

SOCIAL EUROPE

**Seminar on the social aspects
of the common agricultural policy**

SUPPLEMENT 3/89



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

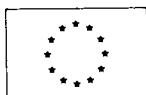
**DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR EMPLOYMENT,
SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND EDUCATION**

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of the common agricultural policy**

Brussels, 24 to 26 June 1987

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This publication is also available in the following languages:

DE ISBN 92-825-9774-1
FR ISBN 92-825-9776-8

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Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1989

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Catalogue number: CE-NC-89-003-EN-C

ISBN 92-825-9775-X

Printed in Belgium

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SEMINAR ON THE SOCIAL ASPECTS
OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Brussels - June 24-26, 1987

I. INTRODUCTION

The proceedings began under the chairmanship of Mr. Karakas of the Directorate-General for Agriculture.

The objectives of the Seminar were as follows:

- To improve the information of employers and workers as regards the C.A.P. and its economic and social consequences for those working in the sector, as well as on socio-structural back-up measures already taken or under preparation, and to develop the dialogue between employers, workers, the Commission and its staff.
- To hold an extensive exchange of views on the employment and working conditions of agricultural workers in the Community.
- To relaunch the social dialogue between the two sides of industry at European level, particularly in the field of harmonization, following the entry of Spain and Portugal into the European Community.
- To reach joint conclusions on the various questions under discussion which could provide a basis for further work by the Joint Committee on Social Problems of Agricultural Workers and by the Advisory Committee on Social Problems of Farmers and their Families.

The topics on the agenda were the following:

- **General Theme:** The Common Agricultural Policy, its economic and social implications and the socio-structural back-up measures implemented or planned to assist the different groups of workers in the sector.
- **Topic No 1:** Employment and working conditions of agricultural workers in the European Community.
- **Topic No 2:** Vocational training for agricultural workers: basic training, problems and possible improvements, the role of the Community and structural funds.
- **Topic No 3:** Health and safety in agriculture.

1. GENERAL THEME

1.1 Address by Mr. Caballero, Deputy Director-General of DG VI

The main points of Mr. Caballero's address on the General Theme were the following:

- Discussions between the different sides of the agricultural industry must essentially take place within the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy and aim at the joint examination of the problems of the rural and agricultural population in the light of the prevailing economic climate, bearing in mind that the Community's agricultural industry is not an isolated element in the context of the world economy or in that of the process of the European integration.

- European agriculture has reached a crucial point in its development, on account of the existing imbalance between supply and demand on European and world markets. As a consequence, corrective measures have had to be imposed in the case of over-production, but these have proved in the long run to be increasingly difficult to apply and increasingly expensive. The problem of surplus growth and the imbalance between supply and demand worldwide and at Community level are contributing factors to an increasingly serious budgetary situation.

Because agriculture in the Community is a fundamental component of the process of the European integration, it is now having to face serious problems in its development within the Community. For three decades, the European undertaking has borne the stamp of its creators and its administrators; it is limited by a budgetary framework which is one of the main elements of Community life and development. It follows, therefore, that because the Common Agricultural Policy constitutes an

important element of the European undertaking, agriculture cannot escape being affected by these budgetary problems.

Furthermore, the Community has had to work towards a strategy focused on the future, and has faced growing tensions in its relations with Third World countries. As a result, there is a growing climate of uncertainty hanging over the activities and choices of Community farmers. With a new round of GATT approaching, the Community must find solutions at the international level, so as to arrive at a better control of production. The internal measures proposed by the Commission should facilitate this undertaking as well as improve and safeguard the Common Agricultural Policy. Moreover, if we are to carry out the objectives of Article 39 of the Treaty of Rome, it is essential (and has been especially so since 1985) to define a project extending over several years. Consistency and continuity are perhaps more important than the intensive nature of the measures carried out during a specific campaign.

In order to integrate agriculture, the Commission has set itself a number of priorities in accordance with the basic provisions of the Common Agricultural Policy under Article 39 of the Treaty with the following aims:

- to gradually control production in surplus sectors and curb budgetary costs due to over-production in these sectors;
- to bring pricing policies more into line with market realities;
- to promote greater diversification and better quality of production in relation to internal and external markets and consumer needs;

- to consider in the most effective way possible, in the light of existing restrictions, all problems regarding the income of small family holdings;
- to support agricultural activity in areas where it is crucial to town and country planning, to maintain a social balance and to safeguard the environment;
- to promote at the same time a greater awareness of environmental problems among farmers;
- to contribute to the development within the European Community of viable family-run farms and processing industries, in order that agriculture may participate in the great technological changes of our time.

In order to achieve the necessary adjustments, it is essential to stabilize agricultural markets. This requires an overall restrictive pricing policy, the relaxation of guarantees and intervention mechanisms, as well as the extension and reinforcement of the co-responsibility of producers. The Commission deems it necessary to take into account the effects such adjustments will have on farms which are structurally or economically weak, to hasten the adaptation of agricultural structures and promote rural development.

The general contents of Regulation (EEC) No 797/85 replacing previous texts already indicated that important changes had taken place. A closer link between the market situation and structural policy was introduced and, in accordance with these provisions, Community subsidies have been aimed at the qualitative reconversion of agricultural holdings to meet demand. Financial support may be prohibited when it might lead to the production of goods which have no outlet. In addition, modernization programmes and measures intended to make farms potentially viable are more accessible to the less developed regions of the Community. Along the same lines, the Community believes that structural funds should be

increased in order to further harmonize development within the Community.

These policies as a whole, and the structural policy in particular, can have concrete results only in the medium and long term.

In order to ensure that the improvement of market conditions will in the immediate future have a stabilizing impact, the Council, acting on a proposal of the Commission, has already decided to introduce measures of direct compensation on specific as well as more general structural questions, such as the milk quota purchasing systems, premiums for beef production and the exemption of certain specific Community regions from co-responsibility.

The Commission is of the opinion that appropriate instruments must be created in order to consolidate the income of farmers while avoiding the encouragement of production in the Community as a whole. Thus, compensatory allowances have been planned, such as those to assist farmers in mountainous and less-favoured regions.

In view of the way the compensatory allowance scheme is progressing, the Commission put forward a proposal to the Council to make it available to all farmers subject to the fulfillment of specific economic and structural criteria. The aim of the proposal is to subsidize incomes by means of three supplementary schemes:

- A Community agricultural-income subsidy which would facilitate the transition and adjustment to the market of the weakest but still potentially viable farms. It would be primarily structural, degressive and limited to 5 years, during which the farm would have to become viable within the framework of the new safeguards, intervention measures and market situation. These measures would be jointly financed by the Community and

modulated according to the regional difficulties and financial resources of each Member State.

- A supervisory scheme for national subsidies leading to greater transparency in that sphere, in order to avoid the proliferation of national subsidies in some States to ensure that aid to the most precarious agricultural holdings should go to the most needy areas.

- An early-retirement pension scheme based on socio-economic factors and aimed at encouraging farmers to cease agricultural activities.

From the social point of view, the proposal aims to guarantee a regular income for elderly farmers most affected by the C.A.P. adaptation measures and provide them with the opportunity to react and readjust to the new market situation.

From the economic point of view, the proposal aims to improve the market situation either by combining early retirement with taking land out of production or by combining early retirement with farm restructuring.

The income proposals contained in the Council's decisions on structures of March 2 and 3, extend and amend pricing policy and intervention in accordance with the conditions listed. These conditions must be followed consistently, however progressive these measures may be.

According to the President of the Commission, Community production apparatus must be consolidated not dismantled and the family farm as an essential component of the Community's agricultural identity must be safeguarded so that it may successfully overcome the adjustment period it is now experiencing.

In its efforts to adapt the C.A.P. to the new European and world contexts, the Commission based itself on two texts: on the one hand, the two 1985 Green Papers, the second of which, "The Future of European Agriculture", was the result of a

lengthy and detailed consultation with professional organizations and which led to the adoption of positions by the Economic and Social Committee and by the European Parliament while the other, a communication entitled "New Frontiers for Europe", is of a more general character and lays down five objectives: the creation of a common economic area, greater economic growth, more efficient institutions, stricter budgetary discipline, and a solid common foreign policy.

The Communication is essentially devoted to the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy in view of the new production and trade conditions, along with the reform of structural funds and financial rules.

The Commission considers that European citizens in general and the various sectors of industry in particular must be made aware of these policies and endeavours. A seminar like the present one plays an important role in publicising the Commission's proposals and achievements. It is also an opportunity to circulate information in reverse as the Commission is very attentive to the views of the professionals. For these reasons the Commission maintains a procedure of permanent consultation, and constantly assesses the criticisms and reservations expressed by professionals regarding its proposals. The Commission is well aware that such criticisms and reservations are unavoidable in the present difficult situation, and deems that it is its duty not only to adapt its proposals to the general framework of European integration and particularly to the present budgetary difficulties facing the C.A.P., but also to ensure smooth transition to a new market. However, it is also aware of the difficulty of reconciling all these objectives, and this is precisely the purport of the proposals made on structural policy and income subsidies - all of which are new solutions and, therefore, not necessarily definitive since they may still be improved.

Regarding the three proposals for direct income subsidy, the Commission is already proposing a reassessment of its results

and a possible change of policy, should it prove necessary, three years after its implementation. For some objectives, such as making agriculture less intensive, which was the aim of the Council's decisions of March 1987, there are no existing European models to provide guidelines. On the contrary, the dominant model is intensive agriculture, which is encouraged in some areas for reasons of general policy in order to promote a better balance between the different social groups.

The Commission is also aware of the specific problems of some regions of the Community, and its preoccupation with them is evident not only in the measures it has taken regarding the beef and the dairy sectors in the suggestions included in its proposals to the Council in March 1987 on structure and the price "package", but also in Community's exceptional financial effort to improve agriculture, particularly in Portugal.

Finally, the training and occupational skills of agricultural workers must be mentioned, as they are essential aspects of any adaptation and economic revival programme. The Commission considers that Community and national subsidies for training, technological assistance and services in agriculture are essential, and it has strived to consolidate and improve the position of this important aspect of agricultural policy.

Because the agricultural sector needs modern technological and socio-economic assistance in order to find its place in the 21st century, it is vital that the agricultural and rural community make use of all available instruments, as it cannot survive without support. It must, however, find this support from within itself, in its autogenous and endogenous potential, in its operational capabilities, and through its associations and organizations. The Community can indeed help, but the agricultural workers themselves must provide the necessary impulse in order to successfully confront the risks which, as in all human endeavours, the future entails.

1.2 Address by Mr. Kjeldsen, President of COPA

Mr. Kjeldsen thanked the Commission for organizing a seminar at such a crucial moment, when guidelines for the C.A.P. are likely to have important economic and social repercussions for everyone working in agriculture. In his opinion, the seminar would make it possible to gauge the progress of work in the social sphere particularly within the Joint Committee, to reassess the present situation and to find solutions to potential problems. The President of COPA deplored the Committee's delay in fixing prices for 1987/88 and stressed that the resulting uncertainty had not only endangered the effectiveness of the C.A.P. but the C.A.P. itself. He then turned his attention to various aspects of agricultural policy from two angles:

* Present Common Agricultural Policy Guidelines and Agricultural Price-Fixing and Related Measures for 1987/88

The Commission's proposals for 1987/88 constitute a logical follow-up to the long-terms guidelines set out in its "green paper" on European agriculture and the C.A.P. The strategy consists in setting quantitative limits for Community production while lowering prices and progressively dismantling market-support mechanisms which are the cornerstone of the C.A.P. The effect of this policy has been to widen the gap between the prices fixed by the Council and those actually received by producers. In 1980, farmers' incomes reached their lowest point since the start of the C.A.P. In real terms, they are 25% lower than in the mid-seventies.

The December and March decisions as regards milk and beef will lead to a further dismantling of market-support mechanisms in these sectors. The Commission's new compromise proposals are likely to result in a 10 to 20% reduction in producer prices. Because all sectors are closely linked, these proposals are likely to lead

to a reduction in income for all farmers. COPA finds such a policy totally unacceptable, particularly as it scorns one of the fundamental principles of the C.A.P.-Community preference - by authorizing the import of agricultural products which are in direct competition with products in surplus. The Community exports 25 million tonnes of cereals, but it imports more than 50 million tonnes of cereals and livestock fodder, and 4 million tonnes of oils and fats at prices which completely undermine Community price levels, destabilize the market and generate higher budgetary costs. One wonders if those Community authorities favouring a decrease in production have first made sure that, in order to achieve a more stable world market, their competitors are doing the same. Similarly, the Commission has done nothing to curb the distortions created by imports; instead, it has guaranteed the United States permanent access to Community cereal, oil and protein markets and has given Thailand and China free access to Community markets for further quantities of cereal substitutes. The Commission's present policy can only result in a reduction of the Community's agricultural potential, which in turn will have disastrous repercussions on farm incomes, employment and environmental protection, as well as lead to a greater dependence on imports. Faced with these problems, the Member States will have no choice but to take the necessary steps at the national level, and COPA is opposed in principle to any generalized system of direct income subsidy. Moreover, the Commission's proposals on Community agricultural-income subsidies are inappropriate. It is estimated that 5% of agricultural holdings would benefit from these subsidies, but, in fact, these so-called "potentially viable" farms would on the average suffer a 15% reduction in income during the five-year period of assistance, and it is difficult to imagine how they could possibly become viable after five years of reduced prices.

The Commission does seem to be aware of the limitations of the Community agricultural-income subsidy scheme, since it proposes that these subsidies should be underpinned by a State subsidy system. Unfortunately, State support presupposes that governments will allocate substantial resources, and this leads to an increase in taxation at a time when reducing taxes is the general pattern. COPA criticizes the fact that for such a system of assistance at the national level, the Commission is content to set the maximum conditions and impose a number of constraints on State subsidies, thus condemning its beneficiaries to be considered as "social problems". Moreover, the proposed national subsidy scheme does not guarantee equal treatment for all farmers. It runs the risk of creating divisions and distorting competition, since only the richer Member States will be in a position to apply it.

Such a policy could compromise the C.A.P. itself and clearly contradicts the intentions and objectives of the Single Act concerning the "cohesion" of the Community.

For all the above reasons, COPA has rejected the present Commission guidelines and proposals on prices and related measures for the 1987/88 marketing year. Like the Commission, COPA wants market stabilization and, apart from that, the reduction of budgetary expenditures. However, COPA advocates a long-term policy which, while facing present difficulties in a realistic manner, would offer a future to farmers and the agriculture within the Community. Agricultural incomes should continue to be determined mainly by pricing and market policies. The prices of agricultural products in the Community must be fixed according to Community production costs and pricing and market policies must be consistently applied not only to agricultural products dealt with by common market organizations, but also to all competitive products, including those which are imported. Price levels must be maintained by effective means of market support and a stop put to the progressive

dismantling of support measures in which the Commission has been engaged over the last few years.

COPA also wished to see the implementation of a minimum price system for all oils and fats destined for human consumption in the Community, other than butter and olive oil, which are already the subject of price- and market-stabilizing measures. It recognizes that the Commission's proposal for the introduction of a system for stabilizing consumer prices for oils and fats constitutes a positive step in that direction and, as a result, has requested that the Council implement such a system within the framework of present agricultural price-fixing and related measures.

Also necessary is an active policy for the development of alternative products in short supply and of new outlets for agricultural products. The Community cannot allow its competitors to seize new opportunities for non-food uses for agricultural products by neglecting research and development in these sectors. COPA considers that the proposals outlined in its document on long-term common agricultural policy would help not only to stabilize the market but also to create better sectoral and regional balances. These measures are, nevertheless, insufficient and need to be complemented by:

- a socio-structural policy adapted to production, processing, marketing and training needs;
- the development of a policy geared to maintenance of agriculture in regions with permanent natural handicaps because it constitutes their basic activity;
- the development of a social policy to assist farmers in need and their employees by means of temporary and stop-gap subsidies.

* Specific Social Aspects in Agriculture

Despite the fact that the powers granted to the European institutions by the Treaty of Rome are very limited and that governments are very protective of their prerogatives in the sphere of social policy, the Commission, empowered by Art. 118 to co-ordinate national policies in that sphere, established a Joint Committee within which both sides of industry, COPA and EFA, have been able to initiate common projects relating to the social aspects of the C.A.P., particularly in the areas of vocational training, safety and working hours.

In the area of vocational training, COPA and EFA participated in the debates on the Mansholt Plan which resulted in Directive 161 on the skills of those working in agriculture. This Directive was subsequently adopted as Commission Regulation (EEC) No 797/85, which, it is to be hoped, will be applied in all Member States in very near future, especially as regards the 150-hour courses provided for. It must be stressed that the creation of the European Centre for Agricultural Training (CEPFAR) by the two sides of the sector is a unique example of its type at European level, and one hopes that optimum use will be made of it.

In the area of safety in agriculture, COPA and EFA have taken a number of initiatives to improve the safe operation of tractors, such as protection against overturning, designing ergonomic tractor seats for better spine protection and developing more secure tractor hitching systems. It has been shown that tractor manufacturers do not pay enough attention to agricultural requirements, and it is, therefore, up to the users, the farmers and agricultural workers, to make their safety requirements known.

In a recent report on the use of chemicals, the two sides called for industry to market approved products, along with specific instructions for their sale,

purchase and use. They also emphasized the need for user training. Finally, with the aid of Commission modules on the handling of animals, studies have been carried out on the relationship between human behaviour on the job and the use of chemical products. Draft modules now exist concerning tractor safety and the use of electricity on farms.

In the area of harmonization, COPA and EFA have also signed two agreements on a 40-hour week for permanent agricultural workers in stock-farming and arable crops. The demand by some members of EFA for a 38-hour week would require an alteration of these agreements, but it would be more logical first to ensure that the original agreements are observed throughout the Community. Although the agricultural working week is 38 hours in the Netherlands, 39 hours both in France and Italy, and is soon to be 37 hours in Denmark, it is still 40 hours in Belgium, West Germany, Spain, Ireland, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom, and even reaches 45 to 48 hours in some regions of Portugal. As agreed, COPA and EFA will be pursuing their activities within the Working Party on Harmonization with the aim of drawing up a series of proposals for approval by the Joint Committee.

1.3 Address by Mr. Ligtenberg, in place of Mr. Lojewski, President of EFA (who was unable to be present)

Mr. Ligtenberg joined Mr. Kjeldsen in congratulating the Commission on the initiative it had taken in holding the Seminar.

He wished to point out that the different areas of the Common Agricultural Policy introduced in 1957 by the Commission following the establishment of the European Community were directed not only at pricing and marketing, structural and trade policies, but also at a "fourth area", that of social policy. At a joint conference of COPA and a working party of trade unions of agricultural workers (a forerunner of EFA) held in 1961, suggestions were made to implement the fourth area and a list of the various aspects of a social policy within the framework of the C.A.P. was drawn up. In the last twenty-five years, pricing and marketing policies have progressed more rapidly than social policy, indeed for too rapidly if one considers present problems. Social policy, on the other hand, is still in its infancy, and although a number of decisions adopted at the 1961 Conference have been ratified - working hours, social security schemes, health and safety, housing, freedom of movement, and the creation of a joint committee - too many questions have been shelved because the Commission did not follow the guidelines outlined at the 1961 Conference.

There is still a considerable incomes gap between agricultural and industrial workers, and social harmonization among Member States is still not complete. Long-term employment in agriculture is no longer a topical question, and statistical data on agricultural workers are insufficient in view of Article 39 of the Treaty of Rome, which stipulates that the aim of the Common Agricultural policy shall be to ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community. It is evident that in agriculture, social policy has been neglected.

A 1982 survey of the standards of living in the (at that time) ten Member States revealed that approximately 650,000 people were permanently engaged in agriculture and that this figure would fall by some 300,000 over a ten-year period, due to poor market conditions and to reduced profitability in agriculture in the Community.

In agriculture, there are more non-contracted workers than workers under contract. Moreover, the latter have to possess skills in the whole range of new technologies.

However, it is often true that the more skilled such workers become, the less money they earn. In some regions, there is the added element of poor accommodation, as well as the fact that vocational training and retraining are unavailable, working hours are long and pensions and unemployment benefits are particularly low. It is therefore essential to promote social policy and EFA considers that the Single Act and Mr. Delors' statements provide such an opportunity. In his speech last April, the President of the Commission declared that a single internal market could only come about in 1992 if it was given a social dimension through negotiations between employers and workers. In his day, Mr. Hallstein, the first President of the Commission, made the same statement, which was then followed by the 1961 Social Conference. But the action taken by the Commission in response to the conclusions of the Conference, do not give rise to optimism, and EFA remains somewhat sceptical about Mr. Delors' statements.

However, EFA feels that the opportunity which presents itself must be seized, particularly as the Single Act has adopted articles which can act as legal instruments for the introduction of a social dimension. Mr. Kjeldsen mentioned Article 118, but an open political attitude is needed on the part of both the Commission and the Council, as well as by the agricultural

employers. EFA is willing to participate , and considers that the Community as a whole and social policy in particular must develop further if the kind of rationalization which is unfortunately already present in some sectors is to be avoided. In the past, EFA has on many occasions expressed opinions on the improvement of the living and working conditions of agricultural workers, and it will continue to do so. In EFA's opinion, the essential component of a social policy can be summarized as follows:

- Vocational training and retraining of agricultural workers, which must be adapted to technology and to the mechanization of agricultural production in order to enable workers to improve their skills and work on modernized farms. The vocational training of agricultural workers must form an integral part of a broader basic training in order not to impede mobility outside agriculture. EFA considers that any agricultural industrial agreement must include arrangements giving workers the right to vocational training and retraining.

- Working conditions in agriculture, which are at present such that workers still have to contend with unacceptable physical and psychological hazards such as dangerous substances, noise and vibration and extremely heavy work. A policy of prevention requiring the co-operation of work safety services and employers' associations, and involving surveys, research and consultation of workers is needed. The resulting data will provide a basis for Community regulations on the import and use of plant protection products, the establishment of European standards on agricultural machinery and the development of suitable protective clothing.

EFA is in favour of the harmonization of working conditions in the Community and considers that the harmonization of incomes and working hours with the industrial sector is essential. While EFA is aware of the fact

that Portugal and Spain are less advanced in this respect, it wishes to see gradual reduction of the 40-hour week still in force in other countries of the Community.

- Employment in agriculture, which is the political responsibility of the Commission. Unemployment in agriculture is lower than the 10% average for all sectors, but the figures do not reflect the real situation since a great number of agricultural workers no longer sign on for unemployment benefit due to the lack of proper employment in the sector. In Spain and Portugal, unemployment figures in agriculture have reached 20% or more.

EFA is of the opinion that the improvement of employment in the agricultural sector requires a policy aimed at qualitative economic growth, combined with a structural agricultural policy. In this way, jobs would be created outside agriculture, employment services extended and retraining opportunities made available. EFA also proposes the creation of work pools, and is of the opinion that measures to combat unemployment must be intensified. EFA condemns the fact that the Commission's proposals on early retirement benefit for elderly workers should be linked to their giving up farming, that these proposals also restrict the number of beneficiaries to two and that they advocate allowances for agricultural wage-earners which are smaller than for the self-employed.

EFA is well aware that the Commission does not bear sole responsibility for this state of affairs, and that in order to remedy the situation there should be increased discussion with COPA. The latter must realize that EFA cannot support the Common Agricultural Policy advocated by COPA for its members, unless, at the same time, living and working conditions of agricultural workers are improved in the manner advocated by EFA.

1.4

Address by Mr. Lopez de la Puerta, President of the Agricultural Section of the Economic and Social Committee

Mr. de la Puerta began by pointing out that he had more reservations concerning the Common Agricultural Policy than positive feelings about it. He considered that it was not enough to speak of reforming the C.A.P., while the basic aim of the Commission was to maintain the principles, objectives and philosophy expressed at Stresa. Rather than a real reform of the C.A.P., what was in play here was a set of new guidelines and changes in the C.A.P. that were mainly financial in nature, their aims being to improve the budget and reduce surpluses. These reforms were insensitive to social problems and lacking in the most elementary agricultural pragmatism, and they also failed to conform with the principles set out in the Single Act.

The Speaker was of the opinion that the Commission was giving excessive priority to stock reduction and budget improvement, thus making the agricultural sector alone responsible for the present huge increase in productivity and for the stagnation of internal demand. He went on to say that:

- according to the Commission's report, productivity has increased more slowly in Europe than it has on a world level;
- the utilized agricultural area (UAA) has decreased by 6 million hectares;
- from 1979 to 1985 farmgate prices rose more slowly than average production costs and the consumer price index;

- at current prices, the value at factor cost per unit of work stood at the same level in 1986 as it had been in 1973, increasing the gap with other sectors;
- the agricultural population has diminished by 50% over the last twenty years;
- intra-Community trade has increased by 8.2%, and now accounts for 34% of final agricultural output;
- a high level of self-sufficiency has been attained, except for certain products such as forestry, tropical products, etc. According to the OECD, this self-sufficiency is due, in most countries of the Community, to a greater rate of increase in consumer prices than in farmgate prices;
- in addition to increased productivity, surpluses are due to the failure to take appropriate measures when necessary and the lack of a strong, generous and courageous foreign policy;
- there is a prevailing conviction that Community expenditure is offset by savings to the national budgets;
- the negative effect which the lack of budgetary discipline has had on expenditure may be due to bad management of the intervention agencies and certain irregularities in the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF);
- finally, the positive effects of European agricultural development can be seen in other sectors such as transport or the agri-foodstuffs sector, which has a turnover of 300 million ECU, i.e. double the total agricultural production, and which has provided 2 million jobs.

Moreover, in order to reduce surpluses and improve the budget, the Commission proposes a restrictive pricing policy, the relaxation of guarantees and intervention mechanisms, and a greater measure of co-responsibility for farmers.

If the first measure, restrictive pricing policy, becomes general and prevents a switch to products which are in short supply, it is most likely that this will provoke an increase in production; in other words, just the opposite of what was intended.

The second measure, the relaxation of guarantees, can only lead to a greater risk of price reduction, proportional to the level of development of agricultural infrastructures, and be prejudicial to the new Member States which have not benefited from the EAGGF Guidance Section and which have the weakest agricultural holdings.

As to the third measure, the reinforcement of co-responsibility quotas, this represents a lack of solidarity and is not simply an economic measure, but also a financial one which could be likened to a form of taxation.

Moreover, the socio-structural back-up measures are very disappointing. Firstly, the date set for the approval of these measures (31 August 1986) was not adhered to but postponed to 28 February 1987, after repeated requests by COPA-COGECA, Parliament and ESC. To this day, no guarantee has been given as to the date for the approval of these supplementary measures, or the number of measures to be adopted, and it is impossible to predict whether there will be sufficient financial resources to enable all Community farmers and agricultural workers to benefit from these measures.

Mr. de la Puerta expressed his doubts about some of the Commission's statements, such as: "Agricultural development must be based on economically-sound foundations ...", where the latter were neither defined nor specified, or: "The fact that most farms are family-run must be taken into consideration ...", where the basic specifications of these farms are not given. In the final analysis, subsidies will go to those farmers who earn most of their income from non-agricultural work.

To illustrate his case, Mr. de la Puerta mentioned the following economic and social repercussions:

- the downward trend in incomes is likely to become more pronounced, with a decline in the asset values of the majority of European agricultural enterprises;
- the process of rural depopulation of farmers and agricultural workers will accelerate;
- for reasons of age and lack of specific training, this section of the agricultural population will experience difficulties in finding new work;
- the excessive dependency of the Community on non-member countries for supplies of products which it is able to produce itself will continue; this is the case, for example, of cereals, proteins, oils, cotton, sheep and forestry products;
- the deterioration of agricultural structures is likely to continue in many of the twelve Member States;
- very few of the weaker agricultural enterprises, young farmers and those over the age of 55, will see their aspirations materialize.

In short, Mr. de la Puerta argued that, owing to the cost of the proposed measures, a large percentage of the agricultural population would become marginalized and remain untouched by the economic and social cohesion advocated by the Single Act. National and regional imbalances would increase, at the risk of a resurgence of national and regional agricultural policies in opposition to the main objectives of the C.A.P. Moreover, it would become more difficult for the agricultural sector to adhere to environmental policy and, because of the reduced use of the means of production, there would be a fall in competitiveness, and a failure to adapt supply to demand. Mr. de la Puerta considered that the Commission should:

- change its attitude so that a new European objective can be reached; these measures can be rapidly implemented; the European civil service can become more flexible; political willingness can improve and trade relations with the Community's external partners can become more rationalized;

- analyze to what extent budgetary deficits and the present surpluses are caused by a lack of budgetary discipline, possible irregularities in the use of the EAGGF Guarantee section, the commercial operations of the intervention agencies, the failure of certain countries to show solidarity by using European products - for example, the use of cereals in compound foodstuffs, the lack of incentives for farmers and stock-farmers to achieve a marketing capacity proportional to their production capacity, and by neglecting the principles of European solidarity (Community preference and market unity).

In addition, we must not only examine to what extent the agricultural sector and the C.A.P. have contributed to reducing national budgets, protecting rural community, reducing inflation and developing other sectors, but we

must also rigorously re-examine the situation and prospects as regards internal and external demand for each product, determine levels of self-sufficiency and desired price levels, analyze the production potentials of the twelve Member State, analyze quantity, quality and the problems of those concerned at the national and regional levels, study the financial capacity of each Member State to continue making its contribution to the policy and lastly review the GATT Agreements.

The results of this work of analysis and evaluation will then have to be complied with and applied. Production guidelines will have to be drawn up for surplus products as well as for those products in short supply in Europe, for which there have been no production guidelines or an inexplicable production quota. Structural and rural policies must be clearly defined and pricing and market policies imposed.

1.5 General Debate and Conclusions of the Chairman on the General Theme

The majority of the participants in the General Debate underlined the serious financial difficulties facing the C.A.P. and the increasing problem of how to dispose of surpluses. A number of participants reiterated the view that the restrictive pricing and market policies proposed by the Commission would have serious consequences for farmers' incomes, the position of the agricultural holdings and employment in the agricultural sector.

The back-up measures were the subject of great misgivings. Some participants argued that prices should cover production costs and provide farmers with an adequate income and expressed clear reservations regarding the principle of direct income subsidies. Others stressed the shortcomings of the Commission's proposals regarding early retirement benefit and expressed regret at the fact that the Commission had failed to take into consideration the observations made by employers and workers' representatives in drafting this third version of its proposals. The participants also showed concern for the repeated delays arising between the Commission's proposals and the Council's decisions and between these decisions and their implementation.

The Secretary of EFA was of the opinion that these questions have a political as well as an economic and social character, and that, due to the failure of the pricing policy to reach the five priority objectives prescribed by Article 30 of the Treaty, a political meeting should be organized with a view to determining the instruments that would enable the goals of the C.A.P. to be achieved vis-à-vis the new markets and the new technological situation.

The participants unanimously emphasized the importance of the social dialogue between employers and employees, as well as between the Commission and the Member States,

and welcomed the fact that such exchanges had made it possible to identify a number of areas of consensus between EFA and COPA.

COPA considered that the dialogue on working conditions must be actively pursued, in spite of its reservations regarding the reductions in working hours recommended in the existing Agreements. COPA urged EFA to support its demands on agricultural prices, and stressed that the profitability of agricultural enterprises and the safeguarding of farmers' incomes were necessary if redundancies were to be avoided and the level of employment maintained. Finally, COPA proposed that a European Seminar be held in order to analyze the problems of social protection in agriculture, particularly in the case of self-employed workers, in whose case it was insufficient.

EFA representatives pointed out that some progress had indeed been achieved since the 1961 Rome Conference, but that since the signing of the European Agreements on the 40-hour week, the situation had remained at standstill. They hoped that the Agreements would be extended to all Member States and that the working conditions of agricultural workers would be improved, expressing their intention to elaborate their views on these matters during the debates on more technical topics. Finally, the situation in Spain and Portugal was given special attention.

The Portuguese workers' representative referred to the poor social conditions existing in his country (45 to 48 hour week, lower wages than in the industrial sector, lower wages for women, poor social protection for seasonal workers), as well as the absence of collective bargaining and vocational training for agricultural workers and farmers. He urged COPA to support efforts

to eliminate such discrimination and improve the situation. He pointed out the risks involved for Portugal in applying certain measures such as early retirement benefit, and called for a better distribution of Community aid among farmers and agricultural workers.

The Spanish agricultural workers' representative called for an assessment of the farming situation in Spain, where 20% of the working population is employed in the agricultural sector. Serious problems have arisen, or will arise, as a result of regional disparities and the fall in the number of agricultural workers. For this reason, a Community social security system should be introduced ensuring minimum social protection for those engaged in agriculture.

In his final speech, the Chairman of the Session, Mr. Karakas summarized areas of consensus and disagreement among participants.

There was a broad consensus among participants on the following points:

- the basic principles of the C.A.P. and its importance for the process of European integration;
- the fact that the C.A.P. has not only an economic but also a social dimension;
- a belief in the objectives of the C.A.P., as outlined in Article 39 of the Treaty, and in the new objectives prescribed by the Single Act, such as "the reinforcement of economic and social cohesion";

- the problems and constraints of the C.A.P. (re-adaptation and long-term measures in order to defend the basic principles of the C.A.P., revitalise it and make it more effective and equitable);

There was, on the other hand, a large measure of disagreement on how reform should be implemented:

- the Commission is conducting its policy of reform along three different lines, which complement each other:
- pricing and intervention policies: more attuned to market reality, prices will no longer constitute the only means of income support. Since 1973, there has been an 80% increase in agricultural expenditure and a 20% increase in production, while incomes have either remained stable or decreased;
- the introduction of social policy aspects and income support into the common organization of the market and supporting measures: direct income subsidies, aid for specific sectors or less-favoured or mountainous regions;
- structural or development measures aimed at increasing the competitiveness of Community agriculture, paying particular attention to the poorer regions.

Employers and labour remain in disagreement with the Commission in the following areas:

- they consider pricing policy to be over-restrictive, with negative effects on income and employment;

- they criticize the policy on imports for causing imbalances on Community agricultural markets;
- they question the effectiveness of income subsidies and the philosophy behind them. However, income subsidies already exist at the national level, and the Commission proposes the establishment of a Community supervisory structure in order to increase both their transparency and its control over them, enabling harmonization to take place;
- EFA also underlined the inadequacy and slow progress of social policy as regards agricultural workers (wages, living and working conditions, employment, training and the harmonization of Member States' legislation). However, readiness for a more intensive social dialogue had emerged and should be explored further during the subsequent debates.

The Chairman concluded by saying that the Commission's efforts to find solutions to certain problems such as those concerning oils and fats, MCAs, the budgetary deficit by increasing own resources were all running into difficulty within the Council. Furthermore, the C.A.P. could not be divorced from other Community policies: the European single market, harmonizing monetary policy, and research policy. The Commission had presented a blueprint for the Community; it was up to the Member States to exercise their responsibilities in this matter.

Session of 23 June on Technical Issues
under the Chairmanship of Mr. H. Van Zonneveld,
Head of Division V/A/2

The Chairman underlined the usefulness of the previous night's General Debate as an essential starting point for discussions on technical issues. He also expressed the wish that these discussions would lead to concrete results and decisions that would permit the implementation of programmes and initiatives for future action both by the Commission departments and by the advisory and joint bodies. He then announced that three papers would be presented on Topic No 1: "Employment and Working Conditions of Agricultural Workers in the Community".

TOPIC No 1

"Employment and Working Conditions
of Agricultural Workers in the Community"

2.1 Address by Mr. Whitby, Head of the Working Party on
the Agricultural Environment at the University of
Newcastle-upon-Tyne (U.K.)

Mr. Whitby referred to the work* he had carried out for the Commission and focused his speech on the problems and future prospects of agricultural workers in the Europe of the ten Member States. According to the speaker, overall employment and income levels in agriculture depended on four main considerations, which should form the basis of any systematic analysis of agricultural and rural employment:

- The prices of agricultural products**, which will continue to fall in real terms until the turn of the century, even if it is difficult to predict the rate. The institutions responsible for the C.A.P. bodies are under pressure to reduce internal prices (budgetary problems) and external prices (trade competition) and they are also under pressure from the two sides of the industry, who wish to keep prices stable. These contradictory pressures will result in a fall in prices which will limit employment. On the other hand, changes in the prices of certain agricultural products could also have an effect on employment if the sectors employing larger numbers are encouraged (such as stock-farming, for instance).

* Doc V/1867/87

** Doc V/569/87

- The new technologies which have become available more recently led in many cases to efficiency. Productivity and capital expenditure per capita have also greatly increased. It is possible, however, to choose technologies which would have a positive effect on employment and on productivity, and which would take ecological and environmental issues into consideration.

The importance of bio-technology in agriculture raises questions as to the effect it has on productivity and employment and the impact it has on the products affected, as opposed to products which depend on traditional methods. A food system dominated by bio-technology would be highly capital-intensive and would need less manpower. However, in the production of "ecological and environmental" foodstuffs, there are opportunities for increased employment in areas such as the protection of the countryside, leisure activities, sport, etc. All of these areas have very flexible demand in relation to income, whereas the demand for foodstuffs tends to drop as incomes rise. Demand in these areas of environmental improvement will rise faster than the standard of living, and this is already reflected in present Community and national policies.

The structure of agriculture, two aspects of which are particularly important:

- a) **farm size:** the number of large agricultural holdings is increasing while smallholdings are tending to disappear, although this trend has slowed down due to part-time farming, where there is production but no wage-earners. However, the trend towards reduced numbers of employees will be tempered by the opportunities full-time agricultural workers and farmers will have to become part-time farmers.

b) **the distribution of employment among wage-earners and self-employed:** the harmonization programme has made the distinction between these two categories far more difficult to pinpoint. Over the years, the number of wage-earners has decreased faster than the number of self-employed, and this trend will continue, due to the greater occupational mobility of wage-earners. Moreover, if the structure of agriculture continues in the same direction, there will be an increase in the number of self-employed. On the other hand, if the demand for "ecological" foodstuffs increases, the structural changes in agriculture could be slower in coming due to the revival of more traditional forms of farming: stock-farming, reduction in the use of chemicals, etc.

- Labour supply in agriculture, which has been declining along with the demand for manpower in the last few decades. The readiness of workers to seek employment in agriculture has likewise diminished. The drop in labour supply is due to several factors: average wages are lower (except in the case of highly skilled workers); working hours are longer and more variable due to inevitable constraints (such as unexpected overtime); health and safety at work are more difficult to ensure and loneliness is a strong factor in the rural environment. However, there are a number of positive aspects, such as the pleasure of working outdoors and with animals, and in pleasant surroundings. The sum of these factors has been a drop in supply, which will continue unless other factors intervene, such as the growth of ecological industries or the improvement of working conditions.

Mr. Whitby stressed that to continue with past practices would lead to an increase in the number of self-employed workers and problems for those seeking alternative

employment. He foresaw both an increase in capital-intensive bio-technology and in natural environmental products, which would bring greater opportunities in that sector. He concluded by raising the following questions of repercussions: Should there be regional specialization or should two methods co-exist within the same region?

2.2 Address by Mr. Fernandez Cavada of Madrid Polytechnic University and by Mr. Brito Suarez of the University of Lisbon

Mr. Fernandez Cavada outlined the main points of the survey* which he had carried out with the collaboration of Mr. Brito Suarez on agricultural workers in Spain and Portugal with particular reference to their future in the European Community.

Spanish and Portuguese agricultural workers are very important numerically in the Community. According to the latest statistics on Spain (1986), there are 826,000 agricultural employees, of whom 152,000 (18.4%) are employed on a permanent basis, and 673,800 (81.6%) on a temporary or occasional basis. In 1979, it was estimated that Portugal had 283,000 agricultural workers, 89,000 of whom were employed on a permanent and 194,000 on a temporary basis. The total for the countries amounted to some 1,108,000 agricultural workers. The combined number of workers permanently employed in agriculture in Spain and Portugal was 241,000, while in 1982 no more than 420,000 were employed on that basis in all of the other Member States (excluding Greece) combined.

Over the last five years, unemployment in agriculture has increased. Out of 673,800 temporary or occasional workers, only 401,800 work on a regular basis, the remaining 272,000 being almost permanently employed. The latter are to be found mainly in southern Spain, in the regions of Andalusia and Extremadura, which are regions poor in extensive farming. Although these people receive unemployment benefit, there is no future

* Doc V/573/87

for them in agriculture and, in the present economic climate (there are 3,000,000 unemployed in Spain), have little chance of finding employment in other sectors.

The legal framework of industrial relations in Spanish agriculture consists of two general legal provisions - the labour statute and the general regulations on agricultural labour - and of collective agreements, which in theory are specific to each of Spain's 50 provinces. Because there are approximately forty such collective agreements, harmonization is difficult to achieve. Furthermore, all these agreements provide for a 40-hour week, 30 days' annual leave, regional bank holidays and the restriction of overtime to 80 hours per annum, all of which serves to reduce flexibility of working hours. Spanish working hours are therefore in line with other EEC countries and the European Agreements. A minimum wage, identical for all sectors, is fixed annually; wages are set by means of collective agreements, but the average wage of agricultural workers is lower than in the industrial and services sectors.

Much is required to bring the working conditions of agricultural workers into line with those of other workers: although several laws were passed in 1987, abolishing discrimination in social-security matters and between permanent and seasonal workers, there will have to be a long period of transition.

In Portugal, there is a great shortage of basic and continuing vocational training, and the country is looking to the European Social Fund for assistance in that area; in fact certain representatives of management and labour have agreed on the creation of a vocational training centre.

2.3 Debate on the topic, "Employment and Working Conditions of Agricultural Workers in the Community"

As a preliminary guide, Mr. Lopez de la Puerta, Chairman of the Agricultural Section of the Economic and Social Committee, outlined the main points of the Information Report (by Mr. Lojewski) and of the Own-Initiative Opinion of the ESC concerning the "repercussions of the Common Agricultural Policy on the social situation of agricultural workers in the EEC". The report points to a steady reduction both in employment levels (down 50% over the last 20 years) and in the working population, which in the last 15 years has fallen from 12 to 7 million.

This has largely been caused by the integration of agriculture into the rest of the economy, through specialization, technological advances and their application to agriculture. Agricultural workers are facing a number of problems: housing, training, effective political representation, fatigue and stress, all of which factors have lead to a reduction in the number of people seeking agricultural employment.

The ESC's own-initiative opinion prescribes:

- an analysis of the effects of the C.A.P. on agricultural workers and on the agri-food-stuffs sector;
- the need for alternative employment and, consequently, vocational training and re-training;
- voluntary early retirement at the age of 55;

- the improvement of health and safety for these workers;
- the development of research into the diversification of products in order to provide European agricultural products in short supply;
- structural and rural policies for promoting employment in the regions most affected by agricultural unemployment.

As far as Spain is concerned, Mr. Lopez de la Puerta made some additional comments on the cause of unemployment, pointing out in particular that the training of agricultural workers there was very poor. Whereas in the other countries of the EEC, 53% of men and 36% of women had undergone agricultural vocational training, in 1984/85, 46% of the agricultural working population in Spain was illiterate and 38.9% had not received any training whatsoever. With the development of new measures aimed at making agriculture competitive, rural areas will rapidly become more depopulated. Nevertheless, the political objectives and the financial measures outlined in the document, "A New Frontier for Europe"(1) should lessen the negative effects of such a trend.

During the debate, the employers' representatives (COPA) stressed the need for competitiveness and to maintain economically viable concerns in order to keep employment at its current levels. They also felt it was necessary to distinguish the economic requirements and costs from the social and ecological requirements and costs. They underlined the problem of harmonizing wages and social costs throughout Europe, and they reiterated their call

(1) "The Single Act: A New Frontier for Europe",
COM (87) 100 final, 15.2.1987.

to employees for backing on the problem of fixing agricultural prices in order to maintain existing employment levels, especially in Northern Europe.

As for measures to support employment, COPA wished to stress three points: the same high-level vocational training for both farm-owners and agricultural workers; the development of alternative products; the creation of "farm support associations" - small farms unable to offer full-time employment would call upon the services of these associations of agricultural workers, thereby ensuring job security for these workers.

The workers' representatives (EFA) expressed some reservations concerning a rise in agricultural prices, which, in their opinion, was not really acceptable in Europe and at any rate had little effect on surpluses and on employment. The main questions raised by EFA were the following:

- The ways in which employment could be safeguarded or increased; several proposals were put forward, in particular the need for training to be geared to alternative or complementary industries such as rural tourism, environmental industries, protecting and maintaining woodland and ecological production. Early retirement for elderly workers is also being considered as a method of combatting unemployment and achieving a better distribution of working hours. In this respect, the Commission's proposal (COM(87) 166 final 3) were deemed to be woefully inadequate, and EFA intends to propose amendments to the Economic and Social Committee.

In order to safeguard permanent jobs and combat job insecurity, even where the small size of some farm could seem to preclude this, EFA has proposed the creation of pools of workers employed on different farms, or the possibility for farmers to employ an

agricultural worker jointly on a permanent basis, while stressing nevertheless that a number of legal and cultural hurdles would still have to be overcome:

- the legal status of agricultural workers. EFA is concerned at the growing number of non-contracted workers (seasonal, occasional or part-time, etc), who have no specific contract of employment or any legal status, and it wishes to see these issues dealt with both in legislation and in collective agreements. However, EFA stressed that the necessary changes in contract of employment should not be allowed to result in a reduction in job security or unacceptable forms of flexibility in working hours.

The workers' representatives also mentioned the situation in Portugal, where there are serious employment problems including lack of job security, availability of cheap labour (women, seasonal workers), poorer wages and working conditions than in industry, part-time farmers competing with agricultural workers on the labour market, difficulties as regards labour mobility between not only the different economic sectors but also the Member States, and finally, the absence of a social challenge. The representatives underlined the need for a negotiated social contract recognizing the rights for both sides: workers' wages and working conditions on the one hand, the farmers' right of ownership, on the other.

Finally, they advocated the implementation, at Community level, of a genuine industrial-relations programme (as in the case of the steel industry, for example), in order to counteract the negative effects of certain developments in the C.A.P., measures to promote better statistical data on wages in agriculture, and the development of the

social dialogue within the Joint Committee to cover various issues which had been raised (the extension of the European Agreements on working hours to countries which do not apply them, the harmonization of working hours, the legal status of agricultural workers, etc.).

On behalf of the Commission, Mr. G. Vistos (DG VI) presented more information and details on the following three points:

- The delay between the decisions taken by the Agricultural Council of 2 and 3 March 1987 and their subsequent publication in the Official Journal (1) was caused by the holding of an additional consultative meeting with the European Parliament on June 15 and 16, 1987, which resulted in a joint declaration from the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament on two major points:
- Structural policy is not merely an extension of pricing policy; it must also safeguard the future of agriculture;
- Economic and social activity must be revived and job-creating industries must be developed in rural areas.

No decision was taken by the March Agricultural Council, owing to its refusal to recognize the obligatory nature of the "early retirement" provision included in this measure. It was therefore redrafted by the Commission and made optional. Regarding the failure to include an opportunity for young farmers to take over a farm, Mr. Vistos pointed out that the objectives of the early-retirement schemes were of a social and structural nature (non-agricultural use of land or restruc-

turing of farms subject to certain conditions). The question of aid (for setting up a farm and for further investments) for young farmers is dealt with by Art. 7 of Regulation (EEC) No. 797/85.

Lastly, as regards the new Member States, especially Portugal, he recalled that the Commission is fully aware of the structural problems the country is facing:

- even prior to its accession to the Community, Portugal had received two aid installments (70 million ECU), enabling it to set up a number of priority structural aid projects (59 projects);
- since its accession, the existing socio-cultural policy has been applied to Portuguese agriculture, which enjoys special arrangements on the most favourable terms (particularly as concerns the rate of financial support), since some 80% of its territory is classified as a "less-favoured region".

As part of direct action to improve the processing and marketing of agricultural products, the Commission decided in 1986 to grant financial assistance amounting to 22 million ECU (53 projects); in 1987, 179 projects were undertaken.

A specific complementary programme, amounting to ECU 700 million over a 10-year period has been drawn up and implemented (PEDAP).

All of these commitments are necessary in Portugal if the living and working conditions of the different regions of the Community are to be harmonized whilst maintaining the improvements made.

However, at the same time, Portugal must also endeavour to eliminate certain conditions and treatments of some of its citizens which set it apart from the other Member States (e.g. discriminatory wage differences between men and women).

In conclusion, the three rapporteurs further defined their points or responded to certain specific questions: the rate of social security contributions for industrial accidents in Spain (either a contribution assessed on wages, at an average rate of 5%, rising to 20% for the large farms, or a contribution based on the amount of land under cultivation); a comparison of labour costs in Spain and France (in the French agricultural sector wage rates are about FF35 per hour; in Spain, they are FF20-25 per hour).

TOPIC No 2

3. The Vocational Training of Agricultural Workers

3.1 Address by Mr. D. Ashcroft of the Agricultural Training Board (UK)

Mr. Ashcroft referred to his paper* dealing with the sectors where changes in training can be expected (new technologies, new training methods, alternative sources of income for training). His statement was therefore concerned with problems of a more permanent and perhaps more fundamental nature relating to initial levels of vocational training and he made a number of suggestions for improving and facilitating discussions between EFA and COPA and the drafting of a resolution on this question by the Commission.

Vocational training can be defined as providing an individual the knowledge and know-how which will enable him or her to acquire or improve his or her qualifications and the ability to practise one or more occupational activities.

Three complementary aspects must therefore be examined: qualifications, ability and the acquisition of practical skills.

As regards qualifications, two questions arise: the problem of comparability and the problem of their recognition and verification, where qualifications must correspond to a level of ability. This requires the establishment of standards and ability tests.

Practical training is inseparable from theoretical training and should correspond to the sector's needs. There are three ways in which it can be provided, each of which present problems and advantages:

* Doc V/410/87

- agricultural colleges, in which there are logistical and financial problems and where there is a danger that the practical training provided may at times be obsolete;
- specialised training centres, which offer important facilities in specific sectors but are expensive;
- training on the farm, which is a method that has still hardly been used in Southern Europe. It offers the advantage of being able to provide training in a real situation, but also poses the combined problems of the farmer's responsibility; availability and teaching ability, as well as the state of the farm's technical equipment.

A number of solutions are possible: establishment of agricultural training centres with EEC support, training of full-time, agricultural vocational training specialists, setting up of a mobile vocational training system, particularly for specialists, in order to take account of geographic and demographic differences, training and retraining of instructors, with particular attention to teaching methods and practice, calling upon experts or people who are active in the field for specific aspects (e.g. trade, management, chemicals, fertilizers, agricultural machinery).

Improvements can also be made in other areas, such as financial management and planning, with Community activities on the lines of the following:

- periodical and regular meetings of instructors at the European level, in order to promote a reciprocal exchange of information on problems and solutions among the Member States;
- the creation of an information pool at the European level so that the Member States which are less

advanced in the area of training may catch up with those which are more advanced;

- a search for agreements at the European level on a number of principles: precise and verifiable ability standards, varying levels of qualification for different activities and criteria for appropriate political training.

3.2 General Debate on Topic No 2

Mr. Lopez de la Puerta (ESC) distinguished three types of vocational training: continuing training for workers in the sector, continuing training which enables workers to enter the sector and continuing training which enables them to leave the agricultural sector.

In order to meet the needs of a developing agricultural industry, vocational training centres must establish systems which provide appropriate training for the rural population, which requires clearly-defined criteria as well as effective measures and objectives. Suitable training is instrumental to employment policy and must adapt to the new market structures, prepare young people for working life, ensure equal opportunities for all working men and women and develop the initiative and creativity needed in order to enable some to engage in individual self-employed work, and other to regroup in the form of co-operatives or producer associations. Its aim must be to improve teaching methods and the quality of the teaching profession, to increase the number of people holding a training diploma (especially in Spain), to institutionalize continuing training, and coordinate the efforts of Community and national authorities.

The achievement of these objectives would require the following measures:

- re-examining teaching methods and greater adaptation to the needs of the young rural population;
- setting up instructor and specialist training courses;

- improving information and guidance services (with particular emphasis on opportunities at Community level);
- enhancing the value of agricultural diplomas and training (for example, by granting a job priority to diploma holders);
- centralizing training, with the aim of making it more widespread and better known;
- aiding centres that lack training facilities;
- improving information at the Community level by setting up a forum for exchanging experience.

Mr. Hardt (CEPFAR) strongly supported Mr. Ashcroft's proposals for the organization of regular meetings among specialists on training course contents and methods, and he also pointed out that CEPFAR could play the role of organizer.

As regards the contents of training, certain shortcomings among people working in the sector must be corrected by developing their "social skills" (communication, dialogue, teamwork spirit, etc.), their capacity to adapt and be flexible, their leadership abilities (group dynamics and exchange of ideas, managing and leading personnel), and finally, by developing their specific knowledge and know-how in the field of product marketing.

The requirements at European level are numerous:

- research into new skills needed by undertakings in the areas of environment, biotechnology, information technology, new products, etc.;

- a European survey of the various types of continuing training and quantitative and qualitative research into continuing training and its impact;
- a study of the adaptation to agriculture of a system of training which makes use of production units, by breaking down the required occupational qualifications into training objectives in order to devise more individualized training options taking into account the knowledge, occupational experience and training needs of those concerned, especially in terms of their general knowledge;
- the development of a European system of equivalence and, in the short term, the establishment of an "occupational information sheet" containing the qualifications, courses and occupational experience of the employed or self-employed persons concerned.

In the crucial area of continuing training, measures are needed to develop experimental research and a European exchange of information on teaching methods, in order to promote a better distribution of resources available for continuing training between agriculture and other sectors. Numerous problems relating to continuing training can be mentioned: workers' lack of time or availability (particularly in Northern Europe); inadequate training opportunities and funds in Southern Europe; working methods that are poorly suited to training requirements (for example, inadequate relief arrangements). Lastly, continuing training must take account of the environment itself and respect the identity of each country or region.

While exchanges and pilot projects should still be promoted, formalization on a European level is to be avoided.

Mr. Vistosi (DG VI) referred to the interest taken by the Directorate-General for Agriculture in the problems of vocational training and qualifications in agriculture in the light of the new C.A.P. guidelines.

Regulation (EEC) No 797/85 adopted and strengthened the objectives of the 1972 socio-cultural directives, the 1975 Mountain and Hill-Farming Directive and a number of provisions concerning the processing and marketing of agricultural products. It identifies the adaptation of vocational training to the specific needs of modern agriculture as one of the objectives of the policy on structures:

- Article 21 of that Regulation provides that Community subsidies will be made available for complementary courses and in-service training for both farmers and agricultural workers;
- Article 7 of that Regulation provides subsidies enabling young farmers to set up in business, subject to their having an adequate level of training, either from the outset or within the following two years; the level and specifications of this training are determined by the Member States.

The March 1987 Council on Agriculture adopted a number of amendments to Regulation (EEC) No 797/85 (1), and to Article 21 in particular, setting up courses and in-service training for the qualitative re-orientation of production and the application of methods compatible with the conservation of the natural environment or the use of woodland. The

Council also decided to increase the amount of aid granted each recipient in order to make provision for these new courses.

Finally, in order to reduce the existing gap between the reimbursement rates of the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) for expenditure on Vocational Training, it was decided to increase the rate of reimbursement granted by the EAGGF to the less-favoured agricultural regions from 25% to 50%, in keeping with the terms of Article 8 of Directive 75/268/EEC. The various participants in the general debate were very much in agreement with the views and proposal of the rapporteur and of the Secretary of CEPFAR, especially as regards that organization's role and the importance of periodical meetings between instructors from the various Member States.

The participants described certain aspects of the vocational training system in each of their countries (2), and drew the following conclusions (which reflect a broad consensus on many points):

- theoretical and practical training go hand in hand with emphasis on alternating work and training as an effective means of adapting training to the needs of the agricultural sector and those who work in it;

- (1) Regulation (EEC) No 1760/87 of 15 June 1987, OJ No L167/1, 26.6.1987
- (2) Mr. Fassino (Italy) has submitted a document on vocational training which may be consulted at the Secretariat of the Joint Committee on Social Problems of Agricultural Workers -- DG/V/A/2 (in Italian).

- both sides of the sector must be closely involved with all the various phases of training. Several possibilities were mentioned; collaboration with the instructors in defining requirements; the importance of collective bargaining on these issues; the creation of jointly-run continuing training centres; the creation of a jointly-managed training insurance fund; making workers aware of the need for training, especially emphasizing its value to them; raising the awareness of the employers as to the need to invest in vocational training and skills;

- regional differences should be respected, but there is also the need for co-operation on a European level; in this respect, the role of CEPFAR and the Working Party on Vocational Training of the Joint Committee on Social Problems of Agricultural Workers was emphasized;

- the workers' representatives also stressed the need to recognize the right of workers to continuing education, to set up training courses that allow employees to move up in their field of occupation and to enhance the value of skills acquired through training when negotiating collective agreements.

TOPIC No 3

4. Health and Safety in Agriculture

4.1 Address by Mr. Heidt of Kassel (Fed. Rep. of Germany)

Mr. Heidt began by pointing out a number of fundamental general principles regarding health, hygiene and safety at work:

- the protection of health and safety at work constitutes a general and legitimate right of every worker in the sector, whatever their occupational status;
- although prevention initially applied mainly to occupational accidents, it has been extended to include occupational diseases;
- in the agricultural sector, hazards are numerous and varied;
- as far as the material and physical consequences are concerned, the high costs these incur are borne by the company through insurance schemes, but the damage caused is very considerable.

With the help of diagrams and colour-slides, he then gave detailed information concerning industrial accidents (part of the human body concerned, circumstances and statistics) and the safety and prevention measures which might be implemented, such as wearing suitable protective footwear to reduce the number of foot and leg injuries (1/3 of all industrial accidents); using proper signs and signals; installing protective devices on dangerous machinery (1/4 of all accidents); and providing protective clothing, better designed

premises with safer wiring and electrical equipment, etc.

As an example of the effectiveness of accident prevention, Mr. Heidt described the protective devices used to prevent tractors from overturning. These have resulted in a spectacular decrease in the number of fatal accidents in Germany, down from 200 in 1969 to 21 in 1980. Legislation should thus provide for essential protective measures for new machinery placed on the market as well as for the necessary improvements to older equipment.

In order to improve working habits, safety training should begin in the home at be followed up at school and during all stages of vocational training.

The role of the European Community in this respect is important: the EC can organize meetings of specialists and sessions of the Joint Committee on Social Problems of Agricultural Workers, design safety training modules and, above all, draw up directives in these matters.

The use of certain toxic products such as pesticides, which cause large numbers of accidents, must also be the subject of preventive measures such as special clothing, the prohibition of certain products, user training. There is also need for specific Community directives and regulations in this area.

In conclusion, Mr. Heidt made a provisional estimate of the preventive measures required in the agricultural sector, and he stressed the fact that, despite their importance, directives and general texts would provide a solution to the problem if they were to be accompanied by an international

standardization of techniques and measures for their application.

In this respect, Mr. Heidt emphasized that the current adoption of socio-cultural measures within the framework of the C.A.P. reform should be accompanied by measures targeting the prevention of occupational accidents and for safety at work based on the principle: "no subsidies without prevention". For instance, investment subsidies for young people could be subject to the existence of minimum requirement regarding safety conditions in farm buildings; subsidies in the less-favoured regions could be coupled with pilot projects incorporating safety measures; and subsidies for company restructuring could be subject to the existence of training courses that include safety training, etc.

Finally, research should be concerned not only with protecting environment, but also with the protection of human health and safety. For in the end, prevention brings with it a reduction in the number of accidents, and therefore in the economic costs they incur, and the costs of prevention itself are quickly offset.

4.2 General Debate on Topic No 3

Mr. Dutailly (V/E/3) began by introducing the principles and philosophy underlying the policies of the Directorate for Health and Safety:

- safety must be considered even at the design stage of machinery, buildings and facilities as well as in the definition of duties and the contents of vocational training;
- safety is not a cost, and must be seen not in terms of corrective measures, but rather in terms of prevention. Even more than the choice of protective clothing it is important to learn the correct usage of a particular product through apprenticeship, training and technical knowledge. Mr. Heidt stated that safety training modules are being drawn up by the Commission and circulated by CEPFAR.

The general debate led to a number of comments of a general nature and proposals for action at the national and European levels:

General comments and information concerning certain countries:

- Agriculture is a high-risk sector: the consequences of accidents (physical disabilities, periods of unemployment, etc.) are made worse by what is, on average, a rather poor standard of health among the population concerned (particularly wage-earners); environmental factors such as bad living conditions and the remoteness of health services; and the lack of information and training due to the dispersion of the work force. In addition, the farm is not only the place of work, but also

the place where private and recreational life takes place (problem of children).

- Vocational training in the area of safety is essential (50% of all accidents are behavioural accidents involving machinery against a third party). A study conducted in France by the Mutualité Sociale Agricole (Agricultural Mutual Aid Society) on forestry workers revealed that basic training of a general nature had little effect on the accident rate, while brief training courses geared to the problems of safety reduced the accident rate by nearly 300%. This type of training must be frequent and repetitive in order to eliminate bad habits.
- The importance of investment in safety (buildings, machinery, training, etc.) was emphasized by everyone present and a number of suggestions were made: allocating a percentage of the contributions collected by bodies for social protection to investments in prevention; establishing a link between investment subsidies and safety, etc.
- Owing to political, technical and other problems, there has been a considerable delay in carrying out the necessary measures regarding plant protection products, and a number of new aspects remain to be tackled (fertilizers, bio-technology, etc.). Safety measures for agricultural machinery and operators must be put into effect on the same lines as they have been for tractors.
- Co-operation between workers and employers and collective bargaining of agreements are important. In this respect, the Italian

workers' representative described at length the situation in Italy and the strategy jointly adopted by employers and workers in this area. (1)

Proposals for action and research at the national and Community level:

- Research is necessary for improving the understanding of occupational hazards as well as analyzing the frequency and nature of accidents that take place. A body for monitoring occupational hazards in agriculture could be created, with the task of harmonizing statistical data and improving the flow of information to the technologically less-advanced countries.
- In the Member States, networks of prevention agencies must be developed and emergency and other health-care services be made more available.
- Finally, the harmonization and standardization of equipment must proceed at the European level, without falling into the trap of a disguised protectionism. Safety training modules must also be developed (plant protection products, the use of agricultural machinery, etc.).

A number of specific measures were proposed: a European seminar on medical supervision on small farms, as well as additional European, week-long information campaigns on safety (two such weeks have already taken place).

(1) The document submitted by Mr. Brancato (FISBA Italy) may be consulted at the Secretariat of the Joint Committee on Social Problems of Agricultural Workers - DG V/A/2

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5. CLOSE OF THE PROCEEDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Address by Mr. Gommers, Director of DG V, on behalf of Vice-President Marin

Mr. Gommers expressed his agreement with the other participants in considering that economic and social problems appear to be insurmountable at the present time. In spite of some improvement in economic growth and employment levels in 1986, the rate of unemployment in Europe is still very high (12%). Long-term unemployment has greatly increased, and there are now 6 million young unemployed (40% of all those out of work). Worse still, economic growth estimated for 1987 have been reduced from 3% to 2%, and the level of unemployment will suffer as a consequence. Moreover, certain forms of under-employment have developed, such as keeping workers employed in subsistence agriculture through lack of recruitment in the manufacturing and service industries, under-qualified employment or the acceptance of precarious employment - all leading to the emergence of serious social problems and new forms of poverty.

In the agricultural sector, the increase in structural surpluses has led to proposals for restrictive pricing and market policies which will have a negative effect on the employment of workers both in the agricultural sector and others downstream. The supporting socio-structural measures which have been proposed go hand in hand with developing a Community policy for the growth of employment and an overall social policy.

Despite the poor economic outlook, the Commission has made further advances. In 1985, it put forward a proposal to the Council for the adoption of a co-operation strategy for growth and employment. At

that time, the growth rate went up from 2.5% to 2.7%, but it is hoped that it will now accelerate, reaching an average of 3.5% over the next five years. As a result, unemployment could go down from 12% to 7-8%, which would still be very high, but would definitely herald new prospects for development. These proposals were accepted in their entirety by management and labour at the seminar held in Val Duchesse, but the Council decided there was no need to make any changes in economic policy, which in 1986 resulted in a growth rate of less than 3%.

The Council's wait-and-see attitude at the 1986 Summit had not altered at the Louvre Conference, and its conclusions were much the same at the OECD Conference in May. At Venice, there was the question of co-ordination, but it is not expected that the prospects of economic growth of less than 2% will produce the desired results.

In the meantime, the Ministers for Social Affairs adopted (in December 1986) a resolution on "An Action Programme for the Growth of Employment", and in order to put it into effect the Commission in 1987 took a series of initiatives in areas directly related to the concerns of those in the agricultural sector:

- promoting employment and combating unemployment;
- equal treatment for men and women;
- living and working conditions and the protection of workers' health.

With this in mind, the Commission drafted a memorandum for the Social Affairs Council of 26 May

1987, concerning the fight against long-term unemployment, proposing a number of policy guidelines such as counselling, training, recruitment aid, preventive measures, etc. For its part, the Commission is implementing a programme of Community back-up measures which entails, in particular, increased support for the E.S.F. (which allocates nearly half of its resources to the long-term unemployed). In 1987, the amount was to be increased by 15%. As regards the promotion of youth employment, action is aimed at facilitating fast integration into working life by means of information, vocational training or job creation. Since 1984, 75% of European Social Fund resources have been allocated to measures in support of young people, and in 1986, the figure reached 80%. The share granted the two new Member States represents nearly a quarter of these appropriations.

Continuing In-service Training for Adult Agricultural Workers is also a priority, due to technological development and the need for better management of human resources. The Commission will soon be presenting the Council with a Community Action Programme on the subject. It is important to note that the European Social Fund can contribute the training and retraining of employed and self-employed agricultural workers under a number of its annually adopted management rules. The Fund also assists employment by aiding development agencies, which have the essential role of promoting local initiatives and rural development. In addition, the European Community is pursuing the application of the principle of equal treatment for men and women, with the adoption by the Council on 5 June 1986 of a new medium-term Programme for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Women, 1986-1990, and the adoption by the Council of two further Directives on equal treatment for men and

women in occupational social security schemes as well as for self-employed men and women, including those engaged in agriculture. The Social Affairs Council of 26 May adopted a number of conclusions regarding the vocational training of women, and invited the Member States, employers and workers to review the possibility of protective legislation for women in the context of mixed employment schemes and the adaptability of labour.

The Commission is also proceeding with the application of the measures contained in the 2nd Community Action Programme on health and safety at work, approved by the Council on 27 February 1984. The Directive on the protection of workers against health hazards due to noise exposure at work was adopted on 12 May 1986. It sets acceptable noise limits, valid at Community level. When exceeded, measures must again be taken to reduce noise to within those levels. Furthermore, on 19 June 1986, the Commission submitted to the Council a proposal amending for the first time the Directive of 27 November 1980 on the protection of workers against hazards connected with exposure to chemical, physical and biological agents at work. This sets maximum exposure limits for a whole range of harmful agents. To this end, the Commission has put forward a preliminary list of limit values that have been selected because they are already to be found on the lists of several Member States and concern agents often used at work.

Finally, the Commission is currently drawing up a communication to the Council concerning: "The contribution of health and safety protection at work to the development of the social dialogue", which identifies a number of areas where action could take place (health and hygiene; safety and ergonomics; information and training; small and

medium-sized enterprises; co-operation and dialogue with two sides of industry, etc.). The Commission proposed Community action (draft Directives, reports, co-ordinated measures, decisions, recommendations, etc.), especially in those sectors where occupational accidents and diseases are most likely to happen: agriculture, fisheries and construction.

Having briefly summarized the policies and objectives which the Community intends to pursue in order to establish the European social area, which is closely linked to the development of an internal market by 1992, Mr. Gommers went on to discuss the institutional and financial measures needed to attain these objectives:

- Articles 118 A and 118 B of the Single Act complement Articles 2 and 117 of the Treaty, and strengthen the Community's social vocation. Article 118 A lays down that "... Member States shall pay particular attention to encouraging improvements, especially in the working environment, as regards to the health and safety of workers, and shall set as their objective the harmonization of conditions in this area, while maintaining the improvements made". With a view to attain these objectives, the Single Act enables the Council acting with the qualified majority to issue directives laying down minimum requirements taking account of conditions and technical regulations existing in each Member State. This represents a particularly good opportunity for improving the protection of health and safety at work. Article 118 B lays down that "... the Commission shall endeavour to develop the dialogue between management and labour at European level, which could, if the

two sides consider it desirable, lead to relations based on agreement".

The Single Act provides opportunities and possibilities which have not yet all been explored or acted upon at the Community level. However, substantial progress has been achieved in the sphere of the social dialogue, where the agricultural sector has played a pioneering role. In 1983, a Joint Committee on Social Problems of Agricultural Workers was created to promote the development of a European system of industrial relations and facilitate collective bargaining. As early as 1978, this Joint Committee opened the way to a European Agreement on harmonization of the working time of permanent wage-earners in crop farming and horticulture. In 1980, the agreement was also extended to stock farming. Currently, both sides of industry are studying the possibility of extending the provisions of these agreements to the new Member States. Along with this, they are looking into ways of improving and extending them to temporary workers and at the possibilities of concluding agreements on issues other than working hours. In this undertaking, they have the support of the Commission and its services. It must be emphasized that in the agricultural sector, the Joint and Advisory Committees are favoured platforms for discussion between workers and employers on questions of mutual interest such as safety and health, vocational training, employment and working conditions, socio-structural back-up measures for the Common Agricultural Policy, etc.

As regards the joint opinion of UNICE, CEEP and ETUC of 6 November 1986, supporting the Community "co-operation strategy for growth and employment", the two sides of industry have drawn up a joint opinion on the micro-economic level on training

and motivation, information and consultation of the work force on new technologies which, if introduced into the firm, would have major implications for them. This social dialogue is now progressing at the highest level, concentrating in particular on problems of adaptability in firms and flexibility of working hours and should help to stimulate further Community decisions in this field.

Finally, following the adoption of the European Single Act, the Commission proposed the reform of the structural funds, centred around a number of set objectives (the fight against long-term unemployment, the integration of young people into the labour force, support to be given to the structurally less advanced regions or those undergoing industrial restructuring) on the one hand, and increasing available resources and rationalization of intervention measures, on the other.

This reform is essential, since structural funds constitute the Community's financial means of achieving the economic and social objectives it has set itself.

Mr. Gommers concluded his address with the hope that these two days of discussion had achieved the objectives which the participants had set for themselves, and that they had provided an opportunity for a fruitful exchange of opinions between workers, employers and the Commission departments. He went on to say that the creation of a European economic entity is wholly dependent on the creation of a European social entity, and that such objectives can only be attained through consultation and negotiation, by a fundamental change in

the policies and action of economic agents, and through an intensification of the social dialogue at all levels. The problems remain enormous and the solutions are hard to find.

5.2 Conclusions of the Seminar

I. General Considerations on the Present Context of the C.A.P.

Regarding agricultural policy and the Commission's proposals on agricultural prices for the 1987/88 market year and socio-structural measures, both sides of industry in the agricultural sector recognize that there is a particularly urgent need to stabilize certain agricultural markets and accelerate the disposal of stocks of agri-foodstuffs.

They considered that the Commission's proposals aiming to stabilize some of the agricultural markets through restrictive pricing and market policies would endanger income levels as well as working and living conditions in agriculture, together with economic activity and employment in a large number of agricultural regions within the Community, unless Community preferences are complied with and unless there is a parallel encouragement of research and development of alternative products in short supply, along with new uses for certain agricultural products.

Furthermore, they stressed the need to apply measures which will create a greater balance between the different regions of the Community. To this end, they advocated a reinforced socio-cultural policy adapted in terms of production, processing, marketing and training, the development of a policy designed to keep agriculture alive in those areas with natural handicaps where it has been traditionally the main economic activity. They also proposed the development of a social policy aimed at assisting farmers in difficulty as well as their employees through the implementation of temporary and stop-gap aid measures.

II. Developments Subsequent to the Advisory Conference on the Social Aspects of the Common Agricultural Policy, Rome (28 September 1961 - 4 October 1961)

The participants noted that there had been definite progress, but also that there remained a number of delays and deficiencies in the implementation of the conclusions of the 1961 Rome Conference.

II.1 Positive aspects

- The creation of the Joint Committee on Social Problems of Agricultural Workers and its subsequent activities, as well as adequate representation of the organizations of agricultural employers and employees on the various advisory committees has led to the development of a social dialogue at the European level, and in particular to the adoption in 1978 of an Agreement on working times of permanent agricultural workers.

The living and housing conditions of agricultural workers have considerably improved; the social security insurance schemes for agricultural workers are adequate in most of the countries of the Community, although problems remain regarding self-employed workers.

- The free movement of agricultural workers will be finally completed at the end of a transitional period for Spain and Portugal.
- Working time has been reduced from 48 to 40 hours, or even less in some countries. However, the situation in some Member States must be rapidly improved.
- The number of fatal accidents, particularly those due to overturning tractors, has decreased, due partly to the efforts of the Joint Committee.

- Regional policy has improved, particularly with the creation in 1975 of the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund).
- Agricultural socio-structural policy received a great impetus with the adoption in 1972 of three Directives (No 159, on farm modernization; No 160, on the cessation of farming; No 161, on vocational training), followed by Regulation (EEC) No 797/85 and the decisions of the Agricultural Council of March 1987, as well as discussions taking place on the Commission's proposals (COM(87)166 final). The participants were concerned, however, by the considerable delays in adopting these proposals as well as by their very limited character, particularly as regards the cessation of farming.

II.2 Negative aspects

The factors that would enable a number of statistical gaps to be filled regarding the social conditions of agricultural workers are as yet not completely at hand.

- In some cases, wage levels and average farmer incomes remain much lower than in the industrial and service sectors.
- Working conditions for agricultural workers are worse than in other sectors, and stable and permanent employment is tending to decrease.
- Measures for fighting rural unemployment and under-employment leave much to be desired.
- Standards regarding the security of employment and health and safety are not being sufficiently applied, and the agricultural sector remains one of the sectors where hazards are the greatest.

III. Current Situation of Agricultural Workers in the Community

The participants examined the conditions of agricultural workers on the basis of two reports which were drawn up at the Commission's request, one by Mr. Whitby ("Working Conditions of Permanent Agricultural Workers in the Community", 1985), and the other by Mr. Fernandez Cavada ("Agricultural Workers in Spain and Portugal", 1987), together with the information report (and connected annex and addendum) produced by the Agricultural Section of the Economic and Social Committee (rapporteur: Mr. Lojewski).

They adopted the conclusions of the own-initiative opinion of the Economic and Social Committee regarding "... the repercussions of the Common Agricultural Policy on the social conditions of agricultural workers in the Community", adopted unanimously at the 237th plenary session of 21 and 22 May, 1986.

IV. European Single Act

The participants expressed their approval of the adoption of the European Single Act which will strengthen the Community's social vocation, especially the following Articles:

- 118 A, aiming to improve workplace conditions in order to protect the health and safety of workers, and to harmonize conditions existing in that area, while maintaining existing improvements;
- 118 B, on the development of the social dialogue at European level;
- 130 A et seq., on the overall harmonious development of the Community, the strengthening of economic and social cohesion, and the reduction of disparities between the regions and of the backwardness of the least favoured regions.

The participants expressed the hope that the various Community institutions will act on the opportunities provided by the Single Act, and that the two sides of industry will co-operate at European level in order to achieve the objective of economic and social cohesion at a high level, as well as greater social protection for agricultural workers.

V. Vocational Training in Agriculture

The participants agreed on the need for a good, basic vocational training system, particularly in the least advanced countries of the Community, and likewise on the need for continuing training and retraining in order to keep up with technological development and new trends in production.

- Training courses, especially practical courses, must take into account the requirements of the different categories of workers and be provided at centres near places of employment.
- The syllabus of each course must be continually updated in order to keep pace with technological development and new Common Agricultural Policy guidelines (on the environment, new forms of production, and the need for safety training, and so forth).
- Replacement services, which enable agricultural workers to participate in training courses, must be developed.
- Community exchanges among young people undergoing training or young workers must be encouraged.
- The Commission must continue its work on the correspondence of vocational training qualifications among the Member States so that training diplomas and certificates may be recognized at Community level.
- The financing of vocational training schemes by the European structural funds must be modulated according to the financial capacity of each Member State or region.

- The positive role and interesting initiatives taken by CEPFAR were underlined; the participants supported its activities and called for an increase in its resources.

- The role and responsibilities of professional organizations and trade unions must be recognized.

Finally, the participants, and in particular the members of COPA and EFA, declared their willingness to begin discussions within the Joint Committee on Social Problems of Agricultural Workers with a view to the adoption of a Joint Declaration on the Right of Workers to Continuing Training and the Procedures for Its Implementation.

VI. Social Protection, Health and Safety in Agriculture

The participants emphasized the importance of the work done by the Joint Committee in this area, in particular the adoption of two Opinions, one on the safety features to be incorporated into the design of tractors, the other on minimum safety requirements in the use of plant protection products.

They expressed the hope that the work currently being carried out on these questions at both the Commission and the Council would soon come to a successful conclusion: approximation of legislation on tractors and other wheeled vehicles for use in agriculture and forestry, classification, labelling and packaging of toxic products, protective clothing, etc. They also voiced their concern at the delay in the adoption by the Council of the Directive on the approval and limitation of plant protection products. They hoped that the Commission would put forward new proposals, particularly as regards the safety of agricultural installations and machinery.

The participants emphasized the need for safety training and called for the development of training modules (training sessions based on existing modules or the creation of new modules).

They called on the Commission to:

- organize a "Safety Week" on the use of toxic substances and plant protection products in agriculture;
- establish a system for the collection of harmonized statistical data on occupational accidents and diseases in agriculture;

- carry out surveys on the development of the occupational activities of agricultural workers, as well as to make use of existing data on medical care in agriculture in order to determine occupational hazards and their related costs and develop effective health protection;

- organize a conference, with a view to examining the possibility of implementing a European social protection policy in agriculture.

VII. Harmonization of Working Conditions of Agricultural Workers whilst Maintaining Existing Improvement

The participants agreed to intensify the work on harmonization within the Joint Committee on Social Problems of Agricultural Workers in the European Community, with the aim of drawing up opinions on a series of proposals to be submitted to the Joint Committee for examination and approval.

Possible topics for discussion are the following:

- Working time: the aim of ratifying and applying the 1978 Agreement on the working time of permanent agricultural workers in the EEC must be promoted in those Member States where this has not yet taken place, as well as promoting discussions on the reduction and flexibility of working hours;
- Vocational training: the right to continuing training and retraining, as well as the right to paid leave during training;
- The harmonization of working conditions;
- The legal protection of temporary agricultural workers.

The participants expressed the wish that the Commission be granted further financial resources in order that it may implement, in collaboration with the two sides of industry and the Joint Committee on Social Problems of Agricultural Workers, specific action in such areas as vocational training and health and safety in agriculture.

Finally, the participants expressed their satisfaction at the holding of the Seminar, as well as with the high quality and open-mindedness of the debates. They

expressed the hope that a further conference would, in the not too distant future (in about five years' time, in order to take into account the completion of the internal market by 1992), discuss the progress that had been made in the meantime, and that the conclusions which they had adopted would be such as to promote the social dialogue and facilitate the adoption of these measures relating to cohesion which the completion of the internal market required.

5.3 Close of Proceedings

Mr. Pop, Chairman of the Joint Committee on Social Problems of Agricultural Workers, and Mr. Beffa, Vice-Chairman, thanked the Commission and its officials for the high quality of the Conference. They voiced their satisfaction at achieving important results which would enable the social dialogue to continue within the Joint Committee, and they expressed their desire to see a similar Conference held in the near future (towards 1992).

In his final statement, Mr. Van Zonneveld, Chairman of the Session, expressed the wish that this seminar should not be seen as the fulfillment of the Committee's work on the matter, but rather a starting point for further endeavours. He thanked the speakers, the specialists, the technical organizers, the interpreters and all the participants at the seminar.

* * * * *

European Communities — Commission

Social Europe — Supplement

Seminar on the social aspects of the common agricultural policy — Brussels, 24 to 26 June 1987

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

1989 — 82 pp. — 21.0 × 29.7 cm

DE, EN, FR

ISBN 92-825-9775-X

Catalogue number: CE-NC-89-003-EN-C

Price (excluding VAT) in Luxembourg: ECU 5.65



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ISBN 92-825-9775-X



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