Free movement of workers: integrated European employment market EURES. Report 1998-1999

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PURPOSE: Presentation of EURES activity report 1998-1999 by the Commission. CONTENT: Having its origins in Council Regulation 1612/68/EC on the free movement of workers, EURES is a specific service for European citizens and was designed to facilitate the exercising of the right of the EU and European Economic Area (EEA) citizens to work in another Member State. EURES basically provides information, advice and placement assistance. It is based on a network of experts (Euroadvisers), a large number of contact points in partner organisations and a free-access service on the Internet. Over and above the individual services it provides for citizens, EURES supports the European employment strategy in a number of ways. The EURES-T "Oberrhein/Rhin superieur" has been active since July 1999. This cross-border region covers a border area between Germany, France and Switzerland. A cross-border parnership was also successfully established at the end of 1997 between Ireland and Northern Ireland. A number of other cross-border regions, particularly in the Scandinavian countries, are currently examining the possibility of applying to establish a EURES-T. Euroadvisers are the driving force behind the EURES network, since they have a key role in delivering information, guidance and placement/recruitment assistance services to both job seekers and employers. However, with the growing process of EURES into the public employment services (PES), their role has been changing. The jobs database itself is housed in the Commission in Brussels and Euroadvisers can connect to the database via a fast telecommunications network funded by the Enterprise DG's TESTA programme. The EURES budget is voted each year by the budgetary authority. For 1998 and 1999, it amounts to a total of 10 MEURO, or 5 MEURO less than for the two previous years. In 1999, a ceiling of 450 000 EURO was set in the context of the total for expenditure on technical assistance and administration. In addition to these amounts, EURES receives a contribution from EFTA under the terms of the agreement on the EEA (participation of Norway and Iceland). Finally, there are four main areas for determining the priorities and challenges facing EURES in the next few years: - politicial and operational integration; - modernising the means of providing services; - improving the range of services; - re-examining administration methods. In conclusion and in accordance with the above, the Commission is currently examining a possible revision of its 1993 Decision on EURES.