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Report

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

on the ~~Communication~~ Communication from the European Communities to the Council on initial measures to establish a common vocational training policy (Doc. 239/72) and on the list of priority projects in the vocational training field to be undertaken in 1973 (Doc. 20/73)

Rapporteur: Mr F. PISONI

PE 33.113/fin.

By letter of 7 December 1972 the Council of the European Communities forwarded to the European Parliament, for its information, the Communication from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council on 'initial measures to establish a common vocational training policy'.

Subsequently by letter of 28 March 1973 the Council forwarded to the European Parliament the 'List of priority projects in the vocational training field to be undertaken in 1973'.

By letter of 11 January 1973 the Bureau of the European Parliament authorised the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment to draw up a report.

The committee appointed Mr PISONI (replacing Mr VANDEWIELE) rapporteur on 13 March 1973.

It considered the Commission documents at its meetings of 23 November 1972, 19 December 1972 and 11 April 1973.

At its meeting of 22 May the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution and explanatory statement.

The following were present: Mr BERTRAND, chairman; Mr ADAMS and Mr DURAND, vice-chairman; Mr PISONI, rapporteur; Sir Tufton BEAMISH (deputizing for Sir Arthur DODDS-PARKER); Mr BERMANI, Mr BERTHOIN, Mr CHRISTENSEN, Mr GIRARDIN, Mr van der GUN, Mr HÄRZSCHEL, Mr JARROT (deputizing for Mr BOROCCO), Mr KLEPSCH (deputizing for Mr LUCIUS), Mr LAUDRIN, Mr MARRAS, Mr MURSCH, Sir John PEEL, Mr SCHWABE, Mr VERMEYLEN and Mr VERNASCHI.

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A.

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

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on the Communication from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council on initial measures to establish a common vocational training policy and on the list of priority projects in the vocational training field to be undertaken in 1973

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Communication from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council on initial measures to establish a common vocational training policy (Doc. 239/72) and on the list of priority projects in the vocational training field to be undertaken in 1973 (Doc. 20/73),
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment (Doc. 83/73),
1. Considers that attention should be chiefly directed to the following guiding principles underlying a common vocational training policy:
 - a) that vocational training must not be merely technical but must aim at a complete development of the human personality;
 - b) that vocational training and its supervision should concentrate increasingly on the general good;
 - c) that rapid readaptation is not possible without sound basic training;
 - d) that the expansion of the labour market with the achievement of effective free movement of manpower and of social mobility makes it necessary to standardize the models, methods and criteria of vocational training, the style of teaching and instruction, the number of years and the standard of preparation, the age at which training should be given, the professions to which it should give access and the 'market' demand;
 2. Considers, however, that the general principles approved by the Council of Ministers in 1963 are still valid;
 3. Regrets that these principles have not been put into effect by the Member States, particularly the fourth which envisages a certain right of

initiative to be exercised by the EEC Commission and the tenth which deals with joint financing of the projects;

4. Invites the Member States to implement these principles and urges the Commission to take practical measures to promote their implementation;
5. Notes that the first programme prepared by the Commission in 1965 has, as the Commission itself admits, proved rather unsuccessful, for three reasons: lack of experience of the methods to be used, failure to make a sufficient distinction between short-term projects (for example, exchange of information) and long-term projects (for example, harmonization of standards and structures) and finally, the inadequacy of the financial resources available;
6. Believes that the new programme may also fail in the same way, since some of the difficulties experienced previously, especially the lack of financial resources and staff, have not been eliminated;
7. Considers that the appropriations earmarked in the 1973 budget under the heading 'Vocational Training' are completely inadequate;
8. Insists that ~~the Council~~ provide the Commission with the necessary financial resources for the vocational training section of the social programme which will be laid down in 1973 in accordance with the decision of the Paris Summit so that it can be effectively implemented and not remain a dead letter;
9. Notes with regret that the new programme is in some respects a retrograde step compared with that of 1965, for instance, in its failure to create experimental centres, to prepare job profiles and to lay down detailed measures for agriculture etc.;
10. Regrets that the Commission's programme confines itself in too many instances to envisaging exchanges of information and experience, a certain coordination at Community level and the organization of study groups and seminars, thus giving the impression that we are still, after all these years of the Community's existence, at a preparatory stage and have not yet reached, except in certain specific sectors, the phase of practical and decisive Community action;
11. Invites the Commission as a matter of urgency to incorporate more specific and direct action in its future general programme;
12. Urges the Commission to put forward Community vocational training programmes for migrant workers either in their country of origin or in the places where such immigration is mainly concentrated;

13. Invites the Commission to include industry among the sectors which are to be given priority (see project H) for Community action in the area of vocational training;
14. Emphasizes the importance of vocational training for the handicapped (see project G 5), to which insufficient attention has been paid in the past;
15. Stresses the risks involved in the fact that the Council of Ministers has only approved some of the projects to be undertaken in 1973, postponing all other projects to the future general programme, since this may prevent the necessary financial resources and staff being made available for implementation of the programme as from 1 January 1974;
16. Considers it essential in this context for the vocational training centre mentioned in the 'Outline of a social action programme' to be endowed with the financial resources necessary for it to carry out its important tasks;
17. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the accompanying explanatory statement to the Council and Commission of the European Communities.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTPreliminary observation

While the European Parliament's Committee on Social Affairs and Employment was preparing to consider a report on the Communication from the Commission to the Council on initial measures to establish a common vocational training policy, the Council informed Parliament on 28 March 1973 that it had already approved some of the projects proposed in the Commission's communication.

However, at its meeting of 11 April 1973, the committee decided to pursue its work on vocational training with a view to embodying in its report some suggestions and proposals for the general social programme to be prepared by the Commission by the end of 1973, in which a prominent place will be given to vocational training.

I. General Introduction

1. In the course of time vocational training has taken on many different forms and characteristics and has changed with new technological discoveries and with new methods and advances in the science of teaching itself.

From the artisan's shop of former times, where the apprentice learned from the master craftsman and depended entirely on him, we have gradually progressed first to a system of training evolved by society and by the undertakings concerned, then to occupational training as a further step forward and finally to vocational training in its present form.

2. The concept of vocational training implies a combination of all-round education and job-oriented training; the emphasis is therefore not merely on technological skills but rather on a complete human education and on personality development. Vocational training implies formation of the individual who takes up a particular occupation; it amounts to much more than turning out a skilled professional man or technician who may or may not have developed his whole personality.

Man as an individual must take precedence over the technician, especially now that automation has greatly curtailed the freedom and creativity of the individual and confined him to monotonous activities.

3. Modern teaching methods and advanced technologies require in increasing measure all-round human education, imparting a sound judgement to the individual and enabling him to exercise all the human freedoms.

While it is true that a greater degree of culture and human enrichment may sometimes make the man working on an assembly line more acutely conscious of the depersonalization of the production process, it is equally true that they enable the working man to rationalize his own conditions and the production process and to make profitable use of his leisure time for his own improvement.

4. In the light of these facts and of the importance which attaches to an education such as we have described, general welfare demands that proper schools be provided and adequate measures taken to meet the needs of vocational training. It must not be left to private industrial undertakings, since the private concern is generally more interested in turning out skilled technicians in the minimum possible time, sometimes at the expense of the integrated human education which should be the goal of all teaching. It is therefore in the general interest for endeavours to be made to ensure this kind of training. The rapidity with which new technologies take the place of old means that old crafts and old techniques are constantly being superseded, and modern vocational training must see to it that the persons engaged in them are suitably retrained. The great degree of personal mobility now achieved makes the need for this clearly evident.

5. The fundamental principles of vocational training are that it should be integrated and versatile; basic training must be backed by appropriate in-service training and training in new techniques.

Only a thorough basic training can enable workers to adapt themselves rapidly to new techniques. As the labour market is expanded and communications improved, the more necessary it becomes to standardize throughout the new territorial groupings and new forms of production, the models, methods and criteria of vocational training, the style of teaching and instruction, the duration and standards of instruction, the age at which this instruction should be imparted, the professions to which it should give access and the demands of the 'market'.

Recognition of professional qualifications throughout the Community depends directly on the factors we have just mentioned; it would be a necessary precondition for achieving the free movement of workers and making it a concrete reality, especially for migrant workers.

6. The European Community should use the Social Fund to reduce the financial burden of vocational training on Member States, both in underdeveloped regions with high emigration rates and in situations where vast retraining programmes are called for. This is all the more necessary in that it is this work force, employed throughout the Community, which has made it possible for the more advanced States to accumulate such riches.

The exchange of experience, studies, statistical data and experimental results is the first step towards practical cooperation and the easiest to implement.

2. The 1965 and 1972 programmes

7. On 5 May 1965 the EEC Commission put forward a first action programme for a common policy on vocational training in general and particularly in agriculture¹ and the Social Affairs Committee delivered an opinion on this document in Report No. 3 of 1966 - 67 by Mr SABATINI.

This first programme of 1965 already indicated several aims and projects which are now contained in the new programme. Examples are provided by the programmes for vocational guidance, for the approximation of teaching standards, for in-service training and for the training of instructors. A number of sectoral and regional aspects of vocational training were also already included in the 1965 programme.

¹ See V SEC(65) 1355/fin.

8. In its new document, the EEC Commission states that the 1972 programme is designed to supplement, develop and further define the first programme of 1965. Nevertheless, in the Sabatini report already mentioned, the Social Affairs Committee expressed reservations about the possibility of implementing that first programme. It maintained that, in the absence of any clear indication of the methods to be used by the Executive to attain the various objectives, there was a danger that the action programme would not be put into effect at all, as had unfortunately been the case with the general principles laid down by the Council in 1963.

One cannot help feeling that the 1965 programme was not in fact adequately implemented. As a matter of fact, in the document entitled 'General guidelines for working out an action programme at Community level on vocational training'¹, approved by the Council of Ministers on 27 July 1971, the Commission acknowledges that activities in this sector up to that time had not met with the hoped-for success for three reasons: lack of experience in training methods, failure to make sufficient distinction between short term projects (for example, exchange of information) and long term projects (for example, harmonization of standards and structures), and finally inadequate financial resources.

9. The Committee on Social Affairs and Employment could therefore conclude from these statements that the 1965 programmes were put into effect only to a very limited extent and, what is worse, that the 1972 programmes are in danger of suffering the same fate if, as appears likely, the difficulties previously encountered by the Commission are not overcome.

10. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that the 1972 programme is, in some respects, a retrograde step vis-à-vis the previous programme. For example, in the matter of vocational guidance, the 1965 programme planned to promote and possibly to finance the creation of experimental centres in Member States to analyse concrete results which might serve as a basis for other projects.

Similar centres were also planned for the 'instructor training' programme. However, in the new programme there is no mention of such projects and all that is envisaged for 'instructors' is the setting up of a training centre.

With regard to the harmonization of training standards, the new programme makes no mention of the preparation of 'occupational profiles' which had been envisaged in the 1965 programme and it does not even refer

¹ See OJ No. C 81, 12 August 1971, p.5

to the organization of European examinations and competitions. The new programme only mentions a study including a comparative assessment of present training standards.

With regard to agriculture, the first programme laid down a detailed plan of action which followed, in its broad outlines, the general action programme and diverged from it only to take account of the particular needs of this sector and of the consequences of the common regional policy.

In the new programme, however, agriculture is treated as a sector no different from many others and the concrete projects envisaged are virtually limited to the implementation of the Council directive of 17 April 1972 on the professional qualifications of persons working in agriculture.

11. It must, however, be stressed that the Commission itself acknowledges the limited scope of this programme which it proposes to integrate into a future more general action programme (designed to implement a common vocational training policy) and to include in the general social policy programme to be prepared by the Commission by 1 January 1974 in accordance with the decisions of the Paris Summit.

3. Consideration of the measures proposed by the EEC Commission

12. To make a fair assessment of the measures proposed by the Commission, it is first of all necessary to recall certain difficulties of a legal and practical nature which hamper the implementation of an effective common policy.

The first difficulty arises from the inadequacy of the provisions of the Treaty. In fact, Article 128 stipulates that 'the Council shall lay down general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy capable of contributing to the harmonious development both of the national economies and of the common market', while Article 118 merely states that the Commission must 'promote close cooperation between Member States in the social field, particularly in matters relating to ... basic and advanced vocational training'.

The Council implemented the provisions of Article 128 by approving on 2 April 1963 a decision laying down the general principles¹ for implementing a common vocational training policy. However, the extent to which these principles are binding on Member States is still open to question, as in fact is the entire legal scope of the Community instrument known as a 'decision'.

¹ OJ No.63, 20 April 1963

In spite of the support of the Social Affairs Committee (Doc.5/62-63, report by Mr SABATINI) the principles have been virtually ignored by the Member States, especially the fourth which gives the EEC Commission a certain right of initiative and the tenth which deals with joint financing of the projects.

13. Apart from this legal difficulty, there is the serious problem of the Member States' different concepts of vocational training and their extreme vagueness on all matters relating to teaching and instruction. If it is difficult to draw a clear distinction between vocational training and education in general, it is even more difficult to find a common basis for the solution of all the other problems, for example, whether vocational training ought to be many-sided or not, how it can be adapted to the needs of the economy and to new technologies, how it is possible to make middle-term forecasts of the growing need for 'qualifications' in the different sectors of industry, etc.

14. Another serious difficulty arises from the fact that the financial resources at the Commission's disposal for this sector are very limited. The 1973 budget included an appropriation of 330,000 u.a. for vocational training (1972 appropriation: 165,000 u.a., 1971 expenditure: 88,577 u.a.) to finance various projects, and even if it is possible to acquire other financial backing for vocational retraining from the European Social Fund, the sums in question will still be altogether inadequate. This explains to some extent why Community intervention has been so limited and ineffective.

It also provides a partial explanation of the fact that the Commission's new programme is sometimes too diffident and largely confined to envisaging exchanges of information and experience, some degree of coordination at Community level and the organization of study groups and seminars.

For example, to take the case of migrant workers, who spring to mind at once as a major problem, there are plans to organize two seminars to analyse the needs of Community and third country migrant workers and to study the possibilities for action at Community level to improve the education of their children. It is only in a third phase, after the seminars and the conclusion of the study programme that the Consultative Committee for vocational training will go on to prepare proposals for practical action. The Commission indicates that some projects may perhaps be financed by the European Social Fund.

15. Another puzzling feature is Project H relating to certain sectors of the economy, from which however industry is excluded, even though it is from this sector that the greatest demand comes for qualified manpower. It is difficult to explain this shortcoming, just as it is difficult to understand why some sectors (for example, road transport, trade and crafts) are given priority over industry.

16. In conclusion, it is difficult to see how the Commission's programme can be an effective instrument for the achievement of the stated objectives, especially since on the question of the financial and staff resources needed for its implementation, the Commission has merely stated that it will take the necessary measures in due time.

17. However, the reservation expressed above may be repeated here, namely, that we are dealing with initial measures intended to be supplemented and integrated into the action programme which the Commission is preparing. Before reaching a final verdict, we ought therefore to await this programme to see what part will be given in it to vocational training.

4. The Commission's proposals and the Council's decisions

18. The Council informed Parliament by letter of 28 March 1973 that it had approved some of the projects suggested by the Commission so that work in the field of vocational training will not be interrupted in 1973 (see Doc. 20/73).

Of the 30 projects in the programme, 13 have been approved (see Doc. 20/73), that is to say, the minimum number of projects to avoid any interruption of the work being carried out by the EEC Commission; all other projects have been held over to the future action programme, which is to come into force on 1 January 1974.

19. The Committee on Social Affairs and Employment stresses the risks involved in postponing these projects in this way which might prevent the financial resources and staff needed by the Commission for any worthwhile activity in 1974 from being made available in time. It must also not be forgotten that the Commission's responsible departments are at present being reorganized; there is accordingly a danger that the programme inaugurated by the Council on the basis of the principles laid down by the Summit Conference will not be implemented in 1974 because of a shortage of staff and funds and because the reorganization of the departments involved will not have been completed.

20. The social programme now under discussion in the Community institutions speaks of the creation of a European Centre for vocational training. The Committee on Social Affairs and Employment whole-heartedly appreciates this idea but has stressed that, unless the Centre is endowed with the necessary financial resources, it will not be able to carry out the important tasks which are to be entrusted to it.