

## Council Resolution on an action programme on employment growth (22 December 1986)

**Caption:** On 22 December 1986, the Council of the European Communities adopts a resolution according to which the Ten undertake to promote economic growth and reduce the level of unemployment in the Member States.

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## Council Resolution of 22 December 1986 on an action programme on employment growth

(86/C 340/02)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community and to the Single European Act,

Having regard to previous resolutions of the Council concerning youth employment, long-term unemployment, labour market policies, local employment initiatives, vocational training, the introduction of new technologies and equal treatment between men and women,

Having regard to the conclusions of the European Council in The Hague on 26 and 27 June 1986 and London on 5 and 6 December 1986,

Having regard to the document 'Employment Growth into the 1990s - A Strategy for the Labour Market' submitted on 28 May 1986 by the Ministers for Employment representing Ireland, Italy and the United Kingdom,

Having regard to the opinions of the European Parliament on the labour market and employment, and to discussions in the Standing Employment Committee, in particular those which took place on 24 April and 7 November 1986,

Acknowledging that the primary responsibility for measures to tackle unemployment rests with the Member States,

Acknowledging that increased employment must come about mainly through economic growth,

Acknowledging the role of measures to improve the functioning of the labour market within the Community's strategy of cooperative economic growth and within the overall economic policies of Member States,

Acknowledging that a strategy to improve the labour market should not put at risk basic rights in the areas of social security, social protection and conditions of work,

Acknowledging that such a strategy should take full account of the views of the social partners, and of conclusions reached in the context of the social dialogue,

Acknowledging that such a strategy should also distinguish between those areas where the Community has responsibility and those within the responsibility of the Member States,

Acknowledging that the European Social Fund, in the use of its available resources and in its priorities, must play an increased role in the Community's efforts to fight unemployment,

HEREBY ADOPTS THIS RESOLUTION:

### I

*The Council takes full account of the Community's strategy of cooperative economic growth as endorsed in Council Decision 85/619/EEC of 20 December 1985 adopting the annual report on the economic situation in the Community and laying down economic policy guidelines for 1986 <sup>(1)</sup> and in the Decision of the ECO/FIN Council of 8 December 1986 and in particular of the need to maintain soundly based economic growth and to work towards a sustained reduction in unemployment.*

## II

*The Council expresses its commitment to concentrate its work on and to develop further the cooperation between Member States in the areas of promoting new business and employment growth; more efficient labour markets; better training for young people and adults; and more help for long-term unemployed people; and further expresses its commitment, in full agreement with the Commission, to take the decisions and measures necessary to achieve the following:*

### **1. Promoting new business and employment growth**

Large employers will continue to play a major role in providing employment. To that end the agreed policies of the Community - and in particular those directed towards the completion of the internal market, the free movement of capital, the maintenance of soundly based economic growth and enhanced support for industrial research and development - will all assist both large and small employers to improve their competitiveness and continue to provide a major source of employment. At the same time the Council recognizes the very substantial potential for future employment growth which lies with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It therefore wishes to assist the further development of such enterprises by:

a) the rapid implementation of the Commission's action programme concerning SMEs as endorsed in the Council Resolution of 3 November 1986 <sup>(2)</sup>, including:

- the undertaking of greater efforts to publicize Community programmes of benefit to SMEs,
- the identification and promotion of means whereby large companies and the private sector in general can assist the creation and growth of SMEs, in particular through training and specialist advice,
- an examination of how Member States might best be assisted in providing small firms with support services including services from the appropriate labour market authorities; initial low cost workspace and accommodation; and advice on the introduction of new technology;

(b) a reduction in the administrative constraints on the creation and expansion of enterprises, including support for the efforts being made within the Member States to encourage the setting up and expansion of SMEs and one person business, in particular through:

- simplified guidance for SMEs and the self-employed,
- a campaign to reduce unnecessary administrative constraints, whose aims should include making Community legislation more easily understood,
- measures to increase the number of persons, particularly young people and the unemployed, going into self-employment,
- a review of existing instruments at all levels to identify whether changes are necessary to remove unnecessary or unintended obstacles to the number of persons taking up self-employment;

(c) encouragement of the growth of cooperatives and local employment initiatives, taking full account of the Council resolution of 7 June 1984 <sup>(3)</sup>, especially with respect to:

- identification of legislative or other barriers within Member States which put cooperatives at a disadvantage compared with other forms of business,
- Community-level support for the provision of training for those who run or assist in the establishment of cooperatives and local employment initiatives,

- efforts to provide on-the-spot advice and counselling to cooperatives and small and medium-sized enterprises.

## 2. More efficient labour markets

The need to ensure more adaptable patterns of work, while not putting at risk basic rights in the areas of social security, social protection and conditions of work, and the need to increase the access to the labour market of all those seeking a job imply a need for greater adaptability in the labour market, in cooperation with the social partners according to the practices in force in the Member States, both internal and external to the enterprise. This also recognises a need to make it easier for workers affected by the decline of traditional industries, or the restructuring of other industries, to get back into work.

To this end the Council wishes to bring about:

(a) the encouragement of initiatives at local level which, while taking account of national and regional characteristics, aim at involving local interests in the development and implementation of employment and training policies in their locality,

(b) steps to make it easier for workers to move to available jobs and to respond to changes in the demand for labour, including those connected with the decline and restructuring of traditional industries, through:

- encouraging Member States as far as possible to remove obstacles to mobility within their own countries including through the provision of rapid and effective placement services,

- the provision of improved information and advice about employment opportunities at all skills levels, and about pensions (including the identification of possible means of improving their portability), social security and other relevant rights and arrangements throughout the Community, so as to remove obstacles to movement between Member States, using as appropriate the SEDOC system,

(c) greater mutual recognition by Member States of vocational qualifications by means of:

- the accelerated implementation of Community decisions on the comparability of vocational training qualifications,

- the identification of, and action on, further areas where the absence of mutually recognized qualifications or comparability between qualifications constitutes a serious impediment to free movement of labour,

(d) the removal of obstacles to the development of new forms of work on the periphery of traditional sectors of employment, in the sector of personal services and in activities which fulfil a public need, with the aim of meeting the changing requirements of society,

(e) the removal of obstacles to the development of part-time and temporary work, fixed term contracts and job sharing whilst preserving due regard for the need for social and employment protection,

(f) an increase in the equality of access to, and opportunity within, the labour market for women by:

- the implementation of the Community's medium term programme 1986-1990,

- support for efforts within Member States to encourage women to set up their own business,

- the promotion of training for occupations where women are under-represented (notably those connected with new technology),

- a re-examination of the need for certain types of restrictive legislation affecting women's employment, as for example that relating to night work in industry,

(g) an increase through the taking of similar measures in the equality of access to, and opportunity within, the labour market for disabled people, migrant workers including those returning to their original Member States, and residents of disadvantaged areas within cities.

### 3. Training

A key factor in securing employment growth is to have a labour force that has both the skills and the flexibility necessary to meet the changing requirements of industry and commerce, particularly at a time of rapid change arising from the growth of new technologies. In addition both young people and adults need to have available to them opportunities for training which will enhance their access to the employment market. A necessary foundation for this training is the provision by Member States of high quality education during the compulsory school period. In these respects the Council therefore wishes to bring about:

(a) more effective vocational programmes of education and training for young people through the taking of measures by Member States to encourage:

- links between schools and the world of work,
- the greater involvement of industry and commerce in the design and provision of vocational education and training,
- up to two years' vocational education and training (including, where appropriate, training at the work place under a training contract and not excluding other training arrangements of longer duration) for school leavers, leading to recognized vocational qualifications,
- special provision for the disadvantaged and disabled,

(b) an increase in the prospects of recruitment and stable employment for those young people leaving programmes of education and training,

(c) an increase in the levels of training and retraining opportunities available to adults through the taking of measures to:

- promote amongst both employers and employees a greater awareness of the importance of training both in encouraging economic growth and in meeting the personal and professional aspirations of individuals,
- encourage employers to invest more in training in industry,
- aid the development of more responsive training systems, including the use of new technologies for the provision of education and training,

(d) the establishment of a series of Community actions designed to examine ways of:

- overcoming restrictions on access to training, particularly where training for certain jobs is not widely available to some sectors of the population,
- identifying the developing training needs of enterprises, particularly at local level as part of the Commission's continuing work in the field of training and in the development of local employment initiatives,
- providing more flexible and cost effective forms of training, particularly through the use of new technologies.

### 4. Long-term unemployed

The continued growth of long-term unemployment in the Community reflects both high unemployment in general and the way in which it affects disproportionately certain areas and certain groups in the labour market, particularly those who by virtue of other disadvantages have difficulty in securing and maintaining employment. Effective action to combat this problem required active intervention in favour of the long-term unemployed by Government wherever possible with the support of the social partners, as already agreed in the Council Resolution of 19 December 1984<sup>(4)</sup>. In view of the continued rise in long-term unemployment since that date, however, the Council considers that further action is urgently needed in respect of:

- (a) the promotion and encouragement of schemes in Member States which will be of benefit to the long-term unemployed including schemes of, or including, training, job counselling and guidance, and which will increase the proportion of employment service resources devoted to the long-term unemployed,
- (b) the adoption of a Community approach, taking account of the experience and individual circumstances of Member States, with regard to recruitment aids for the long-term unemployed,
- (c) the identification of other means of helping more long-term unemployed people (including those under the age of 25) into jobs following discussions of the means of doing so with the social partners,
- (d) agreement on Community-wide comparable statistical data on the duration of unemployment,
- (e) an examination of the impact on the long-term unemployed of social security systems within Member States.

### III

#### **Social dialogue**

The Council recalls Article 118B set out in Article 22 of the Single European Act which requires the Commission to endeavour to develop the dialogue between management and labour at European level, and welcomes those agreements already reached.

The Council supports the efforts which the Commission has undertaken to carry out this mandate and expresses the hope that the dialogue will continue and will lead to conclusions being reached between the social partners which will give added impetus to the programme set out in this Resolution.

### IV

#### **Economic and social cohesion**

The Council recalls Article 130A set out in Article 23 of the Single European Act and endorses the importance of the achievement of economic and social cohesion aimed at reducing disparities between the various regions and the backwardness of the least favoured regions.

In this context the Council recalls the conclusions of the European Council in The Hague on 26 and 27 June 1986 and London on 5 and 6 December 1986.

### V

#### **Implementation of the programme**

1. *The Council*, acknowledging the important role of the Commission in implementing this programme, *invites* the Commission to submit to it, before the next meeting of the Council (Labour and Social Affairs), the first proposals for the implementation by the Community or, where appropriate, Member States of the programme set out above, and otherwise to promote employment.

2. *The Council further invites* the Commission to assist in the rapid dissemination of information throughout the Community on new initiatives taken in the areas covered by the Programme, building as far as possible on the existing structures and information systems, and in particular MISEP and ELISE.

3. *The Council invites* the Commission in preparing such proposals to take account both of the views and the responsibilities of the social partners, and of such jointly agreed conclusions as they may reach or have reached in the framework of the social dialogue, and of the best practices in the Member States.

4. *The Council undertakes* to act on such proposals as soon as possible once it has been informed officially of the Opinions given by the European Parliament and by the Economic and Social Committee on the proposal or communication in question, and with the maximum endeavour to reach agreement. The Council in particular invites the Commission to submit to it, before the next meeting of the Council (Labour and Social Affairs), proposals and communications concerning youth and adult training and long-term unemployment.

5. In this context *the Council recalls* its conclusions of 13 June 1985 which among other things called upon the Commission to examine the possibility of promoting coordinated action to develop experimental or exemplary Community and/or national projects aimed at creating new job opportunities and undertakings; particularly as regards the long-term unemployed and the young; and requests the Commission to report on the results of these examinations, called for in those conclusions, before the next meeting of the Council (Labour and Social Affairs).

6. *The Council further recalls* the request made to the Commission by the European Council on 26/27 June 1986 to analyse the phenomena of the underground economy so as to assist employment policies, and looks forward to receiving the results of the Commission's analysis.

7. *The Council invites* the Commission to furnish the Council, the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee once every six months, with a written summary report on progress made in implementing the Programme and on future developments.

8. *The Council requests* the Commission, within the available resources, to take into account the possibilities of helping the implementation of this Programme in its decisions on the various Community financial instruments, and in particular to bring forward as early as possible its proposals for the review of the European Social Fund.

(1) OJ N° L 377, 31.12.1985, p. 1.

(2) OJ N° C 287, 14. 11. 1986, p. 1.

(3) OJ N° C 161, 21. 6. 1984, p. 1.

(4) OJ N° C 2, 4. 1. 1985, p. 3.