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(Information)

COUNCIL

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

of 21 January 1974

concerning a social action programme

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaties establishing the European Communities;

Having regard to the draft from the Commission;

Having regard to the Opinion of the European Parliament;

Having regard to the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee;

Whereas the Treaties establishing the European Communities assigned to them tasks with relevance to social objectives;

Whereas, pursuant to Article 2 of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, the European Economic Community shall have as a particular task to promote throughout the Community a harmonious development of economic activities, a continuous and balanced expansion, an increase in stability and an accelerated raising of the standard of living;

Whereas the Heads of State or of Government affirmed at their conference held in Paris in October 1972 that economic expansion is not an end in itself but should result in an improvement of the quality of life as well as of the standard of living;

Whereas the Heads of State or of Government emphasized as one of the conclusions adopted at the above-mentioned conference that they attach as much importance to vigorous action in the social field as to the achievement of Economic and Monetary Union and invited the Community institutions to draw up a social action programme providing for concrete measures and the corresponding resources particularly in the framework of the European Social Fund on the basis of suggestions put forward by the Heads of State or of Government and the Commission at the said Conference;

Whereas such a programme involves actions designed to achieve full and better employment, the improvement of living and working conditions and increased involvement of management and labour in the economic and social decisions of the Community, and of workers in the life of undertakings;

Whereas actions described in the above programme should be implemented in accordance with the provisions laid down in the Treaties, including those of Article 235 of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community;

Having regard to the wishes expressed by management and labour;

Whereas, irrespective of serious threats to employment which may arise from the situation obtaining at the time of adoption of this Resolution, and without prejudice to the results of any future studies or measures, the Community should decide on the objectives and priorities to be given to its action in the social field over the coming years;

Takes note of the Social Action Programme from the Commission,

Considers that vigorous action must be undertaken in successive stages with a view to realising the social aims of European union, in order to attain the following broad objectives: full and better employment at Community, national and regional levels, which is an essential condition for an effective social
policy; improvement of living and working conditions so as to make possible their harmonization while the improvement is being maintained; increased involvement of management and labour in the economic and social decisions of the Community, and of workers in the life of undertakings;

Considers that the Community social policy has an individual role to play and should make an essential contribution to achieving the aforementioned objectives by means of Community measures or the definition by the Community of objectives for national social policies, without however seeking a standard solution to all social problems or attempting to transfer to Community level any responsibilities which are assumed more effectively at other levels;

Considers that social objectives should be a constant concern of all Community policies;

Considers that it is essential to ensure the consistency of social and other Community policies so that measures taken will achieve the objectives of social and other policies simultaneously;

Considers that, to achieve the proposed actions successfully, and particularly in view of the structural changes and imbalances in the Community, the necessary resources should be provided, in particular by strengthening the role of the European Social Fund;

Expresses the political will to adopt the measures necessary to achieve the following objectives during a first stage covering the period from 1974 to 1976, in addition to measures adopted in the context of other Community policies:

**Attainment of full and better employment in the Community**

— to establish appropriate consultation between Member States on their employment policies, guided by the need to achieve a policy of full and better employment in the Community as a whole and in the regions;

— to promote better cooperation by national employment services;

— to implement a common vocational training policy, with a view to attaining progressively the principal objectives thereof, especially approximation of training standards, in particular by setting up a European Vocational Training Centre;

— to undertake action for the purpose of achieving equality between men and women as regards access to employment and vocational training and advancement and as regards working conditions, including pay, taking into account the important role of management and labour in this field;

— to ensure that the family responsibilities of all concerned may be reconciled with their job aspirations;

— to establish an action programme for migrant workers and members of their families which shall aim in particular:

  — to improve the conditions of free movement within the Community of workers from Member States, including social security, and the social infrastructure of the Member States, the latter being an indispensable condition for solving the specific problems of migrant workers and members of their families, especially problems of reception, housing, social services, training and education of children;

  — to humanize the free movement of Community workers and members of their families by providing effective assistance during the various phases, it being understood that the prime objective is still to enable workers to find employment in their own regions;

  — to achieve equality of treatment for Community and non-Community workers and members of their families in respect of living and working conditions, wages and economic rights, taking into account the Community provisions in force;

  — to promote consultation on immigration policies vis-à-vis third countries;

  — to initiate a programme for the vocational and social integration of handicapped persons, in particular making provisions for the promotion of pilot experiments for the purpose of rehabilitating them in vocational life, or where appropriate, of placing them in sheltered industries, and to undertake a comparative study of the legal provisions and the arrangements made for rehabilitation at national level;
— to seek solutions to the employment problems confronting certain more vulnerable categories of persons (the young and the aged);
— to protect workers hired through temporary employment agencies and to regulate the activities of such firms with a view to eliminating abuses therein;
— to continue the implementation of the Council's conclusions on employment policy in the Community and particularly those concerning the progressive integration of the labour markets including those relating to employment statistics and estimates;

Improvement of living and working conditions so as to make possible their harmonization while the improvement is being maintained
— to establish appropriate consultations between Member States on their social protection policies with the particular aim of their approximation on the way of progress;
— to establish an action programme for workers aimed at the humanization of their living and working conditions, with particular reference to:
— improvement in safety and health conditions at work;
— the gradual elimination of physical and psychological stress which exists in the place of work and on the job, especially through improving the environment and seeking ways of increasing job satisfaction;
— a reform of the organization of work giving workers wider opportunities, especially those of having their own responsibilities and duties and of obtaining higher qualifications;
— to persevere with and expedite the implementation of the European Social Budget;
— gradually to extend social protection, particularly within the framework of social security schemes, to categories of persons not covered or inadequately provided for under existing schemes;
— to promote the coordination of social security schemes for self-employed workers with regard to freedom of establishment and freedom to provide services;
— to invite the Commission to submit a report on the problems arising in connection with coordination of supplementary schemes for employed persons moving within the Community;
— progressively to introduce machinery for adapting social security benefits to increased prosperity in the various Member States;
— to protect workers' interests, in particular with regard to the retention of rights and advantages in the case of mergers, concentrations or rationalization operations;
— to implement, in cooperation with the Member States, specific measures to combat poverty by drawing up pilot schemes;

Increased involvement of management and labour in the economic and social decisions of the Community, and of workers in the life of undertakings
— to refer more extensively to the Standing Committee on Employment for the discussion of all questions with a fundamental influence on employment;
— to help trade union organizations taking part in Community work to establish training and information services for European affairs and to set up a European Trade Union Institute;
— progressively to involve workers or their representatives in the life of undertakings in the Community;
— to facilitate, depending on the situation in the different countries, the conclusion of collective agreements at European level in appropriate fields;
— to develop the involvement of management and labour in the economic and social decisions of the Community;

Lays down the following priorities among the actions referred to in this Resolution:

Attainment of full and better employment in the Community
1. The establishment of appropriate consultation between Member States on their employment policies and the promotion of better cooperation by national employment services.
2. The establishment of an action programme for migrant workers who are nationals of Member States or third countries.
3. The implementation of a common vocational training policy and the setting up of a European Vocational Training Centre.
4. The undertaking of action to achieve equality between men and women as regards access to employment and vocational training and advancement and as regards working conditions, including pay.

Improvement of living and working conditions so as to make possible their harmonization while the improvement is being maintained
5. The establishment of appropriate consultations between Member States on their social protection policies.
6. The establishment of an initial action programme, relating in particular to health and safety at work, the health of workers and improved organization of tasks, beginning in those economic sectors where working conditions appear to be the most difficult.

7. The implementation, in cooperation with the Member States, of specific measures to combat poverty by drawing up pilot schemes.

Increased involvement of management and labour in the economic and social decisions of the Community, and of workers in the life of undertakings

8. The progressive involvement of workers or their representatives in the life of undertakings in the Community.

9. The promotion of the involvement of management and labour in the economic and social decisions of the Community.

Takes note of the Commission's undertaking to submit to it, during 1974, the necessary proposals concerning the priorities laid down above;

Takes note of the Commission's undertaking to submit to it, before 1 April 1974, proposals relating to:
- an initial action programme with regard to migrant workers;
- the setting up of a European Vocational Training Centre;
- a directive on the harmonization of laws with regard to the retention of rights and advantages in the event of changes in the ownership of undertakings, in particular in the event of mergers;

Notes that the Commission has already submitted to it proposals relating to:
- assistance from the European Social Fund for migrant workers and for handicapped workers;
- an action programme for handicapped workers in an open market economy;
- the setting up of a European General Industrial Safety Committee and the extension of the competence of the Mines Safety and Health Commission;
- a Directive providing for the approximation of legislation of Member States concerning the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women;
- the designation as an immediate objective of the overall application of the principle of the standard 40-hour working week by 1975, and the principle of four weeks annual paid holiday by 1976;
- the setting up of a European Foundation for the improvement of the environment and of living and working conditions;
- a Directive on the approximation of the Member States' legislation on collective dismissals.

Undertakes to act, at the latest five months after the Commission has informed the Council of the results of its deliberations arising from the opinions given by the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee, if such consultations have taken place, or, if such consultations have not taken place, at the latest nine months from the date of the transmission of the proposals to the Council by the Commission;

Takes note of the Commission's undertaking to submit to it before 31 December 1976 a series of measures to be taken during a further phase.