

(98/C 196/61)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3969/97**by Alexandros Alavanos (GUE/NGL) to the Commission***(12 December 1997)*

Subject: Unemployment among young people with further vocational training

Research findings published in Eurostat (No 6897/6-1097) show that the unemployment rate in Greece for young people with further vocational training is higher (20%) than that for those who have only received basic training, (14.3%) whereas the average rates for the European Union are 11.5% and 23.5% respectively.

As these figures show the futility of further vocational training in Greece, will the Commission assess the causes of this 'paradoxical' phenomenon?

Answer given by Mr Flynn on behalf of the Commission*(2 February 1998)*

The Commission is aware of the fact that the correlation between unemployment rate and level of training is not the same throughout the Community. Greece and Portugal are two Member States where a higher level of training does not reduce the risk of unemployment as appreciably as it does in the others. In both those Member States this situation does not appear to be peculiar to young people, but also applies to young adults of working age (25-49 years), especially men. This is illustrated in, for example, the report on 'Employment in Europe — 1996', which is being sent directly to the Honourable Member and to the Secretariat of the European Parliament.

Nevertheless, the relative worsening of the employment situation of persons with higher-level qualifications is a phenomenon which is observed in many Member States and can be explained by several factors. The sharp rise in participation in education and training and the increasing length of studies in all Member States over the past decade are liable to make it more difficult to absorb new generations with a higher level of training into the labour market, if the market's demand for skills and qualifications does not develop accordingly. The job structure trends associated with the progressive transformation of the European economy into a services and highly-skilled activities economy do give reason to believe that these difficulties are temporary, particularly in the case of young persons with further vocational training qualifications, but this transformation is not taking place at the same rate throughout the Community, and it is possible that Greece and other southern European Member States still have a relatively large proportion of more traditional activities and jobs.

The relatively high employment rate for young persons with further training may also reflect the fact that their training is not really consistent with employers' expectations and job requirements. Here too, everything suggests that this problem is not confined to Greece, although it is possible that this country has a greater deficit than other Member States in higher vocational training compared with university training in the more traditional subjects.

In any event, this is an important question that must be taken into account in all of the analyses which the Commission will carry out in monitoring implementation of the employment guidelines.

(98/C 196/62)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3972/97**by Gianni Tamino (V) to the Commission***(12 December 1997)*

Subject: Contracts and environmental impact assessment of the 'Cispadana' road

It was reported in the Italian press ('La Nuova Ferrara' of 1 November 1997) that the contract office of the National Roads Authority in Rome has begun to carry out the contracting procedure for the first stage of the second section of the 'Cispadana' road. It is a short section of 3.7 km in the municipality of S. Agostino (FE) and will cost 38 billion lire. The whole project would consist of a highway without any level crossings of a total length of 24.7 km (only the section in the province of Ferrara). It was designed about 30 years ago and has neither been updated nor adapted to take into account changes that have taken place in the area, such as a viaduct going