Resolution 565 (1974)[1]

Humanisation of working conditions in industrial society

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering that one of the major duties of modern society is to create more humane working conditions ;

2. Noting the change in workers' attitudes and occupational aspirations as a result of recent developments in the economic, social and educational sectors ;

3. Considering that efforts should be concentrated on improving both the mental and physical welfare of individual workers by changing certain working conditions adversely affecting their health and their attitude to their work ;

4. Considering that the implementation of the conventions, recommendations and resolutions of the Council of Europe concerning working conditions and of the international standards adopted by the International Labour Organisation are of great importance for the protection and welfare of workers ;

5. Being of the opinion that certain methods of work must be radically changed, or even abandoned, to allow fuller account to be taken of workers' aptitudes and aspirations ;

6. Referring to the resolutions adopted by the Conference of European Ministers of Labour in 1972 with a view to eliminating "certain soul-destroying forms of work" ;

7. Having taken note of the report of its Committee on Economic Affairs and Development on participation by employees in the decision-making process within the enterprise (Doc. 3423), and approving the principles set out in Resolution 564 ;

8. Convinced that social progress will in future depend increasingly on the interest which workers take in their jobs and the satisfaction they derive from them,

9. Invites all interested parties, parliamentary and governmental authorities as well as workers' and employers' organisations in member states, actively to promote the humanisation of working conditions, particularly by prohibiting dangerous or outdated methods of work and eliminating occupational hazards by means of legislation or collective agreements founded on the principles defined in the appendix to this resolution.

1. Assembly debate on 9 May 1974 (5th Sitting) (see Doc. 3414, report of the Committee on Social and Health Questions). Text adopted by the Assembly on 9 May 1974 (5th Sitting).

Appendix APPENDIX

Measures to humanise working conditions and environment

I. Personalisation of the work and satisfaction of the individual

a. To improve the opportunities for workers to participate in the management of the enterprise, particularly with respect to working methods and conditions and the organisation of the work ;

b. To further vocational training enabling workers to play their proper part in a system of participation of this kind effectively and usefully ;

c. To investigate measures of job redesign to eliminate meaningless, repetitive and fragmented work ;

d. To institute special systems - job enlargement, job rotations, self-controlling groups - for assembly-line and similar production-line workers, subject to the aim of future elimination of assembly-line work ;

e. To increase individual responsibility and create an atmosphere favourable to team spirit and solidarity ;

f. To re-examine and adapt the structure of salaries and methods of payment to the changes mentioned above.

II. Greater flexibility of working life

a. To institute systems of flexible working hours compatible with the maintenance of the production process ;

b. To create where possible in every enterprise a number of part-time jobs with rights of participation in the social security system and medical services, and carrying entitlement to a salary and pension in proportion to the hours worked ;

c. To ensure that the basis for calculating remuneration for part-time work is no less favourable than for full-time work, and that the principle of equal payment for men and women is applied with undiminished strictness to part-time work ;

d. To give special consideration with respect to part-time and other flexible systems of employment to the particular needs of young people completing their training, working mothers with young children and old persons in a state of semi-retirement ;

e. To make it possible to take a pension earlier than the normal by creating schemes of flexible retirement taking also into consideration Recommendation 695 (1973) on the preparation for retirement ;

f. To secure four weeks' holidays with pay for all workers and five weeks for those over 50 years of age, with the possibility for all who so wish of dividing up their holiday in so far as work schedules permit and provided that one of the parts consists of a minimum of two or three consecutive weeks, depending on circumstances.

III. Career possibilities

a. To ensure easy transfer of workers within the enterprise in order to facilitate career development in accordance with the abilities and interests of each worker ;

b. To ensure that scales of salary and promotion provide at each level of the enterprise for possibilities of continuous progress, where merited, right up to the retiring age, and that the calculation of pension shall take account of the level achieved in each case.

IV. Vocational guidance and training

a. To establish in both urban and rural areas centres for occupational training and for the provision of information concerning employment and prospects ;

b. To guarantee the right to every employee to complete his vocational training under approved instruction during a specified number of working hours in the year, given that management is entitled to arrange for the implementation of this measure in ways which will not unduly disrupt the production process ;

c. To give priority with respect to professional training within the enterprise to the aspirations and talents of the individual worker in particular with a view to increasing the range of opportunities in his future working life ;

d. To require the appropriate public authorities to lay down guidelines for the vocational training of young workers and to supervise their implementation ;

e. To require the creation in every enterprise of a fund financed by the employer and administered equally by the employer and by representatives of the employees, with the aim of enabling workers of proven ability and at least five years' service with the enterprise to take paid leave not exceeding six months in normal cases in order to complete their professional training ;

f. To make it possible for older workers to change their jobs and where necessary their type of job by providing opportunities to acquire the necessary training ;

g. To implement Recommendation 593 (1970) on the situation of young workers, in particular paragraphs 5. i and ii.

V. Hierarchy and communication

a.To make the management system less authoritarian and adapt the hierarchical ethos to the spirit of team-work and modern working methods ;

b. To abolish in every enterprise privileges restricted to a small number of employees when these have no relation to the performance of duties, or to extend them to all-personnel and in particular to reduce or eliminate distinctions between manual and non-manual workers ;

c. To provide regular information to all workers on prospective changes affecting their conditions of work or security of employment so as to ensure their retraining or measures necessary to provide them with alternative employment opportunities ;

d. To improve channels of mutual communication between management and workers, and in particular to provide reasonable opportunities for individual workers to make their views known at a high level.

VI. Health and occupational well-being

a. To improve production methods involving severe physical or psychological stress (for example, methods of continuous production requiring the presence at all times of a section of the labour force ; also the effects of noise and air pollution), and to provide - where such improvement is technically impossible - additional holiday or reduced working hours for the workers concerned ;

b. To regulate the speed and rhythm of assembly-lines in such a way as to avoid physical or psychological stress for the worker ;

c. To undertake research into means of ensuring more effective protection of mental health and well-being of workers taking into account the research work carried out by the international governmental organisations ;

d. To improve health and occupational safety measures designed to institute an effective preventive system, particularly through the application of ILO recommendations ;

e. To maintain a corps of public inspectors in sufficient numbers and with appropriate training to exercise effective supervision of health and safety regulations ;

f. To give authority to the inspectors mentioned under e above to take immediate action, including the halting of any process, in order to give effect to the protective norms and safety provisions in force, subject to appeal by the management of the enterprise concerned to the competent public authorities ;

g. To intensify research and promote the training of specialists in the field of industrial medicine ;

h. To implement Resolution (72) 4 of the Committee of Ministers on the protection of young persons at work.

VII. Job security

a. To give workers the guarantee that wages due and unpaid owing to the closing down or bankruptcy of the enterprise will be paid as a first priority and without delay through appropriate action on the part of the public authorities, such payment constituting a charge on the assets of the enterprise ;

b. To give workers more effective protection after loss of employment in ensuring them the payment of their salaries for a minimum period of three months either through the social security system alone or, if this is not possible, through complementary insurance or funds, it being understood that the employer pays in either case at least 50 % of the financial contributions applied to this purpose ;

c. To provide that, in case of transfer or merger of the enterprise, any contract between the new and the former employer which involves a deterioration of working conditions or the redundancy of five or more persons, shall be null and void ;

d. To take account in case of dismissals or lay-offs of the age and length of service of the employee concerned, and to give special protection to the handicapped and to those over 50 years of age ;

e. To give workers of over 50 years of age and of 10 years' service in the enterprise the guarantee that their salaries will not diminish up to the retiring age, even in the case of imposed change of job or transfer within the enterprise ;

f. To give priority of re-employment within a one-year period, where appropriate vacancies occur in the same enterprise, to employees dismissed because of production cutbacks ;

g. To require employers to give notice to the competent national or regional authority from two to six months in advance when production cutbacks or the merger or reorganisation of the enterprise may lead to mass redundancies in the enterprise (five or more persons, depending upon the importance of the enterprise or the sector) ;

h. To require the national or regional authorities mentioned under g to attempt to find a solution to the problems raised by the redundancies in question, without prejudice to their right to refuse to authorise the redundancies if enquiry shows that the arguments put forward by the employer are without foundation or if support from public funds is envisaged

VIII. Job environment and leisure

a. To ensure that work-places provide an environment which is psychologically congenial ;

b. To provide canteens and eating places which have an agreeable and relaxing atmosphere ;

c. To create if possible sport, recreation and also education facilities subsidised by the employer ;

d. To establish social amenities paying attention to the special needs of female staff.