SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 97TH SESSION

18-20 October 2000

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ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT ANNOTATED AGENDA

1. The Committee ADOPTED the Draft Annotated Agenda.

ITEM 2: APPROVAL OF THE SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 96TH SESSION

2. Referring to Item 14C (Quebec Seminar on “Human and social capital and sustained growth and development”), paragraph 69, the Portuguese delegate requested that the fifth sentence be replaced with the following text: The Portuguese delegate underlined the important contribution this activity can make to the strategic objective defined by the Lisbon Summit to achieve healthy and lasting economic growth, with more and better employment and social cohesion. This issue is a priority for Portugal which Chaired the European Union during the first semester.

3. The Committee APPROVED the Summary Record, taking into account the change requested by the Portuguese delegate.

ITEM 3: REVIEW OF LABOUR MARKET AND SOCIAL POLICIES IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

4. The Committee commented on the Secretariat Review in the presence of a Russian delegation lead by Mr. Anatoli Kharlamov (Head of the Department of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Labour and Social Development) and Mrs Antonina Zubkova (Director, Institute of Labour). The Report was formally introduced by two keynote speakers, Professor Michel Sollogoub (Université de Paris I) and Mr. David Stanton (Director, Department of Social Security, London). The Report was the product of work by a Review Team from the Secretariat and including Russian and non-Russian experts. It is intended to develop further follow-up work.

5. Overall, Member countries felt that the Secretariat Review provided a very useful analysis of the current social and economic situation. The Russian delegation noted that the report covered all the main social policy and labour market issues, and would be very useful for encouraging debate in Russia and as an input to legislative decisions. It was also indicated that discussion of the report should be continued in Moscow. However, it was pointed out that there was disagreement about some matters of detail, and the Russian Government would submit comments on the report by November 10. The President agreed that the Committee would take account of these comments.

a) Continuing economic reform and improving labour market performance

6. Discussion of economic reform and labour market issues highlighted a number of specific policy challenges facing Russia. National income has dropped sharply since the early 1990s, as have real wages. Employment has not dropped as significantly, nor has unemployment increased correspondingly. Real wages appear to be low compared with other countries in Eastern Europe. Individuals appear to have adjusted to these adverse trends through multiple job-holding and undertaking independent activities, including working on own plots of land.
7. Discussion of these issues was wide-ranging. It was agreed that improvements in economic and labour market performance were a prerequisite for social policy reform. This included suggestions that Russian policy makers should give emphasis to improvements in investment and in capital markets in order to upgrade the capital stock, and that more attention should be given to building confidence in civil society. It was also noted that the problems of underemployment and low wages should be addressed through reforms to large-scale enterprise, effective policies to foster small and medium-sized firms and to improve worker productivity. It was suggested that supply side investments were required, and attention should be given to building local links between firms, schools and vocational training institutions. A number of questions were asked about the trends in the informal economy, as well as about planned reforms.

8. The Russian delegation agreed that the key issue is economic growth, and that encouraging small enterprise growth is crucial. Reducing the tax burden on entrepreneurs is seen as important. The Delegation agreed with the report’s analysis of active and passive labour market policies. However, it argued that the current economic situation in Russia is improving, and that this, if it continues, will resolve many of the issues highlighted in the report, such as wages and pensions.

b) Designing more effective health and social policies and helping the poorest

9. The discussion of health and social policies started at a broad level. It was suggested that the alleviation of destitution should be seen as a primary goal of social protection, and that proposals for policy change should also promote structural change, or at least not hinder such changes. It was also suggested that it is important to have a policy framework that would be effective under a more pessimistic scenario than currently appears to be accepted, and that policy development should be mindful of future risks.

10. Discussion of means-testing and targeting as a means of improving the effectiveness of social spending given tight budgetary constraints, covered a wide range of issues and views. It was suggested that extensive means-testing of benefits may not be appropriate in current Russian circumstances, but may be in the medium term. A recurring theme in the discussion is the need to balance current, medium-term and long-term priorities. For example, the report points out that pension reforms that may work in the long run may cause problems in the short run. It was also suggested that it is necessary to strengthen tax collection and reporting to provide a sound basis for means-testing. It was further noted that structural reforms will be easiest to achieve while the economy is growing, so that current favourable economic conditions should not be seen as an alternative to fundamental reform.

11. The Russian delegation agreed that past health care reforms appeared to be among the least successful initiatives. Reforms had not been successful in creating a competitive environment. Future reforms needed to be seen as requiring time, and extra resources need to be put into the system. The delegation also noted that not all forms of social protection in Russia are designed only to serve anti-poverty objectives, and that it is necessary to look at the objectives of different programmes (for example, incentives to increase the birth rate). It was noted that further assistance in developing approaches and guidelines for minimum assistance levels would be helpful. It was also argued that while past policies had been somewhat one-sided, the nature of social policy in Russia had changed. The new policy approach was more balanced, with more emphasis given to building the trust of the population in government, and fostering social partnerships.
Main conclusions

12. The main conclusions of the Committee’s discussion were summarised by the President. Emphasis should be given to sustaining economic growth, and economic growth should be of benefit to all. It is also crucial to develop public institutions that inspire confidence. At the more specific level, it is important for the Russian authorities to improve the quality of information on household incomes, as well as to improve labour market and unemployment statistics, in order to make them consistent with ILO definitions. Policies are needed to improve the processes that lead people to create firms and employment, and to avoid further growth in the underground economy. Links between the minimum wage and other social benefits should be uncoupled. It is important to facilitate geographical and vocational mobility, and policies are needed to improve the links between education and training and jobs.

13. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:

- NOTED the review report by the Secretariat;
- RECOMMENDED its derestinction for publication under the responsibility of the Secretary-General, in the light of the Committee’s discussion and written comments to be supplied by the Russian authorities within a three-week deadline;
- NOTED the proposal by the Head of the Russian delegation that the Secretariat present the Review Report and its recommendations at a Seminar to take place shortly in Moscow, with the participation of Russian political decision-makers and academics; and
- NOTED that a follow-up review would take place in the Committee in two-years time.

ITEM 4: CURRENT AND FUTURE WORK ON HEALTH AT THE OECD

14. Mr. Peter Scherer introduced the Note by the Secretariat and presented a summary of the discussion in the Working Party on Social Policy on the topic.

15. The proposal for a horizontal project on health was welcomed and supported by the 25 delegations that spoke to this item. There was, however, some concern that the project was overly ambitious in view of the resources that were being considered (Austria, Finland, Japan, Portugal, United States). The German delegate said it would be important to have a mid-term assessment to evaluate the expected outcomes. Regarding financing, some speakers felt that the project should be financed from the Part 1 budget although others were satisfied that at least 2/3 of it would be financed out of Part 1 resources. Six countries (Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Switzerland) indicated a willingness to consider making additional contributions, either to the project as a whole or to particular components of it (long-term care, for example), though they could not make a formal commitment at this stage. Three other countries (Germany, Japan and the United States) reserved their position, but may offer additional resources, at least for some components of the project or the conference. The Netherlands delegate said his authorities may contribute to the project on waiting lists, but a final decision has not yet been made. Mexico asked that the specific characteristics of some countries be explicitly taken into account when implementing the project. Italy asked for a specific focus on demand for health care, including the impact of ageing and social factors.

16. The majority of speakers emphasised the importance of co-ordination with the WHO and two countries mentioned the EU. The CEC delegate suggested the Secretariat envisage co-operation with the
Bilbao Agency on the question of health and safety at work. The Agency has published an important report that will be made available to the Secretariat. As far as the activities of the European Union are concerned, the Chair indicated that there would be an initiative from the European Council by the end of 2000 on the subject of Social Protection which may involve work on health as a follow up.

17. The issue of an oversight body for the work on the horizontal project was discussed at length. A clear majority of delegates were in favour of establishing an ad hoc group to supervise the work across all the participating directorates, rather than establishing a Working Party on Health reporting to ELSAC. A few countries (notably Japan and Korea) were in favour of establishing a Working Party on Health reporting to ELSAC, but would be satisfied an ad hoc group, if the question of a separate Working Party could be reviewed at the end of the three-year mandate of the horizontal project.

18. The Canadian delegate said his authorities were willing to host and resource an initial conference which would be largely (though not solely) directed at the issue of the development and adoption of performance indicators by health-care system administrators. This proposal was supported by the French and US delegates who also indicated that they might help fund such an event.

19. Comments on specific components of the proposed horizontal project follow:

✓ Improving the Measurement of System Performance: The proposed work on indicators of system performance and on assessment of overall performance was the most strongly supported. Work on determinants of system performance was also given strong support.

✓ Explaining Variations in Performance: A priority for Greece, Finland and Sweden. Greece, Germany and Switzerland welcomed the proposed work on the supply of medical technologies, although this was not a priority New Zealand and the United States; Denmark was not enthusiastic about the biotechnology element; private health insurance was supported by New Zealand and Australia, but was not a priority for France, and was considered negatively by Canada and the United States.

✓ Essential Ameliorative Care: Several countries emphasised their special interest in work on dementia and the provision of long-term care for frail elderly.

20. The Director thanked delegates for their constructive comments which will be communicated to the Secretary-General, together with those of the Working Party on Social Policy. The Committee will be kept informed as work progresses.

21. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:

• SUPPORTED the horizontal project on health;

• RECOGNISED the need to establish an ad hoc group to supervise the work of the horizontal project across all the participating committees;

• EXPRESSED strong support for the proposed work on indicators of system performance and on assessment of overall performance, as well as determinants of system performance;

• NOTED initial country interest in making a financial contribution to the horizontal project as a whole or certain elements of it, including long-term care aspects;
• **NOTED** the expressions of support by several countries for an initial Conference to help launch the horizontal project; and.

• **REQUESTED** the Secretariat to avoid any duplication with work being carried out by the WHO.

**ITEM 5: ORAL STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR, including progress report on CO-OPERATION WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES**

22. The Director reported on recent events and future meetings.

23. The Vice-Chair (UK) reported on the informal consultations with the ELSAC Bureau and BIAC the previous day: i) **OECD horizontal work on growth and sustainable development**: BIAC welcomed this work and particularly stressed the importance of education and the labour market. They also made the point that they believed that the pursuit of profit and the improvement of the lives of people could move in tandem. ii) **Prague conference on the Public Employment Service**: BIAC considered this conference a success and congratulated the OECD and the Czech authorities. They wish work in this area to continue and stressed, in particular, the importance of considering the interaction of public and private employment services. They also stressed the need to consider whether the private sector might be considered as agents for delivering services which are currently publicly provided. iii) **OECD horizontal work on health**: BIAC welcomed this work and stressed the need to consider what part the private sector might play. iv) **Trade, employment and labour standards**: BIAC thought the report was unbalanced and did not recognise sufficiently the role that trade and economic development can play in raising labour standards. The Director pointed out that there had been an equal but opposite reaction from other groups such as TUAC.

24. The Committee:

• **NOTED** the reports on:

  ✓ Update of the 1996 report on “Trade, Employment and Labour Standards” and the proposal by the French delegation to include in future work a study on links between child labour, economic growth and employment, to which they would be prepared to make a financial contribution;

  ✓ Fourth General Assembly of INES, Tokyo, 11-13 September and the proposal to involve ELSAC in future work on adult skills and competences and to elect two ELSAC delegates to serve on the INES Steering Group [DEELSA/ED/CERI/CD(2000)16];

  ✓ OECD/UK Ministerial Conference on “Best practices in tackling poverty and social exclusion: An opportunity for all” and the wish expressed by many delegates that the proceedings of the conference be published;

  ✓ Forthcoming conferences on: i) “Gender Mainstreaming: Competitiveness and Growth”, OECD Paris, 23-24 November; ii) G8 Labour Ministers meeting, Turin, 10-11 November; iii) Finding resources for lifelong learning”, Ottawa, 7-8 December;

  ✓ Review of labour market and social policies in the Baltic states which will be presented to the ELSA Committee in Autumn 2001;

• **NOTED** the report by the Vice-Chair (UK) on the ELSAC Bureau meeting with BIAC.
ITEM 6: EVALUATION OF THE ELSA COMMITTEE BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

[DEELSA/ELSA(2000)13]

25. The draft of ELSAC response to the Recommendations is attached in Annex I. The text will be revised in light of comments received from delegates and forwarded to the Executive Committee.

26. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:


- **NOTED** comments made on the 12 Recommendations and, in particular, the concerns expressed by many delegates with regard to Recommendation 4 on the broad scope of ELSAC’s mandate and nature of representation at meetings, and Recommendation 8 on the proposal to convene a high-level policy group; and

- **REQUESTED** the Secretariat to prepare a first draft of ELSAC’s Response to the Recommendations for comment which would be handled by the Committee’s EDG.

ITEM 7: PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2001-2002


**A. Proposal for a +3 and -3 per cent in the 2001 budget** [DEELSA/ELSA/ED(2000)3]

27. In presenting this item the Director informed delegates that the Secretary-General had been requested by ambassadors to make a first attempt at setting out priorities for the plus 3 per cent and identify activities for the corresponding minus 3 per cent. The ELSA activities listed in the document are not targeted in this first round. However, it should be noted that a final decision will be made by Council in its discussion on priorities and resource allocation for the 2001/2002 work programme of the Organisation. The Director said he would keep delegates informed of any change in the proposed cuts.

28. Although some delegates were not happy that activities 1.3, “Trade and labour standards” and the Making work pay component of 1.6, “Employment oriented social policy” had been listed for the proposed minus 3 per cent, it was recognised that the Committee at its Spring meeting had agreed to leave the choice to the Secretariat.

29. Some delegations did not find the inclusion of activity 1.3 consistent with the conclusions of the Ministerial Council (France, Sweden, US). The French delegate was particularly concerned, given the proposal by the French authorities to include in future work a study on links between child labour, economic growth and employment, to which they would be prepared to make a financial contribution. This would not be possible if the activity was suppressed. The Canadian delegate asked why activity 1.6a was signalled out for possible suppression when it figured 3/12 on the priority list. The Director replied that 1.6a was a small part of a major activity that has a number of distinct products. The result would be a delay in the biennial publication by one year.
30. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:

- **NOTED** the proposals for the +3 and -3 per cent options prepared by the Secretariat in line with the Committee’s decision at its Spring 2000 meeting; and

- **NOTED** the concern expressed by some delegations with regard to the proposed suppression of Activity 1.3 on Trade, FDI and Labour Standards.

### B. Enhancing the Effectiveness of Active Labour Market Policies: Future work [DEELSA/ELSA(2000)12]

31. The Director first drew the Committee’s attention to the fact that the Secretariat was now giving thought to the timing and content of the next labour ministers meeting to take place end 2002/beginning 2003. It is important that delegates start thinking about the Ministerial in terms of future work and give attention to key themes for discussion by labour ministers. The Committee should have this in mind when making its choice for thematic reviews that could feed into the Ministerial. An initial document will be on the agenda for discussion at the Spring meeting. The Deputy-Director then introduced the document and asked delegates to comment on the choice of themes, suggest alternatives, and advise the Secretariat on priorities. Ms. Sallard emphasised the fact that, given the limited resources available for this activity, it would not be possible to have several thematic reviews at the same time and referred to the solution proposed in paragraphs 11 and 12 of document DEELSA/ELSA(2000)12.

32. All speakers welcomed the thematic reviews as opposed to country reviews which is in line with the discussion on the programme of work at the Spring meeting. The strongest support went to the proposed review on *Removing barriers to work for older workers* (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, Switzerland); coming in second place *Activation of the long-term unemployed* (Greece, Italy, Korea, New Zealand, Portugal, UK), and third *Youth labour market and social policy* (Germany, Mexico, Poland, US). Regarding the last topic the Mexican delegate said if it is to be undertaken it should be co-ordinated with the work of the Education Committee on transition from school to work. Spain welcomed all four topics. There was a request to include irregular workers (Korea, Italy), and unskilled workers and women (Spain). The Luxembourg delegate hoped that the reviews would not lead to country rankings. The Deputy Director assured him that this would not be the case. The purpose of the thematic reviews was to identify best practice and facilitate policy discussion.

33. Regarding funding there was a consensus that the reviews should be funded from the Part 1 budget, although a limited number of countries did not exclude the possibility of providing voluntary contributions if necessary.

34. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:

- **NOTED** the request by the Director in his introductory remarks for delegates to begin thinking of possible themes for a meeting of Labour Ministers end 2002/beginning 2003, and the intention of the Secretariat to have a first discussion on the Ministerial at the Spring 2001 Session;

- **WELCOMED** the emphasis in document DEELSA/ELSA(2000)12 on thematic reviews rather than country reviews, as expressed in the discussion of the Programme of Work at the Spring Session;

- **NOTED** initial country interest in participating in the thematic reviews, as follows:
  - Removing barriers to work for older workers (twelve countries);
✓ Activation of the long-term unemployed (six countries), noting that three speakers indicated they would have preferred “welfare to work”, and three others said that the scope of the proposed reviews should be widened to include the inactive population of working age;

✓ Youth labour market and social policy initiatives (four countries); and

• NOTED the additional themes proposed:

✓ Performance measurement of the PES (proposed by Switzerland), and
✓ Acquisition and development of skills in the adult population (Canada).

• REQUESTED the Secretariat to finance this activity from the regular Part I budget and RECOGNISED that, this being the case, only one thematic review could be undertaken.

ITEM 8: HUMAN AND SOCIAL CAPITAL AND SUSTAINED GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

35. The Deputy Director informed delegates that they would have an opportunity to discuss the full draft reports at a meeting of the Enlarged Bureau that the Secretariat will convene in January or February 2001. The final reports will be presented to the May 2001 meeting of the Council at Ministerial Level.

A. The Importance of Human and Social Capital for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development

[DEELSA/ELSA/ED/CERI/CD(2000)3]

36. The document was introduced by Mr. Sylvain Coté, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI). Mr. Coté said that a first draft of the full report will be available in the coming weeks, under the reference DEELSA/ELSA/ED/CERI/CD(2000)3/REV1 and will be discussed by the Education Committee and the CERI Governing Board at their November meetings.

Overall, delegates offered a positive reception to the project put forward by the Secretariat. The discussion focussed on the following:

i) Many delegations appreciated the idea of looking at a broader definition of well-being which included economic growth. It was pointed out that there are benefits which human and social capital produced that may not be properly reflected in economic accounting systems. Within this perspective, coherence between economic and social policy was deemed important.

ii) They stressed the importance of complementarity between various factors including human and social capital. It was agreed that the OECD was in a unique position to explain the complex links between these elements and how they contribute to well-being generally.

iii) Delegates emphasised that human and social capital take a long time to develop. As a result, policy decisions in this area ought to be patient and pointed towards the long term. Child development ought to be an important dimension in any human or social capital investment.

iv) Elements of integration and participation in relation to employment and learning opportunities were also underlined. It was acknowledged that social capital is unevenly distributed - the capability to
participate successfully in the transformation is very different across regions, groups and individuals. Therefore, research in the area ought to take this dimension into account.

v) It was appreciated that social capital can be a difficult concept to measure. But some expressed the wish to find ways of measuring it and create some indicators of social capital. More attention to how social capital could improve the functioning of markets was mentioned as an area for further work.

vi) Delegations offered assistance, dialogue and documentation on the subject. It was agreed that the final version of the report will be presented to a meeting of the Enlarged Bureau scheduled to take place early 2000.

37. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:

- WELCOMED the opportunity to discuss the outline of the Report and NOTED the positive reception given to the concept of “social capital”;
- NOTED support for the work and offers of assistance, dialogue and documentation on the subject, especially from the European Commission and the ILO;
- LOOKED FORWARD to receiving the full draft report that will be discussed at the November meetings of the Education Committee and CERI Governing Board, and having an opportunity to send the Secretariat written comments on it; and
- NOTED that a revised version of the report will be presented to a meeting of the Enlarged Bureau on the growth Ministerial Mandate, to be held at the beginning of 2001.


38. Mr. Mark Pearson introduced the discussion of the links between economic growth and whether changes in the distribution of income or in social protection expenditures can affect the rate of growth.

39. The discussion broadly accepted the Secretariat argument that a 'New Economy' meant a 'New Income Distribution' -- in reality, the income distribution will widen. Indeed, work on income distribution showed that market income inequality has been widening everywhere in the OECD since the mid 1980s, and although this need not be because of the New Economy, it is reason enough to make one 'sit up and think' about the consequences.

40. All delegations that spoke strongly supported the idea that studying whether the wider income distribution had consequences for growth in turn, and in particular whether social protection policies designed to narrow the income distribution might affect growth, was an important exercise. There was agreement that new OECD work could help illuminate the issue in a way that existing empirical studies could not, because previous studies used flawed data. Several delegations expressed reservations about the empirical approach proposed, but agreed that there was no obviously superior alternative way of considering the issues.

41. Other delegations (especially from Nordic countries) expressed concerns that redistribution could not be measured by looking just at the benefit system, but also took place within the labour market (through wage structures); and that more sophisticated measures of social spending and of active social policies were necessary.
42. The Secretariat agreed with these points and pointed out that it could only suggest the approach being followed because so much progress had been made in understanding and measuring such issues, but that given the short time scale, whether much of this could appear in the report to ministers was unlikely. There was broad support for a report stressing the importance of active social policies as being the route most likely to reconcile a desire for equity with rapid growth.


43. Mr. Raymond Torres introduced the discussion on the relationship between labour markets and the new economy and related policy issues.

44. Overall, delegates agreed with the work proposals put forward by the Secretariat. There was strong support for the work on how policy makers should ensure that the labour market will deliver the skills that are demanded in the new economic context, characterised by the rapid adoption of information and communication technology (ICT). It seems that several OECD countries are facing shortages of highly-qualified labour (the so-called "knowledge workers"), to the point that they have increasingly recourse to specialists from developing countries. Policy makers wonder how best they can address these shortages. Training policies have an obvious role to play here, but at the same time the upgrading of skills of all workers should continue -- which in the presence of scarce resources poses difficult trade-offs.

45. Delegates also noted that work practices and organisation are changing, which is an important dimension of the so-called New Economy. Accordingly, they expressed interest in ongoing work in this area and found preliminary evidence on an association between organisational change and adoption of ICT suggestive.

46. The Secretariat was also urged to examine the issue of telework and related policy questions. Indeed, to the extent that ICT is diffused more widely, telework could facilitate the insertion of disadvantaged groups, such as disabled individuals and people living in remote or depressed areas.

47. When considering policies it was noted that the importance for economic growth of reinforcing market mechanisms and increasing the efficiency of labour market institutions should be emphasised.

48. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:

- NOTED the two outlines of work underway in this area,
- REQUESTED the Secretariat to prepare draft reports, taking into account the Committee’s discussions, and present them at a meeting of the Enlarged Bureau on the Growth Ministerial Mandate, to be held at the beginning of 2001.

ITEM 9: LABOUR MARKET POLICIES AND THE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE: Results from the Conference held in Prague on 3-4 July [DEELSA/ELSA/PES(2000)19]

49. Mr. Peter Schwanse, OECD consultant and rapporteur of the Conference introduced the report. On behalf of the Secretariat and the Committee the Director extended thanks to Minister Spidla and the Czech authorities for agreeing to host this conference. The Czech Republic delegate welcomed the report which reflects very well the most important issues raised during the conference and includes the most interesting ideas and formulas. It will serve as an excellent introduction to the publication of the proceedings.

50. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:
• NOTED the presentation by Mr. Peter Schwanse; and

• NOTED that the 18 documents prepared for the Prague Conference, together with the Rapporteur’s Conclusions, are to be published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General.

ITEM 10: THEMATIC REVIEW ON ADULT LEARNING: Progress Report
[DEELSA/ELSA/ED(2000)1]

51. Mrs. Anne Sonnet briefed delegates on progress on the thematic review on adult learning and presented some of the preliminary lessons from adult learning systems in the countries reviewed so far. Four countries had been visited to date: Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Six more would be visited before the end of 2001: Denmark (November 2000), Canada (January 2001), Finland (February 2001), Portugal (March 2001), the United States (April 2001) and Hungary (date to be decided). Mr Patrick Werquin from the Education Division was present to answer questions.

52. The Belgian delegate wished to see more emphasis on the financial aspect, as this was a strong motivating factor for adult learning. He suggested analysing salary scales at sectoral level to see how training bonuses could be introduced alongside age and length of service bonuses.

53. The delegate for Canada requested that the comparative report focus on measuring the results of adult learning. In his comments on the preliminary lessons presented in the progress report, he suggested that one of the characteristics of a promising socio-economic environment to be taken into consideration was a context of macro-economic growth, which would bring a better return on investment in education. The role of labour market institutions should also be expanded upon. In addition, a distinction should be made between different types of work, such as self-employment and temporary work.

54. The Italian delegate noted a certain lack of public funding for adult learning. The purpose of the thematic review met the concerns of both the European Union, which was keen to promote lifelong learning and those of the social partners for whom continuous education was essential. The German delegate said the essential issue was the question of how far the social partners were prepared to go to promote adult learning.

55. The Director stressed the relevance of the issues addressed by the thematic review to the current concerns of the labour market. This was likely to be one of the topics at the next meeting of Labour Ministers. Mr. Martin informed delegates that the Secretariat could consider a second round of reviews, if more countries were ready to participate.

56. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:

• NOTED the presentation by the Secretariat and comments made on the Progress Report from Belgium, Canada, Italy and Germany;

• NOTED that a second round of reviews may take place, should there be sufficient country interest.

57. Mr. Richard Sweet, Education and Training Division, presented this new activity being launched by the Education Committee.

58. Australia, Finland, Italy, Japan, Spain, UK and the US welcomed the opportunity to comment on the project outline. The Australian and Spanish delegates indicated their authorities’ potential interest in participating in the follow-up activity and the Spanish delegate looked forward to receiving more information on the financial aspects.

59. On the proposal of the President, the Committee:

- WELCOMED the presentation and NOTED expressions of country interest in participating in the activity;

- REQUESTED the Secretariat to take the following comments and suggestions into account in conducting the activity: i) ensure that the focus is broader than traditional career guidance models; ii) ensure that consideration is given to the needs of youth at risk; and iii) take into account the potential contribution of employers and enterprises in providing career information and guidance; and

- NOTED that the document will be discussed for the first time by the Education Committee at its meeting on 15-17 November and that delegates will be informed by the Secretariat of the main conclusions of that discussion.

ITEM 12: INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION


60. Mr. Jean-Pierre Garson report on recent and future events:

- New Zealand has recently joined the OECD network of the SOPEMI and participated in the meeting of the Working Party on Migration (WPM);

- The next annual workshop on migration and the labour market in Asia will be held in Tokyo on 1-2 February, organised by the Japan Institute of Labour, the Ministry of Labour with the participation of the ILO and the OECD;

- The WPM is carrying out three important projects: A seminar on the International mobility of the highly skilled in co-operation with DSTI and the Mexican authorities, to take place in Mexico in Spring 2001; the setting up of an expert group on the insertion of young foreigners (or of foreign origin) in the labour market in OECD countries, Paris, September 2001; a two-year study on the role of migration in moderating the effects of population ageing. This study will begin in Spring 2001 and a seminar to present and discuss the results of the study and the policy recommendations will be held in October 2002.
The Division contributed with ECO to the preparation of a chapter on "Immigration: facts and economic consequences", to be published in the December issue of the *Economic Outlook*.

The 2001 issue of the *Employment Outlook* will include a chapter on "Migration and the labour market in OECD countries".

### ITEM 13: THE OECD GUIDELINES FOR MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES

62. Mr. Robert Ley, Head of Division (DAFFE) informed the Committee that since Ministers had adopted the revised Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises in June, governments had been actively reviewing their National Contact Points, consulting their business communities and other social partners, translating the Guidelines into their national language and preparing promotional material and conferences. Regarding future work, Mr. Ley said an outreach event was planned for 12 December to inform and discuss the implementation of the guidelines with non-Members [see DAFFE/IME/WPG(2000)11/REV1]. The first annual meeting of National Contact Points is scheduled to take place in June 2001 and there is considerable support for the idea of having a round table event back-to-back with that meeting, involving non governmental partners and addressing issues relating to corporate responsibility. Document DAFFE/IME/WPG(2000)9 reproduces the text of the Ministerial booklet entitled “The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises”. It contains the final texts of the revised Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises, the revised text of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the revised Council Decision, the Procedural Guidance for National Contact Points and the Commentaries on the Guidelines text and implementation.

63. The Committee **NOTED** the presentation by Mr. Robert Ley, on the present state of play concerning the OECD Guidelines.

### ITEM 14: OTHER BUSINESS

**A. Evaluation of the ELSA Committee:**

- Synthesis of the replies to the questionnaire completed at the Spring meeting
- Evaluation Form, 97th Session

64. The Committee **NOTED** the request by the Secretariat to complete and return to the Secretariat, within two day of the meeting, the Evaluation Form for the present Session.
B. Dates of future meetings

65. The Committee

**NOTED** the dates of future meetings: Spring 2001: 21-23 March; Autumn 2001: 22-24 October; and

**NOTED** the proposal by the Secretariat to hold a meeting of the Enlarged Bureau in January or February 2001 to discuss the three papers on growth [see Item 8].

C. Automatic Declassification of documents

66. The Committee: **NOTED** the request to submit objections to the downgrading of documents circulated between 1st January and 31st December 1998 to the Committee Secretariat, Mrs. Pat Chardome [Fax: 00 33 1 45249098, Email: pat.chardome@oecd.org], in writing, by 1st December 2000 at the latest.

2. The ELSA committee generally welcomed the evaluation and agreed the exercise provided a good opportunity for the committee to reflect on its working methods and take stock. It was recognised that significant improvements had been made in the functioning of the committee over the past eighteen months, through the introduction of annotated agendas, briefing meetings with permanent delegations in advance of the committee, and increased consultation with the Bureau. Several delegates stated that the Task Force’s Report did not give due weight to these improvements, while others argued that it overstated the degree of attention paid to procedural issues, as opposed to discussions of policy.

3. The sections below set out the issues raised during the discussion, together with the reactions by delegations.

I. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE UNDER REVIEW AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES

R1. ELSAC should review the current mandate of the WP on Employment to ensure that it matches the current needs of ELSAC in this area; and consider whether future meetings of the WP should be held before the Spring meeting of ELSAC.

4. The committee agreed that the original mandate of the WP on Employment was much wider than its current main task, which consisted of reviewing draft chapters of the Employment Outlook. But a deliberate decision had been taken when the Outlook was launched in 1985 to confine the work of the WP in this way and consider much of the policy discussion directly in the committee. Most delegates were very comfortable with this division of labour between the WP and ELSAC. That being the case, there was no need to revise the WP’s mandate. This would permit the WP to review other analytical work than the draft chapters of the Outlook, should the committee desire this.

5. Regarding future meetings of the WP, the general view was that the WP should be held before the Spring meeting of ELSAC. However, there were divergent views in the committee on the back-to-back approach. Some delegates recognised the value of back-to-back meetings which would inform them about the policy issues arising from the analysis in the Outlook. Other delegates, however, were of the
opinion that this would put a heavy burden on delegates, not only with regard to attendance but also in terms of the volume of material to read before the meetings. This should not only be seen as a concern for delegates but also for the Secretariat in the preparation and timely distribution of documents, in English and French.

R2. The Secretariat should consult the Committee and make a proposal to Council on the appropriateness of creating a separate WP or group on Health for 2001. It is noted that the costing of such a group on Health will be included in the Secretary-General’s PWB proposed in due course.

6. The proposal to set up a separate WP on Health had been discussed at length under the previous item on the Agenda on “Current and Future Work on Health at the OECD”, as well as during the meeting of the Working Party on Social Policy on 16-17 October. Given the Organisation’s proposed horizontal project on health, there was consensus in the meeting that an ad hoc overseeing body would be more appropriate than the establishment of a separate WP on Health reporting to the committee. Those few countries that did favour a separate WP on Health agreed that, at the present stage, an ad hoc group would suffice, with the option of returning to this recommendation if and when the horizontal project comes to an end.

R3. The mandate of the WP on Migration should, on expiry, be prolonged for a further five years.

7. All speakers welcomed the renewal of the mandate for a further five years which is consistent with the 2000 Council Ministerial communiqué.

II. POLICY RELEVANCE OF THE COMMITTEE’S ACTIVITIES

R4. Governments should recognise that because of the broad scope of the mandate of this committee and the need for coherence in the work of the OECD, it is important to avoid narrowly sectoral views. Therefore, it would be useful for governments to pay particular attention to the nature of their representation at the Committee to ensure that the views expressed cover the range of views of the government as a whole on the issue under discussion.

8. All speakers endorsed this recommendation and many acknowledged the need for a better balance of representation, while recognising that this is not an easy task for countries that co-ordinate representation in the committee. Several delegates said that one way of achieving more coherence in the committee’s work would be through earlier receipt of documents to allow delegates sufficient time to consult with other relevant ministries and be better prepared for meetings. Some speakers intervened to point out that consultation with other relevant ministries prior to meetings already takes place. Three delegates said this recommendation was the responsibility of governments and refers to countries’ own national policy and fields of competence, while another delegate asserted that coherence could be assured through the ELSAC Bureau and the Secretariat.

R5. The Directorate should consult systematically with the bureau to ensure that the Committee continues to respond promptly to new developments; that the Committee considers the proposal set out in paragraph 19 of CE(2000)10; and that the membership in turn recognises its responsibility to flag up new and emerging issues in good time to secure the necessary additional funding.

9. At its Spring 2000 meeting, the composition of the Bureau was discussed by the Committee. It agreed that membership of the Bureau should be for a three-year term, with two members thus standing down each year and two new ones being elected. It was also agreed that the composition of the Bureau should continue to be balanced geographically [see DEELSA/ELSA/M(2000)1, para. 2].
10. There was broad support among delegates for the suggestion in the Task Force report that the chairs of the four working parties be made *ex-officio* members of the Bureau, recognising that this would necessitate an increase in the size of the Bureau to ten members.

III. STRUCTURE, FUNCTIONING AND PARTICIPATION

R6. The Directorate and Committee should ensure that a significant proportion of ELSAC’s agenda is allocated to policy debate. The Task Force further recommends that the Secretariat, in consultation with the bureau, should ensure that all procedural issues are, where possible, dealt with through EDGs and Permanent Delegations. The pre-ELSAC meeting of Permanent Delegations (perhaps held closer to the event) should be used to help prepare and focus the discussion and resolve any outstanding procedural issues.

11. As noted above, several delegates did not accept the underlying premise behind the recommendation that ELSAC devotes too much attention to procedural matters and not enough time to policy debate. Several delegates spoke in favour of devoting more time to discussing social policy and health issues in meetings.

12. The Committee agreed that it would be a useful innovation to have an item on “Country Developments” regularly on the agenda in order to give one or two countries the possibility to inform delegates about a recent innovation in labour market or social policy. It would be particularly helpful if countries could present innovations that had already shown results.

R7. The Secretariat, in consultation with the bureau, should before each ELSAC meeting identify lead speakers for each policy debate.

13. This recommendation was supported by all speakers, but only for specific items and it should not be systematic. It is worth noting that for another item on the agenda of this meeting, the “Review of Labour Market and Social Policy in Russia”, two countries (France and the United Kingdom) were designated as lead speakers

R8. There is a need to further develop a coherent and consistent employment and social strategy across OECD countries. Therefore the Secretary General is invited to prepare a proposal regarding the modalities for convening a one-off ad hoc meeting, linked to a specific issue, of a high-level policy group [see also para. 24 of CE(2000)10].

14. The Committee did not understand the reasoning behind this recommendation which made it difficult to formulate an opinion. Some speakers found it ambiguous as worded; others felt that it set a far too ambitious objective in terms of the reference to a coherent and consistent employment and social strategy. One speaker perceived this recommendation as a diversion from the main task of the Executive Committee’s report which was to put forward recommendations to enable ELSAC to improve the depth and quality of its policy debate.

15. Many delegates pointed out that high-level *ad hoc* meetings already take place on a regular basis. Examples include the Labour Ministerial and Social and Health Ministerial that take place every five years; high-level conferences with ministerial attendance, such as the Washington (1999) and London (2000) Youth conferences; the Prague PES conference (2000); and the recent London conference on “Best Practices in Tackling Poverty.

16. In sum, this recommendation received no support in the committee.
IV. HORIZONTAL RELATIONS WITH OTHER PARTS OF THE OECD

R9. ELSAC, in conjunction with the Directorate, should devise a strategy to enhance its interaction with other committees and directorates in the above areas in order to provide a consistent input into the human and social elements of the triangular paradigm.

17. Although some delegates questioned whether it was necessary to extend the already existing cooperation, the majority agreed with this recommendation and stressed the importance of keeping links to other parts of OECD [EPC, EDRC, CIME, the Trade and Industry Committees were cited as examples]. It was recognised that such cooperation was particularly important for work on horizontal projects, such as growth and the proposed project on health. Several delegates stressed the need for closer cooperation with the work of the Education Committee and the CERI Governing Board.

V. OUTREACH

R10. ELSAC should review the basis of its relationship with non-member observers in relation to Committee attendance, input and output. Observers should report on which ideas, coming out of ELSAC, are helping them to formulate their domestic policy and implement it effectively.

18. There was little discussion of this particular recommendation. However, two delegates emphasised the need for a better geographical balance in the committee’s outreach activities, especially with regard to the Asian economies, in particular China. They felt there was too much focus on Russia. One delegate agreed that it would be useful to get feedback from observers about the benefits to them of ELSAC work.

R11. ELSAC, while consulting the legal service, should review how its interaction with BIAC and TUAC might be further improved, including the possibility of inviting them to attend certain committee debates, while maintaining the possibility to meet without observers as well.

19. Many speakers considered the current position appropriate, with BIAC and TUAC not being invited to participate in the discussions of the committee but having easy access to consultations with the committee or the Bureau. All agreed that the role and responsibility of both social partners is essential and must be continued. One country suggested consultations be held not only with BIAC and TUAC but also certain key NGO’s.

20. The Secretariat put forward the suggestion to organise an informal half-day seminar within the committee on a given topic from time to time, to which BIAC and TUAC would be invited to participate actively. This type of seminar has already been organised in conjunction with a meeting of the Education committee. The committee was on the whole reticent to invite BIAC and TUAC to participate in the discussion of a given item on the agenda, although one country thought it would be worthwhile trying a one-off discussion to see how it works.
VI. **VISIBILITY**

R12. The Task Force strongly supports the preparation by PAC and DEELSA of a communications strategy document to improve public understanding and dissemination of the Directorate's/OECD’s work. This should be shared with the Committee. The Secretariat should, in particular, consider how best to raise the profile of both its completed and on-going work - beyond the Employment Outlook - in a manner that promotes the OECD as being at the cutting edge of international debate and analysis in employment, labour and social issues.

21. Accepted without discussion.
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