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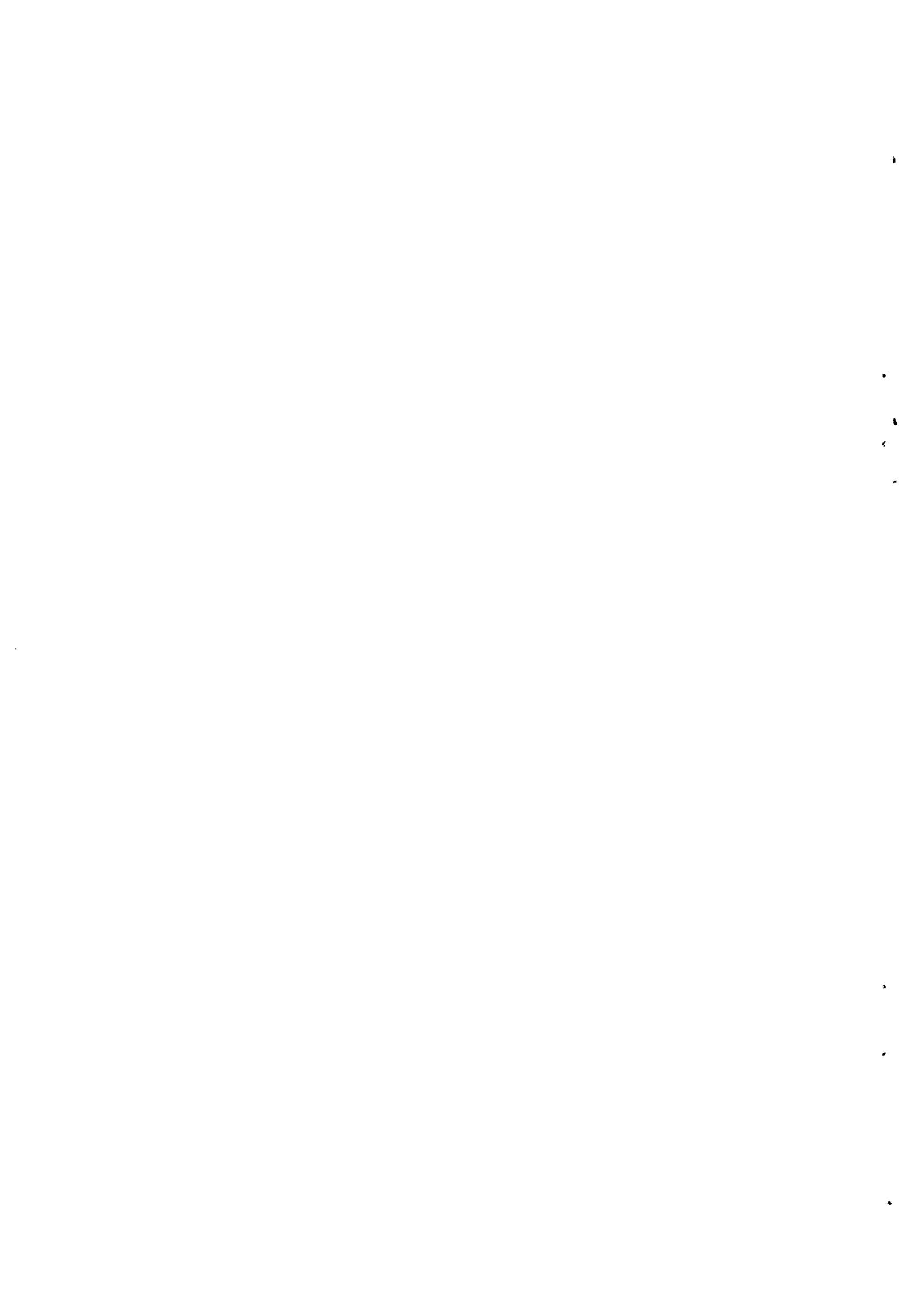
Report

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

on the communication from the Commission of the European Communities to  
the Council (Doc. 480/75) on the European Social Budget

Rapporteur: Mr K. ALBERTSEN

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By letter of 6 January 1976 the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament to deliver an opinion on the communication from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council on the European Social Budget.

The President of the European Parliament referred this communication to the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Budgets for its opinion.

On 23 January 1976 the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education appointed Mr K. Albertsen rapporteur.

It considered this communication at its meetings of 25 February and 23 March 1976.

At its meeting of 23 March 1976 the committee adopted the motion for a resolution and the explanatory statement with 2 votes against.

Present : Mr Van der Gun, chairman; Mr Adams, vice-chairman; Mr Albertsen, rapporteur; Mr Albers, Mrs Caretoni-Romagnoli, Mr Carpentier, Mr Creed, Mrs Dunwoody, Lady Fisher of Rednal, Mr Gerlach (deputizing for Mr Dondelinger), Mr Geurtsen, Mr Glinne, Mr Kavanagh, Mrs Kellett-Bowman, Mr Pianta, Mr Prescott, Sir Brandon Rhys Williams and Mr Terrenoire.

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A

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

embodying the opinion of the European Parliament on the communication from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council on the European Social Budget

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the communication from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (COM(75) 647 final),
  - having been consulted by the Council (Doc. 480/75),
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education and the opinion of the Committee on Budgets (Doc. 38/76 ),
1. Endorses the Commission's proposal as a useful initiative in connection with the final drafting of the European Social Budget;
  2. Regrets, however, that, because of the Council's attitude, the first European Social Budget (revised text) has not yet been submitted to the European Parliament and insists that this should be done as soon as possible;
  3. Expresses the hope that the summary and forecasts of social expenditure and its financing contained in the communication may prove an important instrument in efforts to harmonize the social systems in a progressive manner;
  4. Requests the Commission to process statistics relative to the social sector in the regions of the individual Member States with a view to identifying and endeavouring to eliminate any disparities, so that all citizens living under the same conditions may enjoy the same rights.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTI. INTRODUCTION

1. It should at the outset be noted that, although this communication is ostensibly on the Budget, it is really concerned with drawing up a summary and forecasts of social expenditure and its financing.

2. The Social Budget is intended to give an overall picture of past and future trends - in the short and medium term - in social expenditure and the financing methods relative thereto in the Member States of the Community, so that it may be used as an instrument in the increasing adjustment of social protection in particular, and social policy in general, throughout the Community.

II. BACKGROUND TO THE COMMUNICATION

3. On 9 November 1972, pursuant to a decision, the Council instructed the Commission to draw up the first European Social Budget, acting in collaboration with government experts. It is further recalled that the obligation to draw up this Budget had been laid down in the Social Action Programme<sup>1</sup>, which states (Action III<sub>5</sub>) that 'better information is needed on present and foreseeable conditions in the Member States in order to establish priorities in the sphere of social protection'.

4. The Budget presented on 4 December 1974 covered the period 1970-1975; it consisted of a review of the years 1970-1972 and forecasts for 1973-1975.

Subsequent discussions in the Council's Social Questions Group, produced the following three conclusions:

- (1) the Commission would bring the details up to date for 1975;
- (2) any decision on publishing the updated documents would be postponed;
- (3) all options remained open as regards the extension of the Social Budget to include other fields.

Although there was agreement on the first two conclusions, one delegation pointed out, with respect to the third, that the present mandate relating to the possible extension of the Budget was insufficient to allow an evaluation of the objectives to which the Budget should be geared.

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<sup>1</sup> COM(73) 1600 final, p. 8

### III. CONSIDERATION OF THE COMMUNICATION

5. The purpose of the present document from the Commission is therefore to lay down the general objectives of the European Social Budget with a view to revising the first European Social Budget and indicating guidelines for the second.

#### (1) Objectives

These objectives are based on the views expressed by the various delegations and can be divided into two main categories:

##### (a) Devising source of quantitative information on past and future trends

This involves:

(1) collecting comparative data on a number of social fields;

(2) listing capital expenditure and operating expenses.

(The first European Social Budget (1970-1975) only dealt with current expenditure on:

- social security,
- employers' voluntary contributions,
- benefits for victims of political events and natural disasters,
- social assistance);

(3) greater degree of comparability between the national forecasts in the European Social Budget and greater uniformity of forecasting methods.

(4) analysis of the degree of influence exerted by the various factors which govern expenditure, so as to identify the reasons for converging or diverging trends.

##### (b) Procurement of an aid to decision-making

Forecasts and the experience acquired may be used to assess the consequences of the other aspects of social policy and those of policies pursued in other fields, e.g. economic and taxation policy.

#### (2) Guidelines for the second European Social Budget

(a) The Budget will be restricted to the present content of the social accounts, which embrace social protection,

nevertheless

- (b) Efforts will be made to extend comparable statistics to other social sectors, in particular vocational training for adults and low-cost housing (this possibility is also referred to in the abovementioned Social Action Programme).
- (c) Forecasts covering the 1976-1980 period and a review of the 1970-1975 period with 1975 as the reference year.
- (d) The European Social Budget will be drawn up every two years.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

6. The Committee on Social Affairs, Employment and Education welcomes this communication from the Commission, as it sets out objectives and guidelines which will undoubtedly be very useful in drawing up the European Social Budget.

7. It regrets, however, that the Commission has not yet completed the final drafting of the first European Social Budget (revised text), even though the Council's instructions go back to 9 November 1972 and are further referred to in the Social Action Programme.

8. The committee hopes that the proposed objectives and guidelines may be of considerable use in making the European Social Budget the basis for an effective harmonization of the social systems in a progressive manner.

9. As this harmonization is unlikely to be achieved very soon, the committee requests the Commission to establish, by means of a study, whether disparities exist between the regions of the various Member States. If this proves to be the case, the information acquired should be a suitable starting-point for endeavours to eliminate such disparities, thereby ensuring that all citizens of a given state enjoy the same rights both in theory and in practice.