

measures, in addition to strengthened efforts against age discrimination. We therefore offer the following further observations and recommendations:

The Committee will review with interest the forthcoming formal governmental response to a recent recommendation of the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration, that Employment and Immigration Canada designate older workers as a target group for the purposes of the Canadian Jobs Strategy.

The Committee recognizes as legitimate concerns that action on this recommendation, itself reflecting a recommendation made by the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council to the Minister of Employment and Immigration in 1985, could lead to a dilution of efforts on behalf of existing priority groups. To avoid that result, it may be necessary to formulate an age designation which would target those for whom age is combined with other disadvantaging characteristics, including those already designated for attention in existing programs. Any selection of priority groups, where it is not purely symbolic, implies a relative disadvantage both for groups previously selected and for those which remain excluded. It is the committee's view, however, that the severity of employment difficulties experienced by certain categories of older workers fully justifies the precise identification and designation of at least these groups for targeted support. **The Committee therefore recommends that Employment and Immigration Canada designate older workers (especially those older workers prone to long-term unemployment, if such groups can be identified) as a target group for the purposes of the Canadian Jobs Strategy (Recommendation 4).**

The Committee is mindful that the success of targeted employment programs and affirmative action strategies relies upon the resolution of some highly complex problems. For example, as research on measures taken in some European countries suggests, poorly conceived measures may ghettoize older workers and subtly reinforce the negative images of this group that prevail among some employers. Specific protections may also be associated with undesirable and wholly unintended consequences, as has been argued to be the case with measures in France to protect older workers who already had jobs. These measures were followed by an increased aversion on the part of employers to hiring older workers in the first place.

Nevertheless the Committee wishes to recommend that Employment and Immigration Canada undertake an immediate and thorough review of options available for providing special assistance to unemployed older