which is related more closely to the world of work.

11. The distinction between the general and vocational streams has historically been very clear. However, Member States differ in the structures of vocational education and training which they have adopted. Some – notably Germany and Denmark – rely above all on long-established systems of apprenticeship, which combine vocational training with work experience. Others, notably France, have tended to rely more on full-time vocational education within the formal education system. A third group of Member States , typified by the United Kingdom, have mixed systems. In fact, as will be discussed in more detail below, in recent years these distinctions have become less meaningful. For example, a basic understanding of the major applications of the new information technologies is now so important for life and work that it should be regarded as part of a general education rather than as vocational knowledge. Nonetheless, the balance between general, technical and vocational education/training varies widely. At one extreme is the Federal Republic of Germany, with a predominantly vocational system of post-compulsory education; Denmark and Italy also have largely vocational systems. At the other extreme is Greece, where general courses dominate the post-compulsory curriculum. Ireland is somewhat similar. In the other Member States, there is more of a balance between the various types of provision.
12. Young people leave school in the Community with widely differing qualifications. It is impossible to compare qualifications obtained at the end of compulsory schooling – some Member States do not have them, and in those that do, systems of assessment vary widely. Nonetheless, it is clear that a substantial minority of school-leavers (around 10% in the United Kingdom and Italy, 8% in Ireland, 13% of all young people leaving school or higher education in France) have no formal record of their achievements when they leave school. The majority (73% in the United Kingdom, 48% of all young people leaving school or higher education in France) have an intermediate qualification, often vocational in nature. A growing minority of young people completing the second cycle of secondary education (as many as 30% of the whole age-group in the Federal Republic of Germany, 28% in France and 26% in Italy) have qualifications which give them access to higher education.
13. Many who leave school – and especially the least qualified – face immediate unemployment, often prolonged. Typical unemployment rates for school-leavers (on various definitions) are 25% in Ireland, 28% in Italy

and France. This has been a major impetus behind the appearance of new education, training and work experience measures for young people. For young people under 25, the unemployment rates in April 1984 were as follows:

D	F	I	NL	B	L	UK	IRL	DK	GR
11.6	20.9	33.1	21.6	22.7	7.7	19.7	25.1	17.3	28.8
EUR: 20.8					source: EUROSTAT				

14. These statistics show that there are major differences between Member States in the experience of young people. However, even within individual Member States there are great differences in experience: what happens to young people reflects their sex, colour and ethnic origin, qualifications, social class, and the opportunities available locally, as well as their individual characteristics. For example, though educational participation rates for girls and boys have grown closer in recent years, girls remain over-represented on general courses and on courses leading to jobs in the service sector, and under-represented on scientific and technical courses. Again, qualified young people have better employment prospects than the unqualified. In Ireland in 1984, for example, the unemployment rate amongst unqualified 1983 school-leavers was almost double that for all school-leavers.
15. Finally, as already noted, the situation of young people in the Community is constantly changing. The most important changes over the last decade have been:

- the increase in the numbers of young people. The number of 14 - 24 year-olds in the Community rose from 42 million in 1970 to 46 million in 1985. (Most Member States, however, are now entering a period of demographic decline - often quite dramatic);
- the increasing proportion of young people staying on at school or in other forms of education and training beyond the minimum compulsory school-leaving age;
- because of these factors, the increase in the actual numbers of young people undertaking education or training. For example, between 1970 - 1971 and 1982 - 1983 the number of young people following the second cycle of secondary education rose from 6.3 million to almost 10 million;

-the increasing difficulties faced by young people entering the labour market. The unemployment rate amongst under-25s was probably under 4% in 1970, but had reached almost 21% in 1984.

These structural changes, combined with continuing economic, technological and social change, form the background to the developments on which the rest of this report concentrates.

III. PROGRESS MADE SINCE 1983

Introduction

16. The purpose of this part of the report is
 - to outline the major recent developments in the Member States which relate to the implementation of the Council commitments of 11 July 1983;
 - to discuss, in more detail, some of the most significant innovations.
17. Given the necessary brevity of the report and the wide range of policies and programmes concerned, the report is selective in content. A fuller description of the vocational education and training systems of the Member States is available from the publications of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP). The detailed progress reports prepared by the national authorities of the Member States, on which this overview report is largely based, are being published separately by the Commission.
18. Finally, it is important to note that, although the Council commitments of 11 July 1983 cover education and training opportunities available to all young people under 25, this report concentrates on 15 - 19 year-olds. The commitments in respect of this younger age-group were particularly specific, and in addition fewer data in respect of young people over 19 were available at the time of drafting. However, the Commission will seek to ensure that future reports to the Council give a more balanced account of the situation of young people under 25.
19. The following paragraphs look briefly at each Member State in turn. Section IV then discusses some of the key issues arising from this survey of the scene.

Federal Republic of Germany

20. Education in Germany is compulsory until the age of 18. From 15 (in some Länder) or 16 (in most Länder) it need only be part-time. In practice, about 40% of 15 - 18 year-olds are in full-time education at school. Most of the rest are undertaking vocational training, mainly through the Dualsystem of apprenticeship. Most young people need to make key decisions as early as 11 or 12, because the secondary education system is mainly divided into three major streams (one leading to higher education, and the other two to other forms of education/training)

and transfer between the streams is difficult in practice, if not in theory.

21. The primary policy of the German authorities, as regards vocational training, continues to be reliance upon the Dualsystem. It is indeed remarkable how the capacity of the Dualsystem, which is largely financed by enterprises, has continually expanded - despite the recession - to meet the growing demand from young people for training places. In 1982 some 630,000 places were available, equivalent to 60% of the number of minimum-age school-leavers. In 1984 almost 730,000 places were available, equivalent to over 74% of minimum-age school-leavers and 95% of the total recorded demand for places. Some of this expansion results from a Federal programme of subsidies for inter-firm training centres, which has increased the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises in the Dualsystem.
22. It is the view of the Federal authorities that the Council commitments of 11 July 1983 in respect of school-leavers were achieved long ago. Those young people who fail to obtain an apprenticeship have the right to 12 months of basic vocational preparation after the end of compulsory full-time education. However, although the basic structure of the system remains unchanged, there have been three particularly interesting recent developments.
23. Firstly, there have been changes in the characteristics of young people entering the Dualsystem. Increasing numbers of young people are entering the Dualsystem in preference to entering higher education. Indeed, most of the recent increase in demand for training places comes from these well-qualified young people, who are 18 or older. About 13% of entrants to the Dualsystem are now young people, who are qualified to enter higher education. Though explicitly vocational courses (designed to lead directly to employment) have traditionally had higher status in Germany than in many other Member States, this is in fact an example of a general trend. Increasingly, throughout the Community, vocational and technical courses are seen - by governments, enterprises, parents, and young people - as worthwhile for academically able young people, rather than as the preserve of the less able. This is related to a wider phenomenon: increasing numbers of older young people, whatever their qualifications, are seeking to enter the Dualsystem. In

1984 nearly 50% of applicants were 18 or older. Some had stayed on in full-time education after 15; some saw apprenticeship as offering a useful second qualification; some had been unemployed for a period. There is increasing discussion about the extent to which the Dualsystem is appropriate for such young people.

24. Secondly, there is concern about the coverage of the Dualsystem. In particular, disadvantaged young people, especially the families of migrant workers, can face considerable difficulty in gaining access to vocational training, which in practice usually entails recruitment as an apprentice by an employer. The proportion of young foreigners who fail in their search for a place under the Dualsystem is 50% higher than that for native Germans. This has led the German authorities to introduce various special measures for such young people. Though expenditure on these measures is increasing, it remains modest in comparison with the scale of the resources devoted to the Dualsystem. In addition, there are imbalances between the supply of and demand for training places in terms of particular regions and occupations. Finally, young women are disadvantaged in comparison with young men: for example, nearly two thirds of unsuccessful applicants are women. Nonetheless, the special measures introduced to increase the participation of young women in training courses in traditionally male-dominated occupations have had some encouraging results. The number of young women trained in occupations in which in 1977 at least 80% of trainees were men rose from 13,000 in 1977 to 51,000 in 1983.
25. Thirdly, it must be remembered that training under the Dualsystem is occupationally highly specific. Though broader foundation training is offered to a minority of young people, for example through the Berufsgrundbildungsjahr (a one-year vocational course), the speed and scale of technological and economic change has recently led to considerable activity to simplify the Dualsystem and develop more broadly-based courses within it. In the engineering industry, for example, the employers have recently agreed with the trade union to reduce the number of separate apprenticeship courses from 42 to 6. Similar negotiations are under way in the electrical engineering sector (in which it is planned to reduce the number of recognized occupations from 14 to 7) and in the retail sector (in which one standard training programme is envisaged).

26. Finally, as in many Member States, there have been a variety of complementary developments within the period of compulsory full-time education. For example, there are proposals to extend the provision of vocational preparation courses throughout secondary education, and to improve horizontal mobility between the various parts of the education/training system.

France

27. France is notable for its highly-developed system of full-time vocational and technical education, starting during the period of compulsory schooling, which ends at 15. In 1982, of the 4.4 million 15 - 19 year-olds, 75% were pupils or students, of whom about 60% were following vocational courses, and 40% were on general or technical courses giving access to advanced education or training. 4.5% of 15 - 19 year-olds were apprentices; 8% were employed; and 6.4% were either unemployed or participating in one of the special measures for the young unemployed.
28. In response to rising youth unemployment and technological and economic change, the French authorities have adopted a two-fold strategy of -expanding vocational and technical education. The government's aim is that all young people under 21 should have access to training rather than remaining unemployed. Young people under 19 are being encouraged to remain within full-time education or training;
-developing, in co-operation with the social partners, a series of special measures for the young unemployed. These emphasize vocational guidance and training (for the 16 - 19 age group) and training in the context of an employment/training contract (for older young people).
29. France thus offers an example of the way in which the traditional distinctions between education and training, and indeed between employment and unemployment, are increasingly inadequate descriptions of the actual experiences of young people. The main object of French policy is that all young people receive a qualification relevant to working life. The location of the courses within the education/training system, and the employment status of the trainees, are secondary to this overall objective.

30. Alongside the quantitative expansion of vocational and technical education (for example, an additional 60,000 places in the vocational schools in 1984-1985) has come a range of qualitative developments, including the increasing use of modular courses, and major efforts to retrain teachers in the light of technological change. In June 1985 the government published a draft Five-Year Plan to further expand and improve vocational and technical education. Its main features are:
 - a) creation of a new vocational "baccalaureat", to complement the existing general and technical "baccalaureats". This new qualification is designed to encourage those young people who currently leave the vocational schools at 16 to stay on a further 2 - 3 years and improve their qualifications. Some 80,000 candidates annually are envisaged by 1990. It is thus intended both to improve the supply of trained manpower and to raise the status of vocational education, which has historically had lower status than general and technical education;
 - b) creation of at least five new technological universities: at present Compiègne is unique;
 - c) a 50% increase in intake into the existing technological colleges, which are not of university status.
31. In the area of special measures for the young unemployed, a particularly interesting development is the agreement between the social partners of October 1983, which was reflected in subsequent legislation. This followed the failure of the government's special training measures for 18 - 25 year-olds to reach their quantitative targets. Under the new measures the social partners will have a bigger role in running the programme, and indeed it is being partly financed by relieving participating enterprises from the training tax. The programme consists of various types of employment/training contracts, which are fixed-term contracts of employment under which the young people receive vocational training and are paid a modest wage. By the end of 1985, it was originally hoped that some 300,000 places would be available: latest reports suggest that no more than 185,000 will be secured. In addition, the government is prepared to finance up to 100,000 places if required. A further 140,000 work places are available under the government's new temporary work programme ("Travaux d'Utilité Collective") for unemployed 16 - 21 year-olds, though this does not offer vocational training.

32. Mention should be made of the reception, information and guidance machinery set up since 1982 for young people, which complements these occupational integration measures.

Like the other measures which make up this occupational integration policy, this guidance machinery is the responsibility of the State despite the decentralization carried out in 1983. However, while the guidelines and the financing derive from the central authorities, the purpose of this machinery is to mobilize the various administrations involved at local level, as well as the economic agents in a town or even a neighbourhood.

At present, there are close to 900 Reception, Information and Guidance Offices which are meant to find answers for problems of an occupational nature.

At the same time, some 100 Local Offices, financed jointly by the State and local authorities, have been set up in urban areas where the social and economic situation is particularly difficult to deal not only with training and employment questions, but also questions relating to health and accommodation.

Quite apart from its effect on those directly concerned, the question of the occupational integration of young people has had a major impact in other areas,

-firstly, by inducing bodies to operate in a coordinated manner, something which seldom happened in the past, and

-above all, by bringing about a major development of the recognition accorded to the contribution which undertakings can make to training in the widest sense of the term, although only a few years ago educators regarded them with misgiving. The twinning agreements between technical schools and firms - and also between firms and universities - bear witness to this.

Italy

33. Compulsory schooling in Italy currently ends at 14. However, most of the 800,000 young people who attain the basic school-leaving certificate each year remain at school. About half enter upper secondary schools, most of which have a technical or scientific bias. Around 10%

undertake shorter courses in the vocational schools. There are also about 1,700 vocational training centres run by the regions, which have had the primary responsibility for vocational training since 1978. Their provision includes low-level courses for young people who have failed to obtain the basic school-leaving certificate. Overall, an estimated 65% of young people who remain in education/training after the age of 14 are in vocational or technical institutions. Finally, there is a large-scale apprenticeship system in Italy, involving 60% of those 14 - 19 year-olds who are in employment, some 600,000 young people. However, the quality of the vocational training offered is frequently criticised, and indeed only a small minority of apprentices obtain a vocational qualification.

34. In recent years, in response to growing demand from young people, provision - in particular in the technical upper secondary schools and in the regional vocational training centres - has expanded considerably. In addition, both the central government and the regional authorities have introduced temporary youth measures, including training.
35. There has long been concern in Italy that its education and training system was inadequate to meet the challenges of rapid technical and economic change. Fundamental changes in secondary education are now envisaged over the rest of the decade, following the Senate acceptance in March 1985 of draft reform legislation. The school-leaving age will be raised to 16. This will have a significant quantitative impact: at present about 25% of young people leave school at the minimum age. A common core will be introduced within the curriculum of the first cycle of secondary education. This two-year programme, for 14 - 16 year-olds, will include vocational preparation. Upper secondary provision will be rationalized into four basic streams: arts, humanities, social and information sciences, and scientific and technological studies.
36. A major aim of these planned reforms is to improve the flexibility and adaptability of the workforce, a theme now emphasized by most Member States. Further draft legislation with the same aim includes the proposed reform of educational and vocational guidance, which involves decentralising responsibility to the 20 regions, consulting the social partners more intensively, and the use of information technology to improve labour market intelligence, especially at the regional level.

37. In the light of the acknowledged weaknesses of the apprenticeship system, recent Italian governments have attempted other approaches to encouraging employers to recruit and train more young people. In 1977 a scheme of employment/training contracts was introduced, by which employers could recruit young people under fixed-term contracts including guaranteed training. The scheme never achieved its quantitative targets, which employers attributed to the bureaucratic way in which it was administered. A more flexible approach was introduced by the legislation of January 1983: in the first year of the new arrangements, over 160,000 young people were recruited under employment/training contracts, of whom some 30,000 were aged under 19. The relationship between this form of training, the traditional apprenticeship, and other education/training provision is not clear and is now being actively discussed.

Netherlands

38. In the Netherlands, young people need to make key decisions at the age of 12/13, because there are three different systems of secondary education - although there is some movement between them:
- the AVO schools offer a general education designed to lead to employment, apprenticeship, or upper secondary or higher vocational training in MBO/HBO schools;
 - the LBO (lower secondary vocational) schools offer vocational training at various levels, the courses lasting 3 - 4 years. About a third of these young people subsequently enter apprenticeship - and they represent some 60% of entrants;
 - the VWO schools provide 6-year courses designed to lead on to higher education.

Every year some 140,000 15 - 19 year-olds leave the education system and enter the labour market. However, at any one time 80% of the age-group is in full-time education/training and a further 10% in part-time education/training.

39. Faced with high youth unemployment and technological and economic change, the government has adopted a three-part strategy involving:

a) the expansion of apprenticeship. This is being sought through sectoral agreements between the social partners on the numbers of apprentices and on the establishment of sectoral training funds to finance training places. These agreements with the social partners cover the period 1983-1988. The 1982/83 school year is the reference for the objective of doubling the intake for apprenticeship schemes.

A provisional survey at sectoral level indicates that for 1985 some 38,600 apprenticeship agreements were concluded. This figure, which is made up only of those aged 23 and over, already represents a 55 per cent increase over 1983.

Since 1983 the substantial government funds available for the support of apprentice recruitment have been made available only if the social partners have reached agreement at the sectoral level. Government money has in particular been used to encourage small enterprises to offer training places. The economic recovery which began at the end of 1983 and the measures taken to encourage growth are important factors, as are the plans to achieve a significant increase in the number of training places in government departments and the recent start up of the project channelling school-leavers into occupations in information technology.

b) The introduction of short vocational education courses (known as KMB0) for young people who wish to remain at school beyond the minimum school-leaving age of 17, but do not plan to enter higher education. Introduced experimentally in 1979, KMB0 provision is now stabilizing at around 25,000 participants. The courses are very popular: in 1983-1984 demand exceeded supply by 80%. The basic courses offer a general preparation for working life and last some 10 months, but they can lead on to further vocational training lasting 1 - 2 years. Around 60% of trainees enter the labour market after the course, and the rest go on to other education/training. A particular disappointment has been the declining proportion of young women entering KMB0 courses, apparently because the expansion has mostly taken place in manufacturing occupations which have traditionally been dominated by men;

c) Special measures for the young unemployed. Some 9,000 places are available on the CJW scheme, which offers vocational training to young people who have been unemployed for at least 3 months. Up to 1985, however, most of the resources available for special measures have been devoted to employment schemes, including wage subsidies and temporary work programmes.

40. In recent years the education and training of young people has been the subject of intensive discussion in the Netherlands, especially following the publication of the second report of the Wagner Commission on the future of Dutch industry. In its September 1984 response to this report, the government set out the objective - to be achieved in co-operation with the social partners - of ensuring that all young people who so wished should have access to vocational training equivalent in quality to at least the first stage of an apprenticeship. It is widely recognized, however, that this will involve a major increase in the provision of work experience placements by enterprises. The government is also anxious that all unemployed young people, and particularly those who have been unemployed for 2 years or more, should be offered a constructive alternative. The debate is now focusing around two initiatives:
 - a) the "Industry Plan" put forward by the social partners in manufacturing industry. This envisages guaranteeing to all 15 - 25 year-olds entering the labour market (250,000 young people annually) an apprenticeship or other training place, or a job (either full or part-time). Government assistance is sought in terms of finance and, controversially, in abolishing the minimum wage legislation covering young people and changing their social protection;
 - b) in 1984 the government introduced its "Start Plan", which offers employment and/or training to all young people who have been unemployed for 2 years or more. It involves generous wage subsidies, and fixed-term employment contracts.
41. Finally, as in other Member States, the government has been decentralizing responsibility for the link between vocational education and training on the one hand and the labour market on the other. In 1983-1984 it established 12 "education-employment contact centres" (known as COAs) in the 12 provinces. These bring together, at the regional level, the social partners, the public authorities, and the education and training services. They are involved in the planning and management of educational and vocational guidance services, in the collection and analysis of labour market intelligence, and in encouraging closer links between the individual education/training establishments and local enterprises. Of course, the government continues to intervene in

support of specific national priorities. For example, a per capita grant is offered to enterprises recruiting young women for apprenticeship training in occupations in which fewer than 50% of trainees have previously been women. But a major theme of the current education/training debate in the Netherlands, as elsewhere in the Community, is that it is the collective responsibility of the social partners, the public authorities, and the education and training services to ensure that the economy has the qualified workforce necessary in the 1980s and beyond.

Belgium

42. In Belgium the minimum school-leaving age, until recently, was 14. However, most young people remain at school after 14. Over 80% of 16 year-olds, and nearly 70% of 17 year-olds, are in full-time education: among the highest rates in the Community. From the age of 14, there is a complex and flexible range of vocational and technical courses available to young people in the three education systems (State, local or confessional). Outside the full-time education sector, vocational provision is available through apprenticeship - which is particularly strong amongst the self-employed and small craft enterprises - and through the many youth training schemes organized by industry on its own initiative. Unlike many other Member States, the government has not brought in major temporary training measures in response to rising youth unemployment, but instead has mainly sought to encourage the recruitment of young people by enterprises or to offer the young unemployed temporary jobs in the public or voluntary sector.
43. However, the most significant recent policy development has been the law of June 1983 raising the minimum school-leaving age from 14 to 18, with effect from 1985. The already high education participation rates in Belgium mean of course that only a minority of the age-group is directly affected. From the age of 15 or (usually) 16, the obligation can be met through part-time education/training. The legislation has led to considerable innovation and experiment, but it is too early to assess its practical impact. Nonetheless, the government sees this as the primary means through which the Council commitment of July 1983 in respect of young people reaching school-leaving age is to be fulfilled.

44. Within the context of the raising of the school-leaving age, in July 1983 the government also legislated to extend apprenticeship from the self-employed and craft sector into other sectors of industry. The legislation covers enterprises employing more than 50 workers, and follows the model of the German Dualsystem, in that the off-the-job training is the responsibility of the public education service, while the employer provides the practical training and pays the trainee a wage. It is, again, too early to assess the impact of this measure.
45. Finally, there have been various other measures to improve the quality and flexibility of education and training in response to technological and economic change. The pattern is similar to that found elsewhere in the Community: the measures include intensive teacher training programmes, the encouragement of "twinning" arrangements between schools and local enterprises, and schemes to enable both school students and teachers to undertake work experience in enterprises. High priority is being given to such measures to encourage closer partnership between education and enterprises.

Luxembourg

46. After six years of primary schooling, pupils may go into one of three types of secondary school.
 1. The short secondary leaving course (enseignement complémentaire) lasts three years and therefore takes pupils to the end of their period of compulsory schooling. Twenty-five per cent of pupils in the final primary year go on to this type of school which provides all proper general education together with a preparation for working life. Thanks to new channels for educational cooperation, more than one-third of the pupils in the "complémentaire" still succeed in gaining admission to technical secondary schools.
 2. Technical secondary schools provide pupils with a preparation for working life, giving them a general, technical and vocational education, as well as for technical higher education. This type of education consists of three stages:
-A three-year observation and semi-specialization period during which pupils receive a general education preparing them for the rest of their schooling;

-An intermediate stage, generally of three years, consists of full-time technical training combined with periods of work experience;

-A two-year advanced stage which provides advanced vocational training and prepares students for technical higher education.

3. Academic secondary education, lasting seven years, prepares pupils for higher education.

47. Although in theory it is fairly easy to move from one of these types of education to another statistics show that in most cases pupils are redirected from academic secondary schools to technical schools. Greater flexibility within the system and coordination between technical secondary schools and the "complémentaire" schools enable pupils in the latter to gain admission to technical secondary schools without taking an examination, as was the case previously. Technical education and vocational training were upgraded under the law of 21 May 1979.

The apprenticeship system is, then, currently undergoing changes. Depending on the occupational category, the new system provides for one or two years of full-time training, from about one or two years of training/work experience. This programme is a great success, because of its more intensive technical content and more advanced theoretical qualification.

48. In past years, the Government has also put into effect a number of temporary aid programmes for unemployed young people. For example, 1983 saw the permanent establishment of a programme combining work and training, while in 1984 a programme was set up under which subsidies are granted to firms taking on young people who are unemployed or threatened with redundancy. There are at present three causes for concern:
- the large number of young people who fail to complete training which will give them access to skilled occupations;
 - the overemphasis on commercial apprenticeships to the detriment of those in craft and industrial occupations;
 - the excessive number of migrant workers' children who experience difficulties in obtaining a vocational qualification because of the peculiar language situation in Luxembourg.

Special measures drawn up recently should provide satisfactory solutions in the medium term.

1. All boys and girls who leave after the period of compulsory schooling without following a course in an academic or technical secondary school or entering into an apprenticeship agreement may follow a two-year vocational guidance and introduction course (age 15 to 17). The implementation of a Community pilot project aimed at achieving at local level effective cooperation between all the public authorities involved and industry in taking care of the young people in question has led to an attendance rate of around 90% on the courses provided.

2. Also in 1985, new regulations were introduced concerning the functioning of the apprenticeship system with a view to obtaining a "certificat de capacité manuelle" (CCM - manual proficiency certificate).

Although originally the CCM concerned only those trainees who had begun an apprenticeship with a view to obtaining the "certificat d'aptitude technique et professionnelle" (CATP - technical and vocational proficiency certificate) but whose results showed that they could not achieve the standards required under this form of training within the time limit laid down by law, the new regulations gave many more young people access to this type of training. It is now also open to young people who do not satisfy the requirements for admission to a CATP training scheme. It should be emphasized that a considerable number of young people have benefited from this move.

3. A standing liaison group consisting of representatives of the Ministries of Education and Youth, Economic Affairs and Labour, as well as the employment authorities and the competent chambers of trade, has been set up to ensure that training provided in schools is better matched to the needs of the labour market. A regular exchange of information and improved statistics on the labour market should enable schools to have clearer objectives and react more quickly to certain developments.

United Kingdom

49. In the United Kingdom, compulsory schooling ends at the age of 16. The United Kingdom is unusual in the Community because only about 45% of young people remain in education beyond the minimum age. Of those who

left the education system at the minimum age in 1983-1984, the position in January 1985 was that 53% were on the government's Youth Training Scheme, while over 20% were unemployed. The remainder had found a job, usually with some vocational training, or were economically inactive.

50. As in France, the British government has recently been following a two-fold strategy involving
 - the development of more and better vocational and technical programmes within the education system;
 - major efforts to expand vocational training provision for young people who have left school, especially the young unemployed. In a major policy change, temporary training measures for the young unemployed have been replaced by the Youth Training Scheme, a permanent training programme open to both the unemployed and the employed.
51. Since 1983 the government has been funding a series of innovative projects to stimulate technical and vocational education for 14 - 18 year-olds within the schools and colleges. By September 1985, 74 projects were set up. Each will involve up to 1000 people over a 5 year period. This is funded by central government and run in partnership with local authorities: social partners are also involved. A new one-year vocational course for young people who have reached the minimum school leaving age but wish to stay at school for further vocational preparation was introduced in September 1985. A further important innovation in this field is the introduction, in Scotland, of a new modular structure of vocational courses for young people who have reached the minimum compulsory school-leaving age. This is designed to increase the flexibility of both the education system itself and the young people concerned.
52. The other major area of development in the United Kingdom concerns the vocational training of young people who have left school. Historically, more young people have entered the labour market without a vocational qualification than in most other Member States. Though there is an apprenticeship system, it is mainly found in the traditional heavy industries, and the numbers recruited have fallen considerably in

recent years. In September 1983, the government's Youth Training Scheme became fully operational. This built on previous temporary measures for the young unemployed, and offered all school-leavers who so wished, whether they were unemployed or employed, the opportunity of 12 months' vocational training (at least 13 weeks' off-the-job) and work experience. In 1984-1985, 396,000 young people participated. By the end of 1983, and again in 1984, all unemployed 16 year-olds had, as intended, been offered a place under the programme. It is therefore the government's view that the Council commitment of 11 July 1983 in respect of school-leavers has been achieved.

53. The introduction of such a massive programme in such a short period of time is remarkable - and without parallel in the Community. Despite this achievement, some problems remain particularly in relation to quality of provision, and the Scheme's capacity to prepare young people for a working world dominated by technological and economic change.

To provide employment with an even more competent and flexible workforce a new 2 year Youth Training Scheme is to be introduced from 1 April 1986. The new scheme will offer 2 years' vocational training (including at least 20 weeks' off-the-job) and work experience to minimum age school-leavers. The Scheme will aim to equip all young people with a recognized qualification. Emphasis on quality will be reinforced: a training standards advisory service will be introduced and in due course only 'approved training organisations' will be admitted to the Scheme. All trainees will be given some training related to new technology. Considerable resources are being devoted to the training of trainers and of programme managers. The government aims that ultimately all young people under the age of 18 should have the opportunity of continuing in education or training, whether full or part-time, rather than being unemployed.

54. Provision for older young people has also been improved. Around 30,000 19 - 25 year-olds receive accelerated skill training each year on government courses. More than half of the participants on the Community Programme, which offers temporary jobs to the long term unemployed, are under 25. This Programme will expand by an additional 100,000 places by May 1986, and many participants receive some training during their stay on the programme.

Ireland

55. The minimum school-leaving age in Ireland is 15, though most young people now stay on in education for at least a further year. About two thirds of students in secondary education (12 - 18) are in the general secondary schools and about one quarter in vocational schools. During the 1970s the numbers of young people in post-compulsory secondary education almost doubled, but at the same time the vocational element within the curriculum weakened. In contrast, vocational training courses at higher levels - particularly in the new regional technical colleges - continued to expand. Since the late 1970s, there has been a major expansion in vocational training courses at all levels, including pre-employment courses within the schools and additional technician training in the regional technical colleges. For example, in 1985 the government plans to provide some 19,000 places on pre-employment courses for young people who have reached the minimum school-leaving age but want to improve their qualifications before entering the labour market. This is five times larger than the previous programme.
56. As in most other Member States, high youth unemployment has led the Irish government to introduce special measures for the young unemployed. The main schemes offer work experience, temporary jobs, or vocational training, but there are a number of innovative smaller schemes, for example to encourage young people to set up their own enterprises. The establishment in 1982 of the Youth Employment Agency, financed by a levy on tax-payers, gave renewed impetus to these developments.
57. In February 1985, as an explicit response to the Council Resolution of 11 July 1983, the government announced its "social guarantee" programme for young people. This has two basic objectives:
 - that all young people should receive vocational preparation and training as they first move into the labour market;
 - that young people who find severe difficulties in obtaining employment should be offered a constructive alternative.Special attention is being given to young people who leave school without qualifications, who will be guaranteed at least 6 months on the programme. The programme is being implemented from Autumn 1985, and will

involve both the expansion and the modification of existing special measures for young people. For example, participants on the Work Experience Programme will in future be offered education/training as part of the Programme.

58. As elsewhere in the Community, a key aspect of recent policy has been the emphasis on meeting needs at local level. The "social guarantee" programme will require new patterns of local co-operation, especially between the schools (who are responsible for identifying the young people who need assistance) and the local offices of the manpower service (who will be managing the provision). Further, in March 1985 an experimental scheme was launched to develop closer and better relationships between the education and manpower agencies working with young people, in an initial six localities. The experiment is being co-ordinated nationally by the Youth Employment Agency, which is also responsible for the "social guarantee" programme. In addition, a junior minister in the Labour ministry has also been given responsibilities within the Education ministry, in order to improve inter-agency co-operation at the highest levels.

Denmark

59. In Denmark some 30% of 16 - 19 year-olds are in upper secondary education; 50% are undertaking vocational training; and 20% are in the labour market or economically inactive. There are two major forms of vocational training. In the long-established apprenticeship, the off-the-job and on-the-job training alternate: periods of about 10 weeks off-the-job are followed by around one year on-the-job. Under the newer EFG model, the young people have one year of off-the-job training, designed to give them a broad introduction to their chosen "family" of occupations and a basic introduction to a specific occupation. This is followed by a 1 - 4 years' on-the-job training, under the same pattern as an apprenticeship and work experience. In recent years the balance between the two types of provision has varied. The current government favours the maintenance of both systems in parallel, because they enable young people to enter vocational training either through practical experience (apprenticeship) or in school (EPG). Related developments within the period of compulsory education (which ends at 16) include

the introduction of courses involving the new information technologies, which has necessitated a major programme of teacher training.

60. The government's policy, reaffirmed in its Youth Programme of 1984, is that all young people should receive vocational education/training before entering the labour market. In 1984 an additional 7,000 places were made available in order to meet this demand. There was expansion throughout the education and training system, but the government's basic policy is to develop existing vocational education and training provision, and to minimize the use of special temporary programmes. However, such programmes have been used in the fight against youth unemployment.
61. The most striking innovation is that, under the law of February 1983, all young people under 25 who have been unemployed for over 12 months and who are entitled to receive unemployment benefit are guaranteed the offer of a job. It has proved difficult in practice to find sufficient places. The government has therefore recently introduced a training option, under which the young people can instead take up an entitlement to 12 months' training. It is hoped that this will assist the long-term unemployed to acquire skills which will enable them to find permanent employment.
62. The increase in capacity in the vocational schools has increased the pressure on enterprises to provide work experience placements for these trainees, too. A number of steps have been taken to improve the supply. They include a publicity campaign to encourage enterprises to offer places, and the introduction of a new EFG course for shop assistants, which will enable more shops to offer places.
63. As in Belgium, the Danish government is also planning to extend structured training arrangements into occupational areas which have not previously been covered, both to increase the supply of training places and to meet the challenges of technological and economic change. For example, demographic projections show that the population is going to age considerably over the next few decades. The government is therefore hoping to introduce new EFG courses in health and social service occupations involving the care of old people. It is also introducing special courses for girl school-leavers, designed to encourage them to enter

technical training in occupations traditionally dominated by men.

64. Another important innovation, with parallels in France and Ireland, is the establishment in 1984 of a new education/training fund, the AUD. This is financed by contributions from enterprises and employees. It is being used to finance the Labour ministry's training programmes, which were previously financed from general taxation.
65. Finally, as in other Member States, there is concern about the numbers of young people who do not obtain vocational training or who drop out of the system before obtaining a qualification. 20% of 16 year-olds do not continue in full or part-time education/training. Among initiatives taken to deal with this problem is the establishment of a network of "training-production schools", which provide vocational training throughout the commercial production of goods and services. A total of 1,300 places are now available in these schools, which have proved effective in remotivating disadvantaged young people, who are not attracted by more conventional training opportunities, and equipping them with useful skills.

Greece

66. The Greek education system remains dominated by its classical tradition of general education; vocational provision is relatively undeveloped. 75% of young people in the second cycle of secondary education are undertaking general courses, and only 22% technical or vocational courses. Furthermore, there is not a well-developed apprenticeship system. Some 3,000 young people enter apprenticeship annually, which is only 10% of the numbers entering post-compulsory general education.
67. A major aim of government policy has therefore been to expand vocational provision and improve its quality and status. Four main measures have been adopted:
 - a) the education and manpower authorities are collaborating in a major programme to encourage greater horizontal mobility between the various different parts of the education and training system. This covers the full range of provision, from secondary education up to university level;
 - b) 14 "polyvalent" schools have been established on an experimental basis. These give young people a much wider choice of courses than the

traditional schools, including a compulsory course offering a basic introduction to the main applications of the new information technologies. They are also being managed in an innovative way, with a particular emphasis on establishing close links with the local community;

c) the apprenticeship system has been reformed along the lines of the German Dualsystem. Whereas previously apprentices undertook a year of theoretical instruction followed by work experience, they now follow the Dualsystem model of integrated training and work experience;

d) with the support of the European Social Fund, efforts are also under way to improve the education and training infrastructure. This includes the modernization of existing training centres and the construction of new ones, the development of new courses, and staff training.

68. In addition, the government operates a range of programmes to assist those in particular need. These include accelerated vocational training courses for the young unemployed, and special courses for the children of returning migrant workers.
69. The 1983 - 1987 Five-Year Plan emphasizes the importance of relating education and training provision to the economic and social characteristics of local communities. Responsibility for technical and vocational education/training is therefore being transferred to the regions. The social partners will also be involved more closely in decision-making; for example, they are now systematically consulted about the curriculum in the technical colleges.

IV. KEY ISSUES

Introduction

70. This section of the report discusses some of the key issues raised by recent developments in the Community. It looks briefly at the following questions:

- a) the changing background
- b) national policy objectives
- c) the mix of national policies
- d) the division of responsibilities
- e) resources
- f) the structure and content of provision
- g) institutional changes
- h) the education/training/employment spectrum
- i) outstanding issues for further discussion.

The changing background

71. As noted in section II, all these developments have taken place against a complex background of

- the demographic "bulge" in the numbers of young people
- increasing education participation rates
- recession and high youth unemployment
- rapid technological and economic change.

What are the prospects for the rest of the decade and beyond?

72. Almost all Member States will face a decline in the size of the 15 - 25 age-group, often substantial. There are important non-demographic factors, such as the changing attitudes of young people faced with prolonged high unemployment and rapid change. However, it seems certain that this will reduce the quantitative pressures on the education and training systems resulting from the expected continued increase in education participation rates. It may also contribute to the reduction of youth unemployment. However, the qualitative demands will remain severe, because all the signs are that rapid technological and economic change will continue. In other words, as governments increasingly recognize, measures which were originally introduced primarily as a short-term response to rising youth unemployment will need to become permanent features of the scene.

National policy objectives

73. Most Member States have adopted explicit policy objectives in respect of the vocational preparation of young people. There has been a significant change in vocabulary since 1982 - 1983. At that time, many governments were simply seeking to give unemployed young people a constructive alternative to unemployment. Now it is increasingly recognized that high youth unemployment will be with us for a considerable time yet, and also that to compete successfully on world markets, the Community needs a highly-trained and flexible workforce. Following a period of rapid expansion of youth training programmes, most governments now see their main commitment in terms of securing high-quality vocational preparation for young people entering the labour market, involving access to a recognized qualification, rather than running schemes to keep young people out of the labour market for 6 months or longer. However, though there has been considerable progress, the evidence suggests that the reality has not made as rapid progress as the rhetoric.
74. Many Member States have expressed a commitment to promote equal opportunities for young women, in some cases by the introduction of specific programmes to encourage girls to take up options in sectors regarded as male-dominated and in the industries of the future. However, despite these efforts, girls still tend to concentrate in a limited range of occupations, often with poor status, low pay, and limited range of prospects. While the attitudes of young women are almost certainly formed during the period of compulsory schooling, and while it is during these years that girls need guidance and encouragement to choose long-term training and career options, training policies still have an important role to play. The limitation of career choices to a narrow range of jobs is one of the causes of the particularly high rate of unemployment amongst young women, and not only has adverse social consequences but is also a waste of human resources which the Community cannot afford.
75. Beyond these two major objectives, this review of the scene has shown that all Member States are striving, in different ways, to achieve a balance between various other policy objectives:
 - they are trying to increase the flexibility of the workforce, especially in terms of its occupational and geographical mobility. At the same time there is a renewed emphasis on meeting the short-term needs of specific

localities and enterprises;

-they are working to develop closer links between enterprises and the education/training system, at the same time as - for a range of reasons - young people are tending to delay their entry into the labour market until the age of 18 or later;

-they are giving priority to the needs of enterprises for trained manpower, while recognizing that special efforts are necessary to ensure that disadvantaged young people are helped to compete more effectively for the limited supply of jobs and training places.

These objectives are not necessarily in conflict, but they cannot be achieved without effort, nor can they be secured cheaply.

76. All this suggests that the time is right to re-examine the language of the Council commitment of 11 July 1983. The possible new wording of this commitment is discussed in section V.

The mix of national policies

77. All the Member States are operating a mix of programmes. Three main types of programme can be found:

-the expansion and improvement of technical and vocational courses within the full-time education system

-encouragement to enterprises to offer more vocational training places

-special temporary measures to help the young unemployed.

There is a general trend towards dealing with 15 - 19 year-olds wherever possible through the first two types of programme: most governments are now working towards the objective that no young people under 18 or 19 should be unemployed and without access to education/training. The special measures are increasingly targetted at young people aged 18 or older, or at groups of young people with special needs, such as young migrants. It is also notable that these special measures increasingly tend to offer education/training in addition to access to permanent or temporary jobs.

78. All Member States have seen major increases in the scale of education and training programmes for young people since 1983. Usually, this has been achieved - at least in part - by greater participation by enterprises in the provision of training, though often with considerable financial support from governments. The detailed modalities vary enormously: some Member States - such as the Federal Republic of Germany - have relied on the expansion of the existing apprenticeship system. Others - and notably the United Kingdom - have introduced radically new education/training programmes. New agreements with the social partners have often played a key role, for example in France and Italy. The greater involvement of enterprises in education and training programmes for young people, a trend seen throughout the Community, represents - along with the quantitative expansion in provision - one of the major positive achievements of recent years. There are now signs, however, that the pace of quantitative expansion is slowing. This should in theory facilitate a shift in the focus of activity towards further improving the quality of education/training programmes.

79. These developments have been accompanied by:

-the widespread adoption of linked work and training ("alternance") schemes, in preference to both work experience programmes and programmes of purely theoretical training. As a result, many Member States now operate parallel schemes offering basic vocational preparation, both within the full-time education system, and outside it, in co-operation with enterprises. This can produce difficulties with respect to the content of the courses, the qualifications they offer, and the income of the young people concerned;

-a greater diversity in the programmes on offer, both within individual Member States and within the Community as a whole. For example, most Member States are making efforts to improve the relations between education institutions, at all levels, and enterprises. One side-effect has been an increase in the demand for work experience placements - for students of all ages, and also for teachers. Another has been the increasing complexity of the task of those responsible for managing the different parts of the education/training system and for guiding young people through it.

The division of responsibilities

80. There are three related aspects to this:

- administrative decentralization;
- greater involvement by the social partners;
- participation by young people themselves.

Since 1983 there has been major change in respect of the first two, but still little progress on the third.

81. All Member States have taken steps, some quite recently, to decentralize important responsibilities in the field of vocational education/training to the regional or local level. The main impetus has been the recognition that vocational education/training programmes for young people can only be effective if they are appropriate to the economic and social needs of the locality, and in particular to the local labour market. Decentralized management is also seen as a means of increasing the flexibility and responsiveness of the education/training system.

82. At the same time, there have been moves in every Member State to increase the involvement of the social partners in the planning and management of education and training for young people. The motives behind this have been mixed. Some critics argue that governments have looked to enterprises to provide additional training places because the education systems have been slow to respond to changing needs. But all governments have come to recognize that programmes to prepare young people for working life can only be effective if they have the active support of the social partners. In some cases, such as Denmark and France, there have also been measures to give the social partners more responsibility for the financing of such programmes. The complexity of the changes in the flows of young people and of funds between the various different parts of the education and training system make it difficult to assess the extent to which the relative financial contributions of enterprises and of the public authorities have changed. Research by CEDEFOP suggests, however, that since the late 1970s the relative financial contribution of the public authorities in respect of the education and training of 15 - 19 year-olds has increased.

83. Most Member States started from a broad consensus, that the State was responsible for general education and for special measures to help the young unemployed, while enterprises were responsible for recruiting and training sufficient young people to meet their own needs. Since 1983, this concensus has broken down under the pressures of demographic, technological and economic change. For example, there is no longer agreement on the definition of general education, or on the distinction between education and training. And the labour market for 15 - 19 year-olds has all but disappeared, in the face of high youth unemployment and the policy responses to it. However, there are now signs that governments feel that the pendulum has swung too far, and that a greater financial contribution to education and training should be sought from enterprises.

84. This debate raises the issue of the residual role to be accorded to central government. There seems to be a widespread trend towards seeing the task of central government more in terms of planning rather than directly providing certain types of education and training for young people. While the advantages of decentralization of decision-making are now widely recognized, it can have negative consequences. The dangers are that:

- the more able young people will get help, while the disadvantaged are neglected
- different standards of provision in different regions will reinforce regional disparities and inhibit geographical mobility
- training programmes may be too closely geared to short-term local needs, which may also reduce the flexibility of the workforce.

This means that central governments must retain the essential functions of developing and maintaining the overall legal, financial and administrative framework necessary to an efficient and flexible education/training system.

Resources

85. This analysis receives confirmation from study of the overall levels of expenditure and effort. There have been massive quantitative improvements in the education and training of young people in the Community since 1983. It now appears, however, that in most Member States the period of rapid

quantitative expansion is drawing to a close. This is partly because most Member States can now offer some form of basic vocational preparation to all young people reaching the minimum compulsory school-leaving age. In some cases the demographic downturn is also already beginning to ease the pressure of numbers. The challenge now, in most Member States, is how to improve the quality and relevance of these opportunities, at a time when public expenditure is under constraint. In particular, it cannot be assumed that financing arrangements which worked for temporary special measures can continue to be effective in the longer term. Not surprisingly, therefore, recent policy statements in the Member States stress the need to ensure better use of existing resources, for example through:

- better staff training;
- better educational and vocational guidance;
- more intensive use of existing education/training facilities;
- closer coordination between different agencies and institutions.

The structure and content of provision

86. These issues are highly complex, and this is perhaps the area in which developments within the Member States are the least transparent. However, there seem to be six general trends:
- a) as already noted, most education/training programmes for young people, whatever their location within the system, now offer a combination of education/training with work experience. Increasing numbers of young people are undertaking visits to enterprises during the period of compulsory schooling; at the other extreme, students in higher education are often undertaking work placements;
 - b) there are signs of important changes in the style of teaching. One positive trend is that many courses increasingly emphasize the development of creativity, independence, decision-making skills, and the ability to do teamwork, rather than the competition for academic success. This shift of emphasis does seem to reflect parallel changes in the competencies which enterprises are seeking in their employees, but it raises major problems in terms of assessment and certification;
 - c) many Member States are seeking to define a "common core", related to the world of work, within the compulsory schooling curriculum. Most

definitions focus on literacy, numeracy, and a basic understanding of the main applications of the new information technologies. It is certainly true that young people entering the labour market without these skills will have extremely poor job prospects;

d) there is considerable interest in the use of modular approaches to education/training. These involve splitting courses up into smaller units which can be combined together, in various ways, to provide a range of options designed to meet specific training needs. They are seen as one means of increasing the flexibility of provision, and thus both widening individual choice and improving the capacity of the system to meet labour market demands. Of course, the more options young people have, the more guidance they may need in how to profit from them;

e) related to this, efforts are being made to improve mobility between the different parts of the education/training system, with similar motives. This necessitates some overall framework of recognized qualifications, and agreed systems of assessment and certification. In several Member States there are working groups, involving both governments and the social partners, to examine these issues;

f) there seems to be a general inflation in qualifications. This has both supply and demand aspects. Because of the surplus supply of young workers, enterprises are able to seek better-qualified recruits - perhaps over-qualified. At the same time, technological and economic change means that jobs - and therefore vocational courses - tend to have an increasing technical content. This confirms the need for governments and enterprises to continue to invest heavily in education and training. However, it also raises the issue of how best to help those young people who, because of their limited capacities or their difficult personal circumstances, cannot profit from conventional courses with a highly technical content.

Institutional changes

87. There are numerous examples of institutional changes designed to meet these challenges. The most significant and widespread have been measures to:

-improve co-operation between the education and manpower authorities, at the national and local level;

-develop closer links between the education/training system and enterprises.

It is important to note, however, that the extent of change varies considerably between Member States. The Federal Republic of Germany, for example, has been largely able to rely on its existing institutional framework, in which education was already a regional responsibility and vocational training managed jointly by the social partners at the local level. Other Member States have made significant policy changes within the existing institutional framework; examples include the way in which the apprenticeship system of Belgium is being extended to new occupational areas. Finally, in Member States such as the United Kingdom and Ireland, the new demands have led to significant institutional change.

The education/training/employment spectrum

88. Whatever the institutional divisions within the education and training systems, it seems clear that most young people in the Community are now delaying their entry into the labour market - willingly or unwillingly - until the age of 18 or 19, and that in the intervening period they are engaged in various types of programmes of either general or technical education, or vocational training. The titles of these programmes, and their location within the various national education/training systems, vary enormously. Two further important trends are that:

-technical education and vocational training are gaining status and resources alongside general education. At the same time, a basic technical understanding is increasingly seen as an essential part of any good education;

-in respect of 15 - 19 year-olds, though not of older young people, governments are placing a higher priority upon securing vocational preparation for young people than upon placing them in employment. Whether young people share this sense of priorities we do not know.

89. One effect of these developments is that many young people in the Community - and particularly 15 - 19 year-olds - have an intermediate status in which they are neither fully competitive on the labour market, because

they are in part-time education, nor can they be treated as school students, because they are contributing to production. Thus the conventional categories of "employment" and "unemployment" are increasingly inadequate, both as descriptions of what governments are trying to achieve (or avoid), and as descriptions of daily reality as experienced by young people. However, there is a major difference between those Member States in which large-scale vocational education/training programmes for young people are long-established, in which the rights and responsibilities of participants are well-defined, and other Member States in which there is still uncertainty about the status of such young people.

Outstanding issues for further discussion

90. The single most important question is the extent to which the Council commitments of 11 July 1983 (see paragraph 1) have already been achieved. The Commission does not have sufficient data to respond in respect of the second part of the commitment, which relates to training provision for young people in addition to basic vocational preparation. This is a subject which will be covered in future reports to the Council.
91. Even in respect of the first part of the commitment, covering vocational preparation for young people leaving school, the data are far from satisfactory. However, they suggest that the minimum provisions of this part of the Council Resolution have already been met or exceeded in the Federal Republic of Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Denmark. In the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Ireland, sufficient progress has been made to suggest that the commitment will be fulfilled within the timetable set out in the Resolution. The information available in respect of Italy and Greece does not permit an assessment of progress at this stage.
92. It must be emphasized that these provisional judgments are based on aggregate national data. Even in those Member States which are the furthest advanced, they do not permit assessment of three major factors:
 - a) the comprehensiveness of the coverage of national programmes. Even when there is equilibrium between the demand for and supply of training places at the national level, there are often areas of particular difficulty. These include regions of high unemployment and/or economic decline,

and certain specific groups of young people, including young migrants and those without educational qualifications;

- b) the degree of choice open to young people. Education and training programmes can only be effective if the participants are motivated to succeed and recognize the value of what they are doing. Despite the quantitative expansion of such programmes, it is clear that many young people reaching the minimum age for leaving full-time education have little choice about what they do next. The opportunities available to young women remain particularly limited, despite widespread efforts to widen them;
- c) the quality of education and training programmes. As already noted, Member States have faced exceptional quantitative demands since 1983. It is understandable that quality has sometimes taken second place to quantity. That now needs to change;
- d) the extent to which basic education/training courses for school-leavers prepare them, not just for obtaining employment or making constructive use of a period of unemployment, but also for the further training which many will need in order to prosper in a world of intense international competition and technological change.

93. These questions in turn raise major issues about other aspects of public policy. For example, young people can only make sensible choices if they have access to information and advice about the options open to them. Education and vocational training can only be fully effective if they are complemented by educational and vocational guidance services.

94. These are the areas of concern upon which the Commission will be concentrating over the coming months. In particular, they are seen as a major focus for the local assessments of youth provision which the Commission was invited to undertake in the Council Resolution of 11 July 1983. Indeed, such questions are best explored through detailed analysis at the local level.

V. CONCLUSION

95. This report has sought to describe the main features of the Member States' responses to the commitments in respect of young people set out in the Council Resolution of 11 July 1983. The picture it describes has many positive features: almost all Member States have fulfilled their basic commitments in respect of young people leaving school, or seem about to do so. Nonetheless, there remain major unresolved questions, for example about the extent to which current or planned policies meet the needs of the disadvantaged, offer adequate opportunities to young women, and are of sufficient quality to meet labour market demands at a time of rapid technological and economic change. The complex of issues concerning the quality and distribution of education and training opportunities seems likely to dominate work at both Community level and within the Member States over the next 2 - 3 years.
96. The definition of "quality" is of course problematic. In present circumstances, it is inevitable that for many young people, participation in a training programme will not lead directly to employment. A better criterion is that training programmes should offer all participants a record of their achievements and capacities which is recognized by enterprises and throughout the education/training system. However, the education/training systems of the Community seem ill-equipped to adopt such a strategy. Too often, for example, assessment and certification are not geared to meet the demands arising from technological and economic change. Furthermore, education/training systems still seem much more interested in selecting the most able young people than in offering opportunities to all.
97. In addition, the existing commitments covering guaranteed basic vocational preparation for all young people, and greater opportunities for continuing training, will remain essential weapons in the Community's fight for economic success and social justice.

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