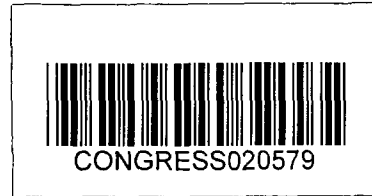


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THIRD SESSION

(Strasbourg, 2-4 July 1996)

REPORT

on

**Unemployment/employment, new activities and occupations -
issues and prospects for the local dimension**

(Florence, 9-10 May 1996)

Rapporteur: Ms Patrizia DINI (Italy)

In 1994 our Congress set up a working group on "Unemployment/employment: New Activities and Professions". This Group was asked to study the existing situation and, if possible, to explore new means of avoiding the traditional unemployment/employment dilemma and to propose forms of action.

The Group's members were MM Bauer (later replaced by Ms Scholle), Edlinger, Kyne and Morgan, Ms Tolonen and Mr Adamczyk for the Chamber of Local Authorities, and MM Grimm, Mihaesi and Suaud and myself for the Chamber of Regions.

At its first meeting (Florence, 19 December 1994) the Group appointed me as Chair and asked me to be its rapporteur. It then concentrated on defining a suitable approach to the unemployment problem. It considered the links between the different aspects of the economic transformation which all European countries are currently undergoing: innovation, new technologies and training for the future, especially of young people. In particular, the Group placed special emphasis on the concept of "innovation" and how the public authorities and society at large react to it. It took the view that an international conference should be organised to enable a number of European regions and cities to share their experience and compare the policies they had adopted.

At its second meeting (Paris, 27 October 1995) the Group accepted an offer from the Region of Tuscany, and the Regional Council in particular, to host an international conference in Florence, for which it adopted a preliminary draft programme.

After several changes of date, the conference was finally held in Florence on 9 and 10 May 1996.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all my fellow members of the Working Group and the Congress who gave me their support and assistance throughout the preparatory work and, above all, took an active part in the conference as rapporteurs. My thanks of course also go to all the other rapporteurs and speakers, who helped make the conference a very interesting, lively event.

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After the Mayor of Florence, Mr Mario Primicerio, had welcomed the participants and Mr Paolo Fontanelli, who is in charge of employment for the Tuscany region, had addressed the conference, the CLRAE's Vice-President, Ms Olga Bennett, made an opening speech giving a good definition of the framework for the conference's proceedings, which drew an attentive audience of about 120 participants.

Ms Bennett pointed out the depth of the current Europe-wide crisis affecting the status of work and workers throughout the range of human occupations; this had led to high unemployment in most of the countries of Greater Europe. Work on offer in the form of traditional jobs seemed to be becoming increasingly scarce, and there was a danger that ever-larger population groups - young people, women, unskilled workers, etc. - would be doomed to inactivity.

Politicians and the population at large were beginning to show serious concern about this trend, as were international institutions¹.

Although technical explanations for the phenomenon were constantly being improved upon, the various solutions envisaged were not always consistent.

Nevertheless, in most countries wealth was growing slowly but steadily. We were thus faced with a fundamental contradiction, which some thought could be solved through a redistribution of jobs and/or income.

However, the rapid, far-reaching technological changes taking place, which had caused some people to say that we were perhaps about to enter a genuine new era characterised by new forms of production and globalisation of trade and capital markets, necessitated a more energetic response.

A number of people had proposed tackling the employment/unemployment issue by creating a "citizen's wage", which would have the merit of unshackling all forms of activity. Others drew attention to community service jobs, the creation of firms with job market integration, public service or stable employment as their objectives and the existence of a "fourth sector" of socially useful occupations, which were not yet recognised because so far they had not been financially viable.

Not all these questions, nor a number of others raised by Ms Bennett, were debated directly by the participants, but these issues unquestionably constituted the backdrop to all of the contributions and discussions throughout the conference.

Some key points raised in Ms Bennett's speech should be underlined here:

- The future of employment and work, or indeed of human occupations, will rapidly become a central issue cutting across traditional political differences. It is therefore an issue on which people are just as likely to be divided as they are to be united.
- Given our present life-styles and living conditions, access to work is perceived as a fundamental individual right. Employment provides an income, and without an income it is not possible to lead a decent existence. Without an income an individual's status as a citizen gradually wanes. On the other hand, those with a reasonable income are able to envisage and encourage all kinds of activities and, if they so wish, to take an active role in the community.
- To understand the significance in both human and political terms of unemployment, employment, income and occupations, we should consider the living conditions of those deprived of work. The CLRAE has already paved the way by looking into the political

¹ Cf. the EU Commission's White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment (the Delors report) of 1993, the Conclusions of the European Councils in Essen (December 1994), Madrid (December 1995) and Florence (June 1996), the OECD's jobs studies (from 1994), the ILO's annual World Employment reports, the Council of Europe's Conferences of European Ministers of Labour (the most recent took place in Malta at the end of 1993), the conclusions of the G7 conference on employment (Lille, 2 April 1996), etc.

consequences of the loss of jobs or sources of income which enabled their beneficiaries to live in dignity².

- A change of vision and of policy is needed. To make good the disadvantages that the lack of employment, income, housing, education and training represent in life, leading to insecurity and poverty, we have to open up our institutions to those who are currently excluded from them because they are merely passive recipients of welfare, thereby countering exclusion through citizenship and combating the notion of handouts with that of solidarity.

- The principles of subsidiarity and community self-help enshrined in the European Charter of Local Self-Government make local and regional authorities duty-bound to take action, first and foremost with the backing of community organisations but also with that of the State and of European institutions, whenever the social processes that lead to unemployment, destitution, homelessness, exclusion and finally instability, place citizens' fundamental rights in jeopardy.

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After the opening speeches, Ms Olga Bennett remained in the chair and three rapporteurs gave introductory addresses.

Mr **Xavier Godinot**, an economist who manages the research and training institute of the International Movement ATD Fourth World (Brussels) opened the session with a very well-received report entitled "Mass unemployment or full activity for all: what choices for Europe?" He first pointed out that the expansion of unemployment and extreme poverty in Europe was a challenge to the ideals and the fundamental freedoms that the Council of Europe sought to promote.

European development models were being called into question, but their results in terms of combating unemployment and poverty were disparate. Since it brought down labour costs the Anglo-Saxon capitalist model was more effective at reducing unemployment, but the price was a significant rise in extreme poverty. The Rhine basin's form of capitalism combined high levels of unemployment and social protection. The east European economies in transition were only just beginning to pull out of a recession which had caused widespread destitution. None of these models had put an end to extreme poverty.

² Resolution 243 (1993) on "Citizenship and Extreme Poverty: the Charleroi Declaration", Resolution 244 (1993) on "The Right to Housing and its Implementation by Local and Regional Authorities" and the Nottingham Declaration, the conclusions of the Conference on "Health and Citizenship: Care for the Poorest in Europe" (Strasbourg, February 1996).

The CLRAE had indeed already tackled the unemployment issue in the past (cf. in particular Resolutions 145 and 178). However, the present circumstances are completely different, and the approach to the problem must also change. In this connection, I draw attention to the results of the seminar held in Stockholm at the instigation of Ms Farrington and Ms Lund on "Combating unemployment through vocational training: the role of the city" (1993).

Lessons relevant to the present day could be drawn from the history of poverty through the ages in Europe. Neither economic growth nor full employment sufficed to eradicate poverty when certain people remained too weak to band together and defend their collective interests and continued to be regarded as unfit for anything because of their long history of poverty.

Could the poorest members of society be given employment in the modern-day economy and under what conditions? Mr Godinot considered various experiences: vocational development workshops and firms with job market integration as their objective, schemes to enable the most underprivileged members of society to find work in traditional firms, the establishment of long-term vocational training courses leading to a qualification and employment, the creation of new community service jobs. There was a lot to be learned from these examples, which showed under what conditions the most disadvantaged population groups could be given employment within a modern economy. However, the convergence criteria of the Maastricht Treaty were designed to facilitate economic and monetary union, not to combat unemployment and extreme poverty. The European Union was now paying for its contradictions, and the weakest were suffering as a result.

He concluded by mentioning six ways in which local and regional authorities in Europe could contribute to a development model that would be more protective of human rights:

- acquire and disseminate knowledge of how situations of vulnerability and extreme poverty develop;
- implement general schemes to counter vulnerability and extreme poverty, bearing in mind the indivisible nature of human rights;
- establish a genuine partnership with the most destitute families in terms of awareness of their situation and measures to overcome it;
- be exemplary employers;
- contribute to changing the national and international framework in which the public authorities take action;
- participate in the world-wide combat against poverty.

Mr **Pierre Reniers** of the International Association of Neighbourhoods in Difficulty (Brussels) then drew a picture of the "social economy" that was to be found in struggling neighbourhoods.

After referring to the opinion on urban development and the European Union issued by the EU's Committee of the Regions and to the OECD's position with regard to neighbourhoods in difficulty, Mr Reniers presented integrated approaches to urban development based on these neighbourhoods' typical features (general, transverse and geographical approaches, setting up of practical projects and use of contracts).

In such circumstances special care must be taken to apply the right methods when pursuing an economic strategy, and the strategy itself must be properly oriented (examples were adopting a regional approach and acknowledging the importance of the local economy).

To identify new requirements it was necessary for businesses to bear in mind the web of local relations and for social recognition to be perceived as a factor of integration. New job opportunities were emerging in the fields identified by the European Council in Essen (December 1994).

After pointing out the example of Rotterdam's Charleroi neighbourhood, mentioning new public management methods (social entrepreneurs, mediators) and describing sources of financing (e.g. community savings and reinvestment schemes, non-profit companies with job market integration as their objective, neighbourhood management agencies), Mr Reniers made the following recommendations:

- neighbourhood firms should encourage networking among local operators;
- access to financing should be ensured (in the United States financing possibilities are afforded by the "Community Reinvestment Act");
- the social economy should be promoted other than in mere occupational terms.

Ms Martine Egelé then presented the point of view of the International Federation of Cultural and Community Centres (Europe Section, Strasbourg).

In the introduction to her report Ms Egelé first looked at the political, moral and economic dimensions of integration, before going on to express the opinion that action with regard to individuals and action affecting the environment were the two factors that needed to be considered before new occupations and new forms of training could be discussed.

Although there were lessons to be learned from crises and failures, it had to be acknowledged that to improve training and skill acquisition schemes it was necessary firstly to involve individuals in defining their own training needs in their own job context and secondly to create new reference points (redistribution of new kinds of formal and informal training based on central/local initiatives, links between formal and on-the-job training and between initial and ongoing training).

On the subject of new occupations Ms Egelé examined the concepts of work, full employment, full activity and multi-activity. She concluded that since the notion of activity was much wider in scope than that of work, it was necessary to reconsider work as a source of pride and interpersonal relationships. This being the case, in the three different types of economy (the public-sector economy, the coactive economy and the market economy) steps needed to be taken to develop, define and manage new forms of activity. It was already possible to perceive the nature of such new activities: rendering services to individuals and businesses, working or sub-contracting for local authorities or welfare organisations, etc.

Was Europe capable of providing the back-up needed to pursue a policy of new activities? Did it have the capacity to adapt to a changing world and play the innovation

card? In the last part of her address Ms Egelé discussed the concept of local services and the role associations could play in developing new activities and occupations in Europe.

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Before describing the case studies looked at in Florence, brief reference should be made to the European Commission's written contribution to the conference on "The place of local development and employment initiatives in the European strategy for employment". The Commission recalled the main political messages of its White Paper on growth, competitiveness and employment and the strategy developed in Essen (December 1994), based on a co-ordinated approach to macro-economic and structural policies and the implementation by the Union's member States of multi-annual employment programmes. The priorities defined by the European Council included the promotion of local development and employment initiatives. The setting of this priority represented the culmination of the Commission's work on the local dimension of development and new sources of jobs. These activities related to endogenous development schemes, the local dimension of employment development (in particular the LEDA programme) and new fields of employment growth. A public survey conducted in 1995 had identified 17 fields for the creation of jobs with potential to satisfy a wide range of needs in European society (these were classified in four main categories: services connected with everyday life, services to improve the quality of life, services connected with culture and leisure, environmental services).

Local job creation initiatives were now the focus of many discussions. There was a need to release their full potential, and this was the thinking behind the European Commission's communication of June 1995 to the Council and the European Parliament on "A European strategy for encouraging local development and employment initiatives". This communication identified the structural obstacles which held back such initiatives and suggested solutions to the problem. The Commission also aimed to promote innovation and the dissemination of good practices and had proposed to channel more resources from the Community structural funds to such activities.

The documents distributed to the participants in Florence also included a very interesting opinion by the European Union's Economic and Social Committee, which cannot be summed up here. It might also be mentioned that at the European Council meeting in Turin (29 March 1996) the Commission's President presented an initiative to promote a European Confidence Pact for Employment, Growth and Competitiveness. At the forthcoming Council meeting in Florence (21 and 22 June 1996) great importance should be attached to the debate on this issue.

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Case study
Innovation policies and pilot activities

The case studies have been divided into three groups. They encompass the experiences of nine European towns and regions, and were intended to be sufficiently representative of both the whole geographical area of western and central Europe, even including eastern Europe, and a range of policies and activities in a wide variety of fields.

The rapporteurs' reports were in many cases complemented by contributions from participants and by questions and answers. As it would have been impossible to give a proper summary here of this huge mass of information, I shall merely draw attention to certain aspects which I feel to be of particular interest, hoping that I can thereby motivate my readers to consult the originals.

The first area of experience was dealt with while my colleague, Bernard Suaud (France), was in the chair.

First of all, I myself described the "information highways" in **Tuscany**. My main aim in my report was to set down a reference framework, considering the interaction between high technology, regional development, small and medium sized firms and the emergence of new occupational skills. Next I viewed this framework against the situation in Tuscany and in the province of Florence. Lastly, I described the telematics infrastructure in Tuscany and the region's policies for making this infrastructure contribute to development. While a few specific conclusions enabled me to list the remaining problems and the research prospects, I can now say, in the light of the results of the proceedings of the conference as a whole, that the debate is not yet over between the pessimistic and the optimistic schools as to the consequences of the speedy introduction of the new information and communication technologies in the occupational and employment sphere, for human activities and for society as a whole. This is why I, like other participants in the conference, take the view that all authorities, at whatever level, should endeavour to take a clear view of the technological infrastructure of the future and to set up think tanks to try out socially useful applications.

Councillor **John Morgan**, former President of the CLRAE, then described the action taken by the **Test Valley** Borough Council (United Kingdom) to create jobs and wealth. He started by raising a question: how does any small rural area attract new companies in the face of strong competition from large urban centres? While there was no single answer to this question, the concerted adoption of a number of policies was nevertheless likely to be fruitful. May I remind you that among them are the provision of small-scale commercial premises and of land for employment use, the systematic provision of support and advice and the paying of particular attention to the economic importance of tourism, office jobs and the services sector, retailing, communications, marketing, training and support for the rural economy. But something which seemed essential to me, and which I felt explained the success of the policies pursued in the Test Valley (where the unemployment rate was 3.2%) was the drawing up of a local plan covering a wide range of issues and policies. Plans took two or three years to prepare, and local people were consulted, having the chance to have an input into the District Council's policies at every stage. The plan provided a framework for development or redevelopment and gave the business community a great feeling of certainty.

An economic development strategy was published each year, and regular surveys and updates were carried out to assess the results and to ensure that plans were still viable.

My personal view is that this approach combines efficiency and a spirit of citizenship and therefore deserves to be known in detail so that it can be extended to other rural and urban locations. It fuelled the discussions and ideas of the Florence conference.

Mr Karl Christian **Zahn**, Mayor of **Dorsten** (Germany) and a member of the Congress, gave a description of the municipal "employment company", a means of obtaining a place on the primary labour market. After giving a reminder of the human significance of the enforced inactivity of large groups of people, he drew our attention to the consequences of the situation for democracy and freedoms. This was why municipal employment policy had to be the prime concern of municipalities and regions. As he said, "every single unemployed person is one too many", for the unemployed are fellow citizens, and I entirely share his point of view:

The action taken by German towns and regions was based on a fundamental principle of "work, not welfare" and on a distinction between the primary labour market (ie the market economy) and the secondary market, comprising "employment companies". The view was taken over the years that it was appropriate not to leave to municipal social services a monopoly on job creation, and that care should be taken to prevent the development of the secondary labour market from causing a loss of jobs on the primary market. Hence the best way of avoiding any conflict between the two was to involve the firms which were active on the primary market in the supervisory and advisory bodies of the employment companies. The latter had, over the last two or three years, begun to adopt the "Start" model, imported from the Netherlands, based on the principle that workers are "loaned" (they are long-term unemployed people who the firms train) to primary sector firms.

The aim of bringing employment company workers into contact with firms on the primary market was the same one as that pursued by the associations of bidders set up by municipal employment companies and firms on the primary market.

Criticism is of course levelled at both these systems, particularly by temporary staff agencies and by primary market firms which make bids. Nor do we yet have reliable figures to show the extent to which the employees of employment companies find permanent places on the primary labour market. Mayors have rapidly learned how to react to such criticism and to these problems: while there is no perfect way of combating unemployment, no tried and tested market economy system will be destroyed by the attempts of the authorities to find new places on the labour market for excluded members of society. On the contrary, a rise in unemployment may constitute a serious threat to our market organisation, based on democracy and the rule of law.

It goes without saying that I share this view and that I admire the determination demonstrated.

The second area of experience was considered with Rudolph **Edlinger** (Austria) in the chair.

Mr Manuel **Borrvalho**, a representative of the National Association of Portuguese Municipalities, opened the session with a description of **Arraiolos Carpets**, Alentejo.

Having recounted the history of the product and its manufacture, Mr Borrvalho emphasised the recent efforts to restore the importance of this production, create jobs and promote the work carried out by the weavers. The three aspects were of course linked.

In 1986, Arraiolos had eight establishments employing 2,365 carpet weavers. In Portugal as a whole, there were an estimated 15,000 carpet weavers in employment.

The first Association of Arraiolos Carpet Manufacturers was set up in Arraiolos in 1989: 20 of the municipality's 23 factories were members of the association. Consideration is now being given to setting up an Arraiolos carpet museum/centre.

In 1996, 23 firms in the municipality of Arraiolos employ 4,000 carpet weavers, while the figure for Portugal as a whole is estimated at some 50,000.

Although some major problems remained unresolved, relating to the status of the employment and to remuneration, this experience proved that traditional crafts had huge potential, especially if they are connected with products which had a specific history and profile.

Mr Luc **Laurent**, Managing Director of the Wallonia Housing Fund for Large Families (Belgium), described some of the schemes to promote access to housing and job creation, particularly in **Charleroi**.

After looking at the impact of the decline in employment on access to housing in Belgium, Mr Laurent considered housing as a factor of employment. A vast stock of dilapidated buildings actually existed, the conservation, renovation and maintenance of which could be regarded as sources of activity, training and employment accessible to persons with little initial training. Many of those who worked in this field were bringing pressure to bear on the authorities and seeking new formulae: self-build, self-renovation, rehabilitation leases. There were many one-off local schemes, and these were springing up spontaneously throughout Europe.

Looking more specifically at the situation at Wallonia and Charleroi, the various schemes in operation could be categorised according to the approach adopted:

- development of renovation sites with a view to both creating housing and providing an opportunity for on-site training. The Wallonia region was financing a programme for the acquisition, renovation, conversion and creation of housing. In Charleroi, schemes to upgrade industrial and urban wasteland were used to provide training and to promote integration;

- those working towards reintegration in the world of workweare helped by the development of skills in building techniques (in Charleroi);
- private owners were encouraged to rent their properties.

In short, the aim was to interlink housing, training, employment and service.

These were also the four principles underlying the IGLOO programme, which was supported by CECODHAS, FEANTSA and ETUC³, as was explained to us immediately afterwards by Ms Catherine **Parmentier**, Secretary General of FEANTSA (Brussels), a programme which aimed to set up local integrated projects for persons suffering from exclusion in the urban environment, to set up local or regional committees to monitor, supervise and evaluate in liaison with the three founding partners and to conduct research and discussions through national support committees and the European steering group.

The main thing which participants learned from Ms Parmentier was the fact that the IGLOO programme could be a practical means of following up Resolution 244 (1993) of the CLRAE on the right to housing and its implementation by local and regional authorities.

Mr Franciszek **Kadzik**, Director of the Foundation of Assistance Programmes for Agricultural Project Implementation Unit, **Nowy Sacz**, (Poland), described the management of the workforce in the overpopulated rural regions of **south-eastern Poland**.

He described the overall situation of agriculture in Poland and then the situation of the 207 municipalities in south-eastern Poland. While agriculture in this part of Poland was less productive than in the other regions, and there was rural overpopulation, it did have considerable assets: unused areas of land, mineral springs, hot springs, picturesque landscapes and a unique folk tradition. Potential sources of work and wealth included farm tourism and equestrian holidays, as well as the woodlands, mountains and pure water of the Carpathian plateaux. A second, not unimportant, advantage of the region was its integrated agriculture and its horticulture and the improved use of both land and workforce (particularly for the production, sale and distribution of soft fruit).

It was nonetheless true that new businesses would have to be set up throughout south-eastern Poland. The concept of varied rural development seems to be the most suited to the region. State assistance was of course necessary in this area (investment loans, information, tax breaks), as in the others already mentioned, but much could be done by the local authorities, which could select the main lines of development in consultation with local people. Each municipality would have to draw up a strategic plan, setting up a unit responsible for encouraging economic development, co-ordinating initiatives and promoting local products and services. Several municipalities were demonstrating a readiness to take action, and a specific comprehensive programme should also be brought into operation.

³ European Liaison Committee for Social Housing, European Federation of National Organizations working with the Homeless and European Trade Union Confederation, respectively.

This experience confirms the benefits to development, already emphasised elsewhere, of activities devised and implemented in consultation with local people in the smallest geographical units. Watch this space.

The third area of experience, considered with Mr Karl Christian **Zahn** (Germany) in the chair, brought together the representatives of three European capitals.

The Mayor of **Budapest**, and Vice-President of the CLRAE, Mr Gabor **Demszky**, based his address on a vocational training programme.

Hungary was in the process of economic modernisation, against a backdrop of a far-reaching economic crisis.

Unemployment, which had reached 13% as the transition to a market economy took place, started to decrease in 1993-1994, and the rate was now 10.3%. The main victims of unemployment were relatively unskilled workers, and the rate was higher in the villages than in the towns. The capital city had a rate of 5.3%, and Budapest had actually made a rapid move into the post-industrial era. 30,000 of its 56,000 jobless citizens were long-term unemployed. 11,000 of them received no allowance whatsoever.

Although unemployment was a matter for central government, while allowances were distributed by the municipal districts, the City of Budapest did intend to play a part in this field. It did so by putting forward proposals to state bodies and to district mayors. The city was also, through a reform in vocational training, endeavouring to prepare young people for the labour market. The prevention of youth unemployment required secondary education, general education, the acquisition of basic knowledge of a specific group of trades and preparation for subsequent specialisation. Practical vocational training had to be conducted in co-operation with the business world, particularly small and medium sized firms. Special training programmes were designed for disadvantaged young people. Vocational upper secondary schools should increase their capacity. But, first and foremost, the capital city wished to create an environment increasingly favourable to firms, so that dynamic development followed and unemployment declined.

This is a really comprehensive and ambitious programme, and I hope that the city puts it into practice, providing a model for other major cities of Europe.

Mr Rudolf **Edlinger**, a **Vienna** city councillor (Austria), responsible for financial and economic policy, described the Vienna Employment Fund.

The capital of Austria was currently an economic hub. It nevertheless had a higher unemployment rate (5.5% in 1995) than the national average (4.6%). Structural changes and economic rationalisation were forcing the city to give a boost to employment. One-third of its 1996 budget was going directly to the economy, in the form of investment and public contracts and grants, enabling between 40 000 and 45 000 jobs to be safeguarded. The city was, however, increasingly applying a real employment policy, implying co-ordination at every level and among all the officials concerned, for employment policy was a matter for the federal state.

In 1995, the City Council decided to set up an Unemployment Fund to provide assistance to persons at risk of unemployment and to the unemployed (assistance for initial and in-service training with a view to improving the occupational skills and integration/reintegration into the labour market of women, older workers and less-skilled workers, in particular; support for vocational training establishments, and for counselling and qualification programmes and for socio-economic employment projects, and so on).

The Fund would intervene when companies in difficulty were reorganising, factories closed, businesses failed or structural problems arose by setting up "employment foundations", in co-operation with firms. The foundations financed employee training or re-training (company foundations, insolvency foundations, industry or regional foundations).

Sixty per cent of the 440 individuals dealt with by the Fund in the second half of 1995 had resumed paid work. In 1996, the Fund was to help with the re-training of 1 500 employees. There were two main objectives for this year: the return of women to paid employment and encouragement for training.

The Fund was run by the City of Vienna, representatives of central institutions and representatives of both sides of industry.

I was personally very struck by the preventive element of the Fund's activity: action was taken before the problem arose, to some extent anticipating it. This gives food for thought.

The official in charge of the Youth Department/Employment Unit of the City of Helsinki, Ms E Onniseika, described her city's youth employment programme.

The commonest solution was to offer unemployed young people in the city (8 000 under the age of 25, with a youth unemployment rate of 30%) six months of work in a special network providing a large number of city jobs. One thousand seven hundred young people were benefiting from this system, paid for jointly by city and state.

For those young people for whom this was unsuitable or who were not interested in it, the city had set up a number of workshops, production schools and special projects centred on a specific theme. They could attend the Blue Workshop, for example, offering performing skills and theatre, cookery, cafe management, textile recycling and garment repair. The Media Workshop covered the production of television and radio programmes, the writing of articles and information technology.

A host of smaller workshops were offered on the same basis (six months' training).

However, the city also arranges short courses and data processing courses. Longer courses lasting eight months were arranged by vocational schools (food industry, social work, health care and information technology).

Since 1995, the "Woodhouse" construction project had been teaching 50 young people how to build a house of wood, awarding a certificate at the end of 18 months of training and work.

Lack of training was the main common denominator in youth unemployment in Helsinki. The City wished to offer young people a wide range of possibilities, as they all had different motives, training and profiles. In order to do so, it had to co-operate with private employers, give assistance to private firms, get young people to take part in international exchanges, encourage them to continue their studies and co-operate with other national and local bodies.

Thirty thousand young people aged under 30 participated in the activities organised by the Youth Department/Employment Unit in 1995.

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The results of the Florence Conference

1. It is in the light of this great variety of situations and contributions and the wide range of attitudes, policies and measures mentioned that a group of rapporteurs, at the end of the case studies, held a **Round Table** session which was open to the other participants. This enabled a brief review to be made of all the proceedings, at the same time outlining the ideas put forward by participants in the form of conclusions.

Chaired by Mr B Suaud (France), the Round Table session was attended by the Mayor of Budapest, Mr Gabor Demszky, the Mayor of Dorsten, Mr K C Zahn, the Deputy Mayor of Florence, Mr P Roggi, a representative of the European Trade Union Confederation (Brussels), Ms A Meunier, a representative of European Young Christian Workers (Brussels), Ms M Steindl, and the Secretary General of the European Association of Régies de Quartier (Strasbourg), Mr M Flament.

The Chair wisely structured discussions round three themes: the defence and promotion of solidarity, the management of the employment, work and activity situation now facing us and proposals with a view to effective combating of unemployment and inactivity in the future. There were therefore three occasions on which Round Table participants each had an opportunity to speak in turn, with the other conference participants also invited to put forward comments and proposals.

It is impossible for me to give a proper summary of the results of the Round Table session, which was lively and exciting. In one form or another, they were included in the conclusions. I should just like to say that the three organisations represented at the session had submitted written documents to conference participants in advance, and these also fuelled the discussions.⁴

⁴ For the ETUC, the document concerned relates to the first research conference on the labour market and employment and unemployment policies (September 1995). I may add in this context that a meeting with the representatives of both sides of industry was held in Brussels on 28 and 29 April 1996, within the framework of the European Confidence Pact suggested by the President of the European Commission. This meeting was to be followed by a tripartite meeting (both sides of industry, states and Commission) in mid-June in Rome, with a view to preparing for the employment discussions at the European Council in Florence on 21 and 22 June.

2. At the final session, chaired by Mr B Suaud, the President of Tuscany Regional Council, Mr A Passaleva, made a clear summary of the proceedings of the conference and of the ideas which stemmed from the Round Table session. He emphasised inter alia that the level of civility of a people was measured less by the yardstick of its wealth than by that of the amount of attention given to its weakest members. This was why solidarity must not be an idle word, but be something experienced in practice, even, and particularly, when times were hard. We were in a period of rapid change, so we must both speedily alter our behaviour and at the same time avoid starting by severing links with everything familiar to us. We must both ensure continuity and find a new way of managing change. There was a risk of young people in particular being severely affected by economic and social instability. Should we train young people for a specific sector or offer them progressive, open and flexible training enabling them to adapt during their careers? School syllabuses would have to be revised and patterns of development anticipated well in advance. Youth training must enable us to link the past to the future while fostering innovation. But Europe must also be capable of managing its economy in a different way, developing a social economy both in theory and in practice. The Chair expressed the wish that the European project with which the authorities should be associated to promote citizenship and develop human activity successfully refocus concern and priority on human dignity.

3. The **conclusions** adopted at the end of the conference are appended to the draft Resolution. As already stated, these describe the results of the Florence conference under four headings:

- I. Developing solidarity
- II. Ensuring continuity and managing the transition in a different way
- III. Fostering innovation
- IV. Promoting citizenship (action by communities for the local and regional development of human activity).

The Bill of Demands for Vocational Training put forward by European YCW was based on the experience of thousands of young people in Europe and sent to all the institutions and organisations involved in vocational training. The Bill, after explaining the concept of vocational training, specifies the kind of career guidance desired, comes down in favour of training for all, including those who are excluded from the labour market, and against the creation of an elite, and refers to the link between vocational training and employment, the development of human capacities, participation in education and vocational training, and state responsibility.

The European Association of Régies de Quartier submitted a document on "social insertion". The Association groups 152 "Régies" in 116 towns in 4 countries (180 in France, 2 in Belgium, 8 in the Netherlands and 4 in Italy). These are self-run enterprises set up with the municipality and housing authorities to provide within their neighbourhood rehabilitation and activities enabling the neighbourhood to return to its place in the urban community. Each "Régie" takes on as a matter of priority the people with the greatest difficulties. The "Régies" have a total of 6 250 full-time employees, who are given social guidance.

The above-mentioned documents are available from the Secretariat.

Rather than summarising them here, I shall quite simply say that they make no claim to form a dogmatic or comprehensive document. The reader should regard them both as food for thought and as a call to take free and mutually supportive action, the only way of guaranteeing a genuinely common future.

The draft **Recommendation** to member states, the European Union, the Committee of the Regions and the Parliamentary Assembly and Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe is based upon these conclusions. The same applies to the draft **Resolution**, which is addressed to the local and regional authorities of Greater Europe. I should nevertheless like to draw your attention to the proposals for action addressed by the Council of Europe to the Assembly, Committee of Ministers and CLRAE.