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Growth, competitiveness, employment

The challenges and ways forward into the 21st century

White Paper

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PREAMBLE

This White Paper sets out to foster debate and to assist decision-making — at decentralized, national or Community level — so as to lay the foundations for sustainable development of the European economies, thereby enabling them to withstand international competition while creating the millions of jobs that are needed.

We are convinced that the European economies have a future. Looking at the traditional bases of prosperity and competitiveness, Europe has preserved its chances. It possesses assets which it has only to exploit — assets such as its abundant non-physical capital (education, skills, capacity for innovation, traditions), the availability of financial capital and highly efficient banking institutions, the soundness of its social model, and the virtues of cooperation between the two sides of industry.

Given the scale of the needs that have to be met, both in the European Union and elsewhere in the world, recovery must be achieved by developing work and employment and not by endorsing basically Malthusian solutions. Yes, we can create jobs, and we must do so if we want to safeguard the future — the future of our children, who must be able to find hope and motivation in the prospect of participating in economic and social activity and of being involved in the society in which they live, and the future of our social protection systems, which are threatened in the short term by inadequate growth and in the long term by the deterioration in the ratio of the people in jobs to those not in employment.

In other words, we are faced with the immense responsibility, while remaining faithful to the ideals which have come to characterize and represent Europe, of finding a new synthesis of the aims pursued by society (work as a factor of social integration, equality of opportunity) and the requirements of the economy (competitiveness and job creation).

This major challenge confronts us all. That is why we are arguing, first and foremost, the need to press on with building a unified Europe which will increase our strength through cooperation and through the benefits of a large area without frontiers of any kind. That is why we are calling on everyone — and not only political decision-makers and business leaders — to contribute to the combined effort by seeking to understand the new world and by participating in the joint endeavour.

Nothing would be more dangerous than for Europe to maintain structures and customs which foster resignation, refusal of commitment and passivity. Revival requires a society driven by citizens who are aware of their own responsibilities and imbued with a spirit of solidarity towards those with whom they form local and national communities — communities that are so rich in history and in their common feeling of belonging.

The contribution which the European Union can make is therefore to assist this movement, which reconciles our historical loyalties with our wish to take our place in this new world that is now emerging.

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PART A

White Paper

**The challenges and ways forward
into the 21st century**

Why this White Paper?

The one and only reason is unemployment. We are aware of its scale, and of its consequences too. The difficult thing, as experience has taught us, is knowing how to tackle it.

The Copenhagen European Council in June invited the European Commission to present a White Paper on a medium-term strategy for growth, competitiveness and employment. That decision followed an in-depth discussion between the Heads of State or Government based on an analysis by the President of the Commission of the weaknesses of the European economies.

The White Paper draws in large part on the contributions from the Member States. It has also been guided by the discussions — often beset by conflict — under way in our countries between governments and social partners (employers' and trade union organizations).

The European Commission is aware of the difficulty of the task. For if the solutions already existed, our countries would surely have applied them; if there were a miracle cure, it would not have gone unnoticed. With national situations being so different, any proposal has to be presented with sensitivity and caution. That being so, the Commission does share the view, expressed by many Member States, that joint responses would strengthen the hand of each player, and therefore of the European Union.

There is no miracle cure

- **Neither protectionism**, which would be suicidal for the European Union, the world's largest trading power, and would run counter to its proclaimed objectives, in particular that of encouraging the economies of the poorest countries to take off;
- **nor a dash for economic freedom**: turning on the tap of government spending and creating money can, like a narcotic, produce a short-lived illusion of well-being. But the return to reality would be all the more painful when we had to repair the

damage wreaked by inflation and external imbalances. The worst damage would be higher unemployment;

- **nor a generalized reduction in working hours and job-sharing at national level**: this would result in a slowing-down of production due to the difficulty of striking the right balances between the demand for skilled workers, the optimum utilization of plant and the supply of labour;
- **nor a drastic cut in wages to align our costs on those of our competitors in the developing countries**: socially unacceptable and politically untenable, such an approach would only worsen the crisis by depressing domestic demand, which also contributes to growth and the maintenance of employment.

How has it come to this?

We will not dwell here on the analysis presented in Copenhagen. This has been confirmed and fleshed out by the national contributions and the Commission's research: competitiveness, growth and employment are closely interrelated, and have been for some time.

Over the last 20 years

- the European economy's potential rate of growth has shrunk (from around 4% to around 2.5% a year);
- unemployment has been steadily rising from cycle to cycle;
- the investment ratio has fallen by five percentage points;
- our competitive position in relation to the USA and Japan has worsened as regards:
 - employment,
 - our shares of export markets,
 - R&D and innovation and its incorporation into goods brought to the market,
 - the development of new products.

And yet the Community over the past few years enjoyed what all observers agree was a period of growth and restructuring prompted by the 1992 objective. That objective was not an illusion: it swiftly received broad support from all sections of society, and the structural changes it generated account for many of the nine million jobs created between 1986 and 1990.

The 1992 objective: A tangible reality

- 70 million customs documents done away with;
- A 3% saving on the costs of international transport;
- Three times more company mergers and acquisitions in the Community over the period in question;
- Twice the number of European companies involved in mergers and acquisitions in the rest of the world;
- A doubling of trade in the Community in sectors previously regarded as sheltered from competition;
- Investment up by one third between 1985 and 1990;
- Nine million jobs created between 1986 and 1990;
- One half of a percentage point extra growth each year.

This integration process is not yet complete since certain sectors are being only gradually opened up to competition; it does, however, amply demonstrate that Europe has been capable of anticipating developments, creating a stimulus and responding to it.

How, then, can we explain the fact that all these achievements have not made it possible at least to cushion the effects of the world recession? Was the single market process merely a flash in the pan? **The truth is that although we have changed, the rest of the world has changed even faster.**

The present crisis can be understood only in the light of the universality of the trends

which have been shaping the global economy and their acceleration since the end of the 1970s.

Changes in the décor

In geopolitical terms

- new competitors have emerged and have shown their ability to incorporate the latest technical progress;
- the end of communism has opened up new potential for economic growth: 120 million people in neighbouring countries with a standard of living well below our own. But we have not been able to harness this for a new dynamism;

In demographic terms

- the ageing of the population and the transformation of family structures;

In technological terms

- the new industrial revolution is well under way and is causing rapid and far-reaching changes in technologies, jobs and skills;
- the economy is becoming increasingly knowledge-based, manufacturing activities are being farmed out, services are taking the lion's share, and the possession and transmission of information is becoming crucial to success;

In financial terms

- the interdependence of markets resulting from the freedom of capital movements together with new technology is an inescapable fact of life for all economic and financial operators

The heart of the problem: The three types of unemployment

Since the beginning of the 1970s, unemployment in the Community has risen steadily except during the second half of the 1980s. Today 17 million people are out of work. Over the last 20 years, 80% more wealth has been created but total employ-

ment has risen by only 9%. To explain this, a distinction must be drawn between the three different forms of unemployment:

Cyclical unemployment

In a context in which labour resources are increasing by some 0.50% a year, any slackening in growth immediately triggers a sharp rise in unemployment. This is particularly so at present when, for the first time since 1975, Europe has experienced a slowdown in economic activity.

Structural unemployment

At the end of the 1980s, when the economy was going strong, unemployment still stood at 12 million.

The explanations for this rigidity of unemployment are now clear:

- The role we have come to play in the new international division of labour has not been an optimum one because we have neglected future growth sectors in concentrating too much on the rents and positions established in traditional industries.
- The relatively high cost of unskilled labour is speeding up the rationalization of investment and holding back job creation in services. This has resulted in the loss of millions of jobs.
- Our employment systems have aged: by this term we mean the whole complex of issues made up nowadays by the labour market and employment policy, the possibilities of flexibility within or outside enterprises, the opportunities provided or not provided by the education and training systems, and social protection.
- Finally and more especially, the countries of the south are stirring and competing with us — even on our own markets — at cost levels which we simply cannot match.

Technological unemployment

This problem is as old as industrial society itself, which has continually changed — albeit not always smoothly — by incorporating technical progress. Nevertheless, the phenomenon now seems to be undergoing

a change of scale. This is not to say that technological progress in enterprises is doing away with more jobs than it is creating: for example, the employment situation is on average more favourable in those firms that have introduced microelectronics than in those that have not done so.

It is nevertheless the case that we are once again passing through a period in which a gap is opening up between the speed of technical progress, which is concerned primarily with how to produce (manufacturing processes and work organization) and which therefore often destroys jobs, and our capacity to think up new individual or collective needs which would provide new job opportunities.

And yet technical progress is presenting opportunities for growth and employment, on condition that we alter our development model, meet the needs stemming from the upheavals in social life and urban civilization, preserve our rural areas, and improve the environment and the quality of our natural assets. In so doing, we will pave the ways for our entry into the 21st century.

Ways forward into the 21st century

In order to reverse the disastrous course which our societies, bedevilled by unemployment, are taking, the European Union should set itself the target of creating 15 million jobs by the end of the century.

It is the economy which can provide the necessary pointers to a reappraisal of principles inherited from an age in which manpower resources were scarce, technological innovation was made possible through imitation, and natural resources could be exploited at will. We are thus setting out a number of broad guidelines which have a predominantly economic basis, although it will be seen that they cannot be dissociated from the major trends which are affecting society itself: an economy that is healthy, open, decentralized, competitive and based on solidarity. However, these efforts would be in vain if we did not once again make employment policy the centre-piece of our overall strategy.

A healthy economy

The people of Europe need stability. The false prophets of inflation and of a return to exchange-rate variability represent special interests. Their bad money still threatens to oust the good.

The White Paper is, accordingly, consistent with the guidelines submitted to the European Council, in accordance with the new Treaty (Article 103), to mark the beginning of the second stage of European economic union, which must be successful if a single currency is to be achieved. We must therefore place our thinking within a **macroeconomic reference** framework for both economic and monetary convergence which will increase the opportunities available to our economies.

This strategy could be applied in two phases, the first consisting of pulling out of the current recession as quickly as possible and the second from the mid-1990s consisting of returning to a path of strong and healthy growth. The macroeconomic policies to be implemented for these two phases are set on similar courses but have different points of emphasis.

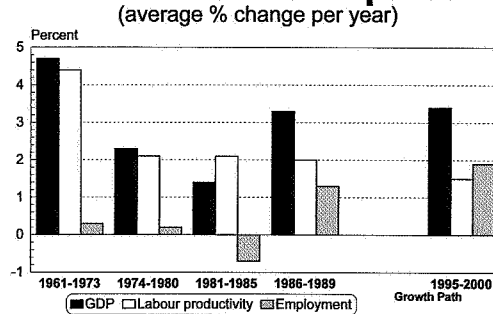
The gradual reduction in public deficits dominates the initial phase, subsequently giving way to their stabilization around the common objective. This will call for increased efforts to restructure spending — and in particular to curb operating expenditure — in favour of public resources allocated to investment.

Stable monetary policies consistent with the aim of low inflation will be a constant benchmark throughout the period. They would lead to further interest-rate cuts that would make more attractive the **investment** essential to the modernization and competitiveness of our economies. Investment in infrastructures, housing and environmental improvement projects would thus be given a particular boost.

Finally, the **trends of all categories of income** should be made consistent with the objectives of monetary stability and cost moderation. During the first phase, the task would be to avert an acceleration which would frustrate the reduction of interest rates in the long term; during the second, it would

be necessary to guarantee an adequate rate of return to permit an increase in the investment ratio and hence in growth.

Growth Path compared

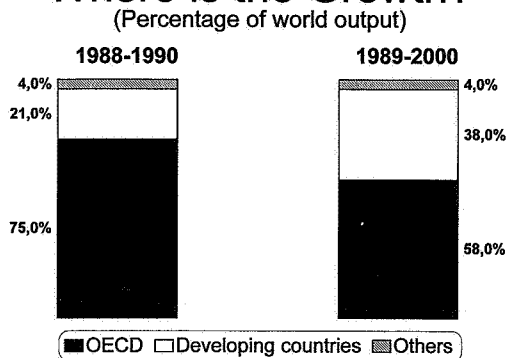


An open economy

Each of the major bursts of growth in the European economies started with a qualitative leap in international trade. The most spectacular contribution probably came from the establishment of the multilateral trading system resulting from the Bretton Woods agreements after the Second World War.

Today we are perhaps seeing the **beginnings of an equally important leap** forward with the very rapid integration into world trade of developing countries and former communist countries.

Where is the Growth?



The Community must be open and prepare itself for this prospect. This is why the conclusion of the Uruguay Round negotiations is of such importance for it too. For the first time, these negotiations will produce a global agreement between industrialized and developing countries containing balanced concessions aimed at fair access to all markets.

Among the issues in these negotiations, the transformation of GATT into a **fully fledged international institution designated a 'multilateral trade organization' would guarantee a sustainable and harmonious development of international trade.** The Community is attached to this idea: it regards it as the means of ensuring that GATT has the authority to stand up to hegemony, to face up more effectively to the imbalances resulting from world monetary instability, and to address other issues where the existence of multilateral rules would be invaluable. There is indeed a need to ensure better consistency between the various bodies responsible for fostering healthy competition, to deal with the inequality of the conditions for **direct investment**, and to guarantee a fair sharing-out of burdens in the area of environmental protection.

The strengthening of the multilateral trading system, its effective application and the transparency of its rules are, for the Community, the best guarantee of success with its own effort to adjust. This is part and parcel of the goal of achieving coherent world management of the problems posed by development inequalities and the concentration of poverty in certain regions.

The European Union must first demonstrate this openness of mind and recognition of the unavoidable globalization of the economy to its eastern and southern neighbours. Enormous potential exists, but it requires us to invest massively, to transfer a considerable volume of know-how and to open up our markets more widely. If all of these countries manage to pursue reasonable policies of adjustment and modernization, they will fully benefit from our action and return those benefits to us in the form of new markets and, consequently, new jobs. Only properly managed interdependence can guarantee a positive outcome for everybody.

Decentralized economy

The market economy has a decentralizing effect. This was the reasoning behind the 'single market' project (Objective 92). Its aim was not only to achieve economies of scale but also to set free the dynamism and the creativity inherent in competition.

Decentralization now also reflects a radical change in the organization of our societies, which are all confronted with the growing complexity of economic and social phenomena and the legislative or regulatory framework.

Hence the growing importance of the local level at which all the ingredients of political action blend together most successfully.

The information society

- The dawning of a multimedia world (sound — text — image) represents a radical change comparable with the first industrial revolution;
- Tomorrow's world is already with us: by the end of the century there will be 10 times as many TV channels and three times the number of subscribers to cable networks. In the USA it is estimated that six million people are already involved in teleworking;
- The USA has already taken the lead: 200 of its biggest companies already use information highways;
- At the heart of the development model for the 21st century, this issue is a crucial aspect in the survival or decline of Europe;
- It can provide an answer to the new needs of European societies: communication networks within companies; widespread teleworking; widespread access to scientific and leisure databases; development of preventive health care and home medicine for the elderly.

Hence also the decentralization movement affecting the business world. SMEs are

often cited as models because they embody operational flexibility and a capacity for integration which the units which make up the big companies are now trying to imitate. Hierarchical and linear empires are gradually giving way to interactive organizations.

This movement towards decentralization, supported by the new technologies, is taking us towards a veritable information society. The corollary to decentralization is information sharing and communication.

The European dimension would give the information society the best possible chances of taking off. The Commission is therefore proposing, in the context of a partnership between the public sector and the private sector, to accelerate the establishment of 'information highways' (broad-band networks) and develop the corresponding services and applications (see Development theme I).

A more competitive economy

Drawing maximum benefit from the single market

While industrial policy continues to be controversial no one is in any doubt as to the responsibility of governments and of the Community to create as favourable an environment as possible for company competitiveness. The single market is now a living reality. However, where companies are concerned, progress is needed in three areas.

The first concerns the body of rules (laws, regulations, standards, certification processes) which assure the smooth functioning of the market. The rules have to be supplemented in line with the initial target (whether they concern pharmaceuticals, intellectual property or company law, for example). But, above all, how it then develops has to be guaranteed against the risk of inconsistency between national and Community laws. This means fresh cooperation between governments at the legislative drafting stage. Likewise, care should be taken to ensure that the Community legislation affecting companies is consistent, especially the environmental legislation.

The second condition revolves around **small and medium-sized enterprises**. While they are a model of flexibility for big companies, they are also increasingly a factor of competitiveness as a result of 'farming-out' and subcontracting. Hence the measures taken on the initiative of big companies to galvanize their suppliers and clients. However, the 'demography' of SMEs, i.e. their birth, growth and regeneration, is also a matter of national policy. In some countries it will be necessary to adapt their tax systems, rights of succession and access to equity and to simplify intercompany credit regulations and practices. While most of the work has to be done at national level, the Community, for its part, must help to fit SMEs into the dynamics of the single market. The immediate task, therefore, is to work towards simplification and information. A Community initiative will shortly be proposed in this connection.

The third condition concerns the accelerated establishment of **trans-European infrastructure networks** (see Development Theme II).

The trans-European infrastructure

Why?

- Faster, safer travel at lower cost;
- Effective planning in Europe;
- Bridge-building towards Eastern Europe.

How?

- Remove regulatory and financial obstacles,
- Get private investors involved in projects of European interest (applying the provisions of the Treaty, 'declaration of European interest');
- Identify projects on the basis of the master plans adopted (transport) or in preparation (energy).

In order to establish these networks, promote the information society, and develop new environmental improvement projects,

the Commission proposes to accelerate the administrative procedures, act as a catalyst, and use the existing cooperation instruments. This represents an investment programme of ECU 20 billion per annum from 1994 to 1999 (see Annex).

Stepping up the research effort and cooperation

Without eschewing competition, the ability to cooperate and share risks is increasingly becoming a sign of creativity. Our laws, our tax systems and our programmes have to be adapted as a result, both at national and at European level. Community competition policy has thus made broad allowance for these new forms of intercompany cooperation.

Encouraging intercompany cooperation will gradually become a basic principle and not just one 'aspect' of **Community research and development policy**. This principle will help to identify major priorities and to promote meetings between the operators involved. The Commission will propose that Member States implement this new form of 'vertical cooperation' on the basis of a restricted number of large joint projects geared to the following:

- **New information technologies**, the importance of which has already been emphasized.
- **Biotechnology**, where the early use of research resources will make for greater synergy between chemical companies and the big potential users in the health and agri-foodstuffs sectors.
- **Ecotechnologies**, meaning radical innovations targeting the causes of pollution and aiming at environmental efficiency throughout the production cycle. Ecotechnologies will soon provide a major competitive advantage.

An economy characterized by solidarity

These options show how the dynamism of the market can help boost growth.

Experience has also shown, however, that the market is not without its failings. It tends to underestimate what is at stake in

the long term, the speed of the changes it creates affects the different social categories unequally, and it spontaneously promotes concentration, thereby creating inequality between the regions and the towns. Awareness of these insufficiencies has led our countries to develop **collective solidarity mechanisms**. At Community level the Single European Act has helped to restore the balance in the development of the single market by way of joint flanking policies as part of economic and social cohesion.

However, the social welfare system is now being re-examined in many Member States to reduce costs through greater responsibility. The new model of European society calls for less passive and more active solidarity.

Solidarity, first of all, between those who have jobs and those who do not. This key concept has not figured at all in the collective discussions and negotiations of the last 10 years. That is why we are proposing a sort of European social pact, the principle of which is quite simple but whose detailed arrangements would be adapted to the specific circumstances of each country and each business; in the spirit of a decentralized economy and of subsidiarity, new gains in productivity would essentially be applied to forward-looking investments and to the creation of jobs.

Solidarity also between generations, with an eye to the repercussions of a demographic trend which will see falling numbers of persons of adult working age. It is absolutely essential that all decisions taken today take account of this demographic dimension. That is why we must not only tackle unemployment, which is jeopardizing all our social security systems, but also expand, and not reduce, the volume of work which generates wealth and so finances solidarity.

Solidarity, once again, between the more prosperous regions and the poor or struggling regions. Hence the conformation of economic and social cohesion as an essential pillar of European construction.

Solidarity, lastly and most importantly, in the fight against social exclusion. If only one proof were needed that our economies have not yet reached maturity and that there are still needs to be met it would be

the existence in Europe of some 40 million people below the poverty line. This is a matter for the Member States, but it is also the business of each citizen to practice 'neighbourly solidarity'. We need a comprehensive policy, preventive as well as remedial, to combat the poverty which so degrades men and women and splits society in two. The areas of action are familiar: renovation of stricken urban areas, construction of subsidized housing, adaptation of education systems with extra resources for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and an active employment policy which attaches high priority to the search for an activity or training accessible to everyone rather than the registration of and payment to the unemployed, even though, in the last resort, this is still essential where all other means of social reinsertion seem, for the moment, to be exhausted.

Action on jobs

As we have seen, the Community has failed to match the substantial increase in generated wealth with parallel improvements in job opportunities. Looked at more closely, however, the performances of individual States differ quite considerably. For instance, Germany and Spain have enjoyed a comparable rate of growth over the last 15 years of around 2.3%, yet their average levels of unemployment are 6 and 16% respectively. Over the same period, meanwhile, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium and Italy have all had an unemployment rate of around 9% of the active population, but with growth rates ranging from 1.8 to 2.5% on average. These disparities tell us a lot.

In a general manner, they show that growth is not in itself the solution to unemployment, that vigorous action is needed to create jobs. However, such action must take account of national circumstances. More specifically, the inflexibility of the labour market, which is responsible for a large part of Europe's structural unemployment, can be traced back to specific institutional, legal and contractual circumstances in each country. **The educational system, labour laws, work contracts, contractual negotiation systems and the social security system form the pillars of the various 'national employ-**

ment systems' and combine to give each of them a distinctive appearance. In each case, the entire system must be mobilized to improve the functioning of the labour market. This goes to show, once again, that there is no miracle solution; nothing short of coordinated action by the various players responsible for the components of these systems can effect the necessary transformation.

Moreover, in each country the methods of social dialogue will reflect national traditions.

Priorities for action on jobs

- lifelong education and training;
- greater flexibility in businesses, both internally and externally;
- greater expectations from decentralization and initiative;
- reduction in the relative cost of low-qualified work;
- thorough overhaul of employment policies;
- efforts to meet new needs.

Investment in education and training: Knowledge and know-how throughout life

Our countries' education systems are faced with major difficulties, and not only of a budgetary nature. These problems are rooted in social ills: the breakdown of the family and the demotivation bred by unemployment. They also reflect a change in the very nature of what is being taught. Preparation for life in tomorrow's world cannot be satisfied by a once-and-for-all acquisition of **knowledge and know-how**. Every bit as essential is the ability to learn, to communicate, to work in a group and to assess one's own situation. On the other hand, if tomorrow's trades require the ability to make diagnoses and propose improvements at all levels, the autonomy, independence of spirit and analytical ability which come of knowledge will once again be indispensable.

Lifelong education is therefore the overall objective to which the national educational communities can make their own contributions. Difficult choices will have to be made, between increasing university capacity or quality, between higher education and vocational paths. However, each country should be aiming towards **universally accessible advanced vocational training**.

As is shown by the Member States' contributions, principles and methods of financing may differ. In some cases, the emphasis is on equal opportunities for all individuals and the proposed response is the provision of training capital or cheques financed by the redistribution of public resources. In other cases, advanced vocational training is linked to businesses and so contractual mechanisms will be proposed for training investment or for co-investment with the participation of wage-earners. In any event, public and private efforts must be married to create the basis in each Member State for a **genuine right to initial or ongoing training throughout one's lifetime**. This should be a key area of social dialogue at European level.

The need for double flexibility — both internal and external — in labour markets

Generally speaking, the flexibility of the labour market has deteriorated under the effects of an accretion of partial measures designed to reduce registered unemployment. All of these measures now need to be re-examined by all the players with a view to removing obstacles to employment.

The question of labour flexibility needs to be examined from two angles: that of the external labour market, where supply meets demand, and that of the market internal to each business, i.e. the human resources at its disposal which it adjusts according to its needs.

Improving **external flexibility** means making it possible for more unemployed persons to meet the identified requirements of businesses. The first step here is to improve geographical mobility. This could be encouraged by injecting new impetus into the accommodation market and, in particular, by removing obstacles to the construction of rented accommodation.

The provision of a framework for exercising the right to advanced vocational training has already been mentioned. This is a major pillar of flexibility, which also calls for initiatives, sometimes radical, from the two sides of industry in cooperation with the public authorities:

- In certain countries of the north of Europe the campaign against undeclared work involves reducing certain unemployment benefits and cutting direct taxation on low incomes. However, unemployment benefits can only be reduced so far before the poverty line is reached. These limits have already been reached in several countries;
- In several southern countries, the laws on the conditions under which workers on unlimited contracts may be laid off need to be made more flexible, with greater assistance being given to the unemployed and with less recourse to precarious forms of employment;
- In many countries, in both north and south, labour compartmentalization is detrimental both to the mobility of the active population and to the retraining of the unemployed. Bridging access needs to be established through collective negotiation.

Internal flexibility is the result of optimum management of a company's human resources. The aim is to adjust the workforce without making people redundant wherever this can be avoided. Focusing on the continuity of the link between the company and the worker, it maximizes the investment in human resources and staff involvement. It is up to individual companies to improve internal flexibility by means of staff versatility, the integrated organization of work, flexible working hours, and performance-related pay. Tailored to the European company model, it should be central to negotiations within the company.

The virtues of decentralization and initiative

The optimum operation of the labour market calls for a large degree of decentralization within 'employment areas'. In

return, the national authorities should focus on the quality of training and the homogeneity of qualifications. The successful experience of several Member States shows the importance of effective participation of the social partners in the decentralized management of employment areas.

Likewise, it is only by a decentralized approach, i.e. at company level, that adjustments to working hours can lead to improved competitiveness, and thereby encourage job creation and job retention.

Thus we can see how at Volkswagen imaginative negotiations based on a four-day week have led to a sensible, socially responsible form of part-time working. More flexible retirement schemes, more diversified working years, and greater provision for part-time working correspond in many situations to the wishes of salaried staff and the interest of undertakings which are concerned to make better use of their capital. Very often, such 'downward' adjustments in working hours are blocked by inflexible practices which standardize the working week in Europe at between 37 and 39 hours. To remove these obstacles, it is necessary, on the basis of the specific provisions of each country, to review labour legislation (role of legislation on working hours) and contractual practices (overtime pay), and in many cases simplify the way in which pension rights are calculated.

Reducing the cost of unskilled and semi-skilled labour

In eight out of the twelve countries of the European Union, social security contributions are relatively more onerous on low incomes. These countries suffer the most from what is one of the most severe structural causes of unemployment and undeclared employment in the Community.

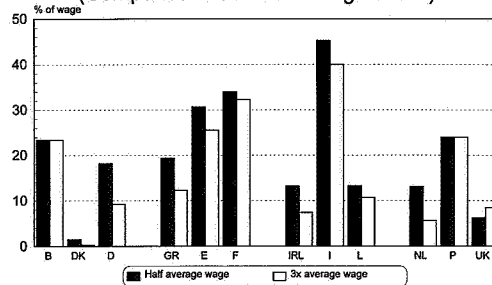
Studies have been carried out in several countries with very high levels of security contributions. These studies show that a reduction of 30 to 40% in social security contributions for low-paid workers would increase employment by 2%. In other countries, the possibility of replacing existing forms of income guarantee payments with a system of negative tax deserves close attention.

For all countries of the Union, it is essential to reduce the cost of unskilled and semi-skilled labour by an amount equivalent to 1 or 2 points of GNP by the year 2000. The improvement in tax revenue resulting from this measure would offset the cost by up to 30%. The remainder should be financed by savings or other revenue. Irrespective of its intrinsic merits, the CO₂/energy tax proposed by the Commission is one of the best ways of offsetting reductions in the cost of employment. Homogeneous taxation at source of investment income as proposed by the Commission since 1989 would be another possibility.

A full-scale overhaul of employment policy

Investing in human resources is not the task of business alone. It is also the task of government. It is no longer possible to leave masses of unemployed people in Europe unoccupied. Such is, however, the structure of government spending on unemployment: roughly two thirds of public expenditure on the unemployed goes on assistance and the remainder on 'active measures'.

Employers' Social Contributions
(Comparison at different wage levels)



Source: European Commission.

A complete reversal of attitude is required, the aim being to prevent long-term unemployment. On the one hand, the unemployed should be offered, according to how long they have been unemployed, first training leading to meaningful qualifications, then the possibility of working, poss-

ably in the public sector, for a number of months. In exchange, unemployed people who are thus given real assistance in returning to employment would make a personal investment in this training and employment. This, too, is a question of a social dialogue in which the unemployed should themselves be involved.

Such a substantial change would require a considerable increase in public employment services, the objective being for every unemployed person to be monitored personally by the same employment adviser. The job of the employment service would become more diversified but comprise three main tasks: provision of information, job placement and support.

Contrary to popular opinion, such an overhaul of employment policy would not be prohibitively expensive. For example, it has been calculated that the cost of tripling operational expenditure on the public employment services in the countries of the Union would mean an increase from 0.17 to 0.5% of GNP. Spread over a period of three years, the corresponding expenditure would be almost entirely offset by the fall in unemployment, estimated at 100 000 in the first year, 400 000 in the second year, and a million in the third year.

Bringing the long-term unemployed — those who have been unemployed for more than 12 months — back into employment is a difficult but not impossible task; this is demonstrated by the success of initiatives in several countries aimed at creating a real route back into employment for such people. These initiatives should be generalized, in cooperation with various associations and the local authorities.

Finally, active employment policy should cross a new threshold in promoting youth employment. Anyone who leaves the school system before the age of 18 without acquiring a meaningful vocational certificate should be guaranteed a 'Youthstart'. It is proposed that a scheme should be progressively established at national level which will give everyone access to a recognized form of training, whether or not accompanied by employment experience. Moreover, at Community level, 'European

Union civilian voluntary service' could be introduced, comprising a training element and public utility work in another Member State of the Union, to be financed by European Social Fund pilot initiatives. This initiative could back up the 'Youthstart' arrangements.

Dealing with new needs

Many needs are still waiting to be satisfied. They correspond to changes in lifestyles, the transformation of family structures, the increase in the number of working women, and the new aspirations of the elderly and of very old people. They also stem from the need to repair damage to the environment and to renovate the most disadvantaged urban areas.

Sources of new jobs

Local services

- Home help for the elderly and handicapped, health care, meal preparation and housework;
- Minding pre-school-age children and schoolchildren before and after school, including taking them to and from school;
- Assistance to young people facing difficulties, comprising help with schoolwork, provision of leisure facilities, especially sports, and support for the most disadvantaged;
- Acting as caretaker for blocks of flats;
- Provision of leisure and cultural facilities, provided they are thereby made more accessible to all (adjusted opening hours, lower prices, travelling shows, art schools, etc.);
- Local shops kept in business in rural areas, and also in outlying suburban areas.

The objection will be voiced that if such needs exist, the market should rapidly provide for them. In fact, the development of both the supply of and demand for such new services comes up against barriers:

- on the demand side there is the problem of price, already referred to in connection with the costs of employment;
- on the supply side there is reticence to take jobs which are perceived as being degrading, because they are often synonymous with domestic service and unskilled or semi-skilled work.

As a result, the development of the services in question is either left to the undeclared employment market, or is publicly funded, which is expensive. A new initiative could stimulate both demand and supply, thus creating a 'continuum' of possibilities ranging from supply totally protected by public subsidies to totally competitive

Improvements in the quality of life

- Renovation of old housing with a view to increasing comfort (installation of bathrooms and noise insulation) and safety;
- Development of local public transport services, which should be made more comfortable, more frequent, accessible (to the handicapped) and safe, and the provision of new services such as shared taxis in rural areas.

Environmental protection

- Maintenance of natural areas and public areas (rubbish clearance, street cleaning, path clearance, etc.);
- Water purification and the cleaning-up of polluted areas;
- Monitoring of quality standards;
- Energy-saving equipment, particularly in housing.

supply. Thus a new 'social economy' would be born, benefiting:

- on the demand side, from incentives such as income tax deductibility, or the local issuing of 'vouchers' along the lines of luncheon vouchers, issued instead of providing the social services normally provided by employers and local authorities, which can be exchanged for local services ('service vouchers');
- on the supply side, from traditional subsidies for the setting-up of undertakings, which could be increased in cases where a 'social employer' undertakes to employ formerly unemployed people. Specific training would be provided to develop the skills needed for these new professions.

The scope for job creation depends largely on the existing structures and services in each country, lifestyles and tax rules.

However, several estimates agree that some three million new jobs could be created in the Community, covering local services, improvements in the quality of life and environmental protection.

Call for action

The analyses out in this document and the possible solutions identified should guide us towards a sustainable development model, both from the viewpoint of the effectiveness of the triangular relationship growth-competitiveness-employment and as regards the environment and the improvement in the quality of life.

The effort to be made calls for adaptations in behaviour and policies at all levels: the Community level, the national level, and the local level. Since we are aware of the differing situations in Member States, we deemed it preferable not to formulate the possible solutions in unduly concise terms. It will be for each Member State to take from the document the elements it regards

as making a positive contribution to its own action.

Nevertheless, in the Commission's view, the individual chapters of Part B should provide the basis for work in the various specialized meetings of the Council of Ministers. If conclusion along these lines were reached at the forthcoming European Council meeting, this would facilitate and actually set in motion the mobilization of the Community institutions in the pursuit of the objectives set.

As for Community action proper, it is proposed to impart a new impetus or give a new form, but only in accordance with five priorities:

- Making the most of the single market;
- Supporting the development and adaptation of small and medium-sized enterprises;
- Pursuing the social dialogue that has, to date, made for fruitful cooperation and joint decision-making by the two sides of industry, thereby assisting the work of the Community;
- Creating the major European infrastructure networks;
- Preparing forthwith and laying the foundations for the information society.

These last two priorities hold the key to enhanced competitiveness and will enable us to exploit technical progress in the interests of employment and an improvement in living conditions.

It needs to be stressed that the implementation of these two priorities in no way calls

into question the financial decisions taken as part of Package II by the Edinburgh European Council. There is, therefore, no need to review the ceilings on resources.

Recourse to saving is the only other source of financing. It would be modest in magnitude since the borrowings envisaged would account for less than 2% of total market issues.

For the rest, what we are advocating is not only economically indispensable but also financially viable and hence carries no risk of adding to national public deficits.

Through these forward-looking measures, the Community will lay the foundations for sound and lasting economic growth the benefits of which will far outweigh the cost of raising the funds required.

As a parallel development, and this is also one of the far-reaching changes made to our growth model, the new-found consistency between macroeconomic policy and an active employment policy will eliminate all the behavioural or structural rigidities that are partly to blame for the underemployment with which we are having to contend. It will then be possible to satisfy the numerous needs that have not yet been met as well as those to which the changes both in the organization of our societies and in the organization and sharing-out of work will give rise.

The Commission thus calls on everyone to conduct a lucid analysis of our strengths and weaknesses and to adapt behaviour to the rapid changes taking place in today's world, setting our sights and focusing our determination on what the future holds.

Development theme I

Information networks

1. Why?

Throughout the world, production systems, methods of organizing work and consumption patterns are undergoing changes which will have long-term effects comparable with the first industrial revolution.

This is the result of the development of information and communications technologies. Digital technologies, in particular, have made it possible to combine transmission of information, sound text and images in a single high-performance system.

The dawn of the multimedia world

This will have far-reaching effects on production structures and methods. It will spell changes in the way companies are organized, in managers' responsibilities and in relations with workers. Small businesses will benefit most. Working conditions will be transformed by the greater flexibility possible with regard to working hours, the place of work itself (teleworking) and, inevitably, terms of contract and pay systems. According to some estimates, six million Americans already work at home. New data transmission systems will enable companies to globalize their activities and strategies, forging forms of partnership and cooperation on a scale never possible before.

The change will also affect consumption patterns.

The need for physical mobility will be reduced by the availability of products and services combining the advantages of mass

production with consumers' specific, and even individual, requirements. A new, far richer range of novel services in the form of information, access to databases, audio-visual, cultural and leisure facilities will be opened up to everyone. More specifically, it will be possible to gain access to general information directly, without any complicated technology, via a portable computer connected, if need be, to a television set or telephone.

The same phenomenon will affect us as citizens.

It will be possible to make the services provided by the public authorities faster, more selective and less impersonal, provided measures are taken to safeguard privacy. Certain services in which the public authorities have traditionally played a leading role (health, education, social security, etc.) could be provided far more widely, rapidly and effectively. Market forces will be able to play a greater part. Doctors, teachers and students will have instant access to vast databases.

This is not a technological dream for the next century.

Some aspects of this new society are already being put into place; many people are beginning to reap the benefit. Naturally, these changes will be led by the Triad powers first, but will gradually extend to the rest of the planet. They will be dictated, above all, by the needs of the users, both companies and consumers alike. Industry is already beginning to adapt to these new prospects. large-scale reorganizations are in train. They are making the traditional distinctions, for example between electronics, information technology, telecommunications and the audiovisual sectors, increasingly obsolete. They are blurring the borderlines between the secondary and tertiary

sectors, between industry and services. They are transforming the balance of power in industry: the capitalization of Nintendo, the video game maker, is already one third of IBM's and its turnover is almost twice that of Microsoft, the leading software producer. This process has already started in the USA, where it is giving birth to unprecedented partnerships and mergers between companies.

It will gain ground in Europe. It is forcing the public authorities to review the regulatory framework.

Concern has been expressed about employment, but it is difficult to assess this factor precisely.

Rapid dissemination of new information technologies can certainly speed up the transfer of certain manufacturing activities to countries with distinctly lower labour costs.

However, the productivity improvements which these technologies will allow throughout industry will also save large numbers of jobs which would otherwise have been lost.

We are witnessing rationalization of the service sector. However, the enormous potential for new services relating to production, consumption, culture and leisure activities will create large numbers of new jobs.

For example, the services generated by Minitel in France have created more than 350 000 jobs. The foreseeable growth in the number of audiovisual services will considerably increase the demand for new programmes. By the turn of the century there should be 10 times as many television channels as now and three times the number of subscribers to cable networks.

In any event, it would be fruitless to become embroiled in a fresh dispute about the 'machine age', as was the case with the first industrial revolution. Worldwide dissemination of new technologies is inevitable.

The aim must be not to slow down this change but, instead, to control it in order to avoid the dramas which marked the adjustments in the last century but would be unacceptable today.

Above all, these changes have been brought about by market pressure and companies' own initiative. The government decisions taken in the USA and Japan aim at organizing and speeding up the process, by supporting companies' efforts. The emphasis has been on establishment of the basic infrastructure and support for new applications and technological development. The US programme to establish the 'National Information Infrastructure' provides for a total investment of x times the spending on the Apollo programme.

It is in Europe's interests to meet this challenge since the first economies which successfully complete this change, in goods conditions, will hold significant competitive advantages.

Compared with its leading competitors, Europe holds comparative advantages from the cultural, social, technological and industrial points of view. Since 1 January 1993 its market has been largely integrated, although too many monopolies and too much overregulation persist. Interoperability has not yet been achieved.

Already, the States which have taken the lead with deregulation have the fastest growing markets and falling consumer prices.

Europe's main handicaps are the fragmentation of the various markets and the lack of major interoperable links. To overcome them, it is necessary to mobilize resources and channel endeavours at European level in a partnership between the public and private sectors.

2. How?

The action plan is based on five priorities:

Priority	Means
1. Promote the use of information technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">— launch European projects on applications and public services (transport, health, training, education and civil protection) and strengthen cooperation between administrations (IDA programme)— promote teleworking— ensure closer involvement of users in the drafting and implementation of technology policies
2. Provide basic trans-European services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">— develop the basic networks (ISDN and broadband)— ensure network interoperability— ensure closer coordination between telecommunications policies and aid from the Structural Funds
3. Create an appropriate regulatory framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none">— end distortions of competition— guarantee a universal service— speed up standardization— protect privacy and ensure the security of information and communication systems— extend intellectual property law
4. Develop training on new technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">— encourage acquisition of the basic knowledge required in order to use new technologies and exploit their potential— ensure widespread use of new technologies in teaching and training— adapt the training for engineers and researchers
5. Improve industrial and technological performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">— increase the RTD effort and adapt it to the new market conditions (fourth framework programme)— promote industry and technology watch— take up the results of RTD in industrial applications— negotiate equitable conditions of access to the competitive market at world level

The keys to the success of this plan are to define the measures clearly, to specify a timetable and to put in place the resources.

It is proposed that a task force on European information infrastructures be established with a direct mandate from the Euro-

pean Council. This task force will have the job of establishing priorities, deciding on procedures and defining the resources required. It should report to the President of the European Council by 31 March 1994 so that the plan can be put into action by mid-1994 after consultation with the parties concerned and the approval of the European Council.

3. Which networks?

The transport network has motorways with several lanes, and access roads and service areas allowing motorists to drive wherever they choose.

The communications network will also have:

- **highways** along which information will move: these will be the broadband optical fibre networks
- **access roads and service areas:** these will be the services (disks, files, databases, electronic mail services and host computers);
- **highway users** who will choose applications for their work or private life.

Europe's telephone networks are already international, but the digital networks for carrying information in the form of text, data or images are mainly being developed on a purely national basis.

In order to provide greater access to a wide range of interactive services and create a common information area, action must be taken:

- to ensure coordinated project management;
- to interconnect the various networks and make them interoperable;
- to invest and innovate in order to provide a wide range of information in the shortest possible time.

Such an approach is essential to stimulate the creation of new markets. New projects must be undertaken rapidly and resolutely

in order to break the vicious circle perpetuated by the weaknesses on both the demand and supply sides.

To this end, the eight strategic projects listed in the Annex are proposed.

They cover infrastructure, services and applications alike.

Establishment of a high-speed communication network

This infrastructure is necessary for the development of multimedia services. It would use the most advanced data transmission technologies (optical fibre) and fully capitalize on the digitization and high-speed transfer of information (high definition, interactive and multifunction systems).

This would extend the integrated services digital networks to be established throughout the Community by the year 2000.

Initiation of three programmes to develop electronic services

These services are necessary for diversification of the applications on a given infrastructure network:

- **Electronic images:** interactive video services will revolutionize working methods, training and leisure activities. The objective is to ensure Europe-wide interoperability of these new *à la carte* services by 1997.
- **Electronic access to information:** this will entail bringing together information (administrative, scientific, cultural or other data) in databases to which all users in the Community should have access.
- **Electronic mail:** the various commercial electronic document transmission services must be made interoperable; development of this service is particularly important to make small firms more competitive.

Promotion of four priority applications: teleworking, teletraining, telemedicine and links between administrations.

- **Teleworking:** Projects are already under way in the Member States. The Community would support pilot programmes on the establishment of a transfrontier network for the management of human resources.
- **Teletraining:** The objective is to establish a network linking more than 100 universities or colleges by 1996 and giving them all access to common training modules.
- **Telemedicine:** By the year 2000, multimedia links are to be established between the main cancer research centres, bone marrow banks and social security centres.
- **Links between administrations:** To ensure smooth operation of the internal market (taxation, customs, statistics), it is essential to improve the interchange of data between administrations and to provide companies and the public with easier access to this information.

4. What decisions?

At the moment, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament are continuing their discussions on the development of data communications (IDA) networks. In the autumn the Commission submitted two proposals on telecommunications networks containing a series of guidelines (master plan) on the integrated services digital network (ISDN) and broadband networks.

The biggest difficulty encountered in the discussions concerns the content of the work: some Member States feel that it should cover the infrastructure only but most think that it should cover not only the infrastructure but also the associated services.

5. Financing options?

The estimated funding needed over the next 10 years will be ECU 150 billion. Some ECU 67 billion will be needed between 1994 and 1999 for the priority projects selected. They will be covered mainly by private investors. Financial support from the national and Community authorities will play a marginal role to provide an incentive, as with other networks.

The Community could provide ECU 5 billion over the entire period from its budget for networks, from the Structural Funds and, in particular, from the research programme. This could be supplemented by EIB loans and European Investment Fund guarantees and the new financial mechanisms described in the Annex.

Trans-European telecommunications networks:

Information highways	Target area for Strategic Projects	Investment required 1994-1999 <i>(billion ecus)</i>
Interconnected advanced networks	— establishment of high-speed communication network	20
	— consolidation of integrated services digital network	15
General electronic services	— electronic acces to information	1
	— electronic mail	1
	— electronic images: interactive video services	10
Telematic applications	— teleworking	3
	— links between administrations	7
	— teletraining	3
	— telemedicine	7
Total		67

Development theme II

Trans-European transport and energy networks

1. Why?

Europe's ascendancy in the past was due to the quality of its communications networks, which gave its inhabitants easy access to natural and technical resources. By developing the movement of people and goods, Europe has been able to marry economic prosperity, quality of life and commercial efficiency; it has also been able to remain at the forefront of technology and to back highly successful industry, Airbus being a good example. Our transport, energy and telecommunications systems are clear evidence of this tradition.

We need to continue along this road, to enter a new phase and to visualize other frontiers in the light of the globalization of markets, the growing mobility of capital and technology and the investment needs which are becoming apparent in the East and the South. The development of trans-European transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructure networks answers

Promoting new or better designed infrastructures, accessible to all citizens, will permit:

- faster, safer travel at lower cost, and thus an increase in trade, while reducing costs and distances and creating scope for other activities;
- effective planning in Europe in order to stem the emergence of serious socio-economic disequilibria in all Member States;
- bridge-building towards Eastern Europe, which is essential in order to meet the immense investment requirement resulting from the state of decay of communications and to organize the necessary economic complementarities.

this need which all the Member States emphasized in their contributions.

This is also a chance to:

- give our industries the opportunity of engaging in promising medium- and long-term projects and of developing new products;
- seek the optimum combination of existing transport modes (multimodality), in order to enhance performance and at the same time reduce their environmental impact.

Making traffic faster, safer and more environmentally compatible, facilitating and boosting trade, and bringing Member States closer to their eastern and southern neighbours would herald the advent of the European Union.

These networks are the complement to the single market. After the huge collective effort made to eliminate frontiers between the Member States, it is now necessary to increase physical links, including those with the most distant countries. This is also a key factor in competitiveness, minimizing costs to businesses and private individuals, and optimizing existing capacities by improving their compatibility.

2. Why now?

Our investment in infrastructures has been slowing down over the last 10 years.

This is particularly true of transport; the result is rigidities, procedural slowness and malfunctions, which are blamed by economic circles as being one of the main causes of the current decline in competitiveness. This can now be remedied with the aid of the new provisions of the Treaty on European Union (Article 129).

The fact that not enough attention has been paid to developing infrastructures is one of the reasons for the deterioration in the quality of life.

Time wasted because of traffic congestion, under-utilization of the new communications media, environmental damage owing to the failure to use the most efficient technology are all to some extent contributory factors in the present malaise of our cities and the resulting social discord. The same is true of the thinly-populated rural areas, whose isolation is a threat to their very existence.

The rapid progress made in data processing, environmental engineering, propulsion methods and new materials completely change the outlook. We are living with separate, compartmentalized networks, with means of transport which are often environmentally damaging. It will henceforth be possible to combine different transport modes, to use electronics to organize links and traffic better, to connect networks in all sectors for which different national authorities are responsible and to integrate stringent environmental standards in infrastructure projects. A wholly new generation of projects is emerging, and a completely different development logic.

Countries such as the USA and Japan are making significant, targeted efforts to renew their infrastructures. New industrial powers such as Singapore, Taiwan, certain parts of China and Argentina are creating networks which integrate the latest technological advances.

By focusing the necessary resources on trans-European projects, we shall maintain our capacity to compete with the rest of the world and improve the quality of life in Europe.

Equally, it is inconceivable that we should develop an economic partnership with the countries of Central Europe and Russia as a preliminary to a deeper association

without, at the same time, embarking on bold infrastructure projects. The two are complementary.

Finally, potential investments by the end of the century, which are put at more than ECU 250 billion, are a key factor in the economic recovery of Europe.

3. How?

Article 129 of the Treaty on European Union spells out the Community's tasks and instruments relating to the establishment of networks.

Within the framework of a system of open and competitive markets, action by the Community shall aim at promoting the interconnection and interoperability of networks as well as access to such networks. It shall take account in particular of the need to link island, landlocked and peripheral regions with the central regions of the Community (Article 129b).

It shall establish a series of guidelines covering the objectives, priorities and broad lines of measures (master plans); these guidelines shall identify **projects of common interest**; it shall support the **financial efforts** made by the Member States for the projects identified, particularly through feasibility studies, loan guarantees or interest rates subsidies; it may also **help coordinate** the policies pursued by the Member States and cooperate with third countries (Article 129c).

The European Parliament and the Council of Ministers decide on the guidelines and projects of common interest by qualified majority; Member States must approve the guidelines and projects that concern their territory.

The Community has two tasks:

- encourage private investors to take a greater part in projects of European interest;

- reduce, to this end, the financial or administrative risks involved.

It is therefore recommended that **priority** should be given to projects of Community interest, the financial and administrative arrangements for which have been well prepared, and for which environmental impact assessments have been carried out.

Project evaluation will concern the financial risks, the possible sources of financing, the legal status (duration of concessions), management and the environmental impact.

An administrative and financial action plan will be drawn up for each project, in order to guarantee investors the necessary predictability and stability.

4. Where are we now?

a) Transport

The plan for high-speed trains had already been accepted by the Council in 1990, and it will be updated in 1994 for integration in a multimodal perspective.

On 29 October 1993 the Council and the European Parliament approved three master plans on:

- **combined transport**, with work in two stages of 6 and 12 years;
- **roads**, with 55 000 km of trans-European links including 12 000 km of motorway to be built in 10 years;
- **inland waterways**, with the establishment of an interoperable network in 10 years.

Three other plans will be presented in 1994 on:

- the **conventional rail infrastructure**, with a view to integrating lines for passenger traffic (regional, urban) and freight in the intermodal network and to extending links towards Central and Eastern Europe;
- the **airport infrastructure**, with a view to improving the linking-in of the Community network internationally and of

advancing the opening-up of certain regions of the Community;

- **seaports**, with a view to promoting intra-Community trade and trade with the rest of the world and relieving congestion on certain inland links, with beneficial environmental effects.

b) Energy

A master plan and projects of common interest for electricity and gas will be presented at the beginning of 1994.

5. What are the priorities?

The projects will focus above all on the trans-European transport network. This is the sector which will require the most substantial investment, and where the gap between available financial resources and needs is biggest. The aim is to develop a truly multimodal strategy, which is essential in order to improve the efficiency of the economy and the quality of life.

It is proposed that major priority projects of Community interest should be selected on the basis of the master plans already approved, in order to bring all the countries of the European continent closer together. These concern:

- new strategic transfrontier links (Brenner rail link, Lyons-Turin rail link, Paris-Barcelona-Madrid rail link, Berlin-Warsaw-Moscow motorway link);
- improving connections between the various transport modes (Heathrow-London-Channel Tunnel link);
- improving interoperability and efficiency of networks by installing traffic management systems (air, sea, land) and thus significantly reducing nuisance factors.

The development of energy networks reflects two priorities: the reduction of costs by making better use of existing capacities, and enhancing security of supply. The first priority is more particularly concerned with electricity, while the second applies to gas.

This will permit more rational overall use of the available energy throughout the whole European continent.

As far as electricity is concerned, the objective is essentially to increase interconnection of networks and thus avoid their saturation in some cases and, in others, provide a better service to the more remote areas.

Making better use of existing electricity capacities will help protect the environment.

With regard to gas, Europe must come to terms with growing consumption which will increasingly be covered by imports from the North Sea, Algeria or Russia.

It is essential, in the interests of economic security, to speed up construction of trans-European gas pipelines capable of guaranteeing supplies and creating avenues for long-term cooperation with the producer countries.

Eight major programmes will shortly be proposed to the Council with this in mind. The success of all these projects is closely linked with the deepening of the internal market.

6. Financing options

The financial requirements for the next 15 years can be put at more than ECU 400 billion; by the end of the century alone, they will probably amount to ECU 250 billion (ECU 220 billion for transport and ECU 30 billion for energy).

The total investment involved for the proposed projects amounts to ECU 82 billion

for transport and ECU 13 billion for energy.

The purpose of the above assessment is to create the best possible conditions for financing by the market in the framework of a public- and private-sector partnership.

Financing is based on three principles:

- **financial equilibrium:** this can to a large extent be ensured by private investors;
- **compatibility with public finances:** any contributions from Member States will respect the guidelines relating to the public debt;
- **subsidiarity:** the Community will support feasibility studies, provide loan guarantees or promote the closing of missing links in the framework of projects of common interest.

With regard to the 26 transport projects already examined in the framework of the master plans (23) or in other Council bodies (3), the Community has already financed feasibility studies and work to the tune of ECU 332 million.

It could provide almost ECU 15 billion over the period 1994-99 from its various instrument,¹ which would be added to loans of an equivalent amount (growth initiative facilities).

The eight major energy programmes will require ECU 13 billion, of which 10 must be provided by the market. The Community could provide ECU 1.2 billion over that period through the structural policies and the instruments for interest-rate subsidies and financing of feasibility studies. Under these conditions, the Member States' contribution will be marginal.

Annex

Investing in the competitiveness of Europe

The trans-European networks are an essential element for the competitiveness of the European economy and the smooth functioning of the single market.

1. Transport and energy networks — ECU 250 billion by the year 2000

These networks of transport infrastructures will enable our citizens to travel more quickly, more safely and more cheaply. They will also form a link to eastern Europe and to north Africa. In total some ECU 400 billion of investments in the transport and energy trans-European networks will be required in the next 15 years, of which some ECU 220 billion by 1999.

Article 129b of the Treaty makes clear how to proceed. The Community¹ establishes a set of guidelines that identify projects of common interest. It then supports the financial efforts of the Member States (feasibility studies, loan guarantees, or interest rate subsidies). It can also contribute to the coordination of the Member States' policies and cooperate with third countries.

The principal guideline networks (*schémas directeurs*) have been proposed by the Commission or adopted by the Council and the Parliament. The Commission has identified a series of priority projects for the next five years (25 transport projects amounting to ECU 83 billion and 10 energy projects costing ECU 13 billion) covering the Community, but also extending to central Europe and north Africa (energy).

2. Telecommunications — ECU 150 billion by the year 2000

A system of information highways for the Community will allow the best means to

¹ The Council decides by qualified majority in co-decision with the European Parliament (Article 189b); guidelines and projects of common interest which relate to the territory of a Member State require the approval of the Member State concerned.

create, manage, access and transfer information. It involves:

- the creation of infrastructures (cable and land or satellite-based radio communication), including integrated digital networks;
- the development of services (electronic images, databases, electronic mail);
- promoting applications (teleworking, teletraining, telemedicine and linked administrations).

The amount of investments that could be put into effect by the end of the century has been estimated at ECU 150 billion.

3. Environment — ECU 174 billion on large environmental projects by the year 2000

The environment is an integral element of the trans-European networks, for example concerning combined transport networks designed to get traffic off the roads onto rail. The Commission has nevertheless environmental programmes of sufficient size to merit eligibility for financial support from the Community. These concern urban waste water treatment and renovation of water supply distribution systems at an estimated cost of ECU 280 billion in total over 12 years or ECU 140 billion by the end of the century. The Community could help finance some ECU 25 billion in this area of environmental concern over the period 1994-99.

4. Financing the trans-European networks and large environmental projects

The major portion of finance for these investments will be raised at the level of the Member State, either through private investors (especially in the telecoms sector) or via public enterprises. The Community can, however, play a role, as foreseen in the Treaty, by supporting the financial efforts

of the Member States and mobilizing private capital¹. This requires a panoply of financial instruments, as set out in the table below, some of which exist already and two of which are new ('Union Bonds', 'Convertibles'). The new instruments are needed for projects specifically included in the Master Plans and complement the lending of the European Investment Bank, which is more general. The budgetary elements remain

within the Edinburgh ceilings. National budgets would not be required to support additional financing. In the case of the new instruments, the capital and interest would be repaid by the promoters of the projects, with the Community budget available to back the repayment of the Union Bonds and the capital of the European Investment Fund available in the case of the Convertibles. There would be no risk of destabilizing the capital markets given that the amounts concerned represent less than 1% of the Eurobond and bank credit markets.

¹ In addition the EIF can guarantee up to a total of ECU 6 billion of private loans for large infrastructure projects, averaging 1 billion per year to 1999.

**Community financing of the trans-European networks
(average financing per year 1994-99)**

<i>Source:</i>	<i>Amount in billion ecus</i>	
Community budget:	5.3	
of which:		
TENs		0.50
Structural Funds:		
	(TENs):	1.35
	(environment):	0.60
Cohesion Fund:		
	(TENs):	1.15
	(environment):	1.15
R&D:		
	(telecommunications):	0.50
	(transport):	0.05
EIB (loans):	6.7	
Union Bonds¹ (esp. transport and energy):	7.0	
Convertibles¹ guaranteed by EIF (esp. telecoms):	1.0	
	Total	20.0

¹ See box.

New facilities

Union Bonds

'Union Bonds' for growth would be issued on tap by the Union for long maturities to promote major infrastructure projects of strategic interest covering the trans-European networks plus cross-border projects with EFTA, Central and Eastern Europe and North Africa. The beneficiaries would be project promoters (public sector agencies, private companies) directly involved in TENs. The EIB would be invited to appraise and advise the Commission on the overall structure of the financial arrangement and act as agent for individual loan contracts.

'Convertibles' guaranteed by the European Investment Fund

Bonds issued for long maturities by the private or public company promoting the project, guaranteed by the European Investment Fund. These would be either:

- convertible wholly or partly into shares or investment certificates; or
- by accompanied by subscription warrants giving the holder a right to buy shares at a certain price; or
- performance-related through a share in the profits of the company or venture concerned.

The maturities of the bonds and of the exchange terms would be coherent between the expected returns of the project and the exercise period of the option. The EIF would create a special window for this type of guarantee, especially for major projects linked to telecommunications networks.

PART B

The conditions of growth, competitiveness and more jobs

(Preparatory work)

I — GROWTH

Chapter 1

The macroeconomic framework

Community unemployment has increased steadily since the beginning of the 1970s with the exception of the second half of the 1980s, when nine million jobs were created through a combination of appropriate national policies, a favourable external environment and the dynamism resulting from the prospect of the single market. Overall, however, since the early 1970s demographic factors have led to an increase in the number of people seeking jobs, while the number of jobs available stagnated or increased only modestly. Other developed economies have been patently more successful in responding to the challenge of increasing job creation.

The causes of the Community's poor relative performance in this area are numerous and deep-seated. The most important ones can be summed up under the headings of a suboptimal macroeconomic management of the economy and of an insufficient effort of adaptation to the changes which have taken place in the structure of the Community's economy and in its international environment. The 1980s saw a change of policy orientation. The emphasis shifted towards creating more stable macroeconomic conditions and towards easing the pain associated with structural change rather than slowing it down. This reorientation brought positive results in the second half of the decade, providing good growth but not enough new jobs. In 1992-93, however, there was a loss of confidence brought on in part by actions outside the economic sphere. This and other errors put the economy into its worst recession.

To the extent that the present problems are the result of inadequate policies in the more or less recent past, there is nothing inevitable in this state of affairs.

In addition, there is a number of factors which are favourable to a rapid return to sustained growth and which can and should

be exploited. The Community's achievement in creating the world's biggest single market is a major asset on which it will be possible to build once the recovery sets in. The recession, painful as it is, has speeded up the process of adaptation of firms to the new environment.

The world economy has continued to grow over recent years and a number of developing countries have experienced very high rates of growth. The presence of new vibrant economies in Asia and, soon, in Eastern Europe constitutes a huge opportunity and not a threat to our standard of living. These countries will be buying on world markets as much as they will earn with their exports. The rest of the world is now experiencing again positive rates of growth of between 2 and 3% while world trade outside the Community is expanding by 5 to 6% in real terms. Finally, the price of oil is now back to the low levels recorded in the mid-1980s.

Over recent years, comprehensive analyses have been made. They show that there is no miracle remedy, but they point to the existence of a wide range of measures to help growth, competitiveness and employment. **The challenge is now to appreciate the order of magnitude of the likely effects of the various measures, to determine their appropriate mix and to implement the preferred strategy with determination. This will not be easy. The factors which have hindered in the past the implementation of the right policies are largely still present. Attacking the sources of the present unemployment problems requires, therefore, a clean break with the past.** This will only be possible if a large consensus on the necessary course of action to be followed can be developed: within each country, between management and the labour force in industry and among the members of the European Community.

This chapter outlines the macroeconomic framework which policies must create and within which the structural interventions outlined in the following chapters will be most successful.

1.1. Views of the Member States

In their contributions to the White Paper, the Member States broadly agree on the assessment made. They shall call for a clear analysis of the serious economic situation with a view to enlisting the help of all those involved in the economic process in finding remedies requiring sacrifices that have to be shared fairly.

The problems of employment and competitiveness — about which governments, the European Council, employers and trade unions have all expressed serious concern — are the result of developments which have been witnessed for a number of years but do not appear to have provoked an adequate political response. The pressures stemming from changes in the world economy are only aggravating the situation. At the same time, production processes and, consequently, the nature of employment have undergone radical change comparable, in certain respects, to the changes brought about by the industrial revolutions. The performance of economies depends on their capacity to adapt to these new circumstances, and it is precisely in this area that the Community is lagging behind.

The macroeconomic framework in the Community is being affected by certain **fundamental imbalances** which have caused a vicious circle to be created. The current levels of public expenditure, particularly in the social field, have become unsustainable and have used up resources which could have been channelled into productive investment. They have pushed up the taxation of labour and increased the cost of money. At the same time, the constant rise in the labour cost — affecting both its wage and non-wage components and caused, at least in part, by excessively rigid regulation — has hindered job creation. As a result, the level of long-term investment has fallen and the lack of confidence among those involved in the economic process has caused demand to contract.

The vital need to restore a **stable macroeconomic framework** as a basis for sustainable, job-creating growth is felt by all Member States. They all point to the link between the efforts to redress the economic situation and the process of economic convergence

within the framework of economic and monetary union, which is generally viewed as the right instrument for addressing structural problems. A number of Member States advocate use of the economic policy guidelines provided for in the Treaty on European Union as a specific means of tackling these matters.

1.2. The problem

The level of unemployment in the Community has reached very serious proportions. After five years of steady decline, the jobless totals in the Community started to rise substantially again at the beginning of the 1990s. In addition, Community unemployment is characterized both by a high rate of long-term unemployment, which is nearing almost half of the unemployment total, and by its impact in particular among low-skilled people.

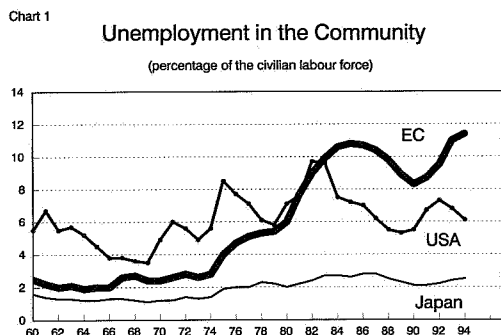
Particularly worrying is the substantial loss of ground in the recent past. There are, of course, identifiable economic reasons for this, in particular the effect of very high interest rates on investment, excessively high budget deficits in some Member States, unsustainable exchange rates and the problems of monetary instability. But the rapidity of the downturn indicates also the importance of the 'confidence factor', the decline in consumer and business confidence linked both to economic pressures and to the uncertainties arising from other causes, in particular the difficult ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. On present trends, a stabilization of the rate of unemployment cannot be expected before the end of 1994. By that date, more than 18 million citizens could be out of work: a figure equal to the total populations of Belgium, Denmark and Ireland.

The difference between the unemployment rates currently experienced in the major global economic areas — 11% of the civilian labour force in the Community against rates of about 7 and 2.5% in the USA and Japan respectively — has given rise to questions about the existence of a specific European unemployment problem. An examination of the Community's past performance and a comparison with the other major areas, however, suggests that no hasty negative conclusions ought to be drawn.

Before the first oil-price shock unemployment was low and the Community compared well with its principal competitors. The rate of unemployment in the Community was lower than that in the USA in each year of the period 1960-80. Even compared with Japan, which has successfully held down unemployment over a long period, the Community's performance only started to diverge radically in the period following the first oil-price shock.

To understand how the Community's unemployment performance deteriorated over time it is necessary to take a long-term perspective. To this end it is useful to distinguish between four main periods: (a) the period up until the first oil-price shock, (b) the period from the first oil-price shock to the mid-1980s, (c) the second half of the 1980s, and (d) the present period of slow growth or outright recession.

(a) The 1960-73 period was highlighted by very high rates of GDP growth (4.8% a year). While growth was high, the employment content of that growth was quite low. However, the low rate of job creation (0.3% a year) was not a problem over this period as the labour supply continued to grow at similarly modest rates (also 0.3% a year). As a result, unemployment in the Community remained relatively stable over this period and its average level was 2.6% (see Chart 1).



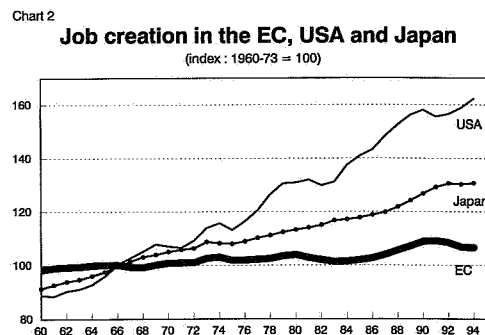
(b) During the subsequent period 1974-85, the rate of growth dropped substantially to a figure of 2.0% a year. The employment intensity increased, but not enough to maintain positive rates of increase in employment. As a result, employment creation stagnated (private-sector employment

actually declined, but this decline was offset by an increase in the public sector) just at the time when demographic factors led to sharp increases in the labour force (0.7% a year). This led inevitably to a continuous and sharp rise in the rate of unemployment from a rate of less than 3% in 1974 to a peak of 10.8% in 1985.

(c) During the years 1986-90, the fruits of the structural adjustment and policy re-orientation which had taken place since the beginning of the 1980s were reaped and the Community experienced stronger rates of growth: 3.2% a year. Even if this average rate of growth was a far cry from that experienced during the 1960s, it was sufficient to generate a very strong increase in jobs since the employment intensity remained at the higher level reached during the previous period. Employment increased by 1.3% a year during this period, and unemployment was reduced from 10.8% in 1985 to 8.3% in 1990.

(d) Since 1991 the rate of increase of GDP slowed down substantially and in 1993 it became negative for the first time since 1975. Unemployment started its present worrying upward path which accelerated sharply when employment declined in 1992 and 1993.

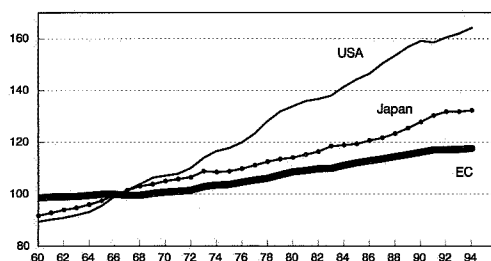
This rapid overview of the Community's past employment performance shows clearly that the Community's economy, with the exception of the period 1986-90, has always been characterized by low employment creation (see Chart 2 and point (b) above) and that the origin of its unemployment problems go back to the



beginning of the 1970s, when it proved unable to increase its rate of job creation to match the increase in the number of people seeking employment.

By contrast, the USA has been able to respond to an even larger increase in the number of people looking for jobs with a strong increase in employment creation. Japan has also managed to increase its rate of job creation. The increase was less substantial than that recorded in the USA, but was more or less in line with the rate of increase in the country's active population. Where these two regions differ strongly, however, is in the way the increase in job creation was achieved. In the USA the job creation of the last 20 years resulted essentially from a modest rate of output growth and a very high employment content (low average productivity) of that growth. Japan, on the other hand, experienced an employment content of growth lower than that of the Community (a higher average productivity) but was able to couple that with a much stronger rate of output growth.

Chart 3
Active population in the EC, USA and Japan
(index: 1960-73 = 100)



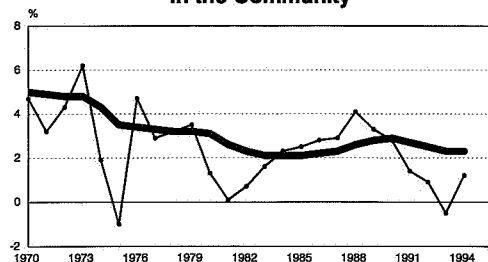
The macroeconomic causes of unemployment

As the contributions received from the Member States show, it is now largely acknowledged that the decline in the rate of job creation in the Community after the first oil-price shock is to a very large extent the result of poor macroeconomic policies. Structural and external factors also played a large role, in particular the inadequate adjustment of industrial structures towards new market opportunities both within the Community and elsewhere in the world, but the main explanation for the poor

unemployment performance of the Community over the past two decades is to be found in the constraints that unresolved distributional conflicts and insufficient structural adjustment placed on macroeconomic policies.

Low investment is one striking consequence. Lower rates of capital accumulation in turn took their toll on the competitiveness of the Community's economy and on its productive capacity which is now expanding much more slowly than in the past. The potential rate of growth, i.e. the rate of growth at which it can grow for many years without experiencing overheating problems, is now estimated to be much less than it used to be in the 1960s: just over 2% against more than 4.5% (see Chart 4).

Chart 4
Actual and potential rate of GDP growth in the Community



The present recession is, to a large extent, a consequence of the combination of a lower potential rate of growth and of policy errors which led to actual rates of growth in excess of the potential rate. At the end of 1987, the fear that the stock exchange crash might provoke a slump led to a worldwide substantial loosening of monetary policy. However, at that time the rate of growth of the Community's economy was already picking up although this was not yet fully reflected in the available statistics. The prospects opened by the single market project and the eventual feeding through of the positive effects of lower oil prices had just sparked off a period of strong investment expansion which was revealed by the statistics only in the spring of 1988.

The monetary stimulus, therefore, came on top of a positive underlying trend. Given

that no compensatory tightening of budgetary policy took place, the Community's economy experienced in 1988 a very strong rate of growth: 4.1% (against the 1.3% forecast by the Commission's services — and many other forecasters — in January 1988).

This rate of growth, although not very high in historical terms, was higher than the potential one. Given that the rate of growth remained above potential until 1990, tensions appeared. Inflation accelerated sharply in 1989 and wages followed in 1990. Since the authorities were committed to a stability course, monetary policy became more restrictive. This unbalanced policy mix had obvious negative consequences for investment and growth. The fiscal impulse resulting from German unification complicated things further. On the one hand, it sustained growth when world demand was faltering, but, on the other hand, it imposed an additional compensatory tightening of monetary policy and led to an even more distorted policy mix and a deeper recession.

The conflict between, on the one hand, budgetary and wage trends, which adapted very slowly, and, on the other hand, the continuing pressure exerted by monetary policy constitutes the single most important factor behind the present recession.

Employment intensity

The **employment intensity** is the relationship between the rate of growth of an economy and its rate of employment creation. Very often it is measured by the so-called '*employment threshold*', which is a purely descriptive measure for the employment content of growth. This threshold is the percentage change above which the growth rate of GDP leads to increases in employment. Contrary to a widespread belief — the phrase 'growth without jobs' is often heard — the employment intensity of growth has not deteriorated over recent years. In fact it is now higher (the employment threshold is lower) than in the 1960s and it has hardly changed over the last 15 to 20 years (see Chart 5).

The employment intensity of growth is determined by numerous factors, such as the relative cost of labour (especially for unskilled work) and capital, working time including part-time work, the sectoral composition of employment, technological developments and a large number of microeconomic conditions. It is difficult to isolate the effects on employment of any of these factors so it is therefore easier to focus on the broad overall relationship between growth and employment, i.e. the **employment threshold**.

The employment threshold corresponds by definition to the trend of the apparent labour productivity of the economy as a whole. Thus, lowering the employment threshold means lowering the overall productivity of the economy. But there is no contradiction between calls for increased productivity growth in all sectors open to international competition and at the same time calling for measures which increase the weight of sectors where productivity increases are low. In fact, the process whereby the increased productivity emanating from the high-productivity sectors feeds through to all sectors of the economy is at the heart of any development model. Productivity must increase to guarantee the international competitiveness of a country and to increase the amount of material wealth distributable among the whole community. At the same time, as the wealth of a country increases, so can the relative importance of certain sectors, with usually a high labour content, which help distribute the wealth so created and at the same time improve the conditions for additional increases in this wealth.

1.3. Unemployment can be reduced

The Commission recommends that the Community sets itself the **objective of creating at least 15 million new jobs, thereby halving the present rate of unemployment by the year 2000**. This can only be a **target**, but it would be of great importance for our citizens, in particular for the young who see

poor prospects of employment ahead of them. A target of this order of magnitude is the minimum required to make a significant dent in the human waste represented by unemployment.

The target, although ambitious, is not out of line with the past performance of the Community's economy or with what the performance of other economies would indicate to be possible. Over the next five to ten years, the Community labour supply will probably increase by about half a percentage point a year. Demographic trends will account for most of this increase. The population of working age is expected to increase by around 0.3% a year, a rate substantially lower than that of the last 20 years. In line with past trends, the rate of participation (0.7% a year) is also expected to increase once jobs again become available, thus providing the rest of the assumed increase in the labour supply. Half a percentage point a year is therefore the rate of increase in employment the Community needs just to keep unemployment stable. To the year 2000 this means creating almost five million jobs only to prevent unemployment from increasing. A reduction in unemployment to about half its present level (i.e. to 5 to 6% of the active population) by the year 2000 deadline requires the creation of an additional 10 million jobs.

If, as a result of structural changes, participation rates were to increase faster than what past experience suggests, then either the unemployment target would have to be revised downwards or the ambitions regarding employment creation would have to be scaled up.

Achieving the target of creating at least 15 million jobs by the year 2000 implies that from 1995 onwards, once the present recession is overcome, employment creation remains steadily a rate of increase of around 2% a year, certainly an impressive and ambitious target.

Between 1984 and 1990, a slightly shorter period of time than the one separating us from the year 2000, the Community economy was able to create more than nine million net new jobs. Between 1988 and 1990, the average annual rate of increase in employment was 1.6%. The proposed target

requires a performance better than that of these years, but the difference is not so large as to suggest that it may be out of reach. Other economies have done even better. The USA, for instance, has recorded an annual average rate of increase in employment of 1.9% over the 17-year period 1974-90!

The immediate policy objective of the Community must be to overcome the recession and start creating jobs again. Section 1.6 deals with this objective. The choice of the policies which will have to be implemented to overcome the recession is conditional, to a certain extent, on the medium-term growth pattern which is considered most appropriate to bring about the required increase in employment. It is therefore useful to identify the medium-term growth pattern which is to be aimed at before discussing the policies needed to promote a recovery since the latter must be consistent with the former.

The present recession is resulting in a large net destruction of jobs (about four million jobs lost in 1992-93). But the Community's present unemployment problem has more deep-seated causes. The combination of the current potential rate of growth and of the employment intensity of that growth is not sufficient to generate the necessary increase in the number of jobs. If growth were to return only to a rate close to the current potential rate of growth (just over 2%), the present employment intensity of growth would not even allow increases in employment which kept pace with the increases in the labour supply and consequently unemployment would go on rising.

A higher rate of job creation can be achieved through various combinations of faster growth and higher employment intensity. The contributions received from the Member States and the EFTA countries contain a wide range of measures which help to reduce unemployment. Some measures aim essentially at increasing the rate of growth, others aim to increase its employment content while a few produce positive effects in both directions.

It is not necessary, nor would it be wise, to seek to lay down in advance what precise combination of growth and of greater

employment content of growth should be achieved. Efforts must be undertaken in both directions at the same time. Given the difficulties in making progress in these areas, which both lie outside the direct control of policy-makers, there is no risk of going too far in either direction.

However, there are significant differences in the scope for progress towards faster sustainable growth and in that towards a higher employment intensity. In addition, the social implications can be quite different and there are some important trade-offs. It is therefore right to examine the degree of realism and the implications of the main different alternatives: modest growth and very high employment intensity, and stronger growth and higher employment intensity.

(a) Modest growth and very high employment intensity

Pessimism over the chances of achieving stronger growth and worries over the environmental consequences of such stronger growth lead to predictions that the necessary rate of job creation would only be attained through a relatively modest rate of growth and a much higher employment content of this growth. Some people think it more desirable to aim, for instance, for a combination of a return to rates of growth close to the present potential rate of growth of the Community (just over 2% a year) and the achievement of an employment intensity much higher than the present one (a gap between output growth and employment growth of less than half a percentage point).

This proposition is usually inspired by the performance of the USA. Indeed, between 1973 and 1990 the USA experienced a rate of growth, 2.3% per year, but labour productivity grew by 0.4% per year, hence a growth in employment of 1.9% per year on average over the 17 years. This growth practically matched a growth in the labour supply which was much higher than in Europe and held down unemployment to cyclical fluctuations around a nearly constant average (5.6% in 1972, 5.5% in 1990). During the same period, however, real wages per head grew by 0.4% a year compared with 1.5% a year in the Community.

It is not clear, however, whether an increase in the employment intensity of the order of magnitude required to achieve this growth pattern is actually possible in the European economic and social context.

An increase in the employment intensity of Community growth to match the US performance would require the implementation, on a large scale, of measures increasing the willingness of employers to hire workers and in particular:

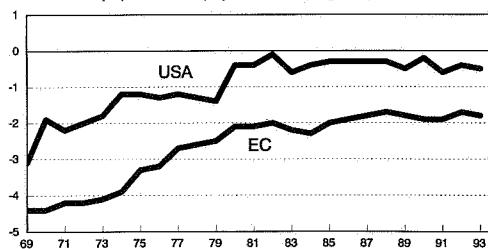
- (i) a considerable downward widening of the scale of wage costs in order to reintegrate those market activities which at present are priced out of it;
- (ii) a reduction in all other costs associated with taking on or maintaining labour, e.g. social security rules.

The experience of the last 15 to 20 years suggests that such an increase may be very difficult to achieve. During the 1980s, some progress has been made in reviewing the regulations that hinder job creation and substantial wage moderation has lowered the relative price of labour as a factor of production, but the employment intensity of growth in the Community has hardly changed (see Chart 5).

Chart 5

Employment intensity of growth

(Gap between employment and output growth)



Probably, the progress that has been made towards increasing it has only offset other factors working in the other direction such as productivity gains resulting from the introduction of more efficient production techniques and the rationalization made possible by the completion of the single market.

In addition, such a growth pattern would have important implications for wage trends. Since more employment would be created for a given rate of growth, the apparent productivity of labour (real GDP per person employed) would by definition be lower. As a consequence, the room for real wage increases would also be smaller. Given the need to improve investment profitability, at least to improve the present weak competitive position of the Community, gross real wages per head would have to remain practically stable. Furthermore, budgetary consolidation might lead to a decline of average net real wages.

Some other macroeconomic implications must also be stressed. This lower growth scenario would also be less positive for the rest of the world since it would mean slower increases in imports with detrimental effects on the developing countries and East European countries' exports and income developments. In addition, there may be some unwelcome social aspects of the specific measures leading to a more employment-creating growth. In particular, the downward widening in the wage distribution would result in a substantial real decrease in the lowest wages. This would not be possible without a lowering of unemployment compensations and social protection schemes. Combined with the expansion of part-time work, this would also, *ceteris paribus*, widen the existing income distribution towards larger inequality and, at the limit, could create 'working poor' unable to survive decently from their wages and thus lead to a form of exclusion just as damaging as unemployment. If the spirit of the European social model is to be kept, compensatory measures would have to be taken (e.g. negative income taxes for the lowest income groups) with significant budgetary costs.

(b) Stronger growth and more employment intensity

The difficulties and problems abovementioned suggest that the necessary pace of job creation is more likely to be achieved by a growth pattern combining a more modest increase in the employment intensity of growth with a stronger rate of growth. For

instance, if from 1995 onwards the Community could achieve an **increase in the employment intensity of growth of between half and one percentage point** (i.e. a gap between output growth and employment growth of between 1 and 1½ percentage points against about 2 points at present) combined with a sustained rate of growth of at least 3% a year, then the unemployment target for the year 2000 would also be achieved. Roughly two thirds of the new jobs would come from stronger growth and about one third from the higher employment intensity of growth.

Real wages per head would be able to increase moderately, but given the resulting increase in employment (2%) the real value of total wages would increase by between 2 and 2½% in real terms. This would be curtailed somewhat by the effects of the necessary budgetary consolidation, but would still leave room for a more substantial real improvement in living standards and an adequate increase in private consumption.

Rates of growth of this order of magnitude are consistent with an environmentally sustainable growth pattern. Indeed, they will make it possible to create the resources to reduce present pollution levels. In addition, stronger investment will also have positive environmental effects since it will accelerate the introduction of new, less-polluting techniques.

An increase in the employment intensity of growth of the order of magnitude of the one envisaged in this second scenario, while not being easy to achieve, would not require the drastic measures needed to reach the performance of the USA. In addition it could be achieved with the consensus of most of those concerned thus improving the chances of implementing at the same time the macroeconomic policies required to achieve higher growth.

This question of how to increase the employment content of growth is dealt with more specifically in Chapter 8.

1.4. The road to higher employment creation

Increasing the rate of growth which the economy of the Community can sustain for

many years and increasing the employment content of growth requires a strategy based on **three inseparable elements**:

- (a) the creation and the maintenance of a **macroeconomic framework** which instead of constraining market forces, as has often happened in the recent past, supports them;
- (b) determined actions in the structural area aimed at increasing the **competitiveness** of European industry and at removing the rigidities which are curbing its dynamism and preventing it from reaping the full benefits of the internal market; an adequate framework for the developing of new market opportunities should be set up;
- (c) active policies and structural changes in the **labour market** and in the regulations limiting the expansion of certain sectors (notably the service sector) which will make it easier to employ people and which will therefore increase the employment content of growth.

The necessary actions in the structural area will be discussed in other chapters of the White Paper. This section draws the attention to the most important macroeconomic factors so as to underline a series of important implications and to help identify some useful intermediate policy targets. Its conclusions help to identify the framework which must be implemented to guarantee that actions in other areas translate in actual faster job creation.

Faster growth is a necessary component of any strategy aimed at reducing unemployment significantly. The achievement of this goal depends on a series of elements, some of which are outside the direct control of Community policy-makers. A healthy world economy and the maintenance of an open trading system are obvious examples. But to a very large, and actually increasing, extent the achievement of faster growth depends on implementing the right policies within the Community.

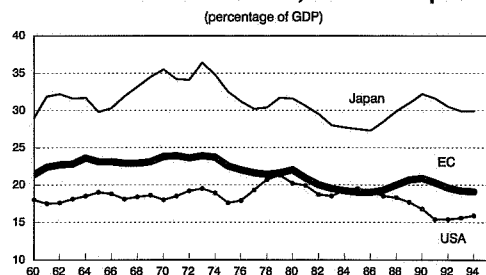
The real challenge facing policy-makers is not just to increase the rate of growth, already a daunting task, but to ensure that the higher rate of growth can be maintained over many years, i.e. to ensure that from

1995, growth remains at the required higher level up to and beyond the year 2000 and that the overheating which appeared in 1989/90 does not arise. This implies increasing the productive capacity of the Community's economy, in other words **increasing its potential rate of growth**.

Given that the capital/output ratio changes very slowly over time, a sustainable increase in production requires an **increase in the available stock of capital**. In turn, this presupposes an increase in investment leading, over time, to a much higher **share of investment** in GDP. This might have to **increase from the present 19% to somewhere in the 23-24% region** (see Chart 6). A shift of this magnitude can only be accomplished over many years.

Chart 6

Investment shares : EC, USA and Japan



Fortunately, however, the actual rate of growth of the Community can reach the target value of at least 3% faster than the potential rate of growth since during the initial years it will be possible to exploit the spare capacity created by the present period of sub-potential growth.

Economic policy must therefore aim at fostering a higher rate of growth and, at the same time at encouraging investment so that it will grow faster than consumption. This relatively slower real expansion of consumption is the price that society must pay over the next few years to ensure a more equitable distribution of the access to gainful employment and to ensure its future overall prosperity.

Higher investment would produce positive results over and above the mechanical relationship between capital and output just mentioned. It would, for instance, accel-

erate the incorporation of new technologies into the production process thus leading to more efficient and more environmentally sustainable production. The competitiveness of the economy of the Community would be greatly enhanced.

Creating the conditions for investment-led growth, however, is another difficult task. A necessary, but not sufficient condition, is to make sure that investment profitability increases. But improving business confidence is the key element.

- (i) **Increasing investment profitability** requires distributing productivity increases among capital and labour. During most of the 1980s, real wages increased in the Community on average by one percentage point less than productivity. This could constitute an acceptable rule of thumb to be followed to achieve the necessary improvement in profitability and competitiveness. Together with the expected growth in employment, such an increase would provide for a steady expansion of households' real disposable income and of private consumption.

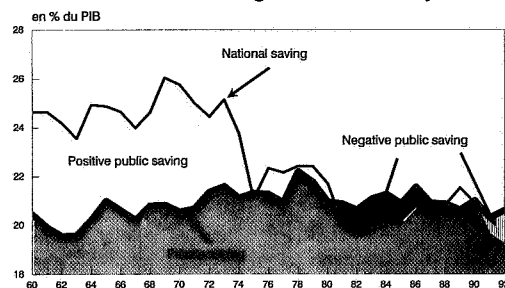
- (ii) **Improving business confidence** calls for a series of other actions which range from the maintenance of a stable macroeconomic environment and an adequate level of demand growth, to a determination to continue the process of structural adjustment and the launching of bold projects which demonstrate the will and ability of governments to promote growth (further trade liberalization in the GATT framework and the total opening-up of the single market, trans-European networks, far-sighted R&D efforts, other infrastructure projects, etc.).

An increase in investment, however achieved, has to be accompanied by a corresponding **increase in the rate of national saving** to prevent the appearance of inflationary pressures and balance of payments disequilibria. The Community's current account is presently recording a deficit while its position as an advanced industrialized group warrants a surplus so as to allow it to transfer real resources to the developing world. The necessary increase in

the rate of national saving must come essentially from an increase in public saving (reduction of public deficits) since the savings behaviour of the private sector (households and enterprises) is very difficult to influence (see Chart 7 which shows how little it has changed over time). The deterioration in national saving which has taken place in the Community over the last 30 years is due almost entirely to the deterioration of the position of the public sector.

Chart 7

National Saving in the Community



1.5. The policies to reduce unemployment

The analyses conducted over many years have identified many policy actions which influence the rate of growth and the employment intensity of growth. Most of these actions have already been tried and have achieved some success. Their implementation is not painless as very often these actions imply a trade-off between sacrifices now and rewards at a later date. It is not surprising, therefore, that their implementation has almost always been discontinued or not pursued for a sufficiently long period of time.

Combination of macroeconomic and structural policies

The combination of the measures is also important. Very often an appropriate combination yields a result greater than the sum of the gains to be expected from each individual measure. In addition, **there are strong interactions between macroeconomic and structural policies**. Structural policies increase the effectiveness of macroeconomic policies through the removal of some of the constraints that limit their use; the positive effects of structural policies become

apparent only in a sound macroeconomic context which allows stronger growth and, finally, implementation of structural policies becomes easier in a context of stronger growth.

The policies required to consolidate growth and to increase its employment content coincide to a large extent, with the policies which are needed to bring the Community's economy out of the recession. The seriousness of the present situation increases the likelihood that these policies will be implemented with sufficient determination. **But the most serious challenge facing policy-makers will be to maintain the awareness of the need to implement appropriate macroeconomic and structural policies even when the recession is overcome.**

Once the best policy mix for the attainment of the medium-term goal of higher growth with a higher employment intensity is identified, it will be necessary to assess the extent to which it also contributes to achieving the immediate objective of overcoming the recession. Should it prove insufficient, it will be necessary to examine whether other policy actions of a shorter-term nature are possible without endangering the achievement of the more important medium-term goals. This assessment will be conducted in Section 1.6.

(a) Structural policies

The depth of the present crisis is largely due to insufficient progress in adapting the structures of the Community's economy to the changing technological, social and international environment. Although a consensus emerged during the 1980s on the need to accompany and accelerate structural change instead of trying to slow it down, the pace at which the European economy adjusted to change was only able to match, but not to surpass, that of its major competitors, with the result that vulnerability to cyclical downturns and external shocks remained high. Nevertheless, a mentality in favour of change and willingness to undertake a fundamental reassessment of corporate performance has grown up in Europe over the past decade. In order to achieve optimal results, however, this positive development must now be assisted and fostered by public authorities through the

identification and removal of remaining barriers and obstacles to the successful implementation of strategies for change by firms. Only through the structural adaptation of industry can the twin requirements of higher productivity and more jobs be achieved.

Action in the structural area is essentially the responsibility of Member States. However, many of the policy areas that have a decisive impact on structural adjustment and competitiveness are either influenced by various Community policies or are primarily dealt with at the Community level. The Community can therefore play a very useful role in implementing appropriate actions in the fields where it has primary responsibility such as trade and competition policies.

A competitive environment is basic to an efficient allocation of resources and stimulates investment innovation and R&D. However in rapidly changing economic circumstances (globalization of markets, speed and cost of technological change) major restructuring and adaptation by firms is necessary. To meet this challenge they need to be able to restructure unilaterally or bilaterally in cooperation with other firms (mergers, strategic alliances, etc.). This restructuring can be facilitated and speeded up by the timely and judicious use of the available instruments such as State aids, cooperation between companies, etc. This proaction by firms and States needs to be distinguished from anti-competitive practices by firms or States that can slow the necessary structural adjustments.

Structural action can equally help to create the right business and consumer environment by making sure that the legal and regulatory infrastructure that has been created as the basis for the single market operates fairly and efficiently. In particular, the Community can **make sure that the regulatory environment in which business and consumers operate is stable and predictable, and places the minimum bureaucratic burden on economic operators**, particularly small and medium-sized businesses. Finally, the Community can support, encourage and coordinate efforts by Member States to accelerate the diffusion throughout the European economy of those technologies, like infor-

mation technologies and biotechnologies, that will shape our society in the future and represent the key factor in shaping global competition in the decades to come. These policy issues will be further examined in the following chapters.

The Community needs an adequate framework for the developing of new market opportunities. In Europe some sectors are traditionally the exclusive preserve of non-market services or public utilities, in particular when it comes to the fulfilment of public needs. Reforms aiming at separating the different functions of public authorities with regard to the supply of such services, as producer, purchaser and regulator, in sectors such as health care, telecommunications, etc., should enable the needs of users to be better served at less cost for public finances and with market creation potential.

In recommending actions to be implemented in the Member States it is sometimes not very useful to make general statements since the individual situations are very different. Calls for a specific type of action to solve one particular problem in a country, where the problem is very serious, are resisted by individuals in other countries where the problem never arose or has already largely been solved. The following paragraphs attempt to identify areas for action common to the largest possible number of Member States. The recommendations must be seen as a framework within which Member States will have to identify their individual scope for action.

The necessary structural measures will be discussed in the other chapters of the White Paper. Here it will suffice to mention that action will have to be taken in **three main areas**:

- (i) **Greater flexibility** should be introduced in the economy as a whole. In particular, the **regulatory framework** should become more enterprise-friendly.
- (ii) Strategies should be developed to create an **efficient labour market** able to respond to new competitive situations.
- (iii) The **international environment must be kept open** to allow the Community to participate fully in the development of those areas of the world where the biggest potential of unsatisfied demand presently exists and which are likely to experience the highest rates of growth over the next decade.

(b) Macroeconomic policies

The main task facing macroeconomic policy-makers is to eliminate the conflicts among policy objectives which have plagued the Community over the last 20 years and, more acutely, over recent years. Eliminating these conflicts will make growth, employment and real convergence compatible again with price stability and nominal convergence and will ensure that progress towards EMU will go hand in hand with stronger employment creation. In a stable and supportive macroeconomic framework market forces will be able to deploy themselves unhindered and the possibilities opened up by the internal market will be realized.

At the macroeconomic level, the first medium-term objective will be to maintain the **stability of monetary policy**. Monetary authorities have, over recent years, behaved in a way which is consistent with an inflation target of between 2 and 3%. It is necessary that budgetary policy and wage behaviour adapt to this objective as soon as possible and remain compatible with it. Interest rates will come down once inflationary expectations are stabilized and the perspective of lower budget deficits is established.

In addition it will be essential to make policy coordination more effective and to maintain exchange-rate stability and the EMU perspective. This will help to reinforce the stability of the macroeconomic framework, it will increase the credibility of policy-makers and will shorten the delay until it will be possible to reap the full benefits of monetary union. The implementation of a growth-oriented strategy, such as the one presented in this document will add credibility to the commitment to exchange-rate stability.

Budgetary policy will have to contribute to the medium-term goal of more growth and employment essentially in two ways: i) achieving debt sustainability and ii) contributing to the necessary increase in national saving. The first goal is necessary to **reduce the burden that unbalanced budgetary policies exert on monetary policies and on fiscal flexibility**. The Maastricht criterion for budget deficits (less than 3% of GDP) will constitute a useful reference point in the pursuit of this first goal. With a return to stronger growth the budget deficit criterion could be met by the Community as a whole by 1997. Individual countries may reach this target sooner or later than the Community average depending on their starting positions.

In a longer-term perspective, budgetary policy will have to contribute to increased national saving. This will require increasing substantially public saving and will imply budget deficits significantly below the 3% reference value indicated in the Maastricht Treaty (between zero and one percentage point).

An essential element of budgetary restraint policy will be the adoption of measures to improve the financial situation of the social security system.

Wages. There is a widespread consensus on the need for continued wage moderation and on the positive results it could produce. In their joint opinion of 3 July 1992, the social partners at the European level presented a consensus view for appropriate wage developments: *'The conduct of wage negotiations is under the responsibility of the social partners. The more credible and socially acceptable economic policies are, the easier the social partners can anticipate low or decreasing inflation rates in the results of their wage negotiations. This would reduce the strain on monetary policy and contribute to the reduction of short-term interest rates. Furthermore, wage developments have to take into account the requirements of the profitability of employment-creating investment, the competitiveness of enterprises on world markets and the implications of full economic and monetary union. The non-inflationary and sustainable growth process, thus generated, would provide the appropriate scope for real wage increases which under-*

lines the interrelation between the European integration process and rising living standards.' The difficulties arise when these general principles are translated into actual wage decisions.

There is evidence of **inconsistency between the stability objectives of the central banks and past and current wage behaviour** which bears part of the responsibility for the continuing high level of short-term interest rates. This can be shown by some simple calculations. Under normal conditions, nominal wages per head could increase by an amount equivalent to the inflation target of the monetary authorities (2 to 3%, as noted above) plus that part of the increase in productivity which can be distributed to labour. In the present situation, the increase in productivity results only from a shedding of labour in excess of the decline in production and does not correspond to any distributable creation of wealth. At present, therefore, nominal wages per head should not increase by more than 2 to 3% a year. However, notwithstanding a recent substantial decline, current trends in some Member States and in the Community as a whole are still higher than this figure thus giving cause for concern to monetary authorities.

The elimination of this conflict is a necessary condition for the return to growth in the present situation, but once the Community's economy is again on a sustained growth path, it will be important to ensure that wages continue to increase in line with the stability objective and the need to allow for an increase in investment profitability and competitiveness (the rule of thumb of *'productivity minus one percentage point'* identified in Section 1.4.). It must be underlined that these EC-wide prescriptions should give room for an appropriate differentiation according to Member countries, regions and vocational qualifications.

1.6. Overcoming the recession

The first requirement that the policies to be implemented must satisfy to overcome the recession is that of being consistent with the aim of the medium-term growth pattern. Within this framework, overcoming the recession calls above all for a **restoration of confidence**. Business leaders, the workforce and citizens in general must be convinced

that the authorities will be able to correct the present imbalances and maintain over many years a sound and stable macroeconomic environment.

This requires measures in both the macroeconomic and structural areas. Macroeconomic policy actions can rapidly change the environment in which businesses operate, but structural actions are essential to the improvement in their confidence. The effects of structural policies will be felt essentially in the medium term, but determined actions are now vital in convincing economic agents that action is under way which will bring results later.

In addition it will be essential to give a new and visible impetus to the process of cooperation at the international level. Rapid implementation of the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty, conclusion of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations, and bold new initiatives *vis-à-vis* the countries of Eastern Europe and of the Third World would be very important signals.

As soon as the recovery sets in, the economy will be able to reap fully the benefits of the structural adjustment which has taken place over the last decade and of the completion of the internal market. These structural measures bring substantial efficiency gains which during periods of slow growth remain unexploited.

Improving rapidly the quality of the policy mix

Lower interest rates constitute a powerful instrument to boost the Community's economy in the short term. Interest rates have already come down significantly over the last 12 months. However, given the depth of the present recession they still remain too high in many countries, especially at the short-term end. Under these circumstances, the first requirement is to create the conditions for further substantial reductions in short-term interest rates. This calls essentially for expected budgetary and wage developments to be kept in line with the monetary authorities' stability objectives. Any lowering of short-term rates not warranted by appropriate budgetary and wage behaviours would risk being offset by expectations of higher future infla-

tion and higher long-term rates. On the other hand, if credible plans for budgetary consolidation and agreements leading to more moderate wage increases were to materialize, expectations would be favourably influenced and central banks might be able to lower short-term interest rates in advance of actual developments.

A substantial lowering of short-term interest rates throughout the Community would reduce tensions within the ERM and would improve the financial position of firms and public budgets. The scope for reductions is large: interest rates could come down substantially in Germany if the appropriate policies are implemented while in other countries the reductions could be even larger to the extent that interest rate differentials can be reduced. A further significant reduction would signal to economic agents that the worst is over, that monetary policy had been loosened as much as it was possible and that nothing would be gained by further postponing any investment decision which may have been contingent on the availability of the best financing conditions.

A lowering of short-term rates in the Community would have a positive impact on the competitiveness of European enterprises. Together with the restoration of confidence, this would trigger an export/investment-led cyclical upswing in the Community.

Budgetary policy

Action in the budgetary area depends on an assessment of the likely impact on demand and on business and consumer confidence of changes in the present budgetary stance. In 1991 and 1992, Member States have allowed budget deficits to deteriorate since it was considered that this would lend a measure of support to domestic demand. At the beginning of 1993 additional efforts at the national level took place in the framework of the Edinburgh growth initiative. By mid-1993, however, Member States reached a consensus¹ that no room for manoeuvre in the short term was available: any additional deterioration in budget deficits was more likely to depress overall demand,

¹ EPC Opinion of 8 July 1993 and EcoFin Council conclusions of 12 July 1993.

through its negative effect on confidence, than to support it. On the contrary, they recognized the need for concrete, credible, medium-term consolidation programmes.

The immediate target of these programmes should be to prevent further deterioration in budgetary positions and to create the prospects of consolidation once the recovery sets in. The severity of the necessary adjustment will depend on the specific conditions of each Member State, but efforts in this direction are required in almost all countries. In addition, all governments should attempt to switch expenditure as far as is practicable, towards those items which most directly influence growth prospects: education, R&D, infrastructure investments, etc.

Wages

The previous section highlighted the existence of an inconsistency between the inflation target pursued by monetary authorities and actual wage behaviour in many countries. The sooner this inconsistency is eliminated, the sooner short-term interest rates can be reduced. In some cases, however, the gap is so large that progress will inevitably take some time. Tripartite agreements between the social partners and governments should be exploited where possible.

Developing a broad social consensus

The continuation of the EMU process is a key element to secure a stable macroeconomic framework enabling the achievement of higher, sustainable, growth. The Community has long acknowledged the negative influence exchange-rate instability has on business confidence and there is a powerful case for arguing that the full benefits of a single market can only be reaped in a monetary union. These considerations have been at the basis of the Treaty on European Union and maintain their validity today notwithstanding the ERM crisis of the last 12 months. A group of countries so closely knit by a web of trade and financial links as the European Community needs a stable monetary environment both internally and externally.

To restore the credibility of the EMU process Member States must retheir commitment to this goal and back up their words with actions. **Economic policy coordination between the Member States must be made more effective.** This calls essentially for the development of a consensus as broad as possible on the policy framework outlined in this document and apportioning in each Member State the efforts which will be required from all parties (using social dialogue procedures wherever possible). Those in employment must be convinced that the measures called for in this document will work and that the solidarity they will show in accepting some sacrifices will effectively result in those now deprived of gainful employment being given a real chance. Increased efforts to improve the situation of the public finances in order to meet the criteria set out in the Maastricht Treaty will require an **update of the convergence programmes** which remain useful instruments for the development of a debate leading to such a consensus. The **guidelines for economic policy aimed at dealing with deficiencies identified in this paper should be agreed as a matter of urgency**, if business confidence is to be restored.

A Community dimension

The success of such a policy course in restoring growth depends, however, on various factors which are to a greater or lesser extent outside the control of policymakers; in particular business and consumer confidence and the performance of the Community's main trading partners. It is very likely that given the severity of the present situation and the size of the budgetary adjustment which will be inevitable in many countries, that the recovery will be modest and hesitant. This may call for an intensification of the Community initiatives agreed at the European Council meetings in Edinburgh and in Copenhagen. In a climate of growing business confidence, various Community projects, such as the trans-European networks, lend themselves to initiatives which can mobilize large financial resources, coming essentially from the private sector, to finance useful projects.

II — COMPETITIVENESS

Chapter 2

The conditions for growth and greater competitiveness

A. Towards global competitiveness

For the level of employment in the Community to improve, firms must achieve global competitiveness on open and competitive markets, both inside and outside Europe. It is the responsibility of the national and Community authorities to provide industry with a favourable environment, to open up clear and reliable prospects for it and to promote its international competitiveness. This responsibility is now enshrined in the Treaty on European Union. Back in 1991 the Council of Ministers adopted guidelines for a Community industrial policy geared to such an objective.

The globalization of economies and markets, which involves the intensification of international competition through the emergence of a potentially unique worldwide market for an expanding range of goods, services and factors, brings out the full importance of that responsibility on the part of national and Community authorities as regards competitiveness. We must increasingly think in terms of competitive rather than comparative advantages. Comparative advantages traditionally relate to endowment in factors such as natural resources and are therefore fairly rigid. Competitive advantages are based on more qualitative factors and can thus be influenced, to a large degree, by corporate strategies and by public policies. In such a context, factor mobility and the capacity to combine factors effectively and to organize the social consensus on the share-out of value-added are becoming much more important than the initial factor endowment.

The Community will be able to improve its global competitiveness considerably provided it achieves a substantial recovery in its invest-

ment ratio (see Chapter 1). For this, it enjoys significant comparative advantages: the potential of its labour force and the social consensus enabling that potential to be exploited, its valuable scientific and technical know-how, its integrated market, the density and quality of its infrastructures, the improved financial structures of its firms, and the diversity of its culture and regions. An economy based on the creation, dissemination and exploitation of knowledge will be one of the dominant features of the 21st century, and against such a background a number of these competitive factors will play a crucial role in generating a recovery in growth and an increase in employment.

The completion of the Europe-wide frontier-free market on 31 December 1992 and the improvements in its operation envisaged by the strategic programme will allow firms to benefit from economies of scale, reduce their administrative and financial costs, have easier and more competitive access to private-sector and public-sector procurement, and cooperate more efficiently with one another. This will give the Community a firm and well-organized base from which to tackle the new problems posed by international competitiveness.

However, the Community will also have to overcome the handicaps which have contributed to the erosion of its competitiveness within the Triad (Community, United States and Japan) in recent years: Apart from the macroeconomic policy imbalances that have contributed to the real appreciation of Community currencies, there is firstly, as emphasized by the Member States, the problem that their industries are not sufficiently well represented on expanding new markets, either in geographical terms or in terms of products, with its firms sometimes at a disadvantage in the face of the dominant positions held by certain international groups and the growth of strategic alliances. Secondly, the regulatory environment is still too rigid, and administrative and managerial traditions too centralized and compartmentalized. Lastly, government policies are often still too defensive and do not take

sufficient account of the new constraints imposed by global competition.

Four overriding objectives must be pursued jointly by industry and the authorities if the Community's industrial competitiveness is to generate the highest possible level of employment:

- **Helping European firms to adapt to the new globalized and interdependent competitive situation.**
- **Exploiting the competitive advantages associated with the gradual shift to a knowledge-based economy.**
- **Promote a sustainable development of industry.**
- **Reducing the time-lag between the pace of change in supply and the corresponding adjustments in demand.**

This chapter analyses the Community's strengths and weaknesses when it comes to tackling these challenges and then goes on to identify the main components of a policy of global competitiveness.

2.1. Views of the Member States

Among the factors having a major impact on the competitiveness of the Community economy, Member States point particularly to the following: the negative effects of public deficits on investment; impaired functioning of the labour market leading — whether in terms of cost, skills or flexibility in the organization of work — to a mismatch between supply of and demand for labour; inadequate assimilation of new technologies combined with failure to exploit properly the results of research and technological development, leading to difficulties in concentrating the production of goods and services in leading-edge and high value-added industries.

A number of Member States report market rigidities or distortions in resource allocation caused by government intervention, either through excessive regulation or through various restrictions on competition. Some Member States point to the heavier burden which the ageing of the population is imposing on the economy, and one Member State establishes a link between competitiveness and the smaller number of

hours worked on average in the Community compared with its main partners.

2.2. The Community's competitive position in a globalized economy: Strengths and weaknesses

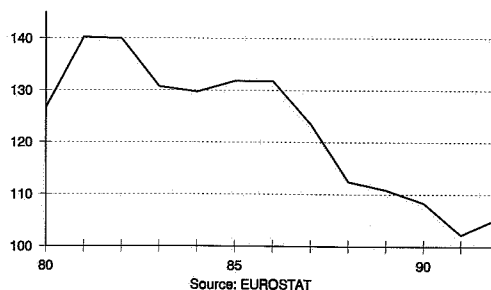
Since 1989 the Community has experienced a gradual decline in the growth rate of the production of goods and services.¹ Although the trend in its industrial competitiveness is also worrying, it does have considerable strengths on which it can draw in order to redress the position and to manage its transition to the 21st century successfully.

Weaknesses

In the fierce competition prevailing on world markets, Community industry is handicapped by the deterioration in its commercial competitiveness, by its failure to establish itself sufficiently on expanding new markets, by an unduly low level of R&D investment and by productivity rates which still lag behind those of its major competitors. Most Member States agree with this assessment.

- (a) **The trade performance** of Community industry has deteriorated since 1980, as the downward trend in the rate of cover of imports by exports shows (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Cover of imports by exports



¹ In the remainder of the text, the term 'industry' is used to cover the production of both goods and services.

In recent years, Community industry has not only lost market shares as a result of the growing power of the newly-industrialized countries, as was foreseeable, but has also had to give ground to the United States of America and Japan.

The situation has deteriorated *vis-à-vis* the USA because of the adverse trend of exchange rates. In the case of Japan, the reason is rather a failure to move into expanding new markets as quickly as Japanese industry. The erosion in the market shares of Community industry has been accentuated by the growing proportion of world trade accounted for by the newly-industrialized countries of South-East Asia.

Community industry's trade performance is fairly uneven. A large part of industry (two thirds in terms of activity) lost market shares between 1986 and 1991, either as a result of increased import penetration of the Community market or because of losses on the export front, or through a combination of the two.

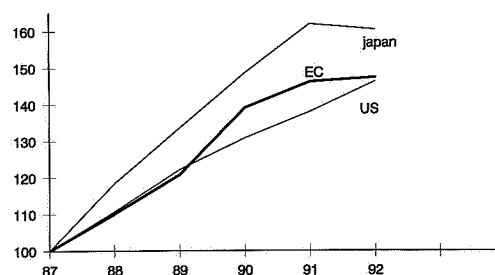
- (b) **Community industry improved its position on markets experiencing slow growth** (railway equipment, cotton, textile and sewing machinery, miscellaneous textiles, tanning and dressing, animal slaughter and meat preparation, grain processing and ethyl alcohol distillation), while **its performance deteriorated on markets with high value-added** such as office automation, information technology, electronics, and medical and surgical equipment. Its structure is therefore not yet geared to that of expanding new markets. This time-lag is all the more damaging in that these high-value-added markets are characterized by rapid growth in the apparent productivity of labour, high wages and salaries, and a diffusion of technological progress into other markets.

Apparent labour productivity in Community manufacturing still lags a good way behind that of US and Japanese industry. There is no sign of any narrowing of the gap (of more than 10%) with the USA and, despite the progress achieved, the gap between

Europe and Japan is still around 40%. Closing this gap will necessitate in particular a significant recovery in the investment ratio. Productivity growth plays a key role in international competitiveness while, at the same time, making for an improvement in domestic living standards. Both the level and the growth rate of productivity must be taken into account. The factors influencing productivity growth are technological development, investment, the rate of capacity utilization, the size and skills of the labour force, management skills, the organization of production and the use of resources such as energy and raw materials.

- (c) **Corporate investment in R&D** is one area in which the Community must make major efforts. In recent years, annual average growth in R&D expenditure has been highest in Japan (10%). Next comes the Community (8.1%), followed by the USA (7.9%). The 1992 break in the trend of corporate R&D expenditure in the Community (and in Japan) is very worrying in this respect (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Growth of R&D expenditures



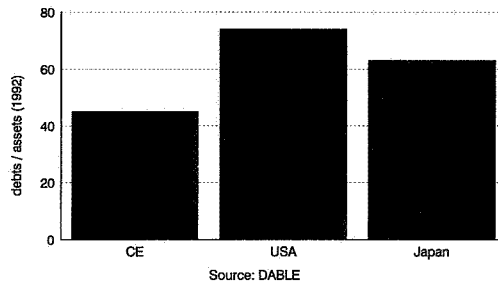
Source: DABLE

Strengths

However, Community industry can draw on major strengths to help it adapt to the new conditions of world competitiveness. It has a low level of indebtedness, and its profit margins are comparable to those of its competitors. It has been able to restructure itself in step with the moves to establish the single market. Its labour force is highly skilled. It has a high density of efficient infrastructures.

- (a) **Community firms have kept control of their level of indebtedness** in recent years, albeit at the cost of some ageing of their capital stock. Their indebtedness is at present much lower than that of their competitors. Community firms are thus comparatively less vulnerable to any increases in interest rates, but they will also benefit comparatively less from further interest-rate reductions (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Indebtedness of firms



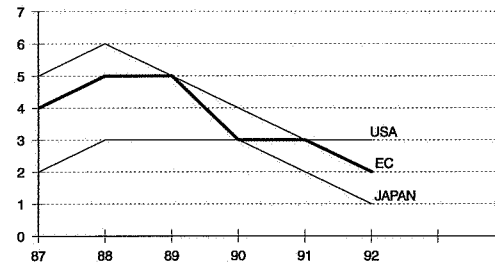
Japanese firms too face major problems in adapting to the decline in consumption and to the adverse effect of the strengthening yen on the volume of their exports.

- (b) When the competitive environment became tougher at the end of the 1980s, Community and US firms **cut their profit margins significantly**. Japanese companies, which traditionally operate with smaller profit margins than their Community competitors, also saw their profit margins squeezed, albeit to a lesser extent. These developments have had the effect of narrowing the gaps between these three trading blocs (see Figure 4).

However, in both Europe and the United States, profit margins differ appreciably from one market to another, much more so in fact than in Japan. In Europe, industries facing relatively little international competition still achieve high profit margins, whereas in industries more exposed to international competition profit mar-

gins have shrunk to worrying levels and, in some cases, have actually disappeared.

Figure 4: Trend of profit margins



- (c) Labour costs are an important element **underlying the competitiveness** of European industry, though by no means the only one. Unit labour costs depend on wage and non-wage costs compared with labour productivity. Thus high labour costs can be compensated for by high productivity to maintain competitive advantage. It is when costs are not aligned with productivity that problems for competitiveness arise. In relative terms, the large rises and falls in unit labour costs compared with those of the Union's leading competitors which have taken place since 1980 have been reflected by fluctuations in bilateral exchange rates between the ecu and the US dollar and yen.

Labour costs affect competitiveness differently with regard to other developed countries and to those in the process of industrialization. Non-cost items such as quality, delivery, design and customer focus can assist in maintaining competitiveness, but attention to relative costs, including labour costs, remains important. Compared with newly industrializing countries, particularly those just entering that path such as China, the **differential in labour cost is too great** for any significant employment gains to be made in Europe from wage reductions in manufacturing industry. Only high productivity and superior products will enable Europe to **maintain a competitive advantage**.

2.3. The main lines of a policy of global competitiveness

(a) *Helping European firms to adapt to the new globalized and interdependent competitive situation*

In the wake of the globalization of economies and markets, it is **no longer possible to divide industry and geographical areas into clearly identified and relatively independent segments**. European firms are engaged in production both within the Community and on third markets. Their competitors increasingly have subsidiaries in the Community. There is a multitude of international agreements between firms: more than 400 international strategic alliances have been entered into by large firms in each of the last five years.

European firms have to compete with international, polyvalent groups. The boundaries of traditional industrial sectors are becoming less and less sharply defined. This is particularly evident in the sphere of 'multimedia' activities. Firms engaged in telecommunications, information technology, consumer electronics, programming and network management combine and come together in extremely complex groups and alliances which will very largely determine the creation and distribution of assets, including cultural assets, over the next decade on expanding new markets of key importance for the future.

Industrial globalization means that **new balances must be sought between competition and cooperation**. Four avenues are particularly important in devising a policy of global industrial competitiveness:

- (i) **Capitalizing on the Community's industrial strengths**, so as to safeguard productive and innovatory capacities as well as a diversified, job-creating industry that is spread throughout Europe, particularly on markets with a high-growth potential, such as health, the environment, biotechnologies, multimedia activities and culture. This aspect must take account of changes stemming from the globalization of markets, production and operators and

from the industrial policies of the Community's main competitors.

- (ii) **The development of an active policy of industrial cooperation**, notably with the transition economies of Eastern Europe and with the high-growth economies along the Pacific rim. As far as the **countries in Eastern Europe** are concerned, much closer industrial cooperation is necessary in order to ensure simultaneously a rapid modernization of their economies, a better division of labour within Europe and optimum exploitation of mutual interests. Cooperation must be based on closer links between public support and private initiatives and on speedier progress in establishing the legal framework, investment conditions and guarantee arrangements which our firms require. For the industries concerned, this could be accompanied by a transitional period to allow the necessary structural adjustments to be carried out under the best possible conditions. As far as the **Pacific area** is concerned, increased market penetration by European firms can be greatly facilitated by concerted efforts on the part of the public authorities to remove the regulatory, administrative and indeed cultural obstacles which have hitherto impeded or deterred such penetration.
- (iii) **The establishment of a coherent and concerted approach to strategic alliances**, the uncontrolled development of which could result in the creation of oligopolistic situations prejudicial to competition at world level. The growing number of industrial and technological alliances will have an impact on all markets. These effects must consequently be assessed simultaneously and in a concerted manner by the competent authorities pending the introduction of appropriate international rules, particularly in the competition field, so that the Community is not placed at a disadvantage by the strict rules it imposes on itself in this connection. In addition, Community firms must be able to rely on **flexible instruments of cooperation**, in legal and tax matters as well as in others, to allow

them to enter into the alliances that are necessary to counterbalance the weight of some of their US and Japanese competitors.

- (iv) **The targeting of measures to remove obstacles to the smooth functioning of markets** in areas that severely penalize European firms' sales and growth potential. European firms' capacity for exporting to, and setting up in, other countries is sometimes far from being fully exploited because of the difficulties stemming from the structural impermeability of certain markets. **Pinpointing such barriers to growth and introducing specific measures** to remove them may help significantly to improve Community industry's opportunities for selling its products on the markets concerned. This could be modelled, for example, on the 'trade assessment mechanism' set up with Japan to identify the nature and causes of the Community's poor trade performance in Japan in those sectors in which Community industry is in a strong competitive position at international level.

(b) Exploiting the competitive advantages associated with the gradual shift to a knowledge-based economy

The wealth of nations is increasingly based on the creation and exploitation of knowledge. Optimum advantage must be taken of this new form of progress available to Community firms since it is an area in which the Community enjoys a substantial head start.

The shift towards a knowledge-based economy is reflected in particular in the externalization of certain activities by industrial firms and by the faster growth of services. It does not mean that manufacturing industry is declining in importance, since this sector is at the very heart of this development and continues to determine the overall competitiveness of the productive system.

The key elements in competitiveness that are now of greatest importance are no longer confined to the relative level of the direct costs of the various factors of production. They include in particular the quality of

education and training, the efficiency of industrial organization, the capacity to make continuous improvements in production processes, the intensity of R&D and its industrial exploitation, the fluidity of the conditions under which markets operate, the availability of competitive service infrastructures, product quality and the way in which corporate strategies take account of the consequences of changes in society, such as improved environmental protection.

Even more crucial is the capacity to incorporate all of these elements into coherent strategies. Between 75% and 95% of firms' total wage and salary bill is now accounted for by functions linked to organization rather than to direct production, for example information technology, engineering, training, accounting, marketing and research. **Organizational capacity** is thus one of the key components of a firm's competitiveness.

A number of these factors, such as training, research and services, may be grouped together under the heading of **'non-physical' (i.e. knowledge-based) investment, to which government policies must in future accord at least the same priority as they do to physical investment.** This type of investment is becoming the key element in bringing about growth that is durable, creates skilled jobs and is economical in its use of resources.

This does not entail any increase in public deficits, but it does presuppose far-reaching reforms:

- **As regards taxes: The relative weight of taxation borne by the various factors of competitiveness should be adjusted** in such a way as to reduce those components of taxation which act as employment disincentives and to increase those conducive to more efficient and less polluting use of scarce resources.
- **As regards the criteria governing the use of national and Community financial instruments:** There should in particular be a **review of the criteria governing the admissibility of aid to industry**, which, under most existing schemes, encourages firms to increase the capital intensity of production and to boost their physical as opposed to their non-physical invest-

ment in order to improve productive efficiency. The aim should be to take fuller account of the creation of value-added and the non-physical content of growth.

- **As regards the priorities governing the use of public funds:** Investment in training, research, the promotion of innovation and, generally speaking, the non-physical components of value-added must be treated at least as favourably as traditional forms of investment. The aim should be twofold: **to promote the emergence of new generations of products** that make optimum use of all the technologies available on the world market, and to encourage the dynamic incorporation of innovation into processes, products and organization. An essential precondition is that there should be an **increase in research activities** by Community firms and greater selectivity in government assistance.
- **As regards the regulatory framework:** More must be done to ensure the efficient operation of the single market, notably by streamlining and **rationalizing rules and regulations** so as to make it easier to establish new forms of labour organization and to move away from 'Taylorism'. A **policy that focuses on quality** and is consistent with the Community's approach to standardization must be pursued in order to exploit the know-how of Community firms and avoid market fragmentation.

(c) Promote a sustainable development of industry

A policy of pollution prevention, in particular through a generalized development of clean products and processes, will not only prevent rapidly increasing clean-up costs but also stimulate a faster diffusion of R&D results. The first-mover advantage that will result will contribute to a strengthened overall competitiveness of European industry.

The significance of the so-called Eco-industry as a quickly expanding industrial market is now widely accepted and, according to OECD studies, will expand considerably this decade. It covers not only

the supply of goods and services to firms for pollution control or abatement but also the expenditures made for the environment in the general context of improved production methods or products, as well as the markets for environmentally-sound products (green products).

In the present context of global competition, the technologies employed in, and the organizational requirements for, the successful introduction of clean technologies are often similar to those associated with the new manufacturing paradigm. The concept of lean (e.g. less energy, fewer raw materials) constitutes a significant improvement regarding the environmental friendliness of production processes and fosters the competitiveness of the industries concerned.

Moving beyond production processes to product markets provides an additional dimension for industrial competitiveness. Markets for environmentally-sound products provide an incentive for firms since they represent in any case a source of potential profits. As stricter environmental requirements are imposed on export markets, the application of clean technologies becomes a condition of access to these markets.

To promote the sustainable development of European industry, the Community should:

- (i) increase substantially and coordinate R&D efforts in the field of clean technology;
- (ii) develop economic incentives to support the diffusion of R&D results into products and processes.

(d) Reducing the time-lag between the pace of change in supply and the corresponding adjustments in demand

As in the case of previous industrial revolutions, there is an appreciable time-lag between:

- changes in supply, where faster modernization is now under way through the use of increasingly efficient technologies, resulting in a rapid increase in labour productivity and thus releasing substantial human resources;

- changes in demand, which are lagging behind changes in supply because of cumbersome rigidities in income distribution, in modes of consumption, in the relatively low level of receptiveness to innovation within the Community, in the geographical structure of growth and in the unsatisfactory functioning of markets.

It is imperative that an attempt be made to reduce this time-lag so as to **make optimum use of the human resources released as a result of the increasing productivity of the productive system**. This can be done only by helping to broaden the sales opportunities for Community industry through policies geared simultaneously to demand, to supply and to improving the interaction between them.

On the demand side, this means:

- **Pursuing initiatives aimed at speeding up a concerted recovery in consumption at world level and helping to bring about a revival in demand for Community industry.** The asymmetries stemming from the continuing large differences in the degree of openness of markets as between the most open areas, foremost amongst which is the Community, and those which, for structural or political reasons, remain largely protected are reflected in a chronic growth deficit at world level. **Resolute support for initiatives to bring about a concerted recovery in demand and for the opening-up and industrial modernization of the protected countries** is essential in order to make up this 'shortfall' in growth.
- **Looking at the various measures liable to promote the emergence of new markets for goods and services.** This is a reference in particular to those markets geared to improvements in **environmental protection** (on which Community firms are particularly competitive), to the exploitation of biotechnologies and to the creation, management and dissemination of information. In this respect, the emergence of **'multimedia' activities** that exploit the scope afforded by the digitalization of information in all its forms (written word, image and sound) will engender major upheavals that will benefit those firms and economies capable

of establishing themselves on these new markets.¹

On the supply side, we must:

- **Encourage continuing structural adjustment in Community industry.** This means facilitating privatization processes, which can, in large measure, help to speed up such adjustments.

Community industry has not sufficiently exploited all the opportunities afforded by the rapid growth of markets in Asia and Latin America.

- **Underpin the dynamism of SMEs.** It is clearly more difficult and relatively more costly for SMEs than for very large firms to find their proper place in the globalized economy, to have access to world technological capital and to avail themselves of the most sophisticated management techniques and business services. The policies in support of SMEs must, therefore, take account of these new constraints and be strengthened accordingly.

Lastly, better interaction between supply and demand must be strongly encouraged by:

- **facilitating partnerships between large firms and their subcontractors.** Effective cooperation between component assemblers and suppliers is one of the essential preconditions for reducing the total time involved in innovation, optimizing R&D expenditure, reducing overheads, ensuring the technical homogeneity of products and improving product quality. The steps already taken in this direction by industry are proving extremely positive and deserve increased support from the public authorities;
- **improving the interfaces between producers and users.** Although wide-ranging, this objective is of particular importance for **research** if more rapid and more sensitive account is to be taken of market requirements in RTD policies and if there is to be greater complementarity between Eureka and the Community research programmes. The research

¹ See the chapter on 'The information society'.

effort, which is insufficient overall, must be stepped up, become more focused and be more effectively exploited as regards its applications. Ensuring the broadest possible dissemination of information and facilitating contacts between all those involved through the establishment of multidisciplinary cooperation are both necessary in order to foster not only competition in the development of technologies but also effectiveness in exploiting them;

- **stimulating the development of 'clusters' of competitive activities that draw on the regional diversity of the Community.** The proliferation within the Community of 'clusters' that combine industrial, technological and geographical advantages may hold one of the keys to job creation. This requires the active involvement of all the actors concerned, something which can be greatly facilitated by **structural measures** taken at Community and national level. In this area, as in the preceding ones, **the main emphasis should be on a horizontal, transsectoral and multidisciplinary approach.**

These guidelines are summarized in the attached table.

Conclusion

So as to establish the bases for such a policy of global competitiveness and ensure that its positive effects on employment come through as rapidly as possible, the Commission proposes that the European Council adopt the following objectives and guidelines:

- (i) **Government intervention in industry must be refocused on horizontal measures and on growth markets** where there is strong potential for European industry to develop, such as health, the environment, biotechnologies, multimedia activities and culture. This also means that precise and short-term deadlines should be set for restructuring activities whose development prospects are not satisfactory in terms of markets.

- (ii) **The machinery and criteria for government intervention** that creates conflict between the promotion of industrial competitiveness and job creation **must be reviewed.** In so doing, the tax burden must be redistributed so as to lighten the burden on labour and increase the burden on the use of natural resources. The criteria for granting public assistance must be reviewed so as to take better account of value-added and so as not to encourage an unjustified increase in the capital intensity of production. The regulatory framework must be transparent, stable and predictable.
- (iii) **The promotion of non-physical, knowledge-based investment** must be made the top priority of the general policy in support of investment. Training, research and know-how in general must be treated as proper targets of investment in their own right. The necessary consequences should be drawn notably as regards changes in tax and accounting rules.
- (iv) **A dynamic policy of industrial cooperation** must be set in motion, starting with the countries of Eastern Europe and with the Pacific area. The details of such a policy must be established as a matter of urgency in collaboration with the private-sector and public-sector operators concerned, on the basis of clearly identified mutual and reciprocal interests.
- (v) **Measures must be taken shortly to strengthen the competitive functioning of markets.** A European approach should be developed that takes account of the proliferation of strategic alliances, particularly in the field of competition, so as to prevent the development of dominant positions at world level. Machinery for pinpointing problems in the functioning of markets and for assessing their industrial implications must be set up so as to identify and tackle rapidly the obstacles facing European firms against the backdrop of global competition.
- (vi) **The coordination of moves to facilitate a revival in consumption and reinforce the**

interaction between changes in supply and demand at both international and Community level must be strengthened. Priority should be given to employing all the resources available, and in particular structural policies, in order to speed up the development of clusters of competitive activities that draw on the Community's regional advantages. The networks for collabor-

ation between operators (SMEs and large firms, producers and users, public and private actors) must be improved along multidisciplinary and multisectoral lines. Lastly, there must be a **European policy on quality** that complements the policy on standardization and is geared to promoting activities with a high value-added.

Guidelines for a policy of global competitiveness

Objectives	Means
<p>1. <i>Helping European firms to adapt to the new globalized and interdependent competitive situation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● capitalizing on the Community's industrial strengths ● developing an active policy of industrial cooperation ● establishing a concerted approach to strategic alliances ● targeting measures to ensure the competitive functioning of markets
<p>2. <i>Exploiting the competitive advantages associated with the gradual shift to a knowledge-based economy</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● reforming tax policies so as not to create employment disincentives and to promote incentives for the efficient use of scarce resources ● developing a policy to encourage 'non-physical' investment (training, research, technical assistance) ● bolstering policies to streamline and rationalize rules and regulations ● reviewing the criteria governing the use of public instruments in support of industry so as to enhance their impact on the growth of value-added and employment ● launching a European policy aimed at quality
<p>3. <i>Promote a sustainable development of industry</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● increase substantially and coordinate R&D efforts in the field of clean technology ● develop economic incentives to support the diffusion of R&D results into products and processes.
<p>4. <i>Reducing the time-lag between the pace of change in supply and the corresponding adjustments in demand</i></p>	<p><i>Demand-side measures:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● pursuing initiatives aimed at facilitating a concerted revival in consumption at world level ● promoting the emergence of new markets <p><i>Supply-side measures:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● encouraging continuing structural adjustment by supporting privatizations ● underpinning the dynamism of SMEs <p><i>Measures to improve the relationship between supply and demand:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● facilitating partnerships between large firms and their subcontractors ● improving the interfaces between producers and users ● establishing collaboration networks so as to develop clusters of competitive activities

B. Making the most of the internal market

The agreement under the Single European Act to establish an area without internal frontiers in which the free circulation of goods, services, capital and persons is ensured represents the single most important step that the Community has made towards a rational economy and greater prosperity. **Ensuring that this ambitious objective** is translated into practical reality is an essential condition for economic growth, competitiveness and employment in the Community.

The Community has met most of the original targets which it set itself for the establishment of a single market. The one outstanding failure to date is the maintenance of physical controls on the free movement of people, although the economic impact of this gap may be limited as the most economically-significant parts of Community legislation in this area, i.e. recognition of the right of establishment and of professional qualifications, are already in place.

The establishment of a genuine single market in the Community is not, however, a matter of once-and-for-all enacting Community legislation within a deadline. It is a continual process of ensuring that, as far as possible, a single legislative framework governing economic activity is enforced and, where necessary, developed in a coherent way within a continually changing environment. The decisions of individual enterprises and citizens are the hard core of a working single market. The challenge before the Community now is to make sure that they are not hindered from taking full advantage of it and to respond quickly to any signs if it is not working well.

Views of the Member States

Making the most of the opportunities offered by the single market is perceived in the Member States' contributions as one of the keys to making the European economy more competitive. Liberalizing sectors that have not yet been opened up to competition (energy and telecommunications in

particular), developing standardization in certain areas, monitoring the application of single market legislation more closely, removing tax barriers and harmonizing certain taxes are seen as priorities. Several Member States stress the need for the single market to create a propitious business environment; in this context, they suggest streamlining existing administrative rules and procedures, carrying out cost/benefit analyses before going ahead with new measures, and studying ways and means of reducing the cost of red tape for businesses.

2.4. The development of a strategic programme

The Commission has therefore decided to publish in parallel with this White Paper a strategic programme for the internal market which provides a comprehensive view of priorities for action in this area and which will serve as a 'road map' for the development of the single market.

The strategic programme contains three parts:

(a) Completing the legislative programme

The Commission will press for **early decisions** on the limited number of measures identified in the 1985 White Paper which have not yet been agreed, as well as on new proposals aiming at securing the free movement of people.

It has to be recognized that the internal market is not yet a reality in certain sectors where national legislation and the granting of exclusive rights deny access to the market and prevent competition in any form. For energy, telecommunications and postal services, for example, proposals have been made but these may have to be strengthened in order to achieve liberalization while ensuring that public policy objectives, such as 'universal service', are fully realized where appropriate. Further liberalization of the transport sectors is also needed, notwithstanding the considerable progress in recent years.

(b) Managing the Community area

This part of the programme is intended to ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place to permit adopted legislation to be applied effectively and efficiently, so that individuals and enterprises will be able to take full and fair advantage of the possibilities which the internal market offers them. This is not a bureaucratic exercise. It is a joint effort by the Community Member States and enterprises to avoid unnecessary costs, to ensure fair competition, to build up the confidence of both producers and consumers — a condition for economic recovery — and to guarantee that the single market is a practical reality.

The main priorities are **effective control of national transposition of Community law**, a reinforcement of administrative cooperation between Member States in the application and enforcement of Community law, notification procedures to prevent the emergence of new barriers to free movement, the auditing of national enforcement measures and measures to facilitate legal redress where Community law is infringed.

The need for **administrative cooperation** also requires the establishment of an efficient, reliable and user-friendly **system of communication and data exchange between administrations**. Until it is operational, unnecessary costs resulting from inefficient administration will be borne by the economy as a whole. What is called for is:

- (i) an accelerated, progressive and wide-ranging introduction of an electronic mail network;
- (ii) a high degree of coordination between the 13 administrations involved;
- (iii) a series of flanking measures in order to facilitate the operational use and further development of the network.

It is proposed that this initiative to establish an effective communications network — a **new trans-European network for effective administration** — be taken by the Community public authorities quickly in order to facilitate the priority objective of the efficient management of the internal market,

while contributing directly to reduced costs for business and the citizen.

(c) Developing the single market

A dynamic view of the single market is necessary for the Community's achievement to be sustained and preserved. The third part of the strategic programme aims to ensure that the internal market can **develop to meet new needs** and to launch new initiatives to ensure that a continental-scale open market is fully realized. Not all such initiatives will be of a legislative nature; they also include close cooperation between the Commission and the Member States, and between public authorities and the private sector.

The following **objectives** are identified in the strategic programme as essential for this purpose:

- (i) improving the evaluation of the effectiveness of Community rules including, when appropriate, the need to simplify them;
- (ii) providing a more favourable environment for business. This is the central part of the programme, including initiatives to ensure greater competition, protection of intellectual property, cross-border payments and direct and indirect taxation, standardization and quality policy and a package of measures designed to assist small and medium-sized enterprises to operate more effectively. The resolute implementation of competition policy and control of State aids is one of the essential elements to ensure a greater flexibility of the system in order to increase competitiveness;
- (iii) promoting the development of trans-European networks;
- (iv) ensuring that the development of the internal market is sustainable. The commitment to 'sustainable and non-inflationary growth respecting the environment' in the Treaty on European Union must be reflected by action at Community level to ensure that measures taken to protect the environment are fully effective and compatible with a single market.

- (v) ensuring a secure environment for the citizen, the employee and the consumer;
- (vi) greater transparency in preparing any new Community legislation, if it were shown to be needed.

2.5. The impact of the internal market on growth, competitiveness and employment

It is impossible today to assess the full effect of all the measures designed to bring about a single market because they are not yet fully in force. Although the internal market has not reached its full potential, its credibility and irrevocability have exerted profound effects on business behaviour. On average, econometric calculations show that the contribution of integration to economic growth has accounted for around 0.4% per year in the period 1986 to 1992.

The following indications also suggest that **the internal market is acting as the catalyst for a shift in the competitive environment to the benefit of the consumer and of greater prosperity in the years ahead:**

- (i) the removal of border formalities is facilitating cross-border trade, although internal market legislation to increase access to public procurement markets and to remove technical trade barriers have yet to make their impact widely felt;
- (ii) the importance of intra-Community trade as a share of total trade has steadily increased (the share of imports rising from 53.4 to 59.3% of the total between 1985 and 1992, and exports from 54.9 to 61.3%);
- (iii) the removal of controls on capital movements has allowed for a marked increase in the degree of integration of some Member States into international capital markets, which will facilitate cross-border investment and ease credit restrictions in some Member States which had contributed to higher costs of capital in those countries. Free capital movement also represents a precondition for effective

liberalization of Community financial services markets. Direct investment through mergers and acquisitions in other Member States has increased sharply, the number of cases rising from 2 190 in 1987 to 4 553 in 1992;

- (iv) the establishment of the internal market has been accompanied by a surge in intra-Community foreign direct investment, which has been heavily concentrated in those sectors most directly concerned by internal market liberalization;
- (v) the internal market programme has also attracted considerable interest from overseas investors, particularly on the part of US, Japanese, and EFTA companies;
- (vi) part of this investment has taken the form of a wave of cross-border mergers and acquisitions, which constitute a strong indication of companies' intentions to set up their presence on partner country markets;
- (vii) in banking and insurance sectors, where obstacles to cross-border trade were particularly pronounced, there is evidence of a profound change in the nature of cross-border competition, reflected in a growing number of branches and outlets in other Community countries and in an increasing share of national insurance markets held by partner country producers;
- (viii) portfolio investment in the Member States coming from other parts of the Community has increased significantly (between 1983 and 1990 it increased by five times in the UK, doubled in France and increased by one and a half times in Germany);
- (ix) there are indications that the removal of non-tariff barriers is already facilitating intra-Community commerce and competition in the sectors most affected by the internal market programme (transport goods, electrical engineering, consumer electronics, office equipment, machine tools). Statistics which suggest that such an evolution is taking place are the

increase in the proportion of a Member State's trade which is directed towards other Community countries, and the increasing share of national consumption which is met by intra-Community imports. This development implies increased presence on national markets and, by extension, greater competitive discipline on domestic enterprises.

In accordance with the Council resolution of 7 December 1992 on making the single market work, the Commission will be conducting a study from 1994 to 1996 on the impact of the single market, a period in which the relevant Community legislation will be more widely applied. This study will focus on individual sectors as well as on the possible macroeconomic effects.

2.6. Supporting the development of SMEs so as to make the internal market fully effective

For many SMEs, completion of the single market means a change in the environment in which they operate, although they do not always see any scope for actively exploiting the new opportunities available because of the lack of a European or international framework for their markets or production processes.

Unless the confidence of SMEs in the prospects opened up by the single market is restored, an important potential for growth will go unexploited. **The Community must therefore devise a back-up strategy designed to make it easier for businesses, particularly SMEs, to adapt to the new requirements of competitiveness** and thus ensure that economic operators are properly mobilized in support of growth, competitiveness and employment. SMEs play a crucial role in the link between growth and employment. On the usual definition of SMEs (fewer than 500 employees), they provide more than two thirds of Community employment (70.2%, of which 29% is accounted for by firms with fewer than 10 employees) and generate more than two thirds of Community turnover (70.3%) and between 65 and 85% of value-added in those countries for which data are available. They are considered to be the greatest potential job cre-

ators. In qualitative terms, SMEs play a major role in providing young people with their first jobs, thereby being instrumental in the training of the labour force, and they also help to provide productive employment for the less sought-after categories of individuals on the labour market since they recruit disproportionately large numbers of young people, women and unskilled workers and operate wage and productivity structures of their own.

However, the rate of SME failures, which, according to certain indicators, seems to be on the increase in most Member States, is a worrying factor as regards the maintenance and growth of total employment.

Analysis/assessment

However, SMEs are not short of strengths that can help them cope with the changes in the economic situation in the Community, notably the recession in the European economy and in the other developed countries.

The strengths of SMEs are, firstly, **their presence on expanding new markets** (activities less vulnerable to international competition, the service sector, market niches, the development of particularly innovative technologies) and, secondly, **their internal organization** (flexibility due to the disproportionately high level of recruitment of certain labour-force categories, notably young people and women, and the greater willingness to adapt working conditions as and when necessary).

The weaknesses of SMEs will be determined by their structural capacity **to deal with the complexity of the administrative and legislative environment** (administrative and legislative requirements, including those performed on behalf of the authorities, such as VAT formalities and the deduction at source of employees' taxes and social security contributions; the introduction of new environmental or social security rules, and a new standardization/certification system as part of the arrangements for implementing the single market; barriers to the carrying-out of certain activities, notably in the service sector along the dividing line between market and non-market ser-

vices); **to overcome financing difficulties** despite the increase in the number and diversity of the financial instruments available to firms; **to come to terms with the complexity of managing a firm and to develop strategic policies**, a problem which stems in particular from the fact that in small businesses most management functions are performed by the head of the business himself even though he does not always possess the necessary specialized skills and knowledge and that he has to switch between the production function and the management function.

2.7. Views of the Member States

In the contributions they sent to the Commission for the purpose of preparing the White Paper, most Member States highlighted the priority they give to measures to assist the activities and development of SMEs. Suggestions were made for improving access by SMEs to sources of financing, the results of research, and training. Other suggestions concerned support aimed at facilitating subcontracting and cooperation between SMEs and their participation in information, advisory and cooperation networks. Some Member States also emphasized the need for simpler administrative procedures and formalities, including those relating to social security, labour or tax rules, and for arrangements to promote job creation by SMEs. This shows that the Member States are aware of the need to step up their current efforts, which the Community could support through the action programme adopted on 14 June. However, to meet the expectations of Member States and firms, **a mass effect must be sought, in partnership with the Member States, so as to enhance the effectiveness, coherence and visibility of the measures in support of SMEs.** In this context, a number of specific measures can be launched by the Community under an **integrated programme.**

2.8. Proposals and remedies

In the light of the above assessment, it is essential to identify a series of back-up measures which the Community should launch with the broad aim of taking account of SME requirements within the

single market, bearing in mind the need to increase competitiveness.

The general **objective** of such measures should be **to integrate SMEs more closely into the single market so as to underpin their competitiveness** as they take up the national, Community and international challenges facing them, with the accompanying dual aim of (i) helping to *preserve the number of jobs* in the Community by supporting existing SMEs and assisting with the renewal of the productive base, and (ii) *increasing the number of jobs* by supporting firms with a high-growth or employment potential.

To help enterprises face up to the dual challenge of growth and competitiveness, on the one hand, and employment, on the other, an enterprise pact for employment could be proposed.

As part of an integrated programme, such measures would be grouped together under **two headings:**

(a) *Making credible in the short term the potential available to SMEs in the single market*

Restoring the confidence of firms prior to encouraging them to increase their competitiveness and job-creating capacity requires **two types of action:**

(i) **Identifying and alleviating the constraints** of a tax, social security, administrative, financial or other nature that hamper the establishment or continued operation of SMEs

Concerted action with the Member States and the organizations representing SMEs could be proposed with a view to *examining existing legislation* that impedes the creation and development of businesses; action could be taken to *exchange information on best practices* for simplifying and harmonizing legislation and to *devise improvements* in priority areas (for example, payment terms, taxation and the transfer of businesses).

In view of the difficulties which social security and labour provisions pose for SMEs, particular attention should be

focused on these aspects, both in terms of the rules applicable and in terms of simplifying their application, including the provision of information, so as to promote more flexible use of the workforce, particularly by very small businesses.

(ii) Improving the financing of firms

In this area, which is of crucial importance for SMEs, the first aim should be to give practical effect to the renewed calls by the Heads of State or Government for **an increase and improvement in the financial resources made available to SMEs** (Edinburgh and Copenhagen facilities, and Brussels decisions). Steps should also be taken to **improve relations between financial institutions and SMEs**, paving the way for more generous allocation of private finance to SMEs and **broader use of the most appropriate financial instruments**.

(b) Exploiting the dynamics of the single market in order to boost competitiveness in the medium term

(i) Supporting cooperation between firms

The Community could step up its efforts to foster cooperation between firms by providing **financing beyond the first stage of the search for partners**. It has already taken steps aimed mainly at encouraging the search for partners and initial contacts between entrepreneurs, but in many cases appropriate back-up (at national or regional level) for a given period would make it possible to follow up developments in a way that could increase the scope for cooperation between SMEs.

Another means of fostering cooperation would be to provide **support for participation by SMEs in enterprise networks** aimed at introducing flexible and specialized production systems. This concerns in particular the networking of subcontracting firms in the face of the threats posed by the major changes taking place in their relations with their main customers.

(ii) Improving the quality of management in SMEs

A key factor in safeguarding the competitiveness of SMEs and hence their long-term employment potential is an improvement in managerial skills in order to remedy the structural weaknesses of SMEs. The measures already taken in this field could be made much more effective if **coordinated action on the part of all intermediaries** placed emphasis on a number of key areas so that SME managers could become aware of the changes they need to make in their role.

There is a need to foster, in cooperation with the Member States and chambers of commerce and industry, **a demand for information, training and advice** in order to overcome the specific obstacles in business. Among these initiatives, appropriate advice could significantly increase the rate of survival among SMEs.

To achieve this, the potential existing among business intermediaries should be exploited to the full. In this connection, the Community could also look into the scope for **improving the supply of direct advice** to firms on the various aspects of their day-to-day management.

(iii) Supporting the development of firms with a high-growth potential

Among the smallest firms in the economy, the firms most likely to create a large number of permanent jobs are those with the determination and skills to expand their business either because their markets are not yet saturated or because they are in as yet uncharted markets. Such firms are to be found both in manufacturing and in the service sector; the problem, though, is to identify them.

Identification will be possible only if the firms themselves are encouraged voluntarily to gear up for growth. A number of measures that could be widely applied have been tried out in order to encourage SMEs to take the initiative, either by having recourse to a synergistic approach (membership of 'business clubs') or by way of an audit method (e.g. 'Euromanagement'). Coordination at Community level and

quality control would make it possible to confer on firms taking part in technological audits recognition that they were capable of participating in national or Community RTD programmes.

(iv) Supporting employment growth in service SMEs

Recent work on the growth of service activities has highlighted the importance of improving productivity in this sector, a development which, far from creating a problem in terms of employment, would be a decisive factor in ensuring the growth of service firms and in the future competitiveness of the developed economies. We must thus turn our attention away from improving productivity in the classical sense to improving performance, that is to say a combination of quantitative development and better quality.

Improved performance depends first and foremost on conducting an awareness and mobilization campaign among service firms and their representative organizations. Through its role of anticipating and supporting changes, the Community can, in cooperation with the partners concerned, **assist in identifying and disseminating models** for service activities that could be developed in the future but have not yet been created for want of sufficient knowledge among individual creators of markets and their potential or of the technological changes likely to influence the provision of services and the market in services. It can also **support the development of professionalism in service activities**, this being essential if the growth and employment potential in these branches of activity is to be exploited, notably by identifying — pref-

erably within the context of the social dialogue — professional profiles and by providing corresponding vocational training leading to the award of approved qualifications.

2.9. Guidelines for an integrated programme to assist SMEs

In order to strengthen, within the framework of broader partnerships, the effectiveness, consistency and visibility of the measures to assist SMEs, it is necessary to examine practical proposals for an integrated programme involving a Community initiative for SMEs.

As a matter of priority, the integrated programme should address three objectives from among all the measures set out above; these objectives correspond to measures which could not be implemented without appropriate financing or the scale of which would be restricted by the ability of the Member States or the intermediaries concerned to finance their general application in full:

- (i) introduction of new financial facilities for SMEs;
- (ii) support for cooperation between firms;
- (iii) support for improvements in management quality.

Such a programme would have to assert the principle of **partnership between the Community and the Member States** in co-financing projects within the Community, would have to be **flexible** as regards **geographical priorities** and would have to ensure active cooperation on the part of SME intermediaries.

Chapter 3

Trans-European networks

3.1. The stakes

Traffic jams are not only exasperating, they also cost Europe dear in terms of productivity. Bottlenecks and missing links in the infrastructure fabric; lack of interoperability between modes and systems; non-communication between too many closed and scattered telecommunications circuits. Networks are the arteries of the single market. They are the lifeblood of competitiveness, and their malfunction is reflected in lost opportunities to create new markets and hence in a level of job creation that falls short of our potential.

The establishment of networks of the highest quality throughout the whole Union and beyond its frontiers is a priority task. It will require a joint, massive and sustained effort on the part of the authorities at all levels and of private operators. The potential to create jobs is substantial, both directly in the short term by initiating the large-scale projects proposed and through the beneficial effect in the long term on production conditions in Europe.

The Commission's analysis shows that the overall volume of direct investment to be mobilized by 1999 could amount to ECU 400 billion, of which ECU 220 billion would go to transport, ECU 150 billion to telecommunications and ECU 13 billion to energy transport. The sums involved are therefore fairly substantial. However, the possible gains in terms of employment creation, economic cohesion and as an aid to regional planning are no less considerable.

The message has not gone unheard. The new Title XII of the Treaty on European Union sets the framework. The objective of developing trans-European networks is to enable citizens, economic operators and regional and local communities to derive full benefit from the setting-up of an area without internal frontiers and to link the peripheral regions with the centre. The pol-

itical impetus was subsequently given by the Copenhagen European Council: it called on the Commission and the Council to speed up the adoption of master plans in the field of transport, energy and telecommunications and the examination of the Commission's proposals on telematic networks; it also extended the duration and amount of the Edinburgh facility, so that in some cases Community financing might amount to 90%; furthermore, projects awarded a declaration of Community interest are to be given privileged access to Community financial instruments. The European Council, meeting in Brussels on 29 October, extended the scope of the Edinburgh lending facility to cover transport infrastructures.

Four master plans for transport and the plan relating to telematic systems are now in place. Discussions are already in progress in the Council on some of the plans, and the Commission intends to present the other draft plans shortly. Major obstacles persist, which are holding up implementation of the objectives of Article 129b of the Treaty within the stipulated framework of 'a system of open and competitive markets'.

It is necessary to step up the pace again. Networks can — and in the present economic context, must — provide fresh impetus. The Commission's analysis shows that the installation or completion of networks as a whole is progressing too slowly. There are many reasons for this, depending to a large extent on the specificities of each type of network concerned.

3.2. Opinion of Member States

Low-cost, efficient infrastructures are generally regarded by the Member States as being essential to promoting competitiveness; by creating trans-European networks, it should be possible to derive greater benefit from the internal market. Several Member States consider that the efficiency of infrastructures depends on their interoperability at Community level together with their deregulation, and on greater competition in the energy and telecommu-

nications sectors in particular. In the transport sector, several Member States indicate that priority should be given to congested areas and transit, links to peripheral areas, traffic management systems, combined transport and high-speed rail links.

With regard to promoting networks, some Member States stress the need to apply market-oriented solutions and to encourage private-sector participation and financing. They are also keen to see rapid and optimum use of resources within the current budgetary constraints and with due regard to the subsidiarity principle.

Some Member States feel that account should be taken of links to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the planning of trans-European networks.

3.3. The four key elements of the initiative

On a general level, four factors of key importance to the proposals have emerged from the analysis:

- (i) The state of the Community's and Member States' finances leaves virtually no margin to increase public financing beyond that already planned. The Commission's proposals take account of this fact and do not entail new public financing requirements.
- (ii) The massive investment required in some sectors, particularly in transport infrastructures, necessitates new types of partnerships between private and public financing, backed by financial engineering encompassing all the different sources and types of financing.
- (iii) The absence of open and competitive markets is hampering, to differing degrees, the optimum use of existing networks and their completion in the interests both of consumers and operators.
- (iv) The inherent sluggishness of the preparation, planning, authorization and evaluation procedures creates major obstacles to the implementation of large projects.

The contributions from the governments of the Member States, as set out above, echo the substance of these points. All the contributions on the subject stress the importance of networks to the efficiency and proper functioning of the internal market, the linking up of peripheral areas with the centre and the impact on economic cohesion throughout the Community. The Member States broadly agree on the need for a greater role for private financing and better financial engineering. They also agree on the need to promote the most efficient use possible of networks by ensuring interconnection and interoperability. Some Member States stress the importance of creating or reinforcing market conditions, the need to respect the financial perspectives at Community level and the principle of subsidiarity.

Consequently, the objective of the Commission's proposals must be to attract private investment in networks by helping to create the conditions in which it will flourish, for example by removing the obstacles that persist, among others in the slowness of procedures at various levels, and by supplementing private investments with public funds where necessary. Stimulating the participation of private investors will have a direct effect on growth, competitiveness and employment in the Community, as it will advance projects which would otherwise not be implemented, however necessary and 'ripe' they may be, or which would suffer unreasonable delay. The Commission therefore proposes a pragmatic approach involving integrated projects.

The three types of networks involved each have different characteristics and suffer from different problems requiring a response tailored to their own particular operating conditions. These responses are examined further on. They have some points in common which make it possible to pursue a pragmatic joint approach. On the basis of a broad consensus between political and economic circles on the need to establish such networks, a genuine partnership should be sought between all concerned: the public authorities at all appropriate levels, in accordance with the subsidiarity principle, network operators, users,

service providers, financiers, and industrialists. The large number of parties involved in itself represents a challenge since it is necessary for them to be able to combine their interests and resolve any possible differences of opinion.

For each type of network, the nature of the partnership may vary according to the problems to be resolved and the objectives to be achieved. For example, to resolve transport infrastructure financing problems, emphasis should be placed on the pivotal role of players capable of mobilizing private investment. On the other hand, in the case of telecommunications there is a need for a partnership with the network users in order to enable the market to be developed in response to their expectations. Where energy is concerned, the partnership should involve players capable of optimizing network efficiency without diminishing the requisite level of competition in this sector.

This partnership is simply a *modus operandi* to be applied discerningly on a Community scale, or on an even wider scale if the networks are extended. Arriving at a consensus on the solutions to be implemented is not the least of the difficulties. There needs to be a willingness to find joint solutions involving measures at all decision-making levels: Community, national, regional, public authorities, economic operators, etc. A strong political signal would enable this partnership to be implemented with a view to addressing the problems identified as pragmatically as possible.

Their respective roles are complementary and, as far as the public authorities are concerned, clearly defined in the various legislative and administrative instruments existing in the Member States. At Community level, the new Title XII of the Treaty defines responsibilities and their limits in the light of subsidiarity. Coordination among Member States is one of these responsibilities, and there are numerous and powerful elements and support instruments available at Community level for this purpose.

The initiative must be taken to unite all the levels of responsibility concerned and the necessary powers, and to write together the score for each of the projects selected. The

Commission proposes to act as a catalyst in this respect.

It will be essential to play an active role at Community level to unlock private investment in the new open, competitive climate of the single market. Although the financing and implementation of the specific projects will have to be agreed on a case-by-case basis, it is equally important to improve market conditions in general by means of a framework favourable to the involvement of institutional and private investors. Various factors could influence the conditions on the financial markets, such as an innovative approach to guarantees and insurance in the framework of the European Investment Fund, interest-rate subsidies for Community loans or tax incentives to attract long-term capital. Direct financing would be another possibility. The Commission will present proposals on this matter.

Also at Community level, attention must be focused on enhancing the role of the declaration of Community interest. If this declaration is to have the desired profile and impact on the availability of private capital, projects to which it has been awarded should have easier access to Community financial instruments and benefit from a binding timetable for completion of the requisite administrative procedures.

3.4. Transport infrastructures: A financing problem

Financing problems are particularly apparent in relation to transport infrastructures, a sector with a major impact on employment in the construction industry.

By 1999, investment of ECU 220 billion will be necessary for trans-European transport networks alone, i.e. between ECU 30 and 35 billion per annum. The Community could mobilize ECU 90 billion of this, including the contributions from Member States. However, given the current state of Member States' finances, it is inconceivable that the remainder could be financed through the budget. Furthermore, the need for high-quality networks does not stop at the Community's external borders; it will be essential to extend the networks in particular within the boundaries of the

European Economic Area and to the East. The magnitude of the deficit is both substantial and worrying. Although the level of savings is still high, it has proved difficult to mobilize private-sector investments in this field. There are two reasons for this: firstly, and above all, any kind of risk inherent in a project dampens the enthusiasm of the private investor. This may concern feasibility, technical viability, authorizations, deadlines or competition from other modes. These elements need to be clarified, evaluated and conclusions drawn. The same response must be applied to the second disincentive, which is a natural follow-on from the first: uncertainty about the return on, and hence the profitability of, the investment.

The objective is therefore clear. In order to launch the process of reflection and preparation for the partnership immediately and effectively, an initial list of projects which are both of Community interest and have the potential to mobilize private economic operators must quickly be drawn up. To this end, the following selection criteria could be applied:

- (i) The Community interest of projects, all of which must figure in the master plans for trans-European networks presented or due to be presented shortly, is obvious in the case of new transfrontier links of a strategic character (e.g. transalpine and Pyrenean links, sea crossings, links with the East); it is also clear in the case of projects which interconnect national networks and ensure their interoperability and access to networks, including transfer from one mode to another; and for projects which take account of the special needs of the countries on the periphery of the Community.
- (ii) The proposed financing of these projects must allow for private investment, the magnitude of which will depend on an evaluation of the risks presented by each project or series of projects on a given network.
- (iii) Priority will be given to projects capable of being implemented at short notice, i.e. which are sufficiently well prepared and feasible.

- (iv) Economic importance in terms of employment creation and industrial impact is essential, over and above the economic viability of the project as such. The increase in the competitiveness of advanced technology products and services merits special attention in this context.
- (v) Last but not least, only projects that have passed the environmental impact scrutiny will be eligible.

The Commission has drawn up an indicative list (see Annex) of 26 major projects, representing an overall investment of the order of ECU 82 billion, on the basis of which it will initiate discussions as soon as possible with the authorities concerned and the relevant economic circles.

Each project on the list will be evaluated jointly with all the actors concerned, in accordance with the partnership principle defined above. The evaluation will focus above all on the inherent risks of the project and the possibilities for covering them under acceptable conditions. It will also be necessary to identify the public financing sources that can be mobilized and the nature of the instruments that could be used to assess the expected revenue from the projected traffic and to consider the possible duration of the concession, the most appropriate legal formula for involving the interested parties, the management of the project, the administrative obstacles and the impact on the environment. The evaluation should lead to the presentation of an action plan for each project in the form which gives it the political profile necessary to speed it on its way and secure its financing.

3.5. Energy transport infrastructure: Towards better utilization of capacities

The reliability and efficiency of energy supplies are key factors in the competitiveness of industry and in terms of their effect on the consumer's pocket. There are various reasons for this, but among them, the sub-optimum use of existing networks and

brakes on their desired expansion are a major problem in the central parts of the Community in particular, and one which is closely bound up with the situation on the market for electricity and gas.

Unlike transport proper, planning of trans-European energy transport networks is not in the first instance a financing problem. Investments in energy networks are generally more lucrative and do not require the same degree of financial support from the public sector. There are only some peripheral regions of the Community where public aid to certain projects is both necessary and useful. In such cases, the Community's Regional and Structural Funds and the EIB provide a suitable framework and market conditions do not, strictly speaking, pose problems.

What tends to be the problem is that private sector investments are often hampered by administrative constraints. These constraints are above all the consequence of exclusive import and export rights, transport monopolies, limited possibilities to construct and operate gas pipelines and transmission lines.

Removal of these constraints is essential to the relaunch of investment and network planning. Furthermore, the opening-up of markets and deregulation means greater competition and thus greater energy efficiency. The competitiveness of European industry would be generally strengthened as a result.

The development of energy networks also helps to protect the environment, by favouring the use of primary fuels with the least carbon dioxide emissions, and to intensify cooperation with non-Community countries in Europe and the Mediterranean region, the main suppliers in this area. Speeding up the development and more efficient use of networks is therefore vital. Gas consumption and imports are already increasing; in the case of electricity, interconnection and improvement of the management of electricity systems continent-wide falls short of what is considered essential to the proper functioning of the single market.

The slowness and complexity of administrative procedures are also an obstacle to

energy networks. As with the other transport networks mentioned above, it would be worth examining giving more force to the declaration of Community interest.

In the light of estimates based on projects in progress, scheduled and planned by industry, the total amount of investment in trans-European electricity and natural gas networks could reach ECU 13 billion by the end of the decade.

Until now, **Community action to promote energy transport networks has essentially focused on financing.** The European Council has also called on the EIB to step up this type of aid. A first series of loans under the new facility has already been decided. The Commission intends to give specific financial support to feasibility studies, as an incentive to carrying out the technical, economic and environmental studies necessary to determine projects and mobilize the various funds and Community financial instruments and programmes, with a view to contributing to the financing of energy transport infrastructure projects whose implementation depends on such support.

However, on a more general level, the Community must remove the obstacles to speedy establishment of these networks. In view of the major obstacles already mentioned, the Commission is seeking the support of the European Council to ask the Council and European Parliament to bring their work on completing the internal energy market already proposed by the Commission to a rapid close. The Commission, for its part, will re-examine the proposal regarding third-party access to the network given the importance of the evolution of national monopolies on imports and exports and on the establishment of lines and sales.

3.6. Telecommunications networks: Creation of new markets

The establishment of trans-European telecommunications networks is a precondition for the creation of the 'common information area'. It is particularly important for the completion of the single market.

The social and economic stakes are high. Today, the telecommunications industries

account for an annual market in terms of services of ECU 285 billion at world level and ECU 84 billion at Community level. The equipment market is worth ECU 82 billion at world level and ECU 26 billion at Community level. The expected annual growth rate until the year 2000 is 8% for services and 4% for the equipment market. It is estimated that this sector alone will account for 6% of GDP at the end of the century, not including the indirect effects on the economy as a whole of network installation and operation.

In the not too distant future, the telecommunications networks will be capable of instantly transporting and processing voice traffic, text and images between any locations, be they homes, offices or businesses, thanks to digitization techniques and electronic processing of information. These networks will therefore constitute the nervous system of the economy, and more generally of tomorrow's society.

With the aid of these new networks, it will be possible to transmit myriads of texts (commercial messages, newspapers, correspondence, training courses, catalogues, technical notices, etc.), images (films, medical images, graphics, etc.) and sound transmissions (voice traffic, music, etc.), stored and combined in databases, for use in the most diverse applications (leisure, education, medical care, tourism, manufacturing activity, etc.).

Although voice telephony networks and services are already international, the same is not true of other networks and services relating to information in text, data and image form. Such networks are currently developing at national level only.

If a common information area really is to be established, the digital national networks must, like the telephone network, be interconnected and managed in a coherent fashion in order to form trans-European networks which will provide access to a wide range of interactive services. Hence, the new telecommunications networks, themselves using different vectors (cables, terrestrial and satellite radio transmission, etc.) will have a beneficial effect on all economic activities and transform the way of life of Europe's citizens.

At present, this transition to interactive trans-European networks and services is being held up by the fragmentation of markets, by insufficient interconnection and interoperability and by the absence of mechanisms to ensure coherent management. Although these are obvious shortcomings, the problems concerning the telecommunications networks and services differ considerably from those of the other trans-European networks for the following reason: supply of services is inadequate and, where it does exist, too costly, with the result that demand is also too low as in this case it is supply which determines demand. As a result, demand is not manifesting itself, which in turn discourages the creation of a viable supply. This is a vicious circle. The general economic situation is aggravating this trend and the private sector will only invest in this area of services, which have been liberalized, if conditions are such as to limit the risks to an acceptable level.

To break this vicious circle and stimulate the creation of new markets, the Commission proposes to identify strategic trans-European projects in collaboration with all the various parties concerned. The aim will be to target our activities in order to identify potential new markets; to tackle obstacles to their development, be they of a financial, regulatory or standardization nature; and to define the specific details and functional characteristics of the services to be developed and the typology of potential suppliers. As in the case of transport networks, the national and Community authorities will restrict their financial involvement to a marginal, catalytic role.

This means that, taking account also of the conditions of competition on the world market, Community action will consist in removing obstacles of a general nature (problems of industrial property, security, training, protection of privacy, etc.), in providing R&D support to project implementation, in contributing to the performance of feasibility studies and in granting loan guarantees and interest-rate subsidies.

The strategic projects would be carried out at each of the three interdependent 'levels' that make up the telecommunications networks: the carrier networks for trans-

mission of information, generic services and telematic applications.

With regard to the networks that serve to carry the information (voice, data, images), the objective would be to consolidate the integrated services' digital network and to install the high-speed communications network using advanced transmission and switching techniques (asynchronous transfer mode: ATM), which will help digitized multimedia services to make a breakthrough.

With regard to the generic (universal) services, which form the common basis for all telematic applications, three areas would be considered:

- (i) access to information services, which should provide all users with user-friendly access to databases containing information of all types available in multimedia libraries, laboratories or administrations;
- (ii) electronic mail, which will enable documents to be transmitted fast and cheaply. The market most concerned, apart from large undertakings and administrations, is that of SMEs;
- (iii) interactive digitized video services covering the whole of the Community, the emergence of which it is vital to promote, as their general availability will revolutionize working practices, leisure and training. They offer new possibilities for customized services ('pay-as-you-view' and 'video on demand' services), creating new demand and hence jobs.

The general availability of such services in the Community will promote the development of 'teleworking', which will mean that

the location of activities and access to available employment can be optimized.

Telematic applications are the third level, which concerns adapting the service to the specific needs of user groups. Public administration in connection with the single market is of particular interest here, as already discussed in Chapter 2.B. Exchanges of data and the coordinated, accelerated introduction of an electronic mail network between administrations involved in the management of the single market should also enable businesses and citizens to have easy access to the administrative information they require. This objective is being pursued in the framework of the Community TNA-IDA project.

Distance learning is another area of considerable public interest which will help to improve skill levels in an on-going fashion without the need for costly infrastructures. The same applies to telemedicine which is designed in particular to give practitioners remote access to specialist centres of excellence, to provide diagnostic aids and a basis for deciding on treatment, and to contribute to exchanges of research results in the fight against serious illnesses such as cancer and AIDS. Finally, the application of telematics to transport (road, maritime, air) is now becoming an important aspect in transport infrastructures.

It is estimated that the volume of financing to be mustered by public and private investors in the areas currently identified as being favourable to the creation of new markets in services, will amount to ECU 150 billion from 1994 over a period of six to 10 years. The priority projects proposed until 1999 would amount to ECU 67 billion.

Infrastructure for the trans-European transport network

Indicative list of projects

Project type	Member States involved	Indicative total cost (million ECU)	Maturity
1. Brenner axis; rail connection through the Alps	I/A/D	10 000	Studies in progress
2. Paris-Brussels-Cologne-Amsterdam-London (PBKAL); high-speed train: Belgium	B	2 500	Completion of feasibility studies
3. Paris-Brussels-Cologne-Amsterdam-London (PBKAL); high-speed train: Netherlands	NL	2 100	Completion of feasibility studies
4. Paris-Brussels-Cologne-Amsterdam-London (PBKAL); high-speed train: London-Tunnel access	UK	3 900	Completion of feasibility studies
5. Madrid-Barcelona-Perpignan; high-speed train	E/F	6 800	Studies in progress
6. Fehmarn belt crossing; fixed link between Denmark and Germany; estimated construction costs for the tunnel/bridge; new construction or upgrading of railway needs to be decided (preliminary cost estimates ECU 2 to 4 billion)	DK/D	4 500	Studies in progress
7. TGV Est; high-speed train Paris-Strasbourg	F	4 000	Studies under completion (F)
8. TGV Est; high-speed train Karlsruhe-Frankfurt-Berlin	D	8 500	Partially ready to go
9. Rotterdam-Betuwe line/(Cologne-Frankfurt-Karlsruhe-Switzerland-Italy); railway line (cost estimates for the corridor up to German/Swiss border ECU 9.6 billion)	NL (D/(CH)/I)	3 100	Studies under completion
10. Lyons-Turin; high-speed train/combined transport	F/I	6 200	Studies in progress
11. Urban by-passes for combined transport corridors and selected combined transport projects	D/F/I/E	2 300	Ready to go
12. Nuremberg-German/Czech border-Prague; motorway	D (Cz)	1 000	German part; ready to go; Czech part: studies finalized
13. Berlin-Warsaw-Polish/Belarusian border (Moscow); motorway (new construction)	D/(P)	3 200	Ongoing studies

Project type	Member States involved	Indicative total cost (million ECU)	Maturity
14. Patras-Athens-Thessaloniki-Greek/Bulgarian border; motorway	GR	1 500	Works in progress
15. Lisbon-Valladolid (Spanish/French border); motorway	P/E	2 000	Works in progress (P)
16. (Dublin)-Holyhead-Birmingham-Cambridge-Felixstowe/Harwich-(Benelux); road corridor (by sections)	UK (IRL)	1 000	Works partially in progress
17. Bari-Brindisi-Otranto; motorway	I	1 000	Studies in progress
18. Road traffic management system	EC	1 000	Technology available; programme to be designed; some centres already in place
19. New Athens airport (Spata)	GR	2 000	Studies in progress, construction consortium chosen; contract not signed
20. Air traffic management system for Europe (CNS/ATM); this includes also the satellite system Inmarsat-III (navigation payloads) and associated ground segment	EC	8 000	Definition of system completed; projects ready for implementation
21. Channel Rhine-Rhône	F	2 500	Studies in progress
22. Channel Seine north	F	1 500	Studies in progress
23. Connections between Elbe and Oder; inland waterways	D	600	Studies in progress
24. Danube upgrading: section between Straubing and Vilshofen; inland waterways	D	700	Studies in progress
25. Vessel traffic management system for Community waters	EC	1 000	Works in progress in E; demands from Cohesion Fund M.S
26. Multimodal positioning system by satellites system	D/F + European Space Agency	1 000	Studies in progress
Total		81 900	

ELECTRICITY NETWORKS

- (a) Connection of isolated electricity networks
- a1: Northern Ireland — Scotland
 - a2: Ireland — United Kingdom
 - a3: Germany : Connection to the new *Länder*
 - a4: Greece — Italy
 - a5: Greece : Connection of Crete
 - a6: Spain : Connection of the Balears
- (b) Improvement of interconnections between Member States
- b1: Germany — Denmark
 - b2: Germany — Netherlands
 - b3: Germany — Belgium
 - b4: France — Belgium
 - b5: France — Germany
 - b6: France — Italy
 - b7: France — Spain
 - b8: Belgium — Netherlands
 - b9: Belgium — Luxembourg
 - b10: Spain — Portugal
- (c) Improvement of electricity networks within Member States in conjunction with improved interconnections between Member States or with non-Community countries
- c1: United Kingdom : Wales
 - c2: Denmark : East-West link
 - c3: Netherlands : North-East area
 - c4: France : North-East area
 - c5: Italy : North-South and East-West links
 - c6: Spain : North-South link and lines along the coast of the Mediterranean and the Cantabrian Sea
 - c7: Portugal : Improvements regarding interconnection with Spain
 - c8: Greece : East-West link
- (d) Creation or improvement of electricity interconnections with non-Community countries
- d1: Germany — Sweden
 - d2: Germany — Poland
 - d3: Germany — Norway
 - d4: Germany — Austria
 - d5: Italy — Switzerland
 - d6: Italy — Austria
 - d7: Italy — Tunisia
 - d8: Greece — Balkan countries
 - d9: Greece — Turkey
 - d10: United Kingdom — Norway
 - d11: Netherlands — Norway
 - d12: France — Switzerland
 - d13: Spain — Morocco

GAS NETWORKS

(e) Introduction of natural gas in new regions

- e1: Northern Ireland
- e2: Germany : New *Länder*
- e3: Corsica and Sardinia
- e4: Spain : New regions
- e5: Portugal : Whole country
- e6: Greece : Whole country, including Crete

(f) Connection of isolated or separated gas networks

- f1: Ireland — Northern Ireland
- f2: Great Britain — Continent
- f3: Germany : Connection of German network to gas
- Belgium : Pipelines coming from Zeebrugge
- f4: Germany : Connections to the new *Länder*
- f5: Spain — France
- f6: Portugal — Spain

(g) Improvement of reception capacities/LNG storage and underground storage

- g1: Ireland : Construction of an LNG station
- g2: Germany : Construction of an LNG station
- g3: France : Extension of LNG stations
- g4: Italy : Extension/construction of LNG stations
- g5: Spain : Extension of LNG stations
- g6: Germany : Creation of underground storage facilities
- g7: France : Creation of underground storage facilities
- g8: Spain : Creation of underground storage facilities

(h) New gas supply pipelines

- h1: Norway — Belgium or Netherlands: new project planned
- h2: Norway — Germany (Emden): Europipe project
- h3: Norway — Denmark-Sweden: Scanpipe project
- h4: Algeria — Morocco-Spain-France (Toulouse/Fos)
- h5: Algeria — Tunisia-Italy: capacity increase
- h6: Russia — Ukraine-EC: upgrading of existing gas pipeline system
- h7: Russia — Belarus-Poland-EC
- h8: Russia — Scandinavian countries-EC
- h9: Bulgaria — Greece

NB: LNG could be an interesting alternative to some gas supply pipeline projects that have not yet been finalized.

Chapter 4

Research and technological development

Research and technological development (RTD) can contribute to renewing growth, strengthening competitiveness and boosting employment in the Community. However, in order to achieve this a series of conditions must be satisfied: an adequate level of funding; an appropriate range of research activities; and effective mechanisms for transferring the results.

4.1. Opinion of the Member States

As it is difficult to increase public spending, the Member States agree on the need to promote investment in RTD in the private sector especially and to increase the effectiveness of their RTD through cooperation between companies and with universities and research centres.

Where Community RTD is concerned, emphasis is placed on **coordination** of RTD conducted by the Community and the Member States, focusing on key areas, simplifying procedures, in particular to facilitate the access of SMEs to RTD, and especially improving the **dissemination and application** of RTD results, notably by promoting standardization.

Among the practical measures proposed, mention is made of tax incentives for RTD investments, the promotion of companies specializing in new technologies, and the launching of major RTD projects.

4.2. Assessment of research in the Community

In the Commission's opinion, Europe's research and industrial base suffers from a series of weaknesses.

(a) Level of resources

The first of these weaknesses is financial. **The Community invests proportionately less than its competitors in research and technological development.** In 1991, for example,

its total public, private, civil and military spending on RTD stood at some ECU 104 billion, compared with ECU 124 billion for the USA and ECU 77 billion for Japan. This was equivalent to an average of **2% of GDP in the Community, 2.8% in the USA and 3% in Japan** or, in relation to population, ECU 302 per inhabitant in the Community, compared with ECU 493 in the USA and ECU 627 in Japan. However, there are big differences between the Member States with research spending accounting for 2.6% of GDP in Germany, for example, but only 0.7% in Greece and Portugal. Investment by businesses is particularly weak, as they fund only 52% of all research in Europe compared with 78% in Japan, for example.

The Community also has **proportionately fewer researchers and engineers**: 630 000 (4 out of every 1 000 of the working population) compared with 950 000 (8 per 1 000) in the USA and 450 000 (9 per 1 000) in Japan.

Figures like these are meaningless in absolute terms and must be treated with caution. The use made of the funds is more important than the amount spent. And more important than the absolute number of researchers are their qualifications, their ability to meet the needs of developing industries and the extent to which the capital they represent is utilized. Nevertheless, on the whole this lower investment in both financial and human terms gives cause for concern.

(b) Coordination of research

A second weakness is the **lack of coordination at various levels** of the research and technological development activities, programmes and strategies in Europe. First, there is the lack of coordination between the **national research policies**. The Community's research budget accounts for only 4% of research spending by the 12 Member States. Even adding the resources allocated to joint European RTD activities in other frameworks (e.g. under Eureka, ESA, CERN, EMBL, etc.), the budget

amounts to only 10% or so of the total. Despite the coordination called for by the existence of these activities and the need for the Member States to take them into account when defining their own policies, the national policies are still developed largely without reference to one another.

This lack of coordination is particularly marked between military and civil research activities in each Member State which are conducted within relatively self-contained institutional frameworks, between which bridges are only just beginning to be built. In some Member States military activities account for a large proportion of all research (44% in the United Kingdom, 37% in France and 17% in Spain).

One immediate consequence, which can vary in intensity from one sector to another but is generally relatively important, is the lack of coordination of **business strategies** too, not only with public research policies and with the activities of universities and public research centres in each Member State but also with the strategies of other European businesses.

(c) Application of research results

The greatest weakness of Europe's research base, however, is its **comparatively limited capacity to convert scientific breakthroughs and technological achievements into industrial and commercial successes**. In most major fields and disciplines, Europe is up to the highest standards in the world in terms, for example, of the number of publications by researchers and of references thereto. In certain fields heavily dependent on action by the public sector, such as telecommunications, transport or the aerospace industry, European firms can also point to indisputable technological successes. The European chemical and pharmaceutical industries are in the forefront on world markets. However, in all other fields of advanced technology, with a few exceptions, European firms have failed to convert their scientific and technological achievements into products and competitiveness.

This weakness stems from a **combination of factors**: the still inadequate links between universities and businesses, despite the pro-

gress made on this point in most Member States; the lack of risk capital to help firms through the development phase and the reluctance of private-sector financiers to invest in activities if they consider the risks too great or the return too uncertain; insufficient account of RTD in business strategies and the lack of coordinated strategies between businesses, universities and the public authorities (compared with Japan, for example); the lack of facilities or the regulatory obstacles to business start-ups by researchers and the lack of mechanisms for harnessing the knowledge and technologies generated by defence research; the targeting on markets which are too small and the weak capacity to foresee future needs and demand on the market, etc.

4.3. The solutions

(a) New directions for research

To restore the dynamic combination of technology, growth and employment, the Community and the Member States must take measures on several levels. These can be divided into two main groups. The first comprises measures aiming essentially at **restoring the competitiveness** of European businesses and **renewing growth**. One aspect will be to correct the traditional weaknesses of Europe's research and industrial base and to restore Community firms to the forefront of the world economy. The other will be to **extend the geographical coverage** and to **take account of the new needs of society** in the Community and throughout the world.

The effect of these measures to restore competitiveness on industrial activity in the Community will have a positive indirect impact on employment. Coordinated measures to take account of the new needs of society should in turn create a number of jobs. Alongside these measures, however, a second category of action should also be taken, targeted more specifically on improving the employment situation.

(i) Restoring competitiveness and renewing growth

To make European companies more competitive, action is needed on the three tradi-

tional weaknesses of Europe's scientific and industrial base. First, steps must be taken to allow **better application of the results of the research** carried out in the Community, i.e. the establishment of **operational mechanisms** at national and European level for the **transfer of technologies from university laboratories to companies, from one company to another and from the military to civil research sectors**. One key aspect must be substantially to step up the measures to improve the business environment, in the form of scientific and technical information, financial services, aid to protect innovations, training in new technologies, etc.

In this context, sufficient importance should be attached to small businesses. **Small businesses working in high-technology sectors**, producing capital goods and advanced consumer goods or **applying advanced technologies** in manufacturing industry, represent a significant potential source of growth. In the USA, a very large proportion of emerging technologies was first developed by small firms which are better equipped to anticipate the needs of the market and to react rapidly.

Beyond the coordination already existing in practice today, measures should also be taken to further effective coordination of research activities, strategies and programmes in Europe. **The first thing must be coordination between the national public research bodies**: the coordination structures now being set up between most of the major national bodies should be strengthened and institutionalized. **A forum for concertation and exchanges between the various European research bodies and centres** could also be set up. To encourage the development of concerted strategies linked to the Community's activities, a **science and technology assembly** could also be established, based on the Commission's existing consultative committees.

Companies, particularly firms conducting large amounts of research, should also **coordinate their strategies more closely in the framework of Community projects**. Based on or alongside existing consortia, **frameworks for intercompany cooperation** should be established at Community level. These frameworks for close cooperation between

potential users and makers of new products, component suppliers and manufacturers of the end-products would provide a means of deriving maximum benefit from the work carried out by companies' research departments and establishing consistent strategies, guided by earlier anticipation of the needs of the market. They could be planned in conjunction with the definition and implementation of major projects bringing together rival European companies for work on carefully targeted technological objectives.

With regard to overall research funding, the **objective of a gradual increase to 3% of GDP** should be borne in mind. It is not a question of 'more of the same research'. In view of the current budgetary constraints in all European countries, companies should bear a larger share of the spending. Their objective should be to achieve investment levels comparable to those of their rivals by providing greater funding for in-house research and work in universities. Appropriate regulatory and tax measures should be taken to make it easier for the private sector to bear such a higher share of research spending.

(ii) New geographical markets and new needs of society

In addition to competition and market forces, considerable potential for growth lies in **catering for a wider geographical area** than the Triad alone (European Community, USA and Japan) **and for the emerging needs of society**. The newly industrialized countries in the Pacific region compete with the Community in basic and intermediate technologies and will soon be able to develop more sophisticated technologies themselves. For several years they will offer a window of opportunity for companies in the Community. Countries such as these which are keen to acquire advanced production technologies but also, by virtue of their explosive development, face serious environmental problems, offer large potential markets.

Both as a source of high-level scientific and technical know-how and as a market for specific technologies and advanced production processes, **the countries of Central and Eastern Europe**, which are not only geogra-

phically but also historically close to the Community, provide further rich potential for innovations which Eastern and Western Europeans should harness together, by pooling their complementary skills.

Accompanied by measures to create viable demand in the countries concerned, the establishment of **truly effective mechanisms for transferring technologies to developing countries** would also provide Europe with substantial potential markets for specific products and requirements.

One key aspect of this broadening of the horizons of the Community's research should be **closer cooperation to implement very big programmes reflecting the biggest worldwide needs for the next century: energy, global change and food.**

New needs which could make a significant contribution to restoring growth are apparent in **three areas: the environment, health and the media.** The market in environmental products and services, for example, covers pollution detection and monitoring technologies, environmental improvement technologies, clean technologies (i.e. improvements to conventional technologies to take greater account of environmental requirements) and ecotechnologies (entirely new technologies based on novel raw materials and energy sources). Added to this market in goods, there is also the market in services such as water treatment, waste processing, etc. On the basis of the latest estimates, this world market in environmental products and services is worth some ECU 190 billion per year now and could reach ECU 270 billion by the year 2000.

The second area is **health.** Alongside new molecules to treat diseases of the nervous system and degenerative and viral illnesses not yet properly controlled, the principal market concerned is in advanced preventive technologies and methods allowing treatment in the home by the patients themselves or by non-specialist staff, automatic monitoring and diagnosis systems, remote monitoring, etc.

In the field of the **media,** one category heading for vigorous expansion is the range of **multimedia products** (CD-ROM, CD-I,

CD-TV, etc.) and the corresponding hardware. With their impressive capacity to store enormous quantities of text, sound and moving and fixed images on the same medium, combined with the possibility of multiplying the effects by linking up with telecommunications systems, these products will revolutionize the media industries.

At the crossroads between satisfying the worldwide needs in the fields of energy, health and the environment and the requirements for competitiveness, **biotechnology** is one of the fields offering the greatest potential for innovation and a particularly rich source of growth. What is more, a significant proportion of the research and development work in this field is carried out by small and medium-sized businesses. However, in order to ensure development of activities in this field commensurate with actual and potential needs, steps must be taken to establish an appropriate regulatory framework, to harmonize the measures taken in the various countries and to **define a global strategy** bringing together the public authorities, research bodies, businesses and the various sectors of society concerned.

Impact on employment

The measures described above to restore competitiveness and take account of the new needs of society should have a **moderate, but indisputably positive indirect impact on employment.** The rise of the environmental industries could possibly have a great impact on competitiveness and should have at least the same effect in terms of safeguarding existing jobs as the concept of quality did a few years ago. By contrast, **there is undoubtedly potential to create jobs in the health and media sectors.** The development of new formulas for care in the home based on decentralized assistance and health-care technologies will create a need for health-care, assistance and training staff. The **new market in media products** in addition to, rather than in place of, existing printed and audiovisual media should also generate a whole cascade of new jobs.

Of course, the measures to encourage business start-ups in high-technology sectors should in turn have a positive impact on

employment. In the USA, firms of this type are often started up by researchers leaving universities or big businesses. The increase in the number of firms of this type should create a certain number of jobs for development engineers, administrative staff, etc. The same applies to the measures to increase the total number of researchers and engineers in the Community. Of course, the primary objective should be **optimization of the available resources by adapting the skills of the existing scientific and technical staff to the new needs.** However, the creation of new jobs for researchers and engineers as fast as Europe's scientific and industrial base can absorb them would be the most effective means of ensuring a net increase in the resources allocated to research activities.

The policies and programmes conducted by the Member States and the Community should also aim at **promoting technologies which will save the maximum number of jobs or require or encourage the creation of new jobs** as long as they have an equal effect on competitiveness and growth and an equal capacity to satisfy the current and foreseeable needs of society. Tools and methods must be devised to determine the net impact of a wide range of technologies on employment.

(b) Specific means

(i) Measures by the Member States

Since most of the spending on research and development in the Community is under the control of the Member States, most of the measures mentioned must be taken at national level. **The provisions outlined should be put into practice in the national policies and programmes.** In view of the current constraints on research budgets and to ensure the most effective action possible in cost/benefit terms, **priority must be given to the indirect regulatory instruments** under the control of the Member States.

In the context of transferring a higher proportion of research spending to the private sector and of shifting government intervention from direct support to indirect instruments, **tax credit schemes for research** could be developed to encourage companies to invest more in science, even in the long

term. Special formulas could be devised to **encourage companies to fund research by universities.**

The Member States could also study and **introduce schemes to lighten the social security contribution burden on firms and research bodies creating new jobs for researchers and engineers** together with financial or career **incentives for further on-the-job training for the scientific and technical staff in service.** In addition to its impact on employment, action in this field could also promote the dissemination of knowledge and of new technologies. Within the existing schemes to help business start-ups, formulas could also be defined for helping researchers to start up businesses. Financial instruments under the direct or indirect control of the national authorities could be adjusted to provide companies, particularly small businesses, with the **risk capital** to develop the innovations which they have prepared.

(ii) Community measures and concerted action

The Community itself should also take measures to back up these activities. The broad lines of the **fourth (1994-98) framework programme** currently being discussed already clearly point towards the establishment of mechanisms to coordinate the national efforts (research consortia) and industrial research policies (particularly in the form of support for Eureka projects), concentration on a limited number of key technologies with a major impact on many branches of industry, greater support for the dissemination of the results of the research carried out in the Community, establishment of a system of access to and participation in the programmes specifically for small and medium-sized businesses, etc.

In conjunction with the fourth framework programme and the preparations about to be started for the next programme, **new large-scale research projects should be defined in conjunction with the national research bodies and companies.**

Implementation of the guidelines proposed will also call for **changes in the rules and instruments for Community research.** In

practice, there are clearly limits to the single formula of 50% funding of the costs of pre-competitive research projects. Formulas creating a more flexible link between project-funding and the obligation to produce results, tailoring the level of public support to the economic and social importance of the results, will have to be explored. More practical formulas in terms of costs and benefits, such as low-interest loans repayable over very long periods, will have to be developed.

To facilitate the adoption of converging, proactive measures in the Member States,

the possibility of **agreeing guidelines at Community level** on business start-ups, funding of the application of research results or changes in the conditions of employment for scientific staff will have to be studied. Steps will also have to be taken to ensure that the measures implemented are compatible with competition policy, notably on agreements and State aid. Finally, to maximize the impact of the measures taken at Community level and by the Member States, significant efforts will be required to **make the Community's research, external relations and commercial policies more compatible.**

Chapter 5

The changing society, the new technologies

Introduction

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are transforming dramatically many aspects of economic and social life, such as working methods and relations, the organization of companies, the focus of training and education, and the way people communicate with each other. They are resulting in major gains in productivity in industry, and in the quality and performance of services. A new 'information society' is emerging, in which management, quality and speed of information are key factors for competitiveness: as an input to the industries as a whole and as a service provided to ultimate consumers, information and communication technologies influence the economy at all stages.

Comparable changes in productivity will be achieved by further progress in life sciences — biotechnology — through the creation of innovation in highly competitive areas of industry and agriculture.

The competitiveness of the European economy will to a great extent depend both on the conditions of utilization and on the development and application of these technologies. Since they are amongst the highest growth activities in industrialized countries, and they are also highly skilled labour activities, their potential for employment creation is considerable, in particular for the creation of new services. At the same time, potential drawbacks of widespread use of these new technologies, such as the risk of non-skilled people being left behind by progress in information technologies, should be combated through positive policies.

Various obstacles to an optimum exploitation of these technologies have been encountered in Europe, and they should be removed. The diffusion of best practice aimed at business should be promoted and the development of Community-wide applications favoured. To this end, an

appropriate regulatory and political environment should be created and the implementation of trans-European telecommunication services stimulated. Training systems should foster the application of these technologies. Europe should implement the conditions that will allow it to maintain a sufficient level of mastery over technology and benefit from an innovative and competitive ICT industry, within an open and competitive environment.

Member States' views

The Member States' contributions on this subject place the emphasis on cooperation between the Community and the Member States to promote economies of scale; the Community could focus its efforts on facilitating the development of market forces, while ensuring free competition and promoting systems compatibility.

A. *The information society*

5.1. Introduction

This decade is witnessing the forging of a link of unprecedented magnitude and significance between the technological innovation process and economic and social organization. Countless innovations are combining to bring about a major upheaval in the organization of activities and relationships within society. A new 'information society' is emerging in which the services provided by information and communications technologies (ICTs) underpin human activities. It constitutes an upheaval but can also offer new job prospects.

With easier access to information, it is becoming increasingly easy to identify, evaluate and compete with economic activities in all sectors. The pressure of the market-place is spreading and growing, obliging businesses to exploit every opportunity available to increase productivity and efficiency. Structural adaptability is becoming a major prerequisite for economic success. The growing interconnection of the economy is leading to major produc-

tivity improvements in the production of goods but also in relation to services, and the borderline between goods and services is becoming increasingly blurred. Throughout the world there is a trend towards specialization and professionalization in economic activities which is gradually extending to subcontractors and service providers. To be able to compete worldwide, European industry must exploit all possible ways of improving its competitiveness by making growing and effective use of ICTs. It must favour innovative and attacking strategies aimed at acquiring market shares rather than simply adjusting by reducing its production costs.

Businesses are very much aware of the importance of applying ICTs in order to stay competitive. The job situation has generally remained more favourable in companies which have introduced microelectronics than in those companies that have not used this technology. The main effects have been job substitutions on the basis of different qualifications. The spread of ICTs within the Community has generated increases in productivity and in GDP, and a lower rate of inflation. The overall impact on employment depends to a large extent on how competitive the European ICT industry is: the better it performs, the greater the benefit in terms of the impact on employment. However, the current worrying employment situation within the Community cannot be blamed on the penetration of the ICTs into the industrial and social fabric.

The economic impact of technological progress on growth and employment depends on the innovation process, which has become interactive. The linear model of innovation, with the innovative act being isolated, has in today's world been replaced by complex mechanisms: innovation requires constant and organized interdependence between the upstream phases linked to technology, and the downstream phases linked to the market.

The means available to create, process, access and transfer information are remodelling relationships in our societies. One of the most important aspects of current developments is the breathtaking expansion in the means available to us to communicate

and process information (sound, text, images) in digital form.

Companies' operations have become unthinkable without the use of ICTs. These technologies are enabling them to seek total integration of their own functions in space and time and in terms of their environment. The introduction of ICTs, globalization and international competition are forcing companies to rethink the way in which they organize their production. Where the general public is concerned, the penetration of ICT-dependent products and services into everyday activities is also striking. This generates new forms of economic and social organization, the structure of which is no longer subject to geographical constraints but depends on telecommunications networks or teleports: teleworking is emerging as a major social phenomenon. Authorities concerned with the management of public funds and wishing to provide their constituents with better quality services also call upon ICTs. Relationships between the general public and the authorities are changing, and more fundamentally the present boundaries between the role of the State and the market are altering.

Despite the undeniable progress that has been made, the penetration of ICTs is not an unmitigated success story. The change-over towards an information society has placed severe demands on the adaptability of those concerned. The risk of exclusion, for example, as a result of inadequate skills or qualifications and, more generally, the emergence of a two-tier society should not be underestimated. Europe must prepare itself for this changeover in order to capitalize upon the economic and social advantages while analysing and mitigating any adverse consequences: an increase in the isolation of individuals, intrusions into private life, and moral and ethical problems. It is important to identify to a greater extent the employment possibilities for those who encounter difficulties in integrating into a working world which is becoming increasingly complex and demanding. Social responsibility is a matter for employers, employees and the State. The information society is producing a significant acceleration of economic and social changes, and new and more flexible

forms of employment are emerging which often require new forms of social protection.

5.2. A common information area

The move towards an 'information society' is irreversible, and affects all aspects of society and interrelations between economic partners. Creation of a common information area within the Community will enable the Community fully to seize these opportunities.

(a) *What is a common information area?*

The common information area consists of a number of indivisible levels:

- (i) the **information** itself, converted and collated in electronic, i.e. digital, form (databases, document bases, image bases, CDI, etc.);
- (ii) the **hardware, components and software** available to the user to process this information;
- (iii) the **physical infrastructure** (terrestrial cable infrastructure, radio communications networks and satellites);
- (iv) the **basic telecommunications services**, particularly electronic mail, file transfer, interactive access to databases and interactive digital image transmission;
- (v) the **applications**, for which the above-mentioned levels perform the storage, processing and transmission functions, providing users with the specific services they need. Generally, users 'see' only the application to which they are connected; the transport side needs to be 'transparent' for them. Consequently, applications are the area where the greatest efforts must be made to improve the structuring of the information and user-friendliness. With the aid of the applications, their performance and the conditions in which they can be used, the common-information area will have an economic and social impact and can help to improve the employment situation;

- (vi) **users**, who are not only trained in operation of the applications, but are also aware of the potential of ICTs and of the conditions required for optimum use thereof.

(b) *What opportunities?*

The common information area is a factor for economic and social improvement. In the current competitive context, access to and mobilization of information are becoming the central aspects of productivity and competitiveness, especially for SMEs. The capital and non-capital investment required to set up information technology infrastructures directly supports growth and contributes to structural improvements in the conditions of supply. The common information area is also a factor for economic and social cohesion: it will allow reconsideration of siting and make it possible to promote new decentralized methods of organizing work, for example, teleworking. It contributes to the performance of other major infrastructures, in particular transport infrastructures, and constitutes an aid for the protection of the environment and risk management. Last but not least, infrastructures are a powerful lever for the development of new services, and in this way can make a significant contribution to improving the job situation. In particular, certain services for which the State has been responsible hitherto, and which are subject to increasingly tight budget restrictions, could be transferred permanently to the market. There are many examples of such new services related to communication and social relations: education and training, culture, security, etc. They cannot be developed free of charge and be funded implicitly by the taxpayer. They call for the introduction of new methods of payment, such as the pay-per-use system.

Modern technologies are fundamentally changing the relationship between the State and the general public. The ordinary citizen can have access to 'public services' on an individual basis, and these will be invoiced on the basis of the use made of them. Transferring such services to the marketplace will lead to new private-sector offers of services and numerous job-creation

opportunities. However, this will have to be accompanied by a reduction in user costs; otherwise, no-one will be willing to make use of such opportunities. It will also be essential to ensure that this transfer does not entail social disadvantages.

(c) The policies pursued with the Triad (European Community, United States and Japan)

The move towards an information society, and the opportunities which it provides, will in the long run be as important as the first industrial revolution. It is difficult to predict the pace at which this change will take place. The economies which are the first to succeed in completing this change satisfactorily will have major competitive advantages. The USA and Japan are therefore attempting to speed up the process.

In the USA, the public authorities have a strong desire to maintain US technological pre-eminence, in particular on national economic security grounds, and are making technology the driving force behind a revival in US economic growth and competitiveness. The policy to establish information technology infrastructure spanning the entire USA is considered vital for the country's growth. The project to speed up the introduction of new high-speed networks, computer systems and communication technologies is not limited to investment in physical infrastructures. It also includes the development and installation of new technologies and applications.

In Japan, political awareness of the strategic importance of ICTs for Japan's economic development dates back to the 1960s, and a social consensus on the priorities and the means and programmes required was already achieved at that time. The recognized importance of 'information infrastructures' to maintain Japan's development has given rise to a programme under the new Japanese economic recovery plan.

The Community and the Member States have taken numerous steps to create information infrastructures: revision of the regulatory framework for telecommunications,

and in particular the liberalization of value-added services and a programme designed to culminate in 1998 in the liberalization of voice telephony, RTD support programme, stimulation of the development of data-communication systems of general interest, establishment of a standardization policy, and a policy of innovation and support for regional policy.

The development of an 'information society' will be a global phenomenon, led first of all by the Triad, but gradually extended to cover the entire planet. In pursuing its strategy, Europe should aim at achieving three objectives:

- (i) from the outset, placing its approach in a world perspective, and therefore encouraging the international alliance strategies of its companies and operators; promoting where possible the development of open systems and international standards; working resolutely towards the opening-up of third country markets, in order to seek genuine reciprocity, and opposing any form of discrimination;
- (ii) ensuring, at the same time, that the systems developed take due account of European characteristics: multilingualism, cultural diversity, economic divergence, and more generally the preservation of its social model;
- (iii) creating the conditions whereby, in an open and competitive international system, Europe still has an adequate take-up of basic technologies and an efficient and competitive industry.

Fuller use of the potential offered by information and communication technologies can:

create new service markets;

facilitate provision of services by the private rather than the public sector, including a new partnership between the private and public sector, for example for training;

speed up administrative decision-making procedures.

5.3. The objective: To create new service markets

Europe has the know-how and experience to establish a common information area. However, to harness them, there needs to be a collective effort and a political framework so that the measures to be taken can be implemented as quickly as possible. This process will primarily be led by the private sector and underpinned by the emergence of new needs and new markets. It is therefore necessary to define the role of the public authorities unambiguously.

In the first instance, it will be their responsibility to address the 'societal' implications as a whole, avoiding exclusion phenomena, maximizing the impact on employment, adapting education and training systems, and taking due account of the cultural and ethical implications for the general public, including aspects relating to the protection of privacy.

The second task of the public authorities will be to remove the remaining regulatory obstacles to the development of new markets. However, investors' 'wait-and-see' attitude can also be explained by the fact that, for want of a communication infrastructure, demand cannot be expressed sufficiently clearly. To resolve this dilemma there is a need for the public authorities to provide encouragement, guidance and opportunities for concertation.

The third task of the public authorities is to create the conditions whereby European companies develop their strategies in an open internal and international competitive environment, and can continue to ensure that crucial technologies are mastered and developed in Europe.

The changeover towards an information society is a very complex process requiring new forms of partnership and cooperation between the public and private sectors. In the measures proposed below, the principle of subsidiarity must be applied fully between the private sector and the public authorities and also between the Community authorities and the national administrations.

A strategy for establishing a common information area must satisfy four specific requirements:

- (i) diffusion of best practice and development of European ICT applications, which is the fundamental objective in view of the contribution which it can make to restoring growth and strengthening competitiveness;
- (ii) liberalization of the telecommunications sector, which alone can release the market forces of the information society; users must be offered a broad range of options at attractive tariffs;
- (iii) faster standardization, which alone can create a European information area from the fragmented communications areas;
- (iv) trans-European telecommunications infrastructure, which is essential as the basic foundation of the information society.

The policy for creating a common information area should set the following priorities:

- (a) Diffusion of best practice and development of European ICT applications. This is the fundamental objective in view of the contribution which it can make to restoring growth, strengthening competitiveness and improving the employment situation.
- (b) Creation and enforcement of a legal, regulatory and political environment encouraging private initiative by opening up the market to competition, taking due account of the interests of the Community (the existence of universal services and the emergence of European operators) and of individual citizens (protection of data and privacy, security, etc.).
- (c) Development of basic trans-European telecommunications services, which are a *sine qua non* for the free movement of information.
- (d) Provision of specific training targeted on extensive use of information and on the needs of the ICT industries for qualified human resources.
- (e) Technology take-up and improvement of the performance of the European ICT industries, a precon-

dition for adapting the applications to the specific situation in Europe, for making full use of technological progress and for maximizing the impact of the measures proposed on employment.

These five complementary priorities form an indivisible whole. The first sets the objective and the others are the means to attain that end. In the current climate of rapid technological and industrial change, action must be started as soon as possible to establish a European information infrastructure and give a positive lead to the strategic intentions and choices made by businesses. The instruments or bodies necessary to ensure the compatibility and interoperability of products and services must also be set up without delay.

(a) Diffusion of best practice and development of European ICT applications

Strict implementation conditions are needed to exploit all the potential offered by ICTs. In particular, the introduction of computer systems must go hand-in-hand with the identification of companies' strategic objectives, the functions and support to be provided by the system, and appropriate work organization. This is an area where the awareness of the user companies must be raised.

It is recommended that the following action be taken:

- (i) **Diffusion of best practice** in the use of ICTs. Attention should be focused on the conditions under which ICTs are used: a programme for the diffusion of best ICT practice aimed at businesses, in particular SMEs, would significantly improve the impact of ICTs on their competitiveness and ability to create jobs.
- (ii) **Launch of European applications projects.** The crux of the matter is not technology, but organization. In order to avoid a proliferation of uncoordinated and incompatible applications in Europe, several major applications projects should be launched to catalyse the market and promote greater

homogeneity in terms of standards in particular. Clear priorities must be defined. They offer the prospect of creating a market large enough to make investment in telecommunications infrastructure profitable and guarantee satisfactory amortization. They could concern:

Administrations, through an extended version of the IDA programme.

Major public services. On the basis of work already carried out, efforts should be concentrated on effective implementation of a limited number of major projects leading to a political commitment: an integrated air-traffic control system, a European road-traffic management network, a European medical information system, a network of research centres, a European distance-learning service, a 'computers in schools' programme or a European civil protection system.

Teleworking and telepartnerships. Teleworking and telepartnerships have an important part to play in the relocation of work and of businesses to the disadvantaged areas of Europe (rural areas, peripheral areas or old industrial areas, etc.). A European project could be launched to promote the development of teleworking and telepartnerships.

Greater involvement of ICT users in the creation and implementation of Community programmes.

Strengthening the coordination of programmes

(b) Creation of a regulatory and political environment

Creation of a common information area will depend primarily on private sector investment. It is therefore essential to create a legal environment which will stimulate the development of such investments and guarantee that they are used in the public interest. Several types of action can be taken to achieve these objectives, most of which have already been initiated, and should be intensified where appropriate.

- (i) **Opening up to competition**, to provide the broadest possible range of services at the best price to suit the market.
- (ii) **Universal service**: since the traditional operators are becoming increasingly independent of the State and are exposed to growing competition, it is necessary to define precisely the universal service obligations, their price and how they should be financed.
- (iii) **Standardization**: given the standardization policy conducted hitherto at Community level, enhancing the efficiency of the present system means speeding up standardization processes, ensuring transparency in standardization (declaration *ab initio* of patents by standards proposers) and guaranteeing all companies equitable rights to exploit the patents underlying the standards.
- (iv) **Protection of data and privacy**, in particular ensuring complete reliability of data transfer systems.
- (v) **Security of information and communication systems**: both industry and Member States are calling for coordinated action to solve the problems of security of information and communication systems.

(c) *Providing the Community with basic trans-European telecommunications services*

European telecommunications face considerable difficulties, notably the incompatibility and non-interoperability of the national telecommunications services' networks. The principal problem is not technological, it is the result of the structure and organization of the market: the absence of telecommunications operators of a European stature and the non-existence of basic services at European level (electronic mail and file transfer, remote access to databases and interactive image transmission services).¹

¹ It should be noted that standardization could lead to the introduction of European telephone paycards or a European 'Minitel' without the need for specific technological development.

The following action can be recommended:

- (i) **development of support networks**: Euro-ISDN and integrated broadband communication (IBC) system. Mobile radio communications (GSM, PCN) are another area in which efforts should be made to speed up development;
- (ii) **acceleration of the standardization process** and integration of standards into services, in particular those which are vital to service interoperability;
- (iii) **strengthening of coordination**, in particular between telecommunications policy and the Structural Funds.

(d) *Providing the right training*

The competitive pressures on European industry require from all staff an increasingly high level of skills and an ability to use new technologies effectively. Managers need specific training to make them aware of the potential of ICTs and their organizational and socio-professional implications. Technicians and other workers need to have specific ICT-related aspects better integrated into the training for their basic trade. Schoolchildren and students should learn to use ICTs, in particular in order to resolve general education and training problems. Educating potential ICT users to enable them to make effective use of ICTs entails training as many people as possible in the basic skills and providing specialist training for some of them.

Europe has made a big effort to develop basic training in computer science, but it does not have sufficient qualified staff, and insufficient attention has been paid so far to the application of new technologies in training and education systems. In particular, the possibilities opened up by distance-training should be better exploited.

The following recommendations are put forward:

- (i) There needs to be an in-depth analysis of the importance of the greatest possible number of people being given the basic knowledge for making the best possible use of data-processing systems, and the conditions and resources necessary to achieve this; on user-

oriented training: generalize the use of new technologies in teaching and training, notably by developing appropriate software and training teachers and instructors;

- (ii) on producer-oriented training: it is essential to train the engineers and researchers which the European ICT industry needs and to coordinate the ICT-related training provided under the various specific Community RTD programmes.

(e) Harnessing technologies and improving the performance of Europe's ICT industry

Unlike its competitors, Europe's ICT industry does not have a firm hold on its home market. Europe must be given the applications necessary to meet its needs and the ability to devise the requisite applications software. A solid software industry base is inconceivable without close cooperation with equipment suppliers and early knowledge of how their equipment performs. Because of the speed of new developments, it is essential to know the specifications of equipment and components before they are available on the market, otherwise it is possible only to follow developments, which leaves very little scope for initiative. Having a strong European ICT industry would also help considerably in maintaining a scientific and technological community in Europe, and particularly in harnessing generic manufacturing technology.

It is recommended that action be taken in the following areas:

- (i) **Promotion of 'strategy watch' at European level.** There should be action to raise awareness on strategy watch, to reinforce the measures already taken and to coordinate and rationalize existing resources in order to remedy the lack of strategy watch structures and organizations in Europe.
- (ii) **Support for the R&D effort.** The rapidity of technological progress requires that the R&D effort be maintained and even reinforced. In the priorities of the fourth framework pro-

gramme concerning the generic technologies necessary for the emergence of an information and communication infrastructure special emphasis will be placed on taking into account users' and market needs and the general aim of making the economy as a whole more competitive. The impact of the programmes will be strengthened by involving users, and through training, coordination with national initiatives and Eureka and international cooperation. Careful consideration needs to be given to taking better account of the importance of incremental research, industrial realities and the interactive nature of the innovation process.

- (iii) **Exploitation of RTD projects through industrial policy.** Specific action could be launched consisting in developing pilot demonstrations in those areas where market forces are slow to commercialize the results of RTD (multimedia, in particular).
- (iv) **Adapting industrial and commercial policies to the new international situation.** Globalization of the economy and the existence of unfair competitive practices in the various markets of the Triad create competitive advantages which could seriously handicap European companies. In accordance with the Council resolution of November 1991,¹ higher priority should be given to specific measures aimed at levelling competitive practices and launching international cooperation programmes.

5.4. Conclusions: Combining our efforts

A Community policy aimed at establishing a common information area will help to increase competition and improve European competitiveness. It will help to create jobs. It should be backed up by specific measures aimed at facilitating economic

¹ Council resolution of 18 November 1991 concerning electronics, information and communication technologies (SN 211/91).

and social changes, and ensuring that all workers have jobs which reflect their qualifications. To this end, steps should be taken to promote the creation of new jobs, for example, in new social services.

Devising a policy to promote a common information area requires in particular the setting-up of an efficient system for cooperation between the parties concerned. Because of the Community's political structure, this is much more difficult than in the USA or Japan.

Establishing an information infrastructure will require urgent and structured measures. If these measures are to be credible and successful, it is important to define them clearly, to specify a timetable and to put in place resources or structures which will ensure that this timetable is respected. We must therefore combine our efforts in Europe and make greater use of synergy in order to achieve as soon as possible objectives aimed at building an efficient European information infrastructure and taking the necessary measures for creating new services.

It is proposed that a task force on European information infrastructures be established with a direct mandate from the European Council. This very high-level task force would follow guidelines set by the European Council and would have the task of establishing priorities, deciding on procedures and setting schedules. It would be required to report to the European Council within three months after first consulting all the parties concerned.

It would consist of one member of the Commission, several members of the governments of the Member States, representatives of the European Parliament and high-level representatives of industry, operators, users and financial institutions.

The task force should be set up before the end of 1993.

At the same time, the European Council should instruct the Council to speed up the work already being done aimed at setting up information infrastructures.

B. Biotechnology and its diffusion

5.5. As a result of intensive scientific research and major discoveries over the past four decades in molecular biology, biotechnology has emerged as one of the most promising and crucial technologies for sustainable development in the next century. Modern biotechnology constitutes a growing range of techniques, procedures and processes, such as cell fusion, r-DNA technology, biocatalysis, that can substitute and complement classical biotechnologies of selective breeding and fermentation. This confluence of classical and modern technologies **enables the creation of new products and highly competitive processes in a large number of industrial and agricultural activities** as well as in the health sector. This would provide the impulse to radically transform the competitiveness and growth potential for a number of activities and open up new possibilities in other sectors such as diagnostics, bioremediation and production of process equipment (biohardware). In terms of the quality of life, we should not underrate the important **potential of biotechnology for improving the environment** by correcting pollution and for improving health by preventing or remedying illness or other physical problems.

The Community has taken a number of initiatives, on the one hand, to promote the competitiveness of bio-industries and, on the other hand, to ensure the safe application of biotechnology. It implies mainly funding of research and development and the putting into place of a regulatory framework.

5.6. Potential of biotechnology and similarities with information technologies

Reinforcing the potential of biotechnology are a number of features which biotechnology shares with electronics and information technologies: it is science-based, the scientific input being the most crucial element of the technology trajectory; the gap between developments in basic science and their research and development applications and even further downstream is small and diminishing; a very major and growing

stimulus can be expected for process equipment, instrument and engineering sectors; and finally the impacts of the processes, techniques and hardware represented by biotechnology are across a number of sectors.

The Community is highly competitive in these sectors which cover chemicals, pharmaceuticals, health care, agriculture and agricultural processing, bulk and specialized plant protection products as well as decontamination, waste treatment and disposal. These sectors where biotechnology has a direct impact currently account for 9% of the Community's gross value-added (approximately ECU 450 billion) and 8% of its employment (approximately 9 million). Beyond this, perhaps only modern biotechnology has the potential to provide significant and viable thrusts, compatible with CAP reform and not dependent on operating subsidies, to new energy/fuel and industrial outlets for agricultural raw materials. The important role of biotechnology in these sectors is likely to be to maintain employment by stimulating its productivity as well as to create highly skilled labour demand.

The following are two valid indicators of the potential of biotechnology: the pace of international innovative activity and the evidence of growth in output and value-added in products derived through biotechnology. Measuring innovative activity by patents filed for relevant products in the USA, the Community and Japan show that patents filed have increased from 1 100 per annum in the early 1980s to 3 350 per annum in 1990. In 1980 the Community was in a leading position, by 1990 the USA was filing 50% more patents than the Community. European Patent Office (EPO) statistics reveal a similar evolution: between 1980 and 1991 biotechnology patents filed with the EPO increased by a factor of 10, the most being filed by US-based companies.

Current global indicators of the growth prospects of the biotechnology industry are the following: in the USA the industry based on modern biotechnology had a turnover of over USD 8 billion in 1992, a growth rate of 28% with employment growing at 13%. It is estimated on the basis of the observed rates of diffusion of bio-

technology that the US biotechnology industry's revenues will grow at an average rate of 40% to reach USD 52 billion by the year 2000. The current industry size in Japan is officially put at USD 3.8 billion and is estimated by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry to reach USD 35 billion by the end of the century. In the Community, despite the emergence of a significant number of firms and a substantial growth in markets, primarily of bio-pharmaceuticals, to over USD 3 billion, at the current rate of growth, the value of output and employment is about the same as that in Japan. It is therefore clear that by the year 2000 with an estimated world market of ECU 100 billion for the biotechnology industry, the Community growth rate will have to be substantially higher than at present to ensure that the Community will become a major producer of such products, thereby reaping the output and employment advantages while at the same time remaining a key player in the related research area.

5.7. Factors favouring growth, competitiveness and employment in the Community

The sectors with the greatest potential for the applications of biotechnology are amongst the most vigorous and competitive sectors in the Community with a long record of sustained growth, productivity increase, and highly competitive trade performance.

The Community firms in these sectors (chemicals, pharmaceuticals, agricultural processing) are leading firms at a global level with important capabilities in the domain of innovation.

Among other factors favouring investment in biotechnology in the Community are the strong science base and infrastructure, the availability of skilled labour, and the high quality of process engineering and production facilities.

5.8. Unfavourable factors

The key factors that may jeopardize a significant expansion of biotechnological applications in the Community are the following:

- (i) In a domain where the technology trajectory is crucially dependent on basic science, the **public research and development expenditure in the Community lags behind**. For the 1993 financial year publicly financed US biotechnology research and development expenditures are set to exceed USD 4 billion; in Japan in 1991 they exceeded USD 900 million whereas the Community's and Member States' expenditures totalled around USD 600 million. The fourth research and development framework programme's proposes ECU 650 million in biotechnology over five years. Member States have also programmes devoted to R&D in biotechnology.
- (ii) **Privately financed research and development on biotechnology in the Community has not compensated for the shortfall in public funding**; on the contrary, available indicators identify a delocalization — an investment outflow, largely net, from Community companies mainly towards the USA and Japan of USD 2.2 billion since 1984. In the most vigorous sector of biotechnology, biopharmaceuticals, in 1990 67% of patents were held by US-based companies and only 15% by Community-based companies. There exists the risk that the Community will be a leading future market for biopharmaceuticals but not a leading future producer. There is an evident feedback between technology diffusion and private investment.
- (iii) Regulation concerning the safety of applications of the new biotechnology is necessary to ensure harmonization, safety, and public acceptance. However, the current horizontal approach is unfavourably perceived by scientists and industry as introducing constraints on basic and applied research and its diffusion and hence having unfavourable effects on EC competitiveness.
- (iv) Technology hostility and social inertia in respect of biotechnology have been more pronounced in the Community in general than in the USA or Japan. It has become clear that these issues should be examined in greater detail in

order to properly address these concerns. Supporting actions such as those under the Biotech programme and the creation of a group of advisers to look at ethical issues have been undertaken.

5.9. Conclusions and recommendations

The potential of biotechnology to dramatically impact on competitiveness is greatest in certain sectors of the Community chemicals, pharmaceuticals, process equipments and appliances, agriculture and agricultural processing. These sectors contribute importantly to value-added and employment. The observed international growth in output of between 30 and 40% in the most vigorous of the biotechnology dependent sectors and the associated labour-intensive service activities (e.g. research, health care) has the capacity to provide a valuable stimulus to employment growth.

The means to achieve a fuller realization of the Community's inherent strength in biotechnology are to be found in overcoming existing constraints by creating appropriate channels for biotechnology policy development and coordination and by acting on the following **recommendations**.

- (a) Given the importance of regulations for a stable and predictable environment for industry and given that they influence localization factors such as field trials and scientific experimentation, the Community should be open to review its regulatory framework with a view to ensuring that advances in scientific knowledge are constantly taken into account and that regulatory oversight is based on potential risks. A greater recourse, where appropriate, to mutual recognition, is warranted to stimulate research activities across Member States. Furthermore, if the Community is to avoid becoming simply a market rather than a producer of biotechnology-derived products then it is vital that Community regulations are harmonized with international practice. The development of standards will supplement regulatory efforts.

- (b) The Commission intends to make full use of the possibilities which exist in the present regulatory framework on flexibility and simplification of procedures as well as for technical adaptation. To sustain a high level of environmental protection and to underpin public acceptance, it is important to reinforce and pool the scientific support for regulations. An advisory scientific body at Community level for biotechnology diffusion drawing on the scientific expertise within and at the disposal of the existing committees at national and Community level. An advisory body at Community level — scientific committee for biotechnology diffusion — could play a crucial role in intensifying scientific collaboration and in providing the needed support for a harmonized approach of the development of risk assessments underlying product approval. This body could also advise on the development of a further Community strategy for biotechnology.
- (c) Since the Community is not matching efforts elsewhere in research and development expenditure, it needs to compensate for this through **focusing on the most vigorous biotechnology research and development domains and increased coordination** between the Community and Member States in order to avoid duplication, encourage collaborative research and improve efficiency of expenditure on research and development.
- (d) The small and medium-sized research-oriented firms play an important role in biotechnology diffusion and the growth of this sector would substantially benefit from the creation of a **network of existing and new biotechnology science parks** in the Community linking together academic institutions, research laboratories and SMEs. This would create the possibilities for, on the one hand, greater educational investment in molecular biology and biohardware, and, on the other hand, the involvement of venture capital and other financial institutions. The Structural Funds could also play an important role.
- (e) Member States should provide additional incentives to **improve further the investment climate for biotechnology** and to facilitate the transfer of applied research and development to the market place. These might include fiscal incentives respecting the existing Community guidelines that have a bearing on biotechnology innovation and investment.
- (f) The commercialization of biotechnology will in certain areas require specific actions aimed at **further enhancing public understanding of the technology**. Member States should encourage interest groups to make objective information available and to encourage dialogue.
- (g) It is necessary to **clarify further value laden issues in relation to some applications of biotechnology**. In view of this, the Commission will reinforce the role of the Group of Advisers on Ethical Implications of Biotechnology and other groups which examine in particular ethical questions related to biomedical research.

C. The audiovisual sector

5.10. Introduction

The audiovisual sector which covers programme production and distribution ('software'), to which equipment manufacturing ('hardware') can be added, has an economic importance that is often underestimated as compared to its unquestionable cultural significance.

The sector has an estimated current global market value, considering both its components, of ECU 257 billion.¹ The software sector represents 54% of the overall market value.² One of the main characteristics of the sector is that it is undergoing both a technological and regulatory transformation that will considerably affect its future growth and development.

¹ Source: OMSYC 1993 report.

² Source: OMSYC 1993 report.

5.11. Europe — Growth forecasts and employment

The European market has been among the fastest growing in the world with a current market growth rate of 6% a year in real terms, that is being sustained even in today's recessionary climate. The USA has benefited most from growth in Europe increasing its sales of programming in Europe from USD 330 million in 1984 to USD 3.6 billion in 1992. In 1991, 77% of American exports of audiovisual programmes went to Europe, of which nearly 60% to the Community, this being the second largest US industrial sector in export terms, while the European Union's annual deficit with the USA in audiovisual trade amounts to about USD 3.5 billion.

Some impressive growth figures that flow from recent studies clearly show that by the end of this century the demand for audiovisual products will double in Europe, expenditure on both audiovisual hardware and software growing from ECU 23 to ECU 45 billion.

Such growth will accelerate under the impact of new transmission technologies which will multiply and diversify the vectors for distribution (satellite TV, pay-per-view, video on demand, interactive TV, etc.). The number of TV channels is expected to increase from the present 117 to 500 by the year 2000 with an increase of TV broadcast hours from 650 000 to 3 250 000 over the same period. Moreover, encrypted programming hours are predicted to increase by a factor of 30, which implies fundamentally different (and greater) revenue flows.

The audiovisual sector has a highly labour-intensive structure. Staff costs make up 47% of typical film budget and on average 15% of TV channels' operating costs (i.e. not counting the personnel involved in **producing** the programmes which may be bought in or made in-house). The sector intrinsically provides many high-level 'grey-matter' jobs, like technicians, performers, script-writers, directors, and so on. It is thus potentially less vulnerable to competition from low labour cost markets.

Though there is a lack of reliable statistics on employment within the sector, it has been estimated that at least 1.8 million people are earning their living in the EC audiovisual services (i.e. in the software sector).³ It is clear from the vigorous demand-side growth trend, accentuated by technological developments, in the audiovisual software sector in Europe, and from the nature and structure of the employment that it can provide, that there is remarkable potential for job creation in this sector. Recent estimates point to the doubling in the medium term of the share of household expenditure given over to audiovisual software products. In line with the increased growth predicted for the sector, on the condition that the growth is translated into jobs in Europe and not into financial transfers from Europe to other parts of the world, job creation could be of the order of two million by the year 2000, if current conditions prevail. Furthermore, bearing in mind that, if proper resources are deployed, there is a clear potential for an increase in our share of the market, it is not unrealistic to estimate that the audiovisual services sector could provide jobs, directly or indirectly, to four million people.

5.12. Conclusions

It is vital that the predicted growth in the European audiovisual market be translated into jobs in Europe? Given the intrinsic nature of audiovisual products (i.e. that they need to be amortized on large domestic markets) concerted national policies and policies at Community level are needed to achieve this objective. The aim must be to establish a growth-employment relationship that is positive within the European audiovisual sector and to prevent increasing resources from being diverted to job creation in other parts of the world, with Europe becoming a passive consumer of other countries' audiovisual products and with both its economy and culture depending on others. This thinking is behind the Community's firm stance in the

³ Source: Eurostat.

GATT negotiations and behind the policy instruments that have been developed since the Rhodes European Council in 1988. Moreover, a Green Paper on audiovisual policy will be presented by the Commission during the first semester of 1994 setting out suggestions on how existing policy instruments in this field may be developed and refined in order to maximize their impact

and contribute to guaranteeing not only the survival but also the growth of a viable audiovisual software industry in Europe into the year 2000. The stakes are high. The audiovisual sector is no longer a marginal one in economic or employment terms. On the contrary, it will be one of the major service sectors in the 21st century and should be given corresponding attention.

Chapter 6

The Community, an open and reliable partner

Summary

World economic relations are no longer limited to international trade in goods and services. In the world economy, the Community and all major partners are interdependent: Community policies must reflect and build on this reality.

The Community must keep up its efforts to bring the Uruguay Round to a swift conclusion covering all the problems now outstanding and paving the way for the transition to a world trade organization.

In the context of the liberalization of global trade and economic relations, the integration of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union into the world economy will contribute to the strengthening of growth in these countries and the world in general. Similarly, the Community should for the same reasons support the smooth and gradual integration of the developing countries in the world economy.

The perspective of accession for the associated countries confirmed by the Copenhagen Summit lays the foundation for the development of a Europe-wide zone of open markets and economic cooperation which will stimulate growth in the associates and give a strong stimulus to Community exports and therefore growth. This process of integration will contribute to rendering European enterprises in West and East more competitive on world markets.

6.1. Diagnosis

The Community economy is a global economy. The Community accounts for one fifth of total world trade in goods; 12 million jobs in Europe depend directly on export of goods. Tradable services account for one quarter of overall goods and services exports. Nor are trade figures alone a good reflection of Community economic

links worldwide. Direct investment by Europe in other countries accounts for over one third of foreign direct investment worldwide. The Community has strong links to preferential partners, but these do not dominate trade: Community exports to EFTA, Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean basin and ACP countries together account for only just over 40% of total exports.

Underlying this static picture, **the structure of the world economy is undergoing rapid change.** The post-war picture of inter-country trade, increasingly accompanied by international investment and with very large companies the privileged players, is less and less reliable. Trade in goods increasingly means interfirm trade in semi-manufactures. The development of informatics networks makes it possible for companies to cooperate more flexibly than by joint venture or franchise alone.

This means that **the key factors shaping business behaviour will be different.** Already, import duties are generally less important for exporters than domestic regulations (tax, safety, consumer protection). There is less and less scope for a nation State or an economic community to improve life for its businessmen by acting alone. Nor, even internationally, can trade policy action be taken without looking at possible policy linkages (trade/exchange rates, trade/environment, trade/security, trade/human rights) which were hardly addressed 10 years ago.

Integration in the global economy none the less depends on a **solid set of trade relations.** The analysis of competitiveness has already demonstrated that extra-Community exports of traded goods are too frequently concentrated in sectors where long-term prospects are for low demand. Nor are Community exporters sufficiently focused on the Asia-Pacific region, which has the highest medium-term growth potential. Community exports to some Asian markets have increased dramatically, underlining the mutual advantages of free trade. But we need to be more broadly present and to pursue further market-opening worldwide.

Nominal exchange-rate fluctuations may increase business uncertainty on third country markets and are a proper subject for Community activity (see recommendation (h) below) but do not seem to drive the underlying trend in Community competitiveness.

Perceptions of unfair trade abound. Some relate to traditional problems (dumping, subsidy, unilateralism), and some to the problem of free-riding in new areas of international policy coordination (social or environmental dumping, international impact of anti-competitive practices). There remains, too, a sense that market-opening is lagging behind economic growth and export performance in many, newly industrialized countries.

6.2. Member States' views

Several Member States' contributions underscore the benefits of an open market economy and free competition as advocated in the Union Treaty. This would enable the Community to turn its competitive advantages to good account in the framework of the international division of labour. Maintaining an open economy facilitates the allocation of resources to the places where they are most productive and, consequently, specialization in products and services with a high added-value and greater competitiveness. In the view of some Member States these arguments also hold good for products originating in countries with low wage costs as their development, coupled with an opening-up of their markets, offers new opportunities for European industry.

All Member States consider the conclusion of the Uruguay Round in the very near future to be necessary for the world economy. Several point to the need in future negotiations to take account of certain factors which have a bearing on trade, such as the environment, competition conditions and monetary aspects. There is no unanimity, however, on the inclusion in trade negotiations of social aspects or on the use and shape of trade policy instruments.

Most of the contributions highlight the benefits to be derived from the European

Economic Area and the progressive integration of the economies of Central and Eastern European.

Some Member States call for international economic cooperation to be stepped up significantly, notably in the G7 framework.

6.3. Europe in the world economy

Open markets with free competition is one of the objectives of the Treaty on European Union. It has a profound interest in promoting open markets, both inside and outside the Community. Open markets are a key element for international competitiveness. Within the Community they facilitate the international division of labour and the assignment of resources where they are most efficient. They also enable Community industry to purchase goods and services (for intermediate or final consumption) or raise capital in the best available conditions worldwide.

In the changing world economy, Europe itself is changing rapidly, presenting dangers but also great opportunities for the European Community.

The successful conclusion of accession negotiations with four of the EFTA countries will lead to the creation of an even more powerful industrial and trading Community.

Recent changes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have major implications for the Community, creating **new opportunities to expand the overall volume of trade** in the region and challenging the Community, and Community business, to play an active role in supporting these countries in their progress towards full market economies so that they achieve their full potential. The European Council meeting in Copenhagen laid down the parameters for developing future relations.

The integration of the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe with the Community resulting from the decisions of the Copenhagen Summit will further reinforce the Continent's trading capacity and its competitiveness on world markets.

In the longer term, similar benefits and challenges for the Community can be

expected from contributing actively to a smooth and gradual integration of the developing countries into the world economy.

6.4. Strategy

An open and comprehensive framework for trade and economic relations under internationally agreed rules, enforced multilaterally, with strong coordination of policy-making in all areas beyond those rules, is the only recipe for maximizing growth in an **interdependent world**. But that recipe will only work if the Community economy regains a long-term competitive position on world markets.

The push for competitiveness and the search for a strong position in the global market depends on a long-term vision: 20 years, not two.

The open 'trade' system must be improved and extended to meet the challenge of global economic interdependence. In order to regain public confidence, it must be seen to respond to current concerns.

The Community must be seen to take full advantage of that system. Community institutions must respond more quickly to threats and opportunities. Community business must work harder at developing strong links to foreign firms and consumers.

We must avoid setting up international trade as either a panacea or a scapegoat for current ills. Strong export growth can ease necessary internal restructuring, but no action on the external front alone, however drastic, could resolve the current unemployment problem.

Community priorities must reflect structural change in world markets, both the long-term prospects of fast-growing regions such as Asia and the immense opportunities created by adjustment in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

These latter opportunities must be seized as they represent not only large future markets but also will present opportunities to Community companies to improve their competitiveness on world markets. It will be necessary to push forward with the liberaliza-

tion of market access, and to develop the economic relationship in areas such as industrial cooperation, in order to maximize the benefits accruing to the Community and the associates from progressive economic integration.

However, the creation of new market opportunities in highly indebted countries will depend on the effective alleviation of the debt burden which strongly constrains these countries' capacity to import. The Community will work jointly with other partners in order to find a lasting and satisfactory solution to the debt problem.

6.5. Recommendations

(a) Reform the open market rules of the world economy

The Uruguay Round is an overdue first push towards the objective of strengthening GATT rules and extending them to reflect today's wider and more complex set of international economic relationships. We must reach a successful conclusion to the Round this year. Prospects for a favourable deal will not improve with time. Without a Uruguay Round agreement, the open trade system will come under sharp protectionist pressures: current Community trade flows as well as prospects for further growth will suffer.

In the remainder of this year and beyond, the Community's priorities are clear:

(i) Market-opening in both goods and services

The latest negotiations have produced progress in sectors where the Community is competitive, at least among major developed countries, and have laid the basis for further progress among all GATT participants.

Negotiations for accession to GATT by countries such as China and Russia will provide opportunities to secure clear commitments to continued market-opening.

The Community must make a positive contribution in order to unlock all these benefits.

Even if the Uruguay Round is concluded successfully, it is still based on a one-track approach to trade liberalization, dealing only with governmental obstacles to trade. It is important that multilateral rules are developed for the elimination of private conduct and structures which constitute obstacles to trade. Such obstacles are adequately dealt with in the Community through an active competition policy. However, the competition policies of its major trading partners are not geared similarly to the trade impeding effects of such private obstacles. Multilateral rules in this area should therefore re-establish a level playing field for Community companies and provide them with important additional trade opportunities.

(ii) Rules for a global economy

In a global economy, the range of policy areas where foreign decisions will affect Community companies is widening rapidly, while the scope for unilateral Community action to secure competitiveness gains at the expense of other economies is weakening. The strategy for all policy areas should be to seek common action with partners to meet Community objectives. This will require early action in a series of fields: some, such as intellectual property rules and investment, are covered in the Round, and others, such as environment and multilateral rules, which establish a level playing field.

(iii) A robust framework

This is essential to guarantee prompt action on outstanding issues. GATT is too loose a body to respond with the speed now essential in the face of new challenges, to integrate the range of policies that now interact, or to secure full compliance with increasingly complex multilateral rules. The trade impact of environment protection is one such issue which will have to be tackled immediately after the Round: the European Community wants to see a permanent environment committee in the new multilateral trade organization. A strengthened organization to manage the multilateral system is the essential guarantee that a Uruguay Round result will be of lasting value.

(iv) More harmonious rules

Special sectoral deals create intersectoral distortions which hamper economic growth in Europe. The Community is fighting in the Uruguay Round for an overall agreement that enables rules for textiles and clothing, agriculture and other sectors subject to GATT — recognized or covert trade restrictions, to be returned progressively to normal disciplines. The process can only be gradual, must bind all participants and must be set in the context of an overall strengthening of GATT rules as well as of the recognition of Community policies in the spheres affected. On this basis, it will be beneficial to Community producers as well as to the economy as a whole.

(v) Stronger rules

This is a necessary corollary to other action referred to above. Dumping and export subsidy remain threats to fair competition. GATT rules for preventing unfair competition must be strengthened. Safeguard action must also be made more effective and transparent, so that the Community can, as GATT foresees, take temporary action to allow industrial restructuring. Wherever possible, this action should be based on cooperative understanding with all involved rather than unilateral action.

(b) Streamline Community decision-making

Trade policy should be shifted towards the citizen (transparency, assessment of consumer interest) and towards greater Commission autonomy (subject to CFI control by the European Court). This will increase the confidence of Community producers that necessary decisions can be taken rapidly. But this will require not only legal powers but greatly increased Commission resources, and better cooperation from national administrations (e.g. statistical offices and customs). Key areas for resource increases include anti-dumping/anti-subsidy/safeguard action, the new policy instrument, the international dimension of competition policy, and action to prevent circumvention or fraudulent use of quotas under the Multifibre Agreement.

(c) Promote Community business strategies for the post-Round world

Uruguay Round market-opening measures will be implemented progressively. But it is not too early to focus debate on optimal strategies to generate Community gains (profit, market-share, new investments and business relationships) from the post-Round world market. This should look beyond the likely impact effect on world business confidence and anticipate the adjustment necessary to take account of new competitive situations in Community markets as well as overseas.

There is no need for Community duplication of Member State export promotion efforts. But at Community level, more effort is needed to produce Community-wide business organizations, and to develop Community organizations expert in regional rather than simply national export markets. Asia is a high priority for action in this regard. Positive developments in Latin America (the setting-up of NAFTA, Mercosur, etc.) open up increasing possibilities for action in this region as well.

The framework exists in embryo in the current web of bilateral agreements, and will be reinforced as those countries align themselves ever more closely on multilateral open market principles. The Community is both leading the cooperative effort of the G24 and developing, through TACIS and PHARE, its own instruments.

Broader business investment in these markets, whether bilaterally or in joint efforts with Asian or US business, is the element that must now be encouraged. Closer economic integration of this sort would accelerate the pace of reform to the East and reduce the examples of friction that inevitably result in sectors suffering structural overcapacity.

We should improve **coordination between export promotion and other policies** in order to increase export opportunities, particularly at the cutting edge of technological development. As policy cooperation becomes more extensive (for example on environment or biotechnology under the Community/Japan Declaration, or other-

wise), the officials involved should be conscious of the scope for creating new forms of industrial cooperation or new markets for Community products.

The globalization of the economy raises the question of the adequacy of the current instruments of commercial policy. We should now be developing more positive tools of business and intergovernmental cooperation.

(d) Develop the relationship with Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union

The Europe Agreements concluded with Poland, Hungary, the Czech and Slovak Republics, Bulgaria and Romania commit the parties to the creation of broadly based political and economic cooperation on the basis of a free trade area. In Copenhagen the European Council decided to accelerate the timetable for removing barriers to trade on the Community side, recognizing that greater market access was an essential support for the process of economic reform in these countries.

In addition to the framework for future trading relations, which has been established, it is necessary to **develop a broad and dynamic economic relationship**, by encouraging business and economic cooperation between Western and Eastern Europe and by providing a framework for cooperation, including the application of common competition rules in the wider European area. One of the benefits of closer economic cooperation should be to reduce trade frictions by easing adjustment and minimizing recourse to trade defence instruments.

The Community is currently negotiating partnership and cooperation agreements with Russia and a number of other newly independent States, and defining the rules which will govern the future trading relationship and which will form a key element of these agreements. The Community has indicated its willingness to envisage establishing a free trade area with Russia in the future.

Finally, the Community must pursue the process of multilateral opening and integration among TACIS and PHARE partici-

pants and support appropriate regional cooperation so that the old model of hub-and-spoke preferences can be avoided.

In order for the former centrally planned economies of Europe to be able to implement market-oriented reforms successfully, the Community will need to adopt an innovative approach that, besides market-opening and financial support, includes the necessary transfer of skills. **Cooperation between Community enterprises and newly privatized firms** can play a key role in this regard.

(e) Anchor the southern Mediterranean region into the European economy

The Mediterranean neighbours, from Morocco to Turkey, represent the southern part of the European Union's future economic and social environment. With a rapidly growing population of some 200 million people at present, these countries represent as important an export market potential as Eastern Europe.

It is of vital political and economic importance for the European Union to develop this relationship into a closer economic symbiosis.

The first steps towards a possible Euro-Mediterranean free trade area have already been made: free trade agreement with Israel (1989), customs union to be completed with Turkey by 1995 and Cyprus, association agreement to be negotiated with Morocco in 1994, later with Tunisia and possibly with other countries of the region.

It is also expected that the successful outcome of the peace negotiations in the Middle East and the process of economic liberalization which is under way will boost the intraregional trade.

All these developments should, during the coming decade, lead to a substantial increase in entrepreneurial activity in the Mediterranean countries, marked by more direct investment, more joint ventures, more agreements of production sharing, and, in general, a much higher level of industrial and trading interaction.

These geo-strategic developments on Europe's southern flank are bound to have a positive impact on the European employment situation, thanks to the economic dynamics that will be generated in the Mediterranean basin.

For this potential to become a reality the Community must contribute actively to the process of economic and social transformation which has already started in these countries, towards more open, regionally integrated and efficient economies.

(f) Improve competitiveness

Trade and economic policies cannot substitute for the development by business both of saleable products and of the means to deliver them to world markets on time and at the cost and quality needed. As to social costs, the fear of so-called social dumping would be misplaced if it related to a belief that in certain countries the level of social protection is kept artificially low in order to gain a competitive advantage elsewhere. We should not accept too simple a picture of high-wage industrial countries and low-wage developing countries. Differences in worker wages alone can be misleading. It is true that modern technology spreads much faster and more easily than in the past to different areas of the world. But poorer education, lower skill levels, lower levels of capital investment overall and inadequate infrastructure can all offset the possible advantage to be derived from low wages.

This is not to say that the Community has no difficulty in competing with labour-abundant countries. But **European competitiveness is falling not principally because of the impact of international social cost differentials in some sectors, but because we ourselves suffer structural distortions in Europe.** In developing countries, more elaborate social protection becomes a generally held political objective as national income rises to a level where those objectives are attainable. In the long run, a major part of the solution will consist in helping these countries to set up the conditions necessary for the development of domestic demand and rise in the standard of living.

The search for greater competitiveness both by trade and other policies does not imply that social protection should be undermined in Europe or ignored abroad. We are rightly proud of our record in this respect, which compares with the best in the world, and we are right to remain committed to establishing European-wide standards for social protection wherever appropriate.

The Community and its Member States can take every opportunity to raise with the countries concerned the need to bring forward their own legal changes. We can encourage this by positive measures, for instance by providing legal advice or technical cooperation where required. These are legitimate objectives of development aid and economic cooperation. But trade policy is not an instrument for the achievement of those objectives.

We rightly object to unilateral action by others to impose on Europe their view of how the world should be run. The international organizations responsible for multilateral rules must themselves judge Community compliance with these rules. The same principle must apply to judging others' compliance.

There are **three fronts** on which to act:

- (i) Inform better the current Community debates on social dumping, explaining why the Community wants multilateral rule-making and should not allow individual countries to set up as the unilateral judge of others' domestic laws or of others' compliance with international agreements;
- (ii) Develop a positive Community economic cooperation policy to increase social standards worldwide but without introducing unilateral trade discrimination as a lever;
- (iii) Prepare for the discussions that will be necessary, in the International Labour Organization and elsewhere, after the Uruguay Round, of how best to strengthen compliance with current and future agreements in the field of social policy.

(g) Pursue a balanced policy on preferential agreements

As worldwide levels of protection fall, the importance of trade preferences diminishes, except in the case of newcomers to the world market-economy open trading system.

Preferences remain an important signal of the Community's political commitment to one or other of its neighbours or partners, but should be **made compatible with the health and stability of the multilateral system**. Nor should special bilateral economic relationships be limited to trade preferences: economic integration cannot be achieved only through reduction of tariffs and non-tariff barriers, however. It also requires the elimination of distortions of competition resulting from anti-competitive behaviour or State aid.

(h) Delocalization

Increased direct investment is good for jobs, for reducing trade imbalances and trade frictions, for developing Europe's cultural understanding of other countries, and for the projection of Europe's identity among its trading partners. It is most useful as a stimulus to the world economy where trade barriers are low, so that increased international investment should go hand in hand with efforts towards further market-opening, in particular in the newly industrialized countries.

There are no Community restrictions on foreign investment, although some Member States continue to vet investment in certain sectors. We encourage investment, but also encourage inward investors to integrate fully in the European economy. We do not want so-called 'screwdriver' operations, nor are they likely to be an attractive formula in the long term for European-based operations, since we have high labour costs and a screwdriver operation depends on low labour costs. For us, the future lies in inward investment which is fully integrated in the local economy, with research, development, marketing and management functions located in Europe alongside manufacturing, sales and service. This indeed is the trend, not least because there has been a sharp rise in mergers and acquisitions as a

proportion of overall foreign investment in Europe.

Little by little, foreign investment in Europe has come to be accepted by European citizens as the first step in closer cooperation between sectors in Europe and their counterparts in key markets overseas. The same is not yet true of European outward investment which has been criticized for over 30 years as a means of 'exporting jobs'. The argument maintains that outward investment simply deprives Europe of value-added activities, increases our imports and decreases our exports. This is not a correct analysis. **Over 80% of Community overseas investment goes to other members of the OECD. Less than 10% goes to the newly industrialized Asian countries and Latin America.** In some parts of the Community, the level of investment in low-salary countries is even lower: 4% of overseas French investment, for example, a figure that has changed very little over time. Industrialists who invest outside Europe tend to do so to supply markets other than their own, reimporting barely 10% of their total intracompany purchases from the low-salary countries where they have invested.

(i) Work multilaterally to minimize exchange-rate fluctuations

Coupled to macroeconomic imbalances and the resulting current account problems of major trading countries, exchange-rate fluctuations increase prevailing levels of uncertainty and increase trade friction, thus reducing business confidence and delaying recovery.

This is a problem which cannot be tackled by the Community in isolation but requires a multilateral solution in which there is **better coordination between the macroeconomic and structural policies** of major international economies and not only exchange-rate targeting. The Community can encourage this by building on its own internal policy coordination of economic policy through regular surveillance.

Recent developments within Europe have not made action on this front any less urgent. Community interests will only be given proper weight in world discussion of exchange-rate issues when we are seen by

the rest of the world to be back on the course towards EMU.

(j) The international dimension of competition policy

Competition policy in most countries has traditionally been seen as a purely national prerogative. The Community was the first to practise a policy which tried to deal with the impact that distortions of competition had on trade. Originally only applied within the Community, this approach has been gradually extended to trade with the Community's main trading partners in Europe as well. Thus, competition policy has played a major role in furthering international trade and, in particular, the possibilities of our companies to export to other markets, hitherto closed by anti-competitive practices, State aids or public monopolies.

Not all the Community's main trading partners have followed a similar approach of applying their competition policies to open their markets to imports, however. Such policies are lacking in particular in a number of countries in East and South-East Asia, whose markets are closed not so much by tariffs and non-tariff barriers, but mainly by anti-competitive practices. The 'Keiretsu' in Japan and the closed distribution systems in several countries are but two important examples of this phenomenon.

It should be a Community priority to seek to establish rules governing these competition problems. Ideally such rules should be multilaterally agreed, in order to give them the broadest coverage possible. As indicated above, the present GATT Round does not deal with the issue, even though certain codes (in particular the TRIPS and Services Codes) include provisions on restrictive business practices. The Multilateral Trade Organization, created as part of the Round's package, should cover competition policy issues as part of its immediate agenda, focusing especially on restrictive business practices and cartels. The aim should certainly be to agree on minimum substantive rules, but more importantly to lay down procedures to ensure enforcement of these rules by each of the contracting parties. For it is only through their enforcement in individual cases that the positive market opening effects can be achieved.

The right of recourse to GATT panels should be strengthened, as should the effectiveness of their adjudications. Achieving effective rules of this kind will be difficult and time consuming but it is high time that the process began.

In the short term, therefore, the first step is to seek agreement on a system of mutual consultation and cooperation with competitive authorities elsewhere in order to forestall potential conflict. The Commission has concluded an administrative agreement with the antitrust authorities of the United

States of America in order to limit such conflicts through a process of consultation, cooperation and coordination.

If the agreement, which is presently being reviewed by the Court of Justice, is upheld, it can form a model for other negotiations. Discussions to this end were already held with the Canadian authorities and other candidates could follow. As one of their main objectives is to limit conflicts in cases of enforcement, such agreements can only be concluded with authorities which actively enforce their competition rules.

III — EMPLOYMENT

Chapter 7

Adaptation of education and vocational training systems

7.1. Training — the catalyst of a changing society

There can be no doubt that education and training, in addition to their fundamental task of promoting the development of the individual and the values of citizenship, have a key role to play in stimulating growth and restoring competitiveness and a socially acceptable level of employment in the Community. However, it is essential to grasp the nature, extent and limits of this role. Given the economic and social problems they are facing today, which are cyclical in certain cases and essentially and more profoundly structural in others, *our societies are making many pressing and sometimes contradictory demands on education and training systems*. Education and training are expected to solve the problems of the competitiveness of businesses, the employment crisis and the tragedy of social exclusion and marginality — in a word, they are expected to help society to overcome its present difficulties and to control the profound changes which it is currently undergoing.

Certain of these demands and expectations are fully justified. Moreover, all other things being equal, it is the countries with the highest levels of general education and training (for example, Germany or Japan) which are the least affected by the problems of competitiveness and employment. However, education and training should not be seen as the sole solution to the most urgent questions. *It is only within certain limits, and in combination with measures in other areas* (industrial and trade policies, research policy etc.) *that they can help to solve immediate problems*. There is no doubt that they could play a significant part in the emergence of a new development model in the Community in the coming years. However, European systems of education and training will be able to do this only if they are suited to the task. Indeed, it is the

place of education and training in the fabric of society and their links with all economic and social activity which must be re-examined. *In a society based far more on the production, transfer and sharing of knowledge than on trade in goods, access to theoretical and practical knowledge must necessarily play a major role.*

These adaptation measures will inevitably have to be implemented progressively, and their effects will be felt only with the passing of time. Nevertheless, by the extension of a certain number of steps taken by the Member States and the Community in recent years, well-planned education and training measures should still produce positive results in *three* areas: *combating unemployment by training young people and retraining staff made unemployed by rises in productivity as a result of technological progress; boosting growth by strengthening the competitiveness of businesses; developing a form of growth which produces more employment* by improved matching of general and specific skills to changes on the markets and to social needs. In order to determine with accuracy the shape and content of the measures needed, it is essential to diagnose the current state of education and training in the Community.

7.2. Opinion of the Member States

The contributions of the Member States highlight the dual role played by the system of vocational training:

- (i) training is an *instrument of active labour market policy*; it adapts vocational skills to market needs and is therefore a key element in making the labour market more flexible; the training system plays a major role in combating unemployment, making it easier for young people to enter the labour market and promote the re-employment of the long-term unemployed;
- (ii) investment in human resources is necessary in order to increase *competitiveness*, and especially in order to make it easier to assimilate and spread new technologies.

As far as labour market policies are concerned, the contributions of the Member States all point to the need to promote *continuing* training in various forms (sandwich and supplementary training, systems of rotation and training leave); several Member States believe that priority should be given to *preventive measures* for low-skilled people whose jobs are more likely to be under threat and to measures for integrating the unemployed and young people into the labour market.

The Member States agree on the need for *greater involvement of the private sector* in education and/or vocational training systems and in drawing up education and training policies in order to take account of market needs and local conditions. This could be done, for example, by encouraging businesses to become involved in education and training systems and to integrate continuing training into their strategic plans.

The following suggestions have been made for specific improvements to training systems:

- (i) the transition from the education system to the world of work should be eased by increasingly practical orientation of training and by ensuring that students have achieved a higher minimum level before they leave the education system;
- (ii) education could be rationalized by providing a shorter period of general education which is better tailored to market needs and by promoting vocational training as an alternative to university;
- (iii) there is a need to improve coordination of the measures implemented by the various authorities and bodies with responsibilities in the areas of training and the labour market.

Under the Treaty on European Union, the Community is to concentrate on promoting cooperation between Member States and on supporting national strategies for improving the results and quality of training, establishing an open education area in the Community by greater recognition of qualifications, and developing Com-

munity programmes for giving a European dimension to training.

7.3. The diagnosis

The most important thing to remember is that the situation differs greatly from one Member State to another. In some of them, the standard of basic education is satisfactory while the quality of vocational training is inadequate; in others, it is the continuing training element which is weak and the basic training which is strong; then again, continuing training may be well-organized but initial training deficient.

A diagnosis of the current situation in the Community in this area provides a mixed picture of weaknesses and a certain number of strengths.

(a) Weaknesses

The major weaknesses of the education and training systems can be found in the most frequently voiced criticisms by industry, parents, social analysts etc. The first is the *relatively low level of training in the Community, and especially the fact that too many young people leave school without essential basic training*. In the Community, the proportion of people of normal school-leaving age who leave the education system with a secondary qualification is 42%, against 75% in the United States of America and 90% in Japan. The proportion of young people in any age bracket who are in higher education in the Community is, on average, 30%, as compared to 70% in the USA and 50% in Japan.

There is a direct connection between this problem and the problem of *the failure of education, which is a particularly important and increasingly widespread factor of marginalization and economic and social exclusion*. In the Community, 25 to 30% of young people, who are the victims of failure, leave the education system without the preparation they need to become properly integrated into working life. Many of them join the ranks of the young long-term unemployed.

As shown by the initially surprising combination of a high rate of unemployment and a lack of skills in various areas, the second area of weakness is the *persistently inade-*

quate development of systems and types of continuing training, the inequality of access to this kind of training, the limited possibilities in this area for people employed in SMEs etc. These weaknesses have produced the second substantial group of unemployed people against a background of ever increasing strides in knowledge and an ever shorter life for technologies and types of work organization.

While the problem of the suitability of skills concerns primarily low- and intermediate-level skills, there is also a real lack of skills in a number of areas related to the applications of science and technology and the interaction between them and society: information technologies; applications of biotechnologies; applications of regulations on the environment; combinations of technical and management skills, etc.

With a university system faced — as it has been since the beginning of the 1970s — with the challenge of absorbing a growing number of students while maintaining the quality of its teaching, and the marginalization of — and increasing disaffection with — vocational education, the most developed systems of education and training in the Member States of the Community are, to put it another way, becoming subject to ever increasing constraints. They are weighed down by a combination of new expectations (improving the level of initial training and the ability of individuals to adapt to occupational and social changes throughout their lives) and old tasks (socializing people and imparting to them the basic values of citizenship).

In addition to these features, which are present in varying but significant degrees in all Member States of the Community, there are a number of weaknesses at the specifically European level: the lack of a genuine European market in skills and occupations; the lack of mutual transparency and the limited recognition of qualifications and skills at Community level; the lack of a genuine European area for open and distance learning.

(b) Positive aspects

Nevertheless, there are also positive points and encouraging developments.

Accordingly, in recent years there have been a number of important qualitative and quantitative steps forward in most Member States: a general improvement in the population's level of training; an increase in the level of school enrolment; the recovery or development of investment in education; an increase in the number of teaching staff etc. Reforms of university systems and education policies and structures — some of them major — have been devised and implemented, the effects of which should be felt throughout the 1990s: growing involvement of the private sector; decentralization of the management of education systems; an increase in local and regional initiatives.

These measures have been accompanied by changes in attitudes which have led to a rapprochement (not always without its risks) between education systems and industry, with the representatives of education systems showing increasing awareness of the need to provide training which prepares students for the world of work, and the representatives of industry realizing the importance of general education, in addition to purely vocational knowledge, given the development of new forms of work organization and the decentralization of responsibilities.

The Member States and the Community should now adapt the European system of education and training by building on the measures referred to above and continuing and bolstering the efforts already made.

7.4. Elements of a reform of education and vocational training systems

(a) General objectives and broad lines

The main principle of the various types of measures to be taken should be to develop human resources throughout people's working lives, starting with basic education and working through initial training to continuing training. By giving general currency to best practice in the various Member States at these different stages, we will succeed in developing an education and training system of the quality we are seeking.

In order to combat unemployment among young people with no skills, the objective should be to develop systems and formulas which *provide sound adequate basic training and establish the link between school education and working life*. The basic skills which are essential for integration into society and working life include a mastery of basic knowledge (linguistic, scientific and other knowledge) and skills of a technological and social nature, that is to say the ability to develop and act in a complex and highly technological environment, characterized, in particular, by the importance of information technologies; the ability to communicate, make contacts and organize etc. These skills include, in particular, the fundamental ability to acquire new knowledge and new skills — *'to learn how to learn' throughout one's life*. People's careers will develop on the basis of the progressive extension of skills.

In order to ensure a smoother and more effective transition from education to working life, *formulas of apprenticeship and in-service training in businesses* which allow people to gain skills in the world of work *should be developed and systematized*. Alongside the normal apprenticeship schemes, considerable effort should be devoted to developing *initial vocational training* in special training centres as a possible alternative to university. *Shorter and more practically oriented forms of training* should be encouraged, but students should still be provided with enough general knowledge to ensure a sufficient degree of adaptability and to avoid excessive specialization.

In their efforts to devise and implement education and training measures which are able to stimulate growth and employment, the Community and the Member States must also take account of the fact that 80% of the European labour force of the year 2000 is already on the labour market. All measures must therefore necessarily be based on the *concept of developing, generalizing and systematizing lifelong learning and continuing training*. This means that education and training systems must be reworked in order to take account of the need — which is already growing and is set to grow even more in the future — for the *perma-*

nent recomposition and redevelopment of knowledge and know-how. The establishment of more flexible and more open systems of training and the development of individuals' ability to adapt will become increasingly important, both for businesses, so that they can make better use of the technological innovations they develop or acquire, and for individuals, a considerable proportion of whom may well have to change their line of work four or five times during their lives.

Education and training systems will have an important role to play in this process of adaptation. There is an evident shortage in the Community of certain highly-skilled technical personnel, such as people who are capable of maintaining flexible manufacturing systems or handling systems for monitoring emissions of pollutants in firms. In many high-tech disciplines, Europe cannot yet call on the requisite manpower to do top-level research. This problem can be overcome by a joint effort on the part of specialized training and higher education establishments. *Cooperation between universities and the business world* is another basic way of transmitting knowledge, a vector for innovation and a way of increasing productivity in developing and potentially job-creating sectors.

Universities must also be given the resources they need to play their particular role in developing lifelong learning and continuing training. In association with public and private partners at national and regional level, they can *promote lifelong education*, for example by measures for training instructors, retraining primary and secondary school teachers, retraining middle and senior management, etc.

In order for these measures to be as effective as possible, it is necessary to *anticipate skill needs correctly and in good time* by identifying the developing areas and the new economic and social functions to be fulfilled, as well as the skills required for them. Even if real-time adjustment is not possible (since a certain period of adaptation is inevitable), the organization of as much research as is necessary in this area and the introduction of observation instruments and of mechanisms for transferring the information collected to the education

system should make it possible to minimize the gap between required and available skills.

In order to ensure the success of this process of adapting the system of education and training and to implement the measures set out above, *it will not just be a question of increasing the level of public funding assigned to this area nor will the same increase be appropriate in all cases. The task is rather to reorganize educational resources in association with the employment services.*

Generally speaking, *the private sector, and businesses in particular, should become more involved in the work of vocational training systems.* In order to facilitate this process, *appropriate incentives (of a fiscal and legal nature) should be developed. The training dimension should be integrated into the strategic plans of businesses.* Provision should also be made for a significant proportion of the funding allocated for the compensation for the unemployed to be reallocated for training measures. In order to ensure optimum overall use of funding, *it is essential to improve the coordination between public and private training opportunities.*

The public authorities, apart from their role of providing incentives and setting the general framework for the measures, *would be responsible for setting guidelines and giving clear instructions on the objectives to be achieved at the various levels.*

Moreover, the systems of education and, above all, vocational training, have developed over the past two decades against the background of life dominated by work. Given the steady rises in productivity and the concern to distribute work more equitably — but at a rate and in a manner which are not yet known — there will probably be a further reduction of working time and a readjustment of the balance between working time and training time. New possibilities are emerging for *linking new patterns of working time with the development of training;* these possibilities should be explored and exploited. Experiments in this area, based notably on agreements between the various parties in businesses, should be multiplied, assessed and, where appropriate, generalized.

(b) The specific means

(i) Action at Member-State level or concerted action

By concerted action at European level, possibly even in a Community framework and with the aid of Community instruments, Member States should use the instruments which they control in an effort to achieve the goals set out above. A key aspect should be the *development of genuine 'training policies' with the involvement of the public authorities, businesses and the social partners.* In order to ensure sufficient transparency at European level and to make it possible for Member States to draw on the experience gained in other Member States and to adapt their measures to those conducted elsewhere, the policies and strategies implemented should lead to *the regular publication and large-scale distribution of documents setting out objectives and providing descriptions and assessments.*

Particular attention should be paid to the continuing training of staff in SMEs, which account for a significant proportion of businesses in the Community and represent a potential for innovation which is by no means negligible. There can be no doubt that *regional and local authorities* have a particular role to play in this area by setting up mechanisms for promoting local forms of partnership in the area of continuing training and the retraining of workers.

The *fiscal instruments* available to Member States (the lowering of social contributions for businesses which organize training measures etc.) should also be used, since they place fewer restrictions on public budgets than does direct funding. *Systems of compensation for unemployment should be modified* and formulas developed for *reallocating part of this funding for training measures,* in particular for the long-term unemployed and for young people entering the labour market without skills.

It is important to set up *generalized and versatile systems of 'training credits' ('training vouchers')* which all young people would receive and could spend relatively freely throughout their working lives in order to obtain new knowledge and to update their skills. Such systems already exist in certain

Member States, but are limited in their scope and target population. Formulas which are more ambitious and of broader scope should be examined and developed on the basis of the models which are best adapted to the various national cultures: statutory entitlement to 'training leave' with financial assistance from the State; incorporation of the right to training in collective agreements, etc. In this context, *possible ways of linking these formulas with measures for increasing flexibility in the conditions applicable to employment and for sharing working time* should be studied and tested.

On the basis of a partnership between universities, public authorities and businesses, systems of initial and continuing training should be set up in the areas corresponding to the technological and social skills required for developing functions and occupations (multidisciplinary types of training; training for work in an environment which makes intensive use of information technologies; compound, technical and management skills, etc.). One pivotal aspect should be the development of *training by the new technologies*, more particularly information technologies, with a view to enhancing the quality and diversity of basic education and training and introducing modular and interactive elements.

By extending and emulating the measures implemented in certain Member States, the countries of the Community should also adopt the provisions needed to *increase the flexibility of the various parts of education systems and the level of decentralization of management of education systems*: within certain limits, and account being taken of the risks of increasing inequalities in education and eroding its humanist and cultural vocation, it is also desirable to give greater choice to students and to stimulate competition between establishments of higher education.

(ii) Community action

The Community could and should take a certain number of specific steps to support and complement all these measures. These steps can be bracketed together in *three main groups*.

In an extension of existing programmes and regulations, and against the backdrop of the implementation of the guidelines for future education and training programmes, the first objective should be *to develop still further the European dimension of education*: to improve the quality of training and to foster innovation in education by increasing exchanges of experience and information on good practices and developing joint projects; to establish a genuine European area of — and market in — skills and training by increasing the transparency, and improving the mutual recognition, of qualifications and skills; to promote European-level mobility among teachers, students and other people undergoing training, that is to say physical mobility and the 'virtual' mobility made possible by the new technologies of communication; to develop common databases and knowledge on skills needs; to conduct comparative research on methodologies used and policies implemented; to improve the interoperability of systems of distance learning and to increase the level of standardization of the new decentralized multi-media training tools, etc.

In association with the measures taken at Community level in the areas of social and employment policy, and in concert with the Member States, the Community should *set in place a political framework for the medium and long-term measures for linking the systems of continuing training and training credits with measures for increasing flexibility and reducing working time*.

Generally speaking, the Community should *set firmly and clearly the essential requirements and the long-term objectives for measures and policies in this area* in order to make it easier to develop a new model for growth, competitiveness and employment in which education and training play a key role and to ensure essential equality of opportunity and the coherent development of the three dimensions of the European system of education and training (education, training and culture). One way of sending an important signal and creating added awareness in this area would be to announce and organise a 'European Year of Education' (perhaps in 1995).

Chapter 8

Turning growth into jobs

8.1. Introduction

The Community will need **both sustained economic growth** and a more **employment intensive** pattern of growth if it is to meet its employment and unemployment objectives.

This will require **changes in economic and social policies** and **changes in the employment environment** as expressed in the structure of labour market, taxation and social security **incentives**. This implies new relationships and new methods of participation between all those effecting, and affected by, the changes that are required.

Producing more jobs from whatever rates of economic growth the Community can achieve requires a **new solidarity** — between those with work and those without, as well as between those who earn their income from work and those who earn their income from investments.

At the same time, the Community needs to improve its **long-term competitiveness** and avoid overreacting to short-term changes in price competitiveness resulting from the vagaries of exchange-rate movements. It means both **investing in people** and developing an active policy of encouraging **new economic activity and employment growth** in domestic and internationally competitive sectors.

This chapter recognizes the need for **more efficient labour market** and associated policies. It also recognizes that the **market alone cannot solve** the employment, unemployment and associated social problems faced by the Community. There is a need to take full account of the **real costs of unemployment for both societies and economies** in developing fiscal as well as labour market and social policies.

This means significant changes, but it does not simply mean a deregulation of Europe's labour markets. Rather, it implies a **remodelled, rational and simplified system of regulation and incentives** which will promote

employment creation, without putting the burden of change on those already in a weak position in the labour market.

All Member States are suffering serious short-term unemployment problems. The scale of these problems should not divert the Community from the longer-term tasks, however. An end to recession will not bring an end to employment difficulties. Short-term concerns should be balanced against the longer-term imperatives of expanding employment opportunities and of ensuring that economic and social progress march in step.

The approach and proposals outlined in this chapter support the medium-term strategy of **'moving towards the 21st century'**. In order to achieve these objectives, and pursue the appropriate mix in terms of policy and delivery, it will be essential to engage the active participation of the widest possible range of economic and social actors at all levels. 'Bottom-up' initiatives need to be encouraged as much as possible. The social partners especially have a substantial responsibility and opportunity to **work together in new ways** to find new solutions, including at European level, through the machinery set up under the terms of the Social Protocol.

8.2. Member States' views

All the Member States agree in their contributions — albeit with certain nuances — on why unemployment is so high in the Community, their **diagnosis** being that unemployment and the inadequate level of job creation are due principally to **structural factors**, exacerbated by the effects of the current recession.

There is unanimous agreement on the fact that **labour markets do not work efficiently**, with a lack of flexibility — more particularly in terms of the organization of working time, pay and mobility — and an inadequate match of labour supply to the needs of the market, especially as regards workforce skills and qualifications. This rigidity is the root cause of what are relatively high labour costs, which have risen at a

much greater rate in the Community than among our principal trading partners. As a result, firms are liable to make any necessary business adjustments by manipulating the labour factor, the tendency being for human labour to be substituted by more capital-intensive factors.

Social protection schemes have — in part at least — had a negative impact on employment in that they have, in the main, tended to protect people already in work, making their situation more secure and consolidating certain advantages. They have in effect proved to be an obstacle to the recruitment of job-seekers or of new entrants to the labour market. A number of Member States make reference here to a dual standard of treatment working to the detriment of the jobless.

Mention is also made of other factors which militate against jobs, such as the high level of non-wage costs, particularly in the form of statutory levies and charges, and insufficient motivation to work due to inappropriate social protection systems and employment services. Certain Member States also cite competition from low-wage countries as a contributory factor to the loss of jobs, particularly in labour-intensive or unskilled sectors.

Together with the broad agreement among the Member States on their diagnosis of the situation, there is also a wide measure of agreement on what remedies should be adopted. There can certainly be no miracle cure, but there is a need for a **thoroughgoing reform of the labour market**, with the introduction of greater flexibility in the organization of work and the distribution of working time, reduced labour costs, a higher level of skills, and pro-active labour policies. There is also a good degree of convergence on the need to maintain social protection systems. Finally, reference is also made to giving priority to combating unemployment among young people and long-term unemployment, as well as social exclusion.

The introduction of more flexibility should centre on the way work is organized, for example by removing obstacles which make it more difficult or costly to employ part-time workers or workers on a fixed-dura-

tion contract, and gearing careers more closely to the individual, or facilitating forms of progressive retirement. As regards the distribution of working time, there are suggestions on calculating working time on an annual basis and on reducing working hours in a period of recession. Obstacles to mobility (whether sectoral, geographical or in-house) should also be eliminated. This increased flexibility should be reflected in collective bargaining rules and systems, to make them more appropriate to the specific situation of local markets and undertakings.

As regards ways of **reducing labour costs**, suggestions are made for gearing levels of pay to company performance and productivity as a way of encouraging the recruitment of young people, and as an alternative to laying people off in a period of recession. A number of Member States make a plea for pay restraint to reflect economic circumstances at a local, sectoral or more general level, as a means of enhancing competitiveness and containing inflation, and to boost jobs. However, some Member States caution that pay restraint should not result in demand contracting over-much.

Most of the **Member States** make reference to this subject in their contributions, suggesting various means of cutting social welfare contributions, more particularly by concentrating such cuts on unskilled jobs. Among the suggestions made for compensating for this loss of income, there are proposals for taxing polluting activities or products, energy or scarce natural resources, or encouraging private insurance schemes. The idea of introducing a 'green tax' receives a varied response, with some of the Member States having reservations about the effect of such taxes on international competitiveness.

To create more **jobs for young people**, there is a suggestion to introduce greater flexibility with regard to the minimum wage, reduced social welfare contributions or other contract terms, for example by introducing flexible forms of apprenticeship, training or practices.

The ideas put forward on **pro-active labour policies** centre on three main aspects. Some of the ideas concern the **employment services**, for example enhancing and refining

the role of employment agencies and creating a better match between labour market supply and demand, by way of closer liaison with undertakings and with local markets, or by the establishment of private employment agencies. Most of the Member States believe that substantial employment prospects could be opened up by developing labour-intensive service activities (for instance, by introducing a greater degree of liberalization), and by introducing **new activities**, for example in the social and cultural fields, and in terms of health, the environment and the quality of life in general. Finally, many of the Member States call for an **examination of social protection systems** to ensure that they actually encourage people to work, for benefits to be more closely geared to the specific market situation, and for expenditure to be targeted more accurately to concentrate the effort on those in real need.

Many of the Member States suggest the introduction of a form of cost/benefit analysis for Community legislative proposals in the social field.

Finally, as regards the **instruments** needed to implement these major reforms, the Member States stress the need for social consensus and for a cooperative attitude on the part of all the parties concerned, with some of them proposing a search for consensus at Community level.

8.3. Scale and nature of the problem

(a) *High recorded and hidden unemployment*

Over the past three years, **recorded unemployment in the Community has risen sharply**. It now stands at almost 16 million people or around 10.5% of the registered workforce. **All Member States have been affected**, although levels of unemployment vary considerably between them.

It follows a period when unemployment had been falling with increased and stable economic growth. However, even after four to five years of steady economic growth at the end of the 1980s, when unemployment reached its lowest level for a decade, it was **still at 12 million or over 8% of the labour force**, and with only 60% of people of

working age in employment. One consequence was that, of the 10 million extra jobs created in this period, only three million were taken by the registered unemployed with the remainder taken by new entrants to the labour market.

(b) *Low rate of employment*

Europe's **employment rate** — the proportion of its population of working age that is in work — is the lowest of any industrialized part of the world. Moreover, it has fallen over the past two decades — from somewhat above 60% to somewhat below. In contrast, the employment rates in Japan and Scandinavia have remained consistently above 70%, and that of the United States of America — which started in 1970 at a similar level to the Community — has grown throughout two decades to reach its present level of 70%.

Divergences in employment-creation performance between the Community and other developed economies, and between Member States, are much greater than would be implied by differences in economic performance. Between 1970 and 1992, the US economy grew in real terms by 70% — somewhat less than Community growth of 81%. Yet employment in the USA rose by 49%, **compared with only 9% in the Community**. In Japan, where the economy grew by 173% from its 1970 level, employment grew by 25%.

In most European countries the proceeds of economic growth have mainly been **absorbed by those who remained in employment**, and there is a large pool of unemployed who have been excluded.

The Spanish economy is the most striking example. Between 1970 and 1992, the Spanish economy grew by 103%. But in 1992, employment was actually 0.3% less than it had been in 1970. Other EC economies also show **relatively low employment growth** compared with output. Over the 1970-92 period, the total growth in output and employment was, respectively: Germany, 70% and 11%; France, 77% and 6%; Italy, 85% and 18%; UK 51% and 3%.

While employment rates in the Community are broadly related to levels of development with southern States having rates of

employment of around 50 to 55% — there is nevertheless a great deal of **variation between economies at similar levels of economic development**. Thus the Netherlands has a much higher rate of employment than Belgium, and Portugal a much higher rate than comparable southern economies.

(c) Changes in hours of work

When examining **changes in working hours**, and considering the potential of job creation in the Community, it is important to **draw a distinction** between the volume of work and the number of people in employment. A number of Member States have, to date, succeeded better than others in translating a given volume of work into jobs, both by reducing normal working hours by a variety of means and by increasing the number of part-time jobs.

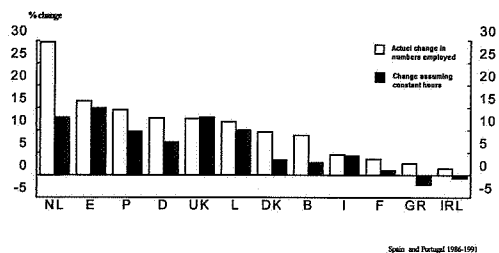
The Netherlands has gone **much further** in this direction than other countries. In 1991, those in employment worked an average of only 33 hours a week as compared with 39 hours a week in the Community as a whole. In Denmark, the figure was **similarly low** at under 35 hours a week. In both cases, these figures reflect the relatively high proportion of people working part-time instead of full-time — 33% in the Netherlands and 23% in Denmark, higher than anywhere else in the Community.

Between 1983 and 1991, the longest period for which comparable data are available, the average hours worked per person per week declined by only 3% in the Community as a whole — by just over one hour. In the Netherlands, by contrast, the reduction was 13% — equivalent to each person working an average of five hours a week less in 1991 than only eight years earlier.

The reduction in hours worked in the Community over the 1980s is not substantial in most countries apart from the Netherlands. However, it seems that in northern Member States, except for the UK, it had an affect on the labour market over this period. The volume of work undertaken, in terms of the total number of hours worked, went up by only around 2% in Denmark and Belgium but, because of the reduction in average hours worked, the number of people in employment increased by 8%. In Germany,

the volume of work rose by 7% and the number of people employed by 12%. In the Netherlands, more than half of the rise in employment of 30% seems to be attributable to the fall in average working time.

Graph 1: Contribution in hours worked to the growth of numbers employed 1983-91



The fact that average weekly hours of work fell between 1983 and 1991 in all Member States, except the UK, means that the available work was shared among more people.

The experience of the recent past is **very relevant** for future job-creation prospects and for the debate on distribution of work and income. In a real sense, such redistribution occurred over the 1980s in many Member States, though only in the Netherlands and perhaps Denmark was it a **deliberate part of labour market policy**. However, the issue is complex and job-creation potential is dependent on a number of social, fiscal and regulatory factors. Also, not all countries are well placed to do so, especially when their levels of income per head are lower — and therefore the income available to be shared along with work is correspondingly less.

(d) Difficulties facing particular groups

The unemployment rates of **young people** (those under 25) are double those of adults. They range, however, from less than 10% in Germany and Luxembourg to 20 to 30% in much of the South of the Community and in France and Ireland.

The incidence of **unemployment among women in the labour force** in the Com-

munity is significantly higher than among men. In May 1993, the unemployment rate for women averaged over 12% whereas for men it was around 9%.

Long-term unemployment has become endemic in the Community. Over half the unemployed have been unemployed for more than one year. It is a particular problem for young people in the South — where they account for 50% of the long-term unemployed. In the North, for men in particular, it is often more concentrated among unskilled middle-aged workers, who have lost their jobs through firm closures. In these areas, youth unemployment accounts for only 15 to 25% of the total.

8.4. Costs and causes of unemployment

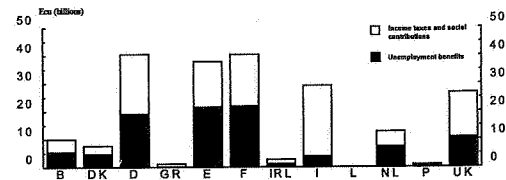
The economic and social costs of this unemployment are enormous. They include not only the direct expenditure on providing social security support for the unemployed, but also the loss of tax revenue which the unemployed would pay out of income if they were working; the increased burden on social services; rising poverty, crime and ill-health; and the increasing levels of educational underachievement.

Graph 2 illustrates the **direct costs of unemployment** in each of the Member States. These costs comprise the amounts paid out in unemployment benefits and the income lost, i.e. the amounts that would be received from taxes and social contributions were those unemployed people in employment.

In Germany, for example, the figures suggest that unemployment will **cost the government** ECU 40 billion in 1993 — ECU 19 billion from benefit payments and ECU 21 billion from foregone income. The estimates suggest that unemployment throughout the Community will cost governments in excess of ECU 200 billion in 1993, which equates to the GDP of Belgium. These costs, it should be noted, do not take account of the wider social costs mentioned above.

Part of the present unemployment in the Community is a legacy of the **depressed rate of economic growth and rigidities in the labour market**.

Graph 2: The cost of unemployment in the Member States



Expenditure on unemployment benefits and foregone revenue from income tax and social contributions is significant in most Member States. For the Community as a whole, the cost of the two elements is estimated at ECU 210 billion in 1993 — almost 4% of Community GDP. The true costs are even higher than this because of lower indirect taxes and all the social costs associated with unemployment.

Slow growth has not only meant low rates of employment creation, however. It has also **inhibited the process of structural economic adjustment**. Before 1973, the creation of new jobs in growth sectors was large enough to absorb those losing their jobs in agriculture and declining industries, and unemployment for the most part remained below 2 to 3%.

Since 1973, job creation in growth sectors has been much slower. The **shift in employment has been much more painful** due to the shortage of alternative employment opportunities, the limited possibilities for companies to shift labour from declining to expanding activities and the **significant impact of new technologies** in replacing labour, particularly in terms of manual and low-skill occupations.

Even if manufacturing employment began to increase again during the period of fast growth at the end of the 1980s, the secular tendency has been for employment in goods-producing industries, including agriculture, to decline. Employment in service-producing industries has increased, thereby **partially offsetting** losses elsewhere in the economy. There are signs that growth in service industries will no longer be possible on the levels previously achieved. To begin

with, services now represent such a large share in all developed economies that income arising from productivity gains in goods-producing industries will not be sufficiently large to finance employment gains elsewhere in the economy.

Further income gains will now largely have to come from productivity gains within the service sector itself. Such gains are indeed possible and are likely to arise from a combination of the **successful application of information technologies and new organization methods**, and from competitive pressures on those service industries subject to international competition or those which represent a significant input to other firms.

A corollary to substantial restructuring in the service sector is that unemployment is also likely to affect those with a **higher level of educational attainment** and not just the poorly qualified, unskilled part of the labour force. In turn, this will create further challenges to containing unemployment.

At the same time, Member State economies and labour markets have been slow to cope with other structural changes. These have included the effects of the continued **industrialization of the less developed parts of the world** with the eventual relocation of activities. They also include the **effects of Community integration** with, on the one hand, the completion of the internal market leading to rationalization, restructuring and relocation and, on the other hand, the progressive convergence of richer and poorer Member States. All this means that the labour market too will have to adapt to changed circumstances.

Social and demographic changes have also been significant:

- (i) the progressive **decline in the importance of traditional households** (husband, wife and children) as the main economic and social unit in society, and the increasing participation of women in the labour market;
- (ii) **demographic changes** with declining birth-rates leading to an ageing population. While this has not, as yet, resulted in an ageing working population — since the effect is offset by the increasing participation of younger women — it will do so post-2000.

Demographic changes are, however, bringing pressure on social security budgets;

- (iii) a **shift in consumer and political preferences** away from the public provision of goods and services towards more private provision has brought a reduction in public sector activities, and hence employment, in many areas of the economy, including areas of potential employment growth.

8.5. The consequences of change

The overall effect of these various economic and social factors has been to:

- (i) **increase the pace of change needed in economic and labour market structures** in order to maintain the Community's competitive economic performance, and thereby maintain employment and real income levels;
- (ii) alter the composition of the Community's labour force in ways that require major **changes in labour market organization**, as well as in supporting activities — from training to child-care;
- (iii) **limit the ability of governments to intervene** directly in the employment-creation process and oblige them to rely more on creating the right market conditions and providing appropriate incentives as a means of promoting employment.

8.6. The need for new policy responses

In the face of persistently high levels of unemployment in the Community, and clear evidence of its growing structural dimensions, some observers have advocated wholesale **labour market deregulation** — especially of employment protection legislation and wage determination — as the only way of bringing its labour markets into equilibrium.

Most Member States have gone somewhat in this direction — with an emphasis on encouraging wage moderation, increasing external labour market flexibility, and reducing the growth of social security expenditure. Many enterprises have fol-

lowed the same route — with the emphasis on increasing internal flexibility and reducing fixed labour costs.

At the same time, government actions have reflected **wider concerns** — such as the need to maintain social and industrial peace, and to avoid creating further poverty among those groups already in the weakest position on the labour market.

The arguments are not just social or political. Evidence that **income distributions have worsened** in certain Member States provides grounds for caution. The Community cannot hope to address the consequences of the international relocation of many jobs through wage-price competition, and that many problems of price competitiveness are due more to the vagaries of exchange-rate movements. This argues for **long-term, strategic responses** rather than short-term ones.

However, where most of the Member States' responses have converged is that actions have generally been aimed more at **reducing unemployment than at increasing employment**. This has been reflected in the large number of employment and training schemes created for the unemployed, and in specific incentives to encourage the recruitment of target groups. Unfortunately, little has been done to **adapt the wider legal and financial environment and regimes** — which provide the main incentives in the labour market — to the new economic and social realities, or to **modify the institutional structures** which surround them.

In broad terms, the way in which taxes, and social contributions, are raised seems to take **little or no account of their potential effects on the level of employment**, still less of the potential effects they may have in, for example, discouraging firms from offering jobs to less skilled and lower paid workers.

Also, many **national fiscal systems are poorly adapted** to present and developing employment needs, and **disincentives and administrative obstacles** to flexible or variable patterns of work abound.

Attempts to reduce levels of job protection in order to introduce more flexibility into labour markets have often led to the **growth**

of two-tier labour markets — those with secure permanent jobs and those with insecure temporary jobs.

Pressure to increase labour market flexibility without countervailing actions has moreover, often **reduced, rather than increased, the incentives for firms and individuals to invest in much needed training and retraining**, as has the lack of taxation encouragement to training.

Also, the range of special measures and incentives which help reintegrate the long-term unemployed, young people, women heads of household and returners, the handicapped or disadvantaged groups in the labour market have become so numerous and complex that they **overcomplicate the recruitment decisions of firms**.

Failure to address these fundamental issues in developing responses is at the **heart of the Community's labour market difficulties**. It is important to find a better balance between combating unemployment and job creation, and to ensure we do not only rely on market forces to resolve the highly complex problems of achieving higher economic and employment performance. It is also important that we acknowledge that all of these factors together with the ineffective gearing of, and interaction between, labour market and other policies have **inhibited the growth of more effective labour markets**.

8.7. Proposals for action: Broad objectives

While the Commission considers that some further **reform of labour market regulation** is called for this has to be accompanied by **other tasks**, namely to:

- (i) **raise levels of employment** and not just lower levels of unemployment;
- (ii) **focus** not on the workings of the labour market, narrowly defined, but on the **broader employment environment**, paying particular attention to the effects of financial deterrents to employment creation embodied in taxation and related fiscal systems;
- (iii) increase the Community's **investment in human resources**, on which long-term competitiveness ultimately depends.

That a **higher rate of employment** can be achieved for a given level of economic activity is amply demonstrated, not only by examples from outside the Community — USA, Japan and Scandinavia — but also by those within. Denmark has among the highest rates in the world.

The **diversity of results** demonstrates that there are multiple routes to follow. The challenge for the Community is to achieve **high employment** results in ways which are compatible with its general economic and social goals and criteria.

Fundamental **economic and social changes** are required, however, if income and employment opportunities are to be distributed more widely among those who wish or need to work. This is not based on a static vision of job and wealth creation. The objective must be continually to increase the stock of jobs and wealth by increasing competitiveness and value-added. However, the manner in which this process gets translated into new and additional employment opportunities is not preordained. Different societies can and do make political and social choices which give different results. If Europe is to set itself a goal of reducing unemployment, which in turn requires maximizing employment opportunities — due to the presence of hidden unemployment — then it will require a general **reform of the systems of incentives which affect employment in the labour market**. Indeed, there is no real alternative if a continued disenfranchisement of a significant minority of its citizens is to be avoided.

There will have to be four interdependent targets:

- (i) to identify the changes which are taking place in the labour market, especially concerning part-time and flexible work and to achieve a **wider distribution of jobs and income**. This includes changing the **pattern and level of working time** to reflect new work organization and job needs; **adapting the incidence of taxation** in ways that encourage more employment; and improving the **adaptability of the labour market** by adjusting the regulatory framework;

- (ii) to improve access to the labour market, especially in less developed regions and among disadvantaged social groups. In particular, this means addressing **youth employment problems**; combating **long-term unemployment** and labour market **exclusion**; and promoting and improving our efforts towards **equal opportunities** between women and men. In this regard, public employment services, together with private agencies, would have a vital role to play in adopting a more proactive approach to job placement;
- (iii) to **raise the stock of human capital** in ways that ensure that Community competitiveness is optimized. Particular attention is given to **continuous training and upgrading skills, basic and introductory training and new technology skills**;
- (iv) to **anticipate and accelerate the development of new jobs and new activities**, particularly labour-intensive ones. This includes **exploiting the potential of SMEs and developing new jobs** in the environmental industries and services — notably, the care sector and the audiovisual, arts, cultural and tourism industries.

8.8. Specific actions

(a) Labour costs and job creation

There is evidence that there may be a mismatch between productivity and wage costs in the low skill part of the market.

Existing collective bargaining and related taxation and labour cost arrangements have the effect of causing gains from economic growth **to be absorbed mainly by those already in employment**, rather than creating more jobs. To change this would mean seeking political and social partner agreement on:

- (i) keeping hourly wage increases below the growth of productivity;
- (ii) accompanying measures to ensure, by a variety of different instruments, that economic growth is better translated into new jobs and a reduction of unemployment.

(b) Flexibility and job creation

Member States should seek to remove obstacles to **already changing** trends, preferences and demands of employees and employers regarding patterns and hours of working, which will **increase the number of jobs for given levels of output**. This cannot be pursued by a top-down, mandatory approach seeking to legislate for a shorter working week. It should rather be pursued by a range of appropriate means which could include:

- (i) adjusting the legal framework so that those who are willing, and often keen, to **work shorter hours** do not suffer loss of social protection and poorer conditions of service;
- (ii) negotiating the balance of social protection between part-time and full-time workers so as to **avoid major discontinuities**, and in order to make the decisions of both employees and employers about preferred working patterns more neutral;
- (iii) minimizing **artificial financial incentives** for those of above-average incomes to work above-average hours;
- (iv) encouraging the national cyclical trends towards a **shorter working week** per employee, where appropriate, while increasing utilization of capital equipment and ensuring competitiveness;
- (v) developing measures which provide incentives to filling the new employment opportunities by people **from the unemployed register**, for example through types of job rotation schemes such as that initiated in Denmark;
- (vi) **reductions** in annualized hours and a favourable examination of career, training, parental and sabbatical **leave breaks**.

(c) Taxation and incentives: Low-skill job creation

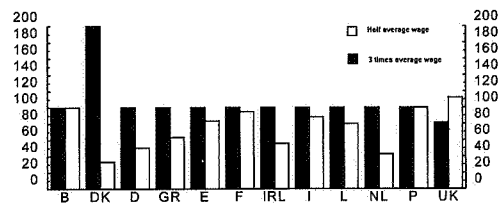
Member States should seek to address the present **disincentives to employing less skilled workers** by a range of possible measures, including:

- (i) adjusting taxation systems as they affect employers, notably by making

non-wage employers' costs neutral or progressive, rather than regressive as they generally are at the moment (see Graph 3), in order to encourage the provision of more jobs for the relatively less skilled by reducing their cost to employers (this approach concerns the adjustment and targeting of taxation incidence, not the level of revenue raised overall);

Graph 3: Employer's social contributions at different wage levels

Index (Contribution at average wage = 100)



In most Member States, employers' social contributions are regressive — they are at a lower rate on high wages than on low wages. The only exceptions are Belgium and Portugal where the rate is the same at all wage levels and the UK where the rate increases as wages rise (but only slightly). In all other countries, apart from Denmark, although the rate is the same at half the average wage as at the average, it is lower for those on three times the average wage. In Denmark, contributions are highly regressive but the rate is very low (1% of wages as opposed to over 20% in most other Member States).

- (ii) lowering the **relative cost of labour with respect to the other production factors** (capital, energy and non-energy inputs), for example by reducing the employers' social security contributions and increasing revenue through other means so as to neutralize the effects on the social protection of workers;
- (iii) improving the prospects of labour market entry for the least competitive by restructuring national government income support schemes in ways which **enable income from work to be topped up with income from social**

security, by developing integrated taxation and income support systems with appropriate safeguards. The job generation potential of such measures might be maximized by their operation through a single government agency;

- (iv) re-examining the ways in which the present interplay of taxation, regulation and related structures could be adapted to enable a **widening of the concept of work**, incorporating all forms of paid or partially paid work within a common framework encompassing the social economy, intermediate employment enterprises and the informal economy, thereby **enabling the re-entry into the formal labour market** of many citizens who have to work at the margins.

(d) SMEs, new activities and job creation

Member States should address **existing barriers to maximizing the job-creation potential** of SMEs and areas of new employment growth and activity by a range of measures aimed at anticipating and accelerating SME and new jobs growth.

- (i) **In terms of SMEs**, these could include measures to:

- facilitate and maximize participation of SMEs in the common internal market by **strengthening their competitiveness** regarding such issues as their access to finance, to information sources, to the results of research and development, and to training, including support through the new European Social Fund Objective 4;
- identify and review those **financial, fiscal, administrative and legal constraints** which fall disproportionately on small and medium-sized firms in order to avoid such measures inhibiting the growth of employment. Small businesses are important as creators of new jobs but they have the **least capacity to pass on costs**, because they have little market power and the highest cost of coping with regulation, due to a lack of specialist staff;

- **an important part of SME development** and the generation of new jobs concerns the best uses and development of **women's work** in ways that improve job creation and fight inequality between women and men. Women's full integration in the labour market is expected to **create jobs in the provision of services and goods not yet integrated** in the market and currently being provided by either unpaid women's labour or paid informal women's labour;

- (ii) In terms of **new jobs and activities** more generally, measures could include those which:

- **promote the development of new employment opportunities** through the use of public-private partnerships at all levels, and notably in potential growth areas such as environment, energy, transport, leisure, arts, sport and the care sector;
- encourage, while respecting existing competition policy, specific sectors, such as the **audiovisual industries**, which could have a strong impact in terms of inward investment, export revenue, and diverse types and levels of employment in a growing media/leisure market. **Pump-priming finance** can be important, particularly where high potential profit is balanced by high risk;
- exploit fully the employment potential represented by the **environment sector**. This covers not only the clean-up activity needed to deal with the legacies of the past, but the new monitoring, standard-setting and maintenance areas which now offer a challenge and opportunity to employment in science and technology. Public expenditure associated with EC programmes could **contribute strongly to job creation** related to supply of equipment, construction and contracting services, in particular in Objective 1 regions. This could average ECU 2.5 billion per annum 1993-2000, which by the end of the century could have cre-

ated 100 000 permanent jobs and 200 000 jobs related to supply of equipment, construction and contracting services in these areas;

- encourage growth in the employment-intensive areas of the **care sector** and of the **provision of household services**. It is necessary to enhance the perceived value, and therefore encourage increased skills in sectors;
- in support of all the above, **strengthen the role of local economic and employment development** through the decentralizing of public agency and government decision-making and expenditure, and support this by Community-wide inter-area cooperation designed to transfer know-how and experience;
- finally, progress on all of those fronts is dependent on ensuring that, at all levels, the social partners are encouraged to **develop new models of workplace relationships** in order to improve flexibility, and keep pace with the changing structures of production, in both large and small firms.

(e) Raising the stock of human capital

The inadequacy of present education and training systems in meeting the challenge of long-term competitiveness should be addressed by developing a range of measures, in the context of national structures, to:

- (i) establish a Community-wide guarantee that no young persons can be unemployed under the age of 18: they should be guaranteed a place in the education and training system or in a linked work and training placement;
- (ii) set progressive targets up to the year 2000 for the elimination of basic illiteracy, and lack of other basic skills, on the part of school-leavers;
- (iii) raise the status of initial vocational education and training, and encourage the development of the entrepreneurial skills of young people

and their capacity to exploit the new technologies throughout appropriate work experience;

- (iv) extend the scope and range of existing apprenticeship schemes, and/or other forms of linked work and training, in active cooperation with the social partners;
- (v) improve the coordinated provision of guidance and placement services, notably at local level, to provide systematic advice to young people on career and job opportunities;
- (vi) encourage universities and other higher education institutions to collaborate more intensively with industry and commerce, especially with a view to ensuring the transfer of innovation and technological breakthroughs through continuing training schemes to firms, especially small and medium-sized;
- (vii) examine ways of introducing tax incentives for firms and individuals to invest in their continuing training, as an expression of public policy commitment to the development of life-long learning opportunities for adults;
- (viii) the social partners should be encouraged to set up collective agreements, including at European level, **to extend access to, and participation in, continuing training** as an essential means of improving the motivation and quality of the workforce as a whole. The setting-up of company-based training plans, linked to company business plans, should be widely encouraged, drawing appropriately on the possibilities opened up by the new Objective 4 of the European Social Fund. A strong emphasis should be placed on anticipative training within companies so as to plan ahead for restructuring, and also new ways of mastering technological change. The dangers of an excessive

emphasis on automation producing a 'culture of no skills' and job displacement should be avoided, and experiments involving the development of human-centred technologies should be given priority and appropriate encouragement.

(f) Targeting specific groups

Member States have to ensure that additional jobs are most effectively made available to those in a **disadvantaged position in the labour market**. This was not achieved in the employment growth period of the second half of the 1980s, and the Community now faces the danger of **not only a dual labour market but also a dual society**. In order to address this threat to social cohesion, Member States are asked, firstly, to have regard to the reintegration potential of the proposals outlined earlier, in terms of the job-creation potential of changes in labour costs, flexibility, taxation and incentives, and, secondly, to consider improving specific integration and reintegration measures in ways which could include:

- **strengthening efforts to integrate or reintegrate the long-term unemployed and unemployed young people, by providing clearer stepping stones to the formal labour market, and to find worthwhile alternatives to inactivity. This would include the introduction of minimum standards** for Member States on those measures for which Community support is sought. Such standards could include:

coherent links with the labour market;

minimum training/qualification standards;

independent counselling;

adequate post-activity placement;

equitable remuneration;

full range of 'soft infrastructure' support (child-care, literacy, etc.);

- providing stronger support in terms of resources and devolved responsibilities, encouraging links to the private sector and to employment services, to the wide range of **intermediate labour market**

agencies (often voluntary sector, local and regional government) which have **demonstrated their ability** to play a strong role in providing effective stepping stones to the formal labour market;

- within this, examining ways in which the social economy can be encouraged, through tax exemptions, public/private partnerships, part work and part income support models, to **engage unemployed people, voluntarily, in actions** which close the gap between people wishing to work and unmet social needs;

- **strengthening equal opportunities policies for women and men in employment** by:

(i) eliminating any **potentially discriminatory** fiscal and social protection policies which can discourage women's equal participation in the formal labour market;

(ii) improving **existing career opportunities** for women, thereby generating demand for support and technical assistance services such as child-care and vocational training;

(iii) ensuring that taxation and social security systems reflect the **fact that women and men may well act as individuals** in seeking employment and reconciling family and working life.

Within all the above efforts aimed at disadvantaged groups, it is important to strengthen and focus the **role of employment services**. Public employment services should be encouraged to **sharpen the guidance and placement services** offered to the unemployed, targeting more effectively the individuals concerned at local level. The provision of these services should be dovetailed with related but often separate vocational guidance units and monitored on a regular basis.

They should also be encouraged to establish **coordinated jobs needs audits** at local level, distilling the potential range of employment opportunities which exist but are unmet and making available such information in more imaginative ways. The results of these audits could be disseminated widely through appropriate national machinery as well as via EURES at European level.

Youthstart

In order to respond more effectively to the problems facing young people in the labour market, Member States will be invited to cooperate in establishing a youth guarantee scheme throughout the Union, to be known as Youthstart. Under this scheme, Member States should progressively take the necessary steps to ensure the availability of access to a recognized form of education or training, including apprenticeships or other forms of linked work and training, to all young people under the age of 18. Assistance to Member States to fulfil such an aim is available under the terms of Objective 3 of the European Social Fund. Special efforts should be targeted by Member States at those young people leaving school with no diploma or basic qualifications.

In the framework of Youthstart, opportunities should be provided to interested young people to take part in voluntary transnational exchanges, involving work experience and training in another Member State. Voluntary organizations and the social partners should be associated with such arrangements. Young people would be encouraged to develop their vocational, personal, entrepreneurial and linguistic skills through gaining experience in projects involving environment protection, urban regeneration or restoration of the cultural heritage. Support for innovative transnational action to underpin Youthstart will be provided under the 'Innovation' section of the European Social Fund, drawing also on the experience to date of the PETRA programme.

There is also a need to encourage **good practice** in temporary job agency activity. Empirical evidence suggests that **temporary work**, as actively operated in a number of Member States, can **lead to permanent job**

creation, by helping to accumulate work experience and training or serve as a kind of probationary period. Also, many people wish to work under such arrangements. It is, however, essential that such instruments offer a path **towards permanent jobs rather than replacing them.**

8.9. Conclusions

Reducing unemployment necessarily requires **increased employment opportunities on an unprecedented scale.** Pro-active labour market policies will be central to such a strategy and will require a radical new look at the whole range of available instruments which can influence the employment environment, whether these be regulatory, fiscal or social security incentives. The vast bulk of these measures will be for individual Member States to decide upon in responding to their diverse national situations.

However, the Community can and must play an important supporting role by:

- (i) providing a forum where a **common broad framework strategy** can be agreed, and by
- (ii) underpinning national measures with **complementary Community action**, whether in the form of financial support through the European Social Fund (which represents 13% of all Member States' expenditure on active labour market policies at present) or through networking and other measures designed to **ensure the transfer of good practice and experience.**

The overall objective should be to encourage the development of national labour markets towards a **Community labour market.** This could produce a more skilled, flexible, mobile, linguistically able and culturally sophisticated workforce, able to exploit Europe's inherited advantages in the developing world markets.

Chapter 9

Statutory charges on labour

A coordinated Community strategy for rekindling growth and overcoming a structural crisis cannot disregard the weight and structure of statutory charges,¹ through which the equivalent of **40% of Community GDP** is channelled.

Between 1970 and 1991 statutory charges rose in the Community from 34 to 40% of GDP. Over the same period they remained stable in the United States of America, at slightly below 30%. In Japan, statutory charges have increased appreciably since 1980 but in 1991 stood at 31% of GDP, i.e. the same level as in the USA and a quarter lower than the average level recorded in the European Union.

Within the European Union there are variations between Member States. In a number of countries the overall level of statutory charges is close to, or in excess of, 45% of GDP. Such is the case in Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and France. The United Kingdom, by contrast, has stabilized its statutory charges since 1980 at a level that is markedly lower than the Community average.

The growing significance of statutory charges raises the question of whether such an increase, which is part the result of the slowdown in economic growth over the past 20 years compared with the previous period, is not itself becoming a cause of that slowdown in growth. This explains the determination of governments in most Member States to **stabilize or reduce statutory charges as a proportion of GDP**. But such policies for stabilizing statutory charges presuppose a long-term effort to control public expenditure and have frequently run foul of the priority need to reduce excessive public deficits.

It is also on account of **their structure** that statutory charges **have an impact on growth**,

¹ The sum of taxes and obligatory social security contributions.

competitiveness and employment. For a firm, this structure partly determines recruitment and investment decisions because it alters the costs of the factors of production (labour, capital, energy, other scarce resources). Particularly where demand is hesitant, statutory charges which immediately increase production costs are felt more keenly than those imposed on products sold or on profits.

Table 1: Changes in statutory charges

(as % of GDP)

Country	1970	1980	1991
B	36.1	43.6	43.7
DK	40.5	44.8	47.1
D	35.7	40.7	40.5
GR	n.a.	30.7	39.7
E	n.a.	25.8	34.4 ¹
F	35.1	41.1	42.8
IRL	31.6	33.7	36.4
I	25.8	29.9	39.0
L	30.8	45.4	47.1
NL	37.4	44.3	46.3
P	n.a.	29.7	35.6
UK	37.2	34.8	34.4
EUR 10	34.4	37.3	39.6 ²
EUR 12			39.6 ²
USA	29.2	29.3	29.8
JAP	19.7	25.4	30.9

¹ 1990.

² Task Force estimates.

Source: OECD.

An analysis must therefore be made of whether the structures of the tax systems, which vary very widely from one Member State to another, could not gradually be adapted to make them less prejudicial to labour. This would involve **reducing non-wage labour costs**, i.e. the statutory charges (taxes and social security contributions of employers and employees) imposed on labour. To be more effective, this reduc-

tion in the statutory charges which are pushing up the cost of labour would have to be coordinated with active employment policies. It could form part of efforts to rekindle growth by restoring confidence (revival of demand), by stepping up investment — particularly non-physical investment (training, research) — and by improving the use of equipment through a rearrangement of working hours.

In order to maintain a high level of social protection and to meet the need to reduce budget deficits, the **easing of statutory charges, which would amount to 1% to 2% of GDP**, would largely be offset by a rise in other charges. These would consist particularly of charges on scarce natural resources and on energy — in order to reinforce environmental protection — and, where appropriate, of taxes on consumption and investment income.

Both for alleviating the charges on labour and for offsetting that through other tax bases, each Member State would adopt measures that would be appropriate to its own situation and consistent with the smooth functioning of the single market.

9.1. Views of the Member States

Most Member States refer to this topic in their contributions. They advocate a reduction in social security contributions, which would be achieved in various ways but particularly by concentrating those reductions on unskilled jobs. The suggestions put forward for offsetting the loss of revenue include the possibility of taxing polluting activities or products, energy or scarce natural resources, and promoting private insurance schemes. The possible introduction of 'green taxes' is not viewed uniformly, however, since some Member States have reservations about the impact of such taxes on international competitiveness.

9.2. Current structures and impact on employment

(a) Charges on labour

Charges directly imposed on labour are equivalent to 23.5% of Community GDP, i.e. **more than half the figure for statutory**

charges as a whole. Since 1970 these charges on labour have increased in the Community by 40% in real terms, twice as rapidly as in the USA.

In a number of Member States charges on labour are equivalent to more than 25% and, in some cases, almost 30% of GDP (the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Germany and France).

Table 2: Statutory charges on labour (approximation used: personal income taxes + social security contributions)

<i>(as % of GDP)</i>			
Country	1970	1991	Change 1970-91
B	19.6	29.5	9.9
DK	21.2	27.3	6.1
D	18.8	25.9	7.1
GR	10.1	16.5	6.4
E	8.2	20.4	12.2
F	16.9	25.4	8.5
IRL	8.3	17.8	9.5
I	12.7	23.6	10.9
L	16.2	25.0	8.8
NL	22.7	29.7	7.0
P	n.a.	16.0	n.a.
UK	16.7	16.7	0.0
EUR 12	16.6	23.5	6.9
USA	15.9	19.4	3.5
JAP	8.6	17.6	9.0

Source: OECD.

In the United Kingdom charges on labour have stabilized since 1980 at a level appreciably lower than the Community average and comparable with the current level in Japan.

If these tax and social security charges are expressed as a proportion not of GDP but of total labour costs, they account on average for **more than 40% of overall labour costs in the Community.** This level is much higher than in Japan (20%) and the USA (30%).

(b) Diversity of charges

In some Member States, the charges on labour consist primarily of income tax, with social security contributions playing only a minor or very minor role: such is the case in Denmark, the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Other Member States, by contrast, have very high social security contributions and a relatively low level of income tax. This is particularly the case in France and Greece.

Finally, on average in the Community, two thirds of compulsory social security contributions are borne by employers and one third by employees. In some Member States, however, such as Belgium and France, the employers' share is higher, accounting for some three quarters of total social security contributions; in the Netherlands, by contrast, employers' social security contributions account for less than half of total social security contributions.

Table 3: Structure of statutory charges by major category (1991)

(as % of GDP)

Country	Indirect	Direct ¹	Social security	Total
B	11	17	16	44
DK	17	29	1	47
D	11	13	16	40
GR	19	8	12	39
E	10	12	12	34
F	14	10	19	43
IRL	16	15	6	37
I	11	15	13	39
L	16	17	14	47
NL	11	17	18	46
P	15	11	10	36
UK	13	14	7	34
EUR 12	12	14	14	40
USA	5	16	9	30
JAP	5	17	9	31

Task Force estimates.

¹ Includes capital taxes.

Source: Eurostat and OECD.

(c) Impact on employment

The high level of non-wage labour costs is prejudicial to employment, exerting a dissuasive influence: it encourages the substitution of capital for labour and promotes the parallel economy; it particularly affects employment in SMEs; finally, it leads to relocation of investment or activities.

Faced with inadequate demand, firms attempt first and foremost to reduce their costs by laying off workers, labour being the adjustment variable. The rise in unemployment pushes up contributions and reduces the number of contributors; labour costs increase, and so forth; and a kind of vicious circle is established. A firm which, by laying off workers, reduces its own costs also passes on the cost of unemployment to other firms in industries which cannot lay off workers as easily, and they too see their situation deteriorate.

Highly labour-intensive firms, whose labour costs and social security budgets are relatively high, are then in turn compelled to lay off workers, to relocate or to resort to the underground economy, either directly or through subcontracting.

The size of the underground economy varies from country to country and according to the methods used to estimate it, but is probably equivalent to between 5% and over 20% of GNP. If the real figure were 10%, this would represent a loss of the order of 5% of GDP in statutory charges. In terms of jobs, the loss is even greater since, to the extent that these activities are carried out by those falsely registered as unemployed, they are an obstacle to bringing down unemployment.

A reduction in the charges on labour, accompanied by tighter controls against fraud, would be likely, if not to reincorporate some of those activities into the normal economy, at least to slow their growth.

(d) Special case of SMEs

Although 70% of private sector jobs are created in SMEs, it is these firms which are worst affected by administrative complexity and the high level of charges on labour: firstly, it would seem that, in the case of

small firms, it is the high level of charges rather than net wages that triggers a psychological reaction against the idea of recruiting labour; secondly, however justified they may be, controls, forms and checks have to be multiplied by the number of administrative departments involved and are viewed as an additional labour cost. This extra burden seems all the more onerous when it has to be borne by someone not familiar with such matters and when it relates to only a small number of jobs.

Several types of tax measure could, therefore, assist SMEs:

- administrative tasks could be simplified: the creation, for all statutory charges, of a single department with which to correspond would be an improvement;
- SMEs that were not limited companies could opt for taxation at the relevant rate of corporation tax and not, as now, in accordance with income-tax scales;
- external financing could be promoted by eliminating double taxation of venture-capital companies;
- the survival of SMEs could be assured by preventing taxes levied on transfers of businesses — particularly cross-frontier transfers — from jeopardizing their existence.

9.3 Guidelines for reducing labour costs

(a) Objective

In order to help maintain employment and create new jobs without reducing wage levels, therefore, steps must be taken to reduce non-wage costs, particularly for less skilled labour. Unemployment is particularly high among unskilled workers. Furthermore, in most Member States non-wage costs bear relatively more heavily on those in low-paid employment.

The Member States should set themselves **the target of reducing non-wage labour costs by an amount equivalent to 1% to 2% of GDP**; this figure could vary according to the tax structures in the Member States.

(b) Implementation

The objective being to reduce labour costs, the reduction could differ from one Member State to another depending on the extent to which it is applied to employers' social security contributions and/or to employees' social security contributions and/or to taxes levied directly on wages.

Social security contributions themselves are sometimes divided up according to the various objectives involved: family, health, old age, unemployment.

In these cases, the reduction could relate primarily to contributions which finance expenditure normally pertaining to national solidarity: family allowances, the minimum old-age pension, serious illnesses, or long-term unemployment. In the case of schemes in which the benefits are more directly related to the contributions (e.g. retirement pensions), it is for each Member State to determine the respective proportions of compulsory and voluntary contributions to be paid under insurance schemes or savings arrangements.

Furthermore, the reduction of statutory charges on labour should apply as a priority to the **lowest earnings**. This would make it possible to limit the budgetary cost of the measure per job saved or created while responding to the scale of unemployment among the least skilled workers.

The flexibility of work should also be encouraged

Experience in some Member States suggests that more flexible organization of work would stimulate job creation. The promotion of more flexible working arrangements could be backed up by reductions in the statutory charges currently imposed on such arrangements.

With regard to services, whether market services or otherwise, which are in contact with the public, an adjustment of working time accompanied by tax incentives would make it possible to increase employment, use equipment more intensively (longer opening hours), and meet a demand (more practical opening hours, longer free time).

The reductions could also be specially targeted on the **creation of new jobs** and the **recruitment of young people**.

But it is clear that if measures to bring down statutory charges substantially are to be effective, **they must be simple**. While it may appear desirable to make certain tax advantages conditional upon the taking of action consistent with the objectives of active employment policies, it is important to avoid schemes which cannot work well because of their complexity.

(c) Effect on employment

The results of several econometric models (see annexed table) confirm that reductions in social security charges offset by an increase in other charges produce a significant positive effect on employment. The most favourable results are observed when the reduction in employers' social security contributions is targeted on categories of workers with a low level of skills and if a tax on CO₂ energy is introduced rather than VAT being increased. On a favourable hypothesis, these models show that if employers' social security contributions are reduced by 1% of GDP, **the unemployment rate falls by 2.5% over four years**.

9.4. Possible compensatory measures

In view of the need to keep budget deficits as small as possible, compensatory measures should be introduced to offset the reductions in statutory charges designed to reduce labour costs.

The reduction in social security contributions could be partly financed by the contributions of persons for which jobs had been created, by the reduction in unemployment benefits resulting from an increase in employment, and by tighter control of public expenditure to make it more efficient.

But in most cases, **compensatory measures in the form of taxation** will be necessary to ensure the tax neutrality of the reductions made. From the various possibilities, measures should be chosen which do not have an adverse effect on the competitiveness of Community industry.

Of course, a detailed study should be made of the effects and the combination of these different possibilities.

(a) Environmental taxes

Environmental taxes, charged for example on the use of limited natural resources and energy, may be envisaged.

The CO₂/energy tax proposed by the Commission in 1992 could raise an amount of revenue equivalent to some 1% of GDP; the other possibilities include taxes on polluting or energy-intensive equipment, some of which would have the advantage of internalizing costs for the environment. In all these cases, predictability and tax neutrality should be assured so as not to handicap industries exposed to international competition, and appropriate **tax incentives** should be studied.

An increase in excise duties on energy products may also form part of a policy of environmental protection enjoying fairly broad popular support. One option to be set alongside the introduction of a tax on CO₂ would be to extend the existing excise duties charged on mineral oils to other energy products (natural gas, coal, electricity), which are also responsible for environmental damage.

According to various studies, carried out both by the Commission departments and in a number of Member States, a transfer of social security charges worth some 1% of GDP to a CO₂/energy tax in the region of USD 10 a barrel would have beneficial effects not only on the environment but also on the use of CO₂.

(b) Taxes on consumption

An increase in excise duties on tobacco and alcohol provides a source of additional budget revenue and a means of preventing widespread social problems, and can help the social security budgets to make savings (by reducing the need to treat cancer and alcoholism).

Since VAT has very little influence on international competitiveness (it can be deducted on exportation) the idea of a social VAT has been mooted.

It is considered in some quarters that VAT could be raised to offset the reduction in social security charges. In theory, the increase in VAT accompanied by a reduction in social security charges could enhance business competitiveness in the Community. Moreover, the system of minimum rates in force in the Community authorizes Member States to raise their rates of VAT. Nevertheless, any increase in VAT and therefore in prices is bound to inhibit consumption and may have economic drawbacks. The question therefore deserves thorough examination in each case. In addition, within the Community, it would be necessary to ensure that disorderly increases in VAT, in particular in the countries where the standard rate of VAT is already high, did not create distortions of competition or call into question the approximation of rates carried out for the entry into force of the single market. If the Member States wish VAT to be increased, it would be better to consider making the change at Community level, in particular by raising the common minimum rate of 15%. For, if the approximation of rates embarked upon in recent years in the Community were to be abandoned, the establishment in 1997 of the definitive VAT arrangements (payment of VAT in the country of origin) would be threatened.

(c) Other taxes

Of the other possibilities, it is necessary to mention measures concerning the taxation of capital.

Without standing in the way of investment, this would mean altering the structure of statutory charges on the different factors of production (labour, capital, scarce natural resources) so as to favour employment instead of discouraging it.

A tax on the income from financial capital which the Commission has been advocating since 1989 would also have the advantage of making it more attractive to channel savings into productive investment and the creation of businesses.

9.5. Conclusion

A substantial reduction in non-wage labour costs (between 1 and 2 percentage points of GDP), particularly for the least-skilled workers, would play a key part in effectively combating unemployment and promoting job creation.

This easing of the burden of statutory charges, which would be introduced as part of active employment policies, would have to be offset by tax measures so as not to swell budget deficits.

Given the diversity of tax systems (taxes and social security contributions) in the European Union, it is impossible to identify a single method for shifting some of the statutory charges on labour onto other factors of production or onto consumption. However, possible compensatory tax measures include environmental taxes (taxation of CO₂ and excise duties on energy), excise duties on consumer products that are damaging to health, taxation of interest income applicable to all Community residents and, where appropriate and subject to certain conditions, an increase in VAT.

In order to ensure that these changes to the structures of statutory charges lead to a coordinated recovery of the European economies, the Member States must be aware of the importance of joint consultations and cooperation in this field

Table 4 — General hypothesis: Reduction in employers' social security contributions with compensation via other statutory charges

Models used

A) Elements of the model

	Quest	Hermes	Mimic
Countries concerned:	EC as a whole	B, D, F, I, NL, UK	Netherlands
Period:	7 years	9 years	10 years
Hypotheses:	Generalized reduction to 1% of GDP (average reduction in rate of 10). Reduction limited to low wages	Generalized reduction of 0,33% in 1993 to 1% in 2001	Generalized reduction in contribution rate from 17,8% to 15,1% Reduction in contribution rate from 17,8% to 11,3% limited to annual wages of up to HFL 20 500
Compensatory measures	Increase in VAT Increase in income tax CO ₂ of USD 10 per barrel	CO ₂ tax	VAT linked to energy consumption

B) Results of simulations in employment terms

a) Values in percentage points of unemployment rate

b) Extent of new job creation: % difference relative to reference situation in 2001

	Quest (a)	Mimic (a)	Hermes (b)
Reduction in social security contributions and increase in VAT	0,0	—	—
Reduction in social security contributions and increase in income tax	-0,7	—	—
Reduction in social security contributions and introduction of CO ₂ tax	-0,9	0,3	0,64
Differentiated reduction in social security contributions and introduction of CO ₂ tax	-2,7	-0,6	—

IV. TOWARDS A NEW DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Chapter 10

Thoughts on a new development model for the Community

10.1. The structural links between environment and employment

(a) *The inefficient use of resources in the Community*

The current development model in the Community is leading to a sub-optimal combination of two of its main resources, i.e. labour and nature. The model is characterized by an insufficient use of labour resources and an excessive use of natural resources, and results in a deterioration of the quality of life. The Community needs to analyse in which ways economic growth can be promoted in a sustainable way which contributes to higher intensity of employment and lower intensity of energy and natural resources consumption.

(i) **The 'underuse' of labour resources**

The use of labour resources has been persistently discouraged for several decades. Although the growth in labour productivity has been a major element contributing to a continued increase in net income per head, a critical point seems to have been reached.

On the one hand, the substitution of labour by capital has been accompanied by a continued increase in the use of energy and raw material, leading to an over-exploitation of environmental resources.

On the other hand, **business strategies are being driven by labour-saving considerations** to an extent, where the productivity gain at the business level seems to be increasingly neutralized by an increase of costs in the sector. One of the clearest examples is unemployment, whereby labour is pushed out of business but at the expense of an increase in unemployment benefits.

The financial requirements of those social security arrangements increase the indirect labour costs further, intensifying the tendency towards labour saving. This mecha-

nism has in addition led to a considerable loss in competitiveness on external markets as sophisticated technology is increasingly being installed in low-wage countries.

Many countries have tried to manage the problem through a reduction in social security provisions, however with limited success. The resulting increase in poverty and income disparities has led to social tensions and a decay of the quality of life in many urban centres.

The 'underuse' of labour resources has apparently not only a quantitative but also a qualitative nature. The organization of work in a standardized way, frequently in huge production units, has distanced the individual from the results of his work. The resulting loss in motivation and creativity, compared to what can be observed in small businesses and farms, is therefore likely also to have had an impact on the economic output as well as on the enjoyability of many jobs. Some businesses have successfully managed to recuperate the lost human capital by combining small, more or less independent production units in an efficient and flexible way.

(ii) **The 'overuse' of environmental resources**

The 'underuse' of labour is combined with an 'overuse' of environmental and natural resources. During the last two decades, and in particular since 1973, it has become increasingly clear that the latter resources are not available in unlimited amounts. Because the market prices do not incorporate sufficiently the limited availability of those natural resources and the environmental scarcities related to their consumption, their overuse has become systematic. This situation cannot be maintained any longer for different reasons:

- (i) the clean-up of past damage requires mounting costs (e.g. polluted sites);
- (ii) the reduced availability and quality of natural and environmental resources represents a burden to future genera-

tions and a reduced capacity for long term economic prosperity;

- (iii) extrapolating current industrial consumption and production patterns to the entire world would require about 10 times the existing resources, which illustrates the scope for possible distribution tensions at global level if current tendencies are not curbed;
- (iv) some forms of pollution are threatening not only local ecological systems but also the natural balance of the entire planet, e.g. climate change, ozone layer, bio-diversity.

These inefficiencies represent significant but hidden welfare losses. As current economic accounting does not reflect unpriced resources such as the environment, only partial estimates are available. It is, for example, generally recognized that **the external cost of current transportation systems alone amount to at least 3 to 4% of GDP** (environmental pollution, accidents, traffic jams). The more research intensifies, and the more is known about these hidden costs which someone ultimately has to bear, the more those estimates become a cause of concern.

Another inefficiency of the current development model concerns the external effects related to the use of fossil and nuclear energy. Although intensified technological progress is able to solve many problems, it is also true that **energy can no longer be seen as an unlimited resource**, particularly not if the external costs related to climate change, acidification, health risks, nuclear waste and risk are concerned. The relative position of energy in the new development model is therefore a key element to be considered.

A more attentive look at the way the Community uses its labour and environmental resources leads to some fundamental weaknesses in the incentive structure of the EC's economy as a result of public intervention (e.g. fiscal treatment of labour costs, transport infrastructure) as well as of market forces (environmental externalities). As a consequence, it is open to question whether an increasing part of the measured economic growth figures does not deal with illusionary instead of real economic progress

and whether many traditional economic concepts (e.g. GDP as traditionally conceived) may be losing their relevance for future policy design.

(b) The request for a new 'sustainable development' model

The inadequate use of available resources — too little labour, too much use of environmental resources — is clearly not in line with the preferences of society as they are revealed through the democratic system: people expect for themselves and for their children on the one hand more jobs and a stable income, but on the other also a higher quality of life. The latter element is reflected through an increasing demand for enjoyable jobs and environmentally-friendly products and public goods.

Any new policy will have to contain substantive answers on how to reduce pollution and how to improve the quality of life in a broad sense. The former element concerns the reversing of the currently negative relationship between 'classical' economic growth and more pollution. People no longer see why the use of more packaging or the presence of more printed advertising material in their mail boxes contributes to higher economic growth figures, as is officially registered.

Improving the quality of life, on the other hand, not only concerns habitats and nature protection, but also the amenity of the landscape, better integration of new buildings and transport infrastructure into historical urban centres, or the availability of parks and other green zones in urban areas. In such a way, the quality of life of millions of people can be substantially improved.

A more adequate policy should therefore be able to offer society a better quality of life with a lower consumption intensity and as a consequence with a reduced stress on environmental resources. In this same context, the creation of more challenging jobs is to be situated, as well as the valorization of human capital in local networks, fostering individual responsibility and social participation. **The new development model for the Community therefore has to address**

the inefficient use of available resources in a wide perspective, i.e. taking into consideration the overall quality of life of the citizen.

Some of these questions have a Community dimension. Indeed, the transition phase towards a more optimal economic model is easier to realize if several countries act together, as this minimizes costs and maximises results. Furthermore, many measures implicitly or explicitly concern sectoral policies as well as the steering of market forces within the internal market. This potential new role for the Community is now explicitly recognized by the Treaty as sustainable development has been incorporated as an overall Community objective.

(c) Clean technology is a key

A major element of the new development model will be to decouple future economic prosperity from environmental pollution and even to **make the economic-ecological relationship a positive instead of a negative one.** The key for doing this will ultimately lie in the creation of a new 'clean technology' base.

There are already important examples which show that bringing the environmental resources explicitly into the production function is able to make such a decoupling possible. The German and Japanese economic growth figures for the last two decades although being the most successful ones in the industrial world, were brought about with a negligible increase in energy consumption somewhere before a linear relationship was considered to be common sense. The driving force behind this basic change has been a high energy price which, also contrary to the usual expectations, did not hinder but rather encouraged economic growth.

Although economic models tend to see technological achievements as exogenous, it should be recognized that these are essentially the result of fundamental incentives originating from the public and private sectors. Moreover, it should be clearly stated that any technology is made by man and that in that respect continued investment in human capital is critical. Solving the current environmental problems is a major challenge in the coming years.

The new integrated technology, of which very likely only the tip of the iceberg has been seen, should result in a reduced need for new environmental resources through:

- (i) improved 'nature productivity' of products: e.g. increased energy efficiency, less raw material-intensive products (lighter cars, etc.);
- (ii) a longer product lifetime: making repair and control services more attractive, which are labour-intensive activities *par excellence*;
- (iii) more reuse and recycling: use the same raw materials or spare parts far more frequently;
- (iv) improved process technology: the production processes (and not the final consumers) generate the largest quantities of waste water, solid waste, etc.

The gradual implementation of the new clean technology will generate a continuous renewal of the capital stock of the Community and will need particular training requirements for the newly-qualified engineers and managers. The resulting integration of clean technologies by industry will become far more important than the current clean-up activities such as waste and waste water treatment, however important they are for the immediate future. The relative, and even the absolute, importance of those activities is expected to decline the more society comes closer to the sustainable development model.

The new clean technology is likely also to generate, apart from a substantially improved environment, considerable **secondary benefits** for the Community:

- (i) in competitiveness terms, in a double perspective: the Community would improve the overall strength of the economy through optimal use of its resources and the prevention of costly clean-up operations, while a first-mover advantage can be exploited; the latter element is not to be underestimated as the new technology is not only a necessity in the industrial world but also in the NICs and LDCs;
- (ii) in strategic terms: the enormous dependence of the Community on the

rest of the world for its imports of energy and raw materials would be reduced and better managed; the savings made through avoided imports could be used to encourage sustainable development, in particular by transferring clean technology to LDCs;

- (iii) the Community would show internationally how sustainable development can be translated into practice, would diminish its excessive use of primary resources, and would thereby soften considerably future distribution problems for scarce environmental and natural resources at global level.

10.2. Ways to facilitate the structural change

(a) *The need for a strategic microeconomic policy*

The decoupling of economic prosperity from environmental deterioration through the creation of a new clean technology base is unlikely to happen without an active and imaginative policy support. To that end, **existing policy instruments will have to be reoriented in so far as they encourage the inefficient use of resources in the Community.** Particular attention will have to be given to many regulations which have been gradually developed during the last few decades but which no longer serve objectives which belong to the new sustainable development model. On top of that, **market prices will have to internalize systematically all the external costs that they generate to society.** Such a review should end up in a set of clear signals and incentives to all economic agents and decision-makers.

The first key element of a strategic microeconomic policy concerns a significant reorientation and encouragement of basic research in areas of particular relevance to the model of sustainable development (renewable energy, recycling and new materials, biotechnology, etc.). This reorientation also concerns economic science and in particular the so-called area of green accounting, which is basically a systematic analysis and estimation of all external effects. In combining scientific and econ-

omic information, a better understanding of the problems and solutions concerning the use of natural resources and their relative importance will be obtained.

The second key element concerns the **speeding up of the implementation of basic research results into marketable innovations.** To that end, a consistent set of pragmatic incentives is to be developed to economic agents considering investments related to the new products and production processes, including new and innovative forms of work organization. This should create a 'virtuous' circle of confidence with consumers and investors concerning the societal project of a sustainable economic future.

(b) *Policy instruments at macro-economic level*

The set of incentives envisaged above concerns a gradual and systematic review of many policy instruments, of which several have a Community dimension. In this context, the following instruments merit particular attention:

- (i) **Indirect taxes** on pollution are a powerful way to address hidden subsidies in so far as external costs are generated at the expense of the society as a whole. Therefore, market prices may have to be corrected to cover the environmental damage related to the use of particular products, e.g. energy sources according to their CO₂ content.
- (ii) **Fiscal regulations**, and in particular tax deduction schemes, are a powerful way of encouraging sustainable economic activities (e.g. pre-market research on green innovations) but are currently having, in many cases, a negative environmental impact (e.g. generous tax deduction schemes for the use of private cars, real estate taxation favouring suburban development, etc.).
- (iii) **The dynamics of the internal market** can be steered to generate optimal resource use in the Community: firstly, sound competition on a level playing field gives a higher chance of generating the necessary technological changes and renewal of capital stock; secondly,

public procurement regulation could be explicitly curbed towards sustainable objectives; thirdly, the internal relocation of economic activities will contribute to the most efficient exploitation of environmental resources inside the Community as well as to a reduction of the far too-high environmental pressure in some areas. The same argument applies, of course, to the enlargement of the Community.

- (iv) **International trade and cooperation policy:** as environmental problems frequently have transfrontier and global aspects, they lead to more intensive international cooperation. In many cases, the involvement of Community resources for dealing with foreign environmental problems are shown to be a cost-effective solution for environmental problems inside the Community (acidification, pollution of rivers, reduction of CO₂). This is equally true for structural problems in the area of growth and employment. In both cases, real and sustainable solutions have to take into consideration this international dimension, in particular concerning regions close to the Community, e.g. Central and Eastern Europe, the CIS and the Mediterranean basin.

(c) Policy instruments at sectoral level

Apart from the instruments which are to be situated at the macroeconomic level, the Community also disposes to some extent of instruments in particular sectoral areas, the importance of which is likely to grow the more the Community strives at the above-mentioned new economic model. The following sectors merit particular attention and have been explicitly addressed in the fifth environmental action programme:

- (i) **Energy:** the way energy is consumed is at the centre of the new development model. In parallel to the liberalization of the internal energy market for electricity and gas, the Community will have to make strategic choices which until now have been sole Member State responsibilities. Those options in particular concern a vigorous development of demand-side management as

well as a diversification of supply towards environmentally-friendly energy sources. Important tools have been used in the past (e.g. Euratom) and need reorientation and strengthening.

- (ii) **Transport:** the huge welfare losses mentioned in the previous section will have to be eliminated thorough revision of investment and planning in transport infrastructure (in particular in urban areas). Tax and subsidy instruments commonly used in the past could be substantially revised as well as zoning and urban planning conceptions.
- (iii) **Agriculture:** the current review of the CAP reform leads to a reduction of the general price support which is compensated for by direct financial support for farmers and accompanied by other measures allowing for the remuneration of agricultural practices, favourable to the environment as well as by a fair remuneration of activities safeguarding hydro-geological balances (quality of drinking water, avoidance of soil erosion, etc.) or improving the amenity of the landscape. This tendency should be reinforced gradually in the years to come. In such a way, the current imbalances in environmental terms will increasingly be eliminated, while a new basis is being laid for sustainable activities and an improved quality of life in rural areas. In this respect, it is also important to evaluate, economically as well as environmentally, pilot projects being undertaken in several Member States, concerning the production of biofuels (biomasse, diester, bioethanol) particularly with a view to reaching environmentally-friendly energy scenarios.
- (iv) **Industry:** a new set of business-minded environmental instruments is to be exploited and a start has already been made through eco-auditing, eco-labelling, voluntary agreements, liability schemes, etc. Some of those instruments will create new job opportunities, particularly in environmental services

*(d) Short term-policy
recommendations*

If it is recognized that the current recession has a dimension beyond the business cycle, preparation for the long term project needs to start now. This implies not only a systematic reorientation of public policy according to the lines sketched out above, but also the **design of anti-cyclical policy measures** which could at the same time contribute to the objectives of the sustainable development model.

A basic recommendation concerns the prevention of further environmental degradation through the **creation of an 'environmental infrastructure'**. Notwithstanding the gradual development of clean technology, in the short and medium term clean-up activities are likely to remain significant, and should even substantially grow in the immediate future. It concerns a considerable backlog of investments in waste recycling equipment (compare over-supply of waste paper), in waste incinerators (incorporating best available technology standards), in waste water treatment equipment.

Many of these activities concern construction activities and are likely to mobilize a significant number of jobs in the short term, while the financing should be provided for by levies and charges in conformity with the 'polluter pays' principle foreseen in the Treaty. The public expenditure and the employment generating capacity can be the more important insofar as the basic infrastructure is still to be built, for example, water sewerage networks.

The same employment-generating possibility applies to the build-up of a higher capacity in the field of collective transportation systems, which is capable of improving substantially the quality of life of millions of people living in urban agglomerations.

Queries also reveal that a considerable demand and an explicit willingness to pay exists for the creation of enjoyable and environmentally friendly projects at the local level, including the creation of parks, walking or jogging and cycling circuits.

The field of energy use has been indicated several times as one of the key areas of the

new economic development model. In particular in households, efficiency standards in energy use can be substantially improved — indicators frequently indicate 40 to 50% — provided appropriate investments are being undertaken in the area of housing (double/triple glazing, roof insulation, best available technologies (BAT) boilers). A considerable amount of jobs can be created in this context, provided sufficient incentives are being developed.

Finally, if the double challenge of unemployment/environmental pollution is to be addressed, a swap can be envisaged between reducing labour costs through increased pollution charges. One particular concrete Commission proposal, which fits completely with the perspective of long term structural change, concerns the carbon/energy tax: external costs related to energy use are being addressed, while the substantial revenue (approximately 1% of GDP) can be used as a first step to accommodate high wage costs by employers.

An important dimension of the proposal concerns the widely advocated shift towards a more intensive use of indirect taxation, as well as a widening and balancing of the tax base on energy products. In the Community these proposals enjoy popular support: about 60 % of European citizens are in favour of such a tax.

10.3. Conclusions

The nature of the structural change the Community is going through needs to be recognized and addressed. It is important to develop a societal project for a higher quality of life in the Community, which can motivate people and hence can generate the required human energy:

- (a) The serious economic and social problems the Community currently faces are the result of some fundamental inefficiencies: an 'underuse' of the quality and quantity of the labour force, combined with an 'overuse' of natural and environmental resources. Both elements are at the heart of the economic development model followed by the Community during the past few decades.
- (d) The basic challenge of a new economic development model is to reverse the

currently negative relationship between environmental conditions and the quality of life in general on the one hand, and economic prosperity on the other. In this respect, a widespread implementation of clean technology is a key aspect. It is to be stressed that much scientific knowledge is already available but is waiting for insertion into the economic system.

- (c) The transition towards a new 'sustainable development' model requires the development of a consistent set of market incentives. The basic task will consist of a systematic review of existent macro and sectoral policies with as a basic guideline that market prices have to incorporate all external effects. Indeed, many policy decisions in the field of taxation, subsidization, competition, infrastructure, labour

organization, land use, urban planning, etc., were developed in a gradual way and on an *ad hoc* basis, or in view of long-term considerations which no longer fit the goal of sustainable development. The same applies even more to policies in the field of energy, transport, industry and agriculture, where several choices, made in the 1950s and 1960s, should be the subject of a review.

- (d) Any short-term policy recommendation to overcome the current recession should make a first step in the policy reorientation mentioned above. Moreover, in the same long-term perspective, considerable employment opportunities can be created in environmental infrastructure, energy efficiency improvements, the creation of enjoyable natural areas and the clean-up of polluted zones.

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LE PREMIER MINISTRE

N.réf.: B1B11B.455
A rappeler

Monsieur DELORS
Président de la Commission européenne
200, Rue de la Loi
1049 Bruxelles

Monsieur le Président,

Par la présente j'ai l'honneur de vous faire parvenir la contribution de la Belgique au Livre blanc que prépare la Commission européenne au sujet d'une stratégie à moyen terme pour la croissance, la compétitivité et l'emploi.

Ci-joint vous trouverez deux exemplaires dudit texte, respectivement en français et en néerlandais. Veuillez noter que la version anglaise vous sera transmise à une date ultérieure.

En vous souhaitant bonne réception de la présente, je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur le Président, l'assurance de ma très haute considération.



Jean-Luc DEHAENE

**ORIENTATION POLITIQUE POUR L'ENCOURAGEMENT DE LA CROISSANCE
ET DE L'EMPLOI AU SEIN DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ EUROPÉENNE.**

Préambule

A l'occasion de la remise de sa contribution au Livre blanc, le gouvernement belge souhaite insister sur l'importance et la nature de l'enjeu du Livre blanc pour la Communauté européenne.

L'enjeu du Livre blanc dépasse le politique et l'économique pour toucher aux fonctionnements même de notre société:

- D'une part parce qu'il touche à la place de l'homme dans la société et son rapport au travail, notamment, ainsi qu'au sens du développement technologique et au sens du progrès lui-même.
- D'autre part parce qu'il met en jeu le sens de la construction européenne. Basée essentiellement sur l'intégration économique, la Communauté est défiée dans sa finalité par le dysfonctionnement que constitue la persistance du chômage. Aujourd'hui, c'est donc le sens de la communauté qui est en question dans l'exercice du Livre blanc. L'avenir de la communauté et l'avènement d'un nouveau modèle de développement sont indissociablement liés.

I. INTRODUCTION

Après l'euphorie des années 1980, les années 90 sont marquées par une mauvaise conjoncture et une multiplication des instabilités internes et externes.

Il y a un consensus sur le fait que la situation très préoccupante du chômage fait monter l'inquiétude de la population et ronge sa confiance dans les institutions démocratiques. L'enjeu est essentiel.

La récession et les prévisions du chômage en Europe.

Durant les trente dernières années, l'économie européenne a connu une croissance de la production, de la productivité et du pouvoir d'achat sans précédents dans son histoire. Mais, depuis la moitié des années '70, la croissance économique n'a pas permis de générer suffisamment d'emplois pour absorber

l'accroissement important de la population active, dû aux évolutions démographiques et à l'extension du travail féminin.

Toutefois, de 1983 à 1991, neuf millions d'emplois ont été créés. A partir de 1991, la situation du chômage s'est à nouveau détériorée. Le chômage prévu pour 1993 atteindra vraisemblablement les niveaux historiques particulièrement élevés, du début des années 80.

Dans l'état actuel des prévisions, le taux de chômage continuera d'augmenter au-delà des 11% qui sont prévus pour 1993.

Le sous-emploi est généralisé à tous les pays développés, mais il convient de noter que ce phénomène a pris une ampleur beaucoup plus importante en Europe. Les dernières prévisions de l'O.C.D.E. annoncent 8,25 millions de chômeurs aux Etats-Unis, 1,7 million au Japon et 20 millions dans la Communauté européenne.

Lorsqu'on examine cette mauvaise performance de la Communauté, deux caractéristiques sont particulièrement importantes à observer depuis les années 60.

- * Même durant les meilleures années de cette période, le chômage dans la Communauté n'est jamais tombé au-dessous de 8,3 % et pour la moyenne de la dernière décennie, il se situe juste en deçà des 10 %.
- * Les créations d'emplois ont été généralement faibles, sauf durant la période 85-90. Sur l'ensemble de la période 1960 à 1990, la croissance moyenne de l'emploi n'a été que de 0,3 %.

Selon les projections, la croissance ne pourra à elle seule résoudre les problèmes actuels de non-emploi et, à fortiori, absorber l'accroissement prévisible de la population active

Les causes du chômage.

La croissance actuelle du chômage est en grande partie conjoncturelle, mais le niveau du chômage est quant à lui, dans une large mesure, structurel.

En effet, en Europe, chaque crise économique s'est traduite par une augmentation du chômage qui s'est transformé en chômage de longue durée dont la résorption a été, à chaque fois, plus difficile à réaliser.

On attribue le processus d'accroissement du chômage en Europe aux rigidités importantes qui caractérisent le marché du travail dans la plupart des pays de la Communauté. Le manque de flexibilité a été largement décrit. En particulier les rigidités sont observées à propos de l'ajustement trop lent du coût du travail, du

niveau trop élevé des charges sur les emplois de faible qualification et de faible productivité et du manque d'incitation à la mobilité et à l'offre de travail.

Le manque d'ajustement du marché du travail résulte aussi de tendances lourdes qui ont largement transformé la conception et les exigences du marché dans le domaine de l'emploi : réduction rapide des emplois industriels, diversification et croissance de l'emploi dans les services, réduction de la stabilité des emplois avec une proportion croissante de travailleurs employés à temps partiel, augmentation des exigences de qualification.

Le progrès technique et scientifique, de même que, mais dans une moindre mesure, la concurrence des pays à bas salaires, tendent à évincer du marché du travail une partie de la population dont le niveau de qualification est trop faible par rapport au coût de cette main d'oeuvre. Ce phénomène est particulièrement aigu sur les marchés des biens et services faisant l'objet du commerce international où la compétition extrêmement vive se traduit par la recherche de hausses continues et importantes de productivité. Les emplois de faible productivité sont encore partiellement localisés dans les secteurs industriels, comme la construction et la fabrication artisanale, mais se concentrent surtout dans des secteurs abrités de la concurrence internationale. En Europe, une grande part de ces emplois se situent dans le secteur non-marchand, ou à la limite de celui-ci. L'orientation de politiques structurelles vers des secteurs de service où se développent de nouveaux besoins de société pourrait favoriser l'absorption d'une partie importante de l'offre de travail disponible. Une demande potentielle latente existe dans de nombreux domaines : l'environnement, les transports collectifs, l'amélioration de la qualité du service. D'autres demandes trouvent leurs racines dans les transformations profondes des structures sociales, familiales et démographiques telles que le soutien aux personnes âgées, la garde et l'éducation des enfants, etc...

Si le niveau du coût du travail est très élevé dans certains pays, cela est dû notamment à la hauteur des coûts non-salariaux. Dans certains cas, la fiscalité et la parafiscalité vont jusqu'à doubler le coût du travail. Ces coûts, ainsi que la législation sociale, ne trouvent pas d'équivalent dans la plupart des pays à bas salaires. Le biais de concurrence qui en résulte exigerait une dérégulation qui est jugée inacceptable dans de nombreux pays européens.

La réaction des entreprises a été d'accroître fortement la productivité, la qualité des produits et dans certains cas, de délocaliser tout ou partie de leur production. Ce phénomène pèse négativement et de façon très aiguë sur les emplois à faible qualification.

II. PISTES D'ACTION.

Le Conseil européen de Copenhague a approuvé la proposition du Président Delors pour un plan à moyen terme "A l'aube du XXIème siècle" en vue de revitaliser l'économie européenne. Ce plan a pour objectif de donner une nouvelle dynamique à la Communauté en exploitant tout le potentiel du marché unique et de la monnaie unique et en préparant la Communauté à relever les multiples défis dans les domaines de la révolution technologique, de l'éducation permanente et des nouvelles finalités socio-économiques dans l'organisation du temps et du marché du travail. La présidence belge sera impliquée dans ce projet ambitieux d'une double manière:

- le Conseil européen de décembre a reçu le mandat d'adopter le cadre global des actions à mettre en oeuvre dans les années à venir; celles-ci seront présentées par la Commission sous forme d'un livre blanc.
- la concrétisation de ces actions se fera en s'appuyant sur les nouveaux instruments du Traité de Maastricht et dans le respect du chemin tracé pour la réalisation de la monnaie unique, à savoir la fixation des grandes orientations de politique économique (art. 103,2) et le suivi du processus de convergence (art. 109, E, 2,b).

Ces actions devraient, en particulier, porter sur les cinq domaines suivants.

1. Rétablir un environnement macro-économique stable.

La reprise d'une croissance durable dans la Communauté européenne dépend en premier lieu du rétablissement de la confiance des opérateurs économiques. Ceux-ci ont depuis plusieurs années aligné leurs stratégies d'investissement sur la perspective de l'intégration européenne, appuyée par une stabilité économique et financière élevée. Ces principes généraux sont inscrits dans le Traité de Maastricht. Il convient de les mettre en oeuvre sans tarder. Concrètement, la Belgique se fixe les objectifs suivants:

1. **Préparer la deuxième phase de l'Union économique et monétaire**, qui doit entrer en vigueur au 1er janvier 1994. Sur le plan formel, ceci implique que l'Institut monétaire européen soit créé, et que la législation secondaire soit adoptée. Il est cependant essentiel que la Communauté européenne rétablisse la crédibilité du processus d'union monétaire, ébranlée par la crise du Système monétaire européen, en créant les conditions nécessaires à la stabilité des changes et au renforcement de la convergence, au cours de la phase II. Ceci n'implique pas seulement un retour à un fonctionnement normal du SME, mais requiert un renforcement du mécanisme de change et une coordination accrue des politiques monétaires qui

s'inscrive effectivement dans les objectifs de la deuxième phase de l'UEM.

2. **Rétablir la crédibilité du processus de convergence**, ce qui est dans l'esprit du Traité la meilleure garantie de réaliser la monnaie unique dans les délais prévus. La réalisation d'une stabilité budgétaire et financière suffisante est aussi la principale condition pour une baisse durable des taux d'intérêts en Europe. Ceci implique qu'un consensus soit établi, au niveau communautaire, sur une approche réaliste et pluriannuelle, qui prend en compte le contexte économique actuel.

La Présidence belge attache dès lors une importance particulière à l'exercice d'évaluation des progrès réalisés en matière de convergence économique et monétaire qui, selon les dispositions du Traité, devra être effectué avant le passage à la deuxième phase de l'UEM.

3. **Fixer les grandes orientations des politiques économiques des Etats membres et de la Communauté** au niveau des Chefs d'Etat et de Gouvernement. Ce nouvel instrument communautaire entrera en vigueur à partir de la ratification du Traité. Il aura un rôle crucial à jouer dans la formulation d'approches communes aux défis que la Communauté rencontre actuellement dans les domaines de la croissance, de l'emploi et de la compétitivité. A défaut, le risque est réel de voir chacun se replier sur soi-même en recherchant des solutions unilatérales à des questions qui, dans l'état actuel de l'intégration économique européenne, ne peuvent être durablement résolues qu'au niveau européen. La Belgique se prépare donc à une première application de ce nouvel instrument à l'occasion du Conseil européen de décembre.

En somme, la présidence belge n'a d'autres ambitions que de contribuer à un climat encourageant les Etats membres à considérer leurs politiques économiques comme une question d'intérêt commun, tel que l'article 103 du Traité le prescrit. Les trois domaines d'actions proposés jetteront la base d'une coordination effective entre Etats membres, montrant que l'UEM est susceptible de produire une plus-value considérable avant même qu'elle ne soit pleinement réalisée.

2. Exécuter l'initiative d'Edimbourg.

Avec l'initiative de croissance, annoncée au Conseil européen d'Edimbourg, les Douze ont fait un choix délibéré en faveur d'une approche communautaire des problèmes économiques actuels, donnant ainsi une nouvelle dynamique à la coordination de leurs politiques. Cette initiative a été complétée au Conseil européen de Copenhague par des mesures en vue de soutenir l'activité économique à court terme. Il conviendra d'assurer de près le suivi des mesures annoncées et d'approfondir le programme dans des domaines spécifiques afin d'améliorer son impact sur la situation de l'emploi.

1. Le suivi devra porter, en particulier, sur la mise en oeuvre des décisions d'investissement qui, selon les estimations de la Commission européenne, permettraient d'augmenter la croissance dans la Communauté de 0.6 pour-cent et de créer 450.000 emplois nouveaux. Dans ce contexte, il conviendra de veiller à ce que le Fonds européen d'investissement, qui est la pièce centrale de l'initiative d'Edimbourg, soit ratifié sans tarder par les parlements nationaux.
2. Dans le même esprit, les instruments mis en avant dans le cadre des nouvelles perspectives financières de la Communauté devront contribuer à un soutien sélectif à l'activité économique, susceptible d'améliorer le potentiel de croissance de la Communauté à moyen terme. Les fonds structurels, y compris le nouveau Fonds de cohésion, l'encouragement des réseaux transeuropéens, la politique de recherche et de développement, les nouveaux programmes de coopération industrielle, notamment dans le domaine de la technologie environnementale, devront être mis en oeuvre sans tarder, de manière à ce que leur effet sur le climat économique ainsi que sur le développement régional soit visible dans les plus brefs délais. L'élaboration de ces programmes, en concertation entre autorités et interlocuteurs sociaux, devra dûment prendre en compte leur impact sur une amélioration durable des perspectives en matière d'emploi.

3. Plan d'action intégré en faveur des P.M.E.

La réalisation du marché unique se traduit par la **nécessité d'une adaptation des entreprises face à un environnement juridique nouveau et à une concurrence accrue**. Il ne faut dès lors pas sous-estimer l'effort d'ajustement demandé à la grande majorité des P.M.E. qui, avant de récolter les bénéfices du marché unique sera confrontée avec un coût, qui

est d'autant plus lourd **en période de récession économique**. Dans ce contexte, le risque est réel que beaucoup de P.M.E. restent en dehors du processus d'intégration européenne.

L'instauration d'un **climat de confiance** au sein des entreprises, notamment des P.M.E., et ce plus particulièrement en ce qui concerne leur propre capacité d'intégration dans le marché unique, doit dès lors **faire l'objet d'une priorité dans la mise en oeuvre et la gestion du Marché intérieur**.

Plus concrètement, il y a lieu de permettre aux P.M.E. de faire face aux changements structurels et de mieux percevoir la dimension européenne de leur marché.

Considérant la situation économique, il y a lieu de prendre à tous les niveaux impliqués dans le bon fonctionnement du marché unique, les mesures nécessaires au renforcement de la compétitivité des P.M.E. et à la réalisation de leurs potentialités d'emplois inutilisées à ce jour, et pour ce faire, de mettre en oeuvre un plan d'action intégré dans cinq domaines d'importance majeure :

- a. Afin de rencontrer les problèmes structurels de sous-capitalisation des P.M.E., il y a lieu d'assurer leur réelle participation à l'initiative de relance de la croissance et de compléter les mécanismes mis en place aux sommets européens d'Edimbourg et de Copenhague par des mesures qui renforcent leur capacité de financement;
- b. Afin de valoriser le rôle des P.M.E. en matière de sous-traitance, il y a lieu de créer une structure active de diffusion des opportunités en la matière à l'échelle du marché intérieur et de clarifier la position juridique, les droits et obligations des sous-traitants;
- c. Etant donné l'importance des marchés publics dans le cadre du marché intérieur en général et de l'initiative de relance de la croissance en particulier, il y a lieu de prendre des mesures afin de renforcer considérablement la participation des P.M.E. aux marchés publics;
- d. Afin d'assurer la crédibilité et l'efficacité de l'action communautaire dans le secteur des P.M.E., il y a lieu non seulement d'accorder une attention toute particulière à l'évaluation préventive, à partir d'une consultation systématique des organisations européennes des P.M.E., de l'impact des propositions législatives sur les P.M.E., mais encore d'assurer la participation directe des organisations interprofessionnelles des P.M.E. concernées au dialogue social;
- e. Afin de renforcer l'innovation dans les P.M.E. il y a lieu, en étroite concertation avec les Etats membres, de réorienter les moyens qui

permettent la valorisation des résultats de la recherche pré-compétitive dans les P.M.E. et de simplifier les conditions d'accès aux programmes de R & DT afin d'augmenter la participation directe des P.M.E. à vocation technologique.

4. Compétitivité et coopération internationale.

Le diagnostic de la Commission européenne sur l'état de compétitivité de l'économie de la C.E. est préoccupant. La part en volume de la Communauté dans les exportations mondiales est passée de 21 % en 1980 à 16 % aujourd'hui. Cette perte de parts de marché a contribué au déficit de la balance des opérations courantes alors qu'en tant que première puissance commerciale mondiale, la C.E. devrait normalement dégager un surplus, lui permettant par ailleurs de financer les énormes besoins des pays en développement et de l'Europe centrale et orientale. Dans certains secteurs de haute technologie, le déficit commercial de la CE est un signe manifeste d'infériorité vis-à-vis de ses grands partenaires. Un redressement de notre performance sur les marchés mondiaux s'impose, à la fois pour rétablir la cohésion économique et monétaire interne et pour préserver les perspectives de croissance à moyen terme.

La Belgique se rallie entièrement à la conclusion du dernier Conseil européen selon laquelle ce redressement doit s'opérer par une amélioration de notre compétitivité, combinée à un renforcement de la coopération internationale, plutôt que par un recours à des mesures protectionnistes. En effet, le protectionnisme ne constituerait qu'une politique à très courte vue pour la CE face à un problème qui, à cause des mutations profondes de l'économie mondiale, requiert une vision et une volonté d'adaptation globale. La mise en oeuvre des conclusions du Conseil européen sous la présidence belge devrait se concrétiser par un progrès dans les quatre domaines suivants :

1. Il est d'une importance capitale de conclure, de manière globale et équilibrée, les négociations de l'Uruguay Round avant la fin de l'année, aboutissant à la même situation tarifaire et d'ouverture des marchés dans les pays industrialisés. Cette conclusion est essentielle pour persuader les opérateurs économiques de la volonté des gouvernements de ne pas se lancer dans une guerre commerciale. Le rétablissement d'un climat de confiance, favorisant les investissements à long terme, est essentiel pour améliorer la conjoncture et mieux dynamiser les acteurs économiques.

Cet accord doit déboucher sur la création d'une organisation mondiale du commerce adaptée à la globalisation des marchés et des stratégies d'entreprise. Cette organisation doit être fondée, sans dérogation aucune, sur l'esprit et les pratiques du multilatéralisme.

Elle doit établir un cadre pour l'application du nouveau mécanisme de règlement des différends et renforcer le système commercial par l'application permanente de l'Accord général. Elle doit inscrire son action en fonction des autres paramètres de l'économie mondiale : l'évolution des monnaies, l'orientation des flux financiers, la prise en charge équitable des charges de la politique de l'environnement, le progrès social auquel tous ont droit, selon un processus graduel et compatible avec le progrès économique. Elle devra coopérer, sur un pied d'égalité, avec d'autres organisations internationales, notamment le FMI et la Banque mondiale.

2. La levée de l'élément d'incertitude sur l'Uruguay Round facilitera également la coordination avec les principaux partenaires de la Communauté en vue d'établir le cadre pour une relance durable de l'économie mondiale. Les principes de cette coordination devront être actés au Sommet du G-7 et dans d'autres enceintes internationales. Ils devraient notamment permettre de rassurer les marchés financiers sur la volonté des grands pays de coopérer en vue du maintien de rapports de change stables et favorables à un commerce mondial équilibré.
3. La C.E. devra, de son côté, veiller à conduire une politique commerciale dynamique.

L'Europe doit absolument se doter de moyens commerciaux défensifs qui soient à la fois opérationnels et efficaces, c'est-à-dire qui permettent de prendre des sanctions effectives et rapides. Nous devons adapter des instruments de défense commerciale telles les règles anti-subsides ou de sauvegarde, les mesures anti-dumping ou encore les restrictions à l'importation.

La création d'un instrument européen de réassurance des investissements et des crédits à l'exportation pourrait mettre un terme à l'actuelle surenchère entre les Etats membres et partant, renforcer la position de la C.E. sur les marchés-tiers, y compris pour des contrats d'une dimension dépassant les limites normales d'intervention des organismes d'assurance nationaux pris individuellement. Ce mécanisme devrait être un élément essentiel de la politique commerciale vis-à-vis des pays-tiers. Il visera, également, à assurer une relance des exportations et, dès lors, à améliorer la situation de l'emploi. Une note technique à ce sujet est présentée à l'annexe 1.

Il conviendra en même temps d'intervenir énergiquement sur base d'instruments efficaces à l'encontre de pratiques de production contraires aux principes de protection sociale et de développement durable, ainsi que vis-à-vis des pratiques de dumping, notamment

en dénonçant le retour à des mesures bilatérales en la matière.

Il faudrait, en outre, s'accorder pour ne pas englober dans le champ d'application de la poursuite de la libéralisation du commerce international, les pays qui ne respecteraient pas certaines normes minimales ou les produits qui seraient issus de modes de production ne les respectant pas. Il sera important à cet égard de faire insérer des normes minimales dans les accords avec des pays-tiers.

4. Nos relations avec l'Europe centrale et orientale prennent une place particulière dans la nouvelle organisation de l'économie mondiale.

Dans la nouvelle division du travail, qui résulte des différences dans les niveaux de développement, dans les coûts de production, dans les spécialisations et les avantages relatifs des différentes régions du monde, la C.E. a un intérêt direct à favoriser au maximum les synergies avec les pays qui lui sont les plus proches. En effet, c'est peut-être par une association avec les pays d'Europe centrale et orientale, que la C.E. réussira à valoriser un potentiel de croissance régional. La CE encouragera ainsi ses nouveaux partenaires commerciaux à s'aligner sur les principes de concurrence et de protection sociale sur lesquels est fondé le modèle communautaire d'économie de marché.

Une approche similaire serait à mettre en oeuvre vis-à-vis du Maghreb.

5. Dans le cadre du rétablissement de la compétitivité de la Communauté européenne, une attention particulière doit être consacrée au développement de réseaux performants de transports et de télécommunications et de la technologie de l'information ainsi qu'à une coopération en matière de R & D (voir les orientations proposées en la matière par la Commission lors du Sommet européen de Copenhague). On trouvera des notes techniques sur ces trois domaines dans les annexes 2, 3 et 4.

5. Réduction du coût du travail.

La présidence belge invite la Commission à approfondir les conditions dans lesquelles une diminution des prélèvements obligatoires touchant le travail pourraient contribuer à réduire structurellement le chômage dans la Communauté européenne. Cet approfondissement devrait s'inspirer, en particulier, des différences structurelles qui distinguent la capacité de créer des emplois en Europe par rapport aux autres parties du monde et d'un meilleur équilibre entre les fiscalités touchant les différents facteurs de production: capital, énergie, travail.

1. Reconnaissant que le retour à une croissance normale dans la Communauté suffira à peine pour stabiliser le taux de chômage actuel, la présidence belge estime qu'une politique volontariste en vue d'améliorer la capacité pour l'économie européenne de créer des emplois s'impose. Cette politique devrait encourager des modèles d'investissement par le secteur privé dans lesquels la création d'emplois n'est pas systématiquement subordonnée aux hausses de productivité. Pour des raisons évidentes, l'encouragement de ces modèles d'investissement implique une réduction du coût du travail qui, à cause du niveau des prélèvements obligatoires dans la plupart des Etats membres, a atteint un niveau prohibitif par rapport aux autres facteurs de production.
2. En raison de la position concurrentielle de l'économie communautaire, les perspectives de réaliser un meilleur rapport entre la croissance et l'emploi paraissent plus favorables dans le secteur abrité que dans le secteur soumis à la concurrence internationale. En effet, celui-ci souffre déjà d'une compétitivité accrue de la part des pays à bas salaires qui ne peut être comblée qu'au moyen d'un effort permanent pour rester à la pointe du progrès technologique.

La perspective d'exploiter d'importants gisements d'emplois est, par contre, nettement meilleure dans le secteur des services, et plus particulièrement les services abrités. La substitution du capital par le travail peut y être réalisée sans risque de compromettre les exigences de la concurrence internationale. Elle permettrait d'ailleurs de mieux répondre aux nouveaux besoins en liaison avec l'évolution démographique et sociologique, notamment la protection de l'environnement, le développement de l'économie sociale et l'aide aux personnes âgées dépendantes, besoins qui aujourd'hui ne peuvent souvent pas être rencontrés en raison du coût excessif de la part de travail qu'ils impliquent. L'encouragement de l'emploi par un abaissement du coût salarial dans les services abrités serait de plus conforme à la politique suivie par les principaux partenaires commerciaux de la Communauté qui, traditionnellement, réalisent une meilleure performance dans ce secteur, grâce à un rapport entre la productivité et le coût salarial nettement plus favorable à la création d'emplois.

3. La diminution des prélèvements obligatoires touchant le travail aura un coût budgétaire, qu'il conviendra d'apprécier dans la plupart des Etats membres à la lumière de la nécessité d'une plus grande sélectivité des dépenses sociales et compte tenu de la diminution des dépenses de chômage attendue d'une économie plus performante en termes d'emploi. Pour amorcer le processus, il paraît cependant nécessaire d'envisager initialement des mesures fiscales permettant de neutraliser le coût budgétaire de l'opération.

Eu égard à leur situation budgétaire, la plupart des Etats membres n'ont d'ailleurs pas d'autre choix. La réalisation d'un meilleur équilibre entre les coûts des différents facteurs de production par un réaménagement au sein des charges globales existantes semble donc répondre à un besoin général.

4. Il convient toutefois d'attirer l'attention sur les limites que le marché unique impose à cet égard à des actions unilatérales et non-coordonnées des Etats membres. Elle estime dès lors qu'un approfondissement de l'harmonisation fiscale au niveau communautaire devrait être envisagé pour permettre la mise en oeuvre de la stratégie proposée sans perturbation de la situation budgétaire des Etats membres. Les propositions de la Commission relatives d'une part, à la réalisation d'une harmonisation minimale de la fiscalité sur les revenus des placements financiers et d'autre part, à l'introduction d'une taxe sur l'émission de CO² et la consommation d'énergie rencontrent ce besoin dans la mesure où les ressources budgétaires qu'elles permettraient de dégager pourraient être affectées à un allègement du coût du travail selon des modalités à définir par les Etats membres. Ces deux propositions seraient d'ailleurs conformes à l'objectif plus général d'améliorer, au niveau des décisions d'investissement, l'équilibre entre le coût des différents facteurs de production.
5. L'approche préconisée devra être élaborée dans le respect du principe de subsidiarité. La nature des rigidités dans la formation des revenus diffère d'ailleurs sensiblement d'un Etat membre à l'autre. Mais en se référant à un cadre défini de commun accord, les Etats membres pourraient donner à leurs actions une plus-value comparable à l'initiative d'Edimbourg. Cette plus-value serait d'autant plus importante si les mesures nationales visant à réduire le coût du travail pouvaient s'appuyer sur une décision permettant de neutraliser leur coût budgétaire par un dispositif fiscal communautaire. La Belgique reconnaît que ces deux propositions sont aujourd'hui loin de faire l'unanimité et que plusieurs questions importantes restent à résoudre avant qu'un consensus sur leur mise en oeuvre puisse se dégager. Elle espère toutefois que les discussions se poursuivront dans un climat constructif durant les six prochains mois.

Une proposition plus élaborée pour une stratégie pluriannuelle pour l'emploi est formulée à l'annexe 5.

6. Politiques actives en matière d'emploi.

La diminution du coût du travail devra s'inscrire dans une politique générale d'élimination des obstacles à l'emploi par une plus grande flexibilité du marché du travail. L'objectif de la diminution n'est pas de

redistribuer les ressources dégagées parmi les opérateurs actuels du marché du travail, mais au contraire d'augmenter le nombre de participants à celui-ci. Pour y arriver, les acteurs économiques devront améliorer la flexibilité dans la formation des revenus et des prix. En toute hypothèse, il paraît nécessaire de mieux exploiter les possibilités de partage du travail qui, dans un contexte de diminution du coût du travail, se présentent sous une lumière plus avantageuse. Cette approche serait d'ailleurs conforme au glissement plus général de la concentration de l'emploi du secteur industriel vers le secteur des services, où les opportunités d'emploi à temps partiel sont plus importantes.

La flexibilité du marché du travail est une condition nécessaire pour augmenter l'intensité en emploi de la croissance. Cette flexibilité peut s'accompagner d'une meilleure redistribution du travail. Certaines rigidités sur le marché du travail freinent la demande de main-d'oeuvre et favorisent la substitution du travail par le capital.

Dans ce contexte, les thèmes de discussion suivants peuvent être pris en considération (on trouvera une note plus élaborée à l'annexe 6):

- a. L'aménagement du temps de travail
 - temps partiel avec une réduction proportionnelle du salaire et une protection sociale suffisante;
 - diminution de la durée du travail dans le cadre d'une meilleure utilisation de l'appareil de production (travail en équipes, travail de nuit, équipes de week-end).
- b. La carrière "à la carte"
 - interruption de carrière;
 - préretraite à temps partiel;
 - emplois d'insertion avec diminution des charges sociales destinée à compenser le manque de productivité et les coûts de formation.
- c. Organisation du travail
 - travail temporaire;
 - contrats à durée déterminée;
 - coût de licenciement et d'embauche

De tels développements devraient se situer dans le cadre d'un contexte social qui prévoit le maintien de garanties nécessaires, sans augmenter le coût du travail. Ils doivent faire l'objet d'une concertation avec les partenaires sociaux.

Enfin, il importe de mettre l'accent, dans l'ensemble, sur une politique active de l'emploi conduisant à un fonctionnement plus efficace du marché du travail. L'investissement en capital humain (formation) et la mobilité sont des éléments importants à cet égard. L'annexe 7 reprend un certain nombre d'idées sur la formation et l'enseignement.

III. POUR UN PACTE POUR L'EMPLOI

Dans les pages précédentes, un ensemble d'actions visant à promouvoir l'emploi et à réduire le chômage ont été proposées. La convergence et la coordination de la politique économique en Europe, une stabilité du contexte macro-économique, la réduction du coût salarial, une plus grande souplesse et une dynamique nouvelle dans le commerce international sont autant d'éléments de nature à promouvoir l'emploi.

Le coeur du problème que nous connaissons aujourd'hui se situe dans la discordance entre le rythme auquel s'aggrave le chômage et le rythme auquel des solutions se concrétisent et s'appliquent. C'est précisément ce différentiel dynamique qui crée l'impression d'être dépassé par les faits. Il convient dès lors de le réduire.

A cet égard, une approche globale est absolument indispensable.

Celle-ci doit s'appuyer en premier lieu sur un usage plus intensif et mieux coordonné des instruments précités.

Mais la problématique est d'une complexité telle - et elle touche tellement directement la population européenne - qu'il faut se demander s'il ne convient pas de poser les jalons d'une stratégie européenne globale. Le marché de l'emploi forme le lien entre l'économie et la société : le fait d'accepter un marché de l'emploi présentant un dysfonctionnement tel que celui que nous connaissons aujourd'hui crée une scission entre la société et l'économie. Il est dès lors indispensable de se fixer explicitement comme objectif la création de conditions d'un marché européen de travail efficace, performant.

Dans une telle optique, deux éléments sont d'importance capitale.

Le premier réside dans la mise sur pied d'une approche et d'un cadre communautaires. La Communauté européenne analyse, depuis quelque temps déjà, les causes du déséquilibre du marché de l'emploi, ainsi que les remèdes pour y pallier. Si ces analyses devaient à court terme permettre de tirer des conclusions, elles devraient idéalement aboutir à la création d'un **cadre de référence européen** accepté par tous, sur la base duquel une stratégie pluriannuelle en faveur de l'emploi pourrait être élaborée. Tout comme la réalisation d'une stabilité monétaire et budgétaire se base sur des plans de convergence, une telle stratégie de l'emploi devrait, elle aussi, déterminer les paramètres rétablissant les conditions d'une plus grande intensité d'emploi de la croissance économique.

La nécessité d'un véritable **pacte** entre les pouvoirs publics et les interlocuteurs sociaux constitue le second paramètre. Ce pacte doit redéfinir le contenu du progrès socio-économique. Pendant la période de l'après-guerre, le progrès était indubitablement synonyme de reconstruction économique et d'augmentation du niveau de vie. Aujourd'hui, il convient de repenser les finalités du développement économique, sur toile de fond d'une société au sein de laquelle certaines

personnes n'ont plus accès au marché de l'emploi et sont menacées d'exclusion sociale, alors que d'autre part, une importance croissante est attachée à une meilleure qualité de vie et à la libre gestion du temps. Le partage du travail occupe une place centrale à cet égard.

Il est essentiel à cette fin que les acteurs de la vie socio-économique n'"externalisent" pas le coût social et financier du chômage. Une partie du lien entre compétitivité et croissance économique d'une part, et emploi d'autre part, se rompt dans la mesure où la sauvegarde de la compétitivité se réalise en économisant sur le facteur travail. Une telle attitude n'offre pas de perspectives étant donné qu'à long terme, elle hypothèque le développement de la société dans son ensemble.

Il est dès lors souhaitable d'entamer un chantier au plan européen, pour développer une approche globale en matière d'emploi, avec la coopération de tous les partenaires. La présidence belge propose que la Commission européenne formule des propositions quant aux piliers sur lesquels une telle approche devrait s'appuyer.

**Mécanisme européen de réassurance des crédits à
l'exportation et des investissements.**

1. La promotion des exportations et des investissements à l'étranger constitue un instrument important de relance économique pour les Etats confrontés à un chômage croissant, au déclin de certaines régions et à la perte de confiance des agents économiques.
2. Les besoins énormes des pays de l'Europe centrale et orientale, de la CEI et de la zone méditerranéenne, ainsi que les possibilités qu'offrent les pays asiatiques et d'Amérique latine posent un problème croissant de capacité et d'équilibre de portefeuille par les organismes d'assurance des Etats membres, et ce essentiellement pour les petits et moyens pays.
Ces difficultés s'inscrivent également dans un contexte de concurrence avec les pays d'Amérique du Nord et le Japon.
3. La réalisation du grand marché européen confère à de nombreuses entreprises une dimension transnationale qui se reflète dans la dimension des projets, quelles qu'en soient leur base nationale et la répartition de leur exécution entre différents pays. De grands programmes naissent également de la coopération entre industriels et financiers de différents Etats.
4. Dans la ligne d'initiatives belges répétées, la Commission s'est déjà penchée à diverses reprises sur le problème, sans que ses propositions successives aient rencontré le succès escompté.
Dans le contexte de la réalisation du grand marché européen, des travaux d'harmonisation en cours dans le domaine des conditions d'assurance et aussi sous la pression des besoins des PECO et de la CEI, la Commission pourrait susciter de nouvelles initiatives.
5. Le moment est donc opportun pour formuler une proposition concrète de création d'une facilité européenne de réassurance qui réponde à l'objectif de créer une capacité supplémentaire permettant aux organismes nationaux de prendre en charge les risques, quelle que soit la dimension des opérations et des contraintes qui résulteraient de la concentration des risques ou de l'origine des biens exportés ou des apports en capitaux.
Certains risques de caractère supplétif et temporaire qui ne sont pas couverts par les organismes nationaux pourraient être assumés entièrement par cette facilité.

6. Assise sur un minimum d'harmonisation des conditions de couverture, résultant des travaux en cours, cette facilité devrait pouvoir fonctionner dans des conditions d'équilibre financier. Ceci suppose une répartition géographique, sectorielle et qualitative des risques aussi étendue que possible et donc une obligation de réassurance de la part des organismes nationaux.

7. La facilité proposée serait dotée de moyens financiers appropriés, en fonction du montant et de la qualité des risques qu'elle sera amenée à supporter. Elle devrait pouvoir bénéficier du concours financier d'autres instruments européens (B.E.I., FED) et grâce à ce concours fonctionner de telle sorte que la charge budgétaire réelle ne porte que sur les pertes qui seraient définitives et non transférables.

8. La gestion en serait assurée par un conseil d'administration composé de représentants des organismes nationaux d'assurance crédits ou d'investissement et de représentants d'instances communautaires appropriées.

**Un réseau performant d'infrastructures
de transport et de télécommunications**

1. Transport

L'achèvement du Marché unique nécessite la définition pour l'ensemble de la Communauté d'un réseau pour chaque mode de transport permettant de relier les axes existant dans les Etats membres et de développer les relations entre pays périphériques et le coeur de l'Europe ainsi qu'entre pays périphériques eux-mêmes.

Le réseau européen de transport doit également permettre aux pays du coeur de l'Europe d'acheminer des trafics de transit en croissance permanente de manière fluide, tout en préservant la sécurité et l'environnement dans les régions traversées.

Dans ce contexte, l'adoption formelle d'un règlement reconduisant pour une période transitoire de deux ans, le règlement 3359/90 relatif à la mise en oeuvre du premier programme d'action, définissant les objectifs et les projets d'infrastructure prioritaires est fondamentale dans l'attente de mesures plus complètes qui seront prises ultérieurement en matière de réseaux transeuropéens.

Ce règlement-cadre fixe également les conditions d'octroi de la déclaration d'utilité européenne (Traité de Maastricht) devant être délivrée par la Commission en faveur de chaque projet éligible à une aide financière.

L'action de la Communauté doit porter sur toute étude concernant l'amélioration des infrastructures de transport et sur de grands projets, parmi lesquels la construction d'un réseau ferroviaire à grande vitesse.

L'achèvement du Marché unique nécessite également la concrétisation des trois schémas directeurs établis dans le domaine du transport routier, des voies navigables, du transport combiné ainsi qu'une finalisation des schémas directeurs en matière de contrôle du trafic maritime (VTS), du chemin de fer conventionnel, du contrôle aérien ainsi que du réseau portuaire et aéroportuaire.

Les schémas directeurs constituent l'instrument principal de la mise en place des réseaux transeuropéens identifiant les projets d'intérêt communautaires susceptibles de faire l'objet d'une incitation financière communautaire.

Il conviendra de veiller, dans ce cadre, à la suppression des goulots d'étranglement

et de tenir compte des contraintes financières des Etats membres.

Plus particulièrement, et par rapport aux 3 schémas directeurs déjà adoptés, une priorité devrait être accordée, pour ce qui concerne :

- le réseau routier transeuropéen : à la mise en place de systèmes télématiques routiers avancés et au développement de systèmes techniques de gestion de la circulation, des connexions internationales et des contournements des principaux raccords urbains.
- le réseau transeuropéen de transport combiné : à l'adaptation des relations ferroviaires au gabarit et conditions nécessaires pour le transport de conteneurs et des caisses mobiles.

2. Télécommunications

- En matière d'infrastructure de télécommunications, il convient d'avancer principalement sur le programme IDA (interchange of data between administrations) et sur le schéma directeur RNIS (encore à déposer) sur réseau numérique à intégration de services).
- Tout comme pour le transport, les contraintes financières des Etats membres, sont, compte tenu des moyens nécessaires, des éléments importants à prendre en considération.

Dans le domaine des télécommunications proprement dites, le plus grand problème est celui de l'interopérabilité des réseaux qui passe par une action d'harmonisation des normes techniques des équipements et des systèmes pour permettre à la fois l'efficacité de fonctionnement des réseaux et une réduction des coûts d'équipement. L'interconnexion telle qu'elle existe maintenant ne suffit en effet pas pour procéder à des échanges efficaces de données informatisées.

Le programme IDA exigera des efforts de concertation et de coopération énormes mais aussi des investissements en équipements qui, même s'ils se basent sur les équipements qui existent déjà, requerront des moyens très importants auxquels les Etats ne pourront faire face seuls.

Il sera donc nécessaire de faire appel au financement communautaire même pour les Etats membres qui n'y ont habituellement pas accès.

L'accès à ce financement communautaire devra passer par la déclaration d'intérêt communautaire telle qu'elle est prévue par le Traité de Maastricht pour les projets d'intérêt commun, dans le but d'assurer le bon fonctionnement du marché intérieur en développant financièrement des projets qui ne concernent pas uniquement les "pays de cohésion".

Infrastructures transeuropéennes de l'information.

1. Dans la perspective de création d'un "espace européen de l'information", il est temps pour la Communauté :
 - d'aller plus loin que le dispositif d'ordre réglementaire, destiné à libérer les services de télécommunications, en développant désormais un processus dynamique d'élaboration d'infrastructures communes ou harmonisées de l'information ("infostructure" transeuropéenne);
 - de compléter la politique de stimulation de l'offre menée jusqu'ici (soutien aux technologies de l'information et des télécommunications, promotion des systèmes ouverts) par une politique visant à susciter et à structurer la demande à l'échelle du grand marché, par l'élaboration de produits et services informationnels européens précurseurs.

Ces objectifs nouveaux doivent être poursuivis en étroite synergie avec la mise en oeuvre de réseaux transeuropéens en matière de télécommunications et aussi de transports (la mobilité physique des personnes et le transfert électronique de l'information devant être considérés dans une certaine mesure comme des réponses alternatives à un même besoin).

2. L'édification de cette "infostructure" - avec les services et les bases de données qui y seront connectés - peut être un élément important de l'initiative de relance économique de la Communauté.

Elle devrait normalement constituer un cadre de référence permettant de stimuler les initiatives conjointes

- des producteurs de technologies (hard- et software)
- des opérateurs de réseaux
- des fournisseurs de services d'information électronique,

et d'améliorer le rapport coût/efficacité

- de nombreux secteurs de l'industrie et des services privés

- des services publics, nationaux et communautaires.

Mais cette infrastructure doit aussi rencontrer adéquatement les besoins d'ordre social, éducatif, culturel et de santé des populations; les avantages de cette infrastructure doivent donc être directement tangibles pour le citoyen européen, dans sa vie courante, en termes d'accroissement de son confort et de sa sécurité.

3. La Communauté dispose d'une vaste gamme d'outils technologiques, développés notamment dans le cadre d'ESPRIT et de RACE. De nombreuses solutions technologiques sont déjà largement prêtes (bien sûr à actualiser par un effort continu de R-D).

C'est pourquoi il est nécessaire de phaser la mise en oeuvre de l'infrastructure en fonction de l'état de maturité des technologies, d'une programmation correcte des besoins d'investissement et de l'évolution prévisible des comportements et des modes d'organisation des utilisateurs.

Il est donc suggéré à la Commission de présenter un processus programmé par étapes, afin de permettre aux divers secteurs - gouvernements, producteurs, opérateurs de réseaux et fournisseurs de services - de se positionner en fonction des diverses échéances.

Pour ce faire, il y aurait lieu d'identifier

- ce qui peut être réalisé à court terme en exploitant à pleine capacité les réseaux existants et en favorisant leur interconnexion; une attention particulière est à accorder aux services nouveaux accessibles par le téléphone;
 - les actions à rendre possibles lorsque le RNIS sera opérationnel à l'échelle européenne
 - les actions à préparer dans la perspective future de la généralisation des réseaux à grand débit.
4. Pour amorcer le processus, il serait indiqué d'agir par priorité sur deux types de marché d'entraînement, afin d'atteindre dans un délai raisonnable un niveau de chiffre d'affaires (d'équipements, mais aussi et surtout de services) permettant un rythme d'amortissement acceptable pour les investisseurs :

- marché d'initiative publique :

l'échange entre Etats membres des informations administratives nécessaires au fonctionnement du grand marché et à la réalisation des politiques communautaires, destiné à ouvrir un marché public à l'échelle européenne. L'initiative IDA répond à cet objectif.

- marché des services proches de l'individu :
quelques produits et services informationnels européens "précurseurs", destinés à ouvrir un marché de grande consommation axé sur les besoins individuels du citoyen européen en matière de supports d'information.
Un premier besoin concerne la "carte individuelle européenne" donnant accès à tous les réseaux sur le territoire de la Communauté. Le contenu informationnel de ce produit serait progressivement enrichi, en commençant par des fonctions primaires (ex. état civil du porteur, données bancaires, de sécurité sociale, d'assurances, permis de conduire) pour évoluer ensuite vers le dossier médical et le "support universel d'informations personnelles".
Un autre besoin concerne des services facilement accessibles à domicile. Avec l'évolution démographique, la proportion de la population restant à domicile ira croissant. Ce phénomène s'étendant à l'ensemble de l'Europe recèle un énorme potentiel de services et de marché en matière d'informations progressivement interactives et de terminaux domestiques conviviaux.

5. La Commission est par conséquent invitée :

- à synthétiser rapidement l'apport que peuvent déjà fournir pour la réalisation de l'infrastructure envisagée, les enseignements de programmes tels que ESPRIT, RACE, ENS, IMPACT;
- à présenter une programmation dans le temps des étapes devant conduire progressivement à une infrastructure techniquement et économiquement performante;
- à clarifier les rôles dévolus aux divers acteurs et les moyens d'assurer entre eux les synergies nécessaires : fournisseurs de technologies, opérateurs de réseaux, fournisseurs de services, utilisateurs finaux, organismes européens de normalisation, gouvernements;
- à clarifier les besoins progressifs en investissements, en fonction notamment des délais d'amortissement; à cet effet, à explorer l'évolution à moyen terme des conditions tarifaires des nouveaux services à relier à l'infrastructure;

- à identifier les innovations réglementaires et les conditions normatives

susceptibles de favoriser le processus d'élaboration de l'infrastructure;

- à réfléchir aux types de structures opérationnelles qu'elle estimerait appropriés pour favoriser la mise en place de l'infrastructure;
- à envisager rapidement des actions de sensibilisation, sous la forme p.ex. d'assises européennes de l'information.

Recherche et développement.

1. L'objectif de 3% du PNB à atteindre pour les ressources affectées à la recherche-développement.

Cet objectif qui, rappelons-le, correspond à la situation aux USA et au Japon doit s'apprécier par rapport à la situation actuelle dans la Communauté. Celle-ci appelle deux commentaires:

- seuls quatre pays sur douze atteignent le niveau actuel de 2%. Pour la plupart des Etats membres, dont la Belgique, l'effort à fournir serait donc supérieur au pour-cent du PNB, ce qui représente **une croissance extrêmement significative** des dépenses de RD.
- les écarts **internes** à la Communauté sont extrêmement importants.

L'objectif de l'accroissement des dépenses de RD soit se situer dans une double perspective:

- l'élévation de la moyenne européenne
- la réduction des disparités entre Etats membres en matière d'intensité de la recherche-développement.

Aucun doute n'est permis quant au rôle moteur que la recherche-développement, dans toutes ses composantes peut jouer dans un "renouveau économique" de l'Europe; une attention particulière doit être réservée à ce type d'investissements, à la fois d'un point de vue quantitatif et qualitatif.

2. L'effort budgétaire nécessaire.

L'effort de RD dont il est question provient à la fois des dépenses des entreprises et des dépenses publiques. Quelle que soit leur proportion (elle est en moyenne de 50/50), il importera d'agir au niveau des finances publiques dans l'ensemble de la Communauté pour atteindre progressivement un niveau comparable à celui de nos compétiteurs.

En effet, sans nier l'importance stratégique de l'effort de recherche de la Communauté, celui-ci n'atteint guère que 4 % de l'ensemble des dépenses de RD des Etats membres: un renforcement des investissements de RD n'est donc

possible qu'en décidant, au niveau européen, un relèvement progressif et coordonné des efforts nationaux en la matière.

Pour atteindre un résultat significatif, ce renforcement doit se situer aux environs de 5% en termes réels pendant la prochaine décennie. Ce choix de priorité, tant au sein des dépenses publiques que des investissements privés, est indispensable pour provoquer une rupture avec les politiques actuelles.

3. Les priorités de l'effort en matière de recherche.

Il ne suffit pas de renforcer le financement de la recherche: encore faut-il veiller à en renforcer les effets en faveur de la compétitivité de notre économie, du consensus social et de la qualité de la vie de nos citoyens.

Des axes prioritaires doivent être fixés:

- la révolution intellectuelle des technologies de l'information implique un renouvellement complet des outils de communication, d'information et de mesure utilisés par tous les chercheurs, y compris dans les disciplines de sciences humaines.
Le renouvellement des infrastructures de recherche est indispensable pour les sortir de l'obsolescence qui les menace, surtout dans le secteur public ou para-public.
Par exemple, et en concordance avec la priorité que doit recevoir ce secteur industriel, des investissements en matière de télécommunications avancées entre centres de recherche peuvent avoir à la fois un effet de renforcement de la cohésion et un effet de relance, en jouant un rôle d'entraînement sur ce secteur économique.
- le renforcement du potentiel humain en matière de recherche doit également être incorporé dans tout effort de relance: cet effort est d'autant plus nécessaire que la structure démographique du personnel de recherche reflète, dans de nombreux pays, la croissance forte des années soixante et implique donc des départs massifs à la retraite dans la prochaine décennie. La formation à la recherche par la recherche, conçue en collaboration avec les acteurs économiques de manière à renforcer ceux-ci, constitue un point critique sur lequel des efforts doivent être consentis.
- le renforcement de l'aptitude à valoriser les résultats de la RD en inventions et en résultats économiques constitue une autre priorité pour les Etats membres et la Communauté: si la mobilisation de tous les acteurs concernés (universités, centres de recherche et entreprises) peut et doit encore être amplifiée par l'octroi d'incitants financiers spécifiques à ce type de collaboration, le rôle des instruments financiers dans le processus de l'innovation doit être orienté de manière à favoriser la transposition économique des acquis de la recherche.
C'est probablement dans ce domaine que le troisième point de la proposition du président DELORS en matière de RD peut trouver un début de concrétisation.

- le renforcement des capacités de recherche développement doit tenir compte du caractère complexe des besoins économiques et sociaux: une priorité particulière doit être réservée aux travaux qui dépassent les clivages traditionnels des disciplines scientifiques et qui structurent, sur une problématique donnée, l'apport des chercheurs de formations différentes.

4. La concentration des actions communautaires et la plus-value communautaire.

Outil principal de cette action communautaire, le programme-cadre doit maintenir les exigences de qualité qu'il impose. L'effort communautaire de recherche n'a de sens que s'il permet aussi d'améliorer la qualité des travaux des chercheurs qui y participent. Le renforcement des orientations qui le déterminent (technologies génériques, problèmes à caractère global en matière d'environnement, etc) doit être réaffirmé afin de préserver sa spécificité.

Il faut noter également que ce que l'on appelle la "big science" (les activités qui par nature exigent des investissements considérables) a été structuré en Europe très souvent à l'extérieur de la Communauté: Agence Spatiale européenne, Centre européen de Recherches Nucléaires, sources de rayonnement ou de neutrons, Observatoire européen). Une meilleure interaction entre les actions spécifiquement communautaires et celles de ces grandes installations ou institutions scientifiques constitue également une nécessité.

Cette exigence de spécificité et de qualité ne doit pas faire passer au second plan les problèmes de cohésion.

En raison de la concentration du potentiel de recherche (privé et public) dans des régions relativement bien délimitées qui sont les plus prospères, l'action communautaire de recherche comporte le risque de renforcer les régions les plus fortes sans stimuler plus énergiquement les plus faibles.

Dès lors, une nouvelle approche des rôles respectifs du 4ème programme-cadre et des fonds structurels doit être mise en oeuvre: l'utilisation des fonds structurels devrait être orientée vers des investissements intellectuels tout autant que matériels, à la fois dans les domaines de la recherche, de l'éducation scientifique et technologique et dans celui du transfert des technologies vers les entreprises des régions moins favorisées.

Recommandations du Gouvernement belge pour une stratégie pluriannuelle en faveur de l'emploi.

Cette note présente les grandes orientations de l'approche retenue par le Gouvernement belge pour promouvoir la création d'emplois dans la Communauté. Elle s'inscrit dans la ligne du plan européen à moyen terme de relance économique, présenté par le Président Delors au Conseil européen de Copenhague et intitulé "A l'aube du XXI^e siècle".

1. Plaidoyer pour une réduction du coût du travail peu qualifié

Le Gouvernement belge convient qu'il importe d'examiner toutes les voies devant permettre de stimuler l'emploi et de réduire le chômage, notamment celles qui concernent: la flexibilité des contrats (temporaires, intérimaires, durée indéterminée, temps partiel), les politiques actives d'accompagnement et de formation, la réduction des coûts d'embauche et de licenciement, et la réorientation des subsides économiques. Il estime cependant qu'**une modification profonde des prix relatifs des facteurs, à la fois en faveur du facteur travail en général, mais plus particulièrement en faveur du travail peu qualifié** est indispensable pour infléchir de manière significative, à l'horizon de la décennie, le contenu en emploi de la croissance économique dans la Communauté.

Le Gouvernement belge est en effet convaincu que le problème du chômage dans la Communauté reflète en grande partie le coût salarial très élevé auquel font face les entreprises, notamment pour engager des travailleurs peu qualifiés.¹ Plusieurs raisons expliquent pourquoi le coût du travail pèse de plus en plus sur l'emploi:

- a. **compétitivité:** parce qu'il accélère la délocalisation d'activités vers d'autres pays où le coût du travail est moins élevé;
- b. **substitution:** parce qu'il contribue à la substitution capital-travail tant dans le secteur exposé que dans le secteur abrité;
- c. **inhibition:** parce qu'il inhibe le développement d'emplois dans les services abrités, qui ont une élasticité de la demande de travail en fonction du coût

¹ En Belgique, l'écart entre le coût salarial à charge de l'employeur et le salaire net (c'est-à-dire le coin fiscal et parafiscal), exprimé par rapport au coût salarial employeur, avoisine les 50% pour les plus bas niveaux de salaire net, à savoir l'équivalent de l'allocation de chômage d'un isolé. Exprimé par rapport au net, cela signifie que l'insertion sur le marché du travail sans baisse du revenu net exige pour l'employeur un coût salarial égal au double du revenu net minimal qu'obtient l'employé.

du travail de 2 à 3 fois plus élevée que celles des autres secteurs. Cette situation s'explique par le fait qu'il existe une demande potentielle importante pour de nouveaux types de services, liés à l'évolution démographique et sociologique de notre société (aides aux personnes âgées, gardes d'enfants pour les femmes qui travaillent, protection de l'environnement, développement des loisirs). Malheureusement, cette demande est encore trop peu satisfaite en raison du prix élevé de ces services lié au coût excessif du facteur travail, et ce compte tenu de la part élevée de travail dans ces services.

On peut donc penser qu'une mesure de baisse du coût salarial devrait entraîner une baisse du prix des services, et ainsi solvabiliser la demande et créer les conditions d'une augmentation de la production de services de qualité. Cette évolution devrait renforcer la cohésion sociale de notre société, et contribuer aussi à améliorer la compétitivité du secteur exposé, via une baisse de ses inputs domestiques.

Une opération d'abaissement du coût salarial bénéficiant principalement aux peu-qualifiés peut se justifier également parce que:

- a. le chômage se caractérise actuellement par une **répartition très inégale** entre les différentes catégories de la population active, les jeunes et les travailleurs peu qualifiés connaissant des taux de chômage bien supérieurs à la moyenne nationale;
- b. les travailleurs qui risquent le plus d'être victimes du **changement technologique** et de la nouvelle division internationale du travail sont les moins qualifiés;
- c. la réduction du coût salarial permettra également de sauver des emplois peu qualifiés dans le **secteur exposé** à la concurrence internationale;
- d. le développement du **travail à temps partiel** devrait également être facilité par l'abaissement du coût du travail peu qualifié.

2. Plaidoyer pour une baisse des prélèvements obligatoires portant sur le travail

Plusieurs mesures de réduction du coût du travail peuvent être envisagées.

Une approche soutenue par certains consiste à remettre en cause le niveau, voire le principe, du **salaire minimum** en vigueur dans beaucoup de pays de la Communauté, estimant que les emplois à faible productivité justifient l'existence de bas salaires. Sans nier que le salaire minimum puisse, dans certains cas, avoir un coût en terme d'emploi, cette approche ne nous semble pas devoir être retenue pour deux raisons:

- a. **Elle n'est pas opportune.** Le principe d'un minimum d'existence est un des aspects importants du système social européen qui doit être maintenu. Dès lors, le revenu salarial net minimum doit être suffisamment supérieur au mimimex pour que la recherche effective d'un emploi soit attrayante.
- b. **Elle n'est pas nécessaire.** Eu égard au niveau très élevé du taux des prélèvements obligatoires au niveau des bas salaires, il y a là une marge de manoeuvre importante pour opérer une réduction du coût salarial sans affecter le salaire net.

Plutôt que de préconiser cette approche, le Gouvernement belge estime que l'allègement du coût salarial devrait prendre la forme d'une **baisse des prélèvements obligatoires portant sur le travail**. En Belgique, où les cotisations sociales à charge des employeurs sont très élevées, on pourrait songer à une exonération des cotisations patronales de sécurité sociale portant sur une partie du salaire. Cette exonération pourrait, soit viser l'ensemble des salariés, soit diminuer progressivement jusqu'à disparaître quand la rémunération atteint un niveau de salaire à définir ².

Le choix de la formule à retenir dépend d'une analyse des avantages et inconvénients. L'inconvénient majeur d'une mesure de baisse du coût du travail pour l'ensemble des salariés se situe dans le coût élevé de cette mesure générale.³ La formule de diminution progressive de l'exonération présente elle-aussi un certain nombre d'inconvénients:

- a. elle implique que le **coût marginal** d'une augmentation de salaire net, pour les petits salaires, sera progressif, puisque toute augmentation de salaire entraînera une réduction, partielle ou totale, de l'exonération de charges sociales pour l'employeur;
- b. il risque de se poser un problème de **fraude**, les entreprises cherchant à maximiser, d'une manière ou d'une autre, le montant de l'exonération de charges patronales;
- c. le **coïn fiscal et parafiscal** restera très élevé pour les salaires ne bénéficiant pas de l'exonération.

Eu égard à ces considérations, le **Gouvernement belge recommande une réduction significative des prélèvements obligatoires portant sur le travail, mise en place en deux étapes:**

² On pourrait imaginer que pour les travailleurs ayant un salaire compris entre 1 fois et 1 1/4 fois le salaire minimum, 3/4 des charges sociales pesant sur le salaire minimum soient supprimés, que pour les travailleurs dont le salaire est compris entre 1 1/4 fois et 1 1/2 fois le salaire minimum, 1/2 des charges sociales pesant sur le salaire minimum soit supprimée, de telle sorte que l'exonération de charges patronales disparaîtrait quand la rémunération atteint deux fois le salaire minimum.

³ En Belgique, les cotisations sociales patronales sur la partie des salaires correspondant au salaire minimum représentaient environ 350 milliards de francs en 1992.

- a. **dans un premier temps**, elle devrait être limitée aux salaires inférieurs à certains niveaux à définir;
- b. **progressivement**, et en tenant compte de l'effet positif constaté de la première étape, elle serait étendue à l'ensemble des salariés.

Cette approche a l'avantage de (a) modifier rapidement le coût salarial du travail peu qualifié, en fonction des possibilités de financement à court terme; (c) d'éviter à moyen terme les effets pervers d'une exonération dégressive; et (c) de mettre en place progressivement les mesures de financement de cette opération, qui devrait s'inscrire dans le cadre d'une **stratégie européenne pluriannuelle en faveur de l'emploi**.

3. Plaidoyer pour une solution de financement au niveau européen

Eu égard à la situation budgétaire de la plupart des Etats membres ainsi qu'à l'exigence de convergence budgétaire au niveau européen, il apparaît nécessaire d'envisager des mesures fiscales permettant de neutraliser le coût budgétaire d'une opération de baisse des prélèvements obligatoires portant sur le travail.

3.1. Mesures de financement possibles

Une telle opération peut être financée par des mesures prises au niveau européen et/ou individuellement par les Etats membres.

Au niveau européen, plusieurs pistes sont possibles:

- a. L'instauration d'une **taxe sur les émissions de CO₂ et la consommation d'énergie**. Si on appliquait la proposition de la Commission⁴, cela se traduirait par des recettes supplémentaires pour l'Etat belge, à l'horizon 2000, d'environ 100 à 130 milliards de francs, selon l'importance des dérogations accordées.
- b. L'instauration d'une **taxe sur les revenus des placements financiers**. Selon la proposition de la Commission⁵, cette mesure accroîtrait d'environ 30 milliards les recettes fiscales de l'Etat.
- c. La hausse des **taux minima de TVA ou d'accises**. En Belgique, une augmentation de 1 point des taux de TVA devrait rapporter environ 20 milliards pour le taux normal et 10 milliards pour le taux réduit.

⁴ C'est-à-dire une taxe équivalent à 10 US\$ par baril de pétrole, mise en oeuvre progressivement jusqu'en 2000.

⁵ Soit une retenue minimale à la source de 15% sur les intérêts payés à des "résidents communautaires".

- d. Comme autre piste possible à moyen terme, on peut aussi mentionner l'instauration d'un **pourcentage additionnel à l'impôt des sociétés**. Mais ceci implique l'harmonisation préalable de la base d'imposition.

Au niveau de chaque Etat membre, les mesures possibles de financement pourraient prendre la forme d'augmentations de certaines catégories d'impôts directs et indirects et/ou de réductions de dépenses publiques.

3.2. Préférence du Gouvernement belge

Le Gouvernement belge estime que **seule une solution de financement mise en oeuvre au niveau communautaire est de nature à offrir une réponse adéquate au problème du chômage en Europe, et à répondre ainsi aux attentes très élevées qui sont nées de la décision prise au Conseil européen de Copenhague de préparer un Livre blanc.**

Les éléments suivants viennent appuyer cette position:

- a. **Effet de seuil.** Pour que l'opération de réduction du coût du travail produise un effet significatif en terme de créations d'emplois, il faut qu'elle soit ambitieuse. En effet, les simulations effectuées à l'aide de modèles économétriques montrent que les impacts en termes de création d'emplois d'une mesure d'abaissement du coût du travail sont relativement faibles ⁶. Par conséquent, sans un accord au niveau européen, il sera difficile pour la plupart des Etats membres de financer une opération de réduction du coût salarial capable de créer les conditions d'une réduction significative du chômage, pour trois raisons: (a) les accords sur l'harmonisation européenne de la fiscalité indirecte limitent les possibilités de financement national par la TVA et les accises; (b) le niveau de la fiscalité sur les revenus des personnes physiques en vigueur au niveau d'un certain nombre d'Etats membres ne leur permet pas de nouvelles hausses d'impôts directs; et (c) la concurrence fiscale ne permet pas d'initiative individuelle en matière de taxation des revenus de l'épargne.

⁶ Ainsi, une étude récente du Bureau du Plan montre qu'une réduction des cotisations patronales financées par la mise en oeuvre de la proposition de la Commission sur la taxe CO2/Energie se traduirait par la création nette de quelques 27 000 emplois d'ici 2000, si la Belgique était le seul pays à mettre en oeuvre cette opération. Il est permis de penser toutefois que ce résultat sous-estime l'élasticité de la demande de travail au coût salarial, dans la mesure où il est basé sur un modèle économétrique dont les paramètres reflètent les caractéristiques structurelles présentes de l'économie belge. Ce type de modèle ne peut donc mesurer les effets macro-économiques d'une baisse du coût salarial représentant une rupture par rapport aux évolutions passées, notamment en ce qui concerne les coûts relatifs entre travail qualifié et travail non-qualifié.

- b. **Effet multiplicateur.** Une action menée au niveau européen devrait avoir un effet multiplicateur important du fait de l'interdépendance croissante de nos économies.
- c. **Risque de délocalisation.** Des réponses nationales au problème du chômage entraîneraient des distorsions de concurrence entre Etats membres au sein du grand marché, chacun cherchant à maximiser l'effet de compétitivité, ainsi que de périlleux mouvements de délocalisation des activités économiques au sein de la Communauté, vers les pays qui seront le plus capables de réduire le coût du facteur travail en raison de la situation avantageuse des finances publiques.
- d. **Risque déflatoire important.** Faute d'accord européen, les Etats membres risquent de rechercher la solution par la mise en oeuvre d'une politique de modération salariale excessive, qui se traduira en perte de pouvoir d'achat pour les travailleurs et en réduction de la demande agrégée, ce qui rendrait encore plus difficile la reprise de la croissance en Europe.

4. Coût du travail et financement de la sécurité sociale

Le financement actuel des régimes de protection sociale qui prévalent dans la majorité des Etats membres de la Communauté repose dans une très large mesure sur des cotisations liées aux revenus du travail. Le principe de ce mode de financement provient de l'histoire même des régimes de protection sociale en Europe. Dans ce contexte, **une réflexion s'impose sur les possibilités de limiter le poids que fait peser le financement de la protection sociale sur le coût du travail par rapport aux autres facteurs de production** (via, par exemple, des cotisations calculées sur la valeur ajoutée de l'entreprise plutôt que sur la masse salariale).

Eu égard à ces observations, le Gouvernement belge invite la Commission à globaliser les problèmes et à examiner la question du financement d'une opération de réduction du coût salarial dans la perspective plus large d'une réflexion sur le financement des mécanismes de protection sociale dans la Communauté. Le fait que de nombreux aspects de cette problématique relèvent de la subsidiarité ne devrait toutefois pas empêcher une réflexion commune à ce sujet, au bénéfice de tous les Etats membres.

**Partage du travail et flexibilité
du marché de travail.**

La croissance économique seule ne peut en Europe pas garantir une création suffisante de postes d'emploi. L'augmentation du contenu de la croissance en emplois doit également passer par l'introduction d'une plus grande flexibilité sur le marché du travail, amélioration de la flexibilité qui doit se traduire par une meilleure répartition du travail disponible.

Le défi aujourd'hui est de reconstruire le plein emploi sans compter exclusivement sur le levier de la croissance. La demande d'une carrière "à la carte" plus souple existe tant du côté des travailleurs que des employeurs. Dans cette optique, ce sont principalement certains aspects de l'organisation du travail qui doivent être adaptés. Là, est le rôle des gouvernements. Dans cette optique, plusieurs pistes peuvent être explorées.

1. Assouplir la fin de la carrière

Il existe tant du côté des travailleurs que des employeurs un besoin d'assouplir la fin de carrière. Or, actuellement, les régimes de la retraite et de la retraite anticipée imposent un retrait complet de la vie active.

On pourrait promouvoir le retrait progressif de la vie active des travailleurs plus âgés par l'instauration d'un régime de travail à mi-temps avec une indemnité compensant partiellement la perte de revenu. Les travailleurs âgés pourront passer d'un emploi à temps plein à un emploi à temps partiel, ce qui leur permettra d'aménager progressivement le passage parfois difficile de l'activité à l'inactivité. De plus, la préretraite à mi-temps permettra au travailleur âgé de partager son emploi avec un travailleur plus jeune.

2. Mieux répondre à la conciliation entre vie familiale (ou privée) et vie professionnelle tout en assurant une meilleure répartition du travail disponible

Un système offrant la possibilité au travailleur d'interrompre temporairement sa carrière (interruption de carrière, congé parental, congé de formation, congé sabbatique) avec une compensation financière ou non et la garantie de retrouver son emploi à l'issue de son interruption pourrait répondre à cet objectif. Afin de garantir la répartition du travail, il est indiqué d'assurer le remplacement d'un travailleur qui interrompt sa carrière par un demandeur d'emploi.

3. Développement des emplois à temps partiel sur base volontaire

Les emplois à temps partiel sur base volontaire et la diminution de salaire qui y correspond doivent être promus. Cela peut aller de pair avec une redistribution du travail, en tenant compte des besoins des entreprises et des travailleurs, la réduction des durées de travail journalières ou hebdomadaires, ou des périodes de travail étendues sur l'année (p.ex. travailler 9 mois par an au lieu de 12, pas de travail durant la période des vacances des enfants en âge scolaire).

A cette fin, il faudrait d'un côté enlever les obstacles légaux et financiers pour l'organisation de cette forme de travail et d'un autre côté prévoir une protection sociale adéquate pour les travailleurs à temps partiel. De plus, il serait indiqué de prévoir la possibilité contractuelle de pouvoir reprendre, en priorité, un emploi à temps plein dans l'entreprise.

4. Réduction du temps de travail dans le cadre d'un meilleur usage des moyens de production

Dans ce cas-ci, les possibilités de réduire le temps de travail dans le cadre du travail en équipes, des équipes de week-end, du travail de nuit, sont compensées par de moindres coûts en capital découlant d'un meilleur usage des moyens de production et de la suppression progressive des primes spéciales supérieures au salaire normal en échange de la réduction des durées de travail.

5. Les entreprises en restructuration

En ce qui concerne les entreprises en restructuration, il faudrait penser à redistribuer le travail disponible autrement qu'en faisant appel aux régimes de retraite anticipée. De nombreuses entreprises en restructuration se tournent aujourd'hui vers un système de retraite anticipée afin d'aménager les licenciements nécessaires en accord avec l'ensemble des personnes qui constituent l'entreprise.

Il paraît souhaitable de favoriser toutes les formes de répartition du temps de travail afin de limiter le nombre de licenciements. Des mesures telles que le travail à temps partiel volontaire, l'interruption de carrière à temps complet ou à mi-temps, des nouveaux régimes de travail peuvent répondre aux difficultés parfois temporaires de l'entreprise.

6. Assouplissement de certains aspects de l'organisation du travail

La flexibilité sur le marché du travail passe également par un assouplissement de certains aspects de l'organisation du travail. Ici aussi, il est indiqué de soumettre la réglementation du travail à un examen profond en concertation avec les partenaires sociaux et de prévoir éventuellement sur base d'un consensus social des dispositions dérogatoires en période de récession afin de diminuer la réticence des employeurs à recruter en période de récession.

7. Modération des salaires en fonction d'une stratégie d'emploi

Un principe de base de la concertation sociale est la redistribution de l'accroissement des gains, issus de la productivité. L'octroi de nouveaux avantages salariaux et de réductions de la durée du travail en sont la traduction concrète. Or, ces avantages sont accordés directement au bénéfice exclusif des seuls travailleurs salariés, en emploi.

Dès que le niveau du chômage menace la cohésion même de nos sociétés, la responsabilité des partenaires sociaux est engagée de sorte que la redistribution des gains de productivité serve directement des objectifs d'emploi.

Bien que de nombreux aspects des thèmes précités relèvent de la compétence des Etats membres, il est nécessaire de procéder à une approche commune au niveau européen afin d'éviter les pratiques contraires à la saine concurrence et le dumping social.

Les Etats membres peuvent dans le cadre de leurs moyens attribués à la politique active de l'emploi stimuler financièrement la répartition du temps du travail.

Sur ce terrain, la Communauté européenne peut jouer un rôle important :

- en tant que forum pour l'échange du savoir et de l'expérience;
- dans l'élaboration d'une approche commune dont la réalisation est laissée aux différents Etats membres conformément au principe de subsidiarité;
- dans la formulation de droits fondamentaux sociaux minimum qui doivent être respectés dans tous les Etats membres;
- pour la promotion du dialogue social en la matière.

Formation et enseignement.

Le droit individuel à l'éducation durant la totalité de la vie active et une politique du marché de l'emploi plus active sont essentiels pour, d'une part, maintenir le potentiel de travail à un niveau de qualification suffisamment élevé et d'autre part, couronner de succès la lutte contre l'exclusion sociale.

- 1) Compte tenu de la nécessité de promouvoir les mutations technologiques afin de rester compétitif en cette matière par rapport aux pays à bas salaires, la formation permanente de nos travailleurs constitue une exigence. A cet effet, il est nécessaire :
 - d'impliquer activement, tant sur le plan du contenu que financièrement, le monde des entreprises dans les structures de formation appropriées;
 - de soutenir financièrement et stimuler les établissements de formation en fonction de leurs résultats concrets en matière de formation, adaptés aux besoins du monde des entreprises;
 - de donner aux travailleurs le droit à une formation permanente sous forme de congé-éducation, établi en fonction des efforts fournis quant à la formation et compte tenu des problèmes organisationnels du monde des entreprises. Les charges qui s'ensuivent pour le monde des entreprises doivent être partiellement ou entièrement allégées par un soutien financier partiel de la part du gouvernement.
 - d'assurer une meilleure coordination entre la structure d'enseignement commune et les divers établissements afin de limiter les coûts, optimaliser les résultats et arriver à un meilleur usage de la structure d'enseignement et de formation.
- 2) La prévention du chômage de longue durée chez les jeunes par l'introduction d'un droit à un emploi de 6 mois minimum après avoir été inscrit comme chercheur d'emploi pendant un an. A cet effet, les éventuels besoins en formation doivent être satisfaits, notamment par :
 - des mesures réduisant les coûts du travail, et dont l'importance varie suivant le niveau de formation des jeunes concernés, avec en contrepartie l'assurance d'un effort de formation ou de l'accompagnement au sein ou en dehors de l'entreprise (plan d'embauche des jeunes, "emploi tremplin", formation et travail alternés, stage des jeunes);

- l'implication de ces jeunes, qui en dépit des mesures prises ne sont cependant pas pris en charge par le marché du travail ordinaire, dans les missions d'intérêt général subsidiées par le gouvernement ou dans des projets d'économie sociale.
- 3) Un effort commun, sous forme d'une contribution commune en faveur des groupes à risque (chômeurs de longue durée) dont les chances d'intégrer le marché du travail exigent des mesures spécifiques et plus concrètes.

**BELEIDSORIËNTATIES VOOR MEER GROEI
EN TEWERKSTELLING IN DE EUROPESE GEMEENSCHAP.**

Voorwoord

Ter gelegenheid van de overhandiging van haar bijdrage tot het Witboek, wenst de Belgische Regering de nadruk te leggen op het belang voor de Europese Gemeenschap van de in het Witboek behandelde materie.

Die materie overstijgt het zuiver politieke of economische en raakt de eigenlijke werking van onze maatschappij :

- De aandacht gaat hierbij enerzijds uit naar de plaats van de mens in de maatschappij, en meer in het bijzonder zijn relatie tot het werk, alsook naar de zin van technologische ontwikkeling en vooruitgang in het algemeen.
- Anderzijds staat de zin van Europese integratie op het spel. De Gemeenschap, die haar fundamentele bestaansreden vindt in de economische integratie, krijgt in haar finaliteit te kampen met een ontwrichting, in de vorm van aanhoudende werkloosheid. Het Witboek zet ons ertoe aan na te denken over de zin van Europese eenmaking. De toekomst van de Gemeenschap en de uitbouw van een nieuw ontwikkelingsmodel zijn immers onlosmakelijk met elkaar verbonden.

I. INLEIDING

Na de euforie van de jaren tachtig worden de jaren negentig gekenmerkt door een slechte conjunctuur en door een toeneming van de interne en externe instabiliteit. Men is het er algemeen over eens dat de zorgwekkende situatie van de werkloosheid de onrust bij de bevolking doet toenemen en het vertrouwen in de democratische instellingen aantast. De uitdaging is uitermate groot.

De recessie en de vooruitzichten met betrekking tot de werkloosheid in Europa

Tijdens de voorbije dertig jaar werd de Europese economie gekenmerkt door een nooit geziene stijging van de produktie, de produktiviteit en de koopkracht. Maar, sinds halfweg de jaren zeventig, heeft de economische groei het niet mogelijk gemaakt voldoende banen te creëren om een tegenwicht te bieden voor de aanzienlijke aangroei van de actieve bevolking, die het gevolg was van de demografische ontwikkelingen en van de uitbreiding van de vrouwenarbeid.

Gedurende de periode van 1983 tot 1991 werden nochtans negen miljoen banen gecreëerd. Sedert 1991 is de toestand van de werkloosheid echter opnieuw slechter geworden. Voor 1993 wordt een werkloosheidsgraad verwacht die waarschijnlijk het historisch recordpeil van het begin van de jaren tachtig zal evenaren.

Volgens de jongste berekeningen zal het werkloosheidspercentage blijven stijgen tot boven 11 %, het percentage dat werd voorspeld voor 1993.

De ondertewerkstelling kenmerkt alle ontwikkelde landen, maar het moet worden aangestipt dat dit verschijnsel in Europa dramatischer dimensies heeft aangenomen. De jongste vooruitzichten van de OESO voorspellen 8,25 miljoen werklozen in de Verenigde Staten, 1,7 miljoen in Japan en 20 miljoen in de Europese Gemeenschap.

Bij een onderzoek van die slechte resultaten in de Europese Gemeenschap springen twee kenmerken in het oog, en dit, sinds de jaren zestig.

- * Zelfs tijdens de beste jaren van die periode, daalde de werkloosheid in de Gemeenschap nooit tot onder 8,3 % en lag gemiddeld tijdens het voorbije decennium iets onder 10 % .
- * Er werden over het algemeen weinig nieuwe arbeidsplaatsen geschapen, behalve tijdens de periode 85-90. Over de gehele periode van 1960 tot 1990 steeg de werkgelegenheid gemiddeld slechts met 0,3 % .

Volgens de voorspellingen zal de groei op zich geen oplossing bieden voor de huidige problemen van niet-werkgelegenheid en zal hij, a fortiori, de te verwachten stijging van de actieve bevolking niet opvangen.

De oorzaken van de werkloosheid.

De huidige stijging van de werkloosheid is grotendeels van conjuncturele aard, het werkloosheidspeil, daarentegen, is in hoge mate structureel.

In Europa leidde elke economische crisis immers tot een stijging van de werkloosheid die overging in langdurige werkloosheid welke steeds moeilijker kon worden weggewerkt.

De toeneming van de werkloosheid in Europa wordt toegeschreven aan de grote starheid die de arbeidsmarkt in de meeste landen van de Gemeenschap kenmerkt. Het gebrek aan flexibiliteit werd reeds vaak beschreven. Die starheid wordt met name waargenomen in de al te trage aanpassing van de arbeidskosten, het te hoge niveau van de lasten voor banen met een lage opleidingsgraad en met een geringe produktiviteit, alsook in het uitblijven van aansparingen tot mobiliteit en tot arbeidsaanbod.

De te geringe aanpassing van de arbeidsmarkt resulteert tevens uit fundamentele tendenzen die de eisen van de markt inzake tewerkstelling grondig hebben veranderd : snelle terugloop van de banen in de industrie, diversifiëring en groei van de tewerkstelling in de dienstensector, geringere stabiliteit van de banen met een toenemend percentage werknemers die part-time werken, stijging van de vereisten inzake beroepsbekwaamheid.

De technische en wetenschappelijke vooruitgang, alsook, zij het in mindere mate, de concurrentie van de lage-loonlanden leiden ertoe dat een gedeelte van de bevolking waarvan de opleidingsgraad te laag is in vergelijking met de kosten van die arbeidskrachten, van de arbeidsmarkt worden verdrongen. Dat verschijnsel is bijzonder nadrukkelijk aanwezig op de goederen- en dienstenmarkten die actief zijn in de buitenlandse handel, waar de scherpe concurrentie tot uiting komt in voortdurende en aanzienlijke produktiviteitsverhogingen. De banen met een geringe produktiviteit zijn nog gedeeltelijk aanwezig in de industriële sectoren, zoals de bouwsector en de ambachtelijke produktie, maar zijn vooral terug te vinden in sectoren die niet blootstaan aan internationale concurrentie. In Europa zijn een groot gedeelte van die banen terug te vinden in de niet-commerciële sector of in aanverwante sectoren. De oriëntering van structurele beleidsmaatregelen naar dienstensectoren waar nieuwe maatschappelijke behoeften tot ontwikkeling komen, kan een belangrijk gedeelte van het beschikbare arbeidsaanbod opvangen. Een latente potentiële vraag bestaat in talrijke domeinen : het milieu, het openbaar vervoer, de verbetering van de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening. Een andere gedeelte van de vraag vloeit voort uit de grondige wijzigingen van de sociale, familiale en demografische structuren zoals de hulp aan bejaarden, de oppas en de opvoeding van kinderen, enz...

Indien het niveau van de arbeidskosten in sommige landen zeer hoog ligt, is dat vooral toe te schrijven aan de hoogte van de niet-loonkosten. In sommige gevallen verdubbelen de fiscaliteit en de parafiscaliteit de arbeidskosten zelfs. Die kosten, alsook de sociale wetgeving, zijn niet vergelijkbaar met de situatie in de meeste lage-loonlanden. De scheefgetrokken concurrentie die eruit voortvloeit, zou een deregulering vergen, die in talrijke Europese landen onaanvaardbaar wordt geacht.

De reactie van het bedrijfsleven bestond erin de produktiviteit en de kwaliteit van de produkten fors te doen stijgen. In sommige gevallen werd de produktie geheel of gedeeltelijk verplaatst. Dat verschijnsel heeft een uitgesproken negatieve weerslag op de laaggeschoolde arbeid.

II. KRACHTLIJNEN VOOR ACTIE

De Europese Top van Kopenhagen heeft zijn instemming betuigd met het voorstel van Commissievoorzitter Delors voor een plan op middellange termijn "Op de drempel van de XXIste eeuw" om de Europese economie nieuw leven in te blazen. Dit plan heeft tot doel de Gemeenschap een nieuwe dynamiek te bezorgen door alle mogelijkheden van de Europese eenheidsmarkt en van de gemeenschappelijke munt te benutten en de Gemeenschap voor te bereiden op de talrijke uitdagingen op het gebied van de technologische revolutie, de permanente scholing en de nieuwe sociaal-economische finaliteiten inzake de regeling van de arbeidstijd en van de arbeidsmarkt. Het Belgisch Voorzitterschap zal op een tweevoudige wijze worden betrokken bij dat ambitieus project :

- de Europese Raad van december heeft de opdracht gekregen het algemene kader goed te keuren voor de acties die moeten worden opgezet in de eerstvolgende jaren ; die acties zullen in de vorm van een witboek door de Commissie worden voorgelegd ;
- de concrete uitwerking van die acties zal gebeuren op basis van de nieuwe instrumenten van het Verdrag van Maastricht en met inachtneming van de koers die werd uitgezet voor de verwezenlijking van de gemeenschappelijke munt, t.w. de vaststelling van de globale richtsnoeren voor het economisch beleid (art. 103, 2) en de opvolging van het convergentieproces (art. 109, E, 2, b).

Die acties moeten met name betrekking hebben op de vijf hierna volgende terreinen.

1. Het herstel van een stabiel macro-economisch klimaat.

De verwezenlijking van een duurzame groei in de Europese Gemeenschap is in de eerste plaats afhankelijk van het herstel van het vertrouwen van de economische subjecten. Die hebben al jarenlang hun investeringsstrategieën afgestemd op het perspectief van de Europese integratie, geschraagd door een grote economische en financiële stabiliteit. Die algemene beginselen liggen vervat in het Verdrag van Maastricht. Zij moeten onverwijld worden uitgevoerd. Concreet heeft België de hierna volgende doelstellingen voor ogen :

1. **De tweede fase van de Economische en Monetaire Unie voorbereiden**, die op 1 januari 1994 van start moet gaan. Vanuit formeel standpunt wordt hieronder verstaan dat het Europees Monetair Instituut wordt opgericht en dat de aanvullende wetgeving wordt aangenomen. Het is echter van groot belang dat de Europese Gemeenschap de geloofwaardigheid van het monetair eenmakingsproces kan herstellen door in de loop van de tweede fase de nodige voorwaarden te creëren voor wisselstabiliteit en door de convergentie te versterken. Zulks impliceert niet enkel een terugkeer naar de normale werking van het EMS, het vereist tevens een versterking van het wisselme-

chanisme en een verhoogde coördinatie inzake monetair beleid, die ter dege inspeelt op de doelstellingen van de tweede fase van de EMU.

2. **Het herstel van de geloofwaardigheid van het convergentieproces**, wat volgens de geest van het Verdrag de beste waarborg is om binnen de gestelde termijnen te komen tot de gemeenschappelijke munt. De verwezenlijking van een voldoende budgettaire en financiële stabiliteit is tevens de voornaamste voorwaarde voor een duurzame renteverlaging in Europa. Zulks impliceert dat, op het niveau van de Gemeenschap, een consensus wordt bereikt over een realistische meerjarenaanpak, die rekening houdt met de huidige economische context.

Bijzonder veel belang wordt gehecht aan de evaluatie van de vooruitgang inzake economische en monetaire convergentie die, krachtens de bepalingen van het Verdrag, moet worden uitgevoerd vóór de overgang naar de tweede fase van de EMU.

3. **De globale richtsnoeren vaststellen voor het economisch beleid van de lidstaten en van de Gemeenschap** op het niveau van de Staatshoofden en de Regeringsleiders. Dat nieuwe instrument van de Gemeenschap zal in werking treden van bij de ratificering van het Verdrag. België is van oordeel dat het een cruciale rol moet spelen bij het formuleren van een gezamenlijk antwoord op de uitdagingen waarmee de Gemeenschap thans af te rekenen heeft inzake groei, werkgelegenheid en concurrentiekracht. Zoniet, is het gevaar niet denkbeeldig dat iedereen zich in zijn schelp terugtrekt en unilateraal oplossingen zoekt voor problemen die, in de huidige stand van de Europese economische integratie, enkel een duurzame oplossing kunnen krijgen op Europees niveau. België bereidt dus een eerste toepassing van dat instrument voor, ter gelegenheid van de Europese Top van december.

Kortom, België wil bijdragen tot een klimaat dat de lidstaten ertoe aanzet hun economisch beleid te zien als een zaak van gemeenschappelijk belang, zoals bepaald bij artikel 103 van het Verdrag. De drie voorgestelde domeinen zullen de basis leggen voor een effectieve coördinatie tussen de lidstaten en op die manier aantonen dat de EMU een aanzienlijke meerwaarde kan betekenen, zelfs voor zij volledig verwezenlijkt is.

2. Het initiatief van Edinburgh uitvoeren

Via het groei-initiatief, dat werd aangekondigd op de Europese Top van Edinburgh, hebben de Twaalf bewust geopteerd voor een gemeenschappelijke aanpak van de huidige economische problemen ten einde op die manier een nieuwe dynamiek te geven aan de coördinatie van hun respectieve beleidsopties. Op de Europese Top van Kopenhagen werd dat initiatief aangevuld met maatregelen tot bevordering van de economische bedrijvigheid op korte termijn. Tijdens het Belgische voorzitterschap zullen de aangekondigde maatregelen nauwgezet moeten worden opgevolgd en zal het programma op specifieke domeinen moeten worden uitgediept ten einde de invloed ervan op de werkgelegenheid te verbeteren.

1. De opvolging moet in de eerste plaats slaan op de uitvoering van de investeringsbeslissingen die, volgens de ramingen van de Europese Commissie, zouden leiden tot een stijging met 0,6 procent van de groei in de Gemeenschap en tot 450.000 nieuwe arbeidsplaatsen. In dat verband moet ervoor worden gewaakt dat het Europees Investeringsfonds, dat de centrale pijler vormt van het initiatief van Edinburg, zo snel mogelijk wordt goedgekeurd door de nationale parlementen.
2. In dezelfde geest zullen de instrumenten waarvoor werd geopteerd in het kader van de nieuwe financiële vooruitzichten van de Gemeenschap, moeten bijdragen tot een selectieve ondersteuning van de economische activiteit die het groeipotentieel van de Gemeenschap op middellange termijn kan verbeteren. Er moet zo snel mogelijk werk worden gemaakt van de structuurfondsen, met inbegrip van het nieuwe Cohesiefonds, het stimuleren van de transeuropese netwerken, het beleid inzake onderzoek en ontwikkeling en de nieuwe programma's voor industriële samenwerking, meer bepaald op het vlak van de milieutechnologie, opdat hun invloed op het economische klimaat en op de regionale ontwikkeling op korte termijn zichtbaar zou worden. Bij de uitwerking van die programma's, die in overleg tussen de overheid en de sociale gesprekspartners moet verlopen, moet in voldoende mate rekening worden gehouden met hun impact op een duurzame verbetering van de vooruitzichten inzake werkgelegenheid.

3. Geïntegreerd actieplan voor de K.M.O.'s.

De totstandkoming van de interne markt **maakt een aanpassing van de ondernemingen aan een nieuwe juridische omgeving en aan een toegenomen concurrentie noodzakelijk.** De inspanning die wordt gevraagd van de meerderheid van de K.M.O.'s is derhalve niet te onderschatten. Vooraleer zij de vruchten kunnen plukken van de eengemaakte markt, zullen zij met een aantal kosten moeten afrekenen, wat des te harder aankomt in een periode van economische recessie.

In die context is het risico reëel dat veel K.M.O.'s onvoldoende op het proces van Europese integratie zullen inspelen.

Het scheppen van een **klimaat van vertrouwen** in de ondernemingen en meer bepaald in de K.M.O.'s, vooral wat betreft hun capaciteit tot integratie in de eenheidsmarkt, **moet een prioriteit worden in de uitvoering en het beheer van de Interne Markt.**

Meer concreet moet het **de K.M.O.'s** mogelijk gemaakt worden in te spelen op de structurele veranderingen en beter de Europese dimensie van hun markt te onderkennen.

Gezien de economische situatie moeten, op alle niveaus die betrokken worden bij de goede werking van de eenheidsmarkt, de nodige maatregelen worden genomen voor de versterking van het concurrentievermogen van de K.M.O.'s en voor de aanboring van hun op vandaag ongebruikt tewerkstellingspotentieel. Hiertoe moet een geïntegreerd actieplan worden uitgewerkt in vijf belangrijke domeinen :

- a. Wat betreft de structurele problemen inzake de onderkapitalisatie van de K.M.O.'s, moet erop worden toegezien dat zij werkelijk kunnen deelnemen aan het initiatief tot relance van de groei en dat de mechanismen ingevoerd op Europese Raad van Edinburg en Kopenhagen, worden aangevuld met maatregelen die hun financieringscapaciteit versterken;
- b. Ten einde de rol van de K.M.O.'s inzake onderaanneming te valoriseren moet er op het niveau van de interne markt een actieve structuur worden gecreëerd ter verspreiding van de mogelijkheden terzake en moeten de juridische positie, de rechten en plichten van de onderaannemers worden verduidelijkt;
- c. Gezien het belang van de overheidsopdrachten in het raam van de interne markt in het algemeen en van het initiatief tot relance van de groei in het bijzonder, moeten er maatregelen worden genomen die de deelname van K.M.O.'s aan de openbare markten aanzienlijk versterken;
- d. Ten einde de geloofwaardigheid en de doeltreffendheid van de communautaire actie in de sector van de K.M.O.'s te verzekeren, moet niet alleen op basis van een systematische raadpleging van de Europese K.M.O.-organisaties, bijzondere aandacht worden besteed aan de preventieve evaluatie van de impact van wetgevende initiatieven op de K.M.O.'s, maar ook de directe deelname van de betrokken interprofessionele organisaties van de K.M.O.'s aan de sociale dialoog worden verzekerd;
- e. Ten einde de technologische vernieuwing in de K.M.O.'s te versterken moeten, in overleg met de Lid-Staten, de middelen worden geheroriënteerd die nodig zijn voor de valorisatie van de resultaten van het pré-competitieve

onderzoek in de K.M.O.'s. Bovendien moeten de toegangsvoorwaarden tot de R&D-programma's worden vereenvoudigd opdat de K.M.O.'s met technologische mogelijkheden er gemakkelijker zouden kunnen aan deelnemen.

4. Concurrentiekracht en internationale samenwerking.

De diagnose van de Europese Commissie met betrekking tot de concurrentiepositie van de economie van de E.G. is zorgwekkend. Het marktaandeel, in volume, van de Gemeenschap in de werelduitvoer is gedaald van 21 % in 1980 tot 16 % vandaag. Dat verlies aan marktaandeel heeft bijgedragen tot een tekort op de lopende rekening van de betalingsbalans, terwijl de E.G., als grootste handelsmacht ter wereld, normaal een overschot moet vertonen, dat haar onder andere moet toelaten om de enorme behoeften van de ontwikkelingslanden en van Midden- en Oost-Europa te financieren. In sommige "high-tech" sectoren is het handelstekort van de E.G. een duidelijk teken van onze zwakke positie in vergelijking met de belangrijkste handelspartners. Een herstel van onze positie op de wereldmarkten is derhalve noodzakelijk, zowel om de interne economische en monetaire samenhang te herstellen als om de groeivoorzichten op middellange termijn veilig te stellen.

België sluit zich volledig aan bij de conclusie van de jongste Europese Top, luidens welke het herstel moet worden verwezenlijkt door een verbetering van onze concurrentiekracht gekoppeld aan een verbetering van de internationale samenwerking, veeleer dan een toevlucht te zoeken in protectionistische maatregelen. Het protectionisme getuigt immers van een kortzichtig beleid in E.G.-verband, daar waar men geconfronteerd wordt met een probleem dat, wegens de grondige veranderingen van de wereldeconomie, een algemene visie en bereidheid tot aanpassing vergt. De uitvoering van de conclusies van de Europese Raad onder het voorzitterschap van België moet concreet tot uiting komen in vooruitgang op de vier hierna volgende gebieden :

1. Het is van essentieel belang de onderhandelingen in het kader van de Uruguay Round op algemene en evenwichtige wijze af te ronden voor het einde van het jaar, ten einde te kunnen komen tot een gelijke situatie op het vlak van tarifiering en markttoegang in de geïndustrialiseerde landen. Dat akkoord is essentieel om de economische subjecten een duidelijk signaal te geven van de wil van hun regeringen om een handelsoorlog te vermijden. Het herstel van een klimaat van vertrouwen, dat de investeringen op lange termijn zal bevorderen, is essentieel voor de verbetering van de conjunctuur en het beter dynamiseren van de economische actoren.

Dat akkoord moet leiden tot de totstandbrenging van een mondiale organisatie van de handel die afgestemd is op het feit dat de markten en de ondernemingsstrategieën een wereldwijd karakter krijgen. Deze organisatie moet, zonder enige afwijking, in theorie en praktijk gebaseerd zijn op een multilaterale aanpak. De organisatie moet een kader creëren voor de

toepassing van een nieuw mechanisme ter beslechting van handelsgeschillen en het handelssysteem versterken door een permanente toepassing van het Algemeen Akkoord. Ze moet haar actie afstemmen op de andere parameters van de wereldeconomie: de monetaire ontwikkelingen, de oriëntatie van de geldstromen, de evenwichtige verdeling van de lasten van het milieubeleid, de sociale vooruitgang waarop allen recht hebben, en wel in het kader van een gradueel proces dat met de economische vooruitgang verenigbaar is. Ze zal tenslotte, op voet van gelijkheid, moeten samen werken met andere internationale organisaties, meer bepaald het I.M.F. en de Wereldbank.

2. Het wegnemen van dat element van onzekerheid betreffende de Uruguay Round zal eveneens de coördinatie met de belangrijkste partners van de Gemeenschap bevorderen, om het kader tot stand te brengen voor een duurzaam herstel van de wereldeconomie. De principes van die coördinatie moeten worden uitgetekend tijdens de Top van de G-7 en in andere internationale middens. Zij moeten het met name mogelijk maken de financiële markten gerust te stellen met betrekking tot de wil tot samenwerking van de grote landen, met het oog op het behoud van stabiele wisselkoersverhoudingen die een evenwichtige wereldhandel in de hand werken.

3. De E.G., van haar kant, moet een dynamisch handelsbeleid voeren.

Europa moet dringend defensieve handelsinstrumenten krijgen die zowel operationeel als efficiënt zijn, d.w.z. die het mogelijk maken om snelle en effectieve sancties te nemen. Wij moeten nieuwe instrumenten voor handelsverdediging aannemen zoals anti-subsidie- en vrijwaringsmaatregelen, alsook anti-dumpingsregels of importbeperkingen.

De invoering van een Europees instrument tot herverzekering van de investeringen en uitvoerkredieten kan een einde maken aan het huidige opbod tussen de lidstaten en derhalve de positie van de E.G. op derde markten verbeteren, ook voor contracten met een omvang die de normale interventiegrenzen van de individuele nationale verzekeringsinstellingen te buiten gaan. Dit mechanisme moet een essentieel element worden van de handelspolitiek tegenover derde landen. Het beoogt tevens de exportopbrengsten te doen stijgen en, op die manier, de situatie op de arbeidsmarkt te verbeteren. Een technische nota hierover komt voor in bijlage 1.

Tegelijkertijd moet krachtig worden opgetreden tegen produktiemethodes die indruisen tegen de principes inzake sociale bescherming en duurzame ontwikkeling terwijl dumpingpraktijken eveneens moeten worden aangepakt, onder meer door de terugkeer tot bilaterale maatregelen in dat verband aan de kaak te stellen.

Bovendien zou moeten worden overeengekomen dat landen die bepaalde minimumnormen niet naleven, alsook produkten die worden gemaakt op basis van produktiemethoden die niet beantwoorden aan diezelfde normen, uitgesloten zouden worden van het toepassingsgebied van de verdere liberalisering van de internationale handel. Op dit vlak zal het belangrijk zijn om minimumnormen in de akkoorden met derde landen te doen opnemen.

4. Onze betrekkingen met Midden- en Oost-Europa nemen een bijzondere plaats in bij de nieuwe organisatie van de wereldeconomie.

In de nieuwe arbeidsverdeling, die zich aftekent als gevolg van een systematische aanwending van de verschillen in ontwikkelingsniveaus, in produktiekosten en in specialisaties en andere relatieve voordelen tussen de diverse delen van de wereld, heeft de E.G. er rechtstreeks belang bij de synergie met de dichtstbijgelegen landen te bevorderen. Door een eventuele samenwerking met de landen van Midden- en Oost-Europa, zal de E.G. er immers in slagen de groeimogelijkheden die voortvloeien uit die nieuwe organisatie van de regionale economie te benutten. Ze zal haar nieuwe handelspartners ertoe aanzetten hun beleid af te stemmen op de principes inzake concurrentie en sociale bescherming waarop het markteconomisch model van de Gemeenschap berust.

Een soortgelijke politiek zal voor de Maghreb-landen ontwikkeld worden.

5. In het kader van het competitiviteitsherstel van de Europese Gemeenschap dient bijzondere aandacht uit te gaan naar de ontwikkeling van performante netten van transport en telecommunicatie en informatietechnologie alsook naar een grotere samenwerking inzake R & D (zie de oriëntaties terzake voorgesteld door de Commissie op de Europese Top van Kopenhagen). Meer uitgewerkte technische nota's omtrent deze 3 domeinen komen voor in bijlagen 2, 3 en 4.

5. Vermindering van de arbeidskosten.

De Commissie wordt verzocht het kader en de voorwaarden te onderzoeken, waarin een vermindering van de verplichte heffingen op arbeid kan bijdragen tot een structurele vermindering van de werkloosheid in de Europese Gemeenschap. Dat onderzoek moet in het bijzonder uitgaan van het structurele verschil inzake het vermogen om arbeidsplaatsen te scheppen tussen Europa en andere delen van de wereld, alsook van een beter evenwicht tussen de fiscale behandeling van de diverse produktiefactoren : kapitaal, energie, arbeid.

1. België erkent dat de terugkeer naar een normale groei in de Gemeenschap amper zal voldoende zijn om het huidige werkloosheidspeil te stabiliseren en is van oordeel dat een voluntaristisch beleid noodzakelijk is ten einde het vermogen van de Europese economie om banen te scheppen, te verbeteren. Dat beleid moet modellen van investeringen door de particuliere sector bevorderen, waarin het scheppen van nieuwe arbeidsplaatsen niet systematisch ondergeschikt wordt gemaakt aan produktiviteitsverhogingen. Om overduidelijke redenen impliceert het bevorderen van die investeringsmodellen een vermindering van de arbeidskosten die, wegens het niveau van de verplichte heffingen in de meeste lidstaten, een prohibitief niveau hebben bereikt ten opzichte van de andere produktiefactoren.
2. Wegens de concurrentiepositie van de economie van de Gemeenschap, lijken de vooruitzichten om te komen tot een betere verhouding tussen de groei en de werkgelegenheid gunstiger in de beschermde sector dan in de sector die blootstaat aan de internationale concurrentie. De laatstgenoemde heeft immers al te lijden van de toegenomen concurrentie van de lage-loonlanden, waaraan enkel kan worden verholpen door middel van een voortdurende inspanning inzake technologische vooruitgang.

Het vooruitzicht om belangrijke nieuwe tewerkstellingsbronnen aan te boren is daarentegen duidelijk gunstiger in de dienstensector, en meer bepaald met betrekking tot de beschermde diensten. De vervanging van kapitaal door arbeid kan er plaatsvinden zonder dat men het gevaar loopt de eisen van de internationale concurrentie op de helling te zetten. Voorts kan daardoor beter worden ingespeeld op de nieuwe noden in verband met de demografische en sociologische ontwikkeling, met name de milieubescherming, de ontwikkeling van de sociale economie en de hulp aan afhankelijke bejaarden, noden waaraan thans vaak niet kan worden beantwoord wegens de te hoge arbeidskosten die daarmee gepaard gaan. De bevordering van de werkgelegenheid door een verlaging van de arbeidskosten in de beschermde diensten zou bovendien beantwoorden aan het beleid dat ter zake wordt gevoerd door de belangrijkste handelspartners van de Gemeenschap die het traditioneel beter doen in die sector, dank zij een voor het scheppen van arbeidsplaatsen veel gunstiger verhouding tussen de produktiviteit en de loonkosten.

3. De vermindering van de verplichte heffingen op arbeid zal een weerslag hebben op de begroting, die zal moeten worden beoordeeld in het licht van de noodzaak, in de meeste lidstaten, van een grotere selectiviteit in de sociale uitgaven en gelet op de verwachte vermindering van de uitgaven voor werkloosheid in een economie die het inzake tewerkstelling beter doet. Om het proces op gang te brengen, lijkt het echter nodig in een eerste fase fiscale maatregelen te overwegen, waardoor de weerslag van de operatie op de begroting kan worden geneutraliseerd. Gelet op de toestand van hun begroting, hebben de meeste lidstaten trouwens geen andere keuze. De totstandbrenging van een beter evenwicht tussen de kosten van de diverse

produktiefactoren door middel van een herschikking van de globale kosten lijkt dus te beantwoorden aan een algemene behoefte.

4. Er dient echter te worden gewezen op de beperkingen die de eenheidsmarkt in dat opzicht oplegt aan unilaterale en niet-gecoördineerde acties van de lidstaten. België is dan ook van oordeel dat een grotere harmonisering van de belastingstelsels op het niveau van de Gemeenschap moet worden overwogen om de voorgestelde strategie te kunnen doorvoeren, zonder de begrotingssituatie van de lidstaten te verstoren. De voorstellen van de Commissie betreffende, enerzijds, de verwezenlijking van een minimale harmonisering van de belasting van de inkomens uit financiële beleggingen en, anderzijds, inzake de invoering van een belasting op de CO₂-uitstoot en op het energieverbruik voldoen aan die behoefte, voor zover de daardoor vrijgekomen begrotingsmiddelen kunnen worden aangewend voor een verlichting van de arbeidskosten volgens door de lidstaten te bepalen modaliteiten. Die twee voorstellen zouden trouwens beantwoorden aan de algemenere doelstelling om, op het niveau van de investeringsbeslissingen, te komen tot een beter evenwicht tussen de kosten van de diverse produktiefactoren.
5. De aanbevolen aanpak moet worden uitgewerkt met inachtneming van het subsidiariteitsbeginsel. De rigiditeit in de inkomensvorming verschilt trouwens aanzienlijk van de ene lidstaat tot de andere. Maar door zich te plaatsen in een gemeenschappelijk vastgesteld referentiekader, kan het optreden van de lidstaten een meerwaarde krijgen, die te vergelijken is met het initiatief van Edinburgh. Die meerwaarde zou trouwens des te groter zijn, indien de nationale maatregelen met het oog op een vermindering van de arbeidskosten gebaseerd konden zijn op een beslissing die de weerslag ervan op de begroting kan neutraliseren via belastingmaatregelen op het niveau van de Gemeenschap. Die twee voorstellen worden thans geenszins door iedereen onderschreven en er moeten nog een aantal problemen worden opgelost voordat hieromtrent een consensus kan worden bereikt. België spreekt evenwel de hoop uit dat de besprekingen ter zake tijdens de eerstvolgende zes maanden in een constructief klimaat kunnen worden voortgezet.

Een meer uitgewerkt voorstel inzake een meerjarenstrategie voor de werkgelegenheid komt voor in bijlage 5.

6. Actief werkgelegenheidsbeleid

De vermindering van de arbeidskosten moet worden ingepast in een algemeen beleid dat erop gericht is alle elementen die de werkgelegenheid in de weg staan, weg te werken door een grotere soepelheid van de arbeidsmarkt. De doelstelling van de vermindering bestaat er niet in de vrijgekomen middelen te herverdelen over de huidige deelnemers aan de arbeidsmarkt, maar, integendeel, het aantal deelnemers te verhogen. Daartoe moeten de economische subjecten

meer flexibiliteit aan de dag leggen in de loon- en prijsvorming. Het lijkt in elk geval noodzakelijk een beter gebruik te maken van de mogelijkheden tot arbeidstijdverdeling, die, in een context van lagere loonkosten, beter tot hun recht komen. Die aanpak zou trouwens beantwoorden aan de algemene verschuiving van de werkgelegenheid van de industriële sector naar de dienstensector waar de mogelijkheden tot deeltijdse banen aanzienlijker zijn.

De flexibiliteit van de arbeidsmarkt is een noodzakelijke voorwaarde voor de verhoging van de werkgelegenheidsintensiteit van de groei. Die flexibiliteit kan gepaard gaan met een betere herverdeling van de arbeid. Een zekere starheid op de arbeidsmarkt remt de vraag naar arbeidskrachten af en bevordert de vervanging van arbeid door kapitaal.

In die context kunnen de hierna volgende thema's aan de orde komen (zie ook een meer uitgewerkte nota als bijlage 6) :

a. De aanpassing van de arbeidstijd

- deeltijdse banen met een proportionele loonsvermindering en een voldoende sociale bescherming ;
- vermindering van de arbeidstijd in het kader van een betere aanwending van het produktieapparaat (ploegendienst, nachtwerk, week-endploegen).

b. De loopbaan "à la carte"

- loopbaanonderbreking ;
- deeltijds brugpensioen ;
- inschakelingsbanen met vermindering van de sociale lasten, bestemd om het produktiviteitsverlies en de opleidingskosten te compenseren.

c. De arbeidsorganisatie

- tijdelijke arbeid ;
- arbeidsovereenkomsten voor bepaalde tijd ;
- ontslag- en aanwervingskosten.

Dergelijke ontwikkelingen moeten worden gesitueerd in een sociale context met behoud van de nodige waarborgen en zonder verhoging van de arbeidskosten. Terzake moet overleg worden gepleegd met de sociale gesprekspartners.

Ten slotte moet, over het geheel genomen, de klemtoon worden gelegd op een actief werkgelegenheidsbeleid dat moet leiden tot een doeltreffender werking van de arbeidsmarkt. De investering in menselijk kapitaal (opleiding) en de mobiliteit zijn hierbij zeer belangrijk. Een aantal ideeën omtrent vorming en onderwijs komen voor in bijlage 7.

III. VOOR EEN WERKGELEGENHEIDSPACT

Hiervoor werd een geheel van acties voorgesteld die de werkgelegenheid moeten stimuleren en de werkloosheid verminderen. De convergentie en coördinatie van het economisch beleid in Europa, een stabiele macro-economische omgeving, de vermindering van de arbeidskost, grotere soepelheid en een nieuwe dynamiek in de internationale handel zijn allemaal elementen die de tewerkstelling zullen bevorderen.

De essentie van de problematiek berust vandaag in de discordantie tussen het tempo waarin de werkloosheid verslechtert en het tempo waarin oplossingen worden uitgewerkt en toegepast. Het is deze tijdsdimensie die de indruk wekt dat men achter de feiten aanloopt. Het komt er derhalve op aan deze achterstand op de feiten te verminderen.

In dit kader is het absoluut noodzakelijk een globale aanpak tot stand te brengen.

Uiteraard moet deze in de eerste plaats stelen op een meer intensief en gecoördineerd gebruik van de hiervoor vermelde instrumenten.

Maar de problematiek is zo veelomvattend en treft zo direct de Europese bevolking, dat men zich de vraag dient te stellen of de grondslagen niet moeten worden gelegd voor een globale Europese strategie. De arbeidsmarkt vormt de link tussen economie en maatschappij. Een arbeidsmarkt die zo ondoeltreffend werkt als vandaag, doet een kloof ontstaan tussen samenleving en economie. Vandaar dat het noodzakelijk is om expliciet als doelstelling voorop te stellen dat de voorwaarden voor een doeltreffende Europese arbeidsmarkt worden gecreëerd.

Bij een dergelijke aanpak zijn 2 elementen van essentieel belang.

Het eerste element is een communautaire benadering en een communautair referentiekader. In de schoot van de Europese Gemeenschap worden reeds enige tijd analyses doorgevoerd naar de oorzaken en remedies voor het onevenwicht op de arbeidsmarkt. Deze zouden niet alleen op korte termijn tot conclusies moeten leiden, maar ideaal ook moeten uitmonden in een aanvaard **Europees referentiekader**, op grond waarvan een meerjarenstrategie voor de tewerkstelling zou kunnen worden uitgewerkt. Zoals de realisatie van monetaire en budgettaire stabiliteit steunt op convergentieplannen, zo ook zou een dergelijke tewerkstellingsstrategie de parameters moeten bepalen die de voorwaarden herstellen voor een sterkere tewerkstellingsintensiteit van de economische groei.

Het tweede element is de noodzaak aan een werkelijk **pact** tussen overheid en sociale partners. In dat pact moet de inhoud van de sociaal-economische vooruitgang gherdefinieerd worden. In de naoorlogse periode stond vooruitgang duidelijk gelijk met economisch herstel en verhoging van de levensstandaard. Vandaag dienen de finaliteiten van de economische ontwikkeling herdacht te worden tegen de achtergrond van een samenleving waarin een aantal mensen geen toegang meer krijgen tot

de arbeidsmarkt en sociaal uitgesloten dreigen te worden, en waarin, anderzijds, meer belang wordt gehecht aan een betere kwaliteit van het leven en de vrije besteding van de tijd. De verdeling van de arbeid bekleedt hierin een centrale plaats.

Daarbij is het essentieel dat de sociaal-economische subjecten de maatschappelijke en financiële kosten van de werkloosheid niet "externaliseren". Een deel van de band tussen concurrentievermogen en economische groei enerzijds en werkgelegenheid anderzijds wordt verbroken, indien de vrijwaring van het concurrentievermogen gerealiseerd wordt door een besparing op de factor arbeid. Een dergelijke benadering biedt geen enkel perspectief, aangezien zij op lange termijn de hele samenleving belast.

Het is derhalve wenselijk dat op Europees niveau, in samenwerking met alle partners, werk wordt gemaakt van een algemene aanpak van de werkgelegenheid. België stelt voor dat de Europese Commissie voorstellen zou formuleren over de pijlers waarop een dergelijke aanpak moet berusten.

**Europees mechanisme voor herverzekering
van exportkredieten en investeringen.**

1. De bevordering van de export en de investeringen in het buitenland is een belangrijk middel om de economie van de lid-staten aan te zwengelen, die meer en meer geconfronteerd worden met een groeiende werkloosheid, achteruitgang van bepaalde gewesten en het verlies aan vertrouwen vanwege de economische agenten.
2. De enorme behoeften van de Midden- en Oosteuropese landen, het GOS en het Middellandse-Zeegebied, alsmede de mogelijkheden die de Aziatische en de Latijns-Amerikaanse landen bieden, doen in toenemende mate een probleem rijzen inzake de verzekeringscapaciteit en de risicospreiding van de portefeuilles voor de verzekeringsinstellingen van de lidstaten, vooral voor de kleine en middelgrote landen. Deze moeilijkheden moeten eveneens gezien worden in het licht van concurrentie met Noord-Amerika en Japan.
3. De realisatie van de grote Europese markt geeft aanleiding tot het ontstaan van talrijke ondernemingen met grensoverschrijdende dimensies. Dit komt o.m. tot uiting in de omvang van de projecten, van welk land zij ook uitgaan en ongeacht de spreiding van de uitvoering over verschillende landen. Ook ontstaan er meer en meer omvangrijke multinationale programma's via een samenwerking tussen industriëlen en financiers uit verschillende staten.
4. Ingaande op de talrijke initiatieven van België ter zake heeft de Commissie zich reeds meerdere malen gebogen over deze problematiek, evenwel zonder dat deze opeenvolgende voorstellen door de Commissie uiteindelijk met succes konden worden bekroond.
Met het oog op de realisatie van de grote Europese markt, en rekening houdend met de aan gang zijnde harmoniseringswerkzaamheden van de verzekeringsvoorwaarden, zou de Commissie nieuwe initiatieven kunnen nemen, mede onder de druk van de behoeften van de Midden- en Oosteuropese landen en van het GOS.
5. Het ogenblik is dus goed gekozen om een concreet voorstel te doen met het oog op het opzetten van een Europese herverzekeringsfaciliteit, waardoor een bijkomende kredietverzekeringscapaciteit voor de nationale kredietverzekeringsinstellingen tot stand zal komen. Zodoende kunnen zij risico's nemen, hoe groot ook de dimensie van de transacties, welke ook de beperkingen zijn die kunnen voortvloeien uit de risico-concentratie of welke ook de oorsprong van de geëxporteerde goederen of van de inbreng van kapitaal zijn.
Bepaalde risico's van aanvullende en tijdelijke aard, die niet worden verzekerd door de nationale instellingen, zouden ook helemaal door deze faciliteit ten laste kunnen worden genomen.

6. Op basis van een minimale harmonisering van de verzekeringsvoorwaarden, voortvloeiend uit de aan gang zijnde werkzaamheden, zou deze faciliteit op grond van financieel evenwicht moeten kunnen werken. Dit veronderstelt een zo uitgebreid mogelijke geografische, sectoriële en kwalitatieve spreiding van de risico's en dus een zekere verplichting tot herverzekering vanwege de nationale instellingen.
7. De voorgestelde faciliteit zou beschikken over aangepaste financiële middelen in functie van het volume en de aard van de risico's die zij zal moeten dragen. Zij zou moeten kunnen rekenen op de financiële medewerking van andere Europese instellingen (EIB, EOF); dank zij die medewerking zou de reële begrotingslast alleen betrekking heffen op de definitieve en niet overdraagbare verliezen.
8. Het beheer ervan zou worden toevertrouwd aan een raad van bestuur samengesteld uit vertegenwoordigers van de nationale kredietverzekerings- of investeringsinstellingen en vertegenwoordigers van bevoegde instanties van de E.G.

**Een doeltreffend infrastructuurnet
van transport en telecommunicatie.**

1. Transport

De voltooiing van de Eenheidsmarkt vergt de omschrijving voor de hele Gemeenschap van een net voor elk vervoermiddel dat het mogelijk maakt de bestaande assen in de Lidstaten te verbinden en de verbindingen tussen de buurlanden en het hart van Europa evenals tussen de buurlanden zelf te ontwikkelen.

Het Europees transportnet moet het de landen van het hart van Europa eveneens mogelijk maken het gestaag groeiend doorgaand verkeer vlot te doen verlopen; daarbij moet er worden gewaakt voor de veiligheid en het leefmilieu in de doorkruisgebieden.

In die context is de formele goedkeuring van een reglement tot voortzetting, tijdens een overgangperiode van twee jaar, van het reglement 3359/90 betreffende de totstandbrenging van het eerste actieprogramma ter bepaling van de doelstellingen en de prioritaire infrastructuurprojecten, fundamenteel, in afwachting van meer volledige maatregelen inzake transeuropese netten die later zullen worden genomen.

Dit kaderreglement stelt eveneens de toekenningsvoorwaarden vast van de verklaring van Europees nut (Verdrag van Maastricht) die door de Commissie moet worden afgeleverd voor elk project dat voor financiële hulp in aanmerking kan worden genomen.

De actie van de Gemeenschap moet betrekking hebben op elke studie over de verbetering van de transportinfrastructuren en over grote projecten, waaronder de constructie van een net voor de hoge snelheidstrein.

De voltooiing van de Eenheidsmarkt vergt eveneens de concretisering van de drie richtschema's opgesteld op het gebied van het wegvervoer, de waterwegen, het gecombineerd transport evenals een finalisering van de richtschema's inzake controle van het maritiem verkeer (VTS), de conventionele spoorwegen, de luchtcontrole en de haven- en luchthavennetten.

De richtschema's vormen het belangrijkste instrument voor de totstandbrenging van transeuropese netten die aangeven welke projecten van communautair belang in aanmerking kunnen worden genomen voor een communautaire financiële aanmoediging.

In dit kader zal men ervoor moeten waken de knelpunten af te schaffen en rekening te houden met de financiële beperkingen van de Lidstaten.

Inzonderheid en met betrekking tot de 3 reeds aangenomen schema's, zal prioriteit moeten worden gegeven:

- inzake het transeuropees wegennet: aan de invoering van geavanceerde telematische wegensystemen en aan de ontwikkeling van technische systemen voor het beheer van het verkeer, de internationale verbindingen en de omzeiling van de belangrijkste stadsverbindingen.
- inzake het transeuropees net van gecombineerd vervoer: aan de aanpassing van de spoorwegverbindingen aan het laadprofiel en aan de vereisten van het vervoer van containers en losse kisten.

2. Telecommunicatie.

- Inzake telecommunicatie-infrastructuur moeten hoofdzakelijk het IDA-programma (Interchange of data between administrations) en het (nog neer te leggen) RNIS-richtschema (numeriek net met integratie van diensten) worden ontwikkeld.
- Zoals voor het transport zijn de financiële beperkingen van de Lidstaten, rekening houdend met de nodige middelen, belangrijke elementen die in overweging moeten worden genomen.

Op het gebied van de telecommunicatie zelf bestaat het grootste probleem in de interoperabiliteit van de netten, wat een inspanning tot harmonisatie van de technische normen voor de uitrustingen en van de systemen vergt, om zowel de doeltreffende werking van de netten als een beperking van de uitrustingskosten mogelijk te maken. De interconnectie zoals zij momenteel bestaat, is inderdaad onvoldoende om over te gaan tot de doeltreffende uitwisseling van geïnformateerde gegevens.

Het IDA-programma zal enorme inspanningen qua overleg en samenwerking vergen, maar ook uitrustingsinvesteringen die, zelfs indien ze steunen op reeds bestaande uitrustingen, aanzienlijke middelen zullen vereisen die de Lidstaten niet alleen zullen aankunnen.

Er zal dus een beroep moeten worden gedaan op de communautaire financiering, zelfs voor de Lidstaten die hierop gewoonlijk geen aanspraak kunnen maken.

Voor het bekomen van deze communautaire financiering zal de verklaring van communautair belang vereist worden, zoals bepaald bij het Verdrag van Maastricht voor de projecten van gemeenschappelijk belang, met het doel te zorgen voor de goede werking van de interne markt door financieel zelfs projecten te ontwikkelen die niet uitsluitend betrekking hebben op de "cohesielanden".

Transeuropese informatie-infrastructuren.

1. In het licht van de oprichting van een "Europese informatieruimte" is het voor de Gemeenschap hoog tijd :

- om verder te gaan dan de beschikking van bestuursrechtelijke orde, die bestemd is om de telecommunicatiediensten vrij te maken door voortaan een dynamisch proces te ontwikkelen voor de uitwerking van gemeenschappelijke of geharmoniseerde informatie-infrastructuren (transeuropese "infostructuur");
- om het tot nog toe gevolgde beleid ter bevordering van het aanbod te vervolledigen (steun aan de informatie- en de telecommunicatietechnologieën, bevordering van de open systemen) door een beleid dat ertoe strekt de vraag op het niveau van de interne markt te stimuleren en te structureren door de invoering van baanbrekende Europese informatieprodukten en -diensten.

Deze nieuwe doelstellingen moeten worden voortgezet in nauwe samenwerking met de oprichting van transeuropese netwerken inzake telecommunicatie en ook transport (fysieke mobiliteit van personen en elektronische overdracht van informatie die in zekere mate moeten worden beschouwd als alternatieve antwoorden op eenzelfde behoefte).

2. De uitwerking van deze "infostructuur" - samen met de gegevensbanken die hiermee gepaard gaan - kan eveneens een belangrijk element vormen voor het economisch herstel van de Gemeenschap.

Zij zou normaal gezien een referentiekader moeten vormen dat het mogelijk maakt de gezamenlijke initiatieven te stimuleren

- van de technologieproducenten (hard- en software)
- van de operatoren van netwerken
- van de leveranciers van elektronische informatie-diensten,

en de kosten-baten-verhouding te verbeteren

- van talrijke sectoren uit de industrie en private diensten
- van de openbare, nationale en communautaire diensten.

Maar deze infostructuur moet ook op adequate wijze beantwoorden aan de behoeften op sociaal, opvoedkundig, cultureel vlak en op het vlak van de gezondheid van de bevolking. De voordelen van deze infostructuur dienen dus voor de Europese burger in zijn dagelijks leven direct voelbaar te zijn, in termen van beter comfort en grotere veiligheid.

3. De Gemeenschap beschikt over een uitgebreid gamma van technologische hulpmiddelen die met name ontwikkeld werden in het kader van ESPRIT en RACE. Vele technologische oplossingen liggen reeds in aanzienlijke mate klaar (uiteraard te actualiseren door voortdurend inspanningen te leveren op het vlak van R&D).

Daarom is het noodzakelijk de infostructuur in verschillende fasen uit te werken in functie van de ontwikkelde technologieën, van een juiste programmering van de investeringsbehoeften en van de voorspelbare evolutie van het gedrag en de organisatiemethodes van de gebruikers.

Er wordt dus aan de Commissie voorgesteld een proces voor te stellen dat gepland is in verschillende fasen, ten einde het voor de verschillende sectoren - regeringen, producenten, operatoren van netwerken en leveranciers van diensten - mogelijk te maken zich aan te passen aan de verschillende termijnen.

Daarom dient men te identificeren :

- wat op korte termijn kan worden verwezenlijkt door de bestaande netwerken op volle kracht uit te buiten en hun interne relatie te bevorderen; men dient bijzondere aandacht te besteden aan de nieuwe diensten die toegankelijk zijn per telefoon;
 - welke acties mogelijk moeten zijn, wanneer het NNID (numeriek netwerk tot integratie van diensten) op Europese schaal operationeel zal zijn;
 - welke acties voorbereid moeten worden in het toekomstig perspectief van de veralgemening van de netwerken met hoog rendement.
4. Om dit proces aan te vatten, is het aangewezen bij voorkeur te werken met twee types van markten, ten einde binnen een redelijke termijn een omzetcijfer te bereiken (van uitrustingen, maar ook en vooral van diensten) dat een voor de investeerders aanvaardbaar ritme van afbetalingen mogelijk maakt:

- markt van openbaar initiatief :

de uitwisseling tussen Lidstaten van administratieve informatie die nodig is voor de werking van de interne markt en voor de verwezenlijking van communautaire belevsvormen bestemd om een openbare aanbesteding op Europees niveau uit te schrijven.

Het initiatief van het IAD beantwoordt aan deze doelstelling.

- markt van diensten die dichtbij het individu staan :

enkele "baanbrekende" Europese informatieprodukten en -diensten, bestemd om een grote consumptiemarkt open te stellen die draait rond de individuele behoeften van de Europese burger inzake informatiedragers.

Een eerste behoefte betreft de "Europese individuele kaart" die toegang verleent tot alle netwerken op het grondgebied van de Gemeenschap. De informatie-inhoud van dit produkt zou geleidelijk aan verrijkt worden, door te beginnen met primaire functies (bv. burgerlijke staat van de drager, bankgegevens, gegevens van sociale zekerheid, verzekeringen, rijbewijs) om vervolgens te evolueren naar het medisch dossier en het "universele medium van persoonlijke gegevens".

Een andere behoefte betreft gemakkelijk toegankelijke diensten aan huis. Met de demografische evolutie zal de verhouding van de thuisblijvende bevolking verder toenemen. Dit verschijnsel dat zich uitstrekt over heel Europa, omvat een enorm potentieel aan diensten en markten inzake interactieve informatie en gebruiksvriendelijke thuis terminals.

5. De Commissie wordt bijgevolg verzocht :

- om snel een synthese te maken van de bijdrage die reeds geleverd wordt voor de verwezenlijking van de in overweging genomen infostructuur door de programmalessen, zoals ESPRIT, RACE, ENS, IMPACT;
- om een trapsgewijze programmering voor te stellen die geleidelijk aan moet leiden tot een technisch en economisch performante infostructuur;
- om de rollen te verduidelijken die toegewezen worden aan de verschillende acteurs, alsook de middelen om de onderling noodzakelijke samenwerkingsverbanden te realiseren : leveranciers van technologieën, operatoren van netwerken, leveranciers van diensten, eindgebruikers, Europese instellingen voor normalisatie, regeringen;
- om de progressieve behoeften inzake investeringen te verduidelijken, met name in functie van de afbetalingstermijnen; daarom dient op middellange termijn de evolutie van de tariefvoorwaarden van nieuwe diensten gebonden aan de infostructuur te worden onderzocht;

- om de bestuursrechtelijke vernieuwingen en de normatieve voorwaarden te identificeren die het proces voor de uitwerking van de infostructuur kunnen stimuleren;
- om na te denken over de types van operationele structuren die haar geschikt lijken om de invoering van de infostructuur te bevorderen;
- om snel sensibiliseringsacties te overwegen, bv. onder de vorm van een Europees informatiecongres.

Onderzoek en ontwikkeling.

1. **De doelstelling de middelen bestemd voor onderzoek-ontwikkeling te brengen tot 3 % van het BNP.**

Deze doelstelling, die nota bene overeenstemt met de toestand in de VS en in Japan, moet worden beoordeeld in het licht van de huidige toestand in de Gemeenschap. Deze doelstelling geeft aanleiding tot twee opmerkingen :

- slechts vier landen op twaalf bereiken het huidige niveau van 2 % . Voor het merendeel van de Lidstaten, waaronder België, zou de inspanning die moet worden geleverd groter zijn dan het percentage van het BNP, wat dus een **zeer belangrijke toename** van de uitgaven voor R&D vertegenwoordigt.
- de **interne** verschillen binnen de Gemeenschap zijn zeer aanzienlijk.

De doelstelling van de toename van de uitgaven voor R&D moet een dubbel perspectief beogen :

- het optrekken van het Europees gemiddelde
- het verminderen van de ongelijkheden tussen de Lidstaten inzake intensiteit van onderzoek-ontwikkeling.

Er kan geen enkel twijfel bestaan over de stimulerende rol die onderzoek-ontwikkeling in al zijn facetten kan spelen bij de "economische vernieuwing" van Europa; zowel vanuit kwantitatief als kwalitatief oogpunt moet men bijzondere aandacht schenken aan dit soort investeringen.

2. **De noodzakelijke budgettaire inspanning.**

De R&D inspanning waarvan hier sprake is, komt zowel van de uitgaven van de ondernemingen als van de overheidsuitgaven. Wat ook hun verhouding is (gemiddeld is die 50/50) in het geheel van de Gemeenschap, zal moeten worden ingegrepen op het vlak van de openbare financiën om geleidelijk een niveau te bereiken dat vergelijkbaar is met dat van onze concurrenten.

Inderdaad, zonder het strategisch belang van de onderzoeksinspanning van de Gemeenschap te ontkennen, bedraagt deze slecht 4 % van het geheel der uitgaven voor R&D van de Lidstaten : een versterking van de investeringen voor R&D is dus

slechts mogelijk als men, op Europees niveau, beslist tot een geleidelijke en gecoördineerde verhoging van de nationale inspanningen terzake.

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Om een duidelijk resultaat te bereiken, moet deze verhoging ongeveer 5 % bedragen in reële termen gedurende het volgende decennium. Deze prioriteitskeuze, zowel binnen de overheidsuitgaven als binnen de private investeringen, is onontbeerlijk als men wil breken met de huidige beeldvormen.

3. De prioriteiten van de inspanning inzake onderzoek

Het volstaat niet de financiering van het onderzoek op te drijven : men moet er tevens op toezien dat de impact ten gunste van de concurrentiekracht van onze economie, van de sociale consensus en van de kwaliteit van het bestaan van onze burgers wordt opgedreven.

Er moeten krachtlijnen worden vastgelegd :

- de intellectuele revolutie van de informatietechnologieën houdt een complete hernieuwing in van de hulpmiddelen voor communicatie, informatie en meting waarvan alle onderzoekers gebruik maken, met inbegrip van deze in de menswetenschappen.
De vernieuwing van de onderzoeksinfrastructuur is onontbeerlijk ten einde ze te onttrekken aan de dreigende economische veroudering, vooral in de openbare of semi-openbare sector.
Overeenkomstig de voorrang die aan de industriële sector moet worden gegeven, kunnen bijvoorbeeld de investeringen inzake geavanceerde telecommunicatie tussen onderzoekscentra zowel leiden tot een betere cohesie als tot een relance doordat deze hele economische sector mee op sleeptouw wordt genomen.
- de versterking van het menselijk potentieel inzake onderzoek moet ook deel uitmaken van iedere stimuleringsinspanning : deze inspanning is des te noodzakelijker daar de bevolkingsstructuur van het onderzoekspersoneel, in talrijke landen, de sterke groei weerspiegelt van de jaren zestig en dus massale uittrédingen zal kennen gedurende het volgende decennium.
De onderzoeksopleiding via onderzoek, uitgedacht in samenwerking met de economische acteurs ten einde deze te versterken, vormt een kritiek punt waarop de inspanningen zullen moeten worden toegespitst.
- de versterking van het vermogen tot valoriseren van de resultaten van R&D op het vlak van uitvindingen en economische resultaten, is een andere prioriteit voor de Lidstaten en de Gemeenschap : als de mobilisatie van alle betrokken acteurs (universiteiten, onderzoekscentra en ondernemingen) kan en moet worden versterkt door het toekennen van specifieke financiële stimulansen aan dit type samenwerking, dan moet de rol van de financiële instrumenten in dit vernieuwingsproces er op gericht zijn de economische transpositie van de verworvenheden van het onderzoek te bevoordelen.
Het is wellicht op dit gebied dat men kan aanvangen met de concretisering van het derde punt van het voorstel van voorzitter DELORS inzake R&D.

- de versterking van de capaciteiten van onderzoek-ontwikkeling moet rekening houden met het complexe karakter van de economische en sociale behoeften : men moet een bijzondere voorrang verlenen aan werkzaamheden die de traditionele scheidingslijnen van de wetenschappelijke disciplines overschrijden en die, inzake een gegeven problematiek, de inbreng van onderzoekers met verschillende opleidingen structureren.

4. Concentratie van de communautaire acties en de communautaire meerwaarde.

Het kaderprogramma, belangrijkste hulpmiddel van deze communautaire actie, moet de kwaliteitseisen die het oplegt, weten te handhaven. De communautaire onderzoeksinspanning heeft slechts zin als ze ook toelaat de kwaliteit te verbeteren van de werkzaamheden van de onderzoekers die eraan deelnemen. De versterking van de krachtlijnen die deze inspanning bepalen (generieke technologieën, problemen met een globaal karakter inzake milieu, enz.) moet opnieuw worden bevestigd ten einde er voor te zorgen dat haar communautaire specificiteit behouden blijft.

Er dient eveneens worden opgemerkt dat de zogenaamde "big science" (de activiteiten die op zich aanzienlijke investeringen vereisen) in Europa dikwijls **buiten de Gemeenschap** werden gestructureerd : Europees Ruimtevaart Agentschap, Europees Centrum voor Kernonderzoek, stralings- of neutronenbronnen, Europees Observatorium). Een betere interactie tussen de specifiek communautaire acties en deze van de grote installaties of onderzoeksinstellingen is eveneens noodzakelijk.

Deze eis van specificiteit en kwaliteit mag de cohesieproblemen echter niet naar de achtergrond verwijzen.

Wegens de concentratie van het onderzoekspotentieel (privaat en openbaar) in de relatief goed afgebakende meest welvarende gewesten, brengt de communautaire onderzoeksactie het risico met zich mee de sterkste gewesten te versterken zonder de zwakste krachtiger te stimuleren.

Derhalve moet men overgaan tot een nieuwe aanpak van de respectieve rol van het 4de kaderprogramma en van de structuurfondsen : het gebruik van de structuurfondsen zou evenzeer op intellectuele als op materiële investeringen moeten gericht zijn, zowel op het gebied van onderzoek, wetenschappelijke en technologische vorming als op het gebied van de overdracht van technologieën naar de ondernemingen van de minst begunstigde gewesten.

**Aanbevelingen van de Belgische Regering voor een
meerjarenstrategie ten bate van de tewerkstelling.**

Onderhavige nota bevat de hoofdlijnen van het beleid dat de Belgische Regering voorstelt teneinde de werkgelegenheid in de Gemeenschap te bevorderen. Zij sluit aan bij het Europese plan op middellange termijn tot economische wederopleving, dat werd voorgesteld door Voorzitter DELORS op de Europese Raad te Kopenhagen, onder de titel : "Op de drempel van de XXIste eeuw".

1. Pleidooi voor een vermindering van de kosten van laaggeschoolde arbeid.

De Belgische Regering is van mening dat alle mogelijkheden moeten worden onderzocht om de tewerkstelling te bevorderen en de werkloosheid terug te dringen, met name die welke betrekking hebben op: de flexibiliteit van de contracten (tijdelijke, tussentijdse, van onbepaalde duur, deeltijdse), een actief beleid inzake begeleiding en opleiding, de vermindering van de aanwervings- en ontslagkosten, en de heroriëntering van de economische subsidies. De Regering **meent nochtans dat een grondige wijziging van de relatieve prijzen der produktiefactoren, tegelijk ten gunste van de factor arbeid in het algemeen maar meer in het bijzonder ten gunste van de laaggeschoolde arbeid**, onontbeerlijk is om tegen het einde van het decennium de factor tewerkstelling van de economische groei in de Gemeenschap op significante wijze om te buigen.

De Belgische Regering is er immers van overtuigd dat het probleem van de werkloosheid in de Gemeenschap grotendeels de zeer hoge arbeidskosten weerspiegelt waaraan de ondernemingen het hoofd moeten bieden, inzonderheid om laaggeschoolde arbeiders aan te werven.⁽¹⁾ Meerdere redenen verklaren waarom de arbeidskosten steeds zwaarder doorwegen op de tewerkstelling.

- a. **het concurrentievermogen** : omdat die kosten de delocalisatie van activiteiten versnellen naar landen waar de arbeidskosten minder hoog zijn;
- b. **substitutie**: omdat die kosten bijdragen tot de vervanging kapitaal-arbeid, zowel in de risicosector als in de beschermde sector;
- c. **belemmering** : vermits die kosten de ontwikkeling van de werkgelegenheid in de weg staan in de beschermde diensten, waar de elasticiteit van de vraag naar arbeid tegenover arbeidskosten 2 tot 3 keer hoger is dan in de andere sectoren.

¹⁾ In België ligt het verschil tussen de loonkosten ten laste van de werkgever en het nettoloon (dus de fiscale en parafiscale wig) uitgedrukt in verhouding tot de loonkosten voor de werkgever rond de 50 pct. voor de laagste niveaus van het nettoloon, met name het equivalent van de werkloosheidsuitkering van een alleenstaande. Uitgedrukt in verhouding tot het nettoloon, betekent zulks dat de inschakeling op de arbeidsmarkt zonder daling van het netto inkomen voor de werkgever een loonkost betekent gelijk aan het dubbele van het minimale netto inkomen dat de werknemer verkrijgt.

Die toestand wordt verklaard door het feit dat er een belangrijke potentiële vraag bestaat naar nieuwe types van diensten gekoppeld aan de demografische en sociologische evolutie van onze maatschappij (bejaardenhulp, kinderopvang voor buitenhuiswerkende vrouwen, bescherming van het leefmilieu, vrijetijdsbesteding). Helaas wordt aan die vraag nog te weinig tegemoet gekomen wegens de hoge prijs van die diensten, wat te maken heeft met de uitzonderlijke kosten van de factor arbeid, omwille van het hoge percentage arbeid vervat in die diensten.

Er is dus reden om te denken dat een maatregel tot verlaging van de arbeidskosten zou moeten leiden tot een verlaging van de prijzen van de diensten, en aldus de vraag solvabiliseren en voorwaarden scheppen voor een verhoging van de produktie van kwaliteitsdiensten. Die evolutie moet de sociale cohesie van onze maatschappij versterken, en tevens bijdragen tot de verbetering van het concurrentievermogen in de risicosector, via een daling van de binnenlandse input ervan.

Een verlaging van de arbeidskosten die vooral de laaggeschoolden zou ten goede komen, kan eveneens worden verantwoord vermits :

- a. de werkloosheid thans wordt gekenmerkt door een zeer ongelijke verdeling onder de verschillende categorieën van de actieve bevolking, waarbij de jongeren en de laaggeschoolde arbeiders een hogere werkloosheidsgraad kennen dan het nationaal gemiddelde;
- b. de arbeiders die het meest het slachtoffer dreigen te worden van de **technologische veranderingen** en van de nieuwe internationale arbeidsverdeling precies de minst geschoolden zijn;
- c. de vermindering van de loonkosten het mogelijk zal maken eveneens de arbeidsplaatsen te redden van de laaggeschoolden in de **sector die het hoofd moet bieden aan de internationale concurrentie**;
- d. de ontwikkeling van de **deeltijdse arbeid** eveneens zou moeten worden vergemakkelijkt via een verlaging van de kosten van laaggeschoolde arbeid.

2. Pleidooi voor een verlaging van de verplichte voorafnemingen die de arbeid bezwaren.

Meerdere maatregelen tot vermindering van de arbeidskosten kunnen worden overwogen.

Een benadering die sommigen aanhangen, bestaat erin het niveau, en zelfs het principe zelf van het **minimumloon** zoals dat bestaat in vele landen van de Gemeenschap, in vraag te stellen, waarbij wordt gemeend dat arbeidsplaatsen met geringe produktiviteit het bestaan van lage lonen verantwoorden. Zonder te ontkennen dat het minimumloon in sommige gevallen arbeidsplaatsen kan kosten, lijkt die benadering voor ons niet te moeten worden in aanmerking genomen om twee redenen :

- a. **Zij is niet opportuun.** Het principe van een bestaansminimum is één van de belangrijke aspecten van het Europese sociale stelsel dat moet worden behouden. Derhalve moet het minimum netto looninkomen voldoende hoog zijn om het effectieve zoeken naar een betrekking aantrekkelijk te maken.
- b. **Zij is niet nodig.** Gelet op het zeer hoge niveau van de verplichte afhoudingen op de lage lonen, bestaat er een aanzienlijke marge om een vermindering van die loonkosten door te voeren zonder te raken aan het nettoloon.

In plaats van die benadering aan te bevelen, meent de Belgische Regering dat de verlaging van de loonkosten de vorm zou moeten aannemen van een **verlaging van de verplichte voorafnemingen op de arbeid**. In België waar de sociale bijdragen ten laste van de werkgevers zeer hoog zijn, zou men kunnen denken aan een vrijstelling van de patronale bijdragen aan de sociale zekerheid voor een gedeelte van het loon. Die vrijstelling zou ofwel kunnen gelden voor alle loontrekkers, ofwel geleidelijk verlagen, respectievelijk verdwijnen als het loon een nog te bepalen niveau zou bereiken.⁽²⁾

De keuze van de juiste formule hangt af van de analyse van de voor- en nadelen. Het grootste nadeel van een maatregel tot verlaging van de arbeidskosten voor het geheel van de loontrekkers ligt in de hoge kosten van die algemene maatregel.⁽³⁾ De formule van geleidelijke vermindering van de vrijstelling vertoont eveneens een bepaald aantal gebreken:

- a. zij impliceert dat **de marginale kosten** van een verhoging van het netto-loon, voor de lage lonen, een progressief karakter zullen hebben vermits elke loonsverhoging zal neerkomen op een gehele of gedeeltelijke vermindering van de vrijstelling van sociale lasten voor de werkgever;
- b. er zou een **fraudeprobleem** dreigen te ontstaan, waarbij de ondernemingen, op een of andere wijze, het bedrag van de vrijstelling van de patronale kosten trachten op te drijven;
- c. de **fiscale en parafiscale wig** zal zeer hoog blijven voor de lonen die geen vrijstelling genieten.

²⁾ Zo zouden voor de arbeiders met een loon tussen 1 maal en 1/4 maal het minimumloon, 3/4 van de sociale lasten die drukken op het minimumloon wegvallen, voor de arbeiders met een loon tussen 1/4 maal en 1 1/2 maal het minimumloon zou 1/2 van de sociale lasten op het minimumloon wegvallen, zodat de vrijstelling van de patronale bijdragen zou wegvallen wanneer het loon tweemaal het minimumloon bedraagt.

³⁾ In België vertegenwoordigden de patronale sociale bijdragen op het gedeelte van het loon dat overeenkomt met het minimumloon ongeveer 350 miljard frank in 1992.

Op grond van die overwegingen, is **de Belgische Regering voorstander van een betekenisvolle vermindering van de verplichte voorafnemingen die de arbeid bezwaren, te realiseren in twee fasen :**

- a. **vooreerst** moet die vermindering worden beperkt tot de lonen die lager zijn dan sommige nog te bepalen niveaus;
- b. **geleidelijk** en rekening houdend met de vastgestelde positieve gevolgen van de eerste fase, moet zij worden uitgebreid tot alle loontrekkenden.

Die benadering heeft het voordeel dat zij (a) de loonkosten van de laaggeschoolde arbeid snel wijzigt in functie van de mogelijkheden tot financiering ervan op korte termijn; (b) vermijdt op middellange termijn de negatieve effecten van een degressieve vrijstelling en (c) geleidelijk de financieringsmaatregelen van die vermindering invoert, wat zou moeten gebeuren in het kader van **een Europese meerjarenstrategie ten bate van de werkgelegenheid.**

3. Pleidooi voor een oplossing inzake financiering op Europees niveau.

Gelet op de begrotingstoestand van de meeste Lidstaten en rekening houdend met de vereiste van budgettaire convergentie op Europees niveau, lijkt het aangewezen fiscale maatregelen te overwegen die het mogelijk maken de begrotingskosten van een inspanning tot verlaging van de verplichte voorafnemingen die de arbeid bezwaren, te neutraliseren.

3.1. Mogelijke financieringsmaatregelen

Een dergelijke inspanning kan worden gefinancierd door maatregelen op Europees niveau en/of door de Lidstaten afzonderlijk.

Op Europees vlak zijn verschillende pistes mogelijk:

- a. De invoering van **een taks op de CO₂-uitstoot en op het energieverbruik.** Indien dat voorstel van de Commissie ⁽⁴⁾ zou worden toegepast zou dat bijkomende ontvangsten meebrengen voor de Belgische Staat, tegen het jaar 2000, ten belope van ongeveer 100 tot 130 miljard frank volgens het niveau van de toegestane afwijkingen.
- b. De invoering van **een taks op de inkomsten uit financiële beleggingen.** Volgens het voorstel van de Commissie ⁽⁵⁾ zou die maatregel de fiscale ontvangsten van de Staat doen stijgen met ongeveer 30 miljard.

⁴⁾ Dat wil zeggen een taks gelijk aan 10 US \$ per vat olie, geleidelijk ingevoerd tot in 2000.

⁵⁾ Ofwel een minimum-afhouding aan de bron van 15 pct. op de aan de "communautaire inwoners" uitbetaalde interesten.

- c. De verhoging van de miniumtarieven van de BTW of van de accijnzen. In België zou een verhoging van de BTW-tarieven met 1 punt ongeveer 20 miljard moeten opbrengen voor het normale tarief en 10 miljard voor het verminderde tarief.
- d. Als andere mogelijke piste op middellange termijn kan eveneens worden gewezen op de invoering van een aanvullend percentage op de vennootschapsbelasting. Dat impliceert echter de voorafgaande harmonisering van de basisbelasting.

Op het niveau van elke Lidstaat afzonderlijk zouden de mogelijke financieringsmaatregelen de vorm kunnen aannemen van verhogingen van sommige categorieën van directe en indirecte belastingen en/of van verminderingen van overheidsuitgaven.

3.2. Voorkeur van de Belgische Regering

De Belgische Regering meent dat enkel een financiering op het niveau van de Gemeenschap van aard is om een adequaat antwoord te geven op het probleem van de werkloosheid in Europa en om aldus in te spelen op de zeer hooggespannen verwachtingen die zijn gerezen na de beslissing van de Europese Raad van Kopenhagen om een Witboek voor te bereiden.

De volgende gegevens versterken die zienswijze.

- a. **Drempeleffect.** Opdat de vermindering van de arbeidskosten een betekenisvol gevolg zou hebben in termen van het scheppen van arbeidsplaatsen, moet zij voldoende ambitieus zijn. Simulaties aan de hand van econometrische modellen tonen aan dat de invloed in termen van scheppen van arbeidsplaatsen van een maatregel tot verlaging van de arbeidskosten relatief gering is ⁽⁶⁾. Bijgevolg zal het, zonder een akkoord op Europees vlak, bijzonder moeilijk zijn voor de meeste Lidstaten om een vermindering van de loonkosten te financieren die het mogelijk maakt de voorwaarden te scheppen voor een betekenisvolle vermindering van de werkloosheid, om drie redenen : (a) de akkoorden over de Europese harmonisatie van de indirecte fiscaliteit beperken de mogelijkheden tot nationale finan-

⁶⁾ Aldus toont een recente studie van het Planbureau aan dat een vermindering van de patronale bijdragen door toepassing van het voorstel van de Commissie inzake de CO2/Energie Taks zich zou vertalen in de nettocreatie van zowat 27.000 arbeidsplaatsen tegen het jaar 2000, indien België het enige land was om die vermindering toe te passen. Men mag evenwel veronderstellen dat dat resultaat de elasticiteit onderschat van de vraag naar arbeid ten aanzien van de loonkosten in de mate waarin dat resultaat is gebaseerd op een econometrisch model waarvan de parameters de huidige structurele kenmerken van de Belgische economie weerspiegelen. Dat type van model kan dus de macro-economische effecten niet meten van een verlaging van de loonkosten die neerkomt op een breuk ten aanzien van de voorbije ontwikkelingen, inzonderheid wat de relatieve kosten tussen geschoolde arbeid en ongeschoolde arbeid betreft.

ciering door de BTW en de accijnzen; (b) het niveau van de personenbelasting in een bepaald aantal Lidstaten maakt nieuwe rechtstreekse belastingverhogingen onmogelijk en (c) de fiscale concurrentie maakt enig afzonderlijk initiatief inzake de belasting van de inkomsten uit spaargeld onmogelijk.

- b. **Multiplicatoreffect.** Een actie op Europees vlak zou een belangrijk multiplicatoreffect moeten hebben wegens de groeiende onderlinge afhankelijkheid van onze economieën.
- c. **Risico van delocalisatie.** Nationale maatregelen om het probleem van de werkloosheid te bestrijden leiden tot ontwrichtingen van concurrentie onder Lidstaten binnen de eenheidsmarkt waarbij elkeen het effect van het concurrentievermogen tracht te maximaliseren, alsmede tot een gevaarlijke delocalisatie van de economische activiteit binnen de Gemeenschap, naar landen die het best in staat zullen zijn om de arbeidskosten te verminderen wegens een voordelige toestand van de overheidsfinanciën.
- d. **Belangrijk deflatierisico.** Bij gebrek aan een Europees akkoord dreigen de Lidstaten te zoeken naar de oplossing via een beleid van excessieve loonmatiging, dat zich zal vertalen in verlies van koopkracht voor de werknemers en in vermindering van de geaggregeerde vraag, wat de wederopleving van de groei in Europa nog moeilijker zal maken.

4. Arbeidskosten en financiering van de sociale zekerheid.

De huidige financiering van de stelsels van sociale zekerheid die gelden in de meeste Lidstaten van de Gemeenschap berust in grote mate op bijdragen die zijn gekoppeld aan de arbeidsinkomsten. Het principe van die financieringswijze is het gevolg van de geschiedenis zelf van de sociale zekerheidstelsels in Europa. In dat verband moet worden nagedacht over de mogelijkheden tot beperking van het gewicht van de financiering van de sociale zekerheid op de arbeidskosten ten opzichte van de andere produktiefactoren (via bijvoorbeeld, het berekenen van de bijdragen op de toegevoegde waarde van de onderneming eerder dan op de loonmassa).

Gelet op die opmerkingen verzoekt de Belgische Regering de Commissie de problemen te globaliseren en het probleem van de financiering van een vermindering van de loonkosten te onderzoeken in het breder perspectief van een bezinning over de financiering van de mechanismen van de sociale zekerheid in de Gemeenschap. Het feit dat tal van aspecten van die problematiek te maken hebben met de subsidiariteit, zou evenwel geen belemmering mogen zijn voor een gemeenschappelijk initiatief terzake, ten gunste van alle Lidstaten.

**Arbeidsherverdeling en flexibiliteit
van de arbeidsmarkt.**

Economische groei alleen kan in Europa onmogelijk de creatie van voldoende arbeidsplaatsen waarborgen om de werkloosheid op significante wijze terug te dringen.

De flexibiliteit van de arbeidsmarkt, die gepaard gaat met een betere herverdeling van de arbeid, is eveneens een noodzakelijke voorwaarde om de groeiintensiteit van de werkgelegenheid te verhogen.

De uitdaging van vandaag bestaat erin opnieuw een volledige tewerkstelling te realiseren zonder te kunnen rekenen op het hefboomeffect van de economische groei. Zowel bij werkgevers als bij werknemers bestaat de vraag naar een loopbaan "à la carte". In die optiek moeten bepaalde organisatieaspecten van de arbeid worden aangepast. Daarin berust de rol van de regeringen. In die optiek kunnen meerdere denkpistes gevolgd worden.

1. Het einde van de loopbaan versoepelen

Zowel bij werknemers als bij werkgevers bestaat de behoefte om het einde van de loopbaan te versoepelen. Momenteel betekenen de stelsels van opruistelling of vervroegde uittreding meestal een volledig afscheid van het beroepsleven.

Men zou een geleidelijke terugtrekking uit het beroepsleven kunnen bevorderen door de invoering van een regeling van deeltijdse tewerkstelling gekoppeld aan een deeltijdse vergoeding. Oudere werknemers zouden kunnen overstappen van voltijds naar deeltijds werk wat hen zou toelaten de overgang van actief bezig zijn naar de professionele inactiviteit geleidelijker te doen verlopen. Bovendien kan een stelsel van geleidelijke terugtrekking oudere werknemers toelaten hun arbeidsplaats te delen met jongere collega's.

2. Meer harmonie tussen familiaal en beroepsleven en een betere verdeling van de beschikbare arbeid verzekeren

Aan deze doelstelling beantwoordt een systeem waardoor de werknemer de mogelijkheid krijgt om zijn loopbaan tijdelijk te onderbreken al dan niet met een vergoeding (loopbaanonderbreking, ouderschapsverlof, vormingsverlof, sabbatical leave) en met de garantie dat hij/zij nadien kan terugkeren naar de job. Ten einde de herverdeling van de arbeid te waarborgen, is het aangewezen de vervanging van een loopbaanonderbreker door een werkzoekende te verzekeren.

3. Uitbouw van deeltijdse jobs op vrijwillige basis

De deeltijdse jobs op vrijwillige basis met overeenstemmende loonvermindering dienen gepromoot te worden. Hier kan de arbeidsherverdeling gepaard gaan, rekening houdend met de noden van de onderneming en de werknemers, met kortere arbeidstijden per dag of per week, of gespreide werkperiodes over het jaar (bvb. 9 maanden per jaar werken i.p.v. 12, geen werk gedurende de vakantieperiode van schoolgaande kinderen).

Daartoe dienen enerzijds de wettelijke en financiële belemmeringen voor de organisatie van deze arbeidsvorm weggenomen te worden en dient er anderzijds een adequate sociale bescherming van de deeltijdse werknemers voorzien te worden. Bovendien zou de contractuele mogelijkheid om bij voorrang te kunnen terugkeren naar een voltijdse job in de onderneming aangewezen zijn.

4. Vermindering van de arbeidstijd in het kader van een betere aanwending van het productieapparaat

Hier liggen de mogelijkheden in het verminderen van de arbeidstijd in het raam van ploegenarbeid, weekendploegen, nachtwerk, gecompenseerd door een vermindering van de kapitaalkosten ingevolge een betere benutting van het productieapparaat en de afbouw van de bijzondere premies boven het normale loon in ruil voor kortere arbeidstijden.

5. Arbeid herverdelen bij herstructurering

Voor de ondernemingen die zich in een herstructurering bevinden moet men trachten de beschikbare arbeid op een andere wijze te verdelen dan door een beroep te doen op stelsels van vervroegde uittreding waarmee een aantal werknemers uit de onderneming verdwijnen. Vele bedrijven die herstructureren kiezen momenteel voor een stelsel van vervroegde uittreding om de noodzakelijke ontslagen te kunnen regelen in akkoord met de werknemers.

Het lijkt wenselijk alle vormen van arbeidsherverdeling aan te moedigen om het aantal ontslagen te beperken. Maatregelen zoals vrijwillige deeltijdse arbeid, voltijdse of deeltijdse loopbaanonderbeking, nieuwe arbeidstijdregelingen kunnen een oplossing bieden voor de soms tijdelijke moeilijkheden van de onderneming.

6. Soepeler organisatie van bepaalde arbeidsvormen

De flexibiliteit van de arbeidsmarkt kan ook vergroot worden door het versoepelen van bepaalde organisatieaspecten van het werk.

Ook hier is het aangewezen om de wettelijke bepalingen inzake de arbeidswetgeving aan een grondig onderzoek in overleg met de sociale partners te onderwerpen en na te gaan of het niet nodig is om in een recessieperiode afwijkende bepalingen te voorzien op basis van een sociale consensus om de terughoudendheid van de werkgevers tegenover het aanwerven in een periode van recessie te verminderen.

7. Loonmatiging in het licht van een werkgelegenheidsstrategie

De herverdeling van de produktiviteitswinsten vormt een basisprincipe van het sociaal overleg. Traditioneel worden hier nieuwe loonvoordelen en arbeidsduurverkortingen toegekend, zij het dat deze voordelen uitsluitend ten goede komen aan de werknemers die reeds in dienst zijn. Van zodra het niveau van de werkloosheid de samenhang van de samenleving bedreigt, dienen de sociale partners er toe aangezet te worden om de produktiviteitswinsten in hoofdzaak voor de bevordering van de werkgelegenheid aan te wenden.

Hoewel heel wat aspecten van voormelde thema's tot de bevoegdheid van de Lidstaten behoren, is een gemeenschappelijke aanpak op Europees vlak noodzakelijk om concurrentievervalsing en sociale dumping te voorkomen.

De overheden van de Lidstaten kunnen, in het raam van de door hen aangewende middelen voor het voeren van een actief werkgelegenheidsbeleid, de herverdeling van de arbeid financieel stimuleren.

De Europese Gemeenschap kan hierin een belangrijke rol vervullen :

- als forum voor de uitwisseling van kennis en ervaring;
- om een gemeenschappelijke benadering uit te werken waarvan de realisatie krachtens het subsidiariteitsbeginsel aan de verschillende Lidstaten wordt overgelaten;
- om minimale sociale grondrechten vast te leggen die in alle Lidstaten moeten worden nageleefd;
- om de sociale dialoog terzake te bevorderen.

Vorming en onderwijs.

Een individueel recht op opleiding gedurende het hele leven en een actiever arbeidsmarktbeleid zijn essentieel om enerzijds het arbeidspotentieel op een voldoende hoog kwalificatieniveau te houden en anderzijds de strijd tegen de sociale uitsluiting met succes te bekronen.

- 1) Ingevolge de noodzaak tot bevordering van technologische veranderingen, ten einde op die basis competitief te blijven ten opzichte van de lage loonlanden, is de permanente scholing van onze werknemers een vereiste. Hiertoe is het noodzakelijk :
 - de bedrijfswereld actief, zowel inhoudelijk als financieel, te betrekken bij de daartoe geëigende vormingsstructuren;
 - de vormingsinstituten financieel te steunen en te stimuleren in functie van hun concrete vormingsresultaten, aangepast aan de noden van de bedrijfswereld;
 - de werknemers een recht op permanente vorming te geven in de vorm van een educatief verlof, vastgesteld in functie van de vormingsinspanning en rekening houdend met de organisatorische problemen van de bedrijfswereld. De daaruit volgende lasten voor de bedrijfswereld dienen onderling geheel of gedeeltelijk gesolidariseerd te worden met zo nodig een gedeeltelijke financiële ondersteuning door de overheid;
 - een betere coördinatie tussen de gewone onderwijsstructuur en de diverse vormingsinstituten om de kosten te drukken, de resultaten te optimaliseren en een beter gebruik van de onderwijs- en vormingsstructuur te verwezenlijken.
- 2) Het voorkomen van langdurige werkloosheid bij jongeren door het instellen van een minimumrecht op tewerkstelling gedurende 6 maanden na 1 jaar werkloosheid. Hierbij dienen de eventuele vormingsbehoeften opgevangen te worden; dit kan gebeuren door :
 - arbeidskostverlagende maatregelen, die des te belangrijker zijn naargelang het vormingspeil van de betrokken jongeren, met als tegenprestatie een zekere vormingsinspanning of jobbegeleiding binnen of buiten het bedrijf (jongerenbanenplannen, ingroeibanen, alternerend leren en werken, stage van jongeren);

- het opvangen van die jongeren, die desondanks de genomen maatregelen toch niet opgenomen worden in de normale arbeidsmarkt, in door de overheid gesubsidieerde taken van algemeen nut of in projecten van sociale economie.
- 3) Een gesolidariseerde inspanning, in de vorm van een solidariteitsbijdrage, ten voordele van risikogroepen (langdurige werklozen) waarvan de inschakelingskansen in de arbeidsmarkt bijzondere en duurdere maatregelen vereisen.



THE COMMISSION'S COPENHAGEN INITIATIVE

Memorandum from Denmark on Growth and Employment in the EC

24 august 1993

Ministry of Economic Affairs

MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

The Economic Secretariat

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The Commission's Copenhagen Initiative

Europe is witnessing continued slow growth as well as high and increasing unemployment, and there is still no prospect of a reversal of the conjunctural situation. Cooperation is a necessity if we are to create an economic recovery in Europe. If we act together, the impact of national initiatives will have double impact. The currency turmoil is an indication of the present wrong trend of affairs.

The overall Community goal is to create a sustainable and non-inflationary growth, which respects the environment and ensures a high level of employment. These objectives form the basis of the economic policy guidelines to be laid down in pursuance of Article 103 of the Maastricht Treaty. They constitute the challenges facing the economic policy at the turn of the century.

Following up on the Edinburgh declaration on promoting economic recovery in Europe, the ECOFIN Council on 19 April 1993 adopted a growth initiative which will enhance cooperation and coordination of economic policies. The strategy is to revive confidence and create increased, non-inflationary growth and higher employment, while at the same time seeking to fulfil the convergence criteria.

Thus, the strategy combines measures to promote short-term growth and employment with initiatives which secure and enhance the nominal convergence within the Community and consequently create the necessary, responsible economic framework to promote investment and thereby medium-term growth and employment. This balance must be secured in the new growth initiatives, which should be prepared in conjunction with the 1994 Budgets. As emphasized by the ECOFIN Council, the conclusions of 19 April are only the first step.

In addition to internal EC work on the growth initiative, a joint EC/EFTA meeting has been held between the Economic and Finance Ministers in order to coordinate the growth initiatives. Furthermore, the growth initiative has been

placed on the agenda of the transatlantic meetings between the Community and the USA. The Community must continue its endeavours to coordinate growth initiatives with its cooperation partners.

Following the ECOFIN meeting on 19 April 1993, the Danish Government has drawn up new, national growth initiatives to revitalize the private sector through structural improvements and a temporary fiscal stimulation. This is to prevent the continuously growing unemployment from undermining confidence of consumers and investors in the private sector. Another aim is to prevent the high conjunctural unemployment from evolving into a permanent structural problem and a constant menace to public finances.

The Government's growth initiatives consist of three parts:

- * A tax reform, reducing marginal taxes and introducing a shift from taxes on labour to taxes on other resources, including introduction of green taxes.
- * A labour market reform strengthening and making more efficient the entire labour market effort. The reform does away with the close connection existing so far between job offers and the rules governing unemployment benefits. The active labour market policy also presents the unemployed with more individual choices and better offers. Adult education and vocational training activities are strengthened. The reform offers leave-of-absence and job rotation schemes, which partly strengthen the prospect for a qualitative up-grading of the labour force and partly present the unemployed with increased job training possibilities.
- * Other initiatives to promote growth, including advancing public investments, stimulating investment in small and medium-sized enterprises improving conditions for entrepreneurs and facilitating the establishment of new enterprises, as well as a number of measures to promote investment in the housing sector and within service production.

In the short term, the temporary fiscal stimulation will increase employment. At the same time, the new Danish growth initiatives address a number of key structural problems which in the medium term will strengthen the labour market.

In this connection, it is also crucial that the parties to the labour market are involved in all initiatives of a social and labour market nature.

The European Council in Copenhagen in June reaffirmed the growth initiatives endorsed in Edinburgh in December and at the ECOFIN meeting in April. It was agreed to rebuild confidence in the European economies.

The conclusions of the European Council in Copenhagen include a memorandum by the Commission's President "Entering the 21st Century. Orientations for Economic Renewal in Europe?" In this connection, the European Council asked the Commission to prepare a white book on a medium-term strategy for growth, competitiveness and employment.

The specific elements to be contained in the Commission's white book should take their point of departure in the ECOFIN Council conclusions concerning the EC growth initiative as they were submitted to the European Council in Copenhagen. It follows from the Maastricht Treaty that all initiatives shall be in conformity with the principle of subsidiarity.

As will appear, the Danish Government has already taken initiatives in many of the 8 potential growth areas cited in the memorandum on economic recovery from the Commission's President. To support the growth initiatives a more binding monetary cooperation must quickly be re-established with a view to an early return to far narrower margins of fluctuation between the currencies.

The formulation of the European growth initiatives - as is the case with the Danish growth initiatives - must also be such as to prevent a deterioration of the citizens' social protection.

In the following the headlines used are the same as those used in the memorandum of the Commission's President.

1. Staying on course for Economic and Monetary Union

Circumstances have changed drastically in a negative direction since the European Council met in Copenhagen. The Danish Government regrets the widening of the EMS band to ± 15 per cent. This was a result of the most recent currency turmoil, which by nature and size was unusual. It is an unsatisfactory situation because the EMS for many years has been an important element of the EC countries' cooperation, among other things to ensure price stability. It is imperative that a more binding monetary cooperation is quickly re-established with a view to narrowing the band of fluctuation between the EMS currencies.

If we want to return to the course for a closer monetary cooperation, the EMS band must be narrowed. Enhanced coordination of economic policy and stronger willingness to observe the rules of the EMS system will constitute the foundation of a closer monetary cooperation. The reports from the informal ECOFIN meeting in Kolding should be translated into practice.

In the Edinburgh Declaration Denmark stated that we do not take part in the third stage of the EMU. But we are an active participant of the second stage. It is imperative that all countries live up to their treaty obligations to act in conformity with the principles of stable prices, sound public finances and monetary conditions, as well as a sustainable balance of payments position. This consideration must be part and parcel of all forms of economic policy, including interest and exchange rate policy.

Stability in Community exchange rates should be promoted through the procedures of the EMU's second stage. Via enhanced market transparency and less uncertainty, a solidly based exchange rate stability will be able to consolidate the internal market and strengthen the derived benefits. This will i.a. result in lower production and transaction cost, increased competitiveness, less uncertainty on the markets, and a higher level of investment, and thus higher growth and lower inflation.

The internal market is also built on the free movement of capital, which has contributed positively to the highly developed markets of the 1990s. This also emphasizes the need for coordinated monetary measures among Member States to stabilize the EMS cooperation. In this context, efforts to bring about an early reduction of European interest rates should also be intensified. In the longer run, it is untenable with the high real interest rates in Europe compared to i.a. the USA and Japan. A reduced level of interest rates would encourage investment and reduce production cost, which would enhance competitiveness and increase employment. A reduction of interest rates would also re-establish business confidence in the stability of the markets and consumers' faith in the future.

2. The Community as an open and reliable partner in the world

The Community should continue to work for a conclusion of the Uruguay Round before 15 December 1993. The agreement should imply proper progress for free trade within all the areas of negotiation. The goal is to create the external framework for a still more liberal world trade.

The agreement should strengthen GATT's role as a world trade organisation for the free international trading system. The organisation should continue to be founded on an efficient regime for settlement of disputes concerning matters of international trade.

Other matters of the world economy are on the agenda of other fora. Trade and monetary matters should be separated, and global monetary matters should primarily be debated by the International Monetary Fund.

We must actively follow up on the conclusions of the World Economic Summit in Tokyo, which expressed deep concern about insufficient growth and inadequate creation of jobs in the industrialized economies. In this connection, steps should be taken to coordinate a follow-up on the G7 countries' individual promises to institute growth-stimulating measures and the Community's growth initiative.

In addition, the Community should work for a further liberalization of international trade through its bilateral relations with the industrialized countries, including the USA, and thus enhance the prerequisites of increased growth.

The EEA agreement extends the Community's internal market with subsequent considerable benefits for growth. The enlargement with the EFTA countries will further enhance these benefits. The momentum of the enlargement negotiations must be maintained and continued as decided by the European Council in Copenhagen.

One of the biggest challenges facing the Community in the years to come is to tie the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the Baltic States, still closer to the Community. An active follow-up on the conclusions of the European Council in Copenhagen concerning improved access to markets will be of decisive importance. Increased trade with the Community will be crucial to the speed of the economic reform process under way in these countries and will simultaneously have a spill-over effect on Community growth. At the same time, efforts should aim at establishing an environmentally sustainable development in the Central and Eastern European countries. Relations to Russia and other European oriented countries in the former Soviet Union should also be given high priority.

An open Community must also manifest itself in relations with the developing countries. An early conclusion of the Uruguay Round within the fixed timetable will be decisive not least for the developing countries. In its bilateral relations the Community should also gradually improve these countries' access to its markets. This will have a positive economic impact on the Community. A protectionist approach would impede the developing countries' chances for implementing the necessary structural adjustment and thus weaken their prospects for a sustainable development. The Community should also contribute towards improving living conditions, human rights and the environment in the developing countries. All Member Countries ought to meet the UN aid target of 1 per cent of GNP.

3. Increased cooperation in the field of research and development

The objective of Community activities within research and development is partly to improve the competitiveness of European industry by strengthening the scientific and technological bases and partly to increase the quality of life for the citizens of Europe.

The Community's coming 4th framework programme should concentrate efforts on broadly applicable technologies based on basic research as well as applied research. Community funded research shall ensure the development of technologies which are best promoted through a coordinated effort. It must continuously be ensured that the effort does not evolve into state subsidy for a few sectors or businesses.

Community activities should concentrate on areas which are best implemented at Community level, and where there is a considerable European research and development potential. Continuous evaluation of research programmes shall ensure an effective priority-setting of tasks.

The programmes must be directed at innovative businesses as well as research centres and universities carrying out research and technological development of high quality. For the programmes to be launched it is necessary that they are desirable from a competitive point of view in order to promote the natural international division of labour.

In consideration of the Community's many innovative enterprises and the creation of employment, the design and administration of the programmes shall be as simple and effective as possible. Small enterprises possibilities of participating must be stimulated and enhanced.

A major part of the Community's research effort shall be used to disseminate knowledge about the results of the joint European research activities, and in particular to small and medium-size enterprises. It is necessary that more

Community research effort is used to promote the mobility of researchers and to strengthen the dialogue between research circles and businesses.

Efforts should be directed at improving the framework for enterprises possibilities of engaging in research and technological development. For example by building international networks consisting of enterprises research centres and universities. A close research collaboration between enterprises and research circles will promote mutual inspiration and enhance quality, and at the same time shorten the road from research to applied results.

4. An efficient network of transport and telecommunications infrastructure

For the Community to be able to fully use the benefits to be derived from the completion of the internal market, communications and transport cost within the borders of the internal market must be effectively cut. In the area of telecommunications this should be done in conformity with Council Resolution of 16 June 1993 concerning liberalisation of teleservices and preparation of a green book on a possible liberalisation of the teleinfrastructure.

An effective network of European links, respecting the environment, should be established. In this context, effective competition, liberty of choice as regards consumer goods, and observance of the Community's state subsidy rules should be ensured.

One possibility is to reorientate public expenditure towards infrastructure and other growth-stimulating spending in conformity with ECOFIN conclusions of 19 April 1993. By resetting priorities, this reorientation can be held within the limit of the existing budgets.

The building of a Trans-European Networks for transport, telecommunications, and infrastructure both within the Community and between Member States and other European countries will benefit trade with the applicant countries, the Central and Eastern European countries as well as the Baltic States. In this

context, it is of imperative importance that the temporary EFB lending facility of 8 billion ECU, as adopted in Edinburgh and Copenhagen, is used effectively.

In connection with support to future development of a well-functioning Trans-European Networks, environmental considerations should be given a far greater importance and weight.

5. Common information area: the new technological revolution

The information area should be given higher priority in order to strengthen the Community's information businesses. This will enhance the technological bases of the European businesses' international competitiveness and stimulate growth and employment in the Community.

Cooperation at Community level and between Member States should be enhanced to ensure that the same technology can be used across borders, and that information can be exchanged effectively across borders.

The Community's role as a mediator of information and inspiration between Member States and businesses is important. In many areas, it would be most appropriate to build information networks and data bases with information of relevance to the citizens and businesses of the Community on national schemes. In this context, it should be ensured that the systems are compatible.

Subject to the above principles, a network of European information data bases should aim to ensure the best possible systems through free competition and by avoiding monopolistic tendencies.

6. Profound changes in our education systems

A well-educated and active population is a must if Europe is to carry weight in the global, political, economic and cultural interplay, and if the European

democracy is to be preserved and developed. It is therefore of particular importance that all citizens of the Community, children, young people and adults alike, have the possibility and right to receive high-quality training and education.

The growing number of new technologies and the increased mobility across borders continue to challenge the educational level of the labour force. In order to meet these challenges, the Community should create an open area for education and training. Thus, the Community's citizens would be free to choose among offers of high-quality education in all Member States. Exchange programmes for students should be strengthened and exchange of experience between education systems enhanced.

By the same token, it should be ensured that the training received and the acquired skills are relevant to the individual citizen, the labour market and the society as a whole. For example, links between school-based and business-based vocational training ought to be strengthened since they are a suitable means to ensure the relevance of the training offered. In order to meet the future demand for all-round competence and increase the mobility of the labour force, general topics and skills should be included in the business oriented education system.

To reach and secure a high level of competence it will be necessary to establish and develop a close collaboration between educational institutions and national and local authorities with a view to promoting innovation and exchange of experience and ideas.

At the same time, special efforts should be directed at young people under the age of 25, who are especially hit by unemployment. We must avoid a situation where a large group of people leaves or is expelled from the education system at an early stage and never gains a foothold on the labour market.

As mentioned, a combination of enhanced adult and supplementary education and increased use of leave-of-absence schemes and job rotation, which also develop the individual's skills, is an important element of the Danish Government's new growth initiatives. To strengthen popular participation in the demo-

cratic development, adult and supplementary education must in addition to the vocational substance also include general and cultural topics.

Matters concerning education and training are primarily of a national nature. All initiatives must be adjusted to the specific circumstances of each individual Member State, and the role of the Community is to support and supplement Member State measures.

7. Towards a new model of development

As stated in Article 2 of the Maastricht Treaty, the economic policy and the environment policy are closely connected. Increased integration of environmental considerations in all Community policies is of decisive importance to a sustainable development in the Community. This will also appear from the fifth Community Programme for the environment as well as from the Commission's internal communication of June 1993, "Integrating the Environment into other Policy Areas within the Commission". This objective should immediately be translated into practice within all areas of the Community.

The Community is facing big problems in the form of a high level of unemployment and damage to the environment and nature. We must therefore try to take into consideration both the environment and businesses' competitiveness to create more jobs. This must be ensured through the formulation of the environment policy, including in particular the choice of means of control, with a view to changing business and consumer behaviour. By altering their approach, businesses will be able to influence the cost caused by enhanced environmental requirements.

In a situation with a high level of unemployment, excessive taxes on labour is not desirable. A well-trained and flexible labour force is a must for an economic recovery. On the other hand, green taxes on pollution and the use of natural resources are economically expedient because the society thereby taxes something which is not desirable. Examples are taxes on CO₂-emissions or excessive

use of natural resources, such as energy resources, minerals and water. Such a shift from taxes on labour to taxes on other resources is, as mentioned, an important element of the Danish Government's growth initiative.

At the same time, it is necessary to cooperate across borders, partly because many environmental problems are of a transnational nature, and partly because an increased environmental protection may have short-term consequences for the individual country's competitiveness. By taking joint action, we attain a more competitive European economy as a whole and create more jobs.

In order to attain a sustainable economic development, respecting the environment and ensuring a high level of employment, national initiatives must be given higher priority, and joint action at Community level must be enhanced.

The new Structural Funds Regulations covering the period from 1994 to 1999 includes stipulations for environmental impact assessment of proposed projects. It must be ensured that the environmental goal of the Community's structural programmes and funds are respected, including in particular the Regional and Social Funds and the Cohesion Fund,

Changes in Community programmes and policies should for example include the implementation of concrete development projects in existing research and development programmes, benefiting the environment and employment.

Furthermore, the Community should strengthen its programmes developing new capital equipment which is able to produce environmentally benign products. These products could solve environmental problems in the Community and at the same time become an export commodity for the Community.

Concrete initiatives aiming at enhancing European businesses' competence and competitiveness in the fields of environment and energy should be launched, as these fields are expected to have a marked impact on industrial development in the coming years. Initiatives may include dissemination of knowledge about the

most recent, cleaner production technologies to small and medium-size enterprises in the Community.

Environmental impact assessments and environmental considerations should also be given higher priority in the processing of applications for loans granted by the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Development and Reconstruction, as well as by other international banks and donor organisations where the Community has a considerable influence.

Finally, the international collaboration should be enhanced to promote employment and protection of the environment globally through activities in the OECD countries, Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltic States, and Russia, as well as the developing countries. In this context, the Community should already now prepare itself for the next important topic of the GATT negotiations after the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, i.e. problems concerning trade and the environment. The Community must make sure that alleged environmental considerations are not used as disguised protectionism.

8. More active policies towards the labour market

The historic high level of unemployment necessitates the use of well-known as well as new and unorthodox methods. A re-orientation is called for within education and training (cf. item 6) and within the area traditionally termed labour market policy.

The labour market policy shall be instrumental in creating a flexible labour market. A sluggish labour market may prevent an effective reduction of the high level of unemployment and must therefore be countered through a broad spectrum of labour market initiatives. The creation of a more flexible labour market must not prejudice the social protection of the citizens, including the Maastricht Treaty's social dimension.

The labour market policy must also be adapted to the future, great demand for household, consumer, and welfare-targeted services. These services must be in such a favourable position that the number of jobs offered by them can increase considerably. This is not the case today. One of the possibilities is increased collaboration between public and private schemes.

The responsibility for an active labour market policy rests primarily with Member States, while efforts at Community level in particular should concentrate on a more overall coordination of growth-stimulating initiatives, as well as common analyses, and exchange of experience across borders.

Nationally, employment efforts directed at the individual person out of work should be carried out at the local level, where local authorities in cooperation with the parties of the labour market can adapt the effort partly in consideration of the wishes and needs of the unemployed and partly in consideration of the circumstances of the local labour market.

It is crucial that all parties - including in particular the parties to the labour market - are involved at all levels in the formulation of the labour market policy.

The specific elements to be contained in a more active labour market policy promoting labour market flexibility, competitiveness and employment should i.a. include an improvement of labour market structures.

One way to improve labour market structures could be to prevent and remedy bottleneck problems on the labour market by enhancing labour's skills, ability to adjust, and mobility. This can be achieved by improving leave-of-absence schemes, increasing job rotation, and strengthening supplementary education.

Leave-of-absence schemes and increased job rotation are crucial for the creation of a more flexible and dynamic labour market. Improved leave-of-absence schemes for persons holding a job - i.a. for participation in supplementary and further education offers - may make room for job training of unemployed in proper jobs. Thus, the unemployed continue to be part of the labour force.

Leave-of-absence and job rotation schemes may also be instrumental in ensuring that the employed through an upgrading of skills may keep the job and improve the working environment. Such schemes may also be a positive contribution to businesses job and personnel development.

Supplementary training is a central tool to prevent and fight unemployment. We must aim at a situation where a still larger part of the labour force is receiving supplementary and further training, thereby creating the foundation for a considerable reduction of unemployment.

Higher labour flexibility resulting from supplementary training, leave-of-absence and rotation schemes will be instrumental in dismantling barriers crucial to the functioning of the labour market. The ability to adjust is sharpened, and thus the labour market policy is supporting the development of a non-inflationary economic recovery. Such a development will at the same time counteract tendencies towards marginalisation of the weakest part of the labour force.

In addition to improved labour market structures we should also launch specific initiatives to prevent and fight long-term unemployment, which will cause the jobless to drop out of the labour market. In order to ensure that persons out of work are not disconnected from the labour market, the unemployed must receive good and fair offers of employment or training already at an early stage. In order to encourage initiative, the unemployed should be involved actively in the implementation of the effort.

Considering the great need for new jobs, endeavours to cultivate new areas of employment should work in tandem with initiatives to increase growth and introduce structural changes on the labour market. Potential areas of employment could i.a. be social services as well as the fields of environment and energy. Support should also be given to the development of jobs - maybe at special conditions - which can be carried out by particularly vulnerable groups of unemployed.

Bonn, den 30. August 1993

An den
Minister der Finanzen
Herrn Philippe Maystadt
Netstraat 12

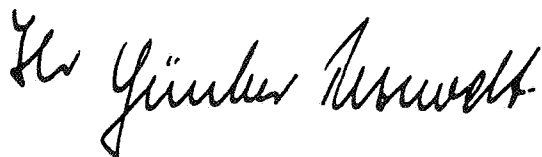
B-1000 Brüssel

Sehr geehrter Herr Minister Maystadt,

zu Ihrer Unterrichtung möchte ich Ihnen den deutschen Beitrag zum vorgesehenen Weißbuch der Kommission über eine mittelfristige Strategie für Wachstum, Wettbewerbsfähigkeit und Beschäftigung in der EG übersenden.

Allen Kollegen des ECOFIN-Rates habe ich dieses Schreiben ebenfalls zugeleitet.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen



Beitrag der Bundesregierung
zum Weißbuch der EG-Kommission
"Mittelfristige Strategie für Wachstum, Wettbewerbs-
fähigkeit und Beschäftigung in der EG"

1. Arbeitslosigkeit in der Gemeinschaft besorgniserregend

Das Wachstum in der Gemeinschaft ist erlahmt, die Beschäftigung geht zurück und die Arbeitslosigkeit steigt besorgniserregend. Strukturelle und konjunkturelle Faktoren überlagern sich. Die Gemeinschaft und die Mitgliedstaaten stehen jetzt vor der doppelten Aufgabe, die Rezession zu überwinden und die Voraussetzungen für einen langanhaltenden Aufschwung zu schaffen. Damit werden auch der Abbau der Arbeitslosigkeit und die Schaffung neuer Arbeitsplätze in Angriff genommen. Die Bundesregierung sieht in den Leitlinien des Präsidenten der Kommission, Jacques Delors, einen wichtigen Diskussionsbeitrag für eine wirtschaftspolitische Konzeption zur Förderung von Wachstum, Beschäftigung und Wettbewerbsfähigkeit in der Gemeinschaft.

2. Das Binnenmarktprogramm verwirklichen

Die konsequente Verwirklichung des Binnenmarktprogramms sowie die Weiterentwicklung der Gemeinschaft zu einer Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion sind wesentliche Voraussetzungen für eine dauerhafte Revitalisierung der Wirtschaft in Europa. Noch vorhandene Unvollkommenheiten des Binnenmarktes müssen daher so rasch wie möglich beseitigt werden. Notwendig ist darüber hinaus eine weitere Öffnung der Märkte nach innen und nach außen, denn unternehmerische Initiative wird sich nur dann ausreichend entfalten, wenn Marktzugangsbeschränkungen abge-

...

baut werden. In diesem größer werdenden Wirtschaftsraum wird sich eine neue Arbeitsteilung der Standorte herausbilden, die Kostenvorteile für alle Mitgliedstaaten sowie ein Potential für zusätzliche Investitionen bietet, mit dem neue Arbeitsplätze geschaffen werden können.

3. Wachstumschancen durch den Europäischen Wirtschaftsraum

Die Verwirklichung des Europäischen Wirtschaftsraumes und der Beitritt von Efta-Staaten zur Gemeinschaft werden wichtige Impulse für weiteres Wirtschaftswachstum geben. Ein zügiger Abschluß der Beitrittsverhandlungen zum 01. Januar 1995 ist deshalb von wesentlicher Bedeutung.

4. Wettbewerb und Strukturwandel fördern

Die Wohlfahrtseffekte der europäischen Integration werden um so größer sein, je mehr sich die Unternehmen dem Wettbewerb stellen und je reibungsloser der Strukturwandel vonstatten geht. Darum ist es wichtig, die Lösung der Produktivkräfte aus unwirtschaftlichen Verwendungen und ihre Überführung in zukunftssträchtige Bereiche zu erleichtern. Anpassungsflexibilität, Risikobereitschaft, innovatives Unternehmertum und Kreativität sind notwendig, damit die Wachstumspotentiale des Strukturwandels voll genutzt werden können. Marktwirtschaftlicher Wettbewerb legt diese Eigenschaften frei. Er fördert Leistungsbereitschaft und Innovationstätigkeit und stärkt damit die Konkurrenzfähigkeit der europäischen Unternehmen. Marktzugangsbarrieren, wettbewerbsbeschränkende Kooperationen sowie dirigistische industriepolitische Maßnahmen wirken jedoch kontraproduktiv. Zur Vermeidung wettbewerbsbeschränkender Praktiken in Europa ist langfristig die Einrichtung einer unabhängigen europäischen Wettbewerbsbehörde erforderlich. Diese Behörde sollte tätig werden, wenn nationale Maßnahmen der Wettbewerbsaufsicht nicht greifen.

5. Voraussetzungen für die Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion schaffen

Die Weiterentwicklung der Gemeinschaft zu einer Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion erfordert gerade in einem schwierig gewordenen Umfeld verstärkte Anstrengungen zur wirtschaftlichen Konvergenz. Die im Vertrag der Europäischen Union festgelegten Konvergenzkriterien verlangen von den Mitgliedstaaten eine konsequente Stabilitäts- und eine solide Haushaltspolitik. Gemessen an diesen Zielen weist die Gemeinschaft noch spürbare Defizite auf. Dies hat auch die jüngste Krise im EWS deutlich gemacht. Die strikte Durchsetzung der Konvergenzkriterien als Maßstab für den Eintritt in die WWU ist unverzichtbar. Nur Mitgliedstaaten, die diese Kriterien erfüllen, dürfen an der Endstufe der WWU teilnehmen.

6. Die wirtschaftspolitischen Instrumente flexibel nutzen

Von herausragender Bedeutung für die wirtschaftliche Dynamik und Leistungskraft der Gemeinschaft wird es sein, wie flexibel sie auf unvorhergesehene Ereignisse und interne Störungen reagiert. Der Vorteil einer WWU, der sich daraus ergibt, daß alle Mitgliedstaaten die gleiche Währung nutzen können und Kapitaltransaktionen keinem Wechselkursrisiko mehr ausgesetzt sind, ist unbestritten. Andererseits stehen Wechselkursänderungen dann auch nicht mehr als wirtschaftspolitisches Anpassungsinstrument zur Verfügung. Sie können also auch nicht als Puffer bei unerwarteten Veränderungen oder zum Ausgleich regionaler Ungleichgewichte dienen. In einer WWU muß solchen Erscheinungen durch eine solide Finanz- und Geldpolitik und eine entsprechend größere Flexibilität der verbleibenden wirtschaftspolitischen Instrumente sowie durch ein entsprechendes lohnpolitisches Verhalten vorgebeugt werden.

7. Ungestörte internationale Wirtschaftsbeziehungen stärken Wachstum und Beschäftigung

Angesichts der engen Verflechtung der Gemeinschaft mit der Weltwirtschaft hängen Wachstum und Beschäftigung in entscheidender Weise von ungestörten wirtschaftlichen Beziehungen zu den Drittstaaten ab. Der freie Austausch von Waren, Dienstleistungen und Kapital gewährleistet die Vorteile der internationalen Arbeitsteilung. Handelsprotektionismus hingegen schränkt Arbeitsteilung und Wettbewerb ein, erhöht die Preise, wirkt innovationshemmend und gefährdet deshalb Arbeitsplätze. Offene Märkte liegen auch im besonderen Interesse der Entwicklungsländer. Die Europäische Gemeinschaft muß ein überzeugendes und glaubwürdiges Modell für eine Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion werden, in der Unternehmen aktiv sind, die sich dem internationalen Wettbewerb in Europa und auf Drittmarkten stellen.

8. Das GATT weiterentwickeln

Die Rahmenbedingungen für den internationalen Wettbewerb müssen weiter verbessert werden. Hierfür ist ein erfolgreicher Abschluß der Uruguay-Runde dringend notwendig. Tarifäre und nichttarifäre Handelshemmnisse müssen, ebenso wie Beschränkungen des internationalen Kapitalverkehrs, abgebaut werden. Im Interesse offener Märkte und freier Handelsbeziehungen muß die Europäische Gemeinschaft sehr behutsam mit ihrem handelspolitischen Instrumentarium umgehen. Langfristig ist das GATT vor allem im Sinne einer internationalen Wettbewerbsordnung fortzuentwickeln, in der Wettbewerbsbeschränkungen aufgrund von marktwidrigen Praktiken, staatlichen Subventionen und protektionistisch wirkenden Regionalisierungen verhindert werden. Zudem muß das GATT wie die Handelspolitik insgesamt das Ziel der nachhaltigen umweltverträglichen Entwicklung mit berücksichtigen.

9. Die Reformländer unterstützen

Mit dem Zusammenbruch der kommunistischen Systeme haben die Staaten Mittel- und Osteuropas sowie die Neuen Unabhängigen Staaten die Chance zu Marktwirtschaft und Demokratie erhalten. Diese Länder brauchen Hilfestellung bei ihren Reformanstrengungen (makroökonomische Beratung, Entwicklung des Rechtssystems, Aufbau einer leistungsfähigen Verwaltung, Aus- und Weiterbildung, Privatisierung, funktionsfähige Finanzmärkte, Entwicklung angemessener Sozialsysteme und Umweltschutz). Darüber hinaus muß die Gemeinschaft zur wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung der Reformländer auch dadurch beitragen, daß sie Beschränkungen des Handels mit diesen Staaten weiter abbaut. Für einen breiten Austausch von Waren, Dienstleistungen und Kapital sind vergleichbare marktwirtschaftliche Rahmenbedingungen wichtig.

10. Das Subsidiaritätsprinzip verwirklichen

Grundlage einer Konzeption zur Belebung der Wirtschaft und einer nachhaltigen Steigerung der Beschäftigung in Europa muß das Prinzip einer offenen sozialen Marktwirtschaft mit freiem Wettbewerb sein. Der Subsidiaritätsgrundsatz erleichtert es, den erforderlichen regionalen und nationalen Differenzierungen flexibel Rechnung zu tragen. Auch innerhalb der Mitgliedsländer dürfen die staatlichen Handlungsebenen nicht verwischt werden.

11. Die Systeme der sozialen Sicherung reformieren

Die demographische Entwicklung erfordert von den Mitgliedstaaten erhebliche Veränderungen in allen Bereichen von Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Die Lebenserwartung nimmt zu. Bei rückläufigen Geburtenzahlen wird im Jahr 2030 voraussichtlich jeder dritte Bürger der Gemeinschaft über 60 Jahre alt sein. Am stärksten betroffen werden durch die zunehmende Alterung

der Bevölkerung das Gesundheitswesen und die Altersversorgung. Die sozialen Sicherungssysteme, insbesondere dasjenige der Alterssicherung, müssen rechtzeitig an diese Entwicklung angepaßt werden, um gleichermaßen sowohl Unternehmen und Arbeitnehmer als auch Leistungsempfänger nicht über Gebühr zu belasten. Neue Konzepte sind erforderlich, damit längerfristig die berufliche Tätigkeit der erhöhten Lebenserwartung angepaßt, die Kenntnisse und Erfahrungen älterer Arbeitskräfte genutzt und die steigenden Anforderungen an die Sozialsysteme finanziert werden können. Gemeinhin gilt: Angemessene soziale Sicherung und notwendige Anpassungsflexibilität im Hinblick auf neue Rahmenbedingungen und veränderte wirtschaftliche Gegebenheiten sind keine Gegensätze.

12. Staatsinterventionen abbauen und die Haushaltskonsolidierung vorantreiben

Das für angemessenes Wachstum und hohe Beschäftigung notwendige Vertrauen von Investoren, Konsumenten und Finanzmärkten in die Wirtschaftspolitik der Mitgliedstaaten und der Gemeinschaft muß durch eine Erhöhung der Effizienz des öffentlichen Sektors gestärkt werden. Ein Abbau überflüssiger Regulierungen, eine Rückführung der Staatsquote, ein Abbau von Subventionen sowie eine Begrenzung der Transferzahlungen und eine Verringerung der öffentlichen Neuverschuldung sind notwendig. Ohne geordnete Staatsfinanzen in den Mitgliedstaaten können auch ein angemessenes Zinsniveau und die Stabilität des Preisniveaus nicht dauerhaft gewährleistet werden. Die Haushaltskonsolidierung in den Mitgliedstaaten muß von entsprechenden Anstrengungen der Gemeinschaft begleitet werden. Verringerten Staatsinterventionen auf nationaler Ebene dürfen nicht vermehrte Regulierungen und Subventionen der Gemeinschaft gegenüberstehen.

13. Rückführung der Neuverschuldung in Deutschland

Die Bundesregierung hat ein Konsolidierungspaket verabschiedet, das Bund, Länder und Gemeinden ab 1994 um 25 bis 35 Mrd DM jährlich entlasten wird. Damit wird die Bundesrepublik Deutschland ab 1996 das im Vertrag von Maastricht festgeschriebene Kriterium für die Begrenzung des Defizits des Gesamtstaats (höchstens 3 % des BIP) erfüllen. Deutliche Kürzungen werden bei den konsumtiven Ausgaben insbesondere im Sozialbereich vorgenommen. Damit wird die Struktur der öffentlichen Haushalte und langfristig ihre Wachstumswirksamkeit verbessert.

14. Wachstumsfördernde Maßnahmen der Bundesregierung

Zur Förderung einer wirtschaftlichen Belebung hat die Bundesregierung außerdem folgende Maßnahmen beschlossen:

- Ein Vorziehen öffentlicher Investitionen des Bundes ins erste Halbjahr 1994 mit Appell an Länder und Gemeinden, in gleicher Weise zu verfahren. Bahn und Post sind aufgerufen, dieser Initiative zu folgen.
- Eine Verlängerung des steuerlichen Schuldzinsenabzugs für eigengenutzte Wohnungsneubauten.
- Eine weitgehende Entschuldung des Wohnungsbestands und eine Verlängerung von steuerlichen Vergünstigungen für Wohnungsbauinvestitionen in den neuen Ländern.
- Eine Anhebung des Verfügungsrahmens für die Städtebauförderung auf 1 Mrd DM im kommenden Jahr.
- Eine Aufstockung der Gemeinschaftsaufgabe regionale Wirtschaftsförderung zugunsten der neuen Bundesländer um 600 Mio DM im Haushalt 1994.
- Eine Verkürzung der Planungsverfahren für Bau- und Verkehrsinvestitionen.
- Die Verabschiedung des Entwurfs eines neuen Arbeitszeitrechtsgesetzes, das den Spielraum für eine effizientere Verteilung der Arbeitszeiten vergrößert, die Ableistung von Nachtarbeit für Arbeiterinnen ermöglicht, dabei Nacht- und

Schichtarbeit arbeitsmedizinisch und sozialpolitisch flankiert sowie die notwendigen Ausnahmen vom grundsätzlichen Verbot der Beschäftigung von Arbeitnehmern an Sonn- und Feiertagen den Anforderungen moderner Produktionsverfahren und des internationalen Wettbewerbs anpaßt.

- Eine Erprobung privater, gewerblicher Arbeitsvermittlung in zweijährigen Modellversuchen.
- Eine Fortführung der bisherigen flexiblen Hermes-Deckungspolitik, insbesondere für Unternehmen in den neuen Bundesländern.

15. Investitionsfreundliche Steuerpolitik durchsetzen

Die Förderung von Wachstum und Beschäftigung sowie die Stärkung der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit sind dauerhafte Aufgaben der Steuerpolitik in den Mitgliedstaaten der Gemeinschaft. Die Bundesregierung hat diese Aufgaben auch bisher schon konsequent wahrgenommen, zuletzt durch das Standortsicherungsgesetz. Mit diesem Gesetz werden ab 01. Januar 1994 die Körperschaftsteuersätze und der Einkommensteuerhöchstsatz für gewerbliche Einkünfte gesenkt, und es wird auf die ursprünglich als Teil der Gegenfinanzierung vorgesehene Einschränkung der degressiven Abschreibung bei Gütern des beweglichen Anlagevermögens verzichtet.

Mittelfristig soll durch eine politische Einigung mit Ländern und Gemeinden im Rahmen der Haushaltsmöglichkeiten mit Vorrang die im internationalen Vergleich besonders nachteilige ertragsunabhängige Gewerkekaptal- und betriebliche Vermögensteuer abgebaut und die Gewerbeertragsteuer zurückgeführt werden. Darüber hinaus ist eine weitere Absenkung der Ertragsteuersätze bei gleichzeitiger Verbreiterung der Bemessungsgrundlage wünschenswert

Unter Wettbewerbsgesichtspunkten kommt im Europäischen Binnenmarkt einer weiteren Harmonisierung der indirekten Steuern besondere Bedeutung zu. Im Bereich der direkten Steuern ist eine Angleichung der Zinsbesteuerung erforderlich. Weitere

Maßnahmen können hier nach dem Subsidiaritätsprinzip nur bei grenzüberschreitenden Sachverhalten und unmittelbaren Auswirkungen der nationalen Normen auf den Binnenmarkt in Betracht kommen.

16. Beschäftigungsorientierte Lohnpolitik notwendig

Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung wird nur dann zu mehr Beschäftigung führen, wenn Arbeitskosten und -produktivität nicht weiter auseinanderdriften. Auch Flexibilität und strukturelle Differenzierung der Lohnhöhe nach Branchen, Regionen und Qualifikationen sind von elementarer Bedeutung für eine Sicherung bestender und die Schaffung neuer Arbeitsplätze. Arbeitsmarktpolitische Instrumente sind vor allem in beschäftigungspolitischen Anpassungsphasen notwendig. Zentrales Element einer aktiven Arbeitsmarktpolitik muß die Qualifizierung der Arbeitnehmer sein. Allerdings kann die Arbeitsmarktpolitik keine dauerhaft wettbewerbsfähigen Arbeitsplätze schaffen. Es gilt eine Brücke zu bauen zwischen denjenigen, die einen Arbeitsplatz haben und denjenigen, die erwerbslos sind. Die Tarifpartner sollten in ihren Verhandlungen die Belange der Arbeitslosen stärker berücksichtigen.

17. Die Lohnzusatzkosten begrenzen

Mit kritischer Aufmerksamkeit sind auch die Lohnzusatzkosten einschließlich der Sozialversicherungsbeiträge zu betrachten, da sie in Europa im Vergleich zum Lohn ein hohes Niveau erreicht haben. Die Entwicklung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Belastung durch Abgaben für soziale Leistungen muß möglichst begrenzt werden. Hieraus ergibt sich nicht nur eine Aufgabe für den Staat, sondern vor allem auch für die Tarifpartner. Zumindest in Deutschland beruht der größte Teil der Lohnzusatzkosten auf tarifvertraglichen Vereinbarungen. Neue soziale Maßnahmen mit Belastungseffekten sollten nur beschlossen werden, wenn Einschränkungen an anderer Stelle erfolgen, wie dies in Deutschland bei der Einführung der gesetzlichen Pflegeversicherung vorgesehen ist.

18. Die Arbeitsmärkte deregulieren

Arbeitsrechtliche und andere Schutzregelungen haben eine zweiseitige Wirkung: Was als Schutz für die Beschäftigten angelegt ist, kann als Eintrittsbarriere für diejenigen wirken, die keine Arbeit haben. Je rigider die Schutzregelungen für die Arbeitsbesitzer sind, desto chancenloser machen sie die Arbeitslosen. Die gesetzlichen Arbeitsmarktregelungen müssen deshalb auf derartige Wirkungen hin durchleuchtet und gegebenenfalls angepaßt werden. Entsprechend sollten auch die Tarifparteien ihre Vereinbarungen überprüfen. Eine Ausweitung der Erwerbstätigkeit und ein Abbau insbesondere der strukturellen Unterbeschäftigung erfordert eine reibungslosere Anpassung von Arbeitsangebot und -nachfrage an veränderte Situationen auf den Arbeitsmärkten. Dabei bedeuten mehr Flexibilität und mehr Wahlfreiheit z.B. in der Bestimmung der Tages-, Wochen- und Jahresarbeitszeit gleichermaßen mehr Möglichkeiten in der Produktion und die Erfüllung der individuellen Arbeitszeitwünsche vieler Menschen.

Die vertrauensvolle Zusammenarbeit im Unternehmen stärkt den sozialen Frieden und trägt durch Förderung der Motivation auch zur Steigerung der Produktivität bei. Deswegen sollten möglichst viele größere Unternehmen einen auch grenzüberschreitenden Dialog mit den Arbeitnehmervertretungen praktizieren. Die Schaffung europäischer Betriebsräte unter Berücksichtigung des Grundsatzes der vertrauensvollen Zusammenarbeit würde diesen Dialog erleichtern.

19. Das Qualifizierungsniveau sichern und heben

Eine gute berufliche Qualifikation, die dazu beiträgt, die Fähigkeit zu autonomem und innovativem Handeln zu entwickeln, stärkt die Produktivität der Volkswirtschaft und damit auch ihre Position im internationalen Wettbewerb. Ausgaben für Bildung und Wissenschaft sind Investitionen in die Zukunft von Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft. Für die berufliche Aus- und Weiterbildung kommt den Unternehmen eine wichtige Rolle zu.

Maßnahmen zur Qualifizierung der Arbeitnehmer zahlen sich für das einzelne Unternehmen aus und sind Bestandteil einer umsichtigen Unternehmensplanung. In den Mitgliedstaaten ist eine Überprüfung der Bildungsinhalte und -strukturen unter den Gesichtspunkten der Effizienz, der Qualitätssteigerung und der Anforderungen des Arbeitsmarktes erforderlich. Dort, wo im internationalen Vergleich sehr lange Bildungszeiten bestehen, ist eine Straffung notwendig. Die berufliche Bildung muß als attraktive Alternative zum Hochschulstudium weiterentwickelt werden. Die Erstausbildung muß durch eine das Arbeitsleben begleitende Weiterbildung ergänzt werden. Die Realisierung dieses Grundsatzes muß allerdings in der Verantwortung der Mitgliedstaaten, der Sozialpartner und des Einzelnen verbleiben.

Die Bildungsprogramme der Gemeinschaft sind ein fester Bestandteil der europäischen Zusammenarbeit geworden. Das Erlernen von Fremdsprachen und der Erwerb von Kenntnissen über andere Länder, der Austausch von Jugendlichen und jungen Erwachsenen in und nach der Ausbildung sowie die Zusammenarbeit von Hochschulen und Forschungseinrichtungen gewinnen zunehmend an Bedeutung. Die Grundvoraussetzung für eine größere Mobilität auf dem europäischen Arbeitsmarkt muß im Rahmen der jeweiligen nationalen Bildungssysteme geschaffen werden. Auch nach Inkrafttreten des Vertrags über die Europäische Union bleibt es Sache der Mitgliedstaaten, über Inhalt und Gestalt ihrer Bildungssysteme zu entscheiden.

20. Die Deregulierungspolitik vorantreiben

Rechtsnormen z.B. zum Schutz von Verbrauchern und Umwelt sind wichtige Eckpfeiler der marktwirtschaftlichen Ordnung und notwendige Grundlage für den Wirtschaftsverkehr. Es muß aber darauf geachtet werden, daß die zunehmende Regulierung und die wachsende Komplexität der Vorschriften Bürger und Unternehmen nicht über Gebühr in ihrer Kreativität und Initiative hemmen und mit Kosten belasten. Auch die Europäische Gemeinschaft muß ihre Vorschriften daran orientieren.

Dazu gehört die strikte Einhaltung des Subsidiaritätsprinzips einschließlich einer Prüfung der Frage, ob nicht die Regulierungsdichte verringert werden kann.

21. Die Privatisierung fortsetzen

Die Erfahrungen zeigen, daß gewerbliche Unternehmen in öffentlicher Hand in aller Regel weniger effizient wirtschaften als private Unternehmen. Eine Privatisierung öffentlicher Unternehmen und die private Durchführung bislang öffentlich wahrgenommener Aufgaben bieten nicht nur die Möglichkeit, den Wettbewerb zu beleben und Existenzgründungen zu ermutigen; sie bieten auch die Chance, beim Staat gebundenes Kapital zu mobilisieren und den Finanzbedarf der öffentlichen Hände zu mindern. Die Mitgliedsländer und ihre verschiedenen staatlichen Ebenen sollten von den ihnen gebotenen Möglichkeiten der Privatisierung von Beteiligungen an Unternehmen und bislang öffentlichen Aufgaben intensiven Gebrauch machen.

22. Die Innovationsfähigkeit stärken

Die internationale Wettbewerbsfähigkeit des Wirtschaftsstandorts Europa wird wesentlich bestimmt durch die Innovationsfähigkeit der Wirtschaft, einen hohen Ausbildungsstand, eine leistungsfähige Forschungsinfrastruktur, ein qualitativ hohes Niveau der Grundlagenforschung sowie von Innovationen fördernden Rahmenbedingungen.

Die europäischen Unternehmen müssen bei Forschung und Entwicklung sowie Anwendung von Schlüsseltechnologien eine Spitzenposition einnehmen, um sich auf den wachstumsstarken Märkten technologisch anspruchsvoller Produkte zu behaupten. Dazu ist eine enge, auch grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit zwischen Unternehmen, Hochschulen und außeruniversitären Forschungseinrichtungen notwendig. Die rasche Umsetzung neuer Technologien in neue Produkte und Verfahren liegt in der Verantwortung der Unternehmen. Die treibende Kraft dabei ist ein funktionsfähiger Wettbewerb auf offenen Märkten.

Gemeinschaft und Mitgliedstaaten müssen ihre Maßnahmen zur Forschungs-, Technologie- und Innovationsförderung nach dem Subsidiaritätsprinzip ausgestalten und die Koordinierung ihrer Forschungspolitiken intensivieren. Das vierte Rahmenprogramm für die Forschung der Gemeinschaft wird neben anderen auf internationale Kooperation ausgerichteten Initiativen wie z.B. EUREKA verstärkt grenzüberschreitende Innovationsstrategien unterstützen. Dabei kommt auch der entwicklungsbegleitenden Normung erhebliche Bedeutung zu.

Insbesondere für kleine und mittlere Unternehmen ist der rasche Zugang zu neuen Technologien ein wesentlicher Wettbewerbsfaktor. Deshalb muß ihr Zugang zu laufenden Förderprogrammen der Gemeinschaft verbessert werden.

23. Informations- und Telekommunikationsstrukturen im Wettbewerb ausbauen

Die Entwicklung von leistungsfähigen Informations- und Telekommunikationsstrukturen innerhalb der Mitgliedstaaten, innerhalb der Gemeinschaft, aber auch weltweit ist angesichts des rasch wachsenden Informationsbedarfs eine wesentliche Voraussetzung für wirtschaftlichen Wohlstand und ein hohes Maß an Beschäftigung. Dafür bedarf es der Weiterentwicklung wettbewerblicher Strukturen in diesem Bereich und der marktkonformen Regulierung marktbeherrschender Anbieter.

Es muß vermieden werden, den Auf- und Ausbau von europäischen Telekommunikationsnetzen vorwiegend unter dem Gesichtspunkt zu sehen, der europäischen Industrie Großaufträge zu verschaffen; dabei bestünde die Gefahr, daß diese Strukturen am Bedarf vorbei entwickelt werden. Eines entsprechenden zusätzlichen Ausbauprogramms der Gemeinschaft bedarf es aus diesem Grunde nicht. Der Infrastrukturauf- und -ausbau ist vielmehr Sache der Telekommunikationsunternehmen.

Die Gemeinschaft sollte in der Telekommunikation auf die "Interoperabilität" der Netze sowie darüber hinaus auf die Schaffung von Rahmenbedingungen achten, die auf Deregulierung und unverfälschten Wettbewerb ausgerichtet sind. Die aus einem Abbau von Monopolstellungen und Marktzutrittsschranken resultierenden Kostensenkungen und Produktivitätszuwächse kommen der wirtschaftlichen Dynamik in der Gemeinschaft zugute.

24. Die europäischen Verkehrsnetze ausbauen

Eine qualitativ hochwertige Verkehrsinfrastruktur ist notwendig für Erhalt und Verbesserung der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der europäischen Unternehmen. Generell kommt beim Ausbau der Infrastruktur der Beseitigung von Engpässen, der Anbindung peripherer Räume sowie einer optimalen Vernetzung und Verknüpfung der Verkehrsträger unter Einsatz moderner Telekommunikationsmittel besondere Bedeutung zu. Die Reformstaaten in Mittel- und Osteuropa und in der ehemaligen Sowjetunion können sich nur dann optimal entwickeln, wenn moderne Verkehrsstrassen diese Wirtschaftsräume mit der Gemeinschaft verbinden. Die insbesondere in der Wachstumsinitiative von Edinburgh verankerte Finanzierung transeuropäischer Netze liefert einen wichtigen Anstoß für die Einrichtung dieser Netze. Grundsätzlich ist eine private Finanzierung des neuen Infrastrukturbedarfs anzustreben; sie ist Teil der Politik für einen nachhaltigen Wirtschaftsaufschwung.

25. Eine sichere, kostengünstige und umweltverträgliche Energieversorgung gewährleisten

Eine sichere, kostengünstige und umweltverträgliche Energieversorgung ist eine wesentliche Voraussetzung für die wirtschaftliche Zukunft Europas. Der Binnenmarkt erfordert auch im Energiebereich - bei Beachtung der nationalen Besonderheiten, z. B. der unterschiedlichen Strukturen bei einheimischen Ressourcen - eine schrittweise Verbesserung der Wettbewerbsverhältnisse. Dies erfordert den Abbau staatlicher

Handelsmonopole, die Harmonisierung technischer Normen, die Öffnung des staatlichen Beschaffungswesens und die Verbesserung der Transparenz von Energiepreisen.

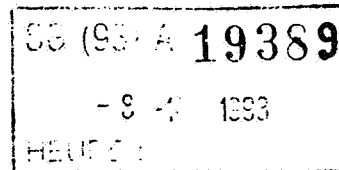
26. Die Umweltpolitik am Verursacherprinzip orientieren

Eine am Verursacher- und Vorsorgeprinzip ausgerichtete Umweltpolitik ist die beste Grundlage für den effizienten Schutz der natürlichen Ressourcen Wasser, Luft und Boden. Für einen gesamtwirtschaftlich kostengünstigen Umweltschutz ist in der Gemeinschaft ein zunehmender Einsatz marktwirtschaftlicher Instrumente erforderlich, wie es auch das 5. EG-Umweltaktionsprogramm vorsieht. Die Einführung neuer Umweltabgaben setzt voraus, daß befriedigende Lenkungseffekte erwartet werden können und die Belastung der Wirtschaft sich insgesamt nicht erhöht. Dabei ist eine internationale Abstimmung anzustreben. In diesem Rahmen spricht sich die Bundesregierung mit Nachdruck für die Einführung einer zumindest EG-weiten CO₂-Energiesteuer als wichtige Maßnahme im Rahmen der internationalen Klimaschutzstrategie aus.



*El Embajador
Representante Permanente de España
ante las Comunidades Europeas*

Bruselas, 7 de octubre de 1993



Excmo. Sr.
D. David Williamson
Secretario General
Comisión de las Comunidades Europeas
BRUSELAS

Señor Secretario General:

Tengo el gusto de remitirle las propuestas españolas, a tener en cuenta, en la elaboración del Libro Blanco sobre "Crecimiento, competitividad y empleo en la Comunidad Europea". Esta comunicación ha sido enviada directamente por el Ministro español de Economía y Hacienda al Vicepresidente Christophersen.

Le saluda atentamente,

Camilo Barcia

SECRETARIA DEL EMBAJADOR
ESPAÑA - CEE
FECHA SALIDA: 7.10.1993
NUMERO: 129

El Consejo Europeo de Copenhague del pasado mes de junio invitó a la Comisión a presentar, en diciembre de 1993, un Libro Blanco sobre la estrategia a medio plazo en favor del crecimiento, la competitividad y el empleo en la Comunidad, y solicitó de los Estados miembros que colaborasen, aportando propuestas sobre elementos específicos que pudieran incluirse en el mismo.

Como respuesta a esta iniciativa, el Gobierno español ha elaborado el presente documento en el que, junto a un análisis sobre la situación económica en la Comunidad, se recogen algunas líneas de actuación que deberían incorporarse a la estrategia a medio plazo de la Comunidad y los Estados miembros en pro de un crecimiento estable y sostenido que garantice la generación de empleo. Con la misma finalidad, el Gobierno español envió, en julio pasado, el Libro sobre Reforma del Mercado de Trabajo presentado al Consejo Económico y Social con objeto de orientar el debate con los interlocutores sociales sobre la reforma estructural del mercado laboral español.

I. LA SITUACION ECONOMICA EN LA COMUNIDAD.

Durante la pasada década, la construcción europea ha experimentado un avance decisivo: la aprobación del Acta Única, la consecución del Mercado Interior y, por último, el Tratado de la Unión Europea, constituyen las piezas clave de este proceso. En cada una de estas fases, no sólo se ha conseguido eliminar la mayoría de las restricciones a la libre circulación de personas, mercancías, servicios y capitales, y desarrollar políticas comunes en nuevos ámbitos; además, se ha dotado a la Comunidad de competencias en Política Exterior y de Seguridad Común, que van permitir que Europa se pronuncie con una sola voz en el contexto internacional; y, finalmente, hemos diseñado un proceso que conducirá a la Unión Económica y Monetaria, fundado en la solidaridad y la colaboración entre los Estados.

Sin embargo, el apoyo social al proyecto europeo se ha visto empañado por la coincidencia de la puesta en marcha de los programas de convergencia, fundados en políticas de estabilidad, con una evolución negativa de las economías de los Estados miembros, propiciando un fenómeno de identificación que es preciso desterrar. En efecto, la caída de la actividad, propia de los fenómenos cíclicos -el importante descenso de la renta, la caída de la inversión, el agravamiento de los desequilibrios presupuestarios, la fuerte inestabilidad cambiaria y, fundamentalmente, el elevado aumento de la tasa de paro- ha puesto de manifiesto una serie de carencias estructurales de las economías comunitarias que, de no ser resueltas, pueden acabar generando una fuerte desconfianza en el futuro inmediato del proyecto europeo.

Por ello, los Gobiernos europeos se enfrentan hoy a un reto: ser capaces de transmitir a la sociedad que es preciso profundizar en la construcción comunitaria; y que, no sólo no deben asociarse las bajas tasas de crecimiento y el elevado nivel de paro con la puesta en práctica de políticas de convergencia sino que, por el contrario, la base del crecimiento sostenido y estable en un mundo abierto, que permita mantener niveles de empleo satisfactorios, exige perseverar en las políticas seguidas hasta ahora, y profundizar en las reformas estructurales precisas para preservar la capacidad competitiva de las economías europeas.

Romper con el pasado económico reciente, recurriendo a políticas de expansión presupuestaria, no asegura el retorno a superiores niveles de empleo. Existe, muy al contrario, entre las diversas instituciones y organismos que hasta ahora han examinado las causas de la escasa capacidad demostrada por las economías comunitarias para generar empleo, un consenso generalizado, tanto en el diagnóstico como en las propuestas de actuación, que avala la afirmación anterior. Todos ellos coinciden en señalar que:

- a) El desempleo en la Comunidad tiene un "componente estructural" cuyo origen se encuentra en ciertos aspectos de las regulaciones nacionales vigentes en los mercados de trabajo, y en determinados efectos, no deseados, que sobre el funcionamiento de dichos mercados se derivan de algunos instrumentos y mecanismos de financiación de los Estados de Bienestar europeos.

- b) El "componente cíclico" del desempleo en la Comunidad no es sustancialmente distinto del que se registra en otras economías desarrolladas. El rasgo distintivo de los mercados de trabajo europeos es, sin embargo, que este "componente cíclico" tiende a perpetuarse, como bien evidencia el hecho de que Europa haya acabado cada ciclo completo de expansión/recesión con un nivel de desempleo mayor del que registraba al comenzar la fase recesiva.

Tanto la teoría económica, como la observación y análisis de las estadísticas del mercado de trabajo europeo, muestran el camino que habría que seguir para registrar mejores resultados: mayor grado de flexibilidad en las legislaciones laborales y, en particular, en la concreción de las formas y modalidades contractuales; redefinición de los Instrumentos del Estado de Bienestar, a fin de hacer posible su sostenibilidad financiera en el medio plazo, así como para garantizar una mayor neutralidad sobre la oferta y demanda de trabajo; reorientación del peso de las políticas de empleo hacia las denominadas políticas activas -formación, asesoramiento, e intermediación en el mercado-; y, finalmente, creación de un entorno que favorezca que la evolución de los salarios reales se ajuste con mayor rapidez a la situación cíclica de la economía y, por tanto, del mercado de trabajo.

Si los avances logrados en esta dirección no han sido hasta la fecha suficientes, la razón no es la falta de consenso técnico sino, fundamentalmente, la constatación de las dificultades políticas que conlleva una reforma de este calado, que supondría una redefinición de las reglas de juego sobre las que se han asentado las sociedades europeas de las últimas cuatro décadas.

II. EL PROYECTO COMUNITARIO Y LA SALIDA DE LA CRISIS ECONOMICA, EN EL MARCO DE LA UNION ECONOMICA Y MONETARIA.

1. CUESTIONES PENDIENTES.

La consolidación del proyecto comunitario y la salida de la crisis económica exigen un consenso social sobre las reformas a acometer, y un consenso entre los Estados miembros para definir y ejecutar coordinadamente las políticas en favor del crecimiento, la competitividad y el empleo.

Los Gobiernos europeos han reconocido que avanzar en las reformas exige lograr un nuevo compromiso entre partidos políticos, sindicatos, y organizaciones empresariales. Posiblemente, la aparición de ese deseable compromiso requiere que todos los agentes perciban con rotundidad que la actual situación es altamente inestable, y que interesa a todos abandonar cuanto antes estrategias no cooperativas para comenzar a encarar la construcción de lo que deberán ser las bases de la futura prosperidad europea.

Para sentar dichas bases, los Gobiernos deben despejar, absolutamente, las incertidumbres que en los últimos doce meses han podido suscitarse sobre el grado de compromiso político con los objetivos de convergencia definidos en el Tratado de la Unión Europea, así como reforzar la percepción de los ciudadanos en general, y de los agentes económicos en particular, sobre su voluntad de llevar a cabo, de forma realista y coordinada, el proyecto comunitario.

En cuanto al modelo, debe quedar claro que la Europa comunitaria es la Europa de la libre circulación de bienes, factores y servicios en la que, sin ambigüedades, la idea de Europa-fortaleza no tiene cabida. Pero también debe quedar claro que la Europa de la Unión Económica y Monetaria a la que nos dirigimos mantiene como valor irrenunciable la solidaridad, tanto en el contexto mundial como en el ámbito interno; que considera la cohesión como un principio básico de actuación, que debe inspirar todas las políticas comunitarias; y que, por ende, quiere garantizar a sus ciudadanos

unos niveles de protección social adecuados, cuya misma viabilidad exige, ineludiblemente, que no se transformen en un obstáculo para lograr un nivel adecuado de empleo.

Ante estas perspectivas, la sociedad europea se va a ver inmediatamente enfrentada a tres cuestiones básicas:

- a) El papel a jugar por la Comunidad Europea en un mundo en el que se haya preservado la noción de que el libre comercio es el motor del crecimiento, con lo que esto conlleva de análisis de las ventajas y desventajas comparativas de las economías comunitarias y, en especial, del funcionamiento integral de los mercados de trabajo europeos.
- b) Cómo debe relanzarse el proceso de convergencia nominal y real de las economías comunitarias para garantizar que la construcción de la UEM cuenta con bases económicas sólidas, que complementan y hacen consistente el compromiso político de los Gobiernos. En este proceso, el punto central será la adopción de iniciativas nacionales y comunitarias que prioricen la generación de empleo y la salida de la recesión.
- c) Cómo se instrumentan mecanismos transparentes e inequívocos que permitan asegurar que los esfuerzos y sacrificios a realizar se distribuyen de forma equitativa entre toda la sociedad, a fin de asegurar la aceptación de los cambios estructurales que es preciso desarrollar.

2. RECUPERACION DEL CLIMA ECONOMICO.

Recuperar la confianza de los ciudadanos y reconstruir un clima económico satisfactorio exigirá algo más que meras declaraciones de intenciones. Ahora, los compromisos macroeconómicos y las reformas estructurales tendrán que ser mucho más concretos, y estar dotados de un preciso calendario en el que se incluyan también los mecanismos que habrían de activarse en caso de que, por razones endógenas o exógenas, el escenario económico sea peor que el inicialmente previsto.

Junto a estos compromisos calendados y transparentes, parece inevitable que se produzca un reequilibrio del protagonismo relativo de las políticas de demanda. La apreciable reducción en las expectativas inflacionistas y la profunda debilidad de las economías europeas, así como la incidencia que sobre esa posición cíclica tienen los costes del servicio de la deuda financiera acumulada en la segunda parte de los años 80, abren la posibilidad de instrumentar una política monetaria menos restrictiva que la que hasta ahora ha venido practicándose.

Concretar ese margen exige, desde luego, que el signo de la política fiscal y la evolución de los salarios se modifique respecto al pasado más reciente. En otros términos, la posibilidad de inducir un impulso positivo desde la política monetaria está condicionada a que la política presupuestaria deje de ser abiertamente expansiva, y a que la evolución salarial no comprometa el horizonte de estabilidad cambiaria y de precios que se pretende mantener. En este sentido, es evidente que la certeza en el horizonte económico inmediato que puede traer consigo la generalización de acuerdos entre los agentes sociales sería altamente deseable, al permitir adelantar en el tiempo el efecto positivo de la mayor relajación monetaria.

En nuestra opinión, la envolvente formal de todos estos posibles elementos -reformas de las legislaciones laborales, redefinición de los instrumentos y mecanismos de financiación del Estado de Bienestar y reequilibrio del protagonismo relativo de las políticas de demanda- no puede ser otra que la actualización y homogeneización de los programas de convergencia. Actualización imprescindible para dotar de consistencia y credibilidad al objetivo final de la UEM, ya que el brusco empeoramiento de la posición de partida de la totalidad de los países hace ineludible una profunda revisión de los compromisos nacionales asumidos hace unos meses.

Paracería oportuno que, en esta ocasión, cada país pudiese identificar lo que cada uno de los distintos bloques del Programa podría razonablemente aportar al objetivo prioritario de la creación de empleo. De esta forma, no sólo sería evidente que la mejor forma de garantizar la maximización y ulterior sostenimiento del nivel de empleo es mantener políticas económicas de crecimiento sostenido que propicien la convergencia nominal con los restantes países del área.

Además, se harían evidentes los costes en términos de empleo no creado que se derivarían de la decisión de no modificar los soportes legales sobre los que se erigen las actuales barreras a la creación de empleo, o el nivel de paro que sería preciso asumir en caso de que se perpetuasen prácticas y comportamientos de los agentes sociales que son incompatibles con el objetivo central de maximización del empleo.

3. CONVERGENCIA NOMINAL Y EMPLEO.

Existe un amplio consenso en señalar que la reducida capacidad europea de generación de empleo se debe fundamentalmente a tres factores:

- a) En primer lugar, en las últimas décadas se han ido acumulando en las legislaciones laborales europeas disposiciones que, aunque diseñadas con un propósito tuitivo, han dificultado el funcionamiento del mercado de trabajo, y limitado la capacidad de generación de empleo.
- b) En segundo lugar, la Europa comunitaria ha optado por un modelo de crecimiento basado en una relativamente elevada intensidad de capital y, por consiguiente, ha favorecido la creación de empleos con aparentemente elevados niveles de productividad y remuneración, en detrimento de la creación de empleos con niveles de productividad más reducidos. Todo ello pese a que éstos eran en Europa muy abundantes al iniciarse la década de los 60, como consecuencia del elevado peso que en nuestras economías tenían el sector agrícola y ciertos servicios.
- c) Por último, los salarios reales en la Comunidad han crecido mucho más rápidamente que los de sus competidores comerciales, en un momento en el que los pasos hacia una economía mundial integrada eran decisivos. Obviamente, esta evolución del precio relativo del trabajo ha acelerado la mutación del modelo productivo europeo hacia una mayor sustitución del factor trabajo.

Las consecuencias de este "modelo", confesadamente esquemático pero útil, son evidentes. Para que los países comunitarios puedan seguir confiando en los "empleos de alta productividad" como única fuente de creación de empleo, es imprescindible que el contexto macroeconómico permita generar el ahorro necesario para financiar los enormes flujos de inversión en capital fijo, tecnología y capital humano que la sostenibilidad de este esquema de desarrollo exige. Tan pronto como esas condiciones no se produzcan, el proceso de creación de empleo europeo tenderá a paralizarse, o a tornarse negativo.

Es evidente que los países comunitarios no deberían, en modo alguno, dejar de poner énfasis en el reforzamiento de este modelo, puesto que, en buena medida, será su posicionamiento en los sectores de alta productividad lo que determine su papel en la división internacional del trabajo y, por tanto, sus potenciales mejoras de bienestar. Por eso, mejorar el nivel de ahorro -reduciendo drásticamente el desahorro público y mejorando la eficiencia con la que los sistemas financieros asignan este recurso escaso- y fomentar la inversión en tecnología y formación, son políticas que deberán considerarse prioritarias en el diseño de la estrategia europea.

Pero no sería razonable pensar que Europa va a reducir drásticamente su nivel actual de paro confiando sólo en esos empleos de alta cualificación. Ni nuestros actuales niveles de formación profesional, ni nuestro posicionamiento en los mercados, permiten esperar que en dicha categoría pueda crearse la oferta de empleo necesaria para reducir en 10 ó 15 millones los actuales desempleados. Para conseguir este objetivo, Europa debe fomentar también, necesariamente, la creación de empleos en sectores intensivos en mano de obra, y actuar en al menos tres frentes:

- a) Modificando las legislaciones nacionales que regulan el mercado de trabajo, a fin de que la mayor flexibilidad de los mercados de bienes y servicios encuentre su contrapartida en una mayor flexibilidad laboral. Actuaciones en el campo de los contratos a tiempo parcial, distribución de la jornada de trabajo y contratos de aprendizaje, podrían tener efectos muy positivos sobre la demanda de empleo.

No quiere decirse con ello que la revisión de la legislación laboral haya de perseguir la simple desregulación, entendida como eliminación normativa, que permita una total autonomía a la voluntad individual de las partes. Muy al contrario, debe buscarse el establecimiento de un marco institucional del mercado de trabajo y una regulación de los derechos de los trabajadores que permita la adaptación de las empresas a las necesidades cambiantes del mercado, mejorando su competitividad y, con ello, su capacidad de mantener y generar empleo. Se trataría, en definitiva, de que las normas laborales concedan un amplio espacio al desarrollo de la negociación colectiva y de que, al establecer las garantías para los trabajadores, tengan presentes las necesidades de adaptación de las empresas.

- b) Revisando aquellos instrumentos y mecanismos de financiación del Estado de Bienestar, que producen efectos contrarios al principio de solidaridad para el que se diseñaron. Es evidente que el justificable deseo de la sociedad europea de establecer una amplia red de solidaridad ha tenido un éxito considerable por cuanto que, en términos generales, ha conseguido mantener un nivel de cohesión social francamente elevado.

Sin embargo, hay que tener en cuenta, por una parte, que estos esquemas no han conseguido evitar la segmentación de la sociedad europea entre aquellos que tienen trabajo y aquellos que no lo tienen. Por otra, que la pervivencia de los sistemas de protección social depende de que se mantenga su equilibrio financiero. Dado que el gasto social no puede desequilibrar estos sistemas, ni tampoco restar posibilidades de desarrollo a otros gastos públicos que pueden favorecer la socialmente necesaria dinamización de la economía, es preciso adecuar las medidas protectoras a las necesidades reales que deben cubrir. Para ello deben utilizarse criterios tales como ceñir las medidas a las estrictas causas que motivan la prestación pública de rentas alternativas a las de trabajo, o considerar de forma global el conjunto de medidas protectoras que puede derivarse de la combinación de distintos niveles o fórmulas de protección.

- c) Promoviendo la liberalización del sector servicios de las economías europeas, a fin de conseguir que su crecimiento absorba parte de los actuales desempleados, a la vez que reduce las tensiones inflacionistas que generalmente caracterizan a este sector.

La razón básica que puede aducirse para justificar las reformas estructurales anteriormente esbozadas, frente a quienes apoyan únicamente políticas expansivas para reducir el desempleo, la proporciona la mera extrapolación de lo que ocurriría en la Comunidad en el período 1993-97 si tan sólo confiásemos en la recuperación como motor de la creación de empleo: relacionando el crecimiento estimado de la población activa potencial en dicho período -en torno al 0,5% anual-, con el crecimiento económico no destructor de empleo que se desprende de nuestra experiencia más reciente, y aún partiendo de las hipótesis más optimistas, resulta que, en ausencia de reformas estructurales, la tasa de paro seguirá aumentando, como mínimo, hasta 1995. Y aunque con posterioridad la Comunidad recupere una senda de crecimiento similar al experimentado en épocas pasadas, seguirá manteniendo un número de desempleados político, social y económicamente inaceptable.

Europa no puede ser timorata a la hora de fijar sus objetivos de creación de empleo en la presente década. No deberíamos conformarnos con que en 1997 nuestra tasa de paro sea igual a la que existía antes de iniciarse la actual recesión, ni con que el proceso de expansión que ahora prevemos para 1994-97 no permita reducir la tasa de desempleo hasta niveles más aceptables.

Puesto que queremos mantener el proyecto comunitario vivo y, simultáneamente, preservar la combinación de equidad y eficiencia que caracteriza a las actuales sociedades europeas, es más que evidente que el camino está en las reformas estructurales a las que antes se ha hecho mención, que deben producirse en el contexto de libertad sindical, negociación colectiva y protección social propio de la cultura europea de las últimas cuatro décadas. Mejor de forma coordinada, que como mero proceso de acumulación de reformas nacionales aisladas. En todo caso, mejor ahora que después.

4. EQUIDAD, DISTRIBUCION DE LOS SACRIFICIOS Y PACTO SOCIAL.

Como ya se ha dicho, los más serios obstáculos al desarrollo efectivo de las reformas estructurales propuestas no nacen de su cuestionamiento económico, sino del rechazo social que suscita lo que ampliamente se percibe como un mero proceso de deterioro del Estado del Bienestar, y de retroceso en los derechos adquiridos de los trabajadores.

La realidad es que para muchos ciudadanos europeos el Estado del Bienestar es ya, "de facto", un puro concepto nocional. En su actual configuración hay muy pocos sistemas europeos de protección social que puedan, sincera y honestamente, seguir manteniendo ante sus ciudadanos la promesa de proporcionar, indefinidamente, los servicios y las transferencias que hoy generan.

El problema real no es, pues, si estamos o no decididos a "abandonar" los actuales esquemas de protección y solidaridad sino, más bien, si estamos preparados para explicar qué tipo de medidas vamos a adoptar ahora para evitar que la quiebra de los mecanismos tradicionales hunda a la sociedad europea en el desconcierto, la intranquilidad y la más profunda frustración.

En la tradición cultural y política europea siempre ha sido posible detectar una predisposición a aceptar determinadas pérdidas de eficiencia productiva, a fin de preservar ciertos niveles de cohesión social. No es éste un modelo al que Europa deba necesariamente renunciar, puesto que bien apreciables son sus ventajas y sus externalidades. Pero es igualmente evidente que se está produciendo un insostenible desajuste entre los objetivos deseables y los medios que se utilizan para tratar de alcanzarlos.

En la actual configuración de los Estados de Bienestar europeos, los costes de eficiencia son tan desproporcionados que amenazan la viabilidad del sistema completo. La aparición de nuevas necesidades, la cambiante naturaleza de los grupos a proteger, los avances tecnológicos en áreas como la salud, la aparición en el sector privado de proveedores más eficientes que el Estado de determinados bienes públicos, hacen sospechar que Europa podría mantener su combinación deseada de eficiencia/equidad, si estuviese dispuesta a redefinir sus esquemas de solidaridad, introdujese nuevos instrumentos menos susceptibles de generar usos abusivos y problemas de "moral hazard", y replantease el papel monopolístico del sector público como gestor de la oferta de alguno de ellos.

Obstinarse en mantener intacta la actual situación amenaza con inducir un proceso más o menos gradual de recortes en las prestaciones, o aumentos en el precio pagado por el consumidor, que difícilmente dejará de tener un alto coste político, además de sembrar la intranquilidad en la sociedad europea.

Una argumentación análoga es aplicable al mercado de trabajo. No se trata ya de decidir si las preferencias sociales se inclinan en favor de un determinado contrato de trabajo al que es inherente la estabilidad y un elevado y creciente nivel de retribución. De lo que se trata es de poner de manifiesto que mantener a ultranza ese tipo de contrato, como único modelo, supone asumir costes muy elevados en términos de desempleo.

Repartir más equitativamente los costes de la actual situación requiere que se produzca un equilibrio entre los niveles de protección de los que ahora gozan los distintos grupos en los que se segmenta el mercado de trabajo europeo. Se trata de que el concepto de equidad no sea tan sólo un absoluto de obligada referencia, sino que se redefinan el conjunto de normas y reglas de juego para que se garantice que la equidad tiene una dimensión vertical (capital versus trabajo), pero también otra horizontal que no se vea distorsionada por la utilización abusiva y la desnaturalización de esquemas que responden a objetivos nobles y colectivamente deseados.

Resituar nuestros Estados de Bienestar y nuestros mercados de trabajo en estas nuevas coordenadas es un reto al que deben hacer frente los Gobiernos y los agentes sociales. De ahí la conveniencia de que, preservando las responsabilidades políticas y sociales de cada uno de ellos, se avance a través de un diálogo social amplio y transparente.

La opción óptima sería que se concertasen reformas realistas que no nos apartaran irreversiblemente de soluciones financieramente sostenibles y socialmente duraderas. En todo caso, si la vía del consenso no se mostrase todo lo fructífera que deseamos, es evidente que difícilmente podremos dejar de tomar las decisiones que, responsablemente, consideremos necesarias, ya que no hacerlo sería tanto como renunciar a mantener en el futuro inmediato la senda de prosperidad y cohesión social que nuestras sociedades nos reclaman.

III. LINEAS CONCRETAS DE ACTUACION.

Las líneas de actuación que a continuación se proponen parten de la convicción de que la profundización del Mercado Interior, y la puesta en práctica de las políticas de convergencia necesarias para mantener el objetivo de la Unión Económica y Monetaria, dentro de un sistema de solidaridad entre Estados, constituyen la única vía hacia un crecimiento sostenido que sea, al mismo tiempo, capaz de generar empleo.

A conseguir estos fines se dirigen las medidas concretas que en cada caso se indican, cuya implantación corresponderá a la Comunidad o a sus Estados miembros, dentro de su respectivo ámbito de competencias.

1. LA REFORMA DEL MERCADO DE TRABAJO.

Aunque la regulación del marco institucional del mercado de trabajo corresponde fundamentalmente a los Estados miembros, con un importante papel de los interlocutores sociales, resulta deseable una coincidencia de los Gobiernos en el diagnóstico de la situación, en la identificación de sus causas y en el señalamiento de los objetivos a alcanzar y de las medidas apropiadas para ello. Tal coincidencia reforzaría la legitimación política para la adopción de dichas medidas, y aseguraría el correcto engarce de los aspectos laborales de las estrategias de crecimiento económico en las estrategias generales de convergencia económica. La implicación de los interlocutores sociales en la definición de estos objetivos y medidas aparece, también, como una garantía complementaria que reforzaría su apoyo social y, por ende, su eficacia.

En este proceso, la Comunidad ha de jugar un papel fundamental. Objetivos como la garantía de los derechos de los trabajadores que inspiraron la Carta Comunitaria de Derechos Sociales Fundamentales, y que actualmente se materializan en el Protocolo Social de Maastrich, deben articularse a través de directivas que establezcan criterios comunes de regulación, compatibles con las peculiaridades y la evolución de los sistemas de relaciones laborales de cada país.

En la misma línea, el lógico consenso de los interlocutores sociales, a nivel comunitario, con los objetivos de crecimiento económico orientado a la

creación de empleo, debe tener un reflejo en su actuación general. Para ello podrían apuntar las referencias o indicadores de la situación económica, en particular relacionados con el empleo, que cabría utilizar en la determinación de pautas de comportamiento en el terreno laboral.

Como medidas para cumplir los objetivos indicados, se señalan las siguientes:

- * Revisión de las normativas laborales, para mejorar la capacidad de adaptación de la relación laboral, desde su nacimiento hasta su extinción, y durante su desarrollo.
- * Flexibilidad retributiva, para establecer procedimientos de formación de salarios adecuados a la situación de las empresas, y para configurar estructuras retributivas en las que los componentes del salario vinculados a aquella situación y a la productividad del trabajador, tengan un mayor peso.
- * Ordenación del tiempo de trabajo, para avanzar en fórmulas de globalización de todos los aspectos de este factor clave, desde la jornada hasta los distintos tipos de descanso.
- * Movilidad funcional, para que, a partir de la mejora y permanente actualización de la formación profesional, se pueda producir un encaje más flexible de la actividad laboral de cada trabajador en distintos puestos de trabajo.
- * Desarrollo del contrato a tiempo parcial, como instrumento de política activa de empleo, favorecedor del incremento de las tasas de ocupación y del reparto del empleo existente. Para ello es necesario integrar esta modalidad en las fórmulas de organización del trabajo de las empresas, haciendo al mismo tiempo atractiva la contratación por esta vía.
- * Extensión del ámbito de la negociación colectiva. La necesaria adaptación de las relaciones laborales a la diversidad de situaciones y a la cambiante evolución de los distintos sectores o empresas, encuentra mejor respuesta en la negociación

colectiva, que se adapta y renueva con mayor facilidad, que en fórmulas normativas uniformes.

- * **Tamaño de las empresas.** El tamaño de las empresas influye, no sólo en el grado de su necesidad de adaptación, sino también en la opción por las distintas fórmulas o facetas de la flexibilidad. Por ello, las alternativas en la regulación pueden requerir un cierto grado de diversificación que tome en cuenta este elemento.
- * **Negociación salarial.** Los interlocutores sociales deberían perseguir la moderación salarial que, al reducir los costes de las empresas, favorece la generación de beneficios que pueden reinvertirse en actividades generadoras de empleo.

Además, debería establecerse un sistema de fijación de salarios que les permita adaptarse a las circunstancias cambiantes de las empresas. Se trataría de adecuar la estructura del salario, incorporando elementos variables en función de la productividad; y de buscar un equilibrio entre fórmulas centralizadas de fijación del salario, inspiradas por referencias macroeconómicas, y métodos descentralizados, que contemplen la situación competitiva de la empresa.

Estas fórmulas salariales requieren, no sólo que los interlocutores sociales asuman estos objetivos en sus negociaciones colectivas, sino que adecúen a ellos la estructura de dichas negociaciones. En esta línea, sería de gran importancia que adoptasen como referencia para la determinación de los incrementos salariales factores relacionados con la posición competitiva de la economía en general, y de los sectores y empresas en particular.

- * **Fomento del Empleo.** Debe continuarse la política de inserción en el mercado de trabajo de los colectivos con mayores dificultades, y maximizar la eficacia de las fórmulas de apoyo económico público a su contratación.

- * **Acceso de los jóvenes al mercado de trabajo.** Exige revisar fórmulas como los contratos de aprendizaje, formación y prácticas, para que se orienten con mayor eficacia a la doble finalidad de facilitar el acceso al primer empleo, y proporcionar al trabajador joven una experiencia que le permita desarrollar una carrera profesional.

- * **La revisión del papel de los órganos o sujetos que intermedian en el mercado de trabajo,** mejorando los servicios de información y formación profesional, y los instrumentos de detección de las necesidades de las empresas, para así conectar la oferta y la demanda de empleo, evitando las distorsiones derivadas de la falta de transparencia en el mercado de trabajo.

- * **Formación profesional.** Es preciso coordinar y planificar las actuaciones de las distintas Administraciones con competencias en este ámbito, así como las que, en su caso, puedan desarrollar los interlocutores sociales.

La formación continua de los trabajadores en las empresas debe integrarse en la estrategia económica de éstas, considerando la gestión de la cualificación como uno de los factores más importantes para su buena marcha. Específicamente, debe considerarse el papel que la formación debe jugar en el ámbito de la movilidad funcional.

Es preciso, por otra parte, destacar la importancia de corresponsabilizar a las partes de la relación laboral en el diseño y gestión, e incluso financiación, de la formación continua, dados los efectos beneficiosos que para ambas se derivan de una mejora de esta formación.

2. EL ESFUERZO INVERSOR EN INFRAESTRUCTURAS.

- * La inversión en infraestructuras como dinamizador de la actividad económica. Este tipo de inversión tiene un componente reactivador de la economía especialmente adecuado en la actual situación de recesión. Además, la reducción de los costes de las comunicaciones y el acceso a inputs a mejores precios mejora la competitividad de las empresas europeas y posibilita su introducción en nuevos mercados.

Convencido de las ventajas de una actuación decidida en este campo, el Gobierno español mantiene desde hace varios años un elevado volumen de inversión pública en infraestructuras, claramente superior a la media comunitaria. Este esfuerzo nacional, apoyado por las políticas estructurales comunitarias, ha permitido reducir nuestro diferencial con el resto de la Comunidad, si bien siguen existiendo graves insuficiencias que es necesario superar. Por ello, en 1994 se mantiene este esfuerzo inversor, pues a pesar de que el ajuste presupuestario va a suponer una ligera reducción del nivel agregado de inversión del Estado, que era muy elevado, se aumentan las asignaciones presupuestarias correspondientes a la inversión en infraestructuras.

- * Política estructural de la Comunidad. La actual situación de recesión económica exige de la Comunidad un aprovechamiento íntegro y sin retrasos de los recursos que el Consejo Europeo de Edimburgo destinó a reforzar las acciones estructurales, incorporadas a la Iniciativa Europea de Crecimiento.

En particular, la Comisión deberá velar por una gestión ágil y eficaz de estos recursos que, en la línea señalada por el Consejo Europeo de Copenhague, permita, no sólo su utilización en los calendarios previstos sino, incluso, su aplicación anticipada a través de fórmulas especiales.

3. APROVECHAR EL POTENCIAL DE CREACION DE EMPLEO DEL SECTOR SERVICIOS.

El conjunto de actividades incluidas en el sector servicios tiene, al menos, tres rasgos en común: son fundamentales para el buen funcionamiento general de la economía; establecer un nivel adecuado de competencia intencional es difícil por su propia esencia; el nivel de regulaciones y disposiciones existentes no sólo es muy elevado, sino que ha favorecido la aparición de barreras de entrada y de acuerdos colusorios tendentes al reparto del mercado, a la fijación de precios, y a la limitación de la producción, la distribución y las inversiones. Todo esto hace que, por una parte, su impacto inflacionista sea elevado, y por otra, que no se aproveche suficientemente su potencial de creación de empleo.

Por ello, es necesaria una acción decidida en este sector que fomente la competencia y evite que el exceso de regulación, producto muchas veces de un acarreo histórico, limite su desarrollo.

4. UN MEJOR APROVECHAMIENTO DEL POTENCIAL DE INVESTIGACION Y DESARROLLO.

- * Apoyo público a los programas de investigación. Los Estados miembros deben concienciar a sus agentes económicos y sociales de la necesidad de aumentar el esfuerzo investigador y tecnológico de las empresas, y asumir el compromiso de mantenimiento y mejora del esfuerzo investigador público, dentro de los límites presupuestarios disponibles.
- * Difusión de las tecnologías. La Comunidad Europea, respetando los objetivos que marcan los Tratados, debe conceder la máxima prioridad a la consolidación de los esfuerzos en materia de investigación básica y precompetitiva, y garantizar el potencial de competitividad que se derivaría de una mejor difusión de los resultados de la investigación, en particular en favor de las pequeñas y medianas empresas, y de un mayor estímulo a la formación y movilidad de los investigadores.

5. EL APOYO A LAS PEQUEÑAS Y MEDIANAS EMPRESAS (PYMES).

- * Apoyo financiero. Deben ponerse en práctica de inmediato los mecanismos comunitarios diseñados en la Iniciativa de Crecimiento para facilitar la financiación de las PYMES, a través de la concesión de garantías (F.E.I.) y de la línea especial de crédito del BEI con tipos de interés subvencionados, acordada en el Consejo Europeo de Copenhague.

Además, deben potenciarse las Sociedades de Garantía Recíproca, el fomento del capital-riesgo (sin que se demore innecesariamente la actividad del FEI en este ámbito) y el acceso de las PYMES a los mercados bursátiles.

- * Apoyo a la gestión. Favoreciendo la información, la simplificación administrativa y la cooperación interempresarial entre PYMES, incluyendo el diseño de regímenes de tributación simplificados.
- * Apoyo a la creación de empleo. A través de incentivos vinculados a la contratación de trabajadores, que tengan en cuenta las especiales características de este tipo de empresas.

6. LA COOPERACION PARA LA EFICACIA DE LOS SISTEMAS FISCALES.

- * El control en ausencia de fronteras fiscales. Tras un período suficiente de aplicación del nuevo régimen de tributación de las operaciones intracomunitarias en el Impuesto sobre el Valor Añadido y en Impuestos Especiales (accisas) deben examinarse los resultados, y adoptar las medidas complementarias precisas para apoyar los esfuerzos de las Administraciones fiscales nacionales para mejorar la gestión y luchar contra el fraude y la evasión fiscal.
- * La fijación de "standards" de tributación y cooperación administrativa en la imposición directa. Debe garantizarse, a través de una armonización mínima, apoyada por una cooperación efectiva entre Administraciones fiscales, que los rendimientos del ahorro contribuyen de forma equitativa al sostenimiento de las cargas públicas.

7. UN ENTORNO AMBIENTAL EQUILIBRADO Y COMPATIBLE CON EL CRECIMIENTO.

- * **Integración en las políticas económicas y sectoriales.** Los retos y objetivos medioambientales deben ser objeto de una ponderación rigurosa que lleve a su integración en las políticas económicas y sectoriales de modo que favorezcan, y no entorpezcan, las cotas de crecimiento sostenible y de creación de empleo que nos hemos marcado.
- * **Ajuste a las necesidades de desarrollo.** La acción de la Comunidad en este ámbito debe respetar los principios esenciales de los Tratados, en particular el de que "quien contamina paga", y ajustarse a las necesidades medioambientales y de desarrollo de cada Estado miembro, sin crear costes artificiales y adicionales que ensombrezcan las legítimas expectativas y potenciales de crecimiento de la economía de cada Estado miembro.

En consecuencia, se debe analizar caso a caso si es apropiada la introducción o aplicación de soluciones horizontales o armonizadas. A problemas diferentes y situaciones comparativas diferentes deben corresponder soluciones diferentes, en particular cuando se trata de decidir la aprobación de nuevos mecanismos financieros o fiscales con incidencia directa en el potencial de desarrollo de los Estados miembros.

A título de ejemplo, España podría aceptar la implantación de una tasa a nivel comunitario sobre las emisiones de CO₂, siempre que se garantice que los Estados miembros con menores niveles de contaminación "per capita" no asumen cargas que son resultado de procesos de desarrollo en otros Estados miembros, en un reparto indiscriminado de responsabilidades que difícilmente puede considerarse compatible con el principio de cohesión.

8. UNA LIBERALIZACION DEL COMERCIO CON UNA REVISION EQUILIBRADA DE LAS REGLAS Y SIN NUEVAS TENSIONES.

España atribuye gran importancia a la pronta conclusión de un acuerdo global, equilibrado, justo y duradero en la Ronda Uruguay del GATT, convencida de que la expansión del comercio internacional que resulte de dicho acuerdo será un factor importante para relanzar el crecimiento económico y reducir el paro, tanto en la Comunidad como en el resto del mundo.

España ya ha difundido en las instituciones comunitarias y en los restantes Estados miembros un "memorandum" con su posición de cara a la finalización de la Ronda. En dicho "memorandum" se recogen los ejes esenciales de las preocupaciones españolas que afectan, tanto al ulterior desarrollo de la negociación multilateral, como a las medidas aún pendientes de adopción en el ámbito intracomunitario para asegurar el mejor cumplimiento de los acuerdos que se alcancen a nivel internacional sin merma de las políticas comunitarias.

España quiere subrayar que una mayor liberalización del comercio mundial debe ir acompañada de medidas de defensa comercial que permitan corregir situaciones imprevistas, o conductas desleales por parte de los socios comerciales de la Comunidad. En esta línea, resulta esencial mejorar las condiciones de aplicación de los procedimientos antidumping y antisubvención y de la cláusula de salvaguardia, tanto en el marco de los Acuerdos de la Ronda como en su vertiente comunitaria.

España considera asimismo importante la creación de una Organización Multilateral del Comercio que profundice en el multilateralismo comercial. Los resultados en términos de crecimiento económico y de creación de empleos duraderos de una mayor liberalización del comercio internacional requieren concesiones recíprocas, especialmente en los sectores sensibles, para asegurar el carácter equilibrado del resultado de la Ronda.

La perdurabilidad de los acuerdos multilaterales requiere un equilibrio en las garantías que se otorgan las Partes Contratantes. Ello es particularmente importante en el ámbito agrícola, mediante una mejora en la aplicación temporal de las cláusulas de paz y de salvaguardia cuya importancia huelga subrayar para la estabilidad del acervo comunitario en esta materia.

REPRESENTATION PERMANENTE
DE LA FRANCE
AUPRES DES COMMUNAUTES EUROPEENNES

—
L' Ambassadeur
—

MT/sdg N° 1466
JM/YF/412/93

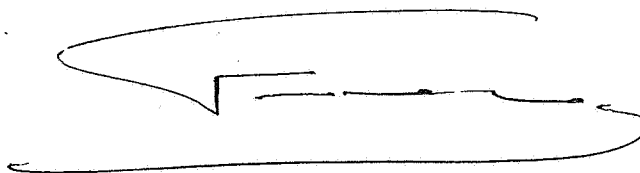
Bruxelles, le 13 septembre 1993

Monsieur le Président,

Cabinet du Président		
15 -09- 1993		
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J'ai l'honneur de vous faire parvenir ci-joint la contribution française au Livre Blanc sur la croissance, la compétitivité et l'emploi.

Je vous prie de croire, Monsieur le Président, à l'assurance de ma haute considération.



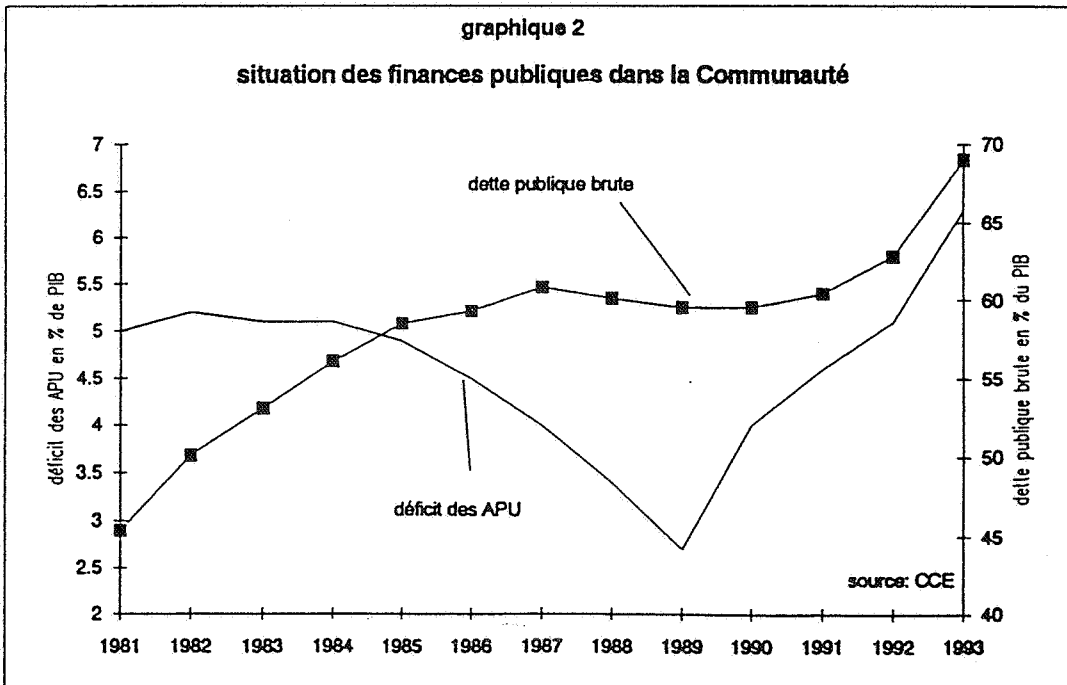
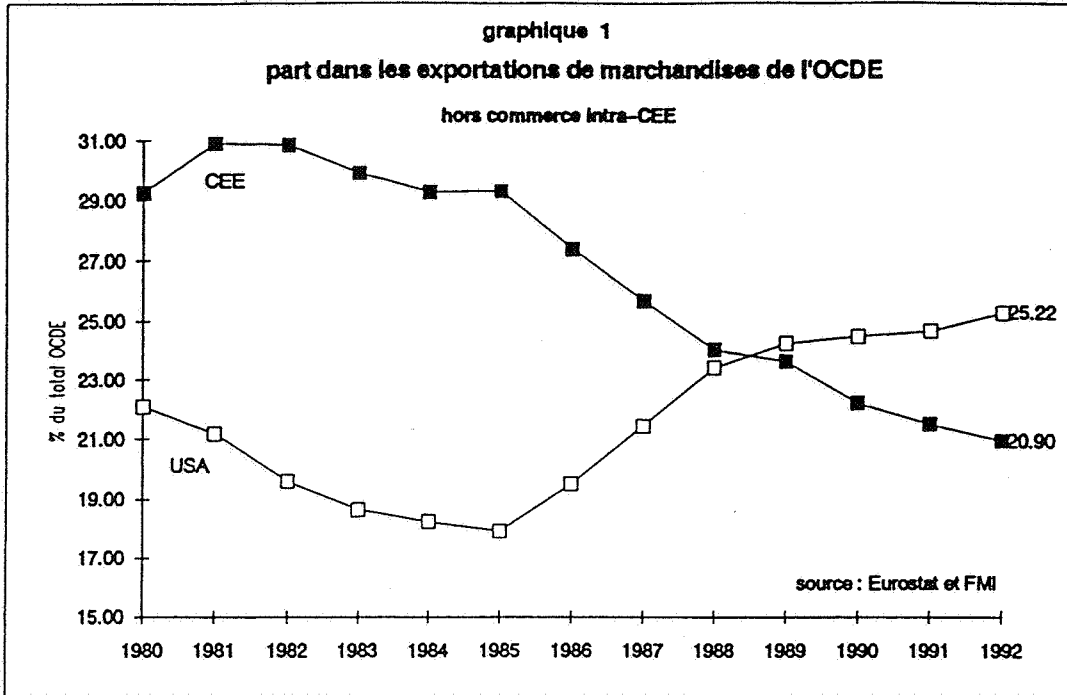
François Scheer

Monsieur Jacques Delors
Président de la Commission
des Communautés Européennes
200, rue de la Loi
1049 BRUXELLES

REPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE

**CONTRIBUTION
AU
LIVRE BLANC
SUR
LA CROISSANCE, LA COMPETITIVITE ET L'EMPLOI**

Paris, le 10 septembre 1993



2. PROMOUVOIR UNE COMMUNAUTE OUVERTE ET SOLIDAIRE

Les progrès de l'intégration européenne n'ont pas remis en cause le fait que la Communauté Européenne demeure la zone la plus ouverte aux importations et reste le premier acteur du commerce mondial. C'est pourquoi les deux priorités de la France sont l'achèvement du marché unique et la libéralisation des échanges.

2.1. L'achèvement du marché unique

En même temps qu'elle participe à l'expansion du libre échange, la Communauté doit pouvoir progresser dans la réalisation de son marché intérieur. L'identité européenne est l'élément moteur de la stabilité du pôle commercial ouest-européen. Son affaiblissement aurait des conséquences dommageables pour l'ensemble du système multilatéral.

L'échéance du 1er janvier 1993 a été tenue par la Communauté Européenne pour réaliser l'espace sans frontières intérieures prévu par l'Acte Unique Européen et dont les dispositions étaient consignées dans le Livre Blanc sur l'achèvement du marché intérieur.

Les effets conjugués de la suppression des barrières intracommunautaires aux échanges (coût des formalités administratives, réglementations techniques notamment) et de l'intégration des marchés (économies d'échelle, renforcement de la concurrence, ...) induits par les mesures visant à la libre circulation des biens, des services et des capitaux sont de nature à permettre aux entreprises européennes de produire davantage à un moindre coût, de réaliser les nécessaires modernisations de structure et de profiter d'un réel dynamisme des échanges. De fait, l'achèvement du marché intérieur a été largement anticipé, les entreprises ont acquis une taille européenne et entrepris des efforts de rationalisation. Un environnement favorable aux échanges et à la croissance a bien été créé par la mise en place d'un espace sans frontières.

La récession actuelle ne remet pas en cause les enchaînements économiques vertueux liés au grand marché intérieur. Au contraire, il convient que les Douze unissent leurs efforts pour conforter et approfondir cet acquis. Les dysfonctionnements de sa mise en oeuvre doivent être identifiés sans retard et d'éventuelles mesures correctrices adoptées. Face aux difficultés présentes, une impulsion forte est d'autant plus nécessaire pour éviter un retour néfaste de protectionnismes nationaux.

A cet égard, les besoins sont de deux ordres : rendre efficace et crédible le processus entamé et créer les moyens d'une puissance européenne accrue.

Il importe avant tout d'assurer la crédibilité des dispositifs mis en place dans le cadre du marché intérieur et de se donner les moyens d'un fonctionnement efficace des règles communautaires adoptées : veiller au contrôle de l'application de celles-ci, assurer un suivi des échanges intracommunautaires et un contrôle des échanges extracommunautaires, lutter contre la fraude en favorisant, par exemple, l'établissement de systèmes d'information et d'alerte ainsi que la mise en place de partenariats entre les administrations nationales et avec la Commission. L'approfondissement de telles mesures, au demeurant déjà engagées, permettrait de renforcer la notion d'identité européenne et de donner une nouvelle confiance aux opérateurs économiques.

Par ailleurs, il convient de s'efforcer de concilier renforcement de la concurrence et développement d'initiatives industrielles susceptibles de donner au marché européen une attractivité qui lui fait trop souvent défaut.

Au niveau communautaire, cela signifie en particulier de mettre l'accent sur l'approfondissement de la normalisation européenne, sur un rapprochement de la fiscalité des entreprises, sur une poursuite des actions à Douze en matière de droits de propriété intellectuelle et industrielle, sur une politique ambitieuse et adaptée de développement des PME.

Il importe également que les partenaires de la Communauté favorisent la coopération des entreprises visant à renforcer les centres d'excellence européens ou à permettre la diffusion des savoirs industriels nécessaire à une bonne gestion de la diversité technologique existant au sein de la Communauté.

2.2. Une libéralisation des échanges

La conclusion d'un accord global, équilibré et durable du cycle d'Uruguay doit être recherchée. Il favorisera en effet la croissance par une libéralisation des échanges et un renforcement de la concurrence sur les marchés. Celui-ci toutefois ne devrait pas bouleverser l'acquis communautaire (dans les domaines tels que la politique de subventions, l'agriculture, l'audiovisuel...) parce que les principes fondamentaux de ces politiques participent de l'identité européenne qu'il s'agit de faire reconnaître par les pays tiers.

De plus, la libéralisation des échanges doit pouvoir offrir aux économies européennes frappées par le chômage des perspectives de création d'emplois durables. Dans ces conditions, la libéralisation des marchés doit être organisée et maîtrisée au niveau multilatéral de manière à obtenir un accès satisfaisant au marché pour les produits industriels. Parallèlement, la libéralisation de secteurs sensibles comme le textile doit rester conditionnée au renforcement des règles et disciplines du GATT.

Il est impératif de faire prévaloir le droit international et la fin des pratiques unilatérales grâce à la création d'une **organisation mondiale du commerce** qui permettra la multilatéralisation réelle des modes de règlement des différends et la prise en compte, en liaison avec les organisations internationales compétentes, des incidences sur les échanges d'autres politiques dans les domaines social, monétaire ou de l'environnement.

Parallèlement, la Communauté européenne serait légitimée à se doter d'instruments de politique commerciale efficaces de sorte que la menace d'y recourir devienne enfin crédible. Le renforcement de l'identité de la politique commerciale commune passe par les trois éléments suivants :

- la volonté de voir assuré un réel accès aux marchés des pays tiers les plus fermés grâce à une réforme appropriée du Nouvel Instrument de Politique Commerciale (NIPC) ;
- le souci d'améliorer les conditions d'utilisation des procédures d'anti-dumping et d'anti-subventions, ainsi que de la clause de sauvegarde, dans le cadre des règlements du GATT ;
- la nécessité d'améliorer le processus de décision en matière commerciale qu'il faut veiller à rendre plus objectif et plus automatique (cela passe notamment par une modification des règles de majorité en la matière).

Enfin, la promotion des échanges internationaux passe aussi par une plus grande stabilité monétaire. Une volatilité excessive des taux de change conduit inévitablement à un repli du commerce international et des investissements directs. Des taux de change correctement évalués sont aussi la meilleure garantie contre une montée du protectionnisme. Les progrès récemment accomplis à cet égard doivent être poursuivis, chaque pays - y compris les nouvelles économies industrialisées - devant prendre ses responsabilités à cet égard.

3. ALLER VERS UNE PLUS GRANDE FLEXIBILITE DU MARCHÉ DU TRAVAIL

La prise en compte de la dimension sociale de la croissance doit permettre de préparer et d'accompagner les mutations des économies nationales. La poursuite de la construction de l'Europe sociale doit notamment s'attacher à favoriser l'insertion et la qualification professionnelles, la flexibilité du marché du travail et la réinsertion des chômeurs.

3.1. Le constat

Depuis 1980, la croissance de l'emploi a été de 0,4 % par an en moyenne dans la CEE, contre 1,5 % aux Etats-Unis. Cet écart n'est pas dû à de moindres performances macroéconomiques en Europe puisque la croissance du PIB a été sensiblement identique dans les deux zones (respectivement 2,2 % et 2,3 % par an en moyenne). **Le faible contenu en emploi de la croissance en Europe, en France tout particulièrement, a des causes structurelles liées à des rigidités institutionnelles et réglementaires ainsi qu'à des handicaps de coût du travail.**

Ces obstacles contribuent au maintien d'un chômage élevé en Europe, dont le taux n'a jamais été inférieur à 8 % au cours des dix dernières années ; la phase d'expansion de la fin des années 80 n'a pas permis de faire refluer le taux de chômage en-dessous de ce seuil.

Le problème du chômage est d'autant plus grave qu'il engendre un phénomène d'exclusion durable : la forte montée du chômage de longue durée est l'un des phénomènes les plus marquants de ces dernières années ; dans la plupart des pays de la Communauté la part du chômage de longue durée dans le chômage total avoisine, voire dépasse 50 % et affecte plus particulièrement la main d'oeuvre peu qualifiée.

Une reprise de la croissance est indispensable pour enrayer la progression du chômage mais, comme nous l'avons souligné, elle sera insuffisante si, parallèlement, ne sont pas mises en place des réformes structurelles visant à améliorer le fonctionnement du marché du travail.

Les pays de la Communauté sont plus ou moins avancés sur les voies de ces réformes et les efforts à engager plus ou moins importants ; dans un souci de cohérence, il est nécessaire de dresser les grands axes qui doivent inspirer les politiques des différents pays de la CEE en direction du marché du travail.

En effet il appartient aux Etats membres de définir les grandes orientations et à la Communauté, dans le cadre des dispositions prévues par le traité, de jouer un rôle de coordination et d'impulsion ainsi que d'intervenir pour soutenir l'action des Etats à travers les fonds structurels. Les grandes orientations de la politique française s'inscrivent dans cette perspective.

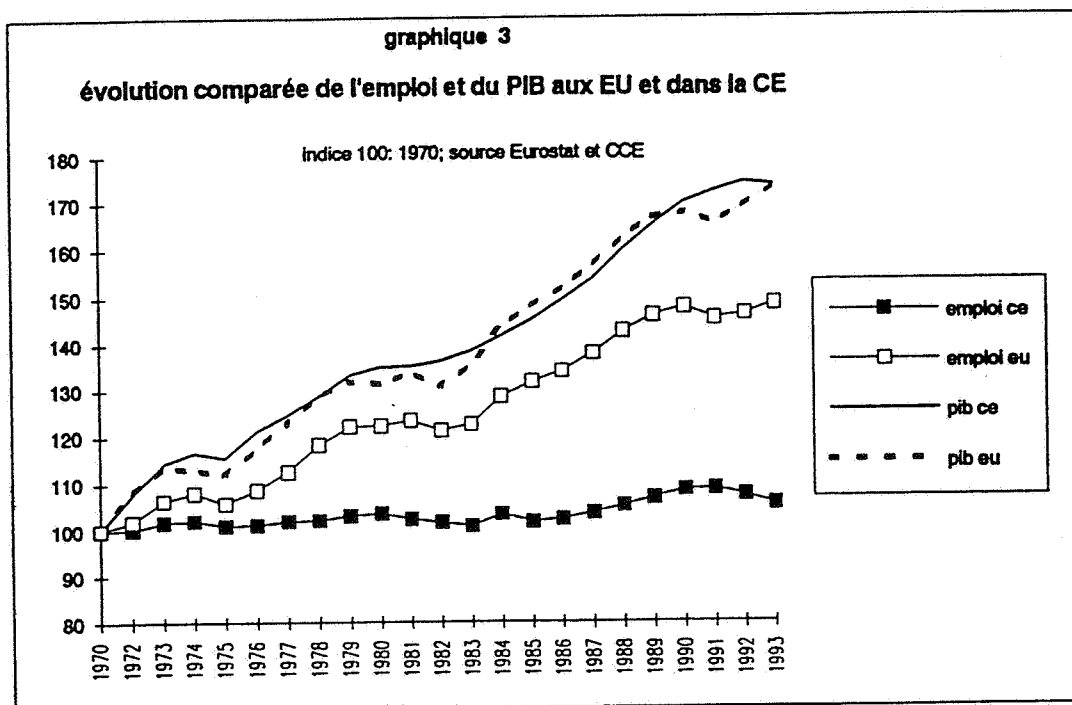
3.2. Les grandes orientations de la politique française

Sur longue période, la performance française en matière d'emploi s'est révélée particulièrement décevante. Le déficit de créations d'emplois (manque à gagner évalué à 700.000 emplois par rapport à nos principaux partenaires au cours des années 1980) a été très important dans le secteur des services.

Les causes de cette pauvreté en emploi de la croissance sont connues : un coût du travail peu qualifié très élevé, un manque de flexibilité dans l'organisation du travail qui conduit à privilégier les modes de production les plus capitalistiques et une efficacité insuffisante de notre système de formation professionnelle. Les dispositions retenues dans le projet de loi quinquennale sur l'emploi visent à réduire ces causes majeures de chômage.

3.2.1. La réduction du coût du travail non qualifié

Le coût du travail non qualifié en France et dans de nombreux pays européens est parmi les plus élevés du monde; il constitue un facteur important de chômage, notamment chez les jeunes. Un ajustement du coût du travail à la productivité de ces personnes favorisera leur retour à l'emploi.



Les principales actions entreprises dans ce sens sont les suivantes:

- l'exonération des cotisations familiales pour les salaires inférieurs à 1,2 fois le salaire minimum (SMIC) qui sera progressivement étendue aux salaires inférieurs à 1,6 fois le SMIC a pour but de réduire le coût du travail peu qualifié ;
- la mise en place d'un nouveau type de contrat d'insertion professionnelle, dérogeant au SMIC, permet d'obtenir un allègement du coût du travail ciblé sur les jeunes demandeurs d'emploi très vulnérables.

3.2.2. L'insertion et la qualification professionnelles

L'importance du taux de chômage des personnes non qualifiées, notamment des jeunes non qualifiés sans expérience professionnelle, traduit un désajustement structurel entre l'offre et la demande de travail. La solution à ce problème passe à moyen long terme par un renforcement des systèmes de formation professionnelle, essentiellement par un **lien plus fort entre système éducatif et système productif**.

Dans cette perspective, il conviendrait d'associer davantage les entreprises à la définition même des systèmes de formation. Il importe de mieux former les jeunes aux besoins concrets de l'entreprise, qui reposent à la fois sur des savoir-faire et sur des savoirs théoriques : cela suppose de favoriser la mise en situation professionnelle des jeunes et de **développer en conséquence les systèmes de formation en alternance tels que l'apprentissage**, en privilégiant les dispositifs orientés vers le secteur marchand, qui permettent une meilleure insertion que les dispositifs du secteur non marchand.

3.2.3. Accroître la flexibilité du marché du travail

Une politique active de l'emploi passe également par des mesures visant à maintenir les personnes dans l'emploi ; le problème se pose de manière plus cruciale en période de ralentissement de la croissance économique. La solution passe par une flexibilité accrue de l'organisation du travail en termes de rémunération et de temps de travail ainsi que par une plus grande mobilité géographique des salariés.

La flexibilité des rémunérations à la conjoncture et aux conditions locales ou sectorielles de l'emploi est nécessaire pour renforcer la capacité d'une économie à résister aux chocs conjoncturels et structurels sans hausse du chômage. Dans cette perspective, **les dispositifs de rémunération qui associent plus étroitement les salariés aux performances de l'entreprise doivent être encouragés**.

Parallèlement, au travers d'une adaptation de la législation du travail, il convient de réduire les contraintes qui empêchent une organisation plus souple du travail et qui sont autant d'obstacles à un ajustement de l'activité sans réduction d'effectifs. **L'annualisation de la durée du travail, le développement et l'aménagement du temps partiel, le recours au chômage partiel doivent être favorisés**. Il convient aussi de privilégier la flexibilité interne fondée sur une logique de formation continue permettant d'assurer la reconversion des salariés dont les postes de travail sont supprimés de préférence à une logique de licenciement.

Une plus grande flexibilité du marché du travail signifie également une plus grande mobilité géographique de la main-d'oeuvre, au sein de chaque pays mais également entre pays dans un cadre européen visant à une plus grande convergence des systèmes. **Les obstacles à la mobilité qui résultent de nombreux facteurs doivent être levés**.

3.2.4. La réinsertion des chômeurs

Les efforts à engager pour favoriser l'insertion professionnelle des jeunes et des personnes non qualifiées doivent l'être parallèlement aux mesures qui seront prises plus généralement en direction des chômeurs.

Les mesures actives visant à requalifier les chômeurs doivent naturellement être promues mais il faut les rendre lisibles à la fois à leurs bénéficiaires potentiels et aux entreprises. Cela exige notamment de réduire au maximum le nombre des dispositifs en privilégiant les plus efficaces ; il faut s'assurer autant que possible que ces dispositifs, visant à la réinsertion sur le marché du travail, permettent aux chômeurs de garder un contact avec le monde de l'entreprise. Les actions de formation professionnelle doivent notamment être liées à des disponibilités effectives d'emploi et comporter une part importante au sein de l'entreprise.

Cette politique active de réinsertion des chômeurs suppose de renforcer le rôle des "agences pour l'emploi" en direction de la prospection des offres d'emplois (les entreprises) et du placement des chômeurs.

En contrepartie de ces efforts, les obligations des chômeurs doivent être clarifiées, notamment en matière de recherche effective d'emploi. A cet égard, **il est nécessaire de définir un système d'indemnisation du chômage (durée, niveau et dégressivité des prestations) qui incite à la recherche d'emploi.**

3.2.5. Faire face aux mutations industrielles

L'industrie communautaire est confrontée à de nombreux facteurs de changement : mondialisation des échanges, modifications de la structure de la demande, changements technologiques et des systèmes de production.

Ces profondes mutations, particulièrement sensibles dans certains domaines de la vie économique (automobile, électronique...), ont déjà eu et auront des conséquences considérables sur l'emploi dans les divers pays de la Communauté. Elles exigent un effort important des entreprises qui devront être capables d'avoir recours à de nouvelles méthodes de production et de renouveler en profondeur leurs techniques d'organisation.

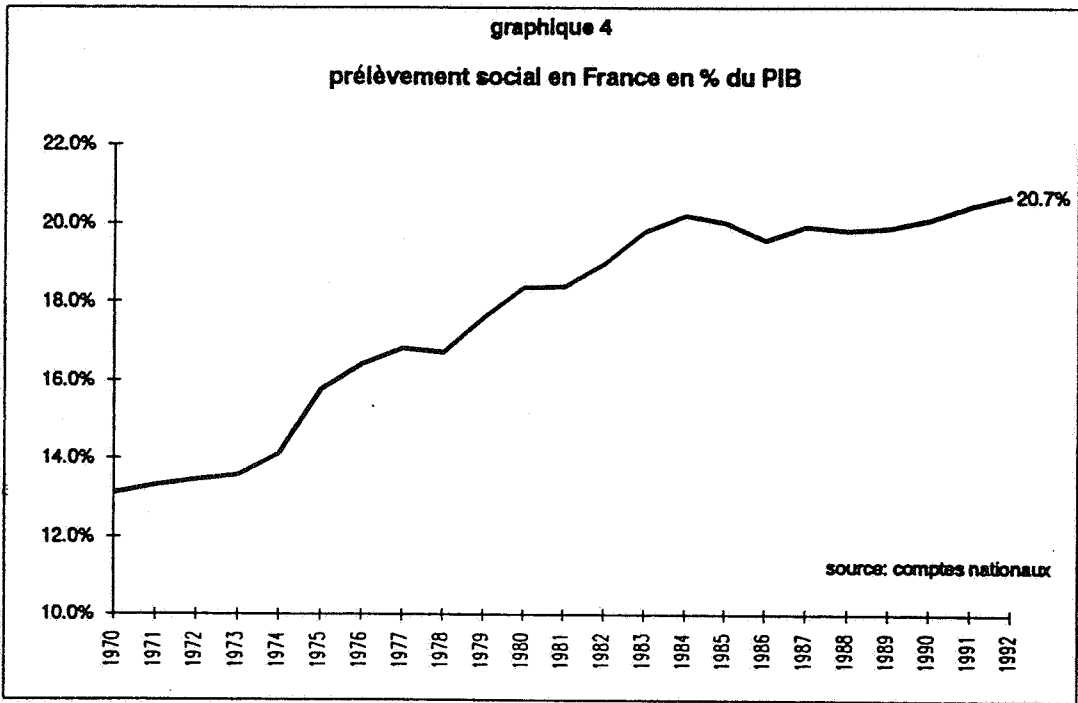
Le nouvel objectif 4 de la réforme des fonds structurels, adopté en juillet dernier, cherche à répondre à ce défi.

4. REFORMER LES REGIMES SOCIAUX

4.1. Le constat

En France, le prélèvement social a progressé de plus de sept points en vingt ans en part de PIB. C'est pour financer l'accroissement des dépenses sociales plus élevé que celui du PIB que les cotisations ont été accrues, avec pour conséquences un renchérissement du coût du travail et une érosion du pouvoir d'achat des salariés. Alors que si les tendances démographiques conduisent mécaniquement à l'alourdissement de la charge des retraites, en revanche, c'est l'insuffisante maîtrise des dépenses de santé qui explique la dérive des dépenses d'assurance-maladie. Enfin, pendant de trop longues années on a négligé l'impact des modalités concrètes d'indemnisation du chômage sur les comportements de recherche d'emploi.

Cette situation n'est pas spécifique à la France et se retrouve dans de nombreux autres pays européens. **Les mesures à prendre relèvent de chaque Etat membre, mais sur le plan des principes, le coût de la politique sociale doit être régulé pour être compatible avec le rythme de croissance de la richesse créée tandis que doivent être renforcés les principes d'efficacité, d'équité redistributive et de contributivité. La Communauté pourrait développer dans ce cadre des**



Initiatives d'analyse, d'information et de concertation, et favoriser une plus grande convergence des politiques.

4.2. Les grandes orientations de la politique française:

Le programme d'action repose sur les quatre axes suivants :

- le retour à l'équilibre financier des régimes sociaux dans le cadre d'une stratégie à moyen terme,
- **une réforme du système de retraite** visant à préparer la transition démographique des années à venir,
- la mise en place d'une **politique de régulation des dépenses de santé** pesant à la fois sur l'offre et sur la demande,
- la mise en oeuvre de modalités d'indemnisation plus favorables au retour à l'emploi.

4.3. Les mesures structurelles mises en oeuvre en France:

4.3.1. Réforme du système de retraites.

L'arrivée à l'âge de la retraite des classes nombreuses de l'après-guerre fera apparaître un profond déséquilibre des comptes des régimes de retraite à l'horizon 2010 qui aurait débouché, si aucune mesure préventive n'avait été prise, sur des hausses de cotisations et des transferts intergénérationnels d'ampleur inacceptable. Une telle dérive n'aurait pas été sans conséquences macroéconomiques graves.

Une réforme de ces régimes est donc nécessaire afin de renforcer leur caractère contributif, c'est-à-dire de rétablir un lien plus étroit entre les cotisations versées et les prestations reçues ; notamment un "Fonds de solidarité vieillesse" a été créé, alimenté par certaines recettes fiscales (en particulier, une majoration de la contribution sociale généralisée, assise sur l'ensemble des revenus des ménages) qui prendra en charge, à partir de 1994, les dépenses d'assurance-vieillesse à caractère non contributif relevant de la solidarité nationale. La réforme des régimes de vieillesse doit aussi viser à assurer les conditions de financement à plus long terme des retraites ; à cet effet, le gouvernement a décidé d'allonger la **durée de cotisation** requise pour bénéficier de la retraite à taux plein (de 37,5 à 40 années) et d'indexer les **pensions sur les prix** à partir de 1994 pour une période de 5 ans.

4.3.2 - Régulation contractuelle des dépenses de santé.

Dans le prolongement de la mise sous enveloppe financière globale du secteur hospitalier public, les premiers **accords d'autorégulation professionnelle** reposant sur des Objectifs Quantifiés Nationaux (OQN) ont été conclus en 1992, au niveau national, entre les caisses d'assurance-maladie et certaines professions de santé (biologistes, cliniques privées, infirmiers libéraux). Une extension de ce dispositif, sur la base d'un code de bonne conduite, est en cours de négociation avec les médecins libéraux.

L'objectif poursuivi, avec la mise en place progressive d'enveloppes globales et la définition de "codes de bonne conduite" des professions de santé, est d'assurer à moyen terme une progression des dépenses de santé parallèle à l'évolution des ressources financières des caisses d'assurance-maladie.

4.3.3. Réforme du dispositif d'indemnisation du chômage.

Depuis juillet 1992, l'indemnisation du chômage repose sur une **Allocation Unique Dégressive** en fonction de la durée de chômage, qui devrait favoriser un retour plus rapide à l'emploi.

5. STIMULER LA RECHERCHE DEVELOPPEMENT

Le constat de la situation de la recherche en Europe montre que l'objectif d'un effort de recherche de 3 % du PIB dans la CE est ambitieux compte tenu du niveau actuel (2 %) et d'une situation très disparate selon les Etats membres (2,81 % du PIB en Allemagne dont 2,54 % par les entreprises en 1990 ; en Espagne, respectivement 0,81 % et 0,59 %). Une des caractéristiques actuelle de la France est la faiblesse des dépenses de recherche réalisées par les entreprises.

Pourtant l'effort de recherche est déterminant pour la compétitivité à long terme de nos économies. Il convient donc de renforcer notre effort en la matière. Aussi, les Etats membres pourraient-ils s'efforcer de ne pas diminuer la part relative dans leur budget de leur effort en faveur de la recherche.

L'action communautaire dans ce domaine est justifiée par les externalités positives engendrées par la recherche ; elle est justifiée aussi par le besoin de protection des résultats de la recherche fondamentale et son caractère non-appropriable. Un bilan précis de ces actions doit cependant être dressé régulièrement, afin notamment de vérifier que des économies d'échelle sont effectivement réalisées.

Il est nécessaire de sélectionner des thèmes d'action communautaire dans les domaines où celle-ci ne fait pas double-emploi avec des coopérations déjà entreprises par les Etats membres, entre eux ou avec des partenaires extérieurs à la Communauté.

Conformément aux conclusions du Conseil européen d'Edimbourg, les financements des programmes de recherche au niveau communautaire doivent continuer à se concentrer sur la recherche précompétitive. Les programmes doivent être retenus en fonction de leur excellence. La définition de ces programmes doit être centrée sur un nombre limité de thèmes sélectionnés pour leur valeur ajoutée spécifique et doit permettre un renforcement des équipes, des laboratoires de pointe, et de la recherche conduite par les entreprises dans le but d'améliorer l'efficacité économique. La coopération, pour être efficace, doit tirer profit de toutes les possibilités offertes par les traités, et notamment recourir à des procédures souples en faveur des PME éliminant les contraintes de calendrier et ouvertes à l'initiative des industriels ainsi qu'à la formule des programmes complémentaires (art. 130 K) pour les opération de grande envergure.

Les programmes du type EUREKA, principal vecteur de soutien aux activités de R et D et dont l'initiative est laissée aux entreprises, apparaissent comme un mode de coopération bien adapté à leurs besoins. En revanche les priorités du PCRD sont actuellement insuffisamment définies et les procédures trop longues et trop complexes.

6. AMELIORER LES RESEAUX D'INFRASTRUCTURE

Dans l'esprit des décisions prises en matière d'initiative européenne de croissance aux Conseils européens d'Edimbourg et de Copenhague, des investissements d'infrastructure à vocation européenne peuvent être développés en accélérant certains projets qui, sur la base d'une analyse coûts/avantages rigoureuse, apparaissent bien dimensionnés et rentables, mais dont le plan de financement n'est pas encore bouclé. La priorité sera réservée aux projets d'intérêt européen visant à promouvoir l'interopérabilité technique des réseaux nationaux existants et les interconnexions nécessaires pour supprimer les goulots d'étranglement ou les chaînons manquants dont l'identification doit relever d'une logique économique. De même, il pourrait être nécessaire de financer les réseaux des zones centrales de transit en Europe. Dans le cadre de ces priorités, les projets peuvent être réalisés par les Etats eux-mêmes ou par des opérateurs publics ou privés, sous réserve que les dossiers soient soutenus par les Etats. Afin de respecter cette liberté de choix, le soutien de

la Communauté pourrait, en particulier pour les projets réalisés par les Etats, prendre des formes diverses en utilisant en priorité les lignes budgétaires existantes.

Les schémas directeurs devront avoir conformément aux principes posés par le Conseil "Transports" de juin 1993, un caractère indicatif et non programmatif dans le but d'inciter les Etats membres à réaliser les infrastructures qui auront été retenues.

Il faut cependant réaffirmer le principe de subsidiarité, la coopération bilatérale pouvant souvent se substituer à des financements communautaires systématiques.

Le rôle de la Communauté doit être enfin d'inciter à une harmonisation au niveau technique et institutionnel et de favoriser une meilleure utilisation des équipements existants, en particulier par une tarification plus optimale destinée à lisser les pointes.

7. DEVELOPPER DE NOUVELLES TECHNOLOGIES DE L'INFORMATION

L'Europe doit assurer à ses citoyens et à ses entreprises les avantages qu'offrent des infrastructures d'information et de communication de haute qualité efficaces, concurrentielles et tournées vers l'avenir dans le cadre du marché unique afin de proposer des services fiables, évolutifs et peu coûteux débouchant sur le développement d'activités nouvelles associées.

Il conviendrait d'investir dans les services avancés ainsi que la recherche, le développement et l'expérimentation, ce qui conduira à améliorer la compétitivité.

Un environnement concurrentiel équitable doit être assuré au plan international.

L'accroissement des coûts de développement des systèmes et services nécessite leur mise en oeuvre cohérente (systèmes et services : exemple de la télévision avancée) au niveau du marché européen pour pouvoir en assurer le succès. L'harmonisation technique, la normalisation et la coopération en amont, entre industriels, opérateurs et utilisateurs, doivent être favorisées pour retirer pleinement les bénéfices de la taille du marché unique.

Toutefois, du fait de la nécessité d'ouvrir les consultations aux industriels extra-européens, il convient d'être prudent sur les effets bénéfiques de ces initiatives sur les entreprises de la Communauté de ce secteur.

8. INTEGRER LES CONTRAINTES LIEES A L'ENVIRONNEMENT DANS NOTRE MODELE DE DEVELOPPEMENT

La politique de l'environnement doit être intégrée dans les politiques économiques et sectorielles pour permettre un développement durable. Elle doit avant tout participer à la correction des dysfonctionnements économiques sectoriels, en assurant une meilleure allocation des ressources rares au sein de l'économie, en favorisant la création de services concourant à l'amélioration de la qualité de vie et en assurant une réelle gestion du patrimoine conforme à la valeur que nous attribuons au bien-être des générations futures.

L'efficacité de cette politique doit être jugée sur la base de résultats de calculs coûts/avantages rigoureux.

La politique de l'environnement ne peut pas jouer à elle seule un rôle de régulation macroéconomique ; elle peut cependant concourir directement ou indirectement à améliorer le contenu de la croissance en emploi.

La Communauté doit veiller à ce que sa politique environnementale évite toute distorsion de concurrence. Par la négociation multilatérale, ou par tout autre moyen, la Communauté doit faire en sorte que les efforts de protection de l'environnement n'aient pas pour effet de dégrader la compétitivité des entreprises européennes sur les marchés mondiaux.

OSSERVAZIONI DEL GOVERNO ITALIANO IN RELAZIONE AL LIBRO BIANCO SULLE
STRATEGIE ECONOMICHE COMUNITARIE DA ELABORARE PER IL CONSIGLIO EUROPEO DEL
PROSSIMO DICEMBRE

Premessa

Con riferimento alle conclusioni del Consiglio Europeo di Copenaghen concernenti la individuazione di strategie a breve, medio e lungo termine, per ritornare ad una crescita sostenuta e non inflazionistica, rafforzare la competitività dell'industria europea e ridurre la disoccupazione, si espongono, di seguito, alcuni elementi che si ritengono cruciali per il conseguimento di tali obiettivi.

Prima di illustrare le politiche del Governo italiano per far uscire la nostra economia dal circuito involutivo costituito da insoddisfacenti livelli produttivi, caduta degli investimenti, consumi stagnanti, aumento della disoccupazione, può risultare utile una breve premessa per inquadrare le scelte adottate e le priorità individuate, nel più ampio contesto della situazione europea, con la quale l'economia italiana ha interagito. Mentre le principali determinanti delle difficoltà nelle quali l'Italia si è trovata sono prevalentemente di origine interna, le tensioni all'interno della Comunità hanno accelerato ed amplificato tali difficoltà.

L'analisi delle vicende politiche ed economiche nel nostro continente, dal collasso dell'Unione Sovietica e degli altri paesi dell'Est in poi, indica che in Europa si è passati da aspettative di crescita continua, troppo ottimistiche, ad un clima di sfiducia degli agenti economici che appare, anch'esso, non pienamente motivato.

E' pur vero che in Europa l'attuale periodo è caratterizzato dalla

prevalenza di elementi negativi (bassa crescita, disoccupazione, deficit di bilancio) che in qualche modo presentano una certa analogia con il periodo 1979-84, ma rispetto a tale periodo, il quadro macroeconomico presenta anche elementi positivi da non sottovalutare ai fini del ristabilimento del clima di fiducia. Infatti, l'inflazione è molto più bassa rispetto al periodo 1979-83 e forti sono gli impegni per ridurla e stabilizzarla; le economie europee sono maggiormente convergenti ed il commercio intra-comunitario è aumentato in modo tale da ridurre le conseguenze degli eventi negativi esterni alla Comunità.

L'esperienza degli ultimi mesi ha dimostrato che la sola prospettiva di procedere verso l'Unione Economica e Monetaria non è sufficiente a sostenere le aspettative positive e i processi di convergenza se non concorre una coerente evoluzione delle grandezze economiche fondamentali.

Le cause del drastico cambiamento di aspettative in Europa sono molteplici, in parte riconducibili alla conseguenza della fase ciclica negativa, esacerbata dagli elevati tassi di interesse nominali e reali, e dall'impossibilità, in molti paesi, di utilizzare la politica fiscale in funzione anticiclica.

Le difficoltà economiche dell'Europa non sono però solo una conseguenza della suddetta fase ciclica negativa, ma anche della ridotta competitività determinata da cause strutturali, quali taluni ritardi nei processi di armonizzazione dei mercati del lavoro e nel progresso tecnologico.

Queste difficoltà sono accentuate da un mutamento nella composizione dei consumi che sta modificando collaudati comportamenti dei consumatori nonché dei contraccolpi suscitati sull'economia europea della ormai avvenuta globalizzazione dell'economia: questa, attraverso anche la ricostituita capacità tecnologica americana ed il dinamismo dei Paesi di

nuova industrializzazione, sta erodendo ulteriormente la competitività dei prodotti europei.

Per ragioni politiche e sociali, è prevalsa spesso la tendenza a rispondere a queste difficoltà con politiche tese alla salvaguardia dell'esistente, rallentando così il processo di aggiustamento. Le difficoltà di raggiungere un accordo nel negoziato dell'Uruguay Round sono un'esempio evidente di tale tendenza; un'ulteriore liberalizzazione degli scambi di merci e di servizi, con un rapida conclusione dei negoziati in ambito GATT, così come un rafforzamento delle politiche strutturali, sono precondizione essenziale per accelerare la crescita della produttività e per rendere più flessibile e competitivo il sistema economico europeo. In tale contesto, il mercato del lavoro, o meglio la sua capacità di adeguarsi al processo di cambiamento, svolge un ruolo centrale.

Le distorsioni tuttora presenti nei mercati del lavoro, sia a livello intra-nazionale che tra paesi, hanno contribuito al rallentamento dei processi di convergenza ed aggravato il problema occupazionale nella Comunità.

Significative sono le differenze, almeno in Italia, tra la situazione attuale e la precedente contrazione ciclica, verificatasi nei primi anni ottanta. Allora, sebbene la disoccupazione fosse in aumento per l'incapacità del sistema di assorbire la crescita delle forze di lavoro (a sua volta frutto di trend demografici e dell'aumento della partecipazione femminile al mercato), l'occupazione nel suo complesso registrò solo una modesta e temporanea battuta d'arresto nel 1982.

La riduzione dell'occupazione nell'industria, legata al processo di profonda ristrutturazione di questo settore, trovava compensazione nella capacità di creazione di nuovi posti di lavoro nel settore dei servizi. Questa capacità si è, però, esaurita perchè anche il settore terziario è

ormai investito dal processo di ristrutturazione e, pertanto, non è ipotizzabile che esso possa continuare a svolgere la funzione di assorbimento dell'eccesso di offerta di lavoro che lo aveva caratterizzato nella fase precedente. Ciò rende ancora più difficile la gestione del problema occupazionale nel prossimo futuro.

Le differenze tra le caratteristiche attuali e quelle della precedente fase, si riflettono anche nella composizione del gruppo delle persone in cerca di lavoro al cui interno si registra, rispetto al passato, una maggiore presenza di quanti hanno perduto un precedente impiego nelle regioni più forti del Paese. Questo elemento di novità ha portato ad un inasprimento degli effetti sociali immediati della disoccupazione in quanto un maggior numero dei soggetti ora interessati, è costituito da capi famiglia dal cui reddito di lavoro spesso dipendono le possibilità di consumo di un intero nucleo familiare.

Ciò nonostante la disoccupazione italiana, benchè nel complesso si situi a livelli non dissimili da quelli degli altri paesi comunitari, rimane largamente caratterizzata dagli ampi divari esistenti tra giovani e adulti, femmine e maschi, Sud e Nord del paese.

Per segmenti omogenei, il tasso di disoccupazione risulta al Sud doppio, o ancora più alto, del corrispondente tasso al Nord soprattutto per la componente giovanile e femminile. Inoltre lo squilibrio "qualitativo" si affaccia sempre di più nelle due aree. Le professionalità domandate differiscono dalle professionalità offerte; ciò ne rende difficile l'incontro, provocando il cosiddetto "mismatch"; in effetti, soprattutto per i giovani in cerca di prima occupazione, si è ulteriormente allungato il tempo necessario per trovare un posto di lavoro. La lunghezza del periodo di disoccupazione è, quindi, in Italia, nettamente superiore a quella media degli altri Paesi maggiormente industrializzati: nel 1991

l'incidenza della disoccupazione di lungo termine (superiore a 12 mesi) sul totale, tra gli uomini, risultava del 69,3% in Italia, del 35,4 in Francia, del 49,0 in Germania e del 44,6 in Gran Bretagna.

D'altra parte, il fenomeno del divario regionale, soprattutto nei livelli della disoccupazione, ha rilevanza anche comunitaria; oltre a molti altri paesi europei, esso interessa ora anche la Germania, nella quale si prevede che il peso dei Länder orientali porterà, nel 1994, il tasso di disoccupazione complessivo al 10,2%, contro il 7,6 previsto per la parte occidentale del Paese. Pertanto le politiche nazionali e comunitarie per le aree depresse volte a ridurre gli squilibri esistenti vanno rafforzate, così come vanno migliorate le condizioni della mobilità territoriale.

Più in generale le politiche occupazionali nazionali e comunitarie per essere efficaci nel medio e lungo periodo devono attivamente cooperare per favorire l'incontro tra domanda e offerta nel mercato del lavoro, considerando le novità di fondo sull'uno e sull'altro versante e valorizzandone gli aspetti positivi quale risorsa fondamentale per il processo produttivo (diversificazione soggettiva delle scelte e del rapporto col lavoro nelle diverse fasi della vita, presenza esplicita delle donne nel mondo del lavoro, influenza dei fattori demografici, crescita dei tassi di scolarità, necessità di contenuti formativi in rapida evoluzione, sviluppo dei settori ad alto contenuto formativo).

Per quanto riguarda le conseguenze della fase ciclica negativa, così come indicato dal Consiglio Europeo di Copenaghen, occorrerebbe, per contrastare le attuali tendenze recessive, una politica monetaria meno restrittiva in Europa, ancorchè inserita in un contesto di stabilità monetaria nel medio periodo e di credibilità delle politiche; un più ampio spazio per la politica monetaria potrebbe aprirsi soprattutto qualora ad essa si affianchino efficaci politiche dei redditi. Ciò deve avvenire nella

riconferma degli obiettivi di protezione sociale, compresi quelli istituzionalizzati nel trattato di Maastricht ed in particolare nei protocolli di politica sociale dei quali occorre completa e rapida attuazione.

Ogni paese europeo deve farsi carico della propria parte di responsabilità, non solo rimettendo ordine nel bilancio pubblico, ma anche contribuendo a ricostituire il circolo virtuoso di un più alto sviluppo del reddito e dell'occupazione; è cruciale il ricreare un generale clima di fiducia sociale in Europa per un lungo arco temporale, in cui le politiche siano credibili, accettate dagli agenti economici, in un contesto di stabilità macroeconomica, di promozione del risparmio privato e di condizioni favorevoli ad un'alta quota di investimento.

Ai fini della realizzazione dell'Unione Economica e Monetaria, vi è generale consenso che bisogna prendere pienamente atto della contraddizione tra politiche monetarie non coordinate, libero movimento di capitali e tassi di cambio quasi fissi. Va quindi fatto tesoro dell'esperienza 1987-93 e va trovata una via di uscita con una soluzione intermedia, in cui tutti i paesi partecipano al processo dell'Unione, anche se alcuni sono in grado di accettare un ancoraggio monetario forte prima di altri per i quali invece è essenziale prioritariamente rafforzare i processi di convergenza, per tutti i fondamentali compreso il livello di disoccupazione, in un contesto che assicuri la flessibilità ritenuta necessaria.

Il Sistema Monetario Europeo conserva, in questo quadro, il suo ruolo essenziale di difesa della stabilità monetaria in attesa del passaggio alla moneta unica.

Sono certamente necessari maggiori elementi di elasticità e di gestione collettiva del Sistema, nel valutare i rapporti di cambio più appropriati, nel concordare eventuali mutamenti e nel difendere le parità ritenute adeguate.

Ma tutto questo deve avvenire nell'ambito di un ferreo accordo europeo: per quel che riguarda la moneta, le gestioni unilaterali da parte delle Banche centrali nazionali dovranno, attraverso il coordinamento operato dall'Istituto Monetario Europeo da istituirsi il primo gennaio 1994 progressivamente sganciarsi dal riferimento nazionale e finalizzarsi all'obiettivo della stabilità e della crescita europea: cambi e relativi interventi dovranno divenire, nei comportamenti effettivi, materia di decisione europea cui giungere mediante un serio processo di consultazioni.

Più in generale è necessario ricostruire una visione comune dell'Europa superando gli egoismi nazionali che nel periodo più recente sono riaffiorati (anche con il potenziale ricorso a misure protezionistiche) e che hanno contribuito a determinare quel clima di sfiducia e di incertezza che è stato tra le cause della recente crisi. Sono in ogni caso da contrastare, ancor prima del loro apparire, l'insorgere di misure protezionistiche.

Strategie di politica economica e sociale adottate dal Governo italiano

Le politiche economiche adottate recentemente in Italia, sono finalizzate a riconciliare gli obiettivi di stabilità di medio termine, di aggiustamento nella politica di bilancio e di miglioramento strutturale - che sono, in qualche modo istituzionalizzate nei programmi di convergenza richiesti ai paesi membri della Comunità, dall'art. 109F del Trattato di Maastricht - con le azioni necessarie a sostenere una maggiore crescita economica, non inflazionistica.

La scelta già compiuta nel 1992, di dare priorità alla riduzione dell'inflazione, è stata confermata e rafforzata.

Gli ultimi dodici mesi sono stati infatti caratterizzati dalla messa in campo di numerosi programmi di aggiustamento strutturale, quali l'accordo Governo-parti sociali del 31 luglio 1992, la riforma del sistema previdenziale, della finanza locale, della Pubblica Amministrazione, e avvio del processo di privatizzazione.

Nel settore cruciale della politica dei redditi, il 23 luglio 1993, le parti sociali, su impulso del Governo, hanno concordato un avanzato sistema di relazioni industriali che riguarda, oltre che la politica salariale e gli assetti contrattuali, anche le politiche dell'occupazione ed il sostegno al sistema produttivo. Il processo di ammodernamento dei meccanismi delle relazioni industriali, intrapreso alla fine del 1991 e confermato e rafforzato nel luglio 1992, sta già determinando - nel confronto con gli altri Paesi comunitari - una delle più basse dinamiche del costo del lavoro.

Gli accordi sul costo del lavoro nell'industria, insieme al proseguimento dell'opera di aggiustamento della finanza pubblica, sono stati individuati dal Governo italiano come la condizione necessaria ed irrinunciabile per realizzare la salvaguardia dei salari reali insieme alla crescita sostenibile sia del reddito che dell'occupazione. In effetti, nonostante la massiccia svalutazione della lira imposta dai mercati, la dinamica salariale e dei prezzi è rimasta sotto controllo, non solo per la debolezza ciclica dell'economia e la conseguente caduta dei consumi, ma soprattutto per l'eliminazione dei meccanismi di indicizzazione salariale e per la rottura delle aspettative inflazionistiche.

Da questo punto di vista l'intesa sul costo del lavoro rappresenta un salto di qualità nella storia delle relazioni sindacali; l'accordo costituisce, nella sua globalità, un vero e proprio patto sociale destinato a regolare, su basi nuove e maggiormente democratiche, l'assetto ed il

ruolo dei soggetti che partecipano al processo produttivo, favorendo scelte di politiche coerenti sia con gli obiettivi di protezione sociale che con lo sviluppo dell'occupazione.

Ha rappresentato un risultato di notevole valore politico, l'aver operato in direzione dell'abbattimento delle rigidità del mercato del lavoro e della gestione delle crisi occupazionali, salvaguardando la protezione per i lavoratori, ma prevedendo la ridefinizione delle garanzie anche in funzione di nuove tipologie lavorative (lavoro ad interim, ecc.).

L'incentivo a moduli lavorativi flessibili e politiche più attive del mercato del lavoro, rendono ancora più necessaria la definizione a livello normativo di un nucleo dei diritti fondamentali dei lavoratori, garantiti in tutto il territorio comunitario, per evitare rischi di dumping sociale che favoriscano un'offerta occupazionale marginale e dequalificata.

L'accordo del 23 luglio si inserisce in una azione, intrapresa da tempo, volta a migliorare il funzionamento del mercato del lavoro; esso non esaurisce evidentemente l'azione del Governo, ma anzi ne costituisce una premessa indispensabile fissando un quadro di riferimento. E' intenzione del Governo modificare il quadro normativo in materia di gestione del mercato del lavoro (al fine di valorizzare le opportunità occupazionali) e delle crisi occupazionali, attraverso una revisione della Cassa Integrazione Guadagni volta a renderla più funzionale al governo delle eccedenze di personale. Saranno rivisti gli strumenti già esistenti per favorire l'occupazione giovanile e quella femminile, disciplinati il lavoro interinale e altre forme di lavoro a tempo determinato e riesaminati l'assetto organizzativo e il funzionamento dell'Agenzia per l'impiego e degli Uffici periferici del Ministero del Lavoro.

La valorizzazione del ruolo delle parti sociali può risultare utile alla Comunità nel suo complesso; un'azione maggiormente coordinata a

livello comunitario, anche attraverso periodiche riunioni congiunte tra Ministri degli Affari Sociali e Ministri economici, può dare risultati vantaggiosi nella definizione della politica economica.

Per consolidare le condizioni di uno sviluppo economico equilibrato, è prevista una riduzione dei trasferimenti netti del settore pubblico per favorire il processo di riallocazione delle risorse verso i settori esposti alla concorrenza internazionale; tale riallocazione di risorse presuppone una maggiore mobilità dei fattori produttivi e l'intervento pubblico sarà chiamato ad attenuare le conseguenze negative di breve periodo, ma non dovrà ostacolare tale tendenza.

Aggiustamenti della finanza pubblica

Con la legge finanziaria per il 1993, l'azione correttiva degli squilibri di finanza pubblica è diventata molto più efficace, poiché ha iniziato ad incidere sui fattori strutturali sottostanti alla crescita del deficit di bilancio. Tale azione è ritenuta indispensabile per procedere al recupero di credibilità del sistema, che aveva toccato un punto minimo nella seconda metà del 1992, costituendo una delle cause fondamentali della crisi valutaria. Va sottolineato che questa azione di risanamento è avvenuta in un periodo particolarmente difficile. L'Italia è, infatti, tra i pochissimi Paesi che sono riusciti a ridurre il disavanzo pubblico in rapporto al PIL malgrado la grave recessione economica che ha caratterizzato il periodo più recente.

Il processo di risanamento strutturale della finanza pubblica, è stato consolidato con gli interventi previsti nel Documento di Programmazione Economica e Finanziaria relativo alla manovra per gli anni '94/'96; nel

1994 tali interventi si dovrebbero concentrare per i 9/10 sul lato della spesa, mentre la pressione tributaria complessiva non dovrebbe aumentare.

In raffronto al 1992, l'incidenza del fabbisogno del settore statale rispetto al PIL si dovrebbe ridurre, nel 1993, di un punto al 9,8%; l'avanzo primario dovrebbe passare dallo 0,6% al 2% del PIL.

Il complesso degli interventi dovrebbe inoltre consentire di consolidare nel 1994 l'avanzo primario e di ridurre il fabbisogno complessivo, sia in rapporto al PIL sia in termini assoluti; tali interventi dovrebbero parimenti consentire di approssimarsi in misura sensibile alla stabilizzazione del rapporto tra debito e PIL; con l'andamento previsto questo obiettivo potrebbe essere raggiunto prima della fine del 1996; l'avanzo primario a fine periodo è previsto di poco superiore a tre punti e mezzo percentuali rispetto al PIL.

A questo riguardo occorre dire che il processo di riduzione in corso dei tassi di interesse, e la conseguente riduzione nel costo del servizio del debito, sta riducendo il differenziale con i tassi degli altri paesi europei e lo ridurrà ancora di più, mantenendo il previsto rigore nella politica di bilancio; questo rappresenta un risultato positivo che non può essere sottovalutato.

Tale processo di riduzione dei tassi e le attuali condizioni dei mercati finanziari fanno sì che, in Italia, dopo un lungo periodo, il costo marginale del debito sia inferiore a quello medio; permanendo tali condizioni, il costo del debito è quindi destinato a diminuire.

Con le politiche previste si tende anche ad interrompere il processo di progressivo irrigidimento del bilancio pubblico.

Una riqualificazione della spesa pubblica si rende necessaria per

l'esigenza che va manifestandosi con crescente intensità in Italia, ma anche in Europa, di intervenire con maggior efficacia in comparti di spesa, a partire dalla tutela dell'ambiente, l'ammodernamento delle infrastrutture materiali ed immateriali e della rete dei trasporti pubblici, la diffusione dell'innovazione tecnologica, la formazione ed il sostegno delle aree depresse.

Data l'attuale rigidità del bilancio e tenuto anche conto degli obblighi della convergenza, gli investimenti pubblici devono essere rilanciati attraverso una più efficace e piena utilizzazione delle risorse disponibili ed in modo da poter favorire l'impiego aggiuntivo di risorse private ("project financing"), insistendo in modo particolare dove più grave è la crisi produttiva ed occupazionale e dove più urgenti sono le necessità di finanziamento della dotazione infrastrutturale.

Proposte per le misure specifiche a medio termine per la Comunità

Coordinamento degli strumenti finanziari della Comunità.

Nel libro bianco sulle strategie economiche comunitarie per uno sviluppo più sostenuto del reddito e dell'occupazione, accanto alle misure di politica economica capaci di determinare le condizioni della maggiore crescita, è opportuno rinforzare l'efficacia delle azioni specifiche a livello strutturale nei settori strategici finalizzate all'aumento della produttività, flessibilità e competitività del sistema economico europeo ed all'integrazione fisica dell'Europa a scala continentale.

Le azioni che appaiono più efficaci, per l'accelerazione della trasformazione strutturale, dovrebbero interessare l'istruzione e la formazione, l'innovazione tecnologica, l'ambiente e l'energia, le grandi

reti transeuropee. Ad esse devono far riferimento tutte le politiche e le azioni comunitarie, comprese quelle finanziate con i fondi strutturali.

Per realizzare una migliore visione d'insieme delle priorità negli interventi della Comunità e rendere tali interventi più efficaci, con un utilizzo ottimale delle risorse, è indispensabile procedere al coordinamento degli strumenti finanziari già operanti e in via di istituzione (bilancio comunitario, FEI, BEI, altri meccanismi di prestito), opportunamente integrati con le altre istituzioni finanziarie internazionali.

A tal fine potrebbe risultare utile l'istituzione presso la Commissione di un gruppo di coordinamento, nel quale siano rappresentati anche gli Stati membri e che possa costituire eventualmente anche supporto tecnico per l'attività dell'ECOFIN. Ciò anche per superare l'approccio prevalentemente verticale fin qui utilizzato.

Educazione e Formazione

Al fine di realizzare incrementi nella crescita, nella competitività e nell'occupazione in Europa, vanno favorite e promosse le azioni che assicurano una disponibilità di forza lavoro in grado di corrispondere alle esigenze della struttura della relativa domanda. I Governi e la Comunità devono perciò fornire risorse adeguate per riqualificare i programmi e le strutture per l'educazione e rafforzare la ricerca di base nelle Università e negli Istituti pubblici di ricerca, favorendo l'interazione con il sistema produttivo. Ciò implica, in particolare, azioni collegate all'evoluzione del mercato del lavoro (femminilizzazione, disoccupazione di lunga durata, invecchiamento della popolazione).

L'area dell'istruzione e della formazione professionale deve essere riconosciuta come variabile fondamentale del processo di sviluppo economico. Tra i programmi più meritevoli di supporto finanziario, anche a livello comunitario, si devono ricomprendere quelli del tipo che una recente legge italiana ha progettato e che prevedono un programma triennale di interventi articolati nel territorio per realizzare una migliore qualità dell'offerta educativa, con particolare riferimento al fenomeno della dispersione scolastica.

Si ritiene che contrastare il fenomeno della dispersione scolastica, significhi, da una parte rispondere ad una sentita esigenza sociale, dall'altra, ottimizzare i flussi di spesa, aumentare la competitività del sistema economico, nonchè adeguare la qualificazione della forza lavoro all'evoluzione strutturale dei mercati; poichè, almeno in Italia, il fenomeno della dispersione si concentra in particolari aree, con il suo superamento si contribuisce a ridurre gli squilibri tra zone deboli e forti del paese. In questa direzione, il programma italiano prevede il potenziamento dell'autonomia delle istituzioni scolastiche nonchè l'istituzione di corsi post-secondari, che vogliono fornire risposte concrete alle esigenze di una maggior flessibilità del sistema scolastico e formativo in rapporto alle rapide trasformazioni tecnologiche del sistema produttivo, consentendo così una più efficace interazione con il mercato del lavoro, anche con interventi di formazione continua.

Ricerca e Innovazione Tecnologica

Nel settore della ricerca di base, di quella applicata e della sua diffusione, la Comunità è già impegnata, avendone riconosciuta la rilevanza

per la competitività; a tuttora comunque, considerando il potenziale e la disponibilità in Europa delle risorse umane e del retroterra scientifico, le politiche di sostegno alla R&S hanno contribuito in modo non pienamente soddisfacente ad aumentare il grado di competizione verso i concorrenti asiatici ed americani ed accelerare il processo di diffusione capillare verso le PMI. L'adeguamento strutturale al mercato unico europeo delle imprese nate e sviluppate nell'epoca dei mercati nazionali, implica la continuazione ed il possibile rafforzamento degli sforzi nazionali e comunitari per l'innovazione tecnologica.

Il sostegno all'industria nella ricerca di base orientata ed in quella applicata va perseguito insieme a strumenti di politica, quali leggi e regolamentazioni o normative per gli appalti e gli acquisti pubblici, che consentano alle nuove tecnologie di essere adottate e diffuse.

La massimizzazione degli effetti dell'investimento finanziario può essere ottenuta non solo stabilendo un maggior equilibrio fra ricerca pura e ricerca applicata, ma accelerando il processo del trasferimento al mercato delle singole innovazioni.

Tenuto conto che il vincolo finanziario potrebbe rallentare il già lento processo d'adeguamento della ricerca italiana ai livelli europei, vanno intensificati gli sforzi per razionalizzare e coordinare le attività di ricerca all'interno e trarre il massimo profitto dalla partecipazione al Programma quadro della Comunità, utilizzandone le linee direttrici ed adoperandosi per rafforzarne la componente applicativa. Questa esigenza si pone per quei settori industriali dove sussiste un vero problema di competitività esterna e dove tecnologie innovative possono contribuire al rilancio di settori importanti dell'economia (e non di frammenti) per le necessità collegate allo sviluppo sostenibile. La ricerca nazionale va quindi attuata cercando di trarre il massimo vantaggio possibile dalla

ricerca comunitaria, sulla base anche del principio di sussidiarietà.

Per evitare i processi di deindustrializzazione, ma anzi favorire maggiori tassi di crescita, la Comunità deve individuare i progetti più idonei a favorire quelle tecnologie e quei settori che si intersecano e si integrano (meccatronica, informatica con telecomunicazioni, biotecnologie con salute o agricoltura), garantendo la competitività dei settori portanti dell'economia, o che danno origine a settori intrinsecamente nuovi.

L'esperienza ha peraltro dimostrato che, in mancanza d'una strategia comunitaria coerente, gli sforzi nazionali o comunitari rischiano d'essere frammentari o dispersivi. S'impone quindi la messa a fuoco d'un orientamento CEE che consideri l'innovazione tecnologica come elemento trainante intorno al quale stimolare una politica industriale della Comunità e come strumento per promuovere obiettivi complementari nella ricerca, nell'energia e nell'ambiente.

Non sempre le scelte strategiche della Comunità (ad esempio sulla televisione ad alta definizione) si sono rivelate conformi agli interessi dell'industria europea nel suo insieme: per evitare nuove frammentazioni, dispersioni od interventi squilibrati, occorre quindi assecondare, nelle politiche e nei progetti, una convergenza intorno ad una forte integrazione fra ricerca e mercato, nonchè sui programmi d'intervento che si pongono in una logica integrativa per tutto il continente europeo.

Ambiente e Energia

Nel dibattito economico e nelle riflessioni analitiche delle più qualificate sedi internazionali, vi è crescente consenso sulla centralità dei temi ambientali nell'impostazione delle politiche economiche; d'altra

parte, l'esperienza mostra che il progresso nella protezione ambientale è più facile da raggiungere nelle economie in espansione e dove i segnali dei meccanismi di mercato funzionano.

Come viene evidenziato anche in recenti studi della Commissione, l'obiettivo di realizzare più ambiziose politiche ecologiche si va sempre più trasformando, nei nostri sistemi economici, in obiettivi di investimento e di innovazione tecnologica. Si va sempre più consolidando il concetto che l'eco-efficienza nelle imprese si trova spesso a coincidere con l'obiettivo della qualità, in particolare con quello della "qualità totale".

Considerando che Paesi nostri concorrenti, quali gli Stati Uniti ed il Giappone, hanno adottato programmi per lo sviluppo di tecnologie legate a benefici per la qualità dell'ambiente e che creano occupazione, si ritiene essenziale che la Comunità migliori la sua competitività in quest'area.

Così come i governi nazionali, anche la Comunità, al proprio livello, dovrebbe sforzarsi di riqualificare la sua struttura di spesa verso priorità che rafforzino lo sviluppo di tecnologie più pulite ed il miglioramento dell'efficienza energetica e la stabilizzazione delle emissioni nocive.

Si ritiene che anche a livello comunitario possano essere individuati una serie di settori d'investimento "labour intensive", verso cui può essere riqualificata prioritariamente la spesa: risanamento urbano, trattamento delle acque reflue e dei rifiuti solidi, sicurezza industriale e prevenzione dei grandi rischi, ammodernamento di infrastrutture di rifornimento idrico, costituzione di parchi e zone protette, protezione del patrimonio forestale.

Anche a livello comunitario gli strumenti economici, ancorchè inseriti nella logica del mercato, devono coadiuvare i tradizionali strumenti di

"command and control" delle politiche ambientali, le quali devono integrarsi in modo crescente in quelle complessive di sviluppo economico e sociali. Ciò non solo per creare nuova occupazione, ma anche per aumentare il consenso dei cittadini su temi percepiti ormai come aspetti integranti della qualità della vita.

Per quanto riguarda l'uso dello strumento fiscale che consenta di riflettere nei prezzi gli effetti ambientali dell'uso delle risorse e della produzione dei beni, il Comitato di Politica Economica della Commissione ha già rilevato che la progressiva introduzione di tale strumento costituisce un processo lungo e complesso che presuppone una generale riconsiderazione degli esistenti, troppo divergenti, sistemi e livelli di tassazione, soprattutto energetici. Nonostante la complessità del problema, vi è crescente consenso sull'utilità di ricorrere ad una più equilibrata distribuzione degli attuali oneri fiscali, eliminando le sovvenzioni distorsive e tentando di internalizzare nei prezzi l'uso delle risorse ambientali.

Anche se le esternalità ambientali sono difficili da quantificare in modo accurato, quello che è importante, ancor più dei risultati quantitativi immediati, è la direzione del cambiamento.

Gli interventi dei singoli Stati devono essere ormai visti in una dimensione comunitaria che può essere peraltro raggiunta concentrandosi su obiettivi mirati e caratterizzati da un elevato valore integrativo. La realizzazione di tali progetti dev'essere percepita come un effettivo impegno ambientale e da svolgere in un contesto omogeneo e bilanciato fra le singole politiche e programmi comunitari. L'iniziativa comunitaria per lo sviluppo di reti transeuropee in materia di trasporto, telecomunicazioni ed energia deve essere accompagnata, in ogni realizzazione progettuale, da un'adeguata valutazione ambientale.

Per quanto concerne i progetti nel settore energetico, per i quali la Commissione ha già individuato alcune priorità, e che sono stati già approvati e cofinanziati, dovrebbe essere accelerata la loro realizzazione.

Nella prospettiva dell'integrazione del sistema energetico, non solo all'interno della Comunità, ma anche in tutto il continente, vanno favorite le condizioni per sviluppare il grande potenziale infrastrutturale, (per es. nel trasporto del gas naturale), particolarmente nell'Europa centro-orientale.

A tal fine dovrebbe essere accelerata la traduzione, in protocolli vincolanti, degli obiettivi della Carta Europea dell'Energia, per l'adozione di norme e principi comuni relativi alla protezione e alla tutela degli investimenti che, come noto, nel settore energetico si caratterizzano per l'elevato livello di rischio connesso alla dimensione degli investimenti stessi ed alla redditività differita.

Oltre all'integrazione dei mercati dell'energia della Comunità con i mercati dei Paesi dell'Europa centro-orientale, per l'Italia è cruciale la realizzazione di infrastrutture che colleghino più strettamente il nostro continente ai Paesi Arabi medio-orientali (progetto del collegamento elettrico via cavo del medio-adriatico) e con i Paesi dell'area nord-africana centro-orientale ad alta potenzialità energetica.

Reti Transeuropee

Nel libro bianco da elaborare per il prossimo Consiglio europeo di dicembre, le decisioni intervenute al Consiglio di Edimburgo e di Copenaghen dovrebbero trovare concreta applicazione sia in termini di

bilancio, sia in termini di attivazione delle procedure e degli strumenti finanziari (Fondo europeo per gli investimenti ecc.) per definire il concorso delle risorse comunitarie relative alle grandi reti transeuropee. A questi fini nel documento si dovrebbe esplicitare un impegno più vincolante per la Commissione e per gli Stati membri, per verificare lo stato della progettualità delle iniziative, compresi gli aspetti finanziari. Rimane prioritaria, data la situazione di bilancio pubblico nei nostri paesi, la necessità di coinvolgere le imprese nel capitale di rischio delle iniziative, creando le condizioni per renderle remunerative, anche se su un arco temporale esteso. Per la realizzazione delle strutture materiali ed immateriali di più immediato sostegno sia all'integrazione dei mercati, sia alla ripresa di un più elevato ritmo di crescita economica, va accelerata la realizzazione di progetti di interesse comunitario già definiti negli schemi direttivi della Comunità e per i quali è già stata definita una lista di priorità (come, ad esempio, i progetti dei trasporti e dell'energia approvati e cofinanziati) e che rispondono alle finalità che verranno esplicitate nel libro bianco.

Per la rete telematica transeuropea, al fine di evitare dispersione di iniziative, la Commissione ha presentato al Consiglio il programma TNA-IDA, che propone schemi direttivi di reti telematiche transnazionali.

Nel settore della rete di telecomunicazioni quale supporto al trasferimento dell'informazione (TEN - ISDN), da parte italiana si ravvisa necessaria un'azione comunitaria atta a promuovere la crescita della domanda in modo da permettere un più ampio mercato dei terminali a basso costo. Gli altri progetti TEN-Broad Band (rete a larga banda) dovranno essere ugualmente attivati e dovrebbero rientrare nei programmi di R & S.

La realizzazione della rete trans-europea telematica per la pubblica amministrazione, impone lo sviluppo armonizzato dei sistemi informatici dei

Paesi membri con conseguenti sensibili impegni finanziari.

Per il programma di azioni IDA dovranno essere individuate adeguate risorse per tutti i progetti, ma dovrà essere posta particolare attenzione alla realizzazione di servizi telematici trans-europei tra le Amministrazioni nei seguenti settori: sistemi per le imposte indirette, dirette e dogane; sistema integrato per i controlli ambientali, sistema informativo per la difesa fitosanitaria e per il controllo dei prodotti agricoli; sistemi pensionistici e sanitari; messaggistica elettronica (Electronic Mail). I progetti di sistemi e reti di controllo nel trasporto marittimo, aereo, ferroviario e stradale sono attualmente in corso di definizione nei piani di sviluppo approvati dalla Commissione.

Per l'Italia assume importanza, il finanziamento dello sviluppo di un catasto elettronico stradale già in fase di realizzazione a livello nazionale.

Per quanto riguarda le reti materiali, si ritiene necessario accelerare il processo di programmazione delle reti di trasporto transeuropeo in vista di predisporre il "Master Plan" delle infrastrutture di interesse comunitario che superi la logica settoriale degli schemi direttivi delle singole modalità di trasporto.

La prospettiva di realizzare una rete transeuropea di trasporto assume importanza primaria, sia con riferimento all'integrazione economica delle regioni meridionali ed insulari della Comunità, sia agli effetti dello sviluppo dell'occupazione nei servizi collegati e nell'indotto.

L'azione italiana per lo sviluppo delle reti transeuropee è ispirata a dare priorità agli interventi contenuti sulle reti modali definiti negli schemi direttivi approvati dal Consiglio CE.

In particolare si dovrà assicurare il coordinamento delle fonti finanziarie e la disponibilità di adeguate risorse per progetti di

intervento prioritari sulle seguenti reti, quali definite nei relativi schemi direttivi:

- rete ferroviaria: progetti alta velocità e combinato merci;
- rete stradale e autostradale;
- idrovie e cabotaggio.

Nell'ambito descritto, carattere di priorità verrà attribuito ai progetti intermodali interessanti le reti e corridoi europei:

- sistemi di valico sulle direttrici nord-sud-asse del Brennero;
- sistemi di valico sulle direttrici est-ovest e connessioni con il T.G.V. (linea alta velocità Torino-Lione e con l'est europeo via Tarvisio);
- collegamenti plurimodali nel Mezzogiorno, con particolare riferimento alle direttrici tirrenica ed adriatica, alle reti insulari ed al sistema portuale;
- sviluppo ed innovazione tecnologica delle reti ferroviarie nel Mezzogiorno;
- potenziamento dei sistemi aeroportuali di Roma Fiumicino e Milano Malpensa e loro integrazione con le reti ferroviarie;
- relaizzazione degli anelli mancanti sulla rete autostradale ed implementazione dei sistemi telematici per la sicurezza e la regolazione del traffico;
- sviluppo delle tecnologie di controllo del traffico autostradale (Management of Traffic) ed aereo (EUROCONTROL) e della navigazione nei porti V.T.S. (Vessel Traffic System).

Considerazioni conclusive

Le conclusioni cui è pervenuto il Consiglio Europeo di Copenaghen pongono l'accento sulla crescita, la competitività e l'occupazione tra loro strettamente collegate.

E' fuori discussione che questi sono gli obiettivi di tutti i paesi e della Comunità nel suo insieme; il governo italiano fornisce, con questo documento, il proprio contributo all'elaborazione del "Libro Bianco" e vengono riassunti, di seguito, i punti che appaiono con maggior valenza politica.

- Il livello insostenibilmente elevato della disoccupazione, per i suoi effetti sul piano economico, sociale e politico costituisce la maggior minaccia all'integrità e allo sviluppo della Comunità. L'aumento dell'occupazione e la riduzione della disoccupazione devono rappresentare una priorità della Comunità ed essere presi in considerazione per la valutazione della convergenza.

- Il livello della disoccupazione è il risultato della interrelazione di numerosi fattori, non è quindi possibile individuare un singolo fattore sul quale intervenire. E' necessaria una strategia complessiva volta a incidere sugli aspetti macro e microeconomici con l'obiettivo di accelerare la crescita e accrescere la capacità dell'economia europea di creare nuovi posti di lavoro in un quadro di stabilità. Questa strategia dovrà essere attuata in maniera coerente e coordinata, sia a livello comunitario, sia in ciascun Paese membro nel rispetto del principio della sussidiarietà.

- Sul piano macroeconomico è indispensabile un forte rilancio della cooperazione comunitaria in materia economica, monetaria e di cambi. Lo SME va ricostruito sulla base di tre principi che possono assicurare flessibilità e stabilità del sistema: determinazione comune delle parità

delle valute, regolazione e comune revisione delle stesse e comune responsabilità della loro difesa. Attraverso il maggior coordinamento delle politiche fiscali e monetarie, va perseguita la stabilità dei tassi di cambio, anche in presenza di parità non fisse. Partendo dal consolidamento del mercato interno vanno proseguiti gli sforzi per la realizzazione dell'Unione Economica e Monetaria e ciascun Paese membro dovrà mantenere e rafforzare l'impegno per la realizzazione degli obiettivi di convergenza definiti a Maastricht.

- La stabilità del quadro macroeconomico che consentirà una ulteriore riduzione dei tassi di interesse - riduzione che resta, in ogni caso, un obiettivo da perseguire - e lo stimolo agli scambi internazionali, che deriverà dalla rapida conclusione dei negoziati dell'Uruguay Round, forniranno un contributo essenziale al superamento delle incertezze dell'attuale situazione, ricostruendo il clima di fiducia da parte degli agenti economici, elemento necessario e fondamentale per uno sviluppo stabile e duraturo.

- Nel contempo sarà necessario rafforzare, a livello comunitario e dei singoli Paesi, gli interventi strutturali volti a migliorare la competitività del sistema europeo nei confronti degli altri concorrenti. La situazione delle finanze pubbliche dei Paesi membri non rende possibile un aumento di risorse per interventi nel campo delle infrastrutture, dell'innovazione tecnologica, dell'ambiente, dell'educazione e della formazione professionale. E', quindi, necessario che le ingenti risorse messe a disposizione della Comunità con gli accordi di Edimburgo siano utilizzate in maniera efficiente e coordinata con quelle che saranno spese a livello di ogni singolo Stato membro, al fine di massimizzarne l'efficacia. In tale ambito anche il principio dell'addizionalità, così come individuato dalla disciplina sui fondi strutturali, deve essere applicato in modo che risulti compatibile con l'osservanza degli obblighi di convergenza.

- Una particolare attenzione dovrà essere dedicata alle piccole e medie

imprese fonte primaria di creazione di occupazione. Più che aumentare gli aiuti alle PMI, si tratta di creare le condizioni che ne favoriscano lo sviluppo, rimuovendo gli ostacoli sul piano giuridico, economico e finanziario che ne rendono difficile la creazione. Una approfondita riflessione a livello comunitario su questi ostacoli e sulle misure necessarie per rimuoverli può rivelarsi di grande utilità. Anzi, a tal proposito, è da considerare se, nell'ambito del principio di sussidiarietà, sia auspicabile una normativa comunitaria che gli imprenditori possano utilizzare in alternativa con quelle nazionali.

- Un più efficiente e flessibile funzionamento del mercato del lavoro in tutti i Paesi della Comunità deve essere un obiettivo fondamentale. Un mercato del lavoro efficiente contribuisce a contenere le spinte inflazionistiche, a migliorare la competitività del sistema economico e ad accrescere la sua capacità di creare occupazione. Una moderata evoluzione, in linea con l'incremento della produttività, dei salari aumenta i margini di manovra della politica monetaria, riduce le pressioni sul bilancio pubblico e contribuisce ad attenuare gli squilibri settoriali e territoriali. Una maggiore mobilità, a livello territoriale, interprofessionale e intra-imprese, del fattore lavoro aumenta la capacità di aggiustamento (e ne riduce i costi) dell'economia alle continue modifiche strutturali derivanti dal progresso tecnico e dalle variazioni della domanda.

- Migliorare il funzionamento del mercato del lavoro è responsabilità di ciascun Stato membro. Fattori storici, politico-istituzionali e sociali caratteristici di ogni Paese determinano il modo di funzionamento di ciascun mercato del lavoro. Non è, quindi, possibile definire un approccio unico per realizzare l'obiettivo di renderli più flessibili ed efficienti. Un contributo notevole alla soluzione di questi difficili problemi può venire da uno scambio di esperienze e da una approfondita riflessione a livello comunitario sul funzionamento del mercato del lavoro e sugli effetti che specifiche misure, in special modo quelle adottate dalla

Comunità, possono avere sulla sua efficienza.

- Il Governo italiano è convinto che un maggior coinvolgimento dei lavoratori e dei loro sindacati alla definizione di politiche volte al miglior funzionamento del mercato del lavoro gioca un ruolo fondamentale nella strategia volta a ridurre la disoccupazione accrescendo la coesione sociale e riducendo le incertezze. In tal senso si è mosso il Governo italiano con l'accordo del 23 luglio scorso che innova notevolmente i meccanismi di contrattazione con l'obiettivo di assicurare una evoluzione dei salari nominali compatibile con gli obiettivi in materia di inflazione, pur salvaguardando il potere di acquisto del mercato del lavoro e l'andamento della produttività, a livello nazionale, settoriale e aziendale. Ne risulterà una maggiore flessibilità dei salari e una loro maggiore diversificazione a tutti i livelli.

- La maggiore flessibilità del mercato del lavoro non deve essere ottenuta riducendo la protezione per i lavoratori. Un alto livello di protezione sociale è una caratteristica fondamentale del modello di sviluppo europeo che va salvaguardata. Tuttavia è inevitabile un suo ripensamento, già da tempo iniziato in quasi tutti i Paesi della Comunità, alla luce dei crescenti costi e delle relative esigenze di bilancio e della necessità di un adattamento ai mutevoli bisogni ed una più specifica finalizzazione alla protezione delle fasce più deboli della popolazione.

Anche in questa materia la responsabilità primaria rinvia agli Stati membri anche se va riconfermata l'esigenza di una base minima comune attuando in maniera compiuta il relativo protocollo aggiuntivo di Maastricht. E', tuttavia, di grande utilità una riflessione comune a livello comunitario sugli strumenti più efficaci per realizzare gli obiettivi delle politiche sociali e sul loro impatto, ad esempio per quanto riguarda i vari possibili sistemi di finanziamento, sull'occupazione.

Luxembourg, le 10 septembre 1993



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13 -09- 1993	

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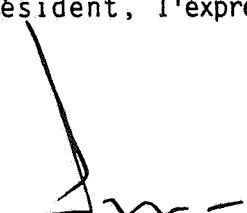
Monsieur Jacques Delors
Président de la Commission
des Communautés Européennes

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Monsieur le Président,

En annexe à la présente, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire parvenir la contribution du Luxembourg au Livre Blanc de la Commission.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur le Président, l'expression de mes sentiments très dévoués.



Jacques F. Poos

Croissance, compétitivité et emploi
dans la Communauté européenne

Contribution du Luxembourg au Livre blanc
de la Commission

Le Conseil européen de Copenhague a retenu un certain nombre d'orientations sur la base du Rapport introductif "Orientations pour le renouveau économique de l'Europe" qui lui a été présenté par le Président Delors. Il a invité la Commission à présenter au Conseil européen qui se réunira en décembre 1993 un Livre blanc sur la stratégie à moyen terme en faveur de la croissance, de la compétitivité et de l'emploi. Les conclusions retiennent également que "les Etats membres proposeront à la Commission, avant le 1er septembre, des éléments spécifiques susceptibles d'être inclus dans cette initiative". Il s'agit d'élaborer une stratégie qui - couvrant le court terme comme le moyen/long terme - permettra à la Communauté de sortir de l'actuelle récession et de renouer avec une croissance créatrice d'emplois. La croissance sans création d'emploi ("jobless growth") est une menace réelle pour l'économie européenne. C'est pour cette raison que la relance économique n'est pas à elle seule une solution pour réduire sensiblement le chômage qui frappe près de 18 millions d'Européens.

Les "Orientations pour le renouveau économique de l'Europe" présentées par le Président de la Commission aux chefs d'Etat et de Gouvernement réunis à Copenhague énoncent, d'un côté, un certain nombre d'actions prioritaires, et formulent, de l'autre côté, quelques éléments d'analyse qui illustrent certaines faiblesses structurelles de l'économie européenne par rapport à ses principaux concurrents.

La contribution du Gouvernement luxembourgeois, après avoir fourni quelques indications sur l'évolution économique du Luxembourg, présente des éléments de réflexion sur les "orientations pour le renouveau économique de l'Europe". Il est certain que la crédibilité de la construction européenne dans nos opinions publiques dépend largement de la capacité de la Communauté et de ses Etats membres de redonner confiance aux acteurs économiques et surtout de réduire le chômage.

1. Croissance, compétitivité, emploi: la situation du Luxembourg.

Le document du Président Delors met en évidence des tendances lourdes qui caractérisent l'évolution économique de la Communauté dans son ensemble. Les situations économiques et sociales dans les douze Etats membres, voire celles au sein même des Etats membres, sont souvent très différenciées. Les disparités en termes de croissance et d'emploi sont considérables d'un pays à l'autre, mais aussi d'une région à l'autre. Ces spécificités qui sont déjà prises en compte dans les différentes politiques communautaires ne peuvent pas être négligées dans l'élaboration d'une stratégie qui vise à redonner à l'Europe communautaire un nouvel élan économique.

Globalement l'économie luxembourgeoise a connu ces dernières années une évolution sensiblement différente par rapport à l'économie communautaire dans son ensemble. Ceci est d'abord vrai pour l'emploi. C'est ainsi que l'emploi intérieur a augmenté, entre 1989 et 1993, de 11.4%. Le taux du chômage est passé, pendant la même période, de 1.4% à 2%. Etant donné que le secteur industriel a perdu 2.5% de ses effectifs, la croissance de l'emploi est essentiellement due au secteur des services marchands (+14.3%). Cette tendance se retrouve dans pratiquement tous les pays européens mais elle a été particulièrement forte et rapide au Luxembourg de sorte que la perte des emplois industriels a été plus que compensée par la création d'emplois tertiaires. L'économie luxembourgeoise qui a été créatrice d'emplois, a vu le nombre des travailleurs frontaliers fortement augmenter pendant la période indiquée (+84%). Elle a ainsi eu un

impact positif sur les régions avoisinantes particulièrement frappées par le chômage.

Une des données essentielles qui est en même temps la plus préoccupante au niveau communautaire est le faible contenu "emploi" de la croissance. C'est ainsi que, selon le tableau présenté par le Président Delors, le contenu "emploi" de la croissance a été nettement plus élevé aux Etats-Unis que dans la Communauté européenne, pour les périodes présentées, à savoir 1974 à 1982 et 1982 à 1990. Cette donnée importante ne fournit évidemment aucune information sur la qualité et la qualification des emplois créés.

L'analyse des chiffres pour le Luxembourg révèle que pour les périodes 1982 à 1990 et 1990 à 1992, la croissance de l'économie luxembourgeoise a été nettement plus forte que la moyenne communautaire. Le contenu "emploi" de la croissance a également été supérieur à celui de la Communauté européenne dans son ensemble. Ceci est notamment dû au rôle dynamique joué par le secteur des services marchands. Au Luxembourg la part des services dans la valeur ajoutée a été supérieure à la moyenne communautaire (52.6% en 1992). Depuis 1989, on constate également que la part que les services marchands détiennent dans l'emploi a dépassé celle que ces derniers détiennent dans la valeur ajoutée. En faisant abstraction de certaines difficultés statistiques, on peut assumer que la productivité des services a été inférieure à celle du reste de l'économie pendant cette période.

En ce qui concerne la compétitivité de l'économie luxembourgeoise, dont le degré d'ouverture est le plus fort de tous les Etats membres de la Communauté, la réponse doit être nuancée. Si la balance commerciale s'est régulièrement détériorée depuis 1975, cette évolution s'explique par deux phénomènes majeurs : une certaine désindustrialisation due à la réduction constante de la production sidérurgique exportée à près de 100% ; la tertiarisation de l'économie créant une augmentation forte des importations. L'excédent considérable au niveau de la balance des services contribue ainsi à un surplus important au niveau de la balance des paiements. Au niveau du

coût horaire de la main d'oeuvre qui est un élément parmi d'autres de la compétitivité industrielle, le Luxembourg se situe évidemment dans le groupe des pays communautaires dont les coûts sont les plus élevés. Il ne se trouve néanmoins qu'au 5ième rang.

Il faut noter que cette situation relativement favorable s'explique par le fait que l'impact des cotisations de sécurité sociale est plus faible que dans la plupart des autres pays de la Communauté. La contribution globale de l'Etat aux recettes courantes de la sécurité sociale atteint 39%. Celle-ci n'est que de 27.8% en moyenne pour l'Europe des douze.

Ces quelques données montrent que sur différents plans l'économie luxembourgeoise se différencie assez nettement des "tendances lourdes" relevées par le Président de la Commission. Le Gouvernement luxembourgeois ne néglige pourtant nullement les fragilités auxquelles est exposée une économie très ouverte et de petite dimension. On constate d'ailleurs depuis plusieurs mois une certaine augmentation des demandeurs d'emplois. L'économie luxembourgeoise a fait face à une désindustrialisation dont les effets ont pu être atténués par le développement du secteur tertiaire et par une politique active en matière d'implantation et de création de nouvelles activités. Il est évident que la situation économique relativement favorable dont bénéficie actuellement le Luxembourg dépend, à plus long terme, très largement de la capacité de la Communauté de renouer avec une croissance plus forte et davantage créatrice d'emplois. Etant donné que les exportations luxembourgeoises se concentrent à hauteur de 90% sur le marché communautaire, notre pays est particulièrement attaché à la stabilité monétaire. Dans cette optique la réalisation de l'Union économique et monétaire comportant la création d'une monnaie européenne unique doit rester un objectif essentiel. Les modalités de sa réalisation qui sont inscrites dans le Traité sur l'Union européenne devront être respectées. L'instabilité monétaire n'affaiblira pas seulement la Communauté dans son ensemble face à ses principaux concurrents internationaux, elle finira par menacer le bon fonctionnement du marché intérieur. Il s'agit là d'une des grandes réalisations communautaires des dernières années qui a largement contribué à la redynamisation dont

a profité l'économie de la Communauté pendant la seconde moitié des années 80. Aussi convient-il de parachever la réalisation du marché intérieur et d'en examiner régulièrement le fonctionnement correct.

2. Orientations pour le renouveau économique de l'Europe:
éléments de réflexion.

Conformément aux conclusions du Conseil européen de Copenhague, il s'agit de fournir quelques éléments de réflexion sur l'élaboration d'une stratégie communautaire en faveur de la croissance, d'un renforcement de la compétitivité et de l'emploi. Pour le Gouvernement luxembourgeois, il est important que cette stratégie que la Commission entend développer dans le Livre blanc s'appuie sur les grands objectifs du Traité sur l'Union européenne. Mettre en doute les engagements, tout particulièrement en matière d'Union économique et monétaire, conduirait fatalement à une plus grande incertitude sur l'avenir économique et monétaire et menacerait ainsi la reprise de l'activité et le retour à une plus grande stabilité, notamment sur le plan monétaire. La mise en oeuvre intégrale du Traité de Maastricht est à cet égard essentielle. Il s'agit en effet de reconstituer la confiance sans laquelle l'économie européenne ne connaîtra pas une relance suffisamment forte de la croissance.

Le Gouvernement luxembourgeois est également conscient du fait que la seule croissance ne permettra pas de réduire sensiblement et suffisamment rapidement le chômage. En effet, les économies européennes se trouvent dans une profonde crise d'ajustement. L'organisation industrielle est en train de changer profondément. Le processus de "re-engineering" dans lequel sont engagées la plupart des entreprises européennes, notamment les plus importantes, est dicté, d'un côté, par la révolution technologique et de l'autre côté, par les nouvelles conditions concurrentielles qu'impose la mondialisation de l'économie. Il en résulte une augmentation de la productivité et en même temps une réduction sensible des effectifs, tout particulièrement dans l'industrie. Ce processus de restructuration globale qui touche pratiquement tous les secteurs industriels semble inévitable dans le

contexte économique international si l'Europe ne veut pas s'engager définitivement sur la voie du déclin économique face à ses principaux concurrents.

Il faut donc réfléchir sur la question comment les pays européens pourront sortir de cette crise d'ajustement en renforçant à la fois leur compétitivité, en relançant la création d'emplois et en sauvegardant le modèle social propre à l'Europe. Le Gouvernement luxembourgeois n'est pas d'avis que la remise en cause de ce modèle social fondé sur la sécurité et la protection sociale ainsi que sur une certaine conception du progrès économique et social permette de redresser durablement la situation économique et l'emploi dans la Communauté.

A cet égard il faut rappeler l'article 2 du Traité sur l'Union européenne qui retient que "la Communauté a pour mission, par l'établissement d'un marché commun et d'une Union économique et monétaire, et par la mise en oeuvre des politiques ou des actions communes visées aux articles 3 et 3A, de promouvoir un développement harmonieux et équilibré des activités économiques dans l'ensemble de la Communauté, une croissance durable et non inflationniste respectant l'environnement, un haut degré de convergence des performances économiques, un niveau d'emploi et de protection sociale élevé, le relèvement du niveau et de la qualité de vie, la cohésion économique et sociale et la solidarité entre les Etats membres."

L'adhésion des citoyens à la construction européenne a résulté également de la capacité de celle-ci de poursuivre avec succès ces objectifs et de contribuer activement au progrès économique et social. Il ne peut donc pas être question de mettre entre parenthèses les objectifs sociaux de la construction européenne.

Le Gouvernement luxembourgeois attache une importance particulière au dialogue social et à la consultation des partenaires sociaux. Le dialogue social est tout particulièrement important en cette période où certains ajustements sont inévitables. L'Accord sur la Politique sociale conclu à Maastricht présente notamment sur le plan de la concertation entre

partenaires sociaux des possibilités qu'il faut pleinement exploiter sur le plan communautaire.

Il apparaît que le renforcement de la compétitivité de l'économie européenne, sans lequel le modèle social européen risquera évidemment de s'éroder, nécessite certains ajustements.

Le monde du travail traverse des mutations profondes qui ne peuvent évidemment pas être ignorées. Il s'agit de véritables transformations sociales qui auront un impact considérable sur toute l'organisation de nos sociétés. La lutte contre le chômage et la relance de l'emploi ne peut donc pas se limiter à la seule sphère économique, elle doit englober les différents aspects de la vie sociale tout comme elle devra prendre en compte l'évolution technologique.

Dans cette perspective, le Gouvernement luxembourgeois peut approuver les grandes orientations pour le renouveau économique de l'Europe présentées par le Président Delors au Conseil européen de Copenhague.

° Une Communauté ouverte et solidaire dans le monde.

Une dérive protectionniste de la Communauté aboutirait très rapidement à un affaiblissement de la compétitivité et par là de l'emploi. La Communauté, première puissance commerciale, a donc intérêt au développement des échanges avec toutes les parties du monde et notamment celles qui connaissent actuellement une expansion économique particulièrement vigoureuse. Dans cette optique la conclusion rapide de l'Uruguay Round et le renforcement du multilatéralisme sont importants. Il faut évidemment mieux prendre en compte les aspects sociaux et la protection de l'environnement. La Communauté devrait jouer à cet égard, notamment dans le cadre des différents accords qu'elle conclut, un rôle encore plus actif en soutenant les efforts dans ces secteurs.

L'introduction d'une clause sociale fondée sur certaines conventions de l'OIT ainsi que d'une clause relative à la protection de l'environnement dans les règles du GATT devrait faire l'objet d'une future négociation commerciale internationale. De telles clauses sont par exemple négociées dans le cadre de l'accord de libre échange entre les Etats-Unis, le Mexique et le Canada. Il faut évidemment veiller à ce qu'elles ne deviennent des mesures protectionnistes contre les pays en développement. De même, un système international ouvert des échanges a également besoin d'une plus grande stabilité monétaire à l'échelle internationale.

Le développement accéléré de l'Europe centrale et orientale représente une chance réelle pour l'économie communautaire. Elle peut y trouver des débouchés nouveaux à condition que ces pays s'intègrent suffisamment vite dans le système économique international. L'ouverture de nos marchés dont la mise en oeuvre accélérée a été décidée par le Conseil européen est une condition nécessaire. La croissance pourra repartir en Europe grâce au développement de cette partie du continent.

° Recherche et développement et politique industrielle.

Une des causes à l'origine de l'affaiblissement de la compétitivité de l'économie européenne réside dans sa moindre valorisation de la recherche et du développement et de sa maîtrise plus faible des nouvelles technologies et procédés de production. Le déficit de la balance commerciale communautaire en matière de technologies de l'information n'a cessé d'augmenter. Les programmes communautaires tels que ESPRIT n'ont pas corrigé cette évolution qui a vu en dix ans le déficit se multiplier par cinq. Si la question de l'impact des nouvelles technologies sur l'emploi reste posée, les différentes études qui ont été effectuées à ce sujet fournissent deux éléments de réponse :

- les entreprises n'ayant pas recouru aux nouvelles technologies ont globalement été plus destructrices d'emplois que celles qui se sont modernisées;

- l'introduction des nouvelles technologies a entraîné des transformations structurelles au niveau de l'organisation du travail et des qualifications. L'Europe a eu des difficultés à s'adapter à ces transformations du mode de production.

Quelques éléments de réflexion :

- Réévaluer la politique communautaire en matière de recherche et de développement et la réorienter en vue de faciliter et d'accélérer l'adaptation du système productif;
- Mettre l'accent sur le développement des nouvelles technologies qui seront au coeur de la restructuration du système productif;
- Exploiter pleinement, à l'échelle européenne, les possibilités d'une politique industrielle axée davantage sur le développement de produits et de technologies avancés. Il s'agit de créer un environnement plus favorable à de tels développements;
- Améliorer le réseau d'infrastructures et de télécommunications.

Le Traité sur l'Union européenne, dans son article 129B, prévoit que la Communauté "contribue à l'établissement et au développement de réseaux transeuropéens dans les secteurs des infrastructures du transport, des télécommunications et de l'énergie". Le Fonds de cohésion a un rôle à jouer à cet égard. Le Conseil européen d'Edimbourg a décidé l'affectation de moyens financiers à la réalisation de cet objectif. Le Gouvernement luxembourgeois est favorable aux idées exprimées à ce sujet par le Président de la Commission. Il faut également étudier dans quelle mesure les pays d'Europe centrale et orientale dont les infrastructures de communication sont sous-développées peuvent bénéficier d'un soutien accru. Les besoins y sont considérables à cet égard.

° La création de nouvelles activités.

La "révolution technologique" évoquée par le Président Delors présente des opportunités pour la création de nouvelles activités. Le secteur lié à la protection de l'environnement représente un potentiel réel qu'il faut développer. Il s'agit également de favoriser par un cadre fiscal et des moyens de financement appropriés (capital à risque) la création de nouvelles activités. Un allègement des charges fiscales et sociales permettrait d'encourager la création de nouvelles entreprises, notamment par de jeunes diplômés. D'autre part, les activités transfrontalières des entreprises se heurtent encore trop souvent à toute sorte de barrières et de difficultés administratives et autres qu'il s'agit de démonter.

Compte tenu du recentrage au niveau des grandes entreprises industrielles, le travail indépendant devra jouer un rôle accru. Les PME méritent à cet égard une attention particulière. Elles ont été par le passé créatrices nettes d'emploi. Il faut maintenir cette dynamique. Le marché intérieur doit encore davantage prendre en compte les problèmes particuliers des PME. Il existe d'ailleurs une disposition qui exige que chaque mesure communautaire soit évaluée en fonction de l'impact qu'elle pourra avoir sur le développement des PME. Il serait recommandé dans ce contexte que la fiche d'impact qui accompagne les projets de textes communautaires susceptible d'affecter l'organisation, l'emploi et la rentabilité des entreprises et plus particulièrement les PME soit dûment élaborée. Par ailleurs, les programmes communautaires en faveur des PME, visant leur insertion dans le marché unique et à renforcer leur compétitivité à partir du double objectif d'information et de coopération, doivent être renforcés.

Il s'agit également d'encourager la création d'activités de services, par exemple dans les secteurs social, culturel, de santé, ... en encourageant notamment la création d'emplois au niveau de services dits "de proximité". Ces services répondent à de réels besoins qui sont insuffisamment pris en compte. Cette catégorie d'emplois nécessitent évidemment différents types d'organisation du travail et une plus grande flexibilité.

° Ajustements sur le marché du travail.

Les problèmes de compétitivités et d'emplois sont souvent trop exclusivement réduits à une seule question : l'inflexibilité du marché du travail européen et tout particulièrement le niveau trop élevé du coût du travail.

Il est certain que les emplois les moins qualifiés sont les plus exposés à la concurrence internationale de la part des pays à bas salaires. Il faut admettre que cette situation va perdurer et que des emplois peu qualifiés vont continuer à disparaître, notamment dans l'industrie. Alléger le coût du travail en fiscalisant davantage certaines charges sociales peut freiner cette évolution. L'Europe doit s'adapter à une nouvelle division internationale du travail et en tirer profit par une meilleure valorisation de ses atouts dont en priorité la mise en valeur de ses ressources humaines.

La flexibilité n'est pas obligatoirement synonyme de remise en cause d'acquis sociaux. Elle peut aussi répondre à de nouvelles demande sociales en matière d'organisation du travail, de répartition entre le travail d'une part, le temps libre, les activités sociales, culturelles, familiales ou éducatives, d'autre part.

Les modèles sociaux n'évoluent pas assez vite ce qui fait que la perte de l'emploi équivaut pour un nombre accru de personnes à une forme d'exclusion sociale. On ne peut pas négliger dans ce contexte que la part du chômage de longue durée dans le chômage totale est largement plus élevée dans la Communauté (45.8%). Il est évidemment une des causes de l'exclusion sociale et d'une nouvelle marginalisation. Ces problèmes ne peuvent pas être ignorés car ils créent de nouvelles tensions politiques et des risques de rupture sociale. Vouloir simplement transposer des modèles extra-européens, notamment américains et asiatiques, est illusoire. Les sociétés européennes et américaine sont très différentes à de nombreux égards. Il faut que l'Europe développe des modèles originaux compatibles avec ses traditions sociales. Si le plein emploi n'est plus, comme cela paraît certain même à plus long terme, une résultante d'une économie en

croissance, il faut que la société invente des formes d'organisation qui assurent à chaque citoyen sa dignité, son utilité sociale et un revenu approprié. La paupérisation de toute une couche de la population n'est certainement pas une solution.

La réponse de la Communauté à la crise de l'emploi ne peut résider dans la création d'emplois peu durables et n'ayant qu'un faible contenu qualitatif. Cette évolution préoccupe d'ailleurs au premier chef les responsables américains qui s'inquiètent de la disparition d'emplois qualifiés et bien rémunérés au profit d'emplois précaires et mal payés. La structure de l'emploi reflète aussi la compétitivité d'une économie.

Dans "The Competitive Advantage of Nations" le professeur américain Michael Porter note : "It is high-productivity jobs, not just any jobs, that translate into high national income The pursuit of competitiveness defined as a trade surplus, a cheap currency or low unit labor costs contains many traps and pitfalls." Les pays de la Communauté disposent de nombreux ressorts pour retrouver une compétitivité assurant le maintien d'un certain modèle social qui, en même temps, a toujours été un atout pour le développement économique et la cohésion sociale.

L'OCDE, dans son Rapport intérimaire sur l'emploi et le chômage évoque la question des "structures salariales" : "Ceux qui risquent le plus d'être victimes du changement technologique, des modifications des échanges et des délocalisations de la production sont les moins qualifiés ou ceux dont les compétences sont trop étroites. La tendance naturelle, en l'absence de mesures, de forces sociales ou d'institutions qui y fassent obstacle, est que les différentiels de salaires reflètent la baisse de la demande de main-d'oeuvre non qualifiée et l'accroissement de la demande de main-d'oeuvre qualifiée. Cette évolution - que l'on a observée aux Etats-Unis - ralentit le processus de perte d'emplois pour les travailleurs non qualifiés, mais on risque alors d'élargir le groupe des "travailleurs pauvres" et, à la limite, d'inciter un grand nombre de travailleurs à devenir inactifs."

La notion de partage du travail disponible, soit par une réduction du temps de travail, le développement de nouvelles formes de travail comme le temps partiel, les contrats à durée déterminée, l'interruption de carrières pour des motifs familiaux ou éducatifs, est à l'ordre du jour. Le développement des services qui ont été jusqu'à présent créateurs d'emplois s'accompagne par une gestion plus flexible du temps de travail ce qui permet souvent une amélioration des performances. Mais comment encourager ces formes de travail tout en évitant une précarisation du travail qui aurait à terme un impact négatif sur la productivité et par là sur la compétitivité qu'il s'agit précisément d'améliorer ? La précarité n'est pas seulement une forme de marginalisation sociale, elle suscite aussi la démotivation à un moment où les ressources humaines bien formées et motivées sont un des atouts d'une entreprise compétitive.

Un effort particulier doit être fait pour permettre à certaines catégories de travailleurs particulièrement frappés par le chômage de longue durée à réintégrer le marché du travail. Il s'agit par exemple des travailleurs d'un certain âge, souvent peu qualifiés mais pas exclusivement, des jeunes sans expérience et peut-être sans qualification bien précise. Il faut encourager les entreprises par certaines mesures d'allègement des charges à employer ces travailleurs menacés par une marginalisation sur le marché du travail.

Dans cette phase d'ajustements et de mauvaise conjoncture, le partage du travail peut également se poser sous la forme de "l'économie de partage", concept développé par l'économiste américain Martin Weitzman. Au lieu d'avoir des salaires fixes qui peuvent, notamment dans cette période être créateurs de chômage, il faudrait établir une liaison forte entre les rémunérations des travailleurs et les résultats de l'entreprise à laquelle ils appartiennent. Ce système existe dans une certaine mesure au Japon où le système des bonus est largement répandu et où l'emploi, surtout dans les grandes firmes, est encore pratiquement garanti.

Cette idée peut être une alternative aux licenciements collectifs. De même, en période de difficultés conjoncturelles et de restructuration, la négociation de réductions de salaires temporaires permettant d'éviter des licenciements est envisageable.

Il semble inévitable que dans le contexte économique actuel, une certaine modération salariale s'impose.

Il ne faut pourtant pas négliger le fait que la crise à laquelle est confrontée l'économie européenne comporte aussi une faiblesse de la demande qu'il ne s'agit pas d'aggraver encore. Dans certains cas des allègements des charges devront sûrement être envisagés dans la mesure où il apparaît qu'ils peuvent entraîner des créations d'emplois.

Ces approches pour être efficaces, socialement et économiquement, supposent un dialogue social et une concertation active entre partenaires sociaux. L'approche contractuelle aux différents niveaux, communautaire, national et entreprise, doit se concentrer prioritairement sur l'amélioration de l'emploi. Une lutte plus efficace contre le chômage exige une plus grande solidarité sociale mais les chômeurs sont peu ou pas du tout représentés. Les chefs d'entreprise doivent également faire preuve d'une plus grande responsabilité à l'égard du maintien de l'emploi en recourant moins exclusivement aux pratiques du licenciement. C'est ainsi que les entreprises devraient jouer davantage sur la flexibilité interne.

S'il n'y a certainement pas de remède miracle capable de retourner rapidement la courbe du chômage, une mobilisation de tous les acteurs économiques et sociaux est nécessaire. La menace d'un chômage endémique rend certains changements de comportement indispensables.

° Formation, qualification et système éducatif.

L'adaptation aux changements structurels en cours nécessite une meilleure formation, une qualification plus élevée et un système éducatif répondant à ces nouveaux besoins.

La mise en valeur des ressources humaines et l'investissement dans le capital humain restent des objectifs prioritaires. Il est néanmoins inquiétant de voir que le chômage ne frappe pas seulement les travailleurs non-qualifiés. Il y a de plus en plus de cadres au chômage, victimes de cet "re-engineering" des entreprises qui amène la suppression de nombreuses fonctions intermédiaires. De plus en plus de jeunes diplômés ont des difficultés à trouver un emploi sur un marché de l'emploi détérioré. La formation et la qualification sont sans aucun doute des atouts, voire des nécessités mais elles sont insuffisantes à relancer à elles seules l'emploi. La formation continue, les politiques de recyclage, l'adaptation aux nouvelles technologies, sont des missions qui doivent être de plus en plus assurées par un système éducatif plus ouvert et plus flexible.

La formation ne se limite plus à une période donnée dans la vie d'un individu, elle fait de plus en plus partie de sa vie active et peut alterner avec les périodes d'activité. Le droit individuel à la formation constitue une dimension nouvelle et importante qui mérite une réflexion approfondie quant aux modalités selon lesquelles ce droit peut s'exercer dans la réalité. Le chèque formation exige en tout cas un certain nombre de garanties sur la qualité si on veut éviter l'émergence de nouveaux clivages très importants. L'évolution des technologies et leur impact sur l'organisation du travail implique des changements de métier plus fréquent, d'où l'importance d'une gestion anticipative des changements technologiques. Celle-ci nécessite une relation plus étroite entre le monde économique et le système éducatif dans le sens large. Il y a trop souvent une absence totale de passerelle entre l'école et l'entreprise. Les jeunes diplômés manquant d'expérience sont laissés à eux-mêmes à la sortie de l'école. Les politiques de l'emploi devront mieux répondre à ces situations.

* * * * *

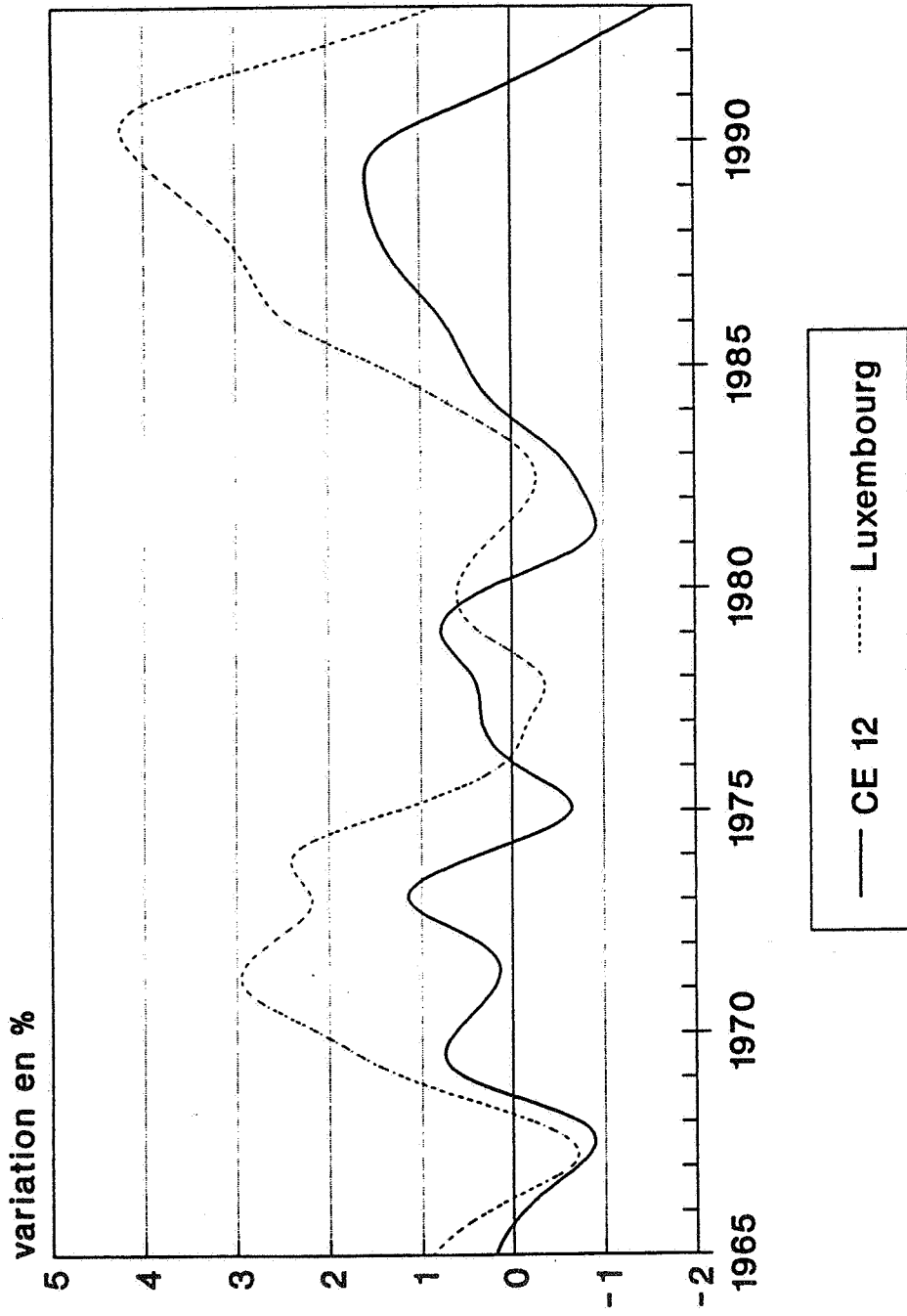
Le problème de l'emploi se trouve sûrement au coeur de la relance de la construction européenne qui doit permettre de restaurer la confiance et d'encourager l'investissement dans l'avenir. En effet, le chômage inflexible et peu sensible aux améliorations de la conjoncture risque de

devenir une sorte de "maladie européenne". Une mobilisation à l'échelle communautaire est pour cette raison essentielle. Des résultats importants peuvent être obtenus par une Communauté qui progresse sur la voie de l'Union et qui, en réalisant l'Union économique et monétaire, retrouve une nouvelle stabilité mais aussi un nouveau dynamisme. Le Livre blanc que la Commission devra présenter au Conseil européen de décembre doit à cet égard devenir une contribution montrant que la Communauté dans son ensemble est prête à s'adapter au monde nouveau qui est en préparation. Il est ainsi le complément des mesures de relance adoptées par le Conseil européen d'Edimbourg et renforcées par celui de Copenhague.

Le Livre blanc pourra fournir toute une série d'idées et de propositions dont certaines peuvent ou doivent être mises en oeuvre ou coordonnées sur un plan communautaire. D'autres nécessiteront d'être adaptées aux différents contextes nationaux qui, tout en connaissant ces mêmes "tendances lourdes", sont également divergents à de nombreux égards.

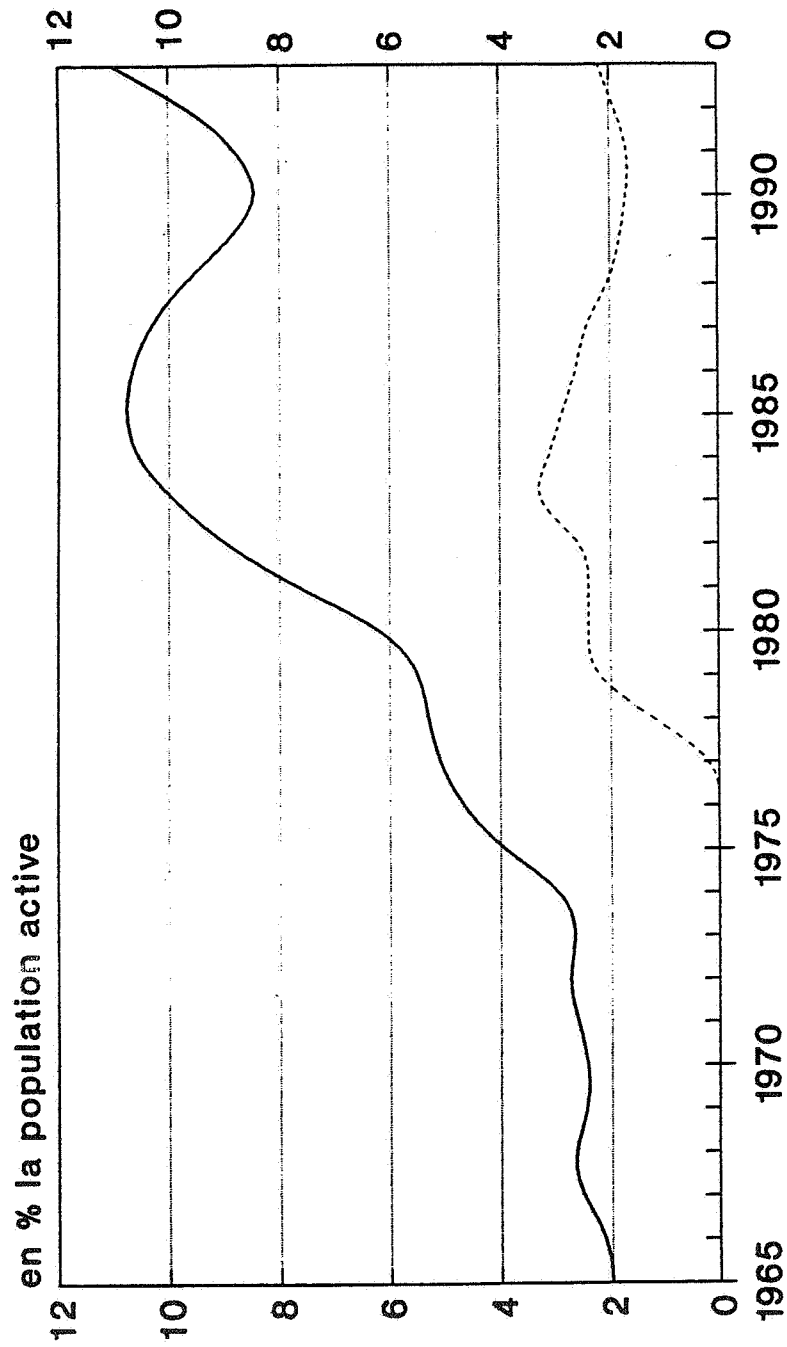
A N N E X E S

Evolution de l'emploi



Source: Commission CE (juin 1993)
Economie Européenne, Annexe statistique

Taux de chômage

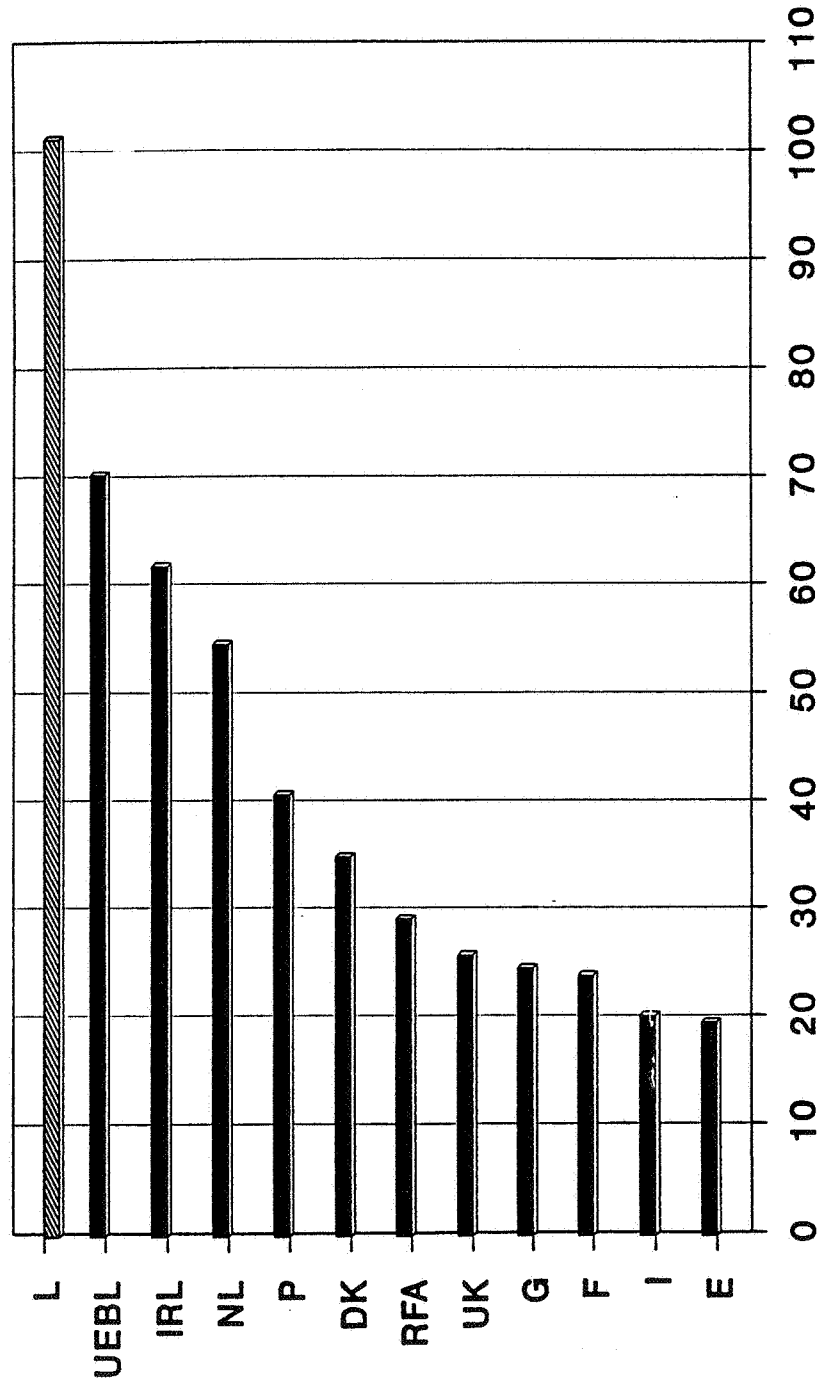


— CE 12 Luxembourg

Source: Commission CE (juin 1993)
Economie Européenne, Annexe statistique

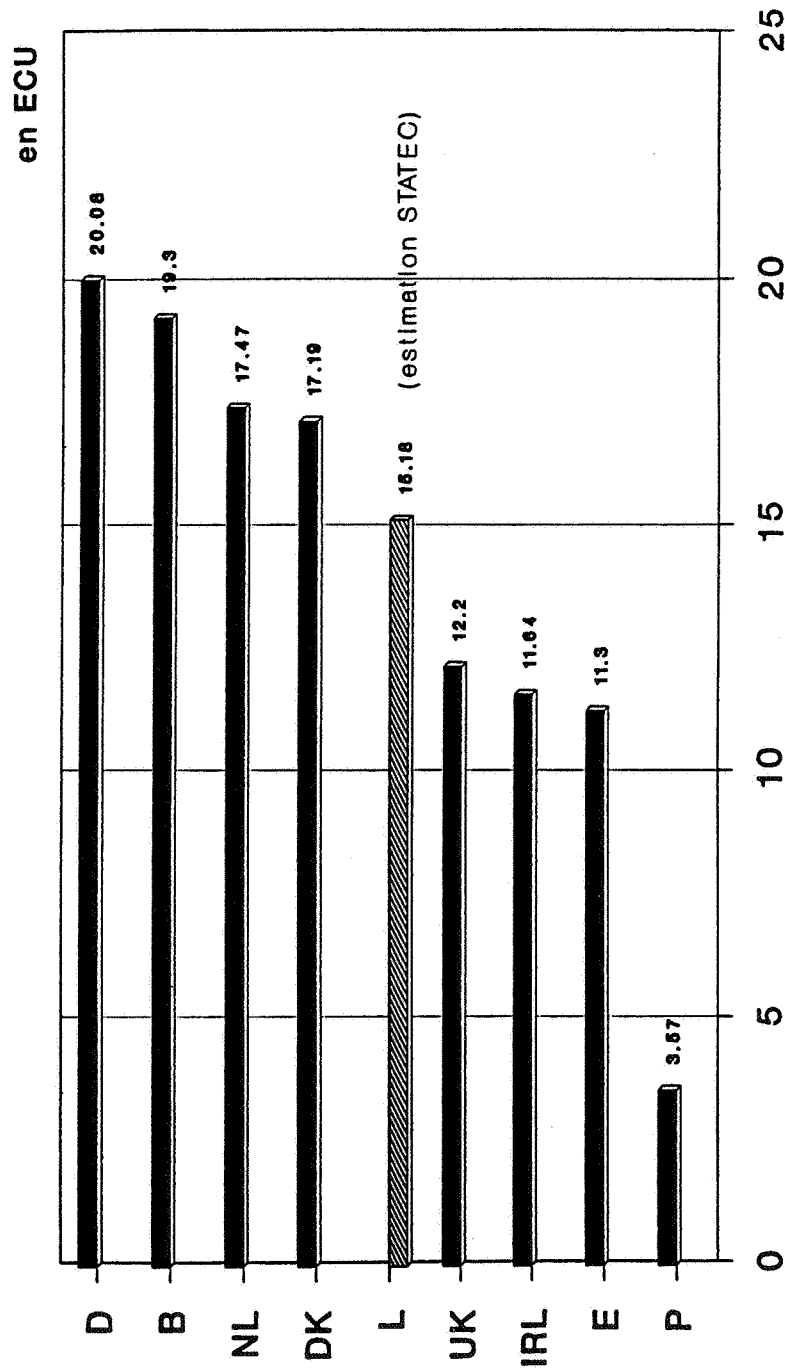
Degré d'ouverture
(Exportations de biens et de services
non-facteurs/2 en % du PIB)

Année 1989



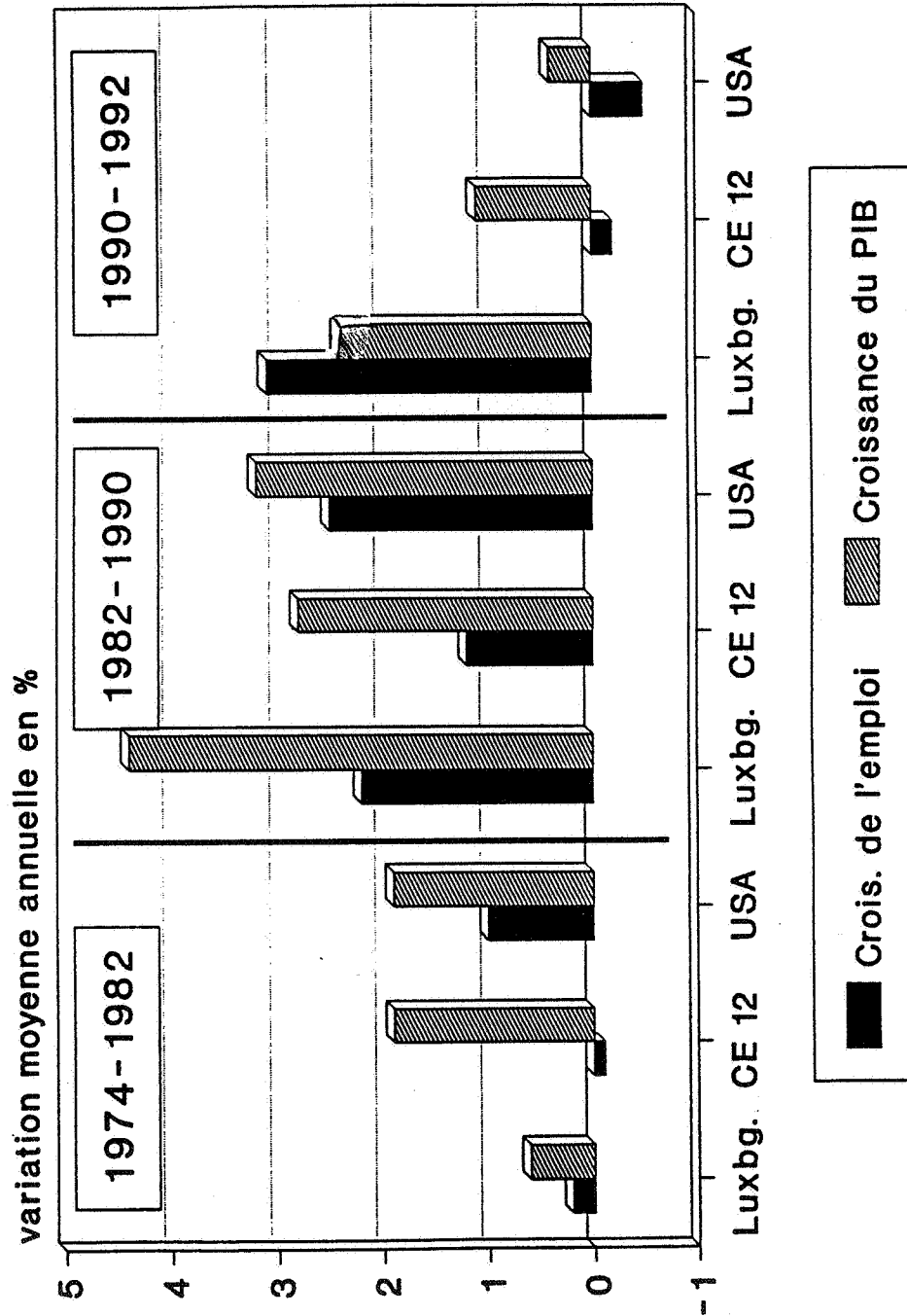
Source: Eurostat et STATEC

Coût horaire de la main d'oeuvre Ensemble de l'industrie (Nace 1-5) Année 1990



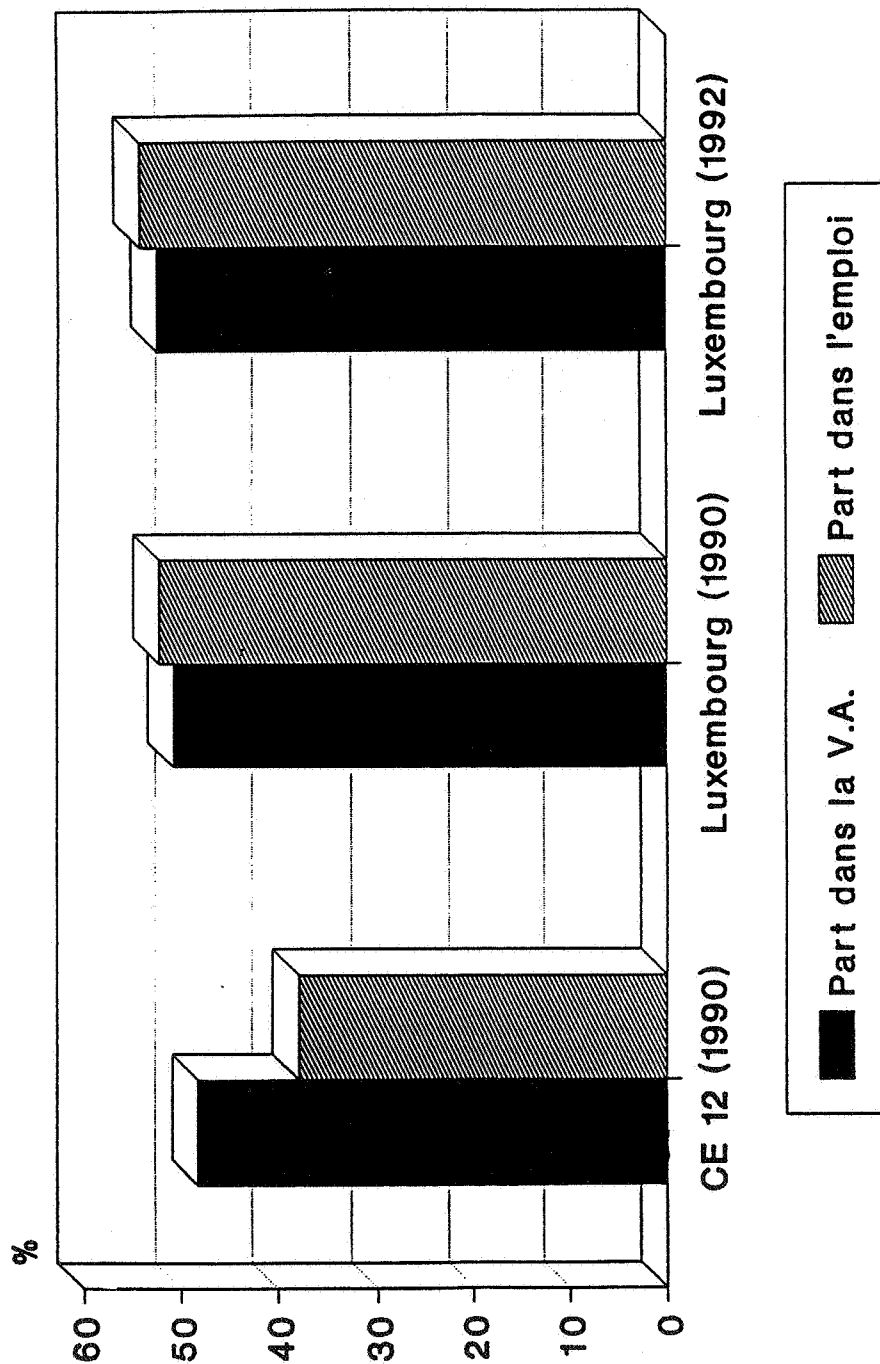
Source: Eurostat (1992),
Coût de la main-d'oeuvre,
Actualisation: 1989 - 1990

Contenu "Emploi" de la croissance



Source: Commission CE (juin 1993)
 Economie Européenne (Annexe statistique)

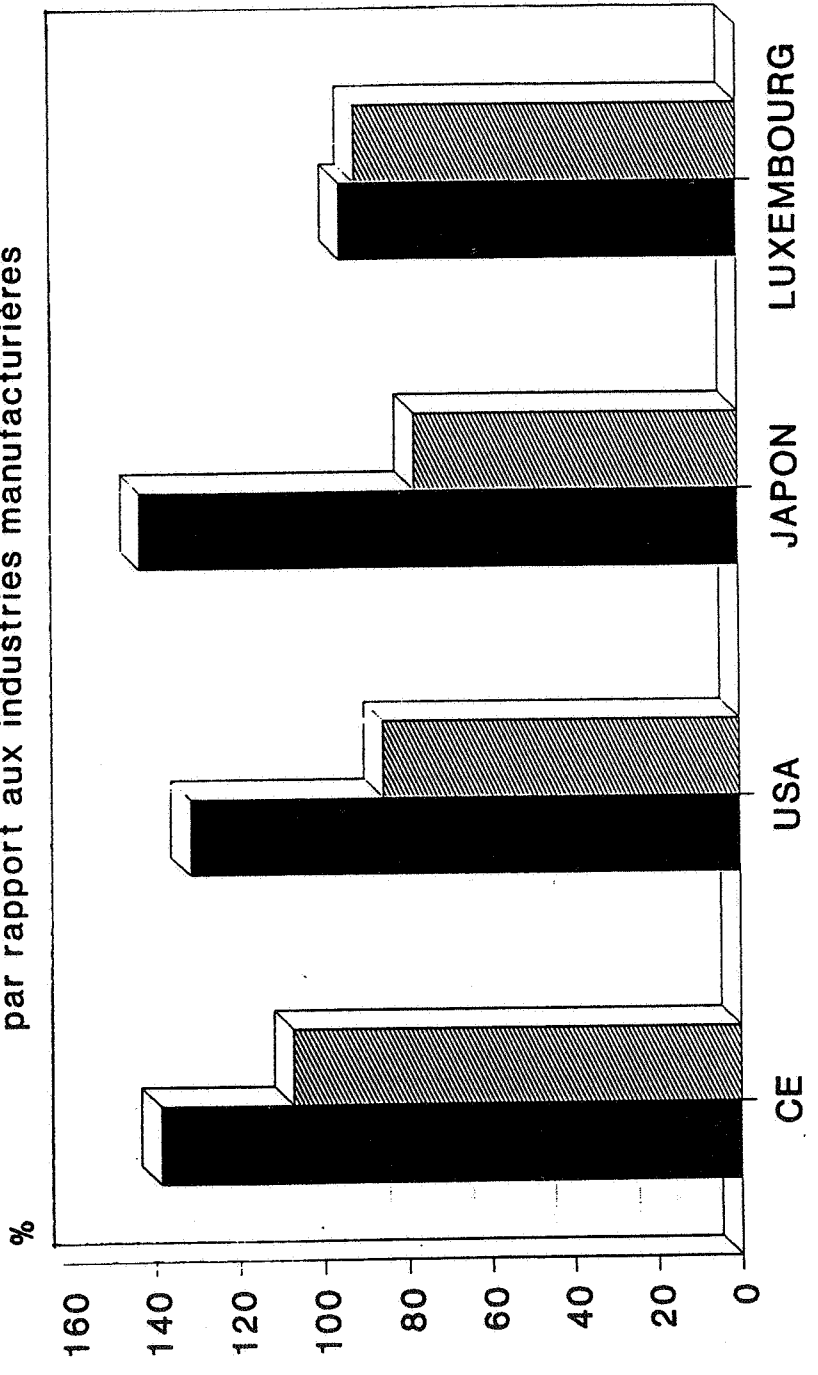
Part des services marchands dans la V.A. et l'emploi



Sources: Statec, Eurostat (Comptes
Comptes nationaux SEC, 1985 - 1990)

Productivité des services

Productivité du travail des services marchands par rapport aux industries manufacturières



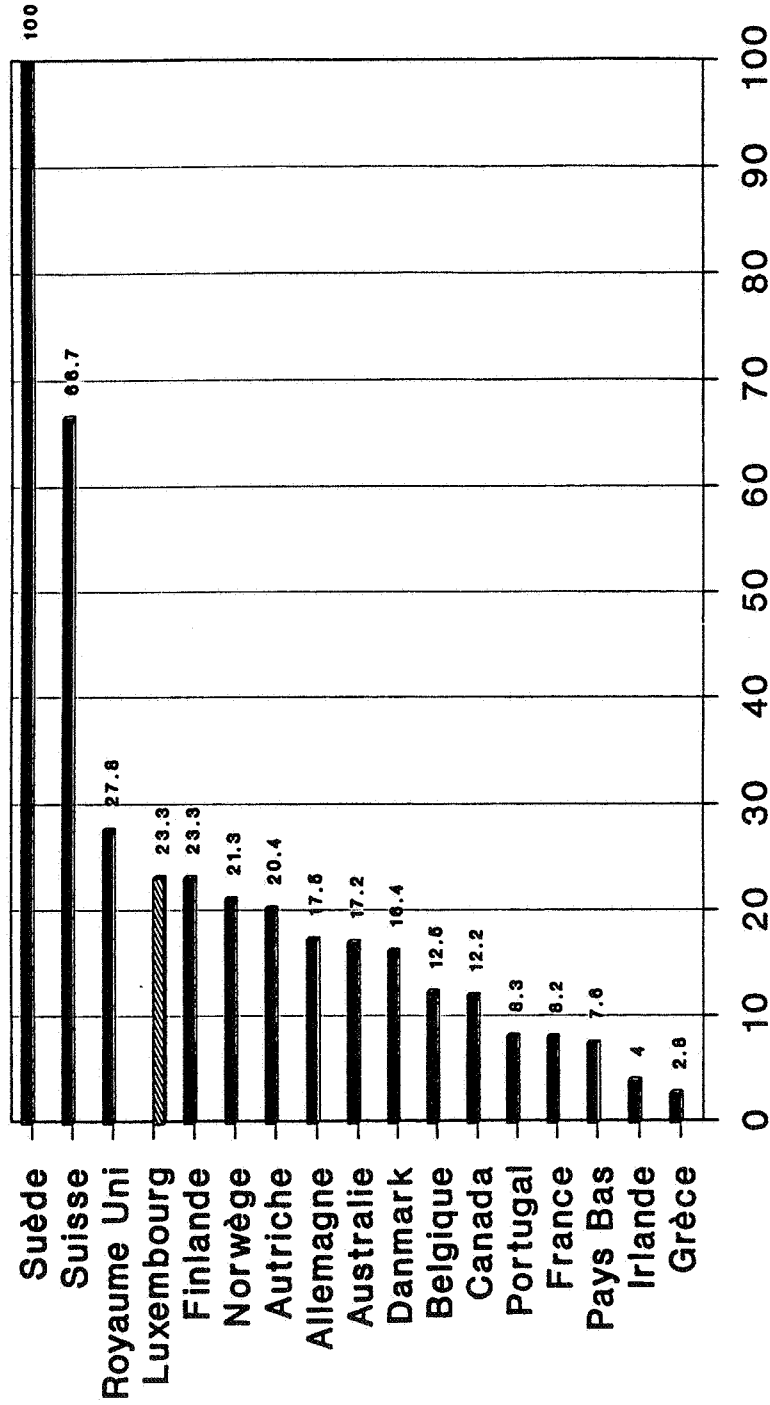
■ 1970
▨ 1990

Source: Commission des CE

Politiques actives du marché de l'emploi Effectifs des services de l'emploi

par 1 000 chômeurs *

* Non compris les personnes affectées au
paiement des indemnités de chômage

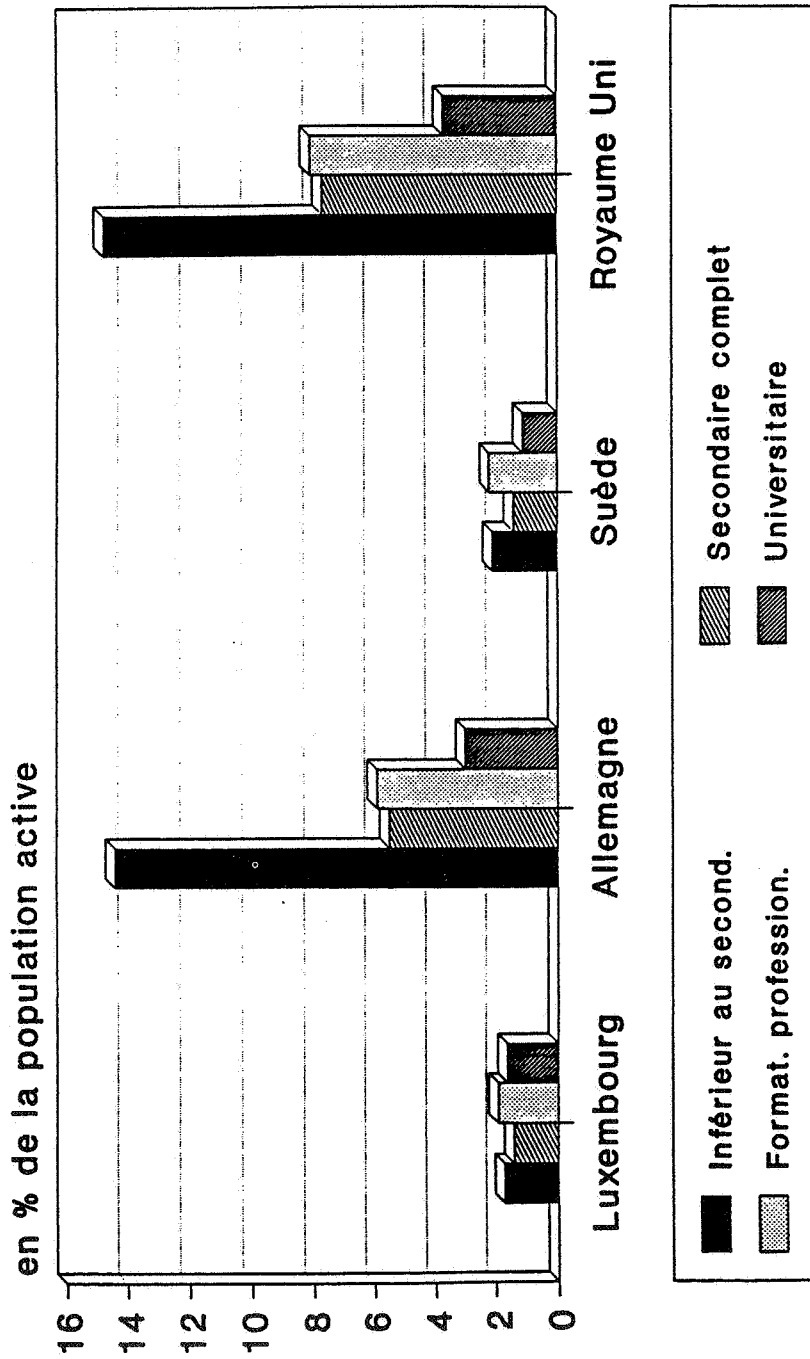


Sources:

Luxembourg: Administration de l'Emploi

Autres pays: OCDE 1990, Labour Market Policies for the 1990's

Taux de chômage des adultes en fonction du niveau d'éducation



Sources:

Luxembourg: Administration de l'Emploi, données 1992, population active totale

Autres pays: OCDE, Perspectives de l'emploi 1989 (données 1988, pop. active masculine)

Comparaison des charges sociales luxembourgeoises avec celles des autres pays des Communautés européennes

Un premier tableau indique la structure des coûts mensuels de la main-d'oeuvre en pourcentages. (Malheureusement ce tableau date de l'année 1988, alors qu'EUROSTAT ne réalise l'enquête que tous les cinq ans). En dehors de la constatation que le coût salarial luxembourgeois se compare favorablement avec les autres pays CE, on peut relever que par rapport à nos pays voisins l'impact des cotisations de sécurité sociale est relativement faible.

Ce taux relativement faible s'explique par le fait que l'intervention de l'Etat dans les recettes de la sécurité sociale est plus importante dans notre pays que dans les autres pays CE, si l'on excepte les pays où le financement est assuré de façon prédominante moyennant le budget de l'Etat.

Ceci résulte du deuxième tableau sur les structures des recettes courantes. Avec une contribution globale des pouvoirs publics de 39 % le Luxembourg dépasse largement ses pays voisins.

Il résulte cependant du troisième tableau que le Luxembourg se trouve par contre dans le peloton de tête en ce qui concerne les prélèvements obligatoires, c'est-à-dire les prélèvements fiscaux et sociaux. Il faut cependant remarquer que par rapport à l'exercice 1990 pour lequel le tableau OECD a été établi, la réforme fiscale est intervenue; ce qui a dû améliorer notre position.

Enfin, le quatrième tableau indique les recettes de la sécurité sociale par rapport au PIB.

Luxembourg, le 8 juillet 1993.

Tableau 1: - Structure des coûts mensuels de la main-d'œuvre en % - Exercices 1968

	Belgique	Danemark	Allemagne	Grèce	Espagne	France	Irlande	Italie	Luxembourg	Pays-Bas	Portugal	Royaume Uni
Ensemble de l'industrie ECU	2 390	2 171	2 504	642	1 336	2 136	1 721	2 063	1 943	2 194	483	1 732
Coût direct en %	69,4	96,2	76,3	80,0	74,9	66,0	82,2	70,0	83,2	72,9	74,2	85,5
Sécurité sociale en %	29,0	3,0	21,5	19,0	24,5	28,6	15,0	32,0	15,9	23,7	21,7	11,9
Autres coûts (+) ou subventions (-)	+1,4	+0,7	+2,2	-	+0,6	+3,4	+2,7	-2,0	+0,9	+3,4	+4,1	+2,6
Commerce de gros et de détail ECU	2 081	2 260	1 983	693	1 146	1 948	1 431	1 984	1 530	1 823	554	1 261
Coût direct en %	78,9	96,1	79,0	80,0	75,9	70,4	82,2	69,4	86,6	80,2	76,7	87,0
Sécurité sociale en %	27,3	2,8	18,5	19,0	24,5	27,1	14,7	29,3	12,7	17,0	21,2	10,9
Autres coûts (+) ou subventions (-)	+1,7	+1,0	+2,6	-	-0,5	+2,5	+3,1	+1,3	+0,7	+2,9	+2,1	+2,1
Institutions de crédit ECU	3 155	2 831	2 919	1 201	2 314	3 052	2 702	3 374	3 040	2 529	1 015	2 167
Coût direct en %	69,8	86,2	73,0	81,0	72,9	62,4	75,9	67,7	86,3	75,8	74,3	78,3
Sécurité sociale en %	26,2	7,7	23,1	19,0	25,6	27,0	20,5	30,4	12,8	19,2	23,2	14,1
Autres coûts (+) ou subventions (-)	+3,9	+6,1	+3,8	-	+1,4	+10,6	+3,7	+1,9	+0,9	+5,0	+2,5	+7,6

Tableau 2: Structure des recettes courantes - 1990 -
(en % du total)

Pays	Cotisations d'employeur	Cotisations ménages	Contributions publiques	Autres recettes	Total
D	40,9 %	30,5 %	25,1 %	3,5 %	100,0 %
F	52,1 %	28,9 %	16,8 %	2,2 %	100,0 %
I	52,9 %	15,0 %	29,0 %	3,0 %	100,0 %
NL	20,2 %	38,9 %	24,9 %	16,0 %	100,0 %
B	44,8 %	26,5 %	25,6 %	3,1 %	100,0 %
L	31,0 %	21,8 %	39,0 %	8,2 %	100,0 %
UK	27,1 %	15,4 %	37,7 %	19,8 %	100,0 %
IRL	24,5 %	15,6 %	58,9 %	1,1 %	100,0 %
DK	7,8 %	5,3 %	80,1 %	6,8 %	100,0 %
GR	41,2 %	33,8 %	16,8 %	8,2 %	100,0 %
E	54,6 %	17,5 %	25,6 %	2,4 %	100,0 %
P	45,4 %	21,2 %	28,1 %	5,4 %	100,0 %
EUR 12	41,5 %	23,9 %	27,8 %	6,8 %	100,0 %

Tableau 3: Prélèvements obligatoires en 1990
(en % du PIB)

Source: OCDE¹ et STATEC

Pays de l'OCDE	Prélèvement global	Pression fiscale ³	Prélèvement social
1. Suède	56,9	41,2 (2)	15,7
2. Luxembourg	48,8	35,3 (3)	13,5
3. Danemark	48,6	47,2 (1)	1,4
4. Norvège	46,3	34,2 (5)	12,1
5. Pays-Bas	45,2	28,4 (10)	16,8
6. Belgique	44,9	29,3 (9)	15,6
7. France	43,7	24,4 (15)	19,3
8. Autriche	41,6	27,9 (11)	13,7
9. Italie	39,1	26,3 (12)	12,8
10. Finlande	38,0	35,2 (4)	2,8
11. Allemagne ²	37,7	23,8 (16)	13,9
12. Irlande	37,2	31,7 (6)	5,5
13. Royaume-Uni	36,7	30,3 (8)	6,4
14. Grèce	36,5	26,1 (13)	10,4
15. Portugal	34,6	25,1 (14)	9,5
16. Espagne	34,4	22,2 (17)	12,2
17. Islande	32,6	31,6 (7)	1,0
18. Suisse	31,7	21,3 (18)	10,4
Moyenne non pondérée:			
OCDE Europe	40,8	30,1	10,7
Communauté européenne	40,6	29,2	11,4

1/ "Statistiques des recettes publiques des pays de l'OCDE", OCDE, Paris 1992.

2/ Les données pour l'Allemagne comprennent pour le second semestre de l'année les données pour les nouveaux "Länder"

3/ Entre parenthèses, rang de placement

Tableau 4: Structure des recettes courantes en % PIB - 1990 -

Pays	Cotisations d'employeur	Cotisations ménages	Contributions publiques	Autres recettes	Total
D	11,7 %	8,7 %	7,2 %	1,0 %	28,6 %
F	14,6 %	8,1 %	4,7 %	0,6 %	28,1 %
I	13,0 %	3,7 %	7,1 %	0,7 %	24,5 %
NL	7,5 %	14,4 %	9,2 %	5,9 %	37,0 %
B	12,2 %	7,3 %	7,0 %	0,8 %	27,3 %
L	9,3 %	6,5 %	11,7 %	2,4 %	29,9 %
UK	7,8 %	4,5 %	10,9 %	5,7 %	29,0 %
IRL	4,9 %	3,1 %	11,9 %	0,2 %	20,1 %
DK	2,6 %	1,7 %	26,2 %	2,2 %	32,7 %
GR	4,6 %	3,7 %	1,9 %	0,9 %	11,1 %
E	11,3 %	3,6 %	5,3 %	0,5 %	20,8 %
P	8,3 %	3,9 %	5,1 %	1,0 %	18,3 %

PERMANENTE VERTEGENWOORDIGING
VAN HET KONINKRIJK DER NEDERLANDEN
BIJ DE EUROPESE GEMEENSCHAPPEN

No: 66120

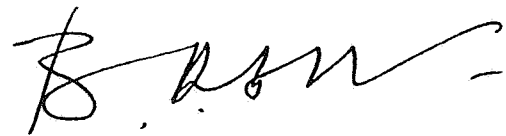
Brussel, 13 september 1993
Kunstlaan 46
1040 Brussel
Tel. 513.77.75

Aan:
de heer Jacques Delors
Voorzitter van de Commissie van
de Europese Gemeenschappen
Breydel-gebouw
Avenue d'Auderghem 45
1049 Brussel

Cabinet du Président		
15 -09- 1993		
87429		

Hoogachtbare Heer Delors,

Hierbij moge ik U een brief aanbieden, d.d. 10 september 1993, ondertekend door de Minister President R.F.M. Lubbers, met als bijlage de Nederlandse bijdrage voor het Witboek over groei, concurrentiekracht en werkgelegenheid.



B.R. Bot
Permanent Vertegenwoordiger

Bijlage: 1

Ministerie van Economische Zaken
Ministerie van Financiën
Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid

NEDERLAND

BIJDRAGE AAN HET WITBOEK OVER GROEI, CONCURRENTIEKRACHT EN
WERKGELEGENHEID.

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1 INLEIDING

Bij diverse gelegenheden¹⁾ is de afgelopen maanden grote zorg geuit over de Europese concurrentiekracht en de geringe werkgelegenheids-groei. De problemen op de arbeidsmarkt die daarmee gepaard gaan zijn gedurende enkele decennia opgebouwd, zonder dat beleidsreacties toereikend zijn gebleken. Dit geldt temeer door de druk die de ontwikkelingen in de wereldeconomie uitoefenen. Productieprocessen zijn inmiddels fundamenteel veranderd, en daarmee ook de aard van de werkgelegenheid. Sommigen spreken al van een nieuwe industriële revolutie. De prestaties van landen hangen af van de mate waarin men flexibel op veranderingen inspeelt. Juist op dat vlak schiet Europa op dit moment tekort.

Op de EG-top in Kopenhagen is aan lidstaten gevraagd een bijdrage te leveren t.b.v. het Witboek voor groei, concurrentievermogen en werkgelegenheid dat door de Europese Commissie zal worden opgesteld t.b.v. de Eurotop in december. De Nederlandse bijdrage is als volgt opgebouwd. Na een korte beschrijving van de ontwikkelingen in de wereldeconomie, volgt in paragraaf 3 een diagnose van de problematiek. Het beleid van de Gemeenschap komt in paragraaf 4 aan de orde. Het Nederlandse beleid is het onderwerp van paragraaf 5 en 6. Daarin komt ook het recente beleidsplan ter bestrijding van de werkloosheid ter sprake. Paragraaf 5 is gericht op het structuurversterkend beleid, terwijl in paragraaf 6 wordt ingegaan op de Nederlandse arbeidsmarkt.

2 GLOBALISERING: HEVIGE CONCURRENTIE

Door nieuwe technologieën zijn bedrijven in staat de productieketen verregaand op te splitsen. Doordat steeds meer delen van de wereld

1 OECD-ministerial van 2-3 juni en de Europese top in Kopenhagen.

(onder andere Oost-Europa, Rusland, China, Latijns-Amerika) zich omvormen tot een markteconomie, komen er ook steeds meer potentiële produktielocaties.

In steeds meer sectoren ontstaat een echte wereldmarkt. De hieruit voortvloeiende, zware, concurrentie zet druk op bedrijven om de produktiviteit te verhogen. In eerste instantie leidt dat tot een verlies van werkgelegenheid. Zoals terecht is aangegeven in het interim-rapport over werkgelegenheid en werkloosheid van de OESO (Parijs, 1993), beperkt deze ontwikkeling zich niet langer tot de industriële bedrijfstakken. Ook steeds meer dienstensectoren hebben nu te maken met scherpe buitenlandse concurrentie, en kunnen daardoor niet meer als buffer voor de werkgelegenheid fungeren zoals dat in het verleden wel gebeurd is. Bovendien kan ook de collectieve sector geen buffer-functie meer vervullen (zie paragraaf 3).

Globalisering brengt ook nieuwe markten met zich mee en veel landen kunnen daarvan profiteren. Op dit moment lijkt dat vooral voor landen in Zuid-Oost-azië te gelden. Voor Europese bedrijven is het zaak de kansen op nieuwe afzetmarkten zo goed mogelijk te benutten.

3 KANSEN, BEDREIGINGEN EN HOOFDLIJNEN VAN BELEID

3.1 Kansen voor Europa

Het globaliseringsproces biedt ook kansen aan Europa. Bij de voltooiing van de integratie van de EG zal het met zo'n 350 miljoen inwoners een grote markt vormen. Als de EVA- en de Oost-Europese landen hier bij opgeteld worden, telt het 'uitgebreide' Europa zelfs meer dan 500 miljoen inwoners.

In het algemeen beschikt Europa over een goed opgeleide beroepsbevolking. Op technologiegebied kan - gelet op de noodzaak projecten op een schaal van voldoende omvang te verrichten - Europese samenwerking op bepaalde terreinen kansen bieden.

De geschetste mogelijkheden kunnen de Europese Gemeenschap in staat stellen de inwoners een minimum niveau aan sociale en economische welvaart te bieden. Daarbij dwingt de versnelling van het globaliseringsproces en de mede daaruit resulterende verscherpte concurrentie echter wel tot een heroriëntatie op sociaal-economisch terrein. De Noord-europese sociale traditie dient daarbij, zeker ook voor Nederland, behouden te blijven. De uitdaging is, in reactie op voornoemde ontwikkelingen, een nieuw evenwicht te vinden tussen het economisch noodzakelijke en het sociaal wenselijke. Er moet gezocht worden naar een inrichting van de verzorgingsstaat die optimaal bijdraagt aan de acceptatie en de snelheid van de noodzakelijke structurele aanpassingen van de economie. Daarbij is actie geboden omdat het huidige stelsel onder de toenemende lasten wordt ondermijnd. De negatieve spiraal van oplopende lasten, afnemende concurrentiekracht en toenemende inactiviteit - en sociale spanningen - moet worden gekeerd.

3.2 Het werkgelegenheidsprobleem

De werkgelegenheid in Europa is slechts matig gegroeid in vergelijking met bijvoorbeeld Japan of de Verenigde Staten. De werkgelegenheid in de EG is nu 10% groter dan in 1960. In Japan 40%, in de VS 80%. Daar komt nog bij dat voorzover er Europese banen zijn bijgekomen, deze voornamelijk in de collectieve sector werden gerealiseerd. Figuur 1 (zie bijlage) illustreert dat. De slechte werkgelegenheidsprestatie weerspiegelt zich in de werkloosheid. Deze loopt nu snel op, terwijl het niveau in de EG al substantieel hoger is dan in de VS of Japan.

Opvallend is ook het structurele karakter van de werkloosheid in Europa. De werkloosheid in de EG stijgt trendmatig in de jaren '70 en explodeert in het begin van de jaren '80 (zie figuur 2). In de "vette" jaren '85-'90 is de werkgelegenheid weliswaar flink gegroeid, maar desondanks is de werkloosheid nauwelijks afgenomen. In de huidige

conjuncturele teruggang stijgt de werkloosheid tot recordhoogte. Hier zit een structureel probleem, ook wel hysteresis²⁾ genoemd.

Dit probleem komt ook tot uitdrukking in de langdurige werkloosheid: meer dan de helft van de werklozen in Europa is langer dan 1 jaar werkloos. Het gaat vooral om de laagstopgeleiden.

De werkloosheid treft deze keer niet alleen "blauwe boorden", maar ook "witte" boorden zijn niet langer zeker van hun baan.

Zelfs als de economische groei de komende jaren meevalt, zal het groeitempo waarschijnlijk onvoldoende zijn om de stijging van het arbeidsaanbod op te vangen en ook nog het huidige, hoge, niveau van werkloosheid terug te dringen.

3.3 Oorzaken

De gevolgen van produktieverschuivingen zijn door de jaren heen niet adequaat opgevangen. Dat geldt voor vrijwel alle EG-landen. Toenemende werkgelegenheid in de collectieve sector heeft als buffer gediend, terwijl ook de sociale zekerheid een uitlaatklep was. Zeker de eenvoudige arbeidsintensieve produktie is in verschillende Westeuropese landen in het gedrang gekomen, omdat de kosten ervan te hoog werden. Dat geldt in het bijzonder voor activiteiten die onderhavig zijn aan toenemende internationale concurrentie.

Zo'n 10 à 15 jaar geleden had Europa op de hoogwaardige marktsegmenten redelijk weinig concurrentie van buiten het OESO-gebied te vrezen. Dat is niet langer het geval. In steeds meer landen (bijvoorbeeld in Oost-Azië en, potentieel, ook in Centraal- en Oost-Europa) kunnen produkten worden gemaakt en diensten worden verricht met minstens dezelfde kwaliteit als in de geïndustrialiseerde landen maar tegen (veel) lagere kosten.

2 De werkloosheid stijgt snel bij een conjuncturele tegenslag zonder weer terug te lopen als het beter gaat.

De analyse van Commissievoorzitter Delors in "Entering the 21st century, prospects for the European Community" legt terecht de nadruk op de noodzaak om Europa's concurrentiepositie te verbeteren. Het aandeel van de EG in de wereldexport daalt sinds 1985. Hoge produktiekosten als gevolg van hoge loonkosten belemmeren de concurrentiekracht van de EG (zie tabel 1). De hoge lasten van belastingen en sociale premies spelen hierbij een belangrijke rol. Zo bedroeg het netto loon van de gemiddelde produktiemedewerker in Europa slechts 66% van de totale loonkosten. Ter vergelijking: in de VS is dat 74% en in Japan 84%. Overigens is het verschil tussen de loonkosten in de geïndustrialiseerde wereld en die in de opkomende industrielanden nog veel pregnanter. Zo bezien is er ook in de VS en Japan sprake van een dreiging voor de concurrentiekracht.

Tabel 1: Loonkosten per uur in industrie, 1991
(index, EG = 100)

EG*	VS	Japan	Singapore	Mexico
100	93	88	22	13

* Gemiddelde EG-landen excl. Griekenland en Portugal.
Bron: World Competitiveness Report 1993.

Een andere aspect van de geringe Europese concurrentiekracht houdt verband met het geringe aantal gewerkte uren in een jaar: in Europa 1400 tot 1700 uur. In de Verenigde staten wordt per jaar gemiddeld 1800 uur per jaar gewerkt en in Japan bijna 2100 uur.

Een hoge produktiviteit per uur is, in tegenstelling tot wat men geneigd is te denken, niet langer reden tot gerustheid. Door het proces van globalisering kunnen nu ook hoogproduktieve activiteiten op steeds meer plaatsen in de wereld, tegen veel lagere kosten, worden verricht omdat steeds meer landen toegang hebben tot "state-of-the-art" technologie. Dat is bijvoorbeeld het geval indien, zoals in de huidige praktijk te zien is, geavanceerde produktiefaciliteiten in Centraal- en Oost-Europa worden ingericht.

De snelheid waarmee de verschuivingen in de wereldeconomie momenteel optreden, stelt hoge eisen aan het aanpassingsvermogen van de EG-economieën. Wil Europa de toegenomen concurrentie het hoofd kunnen bieden en profiteren van de kansen die geboden worden, dan moet het slagvaardig en innoverend op de nieuwe ontwikkelingen in kunnen spelen. Goed functionerende markten zijn daarbij van essentieel belang.

Op goederen- en dienstenmarkten wordt de benodigde flexibiliteit nu nog te vaak geremd door een teveel aan regelgeving, respectievelijk door onvoldoende effectieve mededinging. Hetzelfde geldt voor de arbeidsmarkt, waar rigiditeiten die voortvloeien uit regulerende wetgeving, uit het stelsel van sociale zekerheid en het belastingsysteem alsmede de omvang van de collectieve lasten, hebben geleid tot structurele problemen (met name wat betreft de inpassing van laaggeschoolden).

3.4 De noodzaak tot fundamentele verandering van de Europese economie

Europa heeft het belang van marktdynamiek onderschat. Het hieruit voortvloeiende gebrek aan flexibiliteit heeft geleid tot een relatief lage werkgelegenheid en participatie. Ook de discrepantie tussen vraag en aanbod voor de lager opgeleiden is mede hierop terug te voeren.

De uitgaven voor sociale zekerheid zijn de afgelopen decennia sterk gestegen. Hierdoor (en door de hoge lasten van rente op staatsschuld) vindt een 'crowding-out' plaats van de wezenlijke overheidstaken die de economie moeten versterken, zoals infrastructuur en onderwijs. In een veranderende wereldeconomie worden de economische consequenties hiervan steeds groter. Nieuwe concurrenten op hoogwaardige marktsegmenten dragen immers in minder mate de lasten van hoge overdrachtsuitgaven waar Europese bedrijven mee geconfronteerd worden. Deze situatie dreigt een interne dynamiek te krijgen waarbij hoge lasten voor arbeid en hoge werkloosheid elkaar versterken.

3.5 Algemene beleidslijnen

Structurele maatregelen zijn nodig om de werkgelegenheid in Europa weer op niveau te krijgen.

- A. Er moet een 'level playing field' gecreëerd worden, zowel binnen de Europese gemeenschap als tussen de EG en de rest van de wereld. Protectionisme lijkt een makkelijke oplossing om een gebrek aan concurrentiekracht te maskeren. Dit is echter slechts een schijnoplossing, omdat het de noodzakelijke veranderingen alleen iets kan uitstellen maar niet kan afstellen. Vrijhandel genereert groei en welvaart. Daarom is concurrentiekracht de enige sleutel tot groei.

- B. De investeringen, zowel van de overheid als van het bedrijfsleven, moeten toenemen. Voor een goed investeringsklimaat is essentieel een solide en stabiel macro-economisch beleid. Binnen de overheidsbegroting dient een herschikking plaats te vinden zodanig dat de investeringsuitgaven worden versterkt ten opzichte van de overdrachtsuitgaven. Gezonde openbare financiën en een solide monetaire politiek zijn cruciale elementen voor de versterking van de economische structuur en voor het verbeteren van de voorwaarden voor de groei van werkgelegenheid. Het is dan ook essentieel vast te houden aan de EMU-criteria terzake. Voorts dient het tijdschema zoals dat in het Verdrag van Maastricht is afgesproken, te worden gerespecteerd.

- C. Veel van de problemen in de Europese economie zijn te wijten aan een gebrek aan flexibiliteit. Dit geldt niet alleen voor de arbeidsmarkt, maar ook voor produktmarkten. In de huidige economische omgeving, die gekenmerkt wordt door een grote dynamiek, kennen zulke inflexibiliteiten een hoge prijs. De marktwerking moet daarom worden verbeterd door afbouw van toetredingsbarrières en het verbieden van ongewenste vormen van samenwerking tussen ondernemingen (zoals prijsafspraken). Bovendien zullen de geldende regels voor subsidies en staatssteun moeten worden gerespecteerd. Directe overheids-

interventies en regulering moeten beter worden afgestemd op een gezonde groei, concurrentiekracht en werkgelegenheid in een lange termijn perspectief.

Waar zinvol moeten markten ontlast worden van regelgeving. Regels brengen namelijk lasten voor burgers en bedrijven met zich mee. Op bepaalde terreinen moet een nieuw evenwicht worden gevonden tussen bescherming en kansen. Dat kan bijdragen aan meer werkgelegenheid. In het bijzonder wat betreft de arbeidsmarkt zullen bestaande barrières voor het ontstaan van lager betaalde banen moeten worden heroverwogen.

- D. Sociale zekerheid dient alleen die mensen die dat echt nodig hebben van een inkomen te voorzien. De essentiële elementen van solidariteit die er binnen de samenleving zijn dienen te worden behouden; juist daarom moeten regelingen die werkgelegenheidsgroei onnodig beperken worden aangepast. Zo blijken de financiële prikkels om een baan te aanvaarden in sommige landen te klein te zijn, vooral aan de onderkant van de arbeidsmarkt.
- E. Loonkosten moeten goed beheerst worden, ondersteund door vermindering van de collectieve lastendruk van belastingen en premies.
- F. De ontwikkeling en verspreiding van technologie moet verbeterd worden. Technologie is immers een belangrijke bron van werkgelegenheid (en milieubehoud).
- G. De problemen met betrekking tot groei en werkgelegenheid verschillen per lidstaat. De oplossingen zullen dus eveneens verschillen. Dat neemt niet weg dat de effectiviteit van het beleid groter kan worden door onderlinge afstemming, met inachtneming van zowel de competentie van de Gemeenschap als van de lidstaten.
- H. Bij het streven naar verbetering van het economisch groeipotentieel zal rekening worden gehouden met de effecten op het leefmilieu. Kern

van de uitdaging is om produktieprocessen en consumptiepatronen te laten aansluiten bij een duurzame economische ontwikkeling. Gezien het internationale karakter van bijvoorbeeld het broeikas-effect, is dit bij uitstek een beleidsterrein waar Europese samenwerking - zoals in de vorm van de door de Europese Commissie voorgestelde regulerende energieheffing in Europees verband - een zinvolle bijdrage kan leveren. Overigens is ook hier veel te winnen bij moderne technologie.

4 BELEID OP GEMEENSCHAPSNIVEAU

4.1 Vrijhandel

Om de concurrentiekracht van Europa te vergroten, is het essentieel dat de Gemeenschap zich open stelt voor de rest van de wereld. Doet zij dit onvoldoende, dan verminderen de prikkels om offensief in te spelen op de structurele veranderingen in de wereldeconomie.

In het licht van deze veranderingen en de noodzaak van economisch herstel, kan het belang van een succesvolle afsluiting van de GATT/-Uruguay-ronde voor het einde van dit jaar niet genoeg onderstreept worden. Een evenwichtige multilaterale overeenkomst is de beste garantie voor toegang tot markten in andere landen. Internationale handel en arbeidsverdeling zijn een belangrijke bron van welvaart en economische groei. Vervalsing van concurrentie (waaronder dumping) dient uiteraard te worden bestreden. Oneigenlijke handelspraktijken kunnen het beste in het al bestaande GATT-verband worden aangepakt, al is er wel behoefte aan een versnelling van de terzake geldende procedures.

4.2 Uitbreiding van de Gemeenschap

Uitbreiding van de Gemeenschap, bij voorkeur begin 1995, met Finland, Noorwegen, Oostenrijk en Zweden, kan een belangrijke impuls geven aan herstel van de Europese industrie omdat de thuismarkt groter wordt. Als startpunt van de toetredingsonderhandelingen zal het 'acquis

communautaire' moeten gelden. Een grotere interne markt, met vrij verkeer van goederen, diensten, personen en kapitaal biedt onder meer ook additionele mogelijkheden voor economisch herstel.

De Europese Gemeenschap moet zich inzetten om de omschakeling naar een vrije markteconomie die de Midden- en Oosteuropese landen op dit moment maken, zo soepel mogelijk te laten verlopen. De onlangs gesloten associatie-akkoorden zijn een eerste stap, maar vrije toegang tot de Europese markten moet worden beschouwd als de belangrijkste motor voor verdere integratie en herstel van de economieën. Uiteindelijk zullen de meeste van deze landen zich moeten ontwikkelen tot volwaardige leden van de Gemeenschap.

4.3 De interne markt

De interne markt is een essentieel onderdeel voor economisch herstel in Europa. Voor de voltooiing van de interne markt moeten alle richtlijnen die al zijn aangenomen, zo snel mogelijk geïmplementeerd worden. Stabiele wisselkoersen, een actief mededingingsbeleid en een vermindering van administratieve belemmeringen zijn essentieel voor een soepele werking van de interne markt. Een goed functionerende interne markt stimuleert investeringen en werkgelegenheid.

De Gemeenschap volgt en analyseert, op weg naar een volledige Economische en Monetaire Unie, het economisch beleid van de lidstaten. Het onderhavige debat over hoe de concurrentiekracht en werkgelegenheid te vergroten, is een goed voorbeeld hiervan. Hoewel het grootste deel van het beleid op het niveau van de lidstaten vorm zal worden gegeven (arbeidsmarktbeleid, budgettair beleid), kunnen de effecten versterkt worden als lidstaten gezamenlijk optrekken.

Er ligt een gemeenschappelijke verantwoordelijkheid op gebieden waar EG-wetgeving de inzetbaarheid van nationale beleidsinstrumenten beperkt. Beleid t.a.v. de indirecte belastingen bijvoorbeeld wordt beperkt door de geharmoniseerde belastingwetgeving. Een lager

BTW-tarief voor arbeidsintensieve diensten kan worden gezien op de mogelijke bijdrage aan werkgelegenheidsgroei. Maatregelen op dat vlak zouden door de Gemeenschap moeten worden onderzocht.

4.4 Structuurfondsen

De structuurfondsen van de Gemeenschap kunnen een bijdrage leveren aan de herstructurering ten behoeve van grotere concurrentiekracht, aan het bestrijden van de werkloosheid en aan de hervorming van het landbouwbeleid. Het is uiteraard wel zaak projecten zowel ex ante als ex post zorgvuldig te evalueren om te verzekeren dat de gelden doeltreffend worden ingezet.

Dit najaar zal overeenstemming moeten worden bereikt over het Vierde Kaderprogramma. Dit programma kan onderzoek en ontwikkeling stimuleren. De Nederlandse regering meent dat onderzoek en ontwikkeling een belangrijke bijdrage kunnen leveren aan de concurrentiekracht van Europa. Meer samenwerking tussen de onderzoekswereld en het bedrijfsleven, toepassing en verdere ontwikkeling van (informatie)technologie versterkt Europa's internationale concurrentiepositie. De voorstellen van de Europese Commissie vormen een goede basis voor de te bereiken overeenstemming over het Vierde Kaderprogramma.

De recente besluitvorming over de doelstelling 1 gebieden, kan een belangrijke impuls geven aan de economische ontwikkeling in deze gebieden. Ook de bijdrage aan de Nederlandse regio's die vallen onder doelstelling 2 en 5b kunnen het herstel van deze regio's vergemakkelijken. Een verbreding van doelstelling 3 en 4 kan o.a. gebruikt worden voor bijscholingsprogramma's en uitbreiding van het aantal werkervaringsplaatsen.

5 VERBETERING VAN DE CONCURRENTIEKRACHT VAN DE NEDERLANDSE ECONOMIE

5.1 Inleiding

Investeringsbepalen voor een groot deel de concurrentiekracht van een economie en daarmee de werkgelegenheid. De bruto investeringsquote van bedrijven (in % BBP, excl. woningen) ligt in Nederland iets boven het EG-gemiddelde en die in de VS, maar is aanzienlijk lager dan in Japan.³⁾ Niettemin is, in het licht van het hoge niveau van inactiviteit in Nederland (zie paragraaf 6), een hogere investeringsquote gewenst.

Bedrijfsinvesteringen zijn uit de aard der zaak de verantwoordelijkheid van het bedrijfsleven zelf. De overheid kan de investeringen echter ondersteunen door te zorgen voor een gezond, stabiel en concurrerend economisch klimaat.

5.2 Budgettaire en monetaire politiek

In Nederland is het tekort van de totale overheid gedaald van een recordniveau van 7% BBP in 1982 naar 5% in 1990. Ondanks de teleurstellende conjunctuur, verwacht Nederland, door het onder controle houden van de overheidsuitgaven, het overheidstekort te kunnen beperken tot circa 3,7% van het BBP in 1994. Om de bruto overheidsschuldquote zo snel mogelijk op een dalend pad te brengen, is een verdere tekortreductie nodig. Daarmee kunnen de rentelasten onder controle worden gebracht en zal de stijgende trend hiervan - als aandeel van het BBP en als aandeel van de overheidsuitgaven - worden omgebogen. Zo'n tekortreductie zal vergezeld moeten gaan van een verlaging van de collectieve lastendruk van belastingen en sociale premies opdat een grotere

3 Bedrijfsinvesteringen (excl. woningen) in procenten van het BBP bedroegen in 1992 in Nederland 13,6%; 12,2% in de EG; 9,0% in de VS en 19,5% in Japan.

bijdrage aan economische groei kan worden geleverd. Voorts zullen de overheidsuitgaven moeten worden omgebogen in een meer groeiende richting.

Het Nederlandse monetair beleid is gebaseerd op de gedachte dat in een kleine open economie prijsstabiliteit het best te verwezenlijken valt via een wisselkoersdoelstelling. De consistente uitwerking van deze gedachte heeft in het verleden geleid tot een lage inflatie en ertoe bijgedragen dat de Nederlandse rente nu tot de laagste in Europa behoort. Mede dankzij een consistent geloofwaardig monetair beleid heeft Nederland - nu de fluctuatiemarges in het EMS tijdelijk verruimd zijn tot 15% - een bilateraal accoord kunnen sluiten met Duitsland dat voorziet in handhaving van de bestaande onderlinge fluctuatiemarge van 2,25%. Voor Nederland is evenwel een zo groot mogelijke zone van wisselkoersstabiliteit in de EG belangrijk. De regeringen en nationale centrale banken in de lidstaten zullen al het noodzakelijke moeten doen om een terugkeer naar smallere marges mogelijk te maken.

5.3 Marktwerking

De Wet op de Economische Mededinging is ingrijpend herzien en aangescherpt en de uitvoering van het mededingingsbeleid is geïntensiveerd. Sinds 1 juli van dit jaar zijn horizontale prijsafspraken verboden. Tegen het eind van dit jaar volgen soortgelijke maatregelen betreffende marktverdelingsafspraken (in alle sectoren van de economie) en aanbestedingsregelingen. Op middellange termijn zal het huidige systeem, dat is gebaseerd op het 'misbruik principe', worden vervangen door een geheel nieuwe mededingingswet die gebaseerd zal zijn op het verbodsprincipe van art. 85/86 van het EG-Verdrag. Voorts zal tegen het eind van dit jaar een adviesaanvraag worden gedaan aan de Sociaal Economisch Raad, een adviesraad voor de regering. Onderwerpen van deze adviesaanvraag zullen, onder andere, zijn de organisatie van het mededingingsbeleid, de reikwijdte van de nieuwe wet en sancties.

Er worden voorbereidingen getroffen voor een nieuwe, sterk gewijzigde Vestigingswet om de bestaande toetredingsdrempels en segmentatie van bedrijfstakken te verminderen. De rol van marktdiscipline en flexibiliteit wordt daarbij vergroot. Deze nieuwe wet zal uiterlijk eind 1996 in werking treden.

5.4 Investerings in de infrastructuur

Uitgaven gericht op versterking van de economische structuur zijn, zowel in Nederland als in de rest van de EG, achtergebleven. In Nederland heeft de regering thans een aantal projecten ter hand genomen die de economische structuur van het land aanzienlijk zullen verstevigen.

In de eerste plaats zijn sinds 1989 de middelen voor investeringen in verkeer en vervoer geleidelijk verhoogd. Er zijn voorzieningen getroffen om het wegennet, de vaarwegen en het openbaar vervoer in en rond steden te verbeteren. Voorts is een begin gemaakt met een ambitieus investeringsprogramma voor de spoorwegen.

Ten tweede is besloten om de opbrengsten van de export van extra aardgas te besteden aan infrastructurele projecten, gericht op de versterking van de economie. Er is een apart fonds ingesteld om de extra gasopbrengsten te reserveren voor infrastructurele projecten van nationaal belang zoals delen van het Transeuropese netwerk ('95-'98: extra middelen f 3 miljard). Deze extra middelen zullen met prioriteit worden besteed aan de constructie van een vrachtspoorlijn die Rotterdam met Duitsland verbindt (de 'Betuwelijn) en aan de hogesnelheidslijn van Amsterdam naar Brussel en Parijs.

Ten derde: onlangs is besloten in de periode 1994-1998 f 5 miljard (ca. 1% BBP) extra te besteden aan overheidsinvesteringen. Van dit bedrag zal f 4,25 miljard worden besteed aan de verkeers- en vervoersinfrastructuur.

Tenslotte wordt - ook in bredere zin - hoge prioriteit gegeven aan de optimale ontwikkeling van de Rotterdamse haven en de luchthaven Schiphol.

Deze besluiten passen in het algemene beleid van de overheid gericht op het bevorderen van een duurzame ontwikkeling van de Nederlandse economie. Op lange termijn zijn een gezonde economie, voortgezette concurrentiekracht en duurzame werkgelegenheid alleen mogelijk als rekening wordt gehouden met de effecten van de economische activiteiten op het milieu.

5.5 Innovatie, onderzoek en ontwikkeling

Technologische vooruitgang en innovatieve activiteiten zijn cruciaal voor de versterking van de concurrentiekracht van een economie. De Voorzitter van de Europese Commissie heeft in Kopenhagen voorgesteld de inspanningen op het gebied van technologische vooruitgang in de lidstaten te vergroten. In tegenstelling tot de huidige 2% zou volgens de Commissievoorzitter 3% van het BBP moeten worden besteed aan onderzoek, ontwikkeling en innovatie.

De positie van Nederland op het gebied van technologie is een punt van zorg. Investerings van Nederlandse bedrijven in onderzoek en ontwikkeling (R&D) bedroegen in 1992 slechts 1% van het BBP. Dit is laag t.o.v. van concurrenten van Nederland (bijvoorbeeld 1,8% in Duitsland, 1,5% in Frankrijk en 2% in Zwitserland). De Nederlandse regering hecht daarom grote waarde aan technologiebeleid. Tegen deze achtergrond is recent besloten tot het stimuleren van de R&D-activiteiten door het creëren van een belastingfaciliteit.

Nieuwe ondernemingen zijn een belangrijke bron van nieuwe werkgelegenheid en dragen in hoge mate bij aan de dynamiek en vernieuwing van de economie. Met het oog hierop worden additionele initiatieven overwogen om nieuw ondernemerschap te vergemakkelijken, in het bijzonder in de vorm van innovatieve beginnende ondernemingen.

Met het oog op het verbeteren van de technologische kennis, streeft de Nederlandse regering ook naar het aan ondernemingen beschikbaar stellen van relevante kennis die in de overheidssector (bijvoorbeeld universiteiten) is gegenereerd. Voorts wordt toegepast en technisch wetenschappelijk onderzoek gestimuleerd. Een meer kennisintensieve wijze van produceren hangt ook sterk af van een beroepsbevolking die goed opgeleid is. Dit geldt zowel voor degenen die al enige tijd aan het werk zijn, als voor degenen die nieuw instromen op de arbeidsmarkt. Speciale aandacht zal worden gegeven aan technologie in het basis- en voortgezet onderwijs. Bovendien zal een pakket maatregelen worden genomen om het aantal afgestudeerden in wetenschap en technologie te vergroten. Bestaande initiatieven van de overheid om de aansluiting tussen het aanbod van afgestudeerden in wetenschap en techniek aan de ene kant, en de vraag vanuit het bedrijfsleven aan de andere kant te verbeteren, en om de kennis van bestaande werknemers op peil te houden, zullen worden voortgezet.

Tenslotte heeft de Nederlandse regering een aantal projecten opgezet om de acceptatiegraad en interesse van technologie in de samenleving te vergroten.

5.6 Investeren in scholing

De laatste jaren is het besef doorgedrongen dat een sterke positie in de wereldeconomie, mede in het licht van de complexer wordende technologie, voor een belangrijk deel bepaald wordt door de kwaliteit van de beroepsbevolking (zie ook de vorige paragraaf). De kwaliteit hangt voor een zeer groot deel af van de prestaties van het onderwijssysteem. Het is belangrijk deze notie bij het stellen van prioriteiten binnen het onderwijsbudget in het oog te houden.

In de komende jaren zal in het Nederlandse onderwijssysteem prioriteit worden gegeven aan een aantal zaken. Zo zal ten eerste de nadruk liggen op het doel alle jongeren zodanig op te leiden dat een minimum

startkwalificatie voor de arbeidsmarkt verkregen wordt, bijvoorbeeld via het leerlingwezen.

Ten tweede: er kan worden geconstateerd dat veel jongeren opteren voor een algemene opleiding op zo'n hoog mogelijk niveau. Dit creëert lange 'onderwijsloopbanen' en veel uitvallers, hetgeen ten koste gaat van veel overheidsmiddelen en als consequentie heeft dat het aantal goed opgeleide studenten in bijvoorbeeld de technische vakken afneemt. Het heeft de voorkeur het beschikbare budget vooral te richten op het beschikbaar komen van een groot aantal, adequaat gekwalificeerde arbeidskrachten.

In de derde plaats zouden universiteiten meer selectieve instituten van hoge kwaliteit moeten worden. Tot slot wordt gewezen op het belang van het vergemakkelijken van het tot stand komen van een Europese onderwijs- en arbeidsmarkt door aanpassingen in bestaande regels en door het ruimen van barrières, zoals 'numerus clausus' regels. Verder zijn overeenkomsten nodig over de voorwaarden waaronder studenten in verschillende lidstaten onderwijs kunnen volgen.

6 DE ARBEIDSMARKT

6.1 De huidige situatie

De hierboven genoemde beleidslijnen zijn essentieel om de structuur en de concurrentiekracht van de Nederlandse economie te vergroten. Dit is echter, zoals ook Commissievoorzitter Delors in Kopenhagen opmerkte, niet voldoende. De Nederlandse arbeidsmarkt is geen uitzondering op het algemene beeld van de arbeidsmarkten in Europa. De banencreatie blijft ver achter bij die in Amerika en Japan.

In 1992 lag de werkloosheid in Nederland (6,7% van de beroepsbevolking) onder het EG-gemiddelde (9,5%). De forse groei van de werkgelegenheid in de voorafgaande jaren heeft hieraan bijgedragen. Tussen 1984 en 1992 zijn meer dan 920.000 banen gecreëerd (een gemiddelde jaarlijkse groei van 2%). Zonder twijfel heeft de in deze periode zeer gematigde toename in de loonkosten in Nederland, belangrijk bijgedragen aan deze

werkgelegenheidsgroei. In dit opzicht is de Nederlandse ervaring een uitgelezen voorbeeld van de effectiviteit van het in Kopenhagen voorgestelde beleid gericht op loonmatiging.

De ervaring laat echter ook zien dat beheersing van de loonkosten niet voldoende is. Slechts één van de tien gecreëerde banen is ingenomen door iemand die daarvoor een werkloosheidsuitkering ontving, de rest is vervuld door nieuwe toetreders op de arbeidsmarkt. Bovendien is de concentratie van inactiviteit bij laagopgeleiden nog steeds zeer groot. In de huidige situatie is de verhouding tussen laag opgeleide werknemers en laag opgeleide uitkeringsgerechtigden gestegen tot één, hetgeen driemaal zo hoog is als het gemiddelde. Een ander kenmerk van de inactiviteit is het langdurige karakter. De helft van het werklozenbestand bestaat uit personen die langer dan één jaar werkloos zijn. Daarnaast is in de sfeer van de arbeidsongeschiktheidsregelingen in hoge mate sprake van langdurige inactiviteit. Ten slotte heeft het veelvuldig gebruik van vervroegde uittredingsregelingen geleid tot permanente uitstoot van arbeidskrachten.

Tabel 2 laat zien dat in de EG het aandeel van degenen in de werkzame leeftijd met een baan, aanzienlijk lager is dan in de VS. Nederland valt op als een land met een lage werkgelegenheidsgraad, gemeten in full-time equivalenten. Dit is de weerspiegeling van het grote aantal uitkeringsgerechtigden in de sociale zekerheid, de lage participatie (m.n. van vrouwen en ouderen) en het hoge aandeel van deeltijdwerk.

TABEL 2 Werkgelegenheid als aandeel van de bevolking in de werkzame leeftijd (1990)

	personen	full-time equivalenten
VS	0.71	0.65
Duitsland	0.66	0.61
EG	0.61	0.56
Nederland	0.60	0.49

In het algemeen zijn in Nederland de prikkels op de arbeidsmarkt onvoldoende. Dit betreft zowel de overgang van een uitkeringssituatie naar werk, als de omvang van de wig tussen bruto- en nettoloon. Voor uitkeringsgerechtigden op minimumniveau is het verschil tussen netto loon en netto uitkering gering waardoor de replacement rates relatief hoog zijn (zie annex II). De hoge wig wordt geïllustreerd door grafiek 3 (zie bijlage). In Nederland zijn de loonkosten relatief hoog, terwijl de netto lonen relatief laag zijn. Het verschil wordt gevormd door de hoge belastingen en sociale premies.

6.2 BELEID

6.2.1 Inleiding

Onlangs heeft de Nederlandse regering een veelomvattend programma ⁴⁾ aangenomen ter versterking van de werkgelegenheid en bestrijding van de werkloosheid. Het bestaat uit onderdelen die reeds in paragraaf 5 zijn genoemd, zoals de investeringen in infrastructuur en de stimulering van onderzoek en ontwikkeling. Daarnaast wordt een aantal maatregelen specifiek op de arbeidsmarkt gericht:

- de werking van de arbeidsmarkt
- scholing, werkervaring en deeltijdarbeid
- arbeidsmarktmaatregelen voor langdurig werklozen en andere specifieke groepen
- een werkgelegenheidsimpuls in de zorgsector
- substantiële loonkostenmatiging

De Nederlandse regering is van mening dat de rigiditeiten aan de aanbod- en de vraagkant van de Nederlandse arbeidsmarkt sterk met elkaar samenhangen. Beleid gericht op slechts een enkel probleem, zal daarom niet effectief zijn. Indien partiële oplossingen worden gezocht

4 Dit zal binnenkort aan de Europese Commissie worden gezonden.

zal óf het aantal vacatures stijgen zonder dat daar een adequaat aanbod van arbeid tegenover staat, óf het activeren van het aanbod van arbeid zal niet leiden tot een lager niveau van inactiviteit door gebrek aan werkgelegenheid.

Daarom is het belangrijk dat niet alleen de vraag naar arbeid stijgt maar dat ook de negatieve prikkels om een baan te accepteren worden weggenomen. Daarnaast is het verbeteren van het functioneren van de arbeidsmarkt een belangrijk, apart aandachtspunt van de overheid.

Het arbeidsmarktbeleid is met name gericht op bevordering van de werkgelegenheid op on- en laaggeschoold niveau. De samenstelling en aard van het werklozenbestand noopt hier immers toe: zo'n 500.000 personen uit deze groep zijn werkloos. Bovendien loopt Nederland in dit opzicht uit de pas met andere landen: laagbetaalde arbeid is hier in een hoger tempo verdwenen dan elders. Vanzelfsprekend zal de werkgelegenheid niet noodzakelijk gevonden moeten worden in die sectoren waarin zij verloren is gegaan, maar ook in andere sectoren, zoals de diensten en het onderhoud. Indien door een accentverlegging op de inschakeling van laagproductieve arbeid, aldus macro-economisch een arbeidsintensievere groei resulteert, is dat met het oog op de werkloosheidsproblematiek alleen maar toe te juichen.

Gecombineerd met de maatregelen ter versterking van de economische structuur, kan het arbeidsmarktbeleid zo bijdragen aan een meer geschakeerde ontwikkeling van de werkgelegenheid. Naarmate het beter lukt de discrepantie tussen vraag naar en aanbod van laagproductieven te verkleinen, zal dat beleid leiden tot lagere sociale premies en daardoor zichzelf kunnen versterken.

6.2.2 Vraag naar arbeid

Inzet is stringente loonmatiging. Met het oog op verslechterde situatie op de arbeidsmarkt is het doel van de overheid te komen tot een bevriazing van de lonen in 1994, zowel voor ambtenaren als voor werknemers in de particuliere sector. De nullijn voor deze laatste moet in

1994 concreet worden ingezet door de sociale partners. Indien geen adequate reactie volgt, is het kabinet bereid een loonmaatregel te treffen om de gewenste stringente loonmatiging in '94 alsnog te bewerkstelligen. Ook de sociale zekerheidsuitkeringen zullen volgend jaar niet toenemen. Onvermijdelijk is dat de koopkracht afneemt, en daarmee in dit moeilijke jaar ondergeschikt is aan werkgelegenheid.

Om tot een meer duurzame economische groei te komen, zou ook een verschuiving van belastingen op arbeid naar belastingen op het gebruik van natuurlijke hulpbronnen en het milieu in de rede liggen. De hieruit resulterende lagere belasting op arbeid kan de vraag naar arbeid stimuleren terwijl de hogere belasting op natuurlijke hulpbronnen en vervuiling, innovaties kan bevorderen en zo bijdraagt aan de versterking van de economische structuur. De recent voorgestelde verhoging van de benzine-accijns kan in dit kader worden gezien.

6.2.3 Structurele verbeteringen

In het recente verleden heeft de Nederlandse regering op een aantal punten reeds beslist tot een aantal noodzakelijke structurele aanpassingen. Dit betreft met name wijzigingen in de sociale zekerheid gericht op vergroting van de activerende werking daarvan.

A. Werkloosheidsregelingen

Ten eerste zijn de voorwaarden voor het verkrijgen van een werkloosheidsuitkering verscherpt. Tevens is besloten met betrekking tot de bijstandsuitkeringen voor alleenstaanden en één-oudergezinnen de gemeenten meer vrijheid te geven om de hoogte van ed uitkering af te stemmen op de individuele situatie (met een maximum op het oude niveau van 70%). Jongeren tot 21 jaar wordt een tijdelijke baan in het Jeugd Werk Garantieplan aangeboden. Verder zijn de sanctiebepalingen geüniformeerd.

B. Regelingen voor arbeidsongeschiktheid en ziekte.

Om het grote aantal ontvangers van een arbeidsongeschiktheidsuitkering terug te brengen en om het herintreden in de arbeidsmarkt te vergroten, is onlangs aan aantal wijzigingen in de arbeidsongeschiktheidsverzekering (WAO) aangenomen. Het systeem is minder genereus gemaakt. Tevens is een meer stringente controle op ziekteverzuim en toegang tot de arbeidsongeschiktheidsverzekering geïntroduceerd, inclusief prikkels voor werkgevers. Voorts zijn een loonkostensubsidie en een scholingssubsidie ingevoerd.

C. Uitvoering sociale zekerheid

Aandacht is ook nodig voor de uitvoering van de sociale zekerheidsarrangementen. Dit jaar heeft een parlementair onderzoek plaatsgevonden met betrekking tot de werkloosheids- en arbeidsongeschiktheidsverzekering. De resultaten van dit onderzoek zijn deze maand gepubliceerd. Hoewel de samenwerking tussen de Arbeidsbureau's en de gemeentelijke sociale diensten (die de bijstands/werkloosheidsuitkeringen uitvoeren) is verbeterd, is deze nog steeds verre van optimaal. De regering zal daarom zoeken naar wegen voor vergaande samenwerking (één loketgedachte).

D. Een betere werking van de arbeidsmarkt

Het beleid in deze is met name gericht op de laagste segmenten van de arbeidsmarkt en vindt zijn uitwerking langs drie lijnen:

- het financieel aantrekkelijker maken van werken, met name in het onderste segment van de arbeidsmarkt. Daar is het verschil tussen netto loon en netto uitkering gering. Concreet gaat het in 1994 om fiscale maatregelen, terwijl ook bevriezing van de uitkering uit hoofde van de WKA hieraan bijdraagt.
- de loonkosten zullen meer in overeenstemming moeten worden gebracht met de produktiviteit. Door verlaging van de laagste loonschalen kan de bestaande ruimte tussen het wettelijk minimumloon en deze loonschalen benut worden om meer werk voor on- en laaggeschoolden mogelijk te maken. De Sociaal Economische Raad zal advies gevraagd worden onder welke condities het

mogelijk is dat 5 tot 10% van het personeel van een onderneming niet meer dan het wettelijk minimum wordt betaald.

- deregulering: sommige regels op de arbeidsmarkt belemmeren onnodig de flexibiliteit, deze regels zullen moeten worden heroverwogen. Het gaat daarbij om:
 - * de ontslagwetgeving wordt geliberaliseerd;
 - * het vergunningensysteem voor bemiddeling bij particuliere (tijdelijke) arbeid zal worden afgeschaft;
 - * de wet op de arbeidstijden en arbeidsomstandigheden wordt verruimd;
 - * de regering heeft besloten om de effecten van het algemeen verbindend verklaren van CAO's op werkgelegenheid, op maatregelen die actief arbeidsmarktbeleid ondersteunen (bijvoorbeeld scholing) en op loonflexibiliteit te bestuderen. Speciale aandacht zal worden geschonken aan de werkgelegenheidseffecten voor laagopgeleiden. De regering streeft ernaar in oktober van dit jaar een standpunt over het algemeen verbindend verklaren van CAO's gereed te hebben.

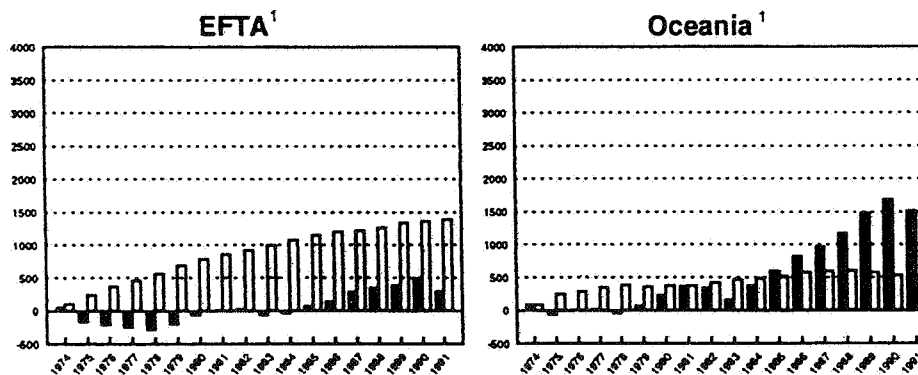
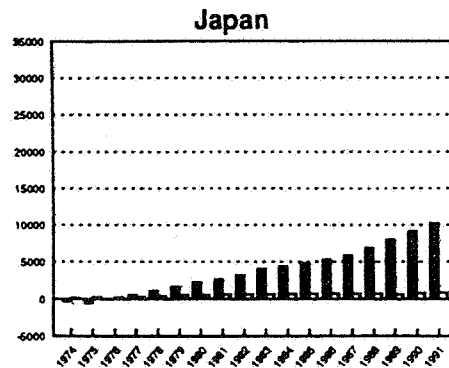
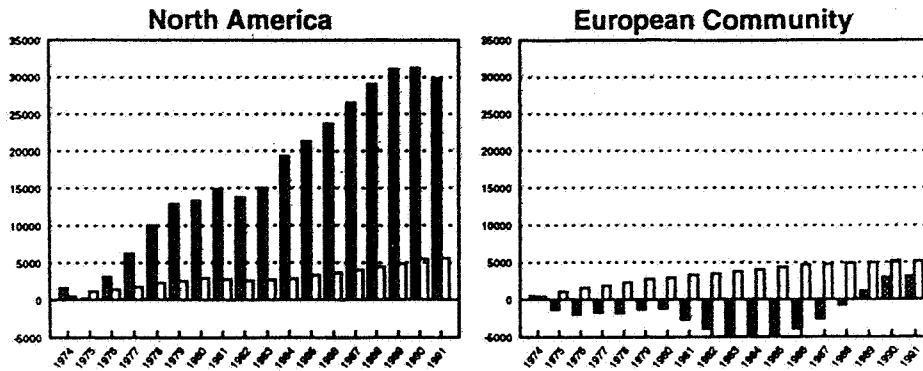
6.2.4 Specifiek arbeidsmarktbeleid

Behalve het gebrek aan financiële prikkels voor het aanbod van arbeid, is er ook een noodzaak om de mensen beter uit te rusten voor een baan. Ook op dit vlak is speciale aandacht vereist voor de onderkant van de arbeidsmarkt. Hierbij gaat het ten eerste om intensivering van het leerlingwezen. Tevens zal worden bevorderd dat ongekwalificeerde werklozen eerder deelnemen aan scholingsprojecten, waarbij bij weigering in beginsel eerder van sancties gebruik zal worden gemaakt. Verder zal het ontstaan van werkervaringsplaatsen in de marktsector worden bevorderd door een gerichte subsidie. In dit kader acht de regering ook uitbreiding van deeltijdarbeid en versterking van de reïntegratie van arbeidsongeschikten een belangrijk aandachtspunt.

7 SLOTOPMERKINGEN

De problemen op de arbeidsmarkt in Europa zijn de afgelopen decennia gestaag toegenomen. Hetzelfde geldt voor de situatie in Nederland. De Nederlandse regering deelt de internationale consensus dat stappen in de richting van een oplossing snel genomen moeten worden. Tegelijkertijd erkent zij dat het bereiken van een structurele oplossing enige tijd vergt. Noodzakelijk is daarom een heldere strategie voor de middellange termijn. De in Nederland genomen beleidsmaatregelen worden beschouwd als stappen in de richting van het bereiken van een economische structuur die de enorme uitdagingen die voor ons liggen aan kan.

Chart 1
Cumulative employment growth in the public and private sectors
 (change in thousands since 1973)



Notes:

1. The scale for EFTA and Oceania is higher than that for North America, the European Community and Japan by a factor of 10.

Source: OECD.

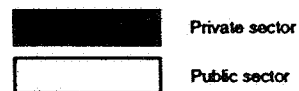
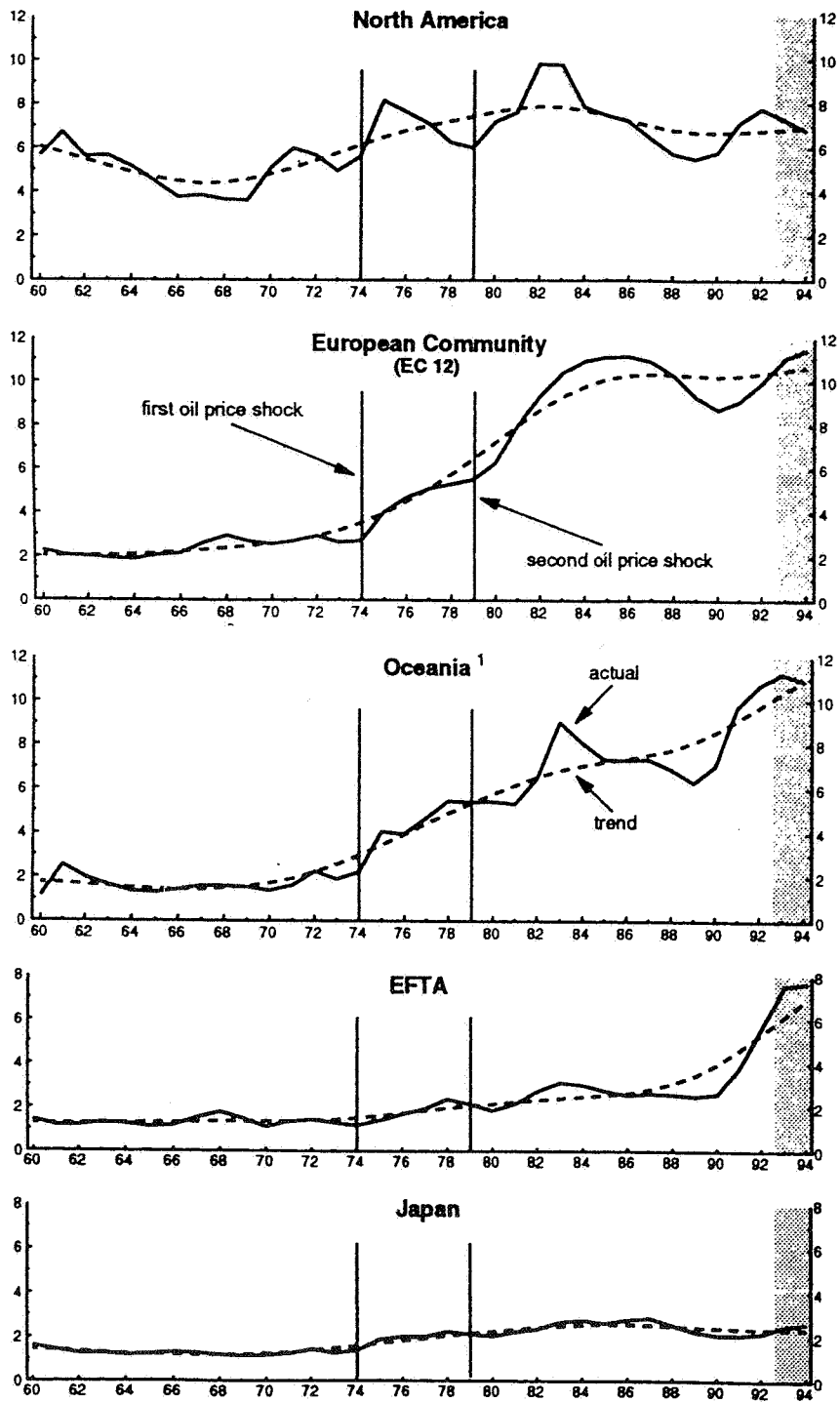


Chart 2 Unemployment rates in OECD regions, 1960-94

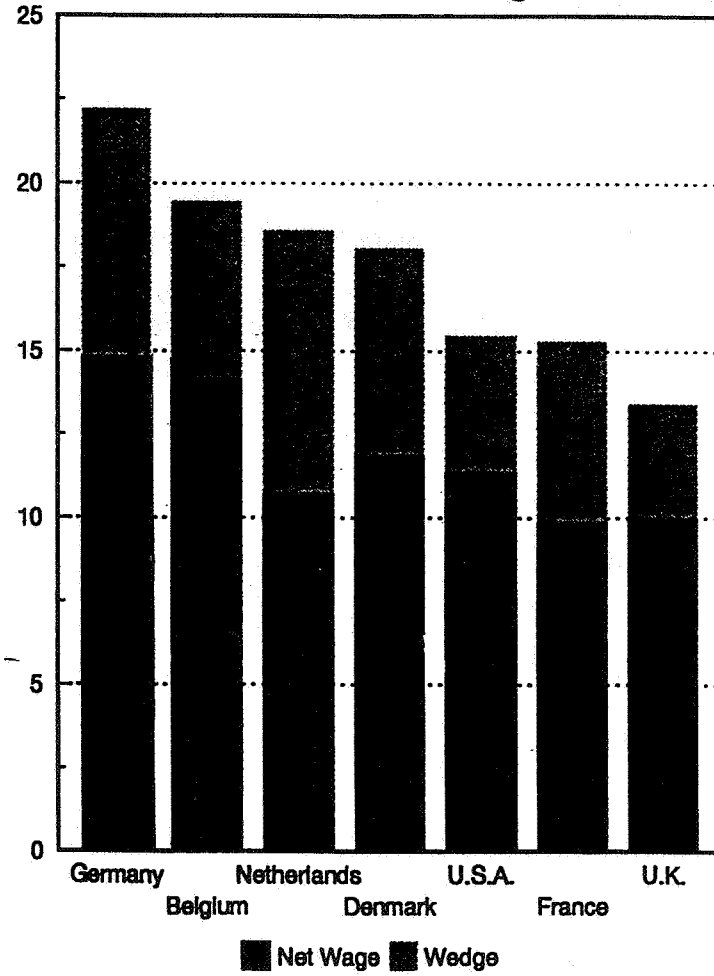
per cent
(OECD projections in shaded area)



1. For all charts, Oceania refers to Australia and New Zealand.
Source: OECD.

figur 3.

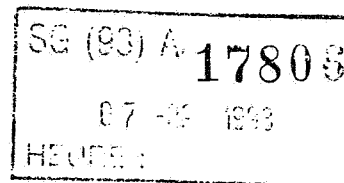
Labour Costs and Net Wages in US \$



Source: The World Competitiveness Report 1993,
Central Planning Bureau, MicroTax-International, April 1993



S. R.
REPRESENTAÇÃO PERMANENTE
DE PORTUGAL
JUNTO DAS
COMUNIDADES EUROPEIAS
BRUXELAS



914

Bruxelas, 6 de Setembro de 1993

Senhor Secretário-Geral

Tenho a honra de incluso remeter a V. Exa. um documento contendo a contribuição portuguesa para o livro branco sobre a estratégia a médio prazo para o crescimento, competitividade e emprego, conforme decidido no Conselho Europeu de Copenhague.

Queira aceitar, Senhor Secretário-Geral, os protestos da minha elevada consideração.

José Paulouro das Neves
Embaixador Representante Permanente

Sua Excelência
Senhor David Williamson
Secretário-Geral da
Comissão das Comunidades Europeias
BRUXELAS

**LIVRO BRANCO COMUNITÁRIO SOBRE A ESTRATÉGIA A
MÉDIO PRAZO PARA O CRESCIMENTO,
COMPETITIVIDADE E EMPREGO**

- contributos de Portugal para a reflexão comunitária -

(3 de Setembro de 1993)

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- ii) Competitividade
- iii) Emprego

1. PROMOVER A RECUPERAÇÃO ECONÓMICA DA EUROPA

A situação de crescimento económico negativo, com perda da competitividade e com aumento do desemprego, está a constituir motivo de profunda preocupação ao nível comunitário, razão por que os Conselhos Europeus de Edimburgo e Copenhaga tomaram a iniciativa de empreender um conjunto de acções visando a recuperação económica na Europa.

O Conselho Europeu, ao reafirmar a determinação da Comunidade e dos seus Estados-membros em restaurar a confiança nos agentes económicos, decidiu adoptar uma estratégia que abranja não só o curto prazo, através das acções em curso, mas também o médio e longo prazo. É neste âmbito que se insere o mandato atribuído à Comissão no sentido de elaborar um Livro Branco sobre a estratégia a médio prazo para o crescimento, competitividade e emprego, com particular realce para o papel das pequenas e médias empresas (PME) como agentes de dinamização do emprego e da estabilidade social.

O Conselho convidou também os Estados-membros a apresentarem à Comissão as suas propostas, tendo em vista o aprofundamento da reflexão à luz das experiências e estratégias próprias. Deste modo, pretende-se contribuir para a identificação de um quadro de referências que auxilie a Comissão na avaliação causal do fenómeno e na proposição de medidas e meios que orientem uma estratégia comunitária, dentro do enquadramento proporcionado pelo Tratado da União Europeia.

Este documento consubstancia o contributo do Governo português, ouvidos os parceiros sociais com assento na Comissão Permanente da Concertação Social do Conselho Económico e Social, para o objectivo supra referenciado.

Portugal aposta numa política activa de emprego como modelo de desenvolvimento e de integração europeia. Importa por isso antes de mais realçar as causas do elevado desemprego estrutural que hoje se verifica na Comunidade, para além dos efeitos cíclicos da recessão que acompanhou a queda do império soviético e que se revelou a mais grave desde os anos trinta. As causas principais apontadas são uma política monetária demasiado restritiva e uma política orçamental expansionista nos principais países membros, o que gera taxas de juro reais demasiado elevadas, uma apreciação das moedas europeias relativamente a países terceiros e uma menor taxa de poupança; além de uma excessiva rigidez nos mercados de trabalho nacionais e mesmo regionais.

A solução para o desemprego estrutural passa por isso por uma maior coordenação das políticas macroeconómicas no caminho da convergência para a moeda única, aproveitando da melhor forma os benefícios do mercado único, ou seja, por um esforço coordenado de promoção da recuperação económica sustentada. Com as perspectivas financeiras até ao fim do século acordadas em Edimburgo, ficou não só assegurado o valor da coesão económica e social, como se contribuiu poderosamente para relançar o crescimento da economia europeia. Daí ter sido possível tomar em Copenhaga novas iniciativas, permitindo que o crescimento em moderação salarial gere emprego e que

a baixa das taxas de juro aumente a competitividade da economia europeia.

As orientações comunitárias devem ser complementadas com medidas estruturais adequadas às características nacionais e regionais de cada Estado-membro. Neste sentido, Portugal está institucionalmente comprometido com a execução de uma estratégia de desenvolvimento económico e social até ao século XXI, aprovada na Assembleia da República. Esta estratégia enforma o Plano de Desenvolvimento Regional (PDR), já apresentado à Comissão Europeia, onde estão contidos os objectivos e os instrumentos indispensáveis para a modernização da economia e sociedade portuguesas.

Trata-se de preparar Portugal para a competição numa economia global, dentro de uma estratégia para o crescimento, competitividade e emprego a médio e longo prazo, ajustada às potencialidades e fragilidades das realidades nacionais.

A implementação do PDR terá, pela sua dimensão, um impacto macroeconómico significativo e constituirá um factor importante de aceleração do crescimento da economia portuguesa nos próximos anos, contribuindo para gerar crescimento do emprego.

As opções estratégicas e os instrumentos corporizados no PDR, tendo embora em atenção as peculiaridades da situação nacional e a sua envolvente internacional, afirmam-se como respostas de médio e longo prazo.

Todavia, a persistência de sérias debilidades estruturais na economia portuguesa, agravadas pela actual envolvente económica

desfavorável, tornaram imperiosa a adopção desde já de um conjunto de acções sectoriais complementares.

Estas acções são prioritariamente dirigidas aos sectores mais relevantes do ponto de vista do relançamento económico e da sustentação do emprego, contribuindo para a consecução dos objectivos de convergência, previstos no respectivo programa para 1992-95 e anualmente concretizados no orçamento do Estado.

No quadro dos objectivos enunciados quanto às opções estratégicas e programas específicos e correspondendo às iniciativas de negociação de medidas de combate ao desemprego apresentadas pelos parceiros sociais, o Governo e estes desenvolvem neste momento um processo negocial tendente à adopção de medidas que visem a prevenção dos riscos de desemprego e o desenvolvimento sustentado do emprego.

2. ENQUADRAMENTO

i) A questão política: A confiança institucional

A problemática do crescimento, competitividade e emprego é particularmente influenciada pelo comportamento dos agentes económicos e sociais que, por sua vez, orientam a sua actividade em função da sua confiança nos objectivos institucionais, nos meios e processos organizados para os realizar. Nesse sentido a entrada em vigor do Tratado da União Europeia, como forma de garantir a coesão política da economia europeia, contra a tentação, sempre presente de modulação das velocidades de integração, afigura-se de importância decisiva para restaurar a confiança institucional.

Num processo tão complexo como o da concretização da União Económica e Monetária (UEM), mas, do mesmo modo, tão necessário para a consolidação do mercado único, as dúvidas - quaisquer que sejam - que afectam a credibilidade do sistema são geradoras de turbulência e perturbadoras da estabilidade que os agentes económicos necessitam para as suas iniciativas empresariais geradoras de emprego.

A credibilidade, a democraticidade e a estabilidade das decisões dos órgãos comunitários, no quadro de uma eficaz solidariedade institucional, são suportes essenciais da confiança necessária ao crescimento, competitividade e emprego.

ii) A questão económica: Crescimento com perda de competitividade e de emprego.

Na década de oitenta, a Comunidade começou a acumular sucessivas perdas de emprego, pese embora o crescimento económico registado nesse período, ainda que de forma bastante irregular. Desde essa altura, a generalidade dos países comunitários tem visto a sua taxa de desemprego aumentar ou, pelo menos, situa-se em níveis não longe dos 10% da população activa.

A necessidade de garantir a competitividade das empresas, num espaço económico com elevados custos de mão de obra, acelerou o grau de intensidade capitalística dos processos de produção, com a consequente diminuição do emprego criado. Por outro lado, os enormes avanços na inovação tecnológica a nível da automação dos processos produtivos, contribuíram e facilitaram este processo.

Assim, o crescimento económico deixou de ser gerador, pelo menos com a mesma intensidade, de novos empregos, dado que grande parte do crescimento do produto comunitário resultou de contínuos aumentos de produtividade de que a actividade económica comunitária carecia por forma a manter a sua competitividade, não só face aos seus concorrentes tradicionais (EUA e Japão), mas igualmente perante a crescente agressividade concorrencial dos novos países industrializados.

A recessão veio a agudizar ainda mais o disfuncionamento do equilíbrio entre crescimento, competitividade e emprego: a CE denota

uma incapacidade estrutural para criar emprego no ritmo e na qualificação desejados pela procura. Por sua vez, a competitividade da Europa Comunitária tem vindo a perder posição relativa face aos seus concorrentes internacionais. A inadequação dos instrumentos da política comercial face às necessidades da política externa comum vem agravar a questão económica, não deixando de ter repercussões na confiança institucional.

iii) A questão social: A crise dos sistemas de protecção social

A persistência de elevadas taxas de desemprego durante um período relativamente longo e o envelhecimento da população, no quadro do modelo que enforma os sistemas de protecção social dos Estados-membros, tiveram como consequência uma crise de capacidade de financiamento dos sistemas. Efectivamente, estes sistemas, já de si negativamente afectados pela evolução demográfica na Europa (com relações contribuintes/beneficiários fortemente decrescentes nos últimos anos), começa a mostrar uma incapacidade de se manter por muito mais tempo nas condições actuais. O desemprego existente e o generalizado aumento de encargos de protecção social pode vir a criar um ciclo vicioso negativo, pois, aumentando a carga contributiva das actividades económicas em funcionamento, prejudica ou, pelo menos, não estimula a criação de novos empregos.

Perspectivando estas preocupações sob o ponto de vista do equilíbrio financeiro dos sistemas, conclui-se ser urgente aprofundar mecanismos complementares ou alternativos de protecção social e ajustar o compromisso social da empresa às variações da sua situação

económica, no quadro de um processo de adaptabilidade dos benefícios que assegure o referido equilíbrio financeiro do sistema.

Neste sentido, são de reforçar todos os mecanismos que favorecem a concertação e o diálogo social ao próprio nível da empresa, recompensando os sectores mais dinâmicos mas também os trabalhadores mais produtivos.

A Comunidade deveria empreender com brevidade trocas de informação e estudos comparativos aprofundados das situações nacionais, por forma a auxiliar os Estados-membros a proceder a ajustamentos dos respectivos sistemas, com vista à suportabilidade dos custos destes e ao reforço da competitividade das empresas.

3. QUESTÕES ESSENCIAIS PARA A REFLEXÃO COMUNITÁRIA

- 1) A influência das políticas comunitárias na internacionalização da economia europeia.

Os agentes económicos internacionais acentuam a internacionalização das suas actividades tendo como suporte uma identificação estratégica com as linhas de política assumidas pelos países mais industrializados num quadro de partilha de influências e ajustamentos de interesses. É preciso reforçar a estratégia comunitária no "forum" das grandes decisões que influenciam a evolução da economia mundial e acentuar a internacionalização das empresas europeias, de forma a marcar activamente a condução das estratégias de que depende a evolução da economia europeia.

Neste sentido, deve ser realçada a importância de uma estratégia de desenvolvimento das trocas comerciais em mercados fora do espaço europeu, mesmo que para a sua consecução se torne necessário associar-lhe uma estratégia comunitária de cooperação que favoreça o desenvolvimento de países de fracos recursos endógenos.

Por outro lado, e tendo em vista este objectivo, deveria a Comunidade, quando neles se assume e exprime publicamente enquanto tal (posição colectiva esta que cada vez mais convem impulsionar e traduzir com firmeza e coerência), deixar claro que é inaceitável a adopção de normativos e procedimentos de vinculação jurídica internacional, mas que, na prática, acabam por ser cumpridos apenas

por reduzido número de países, entre os quais, precisamente, os que integram a própria Comunidade. Mais uma vez surge aqui como essencial o objectivo da coesão política, bem como a compatibilidade entre os objectivos externos e os instrumentos comunitários. Ora essa compatibilidade, se existia na fase da união aduaneira, já não se verifica no quadro mais ambicioso previsto no Tratado da União.

ii) Diálogo e coesão social: Reforço da negociação e redução de assimetrias

O diálogo social permanente, sobretudo na sua vertente de concertação, constitui hoje para alguns países uma experiência considerada positiva, nomeadamente pela contribuição favorável para a política desinflationista, para a reforma das estruturas produtivas, envolvendo as relações de trabalho, para a compatibilização de estratégias que optimizem a eficácia social do desenvolvimento económico e até pelo aprofundamento de participação dos cidadãos, tendo em vista assegurar a governabilidade dos interesses em conflito nos processos de mudança tão profundos como os que ocorrem na CE.

Com efeito, as profundas alterações na economia europeia, bem como o seu enquadramento num ambiente de internacionalização e interpenetração das economias, implica mudanças bem mais profundas e sistemáticas do que em décadas anteriores, pelo que se torna necessário manter e aprofundar esta temática no interesse de todos aqueles agentes económicos que desejem ser mobilizados na base da confiança alicerçada no diálogo e negociação permanentes.

O diálogo social e a concertação tripartida são potenciadores de evoluções graduais e sustentadas, susceptíveis de suportar reformas duradouras.

Sendo certo que o Tratado da União Europeia reforçou institucionalmente o papel dos parceiros sociais europeus e o da consulta e negociação social, não é menos certo que se está ainda, sob este aspecto, numa fase embrionária.

Todavia, a situação que se atravessa em toda a Comunidade, quer do ponto de vista de perda de competitividade das empresas europeias, quer do ponto de vista do aumento do desemprego e do alastramento de fenómenos de exclusão social, aconselha a um reforço da participação dos parceiros sociais europeus na discussão e no acerto concertado das políticas comunitárias que visam o crescimento, a competitividade e o emprego.

Crescimento, competitividade e emprego estão intimamente relacionados. Por isso, parece crucial que governos, empregadores e trabalhadores, em conjunto, possam adoptar orientações ou soluções consensualizadas a nível comunitário, tendo em vista alcançar-se uma plataforma mínima de entendimento. Esta poderá reforçar e emprestar sinergias às políticas comunitárias. Poderá também, se for bem articulada com os processos nacionais de concertação e de negociação social, ajudar a uma melhor e mais rápida convergência das economias nacionais e a uma aproximação realística dos níveis de bem estar social dos Estados-membros.

Este processo de convergência, no contexto recessivo em que se desenvolve, acentua algumas desvantagens comparativas que as nações

mais débeis apresentam. Com efeito a UEM, se permite explorar em profundidade as virtualidades do mercado único, torna mais complexo o processo de redução de disparidades regionais de desenvolvimento na Comunidade, tendo nomeadamente em conta as dificuldades e condições especiais com que as regiões e nações estruturalmente atrasadas ou com fragilidades específicas terão que assegurar um diferencial de crescimento no contexto das exigências de convergência previstas no Tratado da União Europeia. Por isso é necessário, também, reforçar a aplicação de medidas e instrumentos conducentes a uma efectiva coesão económica e social entre os Estados-membros.

iii) Mercado de Trabalho: flexibilidade e qualificação

Num mercado aberto, o emprego está estruturalmente associado à competitividade das empresas e ao crescimento das economias, ainda que outras variáveis possam, por períodos curtos, desequilibrar esta relação de forças. O desenvolvimento sustentado do emprego implica, indiscutivelmente, medidas que favoreçam a melhoria da competitividade das empresas e medidas que assegurem um crescimento positivo da economia, particularmente geradoras de criação líquida de postos de trabalho, objectivos que só serão realizáveis com o esforço continuado de moderação salarial e financeira.

Neste domínio, verificam-se vários constrangimentos, os quais contribuem para reduzir a oferta de oportunidades de emprego bem como tornar o ajustamento aos choques mais lento, impondo-se, portanto, o assumir de acções que procurem ultrapassar esses estrangulamentos e possam dar ao factor trabalho uma imagem cada vez mais positiva.

Ainda assim, a política de emprego não pode deixar de desenvolver uma intervenção activa quer na valorização dos recursos humanos existentes, sobretudo em relação às PME, quer na prevenção do desemprego e, particularmente, das situações graves que potenciam a exclusão sócio-profissional dos desempregados.

Deste modo, perspectivando o crescimento do emprego no quadro do relançamento da economia da Comunidade, destacam-se como grandes áreas de actuação:

- Preparar e qualificar os jovens para a vida activa;
- Melhorar a competitividade das empresas pelo reforço das suas competências;
- Fomentar o aparecimento de iniciativas geradoras de criação de emprego em novas áreas de actividade;
- Prevenir e combater o desemprego, incluindo neste o de longa e muita longa duração.

Mais concretamente, deverão ser reforçados os seguintes eixos de desenvolvimento:

- adequação do sistema educativo à necessidade de conferir aos indivíduos um conjunto de competências, conhecimentos e atitudes que potenciem o desenvolvimento das suas capacidades criativas e de iniciativa num quadro global de inserção no contexto sócio-económico;

- reforço do papel da formação contínua enquanto instrumento de ajustamento entre o perfil do trabalhador e as exigências decorrentes das alterações da organização e conteúdo do trabalho numa óptica de componente estratégica no plano global de desenvolvimento da empresa;
- aprofundamento comparativo do figurino institucional existente nos vários Estados-membros em termos de regulação do mercado de emprego, envolvendo o ordenamento jurídico-laboral, com vista à sua oportuna adequação aos novos contextos sócio-económicos, em particular os gerados por factores organizativos e tecnológicos, bem como um aumento da celeridade e eficiência do próprio processo judicial;
- eliminação das barreiras à mobilidade regional, ocupacional e sectorial, sobretudo ao nível habitacional (com a melhoria do regime do arrendamento), criação de incentivos à transferência e mobilidade, sem prejuízo da defesa do desenvolvimento rural, sobretudo nas áreas especialmente desfavorecidas;
- reorganização do tempo de trabalho, com desenvolvimento, nomeadamente, de formas de trabalho em tempo parcial e de outros modelos de organização do trabalho ajustados às diferentes realidades empresariais;
- redução dos custos do salário indirecto através de esquemas alternativos de protecção social que garantam os mesmos objectivos com menores custos;

- desenvolvimento de intervenções técnicas através de medidas e programas de apoio à inserção ou reinserção profissional dos desempregados actuais ou previsíveis (programas de formação, de emprego/formação, apoio à criação do emprego ou de empresas, programas ocupacionais, fomento da colocação dos desempregados) no prosseguimento de uma política activa de emprego.

Os apoios da Comunidade, emergentes dos fundos estruturais, aos objectivos atrás enunciados, devem ser rapidamente disponibilizados, sob pena de os seus efeitos positivos se diluírem ou se tornarem menos eficazes.

Deve ser exercida uma acção reforçada, a nível comunitário e nacional, de acompanhamento da rigorosa aplicação dos fundos estruturais. Devem ser empreendidas acções de avaliação dos impactos concretos sócio-económicos da utilização dos fundos estruturais, aperfeiçoando-se, entretanto, metodologias comuns e indicadores e instrumentos análogos de avaliação.

Por outro lado, e no que respeita à preparação e emissão de regulamentos e directivas, deve ter-se sempre presente a situação concreta de cada Estado-membro e as circunstâncias específicas que a envolvem.

Este entendimento traduz a necessidade de se avançar no ritmo desejável e com bases realistas também na área social. Isto implica uma correcta avaliação prévia das consequências práticas e concretas, para cada um e todos os Estados-membros, das iniciativas legislativas comunitárias. Sempre que estas, por imperativo do desenvolvimento da

própria Comunidade, comportarem para qualquer dos Estados-membros um reforço/custo suplementar, a iniciativa legislativa deve reflectir esta consideração e ser, portanto, flexível, permitindo a adaptação progressiva da situação nacional ao objectivo comunitário assumido como padrão desejável.

- iv) **Dimensão social:** Priorizar a realização dos direitos sociais que contribuam para o aumento do emprego ou não o ponham em causa.

A realização da dimensão social não pode ser dissociada da capacidade económica do tecido empresarial e da comportabilidade de agravamento da despesa pública sob pena de se tornar, directa ou indirectamente, geradora de desemprego.

O mercado único associa à realização dos objectivos de carácter económico objectivos de natureza social, que integram a sua dimensão social e que se encontram expressos, em parte, na Carta dos Direitos Sociais Fundamentais dos Trabalhadores, direitos, por sua vez, objecto de desenvolvimento através de programas de acção da Comissão.

Neste contexto, e no quadro actual de recessão económica e de incerteza, torna-se necessário consensualizar prioridades, estimando-se que estas se deveriam centrar nas áreas do emprego, formação profissional e segurança e saúde no local de trabalho.

v) **Reforço das competências empresariais: um mercado único concorrencial**

A construção da UEM - requisito essencial da União Europeia - implica uma convergência das remunerações nominais e da produtividade dos factores de produção, pelo que se deve apostar na moderação salarial e financeira em cada país e na Comunidade em geral. A convergência europeia actua beneficemente sobre o crescimento e o emprego, bem como sobre a competitividade, através da consolidação do mercado único e do estímulo sobre a poupança, potenciando os grandes projectos em infra-estruturas. A criação de uma área estável em termos macroeconómicos é vista no espírito da liberalização dos mercados e da eliminação das distorções de política ainda existentes e não numa óptica intervencionista.

A liberalização dos mercados financeiros e de bens e serviços continuará a contribuir para um aumento da concorrência nestes mercados e para a descida das taxas de juro, criando as condições necessárias à recuperação económica, em especial no que respeita às PME, que são responsáveis por uma parte muito significativa do emprego na Comunidade.

Mas é ao nível das políticas estruturais, sobretudo no que respeita ao funcionamento dos mercados de factores, que é necessário actuar para obter resultados duradouros. É por isso necessário melhorar o funcionamento dos mercados de trabalho e promover a criação activa dos empregos do futuro melhorando assim, de forma sustentada, a competitividade europeia.

Os orçamentos nacionais e o regime de tributação têm um papel muito importante na solução dos problemas do desemprego e da competitividade europeia. A própria reforma das administrações públicas nacionais, dando o exemplo da moderação salarial, é um factor essencial para o aumento sustentado da competitividade e do emprego a nível europeu.

É necessário investir mais no capital humano e no esforço de inovação tecnológica de forma sistemática e, a curto prazo, tributar mais os recursos naturais e menos o trabalho por forma a garantir a sustentabilidade do emprego de qualidade e a competitividade.

A protecção ambiental, para além de respeitar as gerações futuras e melhorar a qualidade de vida, poderá aliviar os custos (tributação) do factor trabalho e criar novas oportunidades de emprego.

O modelo de integração consensualmente perfilhado por Portugal aposta numa política de emprego activa como forma de consolidar a base produtiva das economias nacionais. Só assim se conseguirá contrariar a tendência para situações extremas de dependência que já se verificam em determinadas regiões da Comunidade (quer a leste quer a sul dos respectivos centros nacionais), demasiado confiantes no papel das transferências públicas e privadas e que hoje suportam os inerentes custos sociais.

O mesmo poderia acontecer a alguns países em relação à Comunidade como um todo, com consequências ainda mais graves. É por isso necessário encarar as transferências comunitárias para os vários Estados-membros no espírito da coesão económica e social. Ao fim e

ao cabo, trata-se de defender a valorização de todo comunitário pela valorização de cada uma das nações integrantes.

O investimento público é por isso de importância primordial, não tanto pelo aumento das despesas em grandes projectos mas pela execução dos planos de infra-estruturas já previstos a nível comunitário e pelos critérios de selecção das despesas de capital dos vários orçamentos nacionais. O esforço continuado de modernização da rede de infra-estruturas comunitárias reduzirá os custos de transporte e comunicação melhorando a transferência potencial de tecnologia e, conseqüentemente, a produtividade do trabalho. O esforço de redução das despesas correntes deve continuar, libertando recursos para os investimentos em infra-estruturas e capital humano e para o investimento privado. Só este, enquadrado pela estabilidade económica e social, poderá proporcionar um crescimento sustentado.

Ao nível das empresas, o reforço das competências deve também ter lugar no próprio mercado comunitário, por forma a assegurar uma livre e sã concorrência no espaço comunitário. Para tal, a interpretação e a efectiva aplicação das regras comunitárias no espaço de cada um dos Estados-membros não deve ser confrontada com procedimentos administrativos e com regulamentações técnicas internas que acabem por distorcer o objectivo da livre circulação de pessoas, bens, capitais e serviços, indispensável ao crescimento e competitividade das empresas e à potenciação de criação ou manutenção de postos de trabalho pelas empresas.

A existência de tais barreiras internas afronta o objectivo do mercado único e introduz factores de desconfiança e concorrência desleal contrários à solidariedade e coesão a nível comunitário. No

âmbito dos factores que favorecem o desemprego, regista-se, por um lado, a existência de barreiras burocráticas excessivas à criação de empresas e as dificuldades de acesso ao crédito e, em certos casos, elevada carga fiscal. Por outro lado, verifica-se uma grande dificuldade das empresas, em particular as PME, em melhorarem o seu nível de competitividade com base em novos modelos centrados no binómio custo/qualidade, que provém da menor articulação com as entidades vocacionadas para a investigação e o desenvolvimento (I & D), reduzindo a capacidade de inovação e criatividades das empresas.

Esta situação decorre, em muitos casos, do próprio desconhecimento dos instrumentos existentes para apoio à implementação de projectos que possam obviar aos estrangulamentos referidos, impondo-se, por este motivo, o incremento de actividades na área da consultoria. Ressalta daqui que estes serviços poderão ser vistos numa dupla perspectiva, a de criação directa de empregados e a de garantia do emprego existente pela melhoria dos padrões de qualidade das empresas.

A crescente preocupação dos cidadãos com a protecção do ambiente, conservação da natureza e ambiente urbano constitui um dado importante na perspectiva de se incentivarem novas áreas potenciadoras de criação de emprego. Está hoje ultrapassada a ideia de que protecção do ambiente, particularmente na indústria, representa um custo adicional e, como tal, teria um efeito negativo sobre a competitividade e o emprego. As tecnologias que têm em conta o respectivo impacto no ambiente contribuem positivamente para o bem-estar da sociedade numa óptica de longo prazo e, ao defenderem o ambiente, aumentam a qualidade de vida das gerações vindouras.

Uma outra área potencial de criação de emprego é a do sector do turismo, visto numa perspectiva alargada de actividades ligadas ao lazer. A diversificação de produtos neste sector passará pela dinamização da oferta em domínios como o turismo desportivo, cultural, de negócios e de saúde. Por outro lado, o aumento da qualidade da oferta do turismo passará pela modernização e reequipamento de empreendimentos de nível superior, pela recuperação do património histórico e arquitectónico e pela melhoria da animação turística. Relacionada ainda com as indústrias do lazer estão os esforços no domínio do audiovisual.

Importa, porém ter presente que, para as empresas, em particular para as PME, poderem responder aos desafios do futuro necessitam de ajustamentos estratégicos básicos, com destaque na vertente tecnológica, que implicarão um reequacionamento, designadamente da estrutura da sua organização, da forma de financiamento e da propriedade do capital.

Um contributo positivo à dinamização empresarial poderá basear-se num apoio:

- à reorganização do tecido empresarial, fundamentalmente ao nível das PME, através da criação de mecanismos de apoio aos vários níveis, desde a fase de diagnóstico da situação e detecção de estrangulamentos até à fase de implementação dos projectos concretos (projectos de investimento, planos de desenvolvimento de recursos humanos, etc.);
- ao investimento em novas áreas de actividade com crescimento potencial do emprego como, por exemplo, o ambiente, as artes,

os serviços sociais, serviços de consultoria e actividades de lazer, em estreita ligação com o reforço da capacidade regional e local para gerar iniciativas positivas criadoras de emprego.

A acção da Comunidade deveria reforçar a situação das PME, nomeadamente através de:

- desenvolvimento de actividades de I & D no que respeita a novas metodologias de actuação ligadas às PME nos domínios da organização do trabalho, da formação e da forma de financiamento;
- criação de redes de casos de demonstração que pela sua qualidade possam vir a assumir-se como modelos alternativos de resolução de problemas resultantes das mutações organizacionais, tecnológicas e outras que as empresas atravessam.

**vi) Instituições e Regras do Comércio Internacional:
transparência das regras concorrenciais**

As trocas comerciais entre países são fundamentais para a prosperidade e emprego na Europa. As regras, convenções e instituições existentes foram desenhadas numa época com características fundamentais diferentes das de hoje. Os ganhos de quotas de mercado em variados domínios, registados nas últimas décadas por países com protecção social efectiva muito baixa ou

inexistente, têm produzido efeitos negativos nítidos no emprego e no crescimento da Europa.

O fraco crescimento do emprego desde 1970 contribuiu para o agravamento do equilíbrio financeiro dos sistemas de protecção social na Europa, e os aumentos das taxas das contribuições sociais - adoptados com vista ao reequilíbrio financeiro - agravaram os custos do factor trabalho, conduzindo assim a uma menor dinâmica do emprego e a perdas de competitividade.

Num mundo onde o tempo de absorção de tecnologias é cada vez mais reduzido, o diferencial de produtividade de trabalho entre a Europa e os seus concorrentes está a tornar-se inferior ou insuficiente em relação ao diferencial dos custos unitários de trabalho. Por isso, a racionalização da produção com vista à obtenção de novos ganhos de produtividade na Europa deve ser acompanhada por uma reformulação das regras e práticas do comércio internacional, que introduza factores de sã competitividade - em particular, ao nível da preservação do ambiente, da protecção social mínima e das condições mínimas de trabalho - por forma a prevenir que aquela racionalização se alcance à custa do aumento do desemprego.

Nesta dimensão concorrencial, são de colocar valores sociais que constituem - e devem continuar a constituir - património humanístico comum das sociedades desenvolvidas, designadamente os relacionados com a preservação do ambiente, com a defesa da dignidade do trabalho e com a protecção de riscos sociais.

Estes valores, vertidos em instrumentos jurídicos internacionais, que normativizam direitos individuais e colectivos fundamentais,

constituem um quadro de orientação para o desenvolvimento económico com vista ao bem estar do homem, em cujos limites se deve aceitar a legitimação de factores que melhoram a competitividade.

O desenvolvimento do mercado único, num contexto de rigorosa transparência das regras de concorrência, transpõe a necessidade de salvaguarda destes mesmos princípios de concorrência ao nível do sistema de comércio internacional, sob pena de se diminuir a capacidade concorrencial do tecido empresarial europeu.

vii) Reforço da cooperação monetária

A coesão e a concertação devem actuar ao nível das políticas estruturais para os mercados de factores de produção. Além do aumento da mobilidade no mercado de trabalho, já referido, existem medidas para o mercado de capitais, como a harmonização da tributação da poupança e a melhoria nas condições de acesso ao crédito por parte das PME, as quais se prendem directamente com o reforço da cooperação monetária.

As recentes perturbações e profundas tensões nos mercados cambiais constituem sintomas da instabilidade do sistema monetário internacional e, em parte, do desenho das políticas económicas dos Estados-membros da Comunidade. Vários realinhamentos foram efectuados, a participação de algumas moedas no mecanismo cambial foi suspensa e, perante os significativos ataques especulativos, as bandas de flutuação foram temporariamente alargadas.

Neste contexto de incerteza, a preparação da nova instituição de cooperação monetária, o Instituto Monetário Europeu, poderá contribuir a partir do início da segunda fase, em 01.01.94, para o reforço da cooperação multilateral no domínio monetário. O desenvolvimento de mecanismos de coordenação entre os Estados-membros na área monetária poderá por seu turno contribuir para o relançamento do processo de convergência e coesão previsto no Tratado da União Europeia.

4. SÍNTESE: PROPOSTAS DE ACTUAÇÃO

Dos contributos para a reflexão comunitária referidos acima, no seu devido enquadramento, resultam propostas de actuação na promoção do crescimento, na defesa da competitividade e na criação do emprego. Sem prejuízo da interdependência entre estes três objectivos, e da interpenetração entre ^{as questões} ~~a questão~~ política, económica e social que os enquadram, vale a pena apresentar as propostas de actuação à volta de cada um dos três objectivos estratégicos. É o que se faz, em jeito de síntese.

i) Crescimento

A promoção do crescimento na economia europeia exige uma maior internacionalização das empresas europeias, o que, por seu turno, pressupõe que estas possam definir estratégias claras. Para tal, a Comunidade deve falar com uma voz mais forte e mais sintonizada nas organizações e nos foros onde se confrontam os países mais industrializados. A Comunidade deve assumir-se como tal nas trocas comerciais com países terceiros, bem como nas normas e procedimentos de vinculação jurídica internacional. Ao fazê-lo, a Comunidade poderá compatibilizar os seus objectivos externos e os instrumentos comunitários, por um lado, e evitar que os procedimentos acordados sejam ignorados pelos Estados-membros, por outro.

As políticas comunitárias para a internacionalização da economia europeia devem também afectar as instituições e regras do comércio internacional, reforçando a transparência das regras da concorrência.

Não se trata de prescindir dos ganhos da produtividade nem da liberdade das trocas. Simplesmente os valores que constituem o património europeu - defesa da dignidade do trabalho e da pessoa humana, protecção contra os riscos sociais e respeito do ambiente - obrigam a reformular as regras e práticas do comércio internacional. A transparência das regras da concorrência que preside ao estabelecimento do mercado único, e que obriga a um acompanhamento permanente, deve ser transposta ao nível internacional.

Numa palavra, a promoção do crescimento económico europeu exige uma política económica externa, resultante de uma política comercial comum compatibilizada com a política externa e de segurança comum prevista no Tratado da União Europeia.

ii) Competitividade

A defesa da competitividade sustenta a promoção do crescimento. Passa desde logo pelo reforço das competências empresariais, no quadro de um mercado único e concorrencial. É que a realização da União Económica e Monetária implica uma convergência das remunerações nominais e da produtividade dos factores de produção. Essa convergência dos aumentos salariais e das taxas de juro consolida o mercado único e estimula a poupança.

Para ser durável, a convergência exige o recurso a políticas estruturais, susceptíveis de manter a moderação salarial e financeira, bem como um rigor orçamental permanente. Além de dar o exemplo da moderação salarial nas administrações públicas, os orçamentos nacionais devem investir mais no capital humano e na inovação tecnológica, devem tributar mais os recursos naturais e menos o factor trabalho.

O investimento público tem aqui um papel fundamental. Cautelosamente seleccionado, é um factor poderoso de coesão ao mesmo tempo que permite evitar que apareçam situações de dependência extrema relativamente às transferências. Combinado com a redução das despesas correntes e centrado nas infraestruturas e no capital humano, valoriza o investimento privado.

Quanto à empresa, há que lhe assegurar um espaço económico homogéneo (o mercado único sem procedimentos administrativos e regras técnicas que o aniquilam) onde reine uma sã e livre concorrência. Mas também é necessário aumentar a competitividade da empresa (modelos custo/qualidade) em estreita ligação com organismos de investigação e desenvolvimento e de ajudá-la a efectuar ajustamentos estratégicos. É o próprio conceito de empresa que deve ser repensado, do ponto de vista da sua organização, das suas condições de financiamento, da propriedade do seu capital.

A Comunidade pode desempenhar aqui um papel decisivo, sobretudo a favor das pequenas e médias empresas que são responsáveis por uma parte muito significativa do emprego na Europa. Pode desenvolver uma actividade de I&D em favor das PME, em matéria de organização do trabalho, de formação e de financiamento. Pode instalar redes de

demonstração que revelem quer soluções aos problemas resultantes das mutações tecnológicas, organizacionais ou outras quer os êxitos obtidos em novas áreas de actividade promissoras em matéria de emprego, como o ambiente, as artes, os serviços sociais, serviços de consultoria, actividades de lazer, etc..

Além deste esforço microeconómico de reforço das competências empresariais, especialmente decisivo para as pequenas e médias empresas, a defesa da competitividade exige o reforço da cooperação monetária. Directamente relacionado com esta está o funcionamento do Sistema Monetário Europeu e a transformação faseada da actual grelha de paridades do mecanismo cambial numa moeda única, o ecu.

Vão no mesmo sentido de defesa da competitividade empresarial medidas que melhoram o funcionamento do mercado de capitais, quer pela harmonização da fiscalidade sobre a poupança quer por um acesso mais competitivo ao crédito interno e externo por parte das pequenas e médias empresas. Dadas as profundas perturbações por que têm passado os mercados cambiais nos últimos doze meses, além disso, importa que o Sistema Monetário Europeu esteja em condições de contribuir, a partir do início do próximo ano, ao reforço da cooperação no domínio monetário.

iii) Emprego

A criação de emprego, a razão última da defesa da competitividade das empresas e da promoção do crescimento da economia europeia, exige o diálogo e a coesão social a todos os níveis. É a própria eficácia

social do desenvolvimento económico, é a própria democracia, que ganham com o diálogo social permanente.

O Tratado da União Europeia reforça, é certo, o papel dos parceiros sociais, mas de modo ainda embrionário. Há que ir mais longe desde já ao nível comunitário: há que acertar elementos comuns de análise de situação, há que concertar orientações e soluções comuns.

Este diálogo europeu deve articular-se com a concertação social ao nível nacional, por forma a favorecer e acelerar a convergência - que o contexto recessivo torna mais difícil de atingir nas nações mais débeis. Com efeito, a moeda única, se permite explorar as virtualidades do mercado único, também torna mais complexo o processo de redução das disparidades de desenvolvimento na Comunidade, quer entre regiões quer entre nações. Por isso, a aceleração da convergência exige que se reforçe a aplicação de medidas e instrumentos conducentes a uma efectiva coesão económica e social entre os Estados-membros.

Num mercado aberto, a criação de emprego está estruturalmente dependente da competitividade das empresas e do crescimento das economias. Um esforço sustentado da moderação salarial e financeira contribuirão à competitividade e ao crescimento, mas o emprego ele próprio deve ser objecto de uma política activa, articulada com o reforço das competências empresariais, com a criação de postos de trabalho em novas actividades, com a preparação e qualificação dos jovens para a vida activa e com o combate ao desemprego, incluindo o de longa duração.

Vale a pena salientar os eixos de desenvolvimento referidos acima:

- adequação do sistema educativo à capacidade criativa individual;
- reforço da formação contínua;
- aprofundamento comparativo do figurino institucional existente nos vários Estados-membros, envolvendo o ordenamento jurídico-laboral e a celeridade e eficiência do respectivo processo judicial;
- eliminação das barreiras à mobilidade regional, ocupacional e sectorial, sobretudo ao nível habitacional, sem prejuízo da defesa do desenvolvimento rural, sobretudo nas áreas especialmente desfavorecidas;
- reorganização do tempo de trabalho, com desenvolvimento da forma de trabalho parcial;
- redução dos custos do salário indirecto através de esquemas de protecção social que garantem os mesmos objectivos com menores custos;
- desenvolvimento de intervenções técnicas através de medidas e programas de aposta à inserção ou reinserção profissional dos desempregados actuais ou previsíveis.

A Comunidade tem uma dupla função nesta política. Função financeira, por um lado: as intervenções dos fundos estruturais neste domínio devem ser exemplares; devem ser avaliadas em permanência, para serem adaptadas, melhoradas e aperfeiçoadas. Função regulamentar, por outro: os regulamentos e directivas comunitárias nesta matéria devem ser evolutivos e adaptados à situação de cada país.

Para além da flexibilidade e qualificação dos mercados de trabalho, há que atender à dimensão social, que é o objectivo da Carta dos Direitos Sociais Fundamentais dos Trabalhadores. Não podendo esta ser dissociada da capacidade de resposta do tecido empresarial e da competitividade de agravamento da despesa pública, sob pena de se tornar geradora de desemprego, há que priorizar a realização dos direitos sociais que contribuam para a criação de emprego. No quadro actual de recessão económica e de incerteza institucional, torna-se necessário centrar as prioridades no emprego, na formação profissional, na segurança e saúde no local de trabalho.

Lisboa, 3 de Setembro de 1993



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

29 July 1993

Dear Jacques,

Following your presentation at the Copenhagen European Council about the problems of competitiveness and unemployment in the Community, it was agreed that Member States should send to you before 1 September their own proposals for elements to be included in the White Paper, which the Commission is now preparing for consideration at the December European Council.

I am accordingly now sending you the United Kingdom Government's analysis of the problems and our proposals for inclusion in the Commission White Paper. We will be making our contribution available to the press and other media. In addition, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Employment will be sending copies of the paper to their respective colleagues in other Member States.

I look forward to seeing our ideas reflected in the Commission White Paper. I should add that I regard it as important that the ECOFIN Council should, as agreed at Copenhagen, be able fully to examine the Commission's White Paper before the Brussels European Council.

*I hope your back is
recovering - I do sympathise!*

*Yours Ever,
John*

Monsieur Jacques Delors



HM Treasury



Growth, Competitiveness and Employment in the European Community

Paper by the United Kingdom

30 July 1993
HM Treasury

Department of Employment

Executive Summary

The Copenhagen European Council in June called on the Commission to suggest a strategy for growth, competitiveness and employment in the Community. The United Kingdom is contributing the ideas in this paper for the Commission and Member States to consider.

We focus on four central issues affecting unemployment.

(i) Labour market inflexibility

There has been an upward trend in EC unemployment from cycle to cycle since the late 1960s and an increasing proportion of long-term unemployed people. This is evidence of inflexibility in, and over-regulation of, labour markets. These factors deter employers from taking on new employees and damage job creation.

(ii) Competitiveness

There is also clear evidence that the Community has been losing competitiveness. Europe's overall economic performance has been declining both absolutely and in relation to our major competitors.

(iii) Social security and health care

There is no question of abandoning social protection. But in virtually all Member States the costs of social security and health care have been rising faster than the capacity of our economies to sustain them. Cost pressures are rising as people live longer and because of other demographic pressures.

In addition, the design of present social security arrangements can make it harder to reduce unemployment. Member States will need to consider changes in existing systems.

(iv) International trade

Open markets and free competition are essential for economies to grow and flourish.

The Community follows this logic internally, with the Single Market, and must do so in international trade too. Calls to protect EC markets against competition from newly industrialising countries with low labour costs are misguided. Protectionist measures would not address the fundamental problem of the Community's badly functioning labour markets; instead they would impose an extra cost on the competitive sectors of our economies, impeding growth and prolonging unemployment. Free trade will open up new opportunities for Community exporters and help to generate new types of economic activity. The Community should not retreat from the challenge. It has many strengths to draw on.

Action we propose

The Community's central aim must be the **creation of conditions** for enterprise, innovation and investment to generate wealth and employment.

A. International trade

It is essential to complete the Uruguay Round; and the Community should work determinedly for completion in 1993, in response to the call of the G7 in Tokyo.

B. Encouraging Enterprise

- Where steps are still needed to complete the Single Market they should be taken quickly. With most measures now in place, the Commission has a vital task of keeping Member States up to the mark in applying them firmly and consistently.
- Regulations impose costs on businesses. The Council and Commission can help to minimise them by assessing the costs of all new proposals, making new regulations simple, and pruning back old ones.
- Putting the principle of subsidiarity into effect is vital: reducing and simplifying existing EC measures, respecting the competence of individual Member States, and ensuring that the Community acts only where strictly necessary. The Commission has received practical suggestions and should act on these promptly.
- Member States should create conditions in which enterprise, R&D and innovation can thrive, for example by removing regulatory and other obstacles to the success of small and medium sized enterprises; and by allowing resources to flow freely within the Community.
- To ensure fair competition, the rules on subsidies and state aids should be strictly applied.

C. Unemployment and loss of Competitiveness

Specific changes are needed to make labour markets more flexible, and to help unemployed people to find ways back into work, while protecting those in genuine need.

- Each Member State should review its own labour market legislation. Community legislation affecting labour markets should be systematically audited to remove barriers both to employment and to flexible work patterns.
- Wage settlements should not harm competitiveness and pay arrangements should become more flexible.
- ~~Non~~-wage costs should be restrained.
- Member States should reform their social security systems, not only to contain the growth in costs to a sustainable level but to give people greater incentives to work and save.
- The quality and availability of education and training for those of working age should be improved.

PAPER BY THE UNITED KINGDOM

1. At its meeting in Copenhagen, the European Council expressed concern about the present unemployment situation in the Community, in which more and more people are in danger of becoming permanently detached from the labour market. The Commission was invited to present a White Paper, which the European Council would consider in December 1993, on a medium-term strategy for growth, competitiveness and employment. Member States were asked to submit to the Commission, before 1 September, proposals for elements that this strategy might include. The G7 Summit in Tokyo also identified unemployment and lack of growth as key problems.

2. This paper sets out the UK's observations on the problems and suggests elements that the Commission should include in its White Paper. It takes account of the suggestions that the President of the Commission made at Copenhagen.

3. The Community's and Member States' response to the problems of unemployment and lack of growth should:

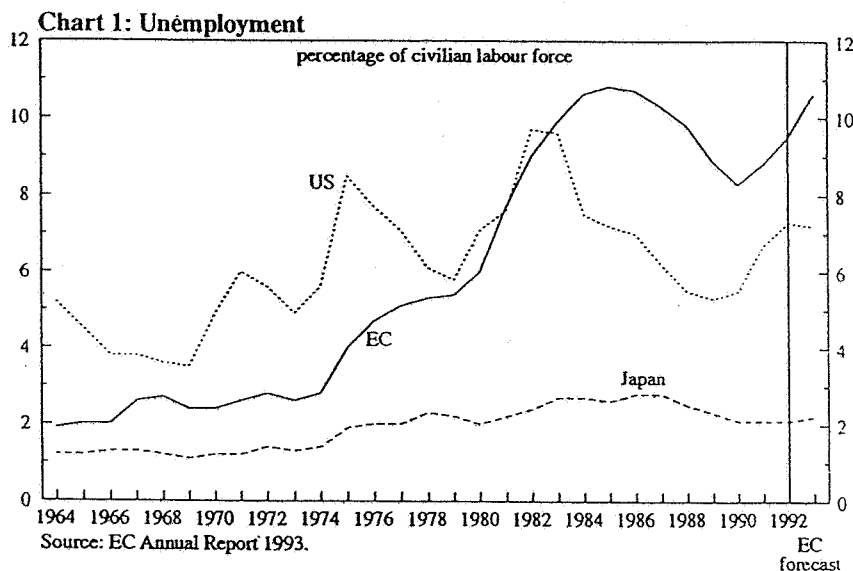
- start from a realistic diagnosis of the Community's declining competitiveness and of the structural causes of unemployment;
- accept that the world does not owe us a living. The Treaty objectives of "raising the standard of living and quality of life" and of a "high level of employment and of social protection" have to be earned; they are aspirations, not entitlements;
- create conditions in which enterprise and innovation can thrive, for example by removing regulatory and other obstacles to the success of small and medium-sized enterprises; by maintaining a clear and firm competition policy; by allowing resources to flow freely within the Community; and by ensuring that the Single Market works effectively;
- respect the Community's international obligations, especially its commitment at the Tokyo Summit to complete the Uruguay Round of the GATT negotiations by 15 December 1993;
- respect the diversity of Member States' economies, labour market traditions and systems of social protection; and
- respect the division of competence between the Community and Member States and the principle of subsidiarity.

Unemployment: The structural problem

4. The UK shares the concerns expressed at Copenhagen about unemployment in the Community. Economically, unemployment is a major waste of resources. On a human level, it causes distress to the 17 million unemployed people in the Community and their families. Unemployment denies them the chance to contribute their skills and energy and to receive

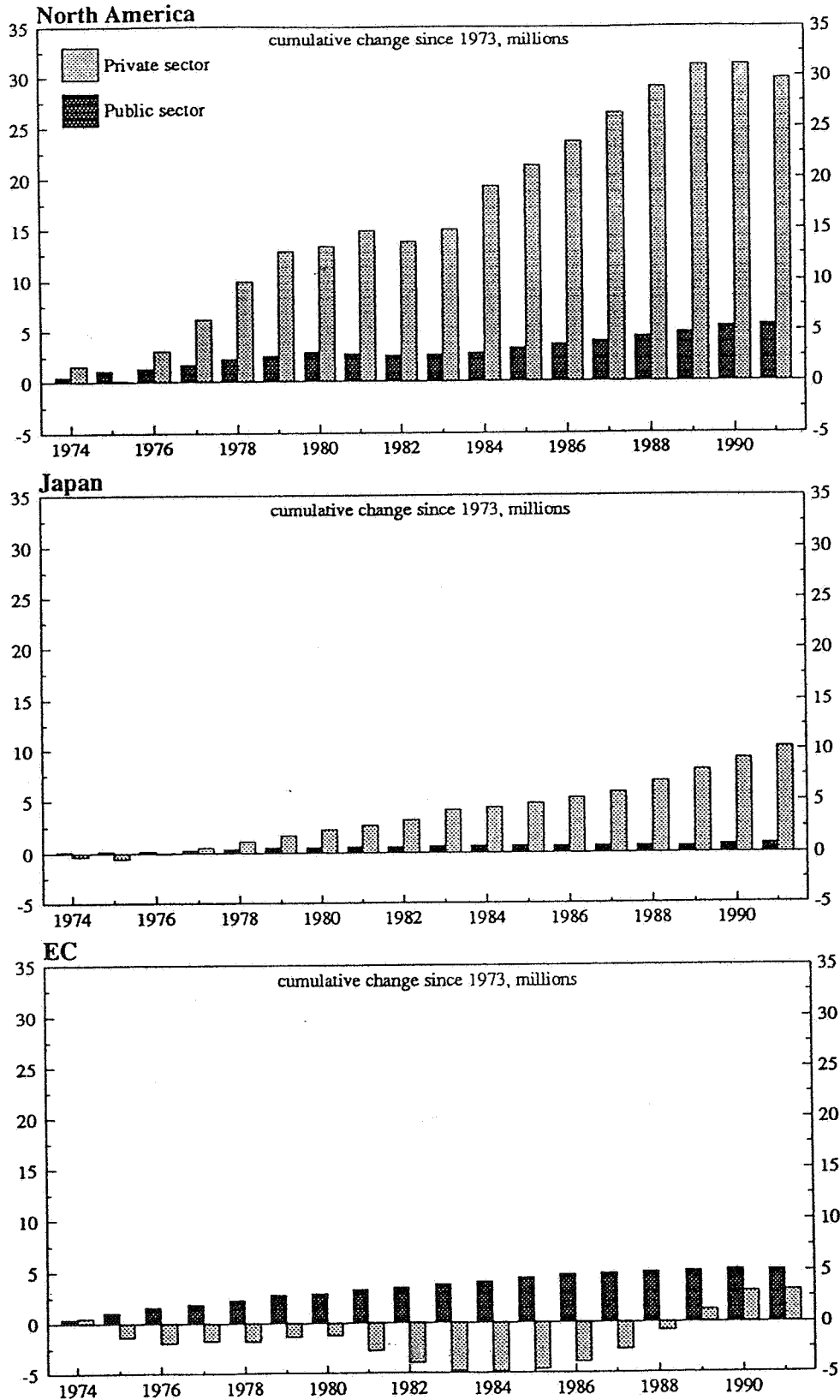
in return the rewards of being in work. It can also damage their motivation and self-esteem and, increasingly as unemployment lengthens, make them doubt their ability to secure a job.

5. EC unemployment rose from under 2½% in the second half of the 1960s to 4% in the 1970s and nearly 10% on average in the 1980s (chart 1). Not enough new jobs have been created in the wealth-creating private sectors of our economies to match the rising trend in the labour force; employment growth in the 1980s in several Member States took place mainly in the public sector (chart 2). Unemployment has been especially severe among unskilled workers, young people (charts 3a & b) and women - all signs that the labour market is not working properly. The high and growing level of long-term unemployment is also alarming: over 45% of total unemployment in 1991, compared with 18% in Japan and only 6% in the USA (charts 4a and b).

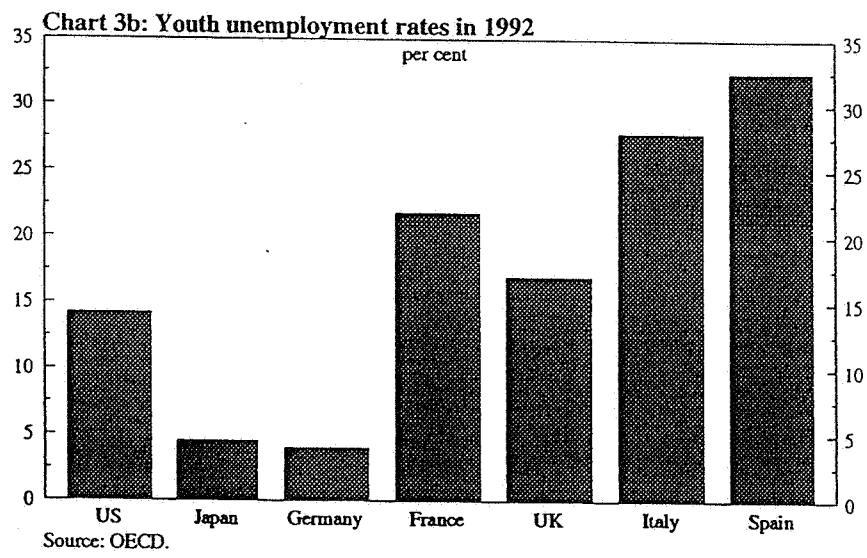
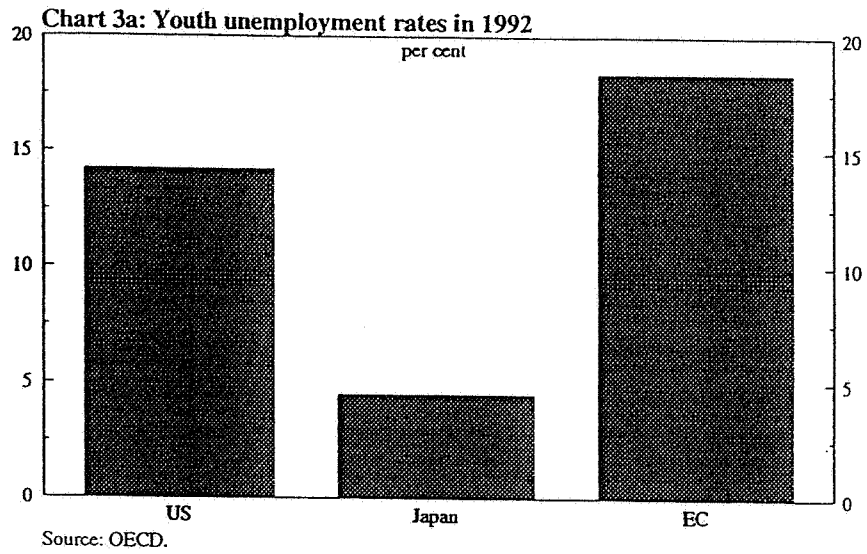


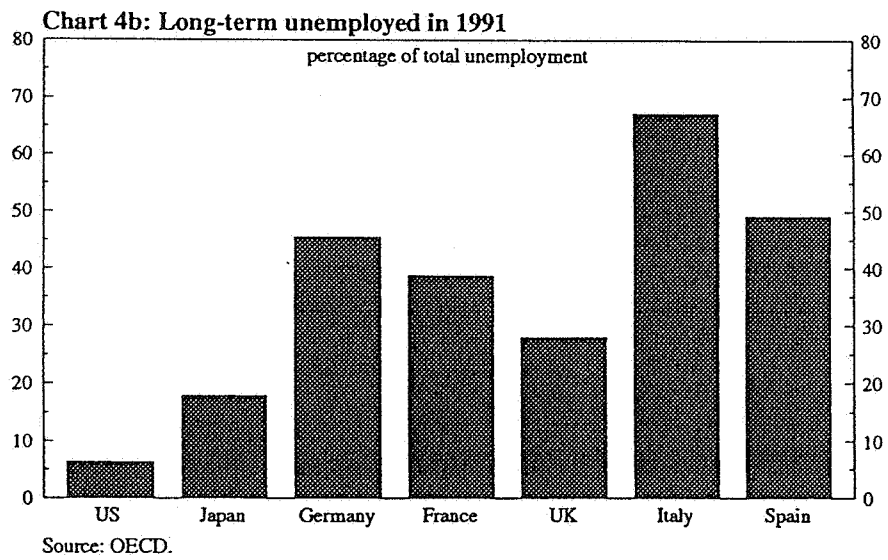
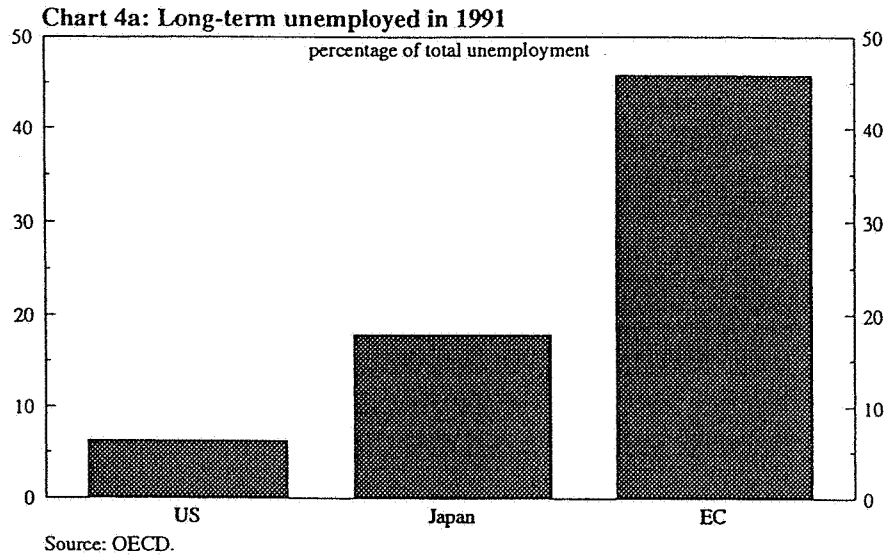
6. As chart 1 shows, in each economic cycle since the second half of the 1960s, the underlying level of unemployment has increased. The OECD's recent interim report on employment and unemployment noted that "the largest trend rise in unemployment has occurred in the European Community" and that structural problems in EC labour markets are particularly acute. European and world recession have made unemployment much worse, but the effects of the recession are superimposed on a long-term structural problem. In the UK, while unemployment has now been falling for five months, it remains too high. A large element of UK unemployment is structural, as it is in nearly all other Member States.

Chart 2: Public and private sector employment creation



Source: OECD.





Causes of Structural Unemployment

(i) Labour Market Inflexibility

7. The Tokyo G7 Summit concluded that "reducing unemployment ... requires structural reforms to improve the efficiency of markets, particularly labour markets". The OECD too has urged labour market flexibility, saying that "Flexible and efficient labour markets are central to achieving sustained non-inflationary growth." (Employment Outlook, July 1992). The EC Economic Policy Committee has recently reached the same conclusion.

8. There is no single cause of the current high unemployment in Europe. However, inflexible, over-regulated labour markets and inappropriate employment incentives are certainly major contributory factors. They:

- deter employers from taking on new employees, even when economies are growing;
- prevent employers and employees from agreeing the flexible work patterns that they both want;
- lead to rigidity in real wages, which prevents the economy from adjusting to changing patterns of demand, external shocks and fluctuations in the economic cycle, and thereby drive unemployment up; and
- make the Community labour market slower to adjust to changing economic circumstances than, for example, that in the USA. In the event of economic and monetary union, labour market flexibility would become even more important.

9. These failures in the operation of the labour market would cause substantial unemployment even if Europe were a completely closed economy. But it is not. The Community's exports to third countries make up 7% of its GNP. The level of unemployment in the EC therefore also depends on its external competitiveness. Europe's overall economic performance has been declining both absolutely and in relation to our major competitors. Labour costs in Europe are simply too high: this depresses profits and investment (charts 5 and 6) and reduces demand for labour relative to other inputs. EC labour costs rose by 4% a year during the 1980s, compared with 0-1% in Japan and the USA (chart 7). EC wage costs and non-wage costs are higher than in Japan and the USA (chart 8).

(ii) Social Security and Health Care

10. The Treaty commits the Community to seeking a high level of social protection. However, public social security and health care expenditure as a proportion of GDP is nearly twice as high in the EC as in Japan and over 60% more than in the USA, with social security accounting for most of this difference. This explains in part why taxation is higher in the EC than in Japan or the USA. Moreover, expenditure on social security and health care in the EC has in recent years grown faster than our GDP and, for demographic reasons alone, the burden will increase in the future. Much of this burden, under present arrangements, falls on employers and employees in the form of social security contributions; and affects unemployment and economic performance directly or indirectly.

Chart 5: Rates of return on capital in the business sector

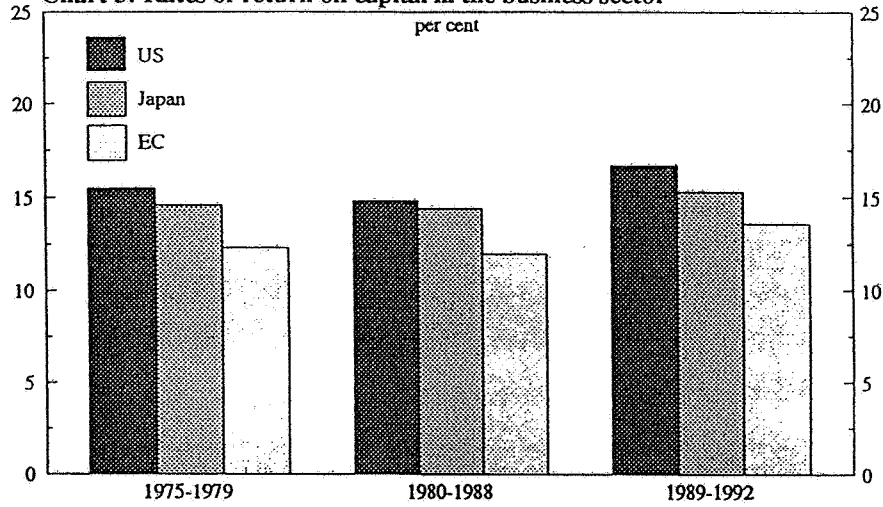
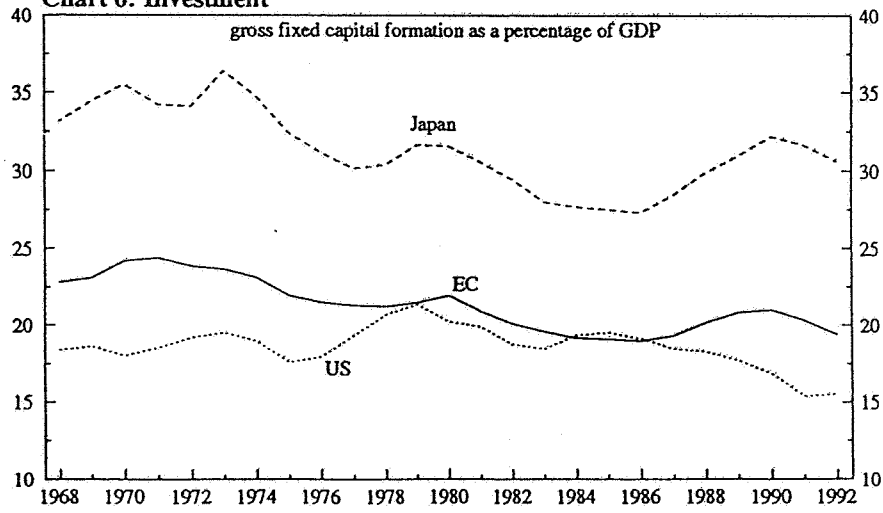
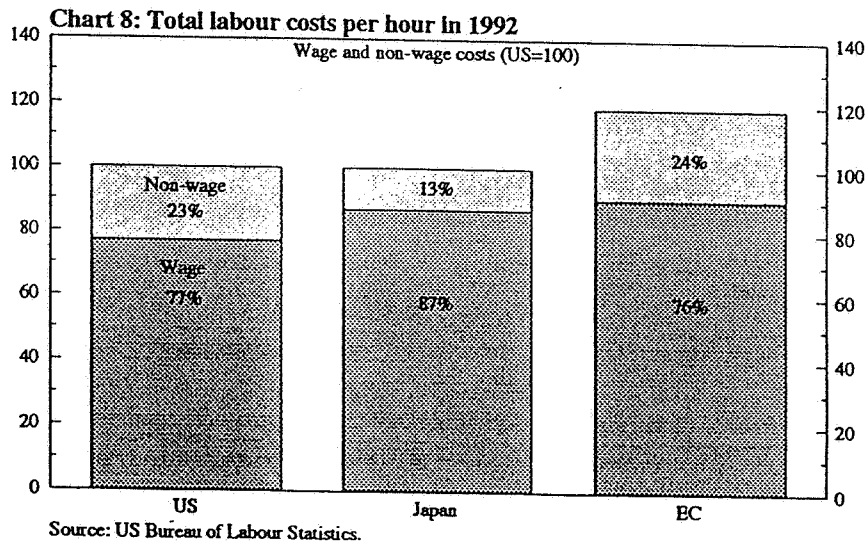
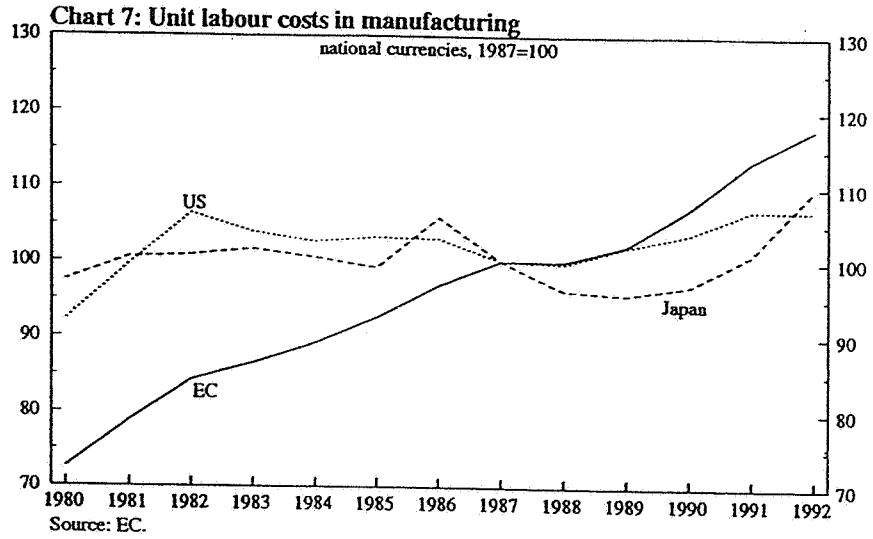


Chart 6: Investment





11. There is no question of abandoning social protection. However, all Member States will have to contain the level of social expenditure, while protecting those in genuine need, now and in the future. Most Member States are starting to adjust their social security systems to meet this challenge.

12. As well as the problem of rising cost, the structure of systems of social security can make it harder to reduce unemployment. Different solutions will be appropriate in different Member States. The Community can help by encouraging open discussion and exchanges of information on how best to reform social security systems in ways that:

- target help effectively on those who need it;
- give people incentives to work and save;
- encourage (or do not discourage) employment; and
- do minimum damage to competitiveness.

The Community must avoid making the problem worse by harmful regulation or by seeking to improve social protection further in ways that increase costs.

The Impact of International Trade

13. Since 1945 the liberalisation of international trade has been a major spur to economic growth. It has allowed individual countries to benefit from specialisation and encouraged the rapid dissemination of new products and processes. The Community's own economic success was from the start based on the dismantling of tariffs and quotas; and the Single Market programme assumed, correctly, that removing the remaining barriers to trade in goods and services would increase competitiveness and growth. The same logic applies at the international level. Article 3a of the Treaty of Rome, as amended at Maastricht, recognises this fact: it requires the Community to conduct its economic policy in accordance with the principle of an open market economy, with free competition.

14. The UK therefore strongly endorses the call from the President of the Commission at Copenhagen and from the G7 Summit for a successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round negotiations by the end of 1993. This is essential for restoring confidence to economic operators and stimulating investment and growth. Failure to agree would jeopardise the entire post-war liberal trading order, provoking a descent, at first gradual, then rapid, into the competitive protectionism of the 1930s. This would prolong the recession and undermine political stability, not least in the newly-emerging democracies of the former Soviet bloc.

15. Fears have been expressed that opening European markets further will increase unemployment, because Europe cannot compete with manufactured and other imports from low-wage economies, especially as productivity levels in those economies rise with their rapid adoption of high technology. This has led to calls to maintain protection for "sensitive" sectors. Clearly, lowering trade barriers may call for painful adjustment, which may add to unemployment in the short term. But the fear that Europe will somehow be unable to compete across the board and that a permanent long-term increase in unemployment is therefore inevitable rests on two false assumptions:

- (i) that there is only a single "lump" of work for competing economies to do. This is clearly false. As developing and newly industrialising countries

continue to expand in traditional sectors of industrial production, EC and other advanced economies will increasingly specialise in producing and exporting high-value-added tradeable goods and services; and

- (ii) that, because differences in levels of productivity between economies are falling, Europe can no longer benefit from international trade. This too is false. Increased prosperity from international trade flows from differences in comparative advantage in the production of different goods and services, not from absolute differences in productivity levels.

16. It is both inevitable and desirable that many developing countries and the newly industrialising countries are catching up fast with the Western economies: this has long been the objective of our development policies. We stand to benefit from the lower costs of products that we import from them and from increasingly buoyant export markets for our own products. To maintain or even increase protection against imports would deny us those benefits, with dire consequences for the European economy and for employment. It would be an admission of economic weakness and would be self-defeating. Protectionist measures - whether overt or hidden under a label of "Community preference" - would not address the fundamental problem of the Community's badly functioning labour market, which, as noted in paragraph 9 above, is separate from the issue of the Community's external competitiveness. Such measures would distort the economic signals needed for adjustment; impose an extra cost on the competitive sectors of our economies, thus impeding growth and prolonging unemployment; give the EC's trading partners an excuse not to open their markets to EC exports; and deny developing countries access to the ladder of wealth creation, which is the only sure long-term way for them to improve their social and employment conditions.

17. For these reasons, the UK rejects the notion that there should be any GATT provisions to control imports of goods from economies with low labour costs, including non-wage costs. It would be both unrealistic and contrary to the EC's interests to try to impose on newly industrialising countries levels of social expenditure and social protection that we have achieved only after more than two centuries of industrialisation. Our trading partners would see such provisions merely as an excuse to avoid liberalisation commitments and to "pick off" particular competitors. The lesson for EC firms would be clear: they need not adjust to competitive pressures, because the Community was forcing its own high costs on to others.

18. Overall, the challenge for the EC is to make our economies flexible enough to adapt rapidly to new patterns of trade and production. If we fail, fears about the short-term costs of adjustment may cause us to miss the long-term benefits of trade and condemn us to economic stagnation.

The UK's Proposals

19. The Community should work to create conditions that build on Europe's strengths by encouraging wealth creation, enterprise, innovation and investment by industry. We must make European industry more competitive, and the EC a more attractive place for new investment.

- (a) The Wider Context

20. This means pursuing low inflation; substantial and progressive falls in budget

deficits, which are currently too high in nearly all Member States; and a wide range of structural reforms to make the supply side of our economies work better. This will encourage sustained economic growth, reduce unemployment and make it possible for Member States to meet the convergence criteria in the Maastricht Treaty.

21. In international trade policy, it means pursuing open markets and a liberal international trading regime outside Europe; and seeking an early and successful conclusion to the Uruguay GATT Round, in order to restore confidence among economic operators and open up markets for our exporters.

(b) Encouraging Enterprise

22. The Single Market is designed to stimulate trade, enterprise and wealth creation within the Community. Those Single Market measures already in place must be implemented and enforced consistently throughout the Community. The Commission has a key role here. The Community should also remove as soon as possible the remaining barriers to the Single Market.

23. All regulations impose a cost on business. We must reduce the burden of existing legislation. The Commission should follow up its report to the European Council on the principle of subsidiarity with early proposals for lightening the burden of Community rules. New regulations at Community level should be introduced only where they are strictly necessary; should be easily understandable; and should minimise the costs of compliance for business. The Commission should supply a clear statement of compliance costs and a cost-benefit analysis, based on a rigorously formulated methodology, with all new proposals that are likely to have a substantial impact on business. The Commission should also conduct an audit of the effect of existing regulations.

24. Research and development are vital for future wealth creation. It is tempting - but wrong - to conclude that we should go on increasing public spending on R&D. The Commission's report "Research after Maastricht" rightly says that "Countries where private companies finance a large proportion of R&D are by definition more likely to produce results which are more directly related to industrial activities and more readily usable by industry". We should therefore let the private sector take the lead, and focus Community action on pre-competitive research, within the limit of the financial perspectives agreed at Edinburgh.

25. We must encourage innovation if the Community is to hold its own in an increasingly competitive world. Innovation comes from businesses both large and small, but particular efforts are needed to encourage - or offset disadvantages otherwise faced by - small and medium-sized enterprises.

26. Firm control of subsidies and state aids to business is essential to avoid distortions in the Single Market and to free resources from unproductive uses. The Commission should ensure that Member States abide strictly by the rules in this area.

27. The Edinburgh and Copenhagen European Councils agreed substantial sums for spending on trans-European networks and infrastructure. The financial conditions do not exist for any increases in spending at Community level over and above those sums. We must therefore get the best value for money from the available resources. We must also forge a close partnership between governments and the private sector, in order to seek market-driven solutions, which are likely to be most effective, wherever possible.

28. Annex A makes more detailed proposals on how to encourage enterprise in some of the above areas.

(c) Unemployment and Loss of Competitiveness

29. Unemployment should be attacked from two sides. All Member States should seek to:

- reduce the high costs of employment and remove the regulatory barriers, which prevent unemployed people from securing work; and
- improve the skills and productivity of the labour force.

It is sometimes argued that these two policies are contradictory; that aiming to reduce the costs of employment is incompatible with creating a high-technology, high-productivity economy. There is no such contradiction. On the contrary, if the costs of employment are too high, profits are reduced and investment in both capital goods and human skills is held back.

30. We need a wide range of measures to reduce the cost barriers to increased employment and to avoid the permanent exclusion of the unemployed from the labour market. Member States should take steps to make their labour markets more flexible. They might, for example, promote flexible patterns of wages and working hours; continue to encourage employers to ensure that the level of wage settlements does not harm competitiveness; restrain non-wage costs; and review the impact of social security systems on incentives to work and on employers' willingness to take on labour. For many unemployed people the chance to return to work is more important than the nature of the work or its terms and conditions. Temporary or part-time jobs can be a route back into work, enabling people to move into more traditional full-time jobs later if they wish. We must therefore not impede the growth of such work by, for example, attaching unnecessary regulations or conditions to it. Measures to help and encourage unemployed people, especially long-term unemployed people, to stay in touch with the labour market can promote competition; help contain wage pressures; and provide hope and opportunity for those concerned.

31. Action by the Commission and the Community to reduce the burden of regulation on business will be especially important in the case of the labour market. The Commission should focus on labour market regulations that discourage employment, hamper flexible working arrangements and discourage economic adjustment. In particular, it should:

- systematically estimate the long-term impact of any proposed new regulation on business, jobs and the wider labour market, and on competitiveness. Some proposals currently under consideration - such as the Atypical Work Directive and the Young Persons Directive - would have an unacceptable impact; and
- conduct an audit of existing regulations, to assess what their actual impact has been.

This analysis should take account of the views of business and other outside experts.

32. Improving the skills and productivity of the labour force depends on various factors, including the quality of education and training for both the unemployed and those in work. Member States could devise national strategies to improve training. Companies should be

encouraged to integrate their training decisions with their business goals. We should seek to ensure that national training qualifications are more widely accepted across the Community. Raising educational standards is a matter for Member States, with support from the Community. The UK has taken major steps to improve its education system in recent years, notably by introducing a national curriculum in schools and by a rapid expansion in the number of students benefiting from further and higher education.

33. **Annexes B and C** make more specific proposals on, respectively, labour market efficiency and social protection.

ENCOURAGING ENTERPRISE

Implementation of the Single Market

1. The Community must maintain and reinforce a liberal Single Market. Despite the successful completion of the original White Paper programme, some work remains to be done. For example, liberalising the energy and telecommunications sectors will greatly reduce the costs to business of energy and communication. Some Community measures need underpinning, for instance by faster progress in producing European standards. Others will need revision to reflect changes in technology and market conditions. Increasingly, however, the success of the Single Market will depend on whether agreed measures are being effectively implemented and enforced consistently throughout the Community. An open and competitive economy within the Community - combined with a strong competition policy and firm control of state aid, to avoid short-term distortions in the market - is essential if we are to meet the competitive pressures of the global market place.

Burdens on business

2. Legislation - whether it relates to labour markets, social protection, the environment, health and safety or other areas - can damage the competitiveness of European business. The Commission and Member States should co-operate closely, in consultation with industry, to ensure that legislative objectives are achieved in the most cost-effective way. Member States should exchange information on steps that they take to reduce burdens on business. The UK, for example, is reviewing urgently the burden of the 3,500 regulations that currently affect business.

Infrastructure and networks

3. The Edinburgh and Copenhagen European Councils noted the need to develop the Community's infrastructure and networks. The Copenhagen Council agreed that full use should be made of the provisions in the Maastricht Treaty on Trans-European networks, in order to promote economic and industrial growth, cohesion and the effective functioning of the internal market and to encourage European industry to make full use of modern information technology. Such an approach will enable industry to do business efficiently across the Community and with third countries. Community funding will be needed in some cases, within the financial ceilings agreed unanimously at Edinburgh. It will be essential to appraise and evaluate projects fully, in order to ensure that Community money is spent cost-effectively. The private sector should be involved wherever possible in funding infrastructure projects. Market-driven solutions are also likely to be the most cost-effective and to meet the needs of Community industry most clearly. Further liberalisation of the energy and telecommunications sectors will encourage the most competitive players into the market and the provision of new services and networks.

R&D

4. R&D is a key factor in innovation, especially in sectors of rapid scientific and technological development. Although EC R&D spending is still a small part of total spending on R&D within the Community, it has risen sharply in recent years. There is no case for any further increase. In negotiating the Fourth Framework Programme, the Community's aim must be to assist wealth creation by ensuring the best value for money from whatever budget it agrees within the Edinburgh parameters. It should therefore:

- take full account of users' needs;
- focus on pre-competitive research in key technologies that have widespread application, where industry will be able to exploit the results worldwide;
- give greater priority to the effective dissemination of the technologies developed;
- manage programmes efficiently and effectively and evaluate them properly both whilst they are in progress, and retrospectively;
- ensure that European product standards are compatible with world standards and responsive to the needs of the world market.

MAKING THE LABOUR MARKET MORE EFFICIENT

1. The current high level of unemployment in the Community, the fact that since the 1960s the average level of unemployment has risen steeply from one cycle to the next, and the increasing proportion of long-term unemployed people all provide strong evidence that European labour markets are not functioning efficiently.

An efficient labour market

2. An efficient labour market increases competitiveness in product markets, promotes economic growth and generates higher employment. The OECD defines an efficient labour market as one that "ensures that labour is continuously and swiftly directed to its most productive and rewarding use". It ensures that all who want work can find it at a wage consistent with market circumstances. It requires that tax and benefit systems and regulation of business do not distort responses to signals given by wage and vacancy levels. In short, an efficient labour market:

- encourages the creation of jobs and new businesses and does not inhibit it through the costs (including non-wage costs) of employing people;
- helps people compete for jobs by giving them suitable information and help, and by providing a benefit system that encourages unemployed people actively to seek work;
- provides incentives to develop skills and tailors training to the needs of local labour markets;
- allows wages to respond flexibly to labour market circumstances, with employers and employees being free to negotiate wages appropriate to their circumstances.

The role of Member States and the Community

3. It is primarily for Member States to establish the right framework in which labour markets can operate. But the Community has a role in complementing and supporting action by Member States. It should co-ordinate exchanges of experience and views on how to improve labour market flexibility; stimulate new thinking and innovation; conduct research into particular issues, such as the relationship between benefits and unemployment; encourage flexible working arrangements, so that people can adopt the working patterns that they need; and encourage a more flexible approach to the contractual relationship between employer and employee, where unnecessary restrictions can limit labour market efficiency. Above all, the Community must avoid imposing labour market regulations that increase costs, lock Member States and employers unnecessarily into existing rigidities or make it harder to create new jobs.

Labour market regulation

4. Ill-considered or excessively rigid regulation can have undesirable consequences that inhibit job creation and increase unemployment. Measures that affect significantly non-wage costs and employers' room for manoeuvre can discourage employers from taking on new recruits, thus helping those in work only at the expense of the unemployed. Such measures can impede in particular the establishment and growth of small and medium-sized enterprises, which have played a valuable role in creating new jobs in recent years. The UK acknowledges Member States' varied approaches to labour market regulation, but believes that the Community has in the past paid too little attention to the balance between protecting the employed and protecting the unemployed, and the wider impact on jobs.

5. Much EC legislation has imposed or will impose costs on employers - sometimes high costs. For example the Directive on Working Time will, if implemented, not only impose major initial costs on many employers by forcing changes in working practices, but will reduce employers' flexibility to manage production and services to meet ever changing demands in the world market place. Similarly, European employers' organisations argue that imposing a rigid model of employee involvement under a European Works Councils Directive would delay vital business decisions and damage existing effective systems of employee involvement.

Assessing Costs and Benefits

6. The Community must therefore, especially in the current difficult economic circumstances, look afresh both at measures currently under consideration and at those adopted in the past. It should examine whether current EC social legislation has achieved its objectives; how it has affected employers' costs and EC competitiveness; and, crucially, what its impact has been on employment and job creation in Member States, regardless of what was expected when it was first proposed. A special task force might be established, involving the Commission services, representatives from industry with practical experience, and other outside experts, to assess in consultation with employers and employees how far particular measures have affected the efficiency of the labour market and the competitiveness of EC industry.

7. The Commission should also take full account of the effect of new legislation on growth, competitiveness and employment before submitting new proposals. It should start from the existing system of fiches d'impact (impact assessments). The UK welcomes the efforts that the Commission has already made to target this system on proposals likely to impose the highest costs on business. The Commission and Member States should discuss further the methodology underlying the fiches. Business should be involved at an early stage in assessing the likely compliance costs. The Commission should publish the fiches at the same time as it adopts its proposals. Building on these fiches, the Commission should also introduce a system of cost-benefit analysis for those proposals likely to have the greatest impact on business - especially environmental and social measures with high horizontal costs. When working groups and the Council discuss proposals such as the Young Persons Directive and the Atypical Work Directive, Member States will then be able to assess their merits, based on a thorough and objective analysis of the costs.

Active labour market measures

8. Active measures encourage - and in some cases require - unemployed people to retain contact with the labour market and become better able to compete for jobs. Such measures need not be expensive; and often they are better value for money - and give people more hope - than other employment-related policies. Employment services and similar agencies have a key role. By promoting the active participation of unemployed people - especially the long-term unemployed - in the labour market, they can promote competition in the labour market and thereby help to contain wage pressures.

9. Active labour market measures might typically include:

- requiring all who receive unemployment benefits to be available for work and to seek work actively;
- reviewing regularly with unemployed people what action they are taking to try and find work;
- offering a wide range of opportunities to help unemployed people to review the options open to them, to improve their job search activities and to increase their skills through training.

Member States should review regularly how they help unemployed people to obtain work and whether the eligibility conditions for unemployment benefits reflect local labour market needs.

A skilled and committed workforce

10. If Europe is to become more competitive and reduce unemployment, companies must take full advantage of the existing and potential abilities of their workforce. More and more companies now realise that they must find ways of releasing the energies and commitment of their employees - for example, by establishing systematic two-way communication, consultation and problem-solving groups and by delegating decision-making to the lowest practicable level of authority. Effective employee involvement, agreed voluntarily on the basis of mutual trust and respect, can enhance business success and job satisfaction for employees.

11. Member States should work to provide a framework for business to undertake this task cost-effectively. Each Member State needs mechanisms that enable industry and government to co-operate, in order that government can take full account of employers' needs and local circumstances in allocating taxpayers' resources for training.

12. Employers are primarily responsible for training their employees. The Community should support as necessary the efforts of Member States to improve employers' performance in the training field, encourage individual initiative and improve standards in education.

- a) National training performance. Member States could publish national strategies to improve training; and set targets for performance and what responsibilities government, employers and individuals have for achieving those targets.
- b) Company training performance. The most successful European firms have

built understanding of the benefits of training into their company culture, by integrating training decisions with business goals. The Community might encourage a new business-led standard for best practice in linking the training and development of a firm's employees to its business requirements. There might also be a Community training award for firms with effective and coherent training programmes designed to improve their competitiveness.

- c) Individual skills standards. Work already under way in the Community could be the basis for a more coherent approach to quality in individual training and development. We might achieve the wider acceptance of national qualifications across the Community in various ways, including the development of an "individual portfolio" setting out for prospective employers one's qualifications and experience.
- d) Education. Member States are committed to raising standards of education, on the basis of Member States' responsibility for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and of Article 126 of the Maastricht Treaty.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

1. Social spending has a major impact on public finances and on employers' costs. It influences:

- the size of the active labour force;
- the level of employment;
- the effort that people put into their work;
- the level of savings and investment;
- the burden of tax and public borrowing;
- the scope for public spending on other programmes; and
- attitudes towards risk and enterprise.

2. The development of effective systems of social protection has been a major European achievement. There can be no question of abandoning them. But Member States increasingly recognise that excessive social spending can damage both employment and competitiveness. We must control the effects and cost of social protection if we are to fulfil our aim of protecting those in genuine need. The Council has in the past adopted some measures of social protection without enough regard to the consequences for employment. Our systems need to do more to encourage employment, by giving people incentives to work and to save, and enabling business to compete, while ensuring that those who need help can get it.

The burden of social spending

3. The costs of public social protection - social security, social assistance and health care - in the EC are already very high compared with those of our main competitors. They were equivalent to 23% of GDP in the EC in 1988, compared with 14% in the USA and 12% in Japan. (The health element of these costs was in each case some 5-6% of GDP.) These costs exclude private provision, which varies considerably between countries.

4. Demographic and social changes are pushing up social security spending. Between 1990 and 2020, the proportion of people over 65 in the EC is likely to increase by 25-40%. This would increase social expenditure's share of GDP by 3% in most EC countries. The cost of social protection will be shared among a smaller number of people. Chart 9 shows the decrease over time in the number of people in the EC aged 15-64, relative to the number of people over 65. Chart 10 shows the likely increase for the average person in employment in the cost of paying for publicly provided social protection. Increases in the number of sick and disabled people claiming benefit and - in some Member States - of lone parents are adding to this effect.

Chart 9: The support ratio for the EC

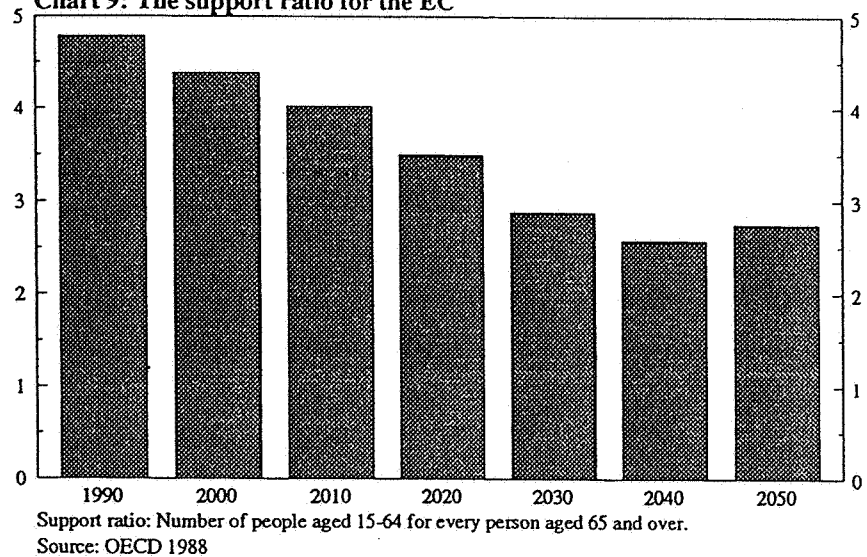
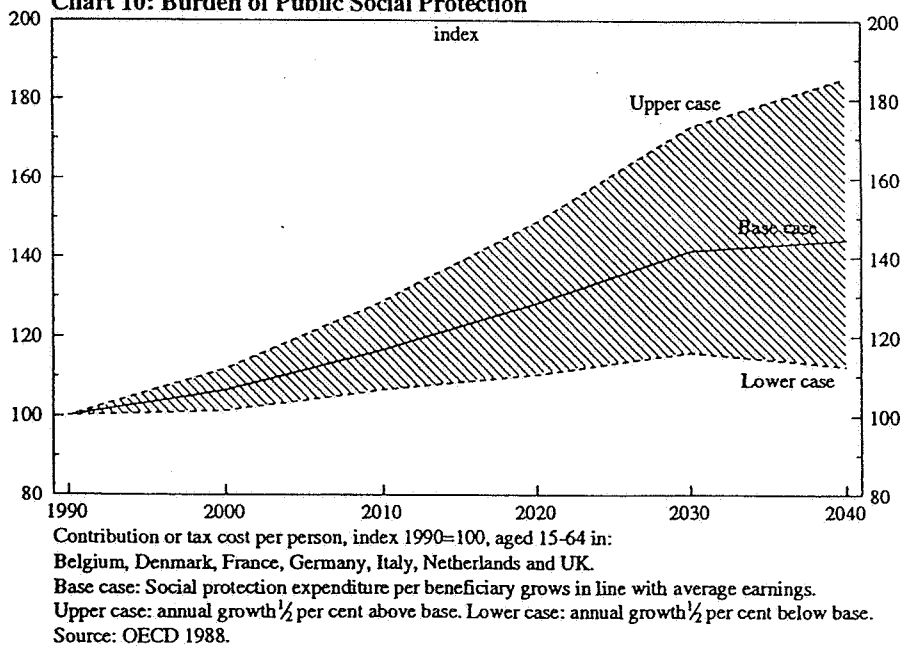


Chart 10: Burden of Public Social Protection



Action for Member States and the Community role

5. Many Member States have already taken steps to reduce the burden of social spending. Germany's savings programme will cut some unemployment benefits by 3%. France plans to curb spending on pensions and health. Italy is introducing healthcare charges for patients, streamlining health service management structures and making cost-saving changes to pension provision.

6. The UK made wide-ranging reforms of social security in the late 1980s, including a reduction in the long-term growth in the value of the state pension and allowing people to opt out of part of the State pension scheme in favour of private provision. We are now conducting another long-term review of social security expenditure. The UK has also reformed the structure of the National Health Service, to make it more efficient and effective. This has led to both record levels of service and cumulative efficiency gains since 1979 of nearly 25%. The organisation, scope and structure of statutory health schemes vary widely between Member States, which alone decide how much health care to provide under these schemes and what form it should take.

7. The ratio of the number of people aged 15-64 to the number aged 65 or more will fall more in some Member States than in others; the speed of the fall will also vary. In addition, pension provision varies across the EC. The UK therefore believes that formulation of policies on pensions and pension age must be for Member States. For example, Member States should decide for themselves how best to equalise state pension age, and how best to implement the judgment of the ECJ in the Barber case, in the light of the subsequent cases clarifying that judgment.

8. The system of unemployment benefits is essentially a matter for Member States. The UK believes that an ideal system should be:

- forward-looking, in encouraging people to find work and offering the right financial incentives to them to do so, while avoiding any disincentives, for example from an excessive ratio of out-of-work income to income in work;
- clear, tightly managed and fair, so that beneficiaries know what is expected of them and the penalties for abuse;
- flexible, so that it can respond to different labour market circumstances and working patterns.

9. Some Member States have also addressed the provision of work incentives. The UK has introduced in-work benefits for the low paid, while ensuring that unemployment benefits are available only to those who actively seek work.

10. For its part, **the Community** should ensure that social security arrangements do not hamper the free movement of workers; this is important if the labour market is to be flexible and if the Single Market is to operate effectively. Measures necessary to maintain this approach include the continued co-ordination of social security for migrant workers and, taking account of the diversity of systems in Member States, measures to protect the occupational pension rights of migrant workers. The UK welcomes the proposed Pension Fund Directive, which would enable pension funds' assets to be managed more efficiently across the EC, and hopes for its speedy adoption.

11. The Community can make other valuable contributions. The Commission should:

- analyse further the relationship between social protection, unemployment and competitiveness. This could inform the initiatives that Member States take; and
- promote exchanges of information between Member States on measures to contain costs, enhance employment incentives and promote competition.

Communautés européennes — Commission

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