

European Communities

3-053.3(20)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 4-5 21

Working Documents

1976 - 1977

15 November 1976

DOCUMENT 398/76

Report

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

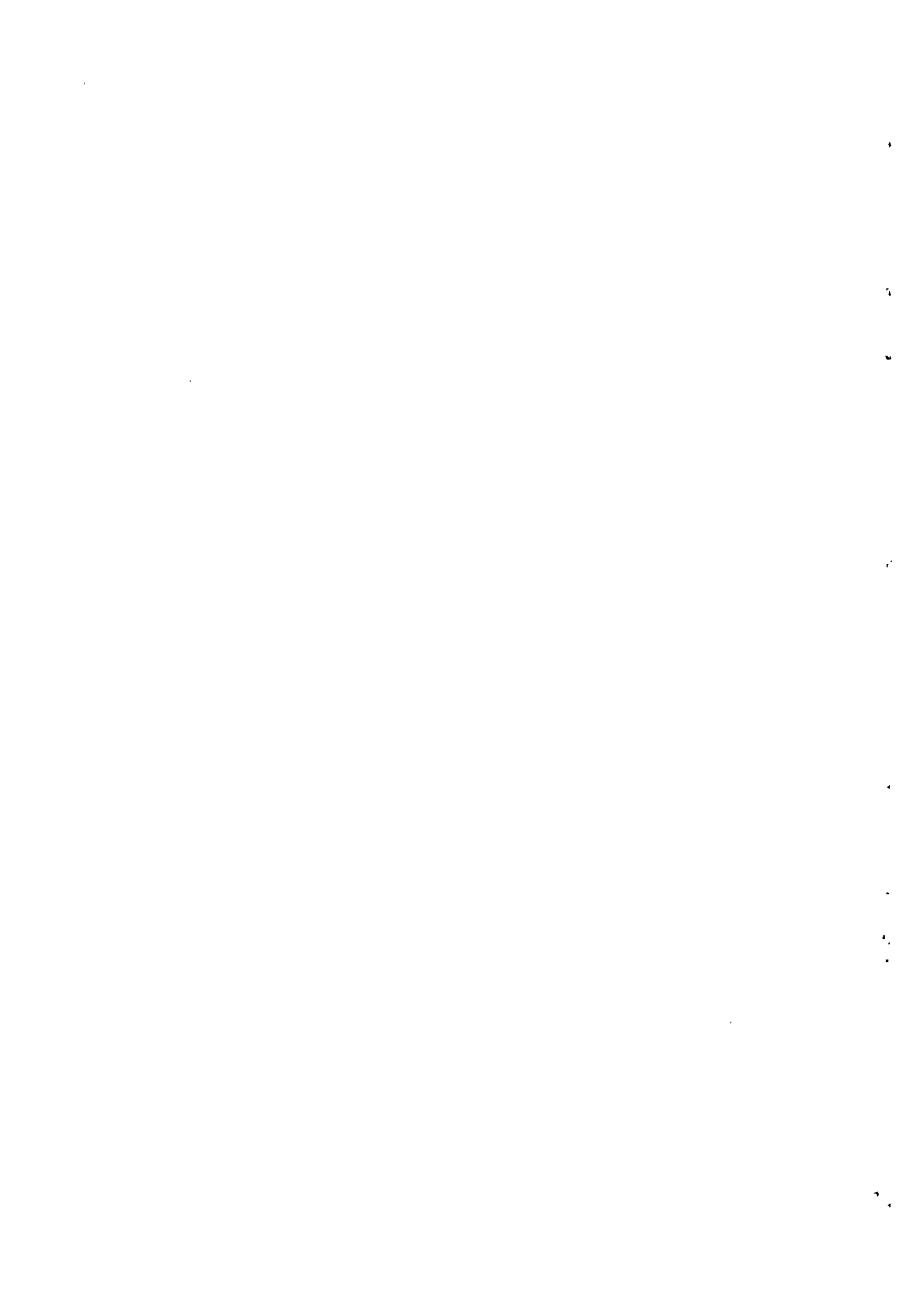
on the draft Commission recommendation to the Member States (doc. 298/76) on
/ vocational preparation for young people who are unemployed or threatened by
unemployment

Rapporteur: Mr K.-H. WALKHOFF

PE 46.342 fin.

1.2.3

English Edition



By letter of 16 September 1976 the Commission of the European Communities optionally requested the European Parliament to deliver an opinion on its draft recommendation to the Member States on vocational preparation for young people who are unemployed or threatened by unemployment (Doc. 298/76).

On 24 September 1976 the President of the European Parliament referred this draft to the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education, as the committee responsible.

On 29 September 1976 the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education appointed Mr WALKHOFF rapporteur.

It considered the draft at its meeting of 28 October 1976.

At the same meeting the committee unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution.

Present: Mr van der Gun, chairman; Mr Adams, vice-chairman; Mr Galluzzi, vice-chairman; Mr Albers, Mr Caro, Mr Dondelinger, Mrs Dunwoody, Mr Geurtsen, Mr Härzschel, Mr Howell, Mrs Kellett-Bowman, Mr Meintz, Mr Pianta and Mr Santer.

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

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on the draft recommendation from the Commission of the European Communities to the Member States on vocational preparation for young people who are unemployed or threatened by unemployment.

The European Parliament,

- having been optionally consulted by the Commission on this draft recommendation. (Doc. 298/76)

- having regard to the report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education (Doc. 398/76);

- 1. Expresses its regret that, in spite of repeated objections by the European Parliament, the Commission has again opted for the non-binding legal form of the recommendation;

- 2. Is concerned about the extent of youth unemployment in the Community, which has to be seen in terms of unemployment as a whole; shares the fear that this is a long-term problem which will not be solved automatically by increased demand for labour; and also considers that unemployment is to a certain extent determined by the economic system operated by the countries of the Community;

- 3. Believes nevertheless that it is very important also in the short term to take measures which, while not tackling the problem at the roots, will lead to a reduction in unemployment and above all to better integration of young people into working process;

- 4. Takes the view that young people with no vocational training are the hardest hit by unemployment, and agrees with the Commission that the problems of these young people must be dealt with urgently;

- 5. Points out that it is poorly educated young people in particular who often cannot obtain training places and that vocational preparation must take account of this fact;

6. Expresses doubts about the Commission's policy, although agreeing with its aims, as the measures recommended are sometimes both incomplete and unrealistic;
7. Proposes that a period of two years be recommended for vocational preparation, and that the list of measures given by the Commission be extended to include:
 - (a) Introduction to the working environment and practical experience of various fields of work;
 - (b) Training of young people with the following alternative aims, having regard to their capabilities:
 - qualification as a skilled worker, specialized training to a level below that level or assistance in special workshops to enable young people to earn their own living;
8. Considers in this connection that, where appropriate, young people ought to be given the opportunity to complete elementary schooling;
9. Expects the countries of the Community to be recommended to set up training centres in cases where companies do not provide sufficient training places;
10. Regrets the lack of any reference to the need for state undertakings to provide more training places and jobs for young people;
11. Considers it unrealistic to recommend that 'young people threatened by unemployment should be given reasonable leave of absence from their work in order to undertake vocational preparation';
12. Points out that the coordination and improvement repeatedly called for by the European Parliament in the vocational guidance provided for in the EEC Treaty have hitherto remained merely empty phrases, and fears that this Commission recommendation will not produce any radical progress either;
13. Takes the view that the idea behind the recommendation must be supported, but asks the Commission to increase the likelihood of its proposals being carried into effect by supplementing and formulating them more realistically as part of a binding programme of action.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. The Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education has repeatedly raised strong objections to the Commission practice of submitting Community actions in the legal form of a recommendation which can be treated by the Member States as largely non-binding. This is all the more regrettable since the present recommendation on vocational preparation for young people who are unemployed or threatened by unemployment deals with an extremely important area of social policy. The figures which the Commission gives in its recommendation - more than 1.5 million people under 25 unemployed in the spring of 1976 - are not likely to improve before 1980, as there will be pressure on the labour market both as a result of the high birth-rate in past years and because increasing numbers of the first generation of children of migrant workers will be leaving school to look for training places. This will happen regardless of the expected economic upswing. In general it is true that unemployment is a logical consequence of a certain economic system and of the economic philosophy on which it is based.

2. The view underlying the Commission's recommendation, namely that measures in the sphere of youth unemployment are urgently needed, is certainly to be welcomed, as is the idea of restricting them to young people with no vocational training or preparation who are unemployed or threatened by unemployment.

In considering the content of the Commission's proposals, however, the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education cannot refrain from expressing certain doubts about their feasibility and their value to the young people concerned - for instance, the requirement in paragraph A 8 that 'young people threatened by unemployment should be given reasonable leave of absence from their work in order to undertake vocational preparation'.

3. It should also be pointed out that there must be greater differentiation in measures for vocational preparation, since there will probably be wide differences in previous education and corresponding expectations. The time-limit of one year cannot be considered other than inadequate if, as the Commission assumes in its document, the level of education reached is in any case insufficient. Nor should it be automatically assumed that qualifications obtained at the end of schooling will be adequate for a future occupation. Any set of measures would therefore have to include the possibility of completing elementary schooling.

4. There is no doubt, as the Commission has already noted, that use must be made of all existing and potential opportunities for education and training and that the social partners, who have the means and experience to contribute to these measures, should be involved in their implementation. Further measures would have to be taken so that, where private industry is not able or prepared to make adequate and appropriate training places available, state or Community vocational training facilities must be provided. In conclusion, it is again pointed out that the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education basically endorses the Commission's recommendations, but calls upon it to formulate its proposals more realistically and with a higher degree of discrimination as part of a binding programme of action.