

ORAL QUESTION O-0098/00

pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure

by Stephen Hughes, Eryl McNally, Robert Goebbels and Bruno Trentin, on behalf of the PSE Group to the Commission

Subject:           Creation of a Monitoring Centre on Industrial Change

The European Union is going through a number of dynamic changes, which include the transfer of 'old economy' sectors to less developed countries, and the consolidation of the internal market accelerated by the euro in strategic service sectors. Industrial change is also driven by new technology, financial upheaval and globalisation. It may provide new opportunities but it also has economic implications and adverse employment and social consequences.

The High Level Group of Experts instructed by the Commission to study the economic and social implications of industrial changes completed its work in November 1998.

The most important recommendation of that Group was the creation of a European Monitoring Centre on Industrial Change, which would gather and disseminate information on ongoing industrial change to all those concerned - Commission, European Parliament, social partners, companies, government bodies and local authorities - with a view to increasing the EU capacity to anticipate it. This Monitoring Centre should draw on the many qualified sources and institutes that already exist, act as a resource centre for economic data and forward studies on economic, financial, technological, territorial and social developments within the EU.

The social partners adopted a joint position supporting the Monitoring Centre which was presented at the High Level Forum held in Brussels on 15 June 2000.

1. Does the Commission agree that the setting-up of such a Monitoring Centre would contribute to a more proactive approach to industrial change?
2. What should be the Monitoring Centre's structure?
3. Does the Commission believe that the information provided by the Monitoring Centre on economic, financial, technological, territorial and social developments within the EU should be dealt with inside the Commission in a coordinated manner in order to enable it to take responsibility for and manage the follow-up of all aspects of industrial and technological change in a more comprehensive way?

Tabled: 06.07.2000

Forwarded: 10.07.2000

Deadline for reply: 17.07.2000