

# European Communities

---

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

## Working Documents

1973-1974

---

11 February 1974

DOCUMENT 353/73

### Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment

on the Communication from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 314/73): Community Action Programme "employment of handicapped persons in an open market economy"

Rapporteur: Mr Charles DURAND



By letter of 3 January 1974 the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament to deliver an opinion on the communication from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council : Community action programme 'employment of handicapped persons in an open market economy'.

At the plenary sitting of 14 January 1974 the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment as the committee responsible.

The Committee on Social Affairs and Employment appointed Mr DURAND rapporteur on 22 January 1974.

It considered this proposal at its meetings of 22/23 January 1974 and 4 February 1974.

At its meeting of 4 February 1974 the committee unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution and the explanatory statement.

The following were present: Mr Bertrand, chairman, Mr Adams, vice-chairman, Mr Durand, vice-chairman and rapporteur, Mr Berthoin, Lady Elles, Mr Frehsee, Mr Jahn (deputizing for Mr Mursch), Mr Laudrin, Miss Lulling, Sir John Peel, Mr Pisoni, Mr Terrenoire, Mr Vermeylen and Mr Wieldraaijer.

C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
A. MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION .....	5
B. EXPLANATORY STATEMENT .....	7

A

The Committee on Social Affairs and Employment submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution, together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

embodying the opinion of the European Parliament on the communication from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council : Community action programme 'employment of handicapped persons in an open market economy'

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Communication from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (SEC (73) 4006 final),
  - having been consulted by the Council (Doc. 314/73),
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment (Doc. 353/73),
1. Approves the action programme to assist handicapped persons presented by the EEC Commission;
  2. Notes, however, that the programme only deals with one sector of the occupational rehabilitation of handicapped persons, i.e. preparations for their integration;
  3. Asks the Commission to submit proposals for solving all the social and occupational rehabilitation problems faced by handicapped persons;
  4. Considers that this first stage must be followed as soon as possible by a second stage providing in particular, for community aid to assist the integration of handicapped persons who require special working conditions (sheltered workshops) or are no longer able to work;
  5. Welcomes the fact that the EEC Commission has not excluded any type of disablement from its programme;
  6. Invites the Commission to study the possibility of providing aid from the Social Fund to assist newly employed handicapped persons, namely by supplementing their wages for a limited period.
  7. Considers it essential that organizations and groups of handicapped persons lend their full support and cooperation in the implementation of the programme.

8. Believes that a precise division of labour between the various pilot centres forming the European network to be built up will make it possible to avoid wasting Community resources;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the report of its committee to the Council and the Commission of the European Communities.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTCOMMENTS ON THE PROGRAMME

1. This programme must be seen in the light and in the framework of the Commission's proposal to the Council for a decision on action by the European Social Fund to assist the social and occupational integration of handicapped persons (Doc. 268/73). The Committee on Social Affairs and Employment must also deliver an opinion on this proposal (see Mr WIELDRAAIJER's draft report, PE 35.750).

While the action programme specifies the objective to be achieved, viz. to make normal employment available to the greatest possible number of handicapped persons, it is for the Social Fund to provide the necessary finances under the provisions of its Article 4<sup>1</sup>.

2. Various observations have been made on the Programme in our committee and certain of these have been taken up in Mr WIELDRAAIJER's report on ESF action within the framework of the action programme.

3. Particular stress was laid on the fact that the programme treats the problem as almost exclusively economic and makes too little reference to the question of human solidarity with handicapped persons and society's moral obligation to reintegrate them into normal life so that they shall not become second-class human beings.

4. It was also pointed out that the programme talks mostly in terms of qualitative aims (improving the quality of social services to handicapped persons) rather than quantitative. The Commission will in fact only be able to provide direct assistance for a very limited number (probably not more than 1,000 - 1,500) within the framework of the programme.

5. The Committee on Social Affairs and Employment approved of the fact that the EEC Commission did not exclude any type of disablement from the programme. The mentally handicapped in particular should, in the opinion of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment, be the beneficiaries of Community action.

6. Your committee noted that this programme was only a first stage, to be followed later by more important steps. As regards the latter, your committee considers that the integration of handicapped persons who require special working conditions (sheltered workshops), or can no longer work is particularly important and expects the Commission to present appropriate proposals in the near future. The Commission's studies and the seminars it has organized should have enabled it to arrive at conclusions on which to found its new programme.

---

<sup>1</sup>See Council decision of 1.2.1971 on the reform of the ESF, OJ L 28, 4.2.1971

7. In the second stage, the Commission should also study the very serious difficulties which handicapped persons encounter in finding employment at the end of their rehabilitation period. The Commission should study the possibility of the Social Fund providing a grant to make it possible for newly employed handicapped persons to be given full wages for a limited period so as to encourage undertakings to employ them and so that, with the help of Community aid, they can be given additional vocational training or their work can be adapted to allow for their handicap.

8. The EEC Commission does not appear to have consulted the national and European organizations of handicapped persons in drawing up its programme. If such consultation did not in fact take place, the Commission has shown very serious negligence; for it is by involving interested parties that the Commission will be able to work out practical proposals in whose implementation those parties will lend their support and cooperation.

9. The Committee on Social Affairs and Employment has even contemplated organizing a hearing at which organizations in this field could make known their opinions and practical proposals. If such a hearing cannot be organized within the framework of this programme, the committee reserves the right to organize one when the Commission announces the second stage.

In the committee's opinion, a liaison committee of all the national groupings should be set up at European level; such a committee could give the Commission valuable assistance in the implementation of its programme.

10. During discussions, it was proposed that it be suggested to the Commission that it divide work between the 14 or 16 pilot centres in the various Member States, chosen for the high standards they have attained in this field. These centres would form a European network for encouraging the production of new teaching methods, their dissemination and utilization.

Several members consider that the waste of Community resources which would be involved in giving each centre more or less identical tasks must be avoided at all costs. Different tasks must be carefully allocated to each centre in order to avoid duplication.

11. The programme is designed to cover 6 years. Your committee considered that this should be long enough to carry out the first stage. It should be noted, however, that the Commission had envisaged that a first series of aid projects would have already been drawn up by 31 December 1973. Seeing that the Council has not yet adopted the Programme, it is hardly conceivable that the Commission's services have already started to implement it; it will therefore be moved forward and concluded in 1979 instead of 1978. It might, then, be desirable to accelerate the programme in such a way that



the timetable already established can, where possible, be adhered to.

12 . The absence of any indication of the cost of the programme represents a serious omission. No estimate is made of the expenses to be met from the Social Fund, which is all the more regrettable since the Fund's present finances are completely inadequate to carry out the tasks with which it has been entrusted and the uncertainty about this additional burden is likely to impede its smooth working. Account must also be taken of the fact that the Council of Ministers is always reluctant to put into operation measures whose cost has not been clearly determined in advance.

Your committee has therefore asked the Commission of the European Communities to include in its programme some indication of the probable financial implications, so that the European Parliament can express its opinion in full knowledge of the facts.

