

Proposal for a Council Decision proposing the adoption of a Community action programme for the development of continuing vocational training

COM(89) 567 final

(Submitted by the Commission on 20 November 1989)

(90/C 12/08)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 128 thereof,

Having regard to the Commission proposal,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee,

Whereas the fundamental objectives of a common vocational training policy set forth in the second principle of Decision 63/266/EEC ⁽¹⁾ refer, in particular, to the need to promote basic and advanced vocational training and, where appropriate, retraining, suitable for the various stages of working life; whereas the 10th principle of Decision 63/266/EEC states that special measures may be taken in respect of special problems concerning special sectors of activity or specific categories of person;

Whereas the European Council affirmed that completion of the internal market must go hand in hand with improved access to vocational training (Hanover, 27 and 28 June 1998); whereas it stressed that Community action should help to develop available human resources and the preparation of future changes and technical adjustment; whereas the reform of training systems, including continuing vocational training, will play a vital role in achieving these objectives (Rhodes, 2 and 3 December 1988); whereas it noted the agreement reached by the Council on continuing vocational training (Madrid, 26 and 27 June 1989);

Whereas on 15 March 1989 the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the social dimension of the internal market ⁽²⁾ in which it emphasized investment in

training and making the most of human resources; whereas, in particular, it considered that vocational training and the management of human resources are decisive factors in the adaptation of undertakings and their capacity to respond to change, and that consequently it is essential to encourage them to invest in these areas;

Whereas in its resolution of 5 June 1989 on continuing vocational training ⁽³⁾ the Council stressed that continuing vocational training plays an important role in the strategy for achieving, by 1992, both the internal market, including its social dimension, and economic and social cohesion, as a determining factor in economic and social policy; whereas it considered that all workers should, in the light of requirements, have access to continuing vocational training, and benefit therefrom; whereas it requested the Member States, with due regard for the powers under national law of the parties concerned, to take or promote a number of measures; whereas it requested the Commission to lay before it as soon as possible an action programme on continuing vocational training;

Whereas the acceleration of technical, economic and industrial change against a background of increased competition and the advent of the completion of the internal market demand at this juncture reinforcement of the anticipatory and adaptational role played by continuing vocational training and the reinforcement of existing measures;

Whereas equality as regards access to continuing vocational training is essential to promote equal treatment for men and women;

Whereas the monitoring of changes in qualifications is an essential factor in developing initial and continuing vocational training operations adapted to the requirements of the labour market;

⁽¹⁾ OJ No 63, 20. 4. 1963, p. 1338/63.

⁽²⁾ OJ No C 96, 17. 4. 1989, p. 61.

⁽³⁾ OJ No C 148, 15. 6. 1989, p. 1.

Whereas cooperation between Member States is likely to enable them to reinforce continuing vocational training arrangements open to all workers, to contribute to developing human resources through training and investment in human resources, to make a significant contribution to access to continuing vocational training for all workers, and to promote the European dimension so as to give vitality to the functions of anticipation, adaptation and the promotion of social advancement through continuing vocational training; whereas such cooperation should be based on existing measures in force in the Member States, while respecting the diversity of national legal systems and national practices, and the powers under internal law of the parties concerned and contractual autonomy;

Whereas the Community can make a significant contribution to cooperation between Member States by developing an action programme with the aim of supporting and supplementing the policies and activities developed by and in the Member States in the area of continuing vocational training; whereas this action programme should be organized in such a way that it interacts with the tasks and actions of the European Social Fund ⁽¹⁾, the Eurotecnet ⁽²⁾ and Comett ⁽³⁾ programmes, the IRIS network ⁽⁴⁾ on vocational training for women with a view to 1992, and experimental schemes promoted by the SMEs ⁽⁵⁾;

Whereas this programme should be designed to mobilized all the parties concerned in the development of continuing vocational training and promote the coherence of new measures introduced by and in the Member States; whereas it should therefore include two complementary parts, a common framework of general principles and a number of transnational measures; whereas the common framework of general measures is designed to promote the coherence of measures adopted by the public authorities in the Member States, especially with a view to bringing about a significant improvement in access to continuing vocational training; whereas the transnational measures are intended to give a significant Community impetus to the Member States' efforts to promote the development of continuing vocational training and make sure that the Community makes a significant contribution to the activities developed by and in the Member States in this field;

Whereas on 6 March 1987 the two sides of industry at Community level (UNICE, CEEP, ETUC) adopted a joint opinion on training and motivation; whereas they are presently working on a new joint opinion setting out their policy as regards continuing vocational training; whereas, accordingly, it is appropriate to associate them closely with the implementation of the action programme with a view to establishing synergy with work on the social dialogue,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

An action programme for the development of continuing vocational training in the Community is hereby adopted for the period 1 July 1990 to 31 December 1993. Its aim is to support and complement the policies and activities developed by and in the Member States in the area of continuing vocational training. It is so designed as to involve all the parties concerned (undertakings, training bodies, the two sides of industry and public authorities) and to make their efforts on the following objectives converge.

Every European Community worker must have access to vocational training and be able to benefit from it throughout his working life. The conditions of access to such training may not include discrimination on grounds of nationality.

The public authorities, undertakings or the two sides of industry, each within their own sphere of competence, must set up continuing and permanent training systems enabling every individual to undergo retraining, more especially through leave for training purposes, to improve his skills or to acquire new skills, particularly in the light of technical developments.

Article 2

The objectives of the programme are:

- (a) to encourage greater investment in continuing vocational training and an improved return from it, in particular by developing innovatory partnerships designed to encourage greater awareness among the public authorities (especially in the regions), undertakings (in particular SMEs), the two sides of industry and individual workers, of the benefits accruing from investment in training;
- (b) to support innovations in training management, training methods and training facilities, particularly with a view to developing training schemes for those categories of workers, economic sectors or regions of the Community which are currently lagging

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 185, 15. 12. 1988, p. 9, and OJ No L 374, 31. 12. 1988, p. 21.

⁽²⁾ OJ No C 186, 25. 6. 1983, p. 1.

⁽³⁾ OJ No L 13, 17. 1. 1989, p. 28.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ No L 342, 4. 12. 1987, p. 35.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ No L 239, 16. 8. 1989, p. 33.

behind in terms of participation and training investment;

- (c) to promote the strategic planning and design of schemes which take account explicitly of the consequences of the completion of the internal market, in particular by supporting transnational and trans-frontier partnerships and the exchange of information and experience;
- (d) to contribute to greater effectiveness of training mechanisms and their capacity to respond to changes in the Community labour market, by reinforcing measures at all levels to monitor and analyse the development of continuing vocational training, identifying better ways of forecasting requirements in terms of qualifications and occupations and ensuring a general and effective dissemination of information on these trends.

Article 3

The programme includes two complementary parts which respect the principle of subsidiarity:

- (a) a common framework of general principles designed to support and complement the policies and measures adopted by the Member States, bearing in mind the responsibilities of the parties concerned under national law, with a view to promoting the development of continuing vocational training, as set forth in Article 5;
- (b) a number of transitional measures implemented at Community level, designed to support and complement activities developed by and in the Member States, as described in Article 6 and the Annex.

Article 4

For the purposes of this decision:

- the phrase 'continuing vocational training' is used in a general sense to denote any vocational training engaged in by a worker in the European Community throughout his working life. The training operations are intended to perform one of three functions, within an undertaking or outside it, as appropriate:
 - to ensure permanent adaptation to the changing nature and content of occupations, and hence the improvement of skills and qualifications imperative for strengthening the competitiveness of European undertakings and their staff,

- to promote social conditions to enable large numbers of workers to overcome their lack of qualifications and thereby to improve their situation,

- to anticipate the consequence of the completion of the internal market and to overcome the difficulties arising in sectors of undertaking undergoing economic or technological restructuring,

- the word 'undertaking' is used to denote all types of economic activity, including large and small businesses, regardless of their legal status or the economic sector in which they operate,

- the phrase 'training body' is used to denote all types of public, semi-public or private establishment engaged in vocational training, further training, updating or retraining activities, regardless of the way in which they are referred to in the Member States. By extension, the phrase 'training body' also denotes professional associations and autonomous economic organizations (in particular Chambers of Commerce and Industry and/or their equivalents) which organize training courses for third parties,

- the word 'worker' is used to denote any person obtaining an income from their employment, including the self-employed.

Article 5

1. The common framework of general principles and the transnational measures provided for in Article 6 contribute to promoting the convergence of measures, provisions and new initiatives adopted by the Member States, in accordance with their national legal systems and practices, bearing in mind the responsibilities of the parties concerned under national law, while respecting contractual bargaining systems, which seek:

- (a) to promote the European dimension of schemes to give impetus to the functions of anticipation, adaptation and social advancement assured by continuing vocational training;
- (b) to ensure, in concertation with labour and management, that the least qualified workers, whatever their status, benefit from continuing vocational training measures, enabling them to obtain a basic qualification;
- (c) to promote real equality of opportunity for men and women as regards access to continuing vocational training;
- (d) to strengthen incentives for undertakings, particularly small businesses, to invest in continuing vocational training;

- (e) to seek, after consulting management and labour, to improve at all levels the forecasting of trends in qualifications and to achieve greater convergence between the objectives of vocational training and employment;
- (f) to improve, by procedures adapted to national conditions and customs, and, if necessary, in stages, the supply of continuing vocational training and to reinforce existing arrangements for continuing vocational training, in order to meet the specific needs of small and medium-sized businesses and the demands of labour and management at all levels in relation to the development of new forms of partnership;
- (g) to ensure that all workers who are nationals of Member States are afforded equal treatment as regards access to continuing vocational training;
- (h) to promote the individual right to continuing vocational training according to conditions to be laid down by each Member State.

2. Within two years of the date of this Decision and subsequently on an annual basis, the Member States shall send to the Commission a report on the steps taken to implement this common framework of general principles, including information on current arrangements to promote continuing vocational training, the levels of such training and financing methods. These reports and summaries thereof will be assessed with the national authorities in consultation with labour and management.

Article 6

In order to give a significant Community impetus to the efforts of the Member States to develop continuing vocational training and to ensure a genuine Community contribution to the activities developed by and in the Member States, the Commission shall implement the following transnational measures:

1. support for innovation in continuing vocational training;
2. analysis, monitoring and evaluation of the development of continuing vocational training and

improved access to it; forecasting of changes with regard to qualifications and occupations;

3. supplementary back-up measures.

Detailed provisions regarding these measures are set out in the Annex.

Article 7

From 1 January 1991, the annual appropriations needed to cover the Community contribution to the schemes provided for in the programme will be set out in the annual budgetary procedure. These appropriations are intended for the financing of various schemes set out in detail in the Annex, including the appropriate measures taken to ensure technical assistance at Community level, continuous monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

The appropriations considered necessary to cover the first two years of the programme will form part of future budgets in accordance with the financial perspectives for 1988 to 1992 (decided in June 1988 by the three Institutions jointly) and their adjustments.

Article 8

1. The Commission shall secure the cooperation of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), on the terms set out in Council Regulation EEC No 337/75 ⁽¹⁾.

2. Before 30 June 1992 the Commission shall present to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training an interim report on the launch phase and, before 30 June 1994, a final report on the implementation of the programme.

Article 9

The Commission shall implement the programme in accordance with the provisions set out in the Annex.

Article 10

This Decision is addressed to the Member States.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No L 39, 13. 2. 1975, p. 1.

ANNEX

COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The following measures are to be implemented:

ACTION I

Support for innovation in continuing vocational training*(a) Achieving synergy in innovation*

The Community could support activities at Community level and the operation of a European network of transnational operations with a view to stimulating all possible forms of partnership between the parties concerned, to improve the design, organization and assessment of continuing vocational training operations with particular reference to the general objectives of the programme and to encourage the transfer of knowledge and know-how in the Community. It is up to the Member States to ensure the establishment and financing of the transnational operations as such and to present in the Community support frameworks measures to be financed jointly by the European Social Fund. The aim of assistance from the programme is to develop and improve links between operations at Community level through animation and collaboration activities and dissemination of information and experience. Under the heading of organization, Community assistance could be granted for:

- (i) an exchange scheme to promote the rapid dissemination of innovations in continuing vocational training while promoting the European dimension of certain training operations aimed at bringing about a significant improvement in access to continuing vocational training; the Community could provide support in the form of grants for training courses in firms or training bodies in another Member State, for full-time instructors, staff, in human resources departments, staff representatives in firms and training specialists in regional consortia;
- (ii) preparatory work on the design and development of transnational or cross-frontier continuing vocational training pilot schemes, in close liaison with firms and groups of firms in various Member States with a view to promoting the transfer of information and know-how in the Community, while giving priority to the needs of small businesses, and explicitly taking into account the consequences of completing the internal market, in particular: workers' geographical mobility; promotion of equal opportunities for men and women; forecasting of trends in occupations and qualifications and development of training at Community level.

(b) European sectoral surveys of training plans

The Community could support sectoral surveys of training plans which would examine the following topics: methods of drawing up training plans at firm level; cost-effectiveness evaluation of training at firm level; firm-level agreements and practices; techniques used to develop training and improve the access of workers who have few qualifications; are working part-time and on an insecure basis.

(c) Community financial contribution

The contribution will be limited to the costs directly incurred under (a) and (b). The Community could cover the management costs of the European network and cooperation activities (conferences, seminars and workshops) and the dissemination of knowledge (publications, video); and with respect to organizational activities: grants for training courses — the Community contribution would be limited to the direct costs of mobility and could not exceed a ceiling of ECU 7 500 per grant and per beneficiary for training courses of up to three months. Preparatory work on the design and development of transnational or cross-frontier continuing vocational training pilot schemes: the Community contribution would be limited to 50 % of eligible expenditure incurred up to a ceiling of ECU 100 000 per year and per project for transnational or cross-frontier projects for a maximum of two years.

The Community could cover the design, implementation and assessment costs of sectoral surveys, up to a ceiling of ECU 0,5 million, throughout their duration.

ACTION II

Analysis, monitoring, assessment and forecasting*(a) Analysis and monitoring mechanism on the implementation of the common framework of general principles*

In support of reports presented by the Member States on the implementation of the common framework of general principles, through Eurostat the Community, while improving existing statistical instruments and data collection, plans to launch a survey on training and continuing vocational training. This survey should provide *inter alia* basic information on the number of beneficiaries of training, length of courses, level of qualifications, costs of training and methods of financing.

(b) Analysis of contractual policy on continuing vocational training

The Community plans to support the preparation of a coherent table for the analysis of practices, contractual arrangements and collective agreements on continuing training agreed at all levels concerned in collective bargaining in the Member States. It will be used to identify and disseminate innovatory contractual agreements.

To encourage the dissemination of innovatory contractual agreements the Community could award support grants for exchanges of those involved in the social process (members of socio-professional organizations) to employers'/workers' organizations or joint bodies in other Member States.

(c) Forecasting trends in qualifications and occupations

Drawing on work developed by Cedefop in this field, and with its assistance, a network of highly specialized experts in the analysis and forecasting of trends in qualifications and occupations could be made responsible for work aimed at promoting the comparability and convergence of methodologies relating to the analysis of training needs and changes on the labour market, and the development of a common analysis table.

(d) Community financial contribution

This will be limited to the direct costs entered into under (a), (b) and (c). The Community could cover the cost of the Eurostat survey analysis tables on contractual agreements and forecasting trends in qualifications and occupations. With respect to grants for exchanges, the Community financial contribution will be limited to the direct costs of mobility and must not exceed ECU 7 500 per grant per beneficiary, for exchanges of up to three months.

ACTION III

Supplementary accompanying measures

The accompanying measures will concern monitoring the implementation of the programme, technical assistance and assessment of the achievement of the general objectives of the programme and concertation with those responsible for training within the public authorities, the two sides of industry and firms.

The Community financial contribution could cover up to 100 % of actual expenditure incurred.
