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REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN

THIRD COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME 1991 - 1995

MID-TERM REPORT

INTRODUCTION

ON THE MID-TERM REPORT ON THE THIRD COMMUNITY MEDIUM-TERM ACTION PROGRAMME ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN 1991-1995

The Commission has undertaken three Action Programmes on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women in the period 1980-1993. The first was intended to develop the legal framework and the second concentrated on positive action. By 1989 it was clear that the successes of the earlier action programmes, coupled with the effect of the five Equality Directives and the decisions of the European Court of Justice on equality matters, were the driving force behind equal opportunities policies in the Member States.

In 1989, the Commission drew up its Third Action Programme for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, a comprehensive programme which reinforced the Commission's Commitment to an integrated approach to equal treatment. The third Action Programme was set in the context of the advent of the Single Market, the conclusions of the Cechini report and the Social Charter and its action programme. At the same time the first three Community Social Fund initiatives (NOW, HORIZON & EUROFORM) were adopted.

The Third Action Programme was innovatory on three grounds. Firstly it tackled the question of the quality of women's employment, secondly it introduced the idea that the status of women in society is an equality issue and thirdly it brought in the concept of mainstreaming. It developed the theme, hitherto not tackled, of women in the decision-making process.

The mid-term report on the Third Action Programme is of crucial importance for the preparation of the Fourth Action Programme, due to begin in 1996. As far as the report itself was concerned it was difficult to assess the qualitative impact of some aspects of the Third Action Programme for three reasons. Firstly, the economic situation has changed dramatically since 1989 when current thinking was based on an optimistic economic scenario which, it was assumed, would lead to swift progress in equal opportunities. Secondly, information transmitted by the Member States in answer to the questionnaire sent by the Commission has in many cases not been complete enough to allow a full evaluation of the actions undertaken. Thirdly, differences in the implementation procedures of the bulk of the actions of the Third Action Programme on the one hand and the implementation procedures of the ESF NOW initiative on the other became evident.

Overall, it can be concluded that the Third Action Programme has been innovatory, has demonstrated an integrated approach, has raised the profile of equal opportunities and has held to the principle of mainstreaming. The report poses a number of questions and raises some issues which will be addressed in the context of the preparation of the Fourth Action Programme.

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I. GENERAL EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

A. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION

The objectives of this evaluation are to:

- describe the activities conducted during the first phase of the third programme (up to June 1993);¹
- suggest improvements for the second phase of the programme;
- prepare the ground for the fourth programme.

B. METHOD

1. Collection of data

a) *Activities conducted by the Commission*

These were examined on the basis of:

- analysis of documents produced by the Commission;
- interviews with some network coordinators;
- a questionnaire sent to all the members of the Commission's Equality Networks and working groups;
- analysis of the minutes of the meetings of networks and working parties;
- analysis of the minutes of meetings of the Commission's Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities between October 1991 and April 1993;
- quantitative and qualitative analysis of infringement procedures and requests for preliminary rulings;

b) *Activities conducted by the Member States and by employers' and workers' organisations*

Two questionnaires were sent to the Member States and to employers' and workers' organisations.

The responses from the Member States were examined in terms of:

- legislation, regulations or agreements governing each subject dealt with;
- action taken;
- the organisations involved and the synergies developed between the organisations.

Of the employers' and workers' organisations only the European Trade Union Confederation replied to the questionnaire.

The Member States were also asked to draw up a short evaluation of the implementation of the third programme.

¹ due to late publication, events which took place in the second semester 1993 and during 1994 are also mentioned.

2. Criteria

Before the evaluation was started, following criteria were established:

1. Pursuit of the objectives

Here the aim was to assess whether the programme's objectives were actually pursued.

2. Partnerships

Various partnerships were examined:

- between the Commission and the Member States;
- transnational;
- with employers' and workers' organisations.

3. Innovation

The aim here was to examine in what respects the third programme generates new and innovatory solutions to the problems tackled.

4. Profile, optimization and long-term impact

What means of dissemination, publicity and optimization have been deployed so as to ensure that the programme has some long-term impact?

5. Internal and external coherence

Analysing internal coherence means examining the relationship between results, activities set up, objectives and needs which the programme is supposed to meet.

External coherence is concerned with the programme vis-à-vis the Commission's other policies.

6. Complementarity

The idea here is to examine via the national reports whether the Member States and employers' and workers' organisations have introduced measures complementing the Commission's activities.

7. Compliance with the schedule

At this intermediate stage it is useful to determine whether the programme is on schedule and to ascertain why certain delays occurred.

3. Activities covered by the evaluation

The activities of the third programme were analysed and classified under the three main objectives of the third programme.

Objective I Implementation and development of legislation

Objective II Integration of women in the labour market

- 1) Education: equal opportunities for girls and boys at school
- 2) Vocational training: - the IRIS network
- the NOW initiative

3) Positive action in enterprises

4) The setting up of businesses by women: local employment initiatives

5) Reconciliation of work and family responsibilities for men and women

6) The position of women in the labour market

Objective III Improving the status of women in society

1) Women and decision making

2) Women and the media

3) Women's studies

4) Mainstreaming

5) Awareness raising and information

N.B. All these activities - except NOW - were examined in the light of the seven criteria mentioned above. NOW's status within the Third Programme is special, because it is within the province and under the management of the European Social Fund. It follows the regulations governing the ESF and, therefore, it will be evaluated according to the rules and procedures established therein.

4. Presentation of the results

The programme was evaluated along two axes and the results are presented accordingly:

- Vertically, i.e. examining:

- the activities implemented
- an evaluation based on the criteria set out above
- possible improvements to the programme

for each specific field of action, and

- Horizontally, offering an overall evaluation of the programme as a whole.

II. ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC FIELDS OF ACTION

OBJECTIVE I:

IMPLEMENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF LEGISLATION

A. GENERAL OBJECTIVES SET OUT IN THE THIRD ACTION PROGRAMME

a) *Implementation and development of existing legal procedures.*

The Commission will continue, as in the past, to have recourse to Article 169 of the Treaty where this is considered appropriate. It will also continue to follow up the implementation of the existing Directives in cooperation with the network of independent legal experts and other appropriate bodies. In addition, given the complexity of the existing legal systems, it will be necessary to clarify certain concepts and to study thoroughly the effectiveness of existing enforcement mechanisms and to consider strengthening them if necessary.

b) *Addressing specific issues.*

The Commission shall:

- 1) *as regards equal pay for work of equal value:*
 - *adopt a memorandum to define the scope and concept of equal pay for work of equal value and provide guidance on the criteria to be taken into account in job evaluation and job classification;*
 - *collect information and carry out studies on the characteristics of payment systems and their impact on the gap between men's and women's earnings.*
- 2) *as regards indirect discrimination, contribute in cooperation with the legal network to clarify the concept of indirect discrimination by reference to rulings of the European Court of Justice.*
- 3) *as regards social protection and social security, taking into account the decision of the European Court of Justice in Case 262/88 Barber, delivered on 17 May 1990, present a communication concerning occupational or complementary benefit schemes which fall within the scope of Article 119 of the EEC Treaty concerning equal pay, take the necessary measures.*
- 4) *as regards self-employed women, present a report to the Council on the implementation of Council Directive 86/613/EEC on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity, including agriculture, in a self-employed capacity, and on the protection of self-employed women during pregnancy and motherhood. This Directive shall be revised as provided by Article 11.*

c) *Raising awareness.*

The Commission shall:

- 1) *give support to the provision of information and training on legal concepts, legal developments and better application of the law for judges, lawyers and other professionals concerned with application of the law, in cooperation with the legal network.*
- 2) *monitor legal developments in the Member States and establish a system for disseminating information on case law and legal standards.*

B. ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSION

1. Recourse to Article 169 of the Treaty

The Commission has instituted infringement procedures against five Member States under Article 169 of the Treaty in respect of the ban of night work for women. Moreover, the legal network has devised strategies based on the Article. This legal network was created in 1982 and is responsible for monitoring the application of Community directives in the Member States. It has identified the circumstances in which a procedure for infringing Community law can be particularly effective compared with other means of safeguarding rights, for example in cases where access to national courts and the protection offered by the legal system are inadequate.

2. Monitoring application of the Directives

The Commission carried out its duty as guardian of the treaties, ensuring that the five Directives were observed, examining the numerous complaints made to it and responding to written or oral questions and petitions from the European Parliament.

The Commission also submitted observations on a number of occasions when national courts referred questions to the Court of Justice for preliminary rulings under Article 177 of the Treaty (36 cases as of July 1993).

Since 1992 the network has produced an quarterly internal *Newsletter*, in addition to its general report, identifying problems arising in implementing directives, new national legislation and legal decisions, etc. The aim is to encourage a regular flow of information between the members of the network and the Commission.

3. Effectiveness of legal mechanisms - access to justice - penalties

The theme of legal protection was addressed at a European conference subsidised by the Commission and organised by the University of Louvain-La-Neuve (Belgium) entitled "Access to justice".

This conference examined what means were available to ensure that victims of discrimination were able to obtain proper compensation and to ensure that the people responsible for discrimination were suitably penalised. The proceedings of the conference were published in 1993.

The rapporteur for the conference recommended that the Commission pursue a policy comprising:

- a multifaceted approach to penalties and access to justice;
- planning of activities for the end of the third programme and evaluation thereof;
- an increase in training for judges and lawyers;
- conducting of a number of studies on possible ways of making the legal system more effective;
- a proactive approach to infringements;
- a proposal for a directive or a recommendation on procedures and penalties.

Following the recommendations made at the conference, the Commission commissioned a study on the problem of *Contract compliance*. The aim of this study is to examine the possibility of an equal opportunities clause as a prerequisite for any contract, grant or subsidy awarded to a private enterprise by a public authority.

A wide-ranging study was also undertaken to determine what legal, sociological or other obstacles there might be to bringing legal action relating to equal opportunities. The first part, covering the legal obstacles, has been completed and the second is scheduled for the beginning of 1995 (*Sex equality litigation*).

4. Equal pay

A memorandum defining the scope and concept of equal pay for work of equal value and providing guidance on the criteria governing job evaluation and job classification was to be adopted under the third programme.

A preparatory study has been carried out entitled "*Working document in connection with the memorandum on equal pay for work of equal value*". It is available in English and French. The memorandum itself has been adopted by the Commission on 23 June 1994.

5. Indirect discrimination

The legal network produced a report on indirect discrimination and discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy or motherhood. The report reveals serious discrepancies between, on the one hand, the way in which the concept of indirect discrimination is defined and applied in Community law, and, on the other, how that concept is defined and applied in national law. It recommends that the draft directive on the burden of proof, including the definition of indirect discrimination, which is still before the Council, be adopted. It also advises that information on this topic be provided in the form of an official document (a Commission communication or recommendation) or in publications suitable for various target groups.

6. The Application of Article 119 of the EC Treaty to Private Social Security and Pension Systems

On 17 May 1990 the Court of Justice decided in the case *D.H. Barber v Guardian Royal Exchange Assurance Group*¹ that benefits paid by an employer to a worker under an occupational pension scheme come within Article 119 of the EEC Treaty, regardless of how the scheme is financed or its legal status under national law. The ruling applies both to normal retirement and to compulsory redundancies made before normal retirement.

The Barber decision has rendered several provisions of Directive 86/378/EEC² inapplicable to employees, especially Article 9 thereof - pensions and survivors benefits.

The Barber decision may not be relied upon to contest the level of payments made under an occupational pension scheme in respect of periods of service prior to 17 May 1990, unless the claimant had already taken legal action before that date.

This issue was also addressed through the addition of a special protocol to the Maastricht Treaty which expressly limits the effects in time of the Barber decision. According to this protocol the direct effect of Article 119 as regards occupational pension schemes can only be relied upon in respect of periods worked after this date, an exception being made for persons who had initiated proceedings before their national courts before this date.

The Court of Justice has recently handed down a number of decisions which confirm and elaborate upon the Barber ruling.

In the *Ten Oever* case (C-109/91) the Court confirmed that Article 119 applies to benefits received by a surviving spouse since 17 May 1990 and no discrimination between men and women can be allowed in this respect since that date. In the *Moroni* case (C-110/91) the Court confirmed that Article 119 applies to all types of occupational social security schemes and, therefore, that the age which determines pension eligibility must be the same for both sexes.

In the *Neath* case (C-152/91) the Court specified that employee contributions to occupational social security schemes must be the same for both sexes since they too are covered by Article 119. By contrast, employers contributions to such schemes may differentiate in respect of female and male employees to the extent that such differences are based on objective actuarial calculations which differentiate according to sex.

¹ Case C262/88 - decision of the Court delivered on 17 May 1990

² Directive 86/378/EEC on 24 July 1986 on equal treatment for men and women in occupational social security schemes. OJ L 225 of 12.8.86 page 40

Furthermore in the light of the above judgements and the judgement in the Coloroll case and in the other cases decided on the same day¹, the Commission intends to propose for reasons of legal certainty a modification of Directive 86/378/EEC².

7. Self-employed women

The report on the implementation of Directive 86/613/EEC on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity, including agriculture, in a self-employed capacity has been adopted by the Commission on 16 September 1994. The Commission subsidised three European seminars (in France, Ireland and Italy) held by the women's section of the Committee of Professional Farming Organisations (COPA) and, in France, a seminar on comparative law on family enterprises.

8. Raising awareness

The Commission subsidised a variety of seminars and conferences on Community legislation:

- seminars in Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom on the theme of equal pay;
- conferences on legislation on non-standard employment of women and on Community law (Italy);
- seminars organised in cooperation with the legal network on indirect discrimination in social security in Warwick, Hamburg and Oxford;
- a conference held by the Dutch Presidency of the Council on the protection of the dignity of women and men at work.

Four seminars on sexual harassment were subsidized (United Kingdom, Belgium, Netherlands and Greece) as well as a pilot project for a telephone hotline in Greece.

The network contributed to the process of awareness raising by continuing its work on a legal encyclopedia on equal opportunities which was originally started in the previous programme.

¹ Case C-200/91, Coloroll; Case 408/92, Smith; Case 28/93, Van Den Akker; Case C-57/93, Vroege; Case C-128/93, Fisscher; Case C-7/93, Beune. In these judgments, delivered on 28 September 1994, the Court of Justice confirms its thesis in the previous judgments about the degree of retroactivity of the application of Article 119 of the Treaty in the occupational schemes and the material scope of this Article, but there is some innovation as, for example, the application of Article 119 of the Treaty in the area of some schemes for civil servants and the degree of retroactivity on the application of Article 119 when it concerns the right to join a scheme for part-time workers.

² OJ L 225 of 12.8.86, page 40. This Directive contains provisions which permit derogations to the principle of equal treatment for men and women in occupational pensions, which do not accord with Article 119 as interpreted by the Court in Barber and the follow-up cases.

9. Other activities

On 31 March 1992 the Council adopted a recommendation on child care and on 19 October 1992 a directive on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.

On 27 November 1991 the Commission adopted a recommendation and a code of practice on sexual harassment intended to provide employers and trade unions with guidelines on policy to prevent and resolve conflicts in the event of sexual harassment at work.

The Commission has published a guide in the nine Community languages in order to provide all those concerned with examples of action undertaken in the Member States based on the principles set out in the code of practice (Title *How to combat sexual harassment at work*).

C. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE NATIONAL REPORTS

According to the text of the third action programme, it is for the Member States to:

1. *Ensure that all new legislation is free of unlawful discrimination and to develop appropriate collective means of redress and ensure that national equality agencies and other appropriate bodies have sufficient resources for the effective support of those seeking legal redress.*

a) New legislation which is free of discriminatory provisions.

According to the national reports nine countries (with the exception of Belgium, Spain and Greece) have mechanisms for scrutinising new legislation. Various organisations and activities are involved, depending on the type of scrutiny:

- general a priori monitoring of all proposals for legislation by the organisations involved in the legislative process or the authorities responsible for ensuring that laws are compatible with the constitution: in the Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany, Ireland, Denmark and Portugal.
- Organisations responsible for equal opportunities for men and women which are consulted on any legislative proposal which concerns women: Luxembourg, United Kingdom, Federal Republic of Germany and Italy.
- A priori monitoring of the impact of all legislation on women in the Netherlands and in Ireland.
- A posteriori monitoring in the form of reports on the impact on women's employment of legislative measures: France and Italy.

b) Collective legal action

Identifying individual instances of discrimination against women is known to be a problem, which is why collective action is under discussion. However, this concept has not been defined in the third programme and seems to be interpreted differently from one Member State to another. The possibility of bringing a collective action in law only exists in the Netherlands, which permits interest

groups to challenge discriminatory laws in the courts. By contrast, several countries report that it is possible for trade unions and vocational organisations to bring an action when their members complain: Belgium, Denmark, France (only on the grounds of sexual harassment), Spain, Italy and Portugal.

c) The resources of national agencies

Only in Ireland and the United Kingdom do systems exist for national equal opportunities agencies to provide legal assistance, mainly in the form of financial help, as described in the action programme, to victims of discrimination. In other countries (Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Netherlands and Portugal) the national agencies can deliver technical opinions which may be used in court. In Italy, equal opportunities counsellors can also be heard by the courts. Finally, in Denmark the Equal Opportunities Council can demand information from employers, salaried workers and other representative organisations.

2 *To take the necessary steps to ensure application of the equal pay legislation and systematically examine and implement the practical implications of the decisions of the European Court of Justice.*

Action has been taken in most of the Member States to improve the implementation of Community law on equal opportunities.

- Five countries have already amended or plan to amend their legislation: Denmark, Spain, Ireland, Germany and the United Kingdom.
- Surveys in enterprises have been carried out in Belgium, France, Italy and the Netherlands and in some countries - Portugal and the Netherlands (health sector) - a systematic analysis of collective agreements has been made.
- The national reports also mention awareness-raising campaigns in trade unions in Belgium, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany.
- Finally there is a large body of case law on equal pay in the United Kingdom and Denmark.

3 *Improve the dissemination of information on legal standards by including the topics of Community law and the principle of equality in training.*

Many awareness-raising activities were conducted in the majority of the countries, involving the following organisations:

- Various national ministerial departments or regional services: Germany, Belgium, Spain, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom.
- Organisations providing legal training or information: Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Ireland, Germany and the United Kingdom.
- Employers' and workers' organisations: Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Ireland, Italy and the United Kingdom.
- The Labour Inspectorate: France and Spain.
- Women's associations: Ireland, Italy and Luxembourg

In Ireland the media were also involved and in France the pension bodies for artisans and shopkeepers.

D. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE ETUC REPORT

The Member States' ETUC reports underlined the increasing difficulties encountered in negotiating equality clauses in collective agreements, since the problem of unemployment is now a priority in the majority of the Member States. At the same time the gap in earnings between men and women is increasing due to salary structures, discriminatory job classification and the increase in the number of women working part-time and in non-standard employment.

The action taken by the ETUC to complement the third programme was mainly concerned with equal pay and job classification and the protection of the dignity of women and men at work.

E. EVALUATION

The objectives set out in the third programme were clearly pursued during the first phase. All the activities planned were carried out.

Most of what was done was devoted to consolidating Community law, as well as to initiating infringement proceedings and submitting observation to the Court on Article 177 references. It was also important to strengthen exchanges of information on developments in national law, and the most innovatory aspect of the work programme of the law network was the creation of a *Newsletter*.

The only way to capitalise and focus attention upon legal activities is to increase awareness in the appropriate quarters and to provide a good information service. The sort of information that can be disseminated is of two types:

- on Community law when a new directive, resolution or recommendation is adopted;
- on the implications of Community law for national law, for example, when the Court of Justice delivers an important decision when referred to for a preliminary ruling.

The number and provenance of questions referred to the Court for a preliminary ruling since the beginning of the third programme were analysed. Thirty-six came from seven countries namely the United Kingdom, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Denmark, France and Belgium. Four Member States, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece, have never put questions to the Court.

It is interesting to note that during this period each Member State referred a particular type of case to the Court. In Germany, for example, the majority of the questions related to discrimination against part-time workers, in the United Kingdom to pension schemes and in the Netherlands exclusively to social security.

It might be suggested that the number of questions referred to the Court for preliminary ruling is one of the indicators of the level of awareness. If this is so, this breakdown shows that information on Community law in different Member states tends to focus on a particular subject.

During the first phase of the third action programme the activities of the Commission, the Member States and the social partners complemented one another well in the following fields:

- protection of the dignity of women and men at work (seven countries, where activities were conducted in conjunction with the ETUC and UNICE) to implement the Commission's code of good practice;
- equal pay (nine countries, ETUC and UNICE), examination of differences in job classification;
- protection of motherhood (five countries);
- parental leave (four countries).

To conclude, it is worth pointing out that five Member States have stressed that changes to their occupational pension schemes will be made once the uncertainty arising from the Barber judgment has been resolved¹.

¹ cf page 9, note 1

OBJECTIVE II:

INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MARKET

INTRODUCTION

The overall objective of the integration of women in the labour market is pursued via six fields of action, namely:

- Education: equal opportunities for boys and girls at school.
- Vocational training for women: the IRIS network
the NOW initiative.
- Action in enterprises: positive action.
- Creation of enterprises by women: the network and the LEI programme.
- Reconciling work and family responsibilities for men and women: the childcare network.
- The situation of women in the labour market: the "Women and the labour market" network.

1. EDUCATION

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIRLS AND BOYS AT SCHOOL

A. GENERAL OBJECTIVES SET OUT IN THE THIRD PROGRAMME

In the area of education the Resolution of 1985 of the Council and the conclusions of the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council on 31 May 1990, underlined and confirmed the importance which they attach to action to promoting equal opportunities for girls and boys at school. Taking this into account:

- a) *The Commission will take stock with the Member States of progress achieved since the first report on the implementation of the 1985 Resolution in cooperation with the working group set up to follow up and assess the implementation of the 1985 Resolution and with the Education Committee of the Council.*
- b) *Priority measures for the next period will then be defined in collaboration with the Member States.*
- c) *In addition, the Commission will disseminate relevant research findings and examples of good practice in equal opportunities including:*

- *the findings of the research programme on equal opportunities and teacher training (TENET);*
- *action undertaken to make scientific and technical subjects more attractive to young girls.*

B. ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSION

1. Activities conducted in the framework of the action programme on "Equal opportunities for girls and boys in education".

A report on these was submitted in July 1993. It will be discussed in the coming months in order to define the main thrust of future work.

The activities supported by the Commission in this field between 1988 and 1992 were:

- the TENET (Teacher Education Network programme);
- research (5);
- studies (4);
- colloquia and conferences (8);
- dissemination seminars (5).

Of the ten main objectives of the 1985 Resolution, progress on the following two was highly satisfactory:

- *Promoting awareness among all the participants in the educational process of the need to achieve equal opportunities for girls and boys.*
- *Including the question of equal opportunities in teachers' initial and in-service training.*

Good work was also done on the following three objectives:

- *Educational and vocational guidance as a service to all pupils to encourage girls and boys to diversify their career choices.*
- *Opening up schools to the world of work.*
- *Extending the possibilities for effective access to all vocational training options.*

According to the report the five remaining objectives were not pursued at all:

- *Reinforcing coeducational practices.*
- *Developing a balance between men and women holding responsible positions in education.*
- *Eradicating stereotypes from school text books.*
- *Special measures to help the underprivileged.*
- *Measures to encourage the promotion of programmes for equal opportunities for girls and boys.*

However, since the first half of 1993, EC action has brought about a new strategy intended to make up for the weak points in the previous period. As a result of more dynamic co-operation with the Member States and better synergy between the EC policies on E.O. and education, it has been possible to develop the five objectives which were not pursued in the previous period.

Similarly a certain imbalance has been redressed by supporting activities in those countries where well-documented activities concerning E.O. had been lacking.

Note: The conclusion regarding the last objective can be qualified to some extent as any activity subsidised by the Commission, be it a research study or a conference, might be regarded as a measure to encourage the promotion of equal opportunities programmes.

2. Definition of priority areas of activity for the next phase

This could not be done until the report was ready. The priorities were then defined during the subsequent months by the Working Group on Equal Opportunities in Education. However, since the start of 1993, the representatives of the Task Force for Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth (TFHRETY) and the Equal Opportunities Unit have been able, by stimulating greater European co-operation, to support activities which should form the basis for the future period and which takes in the following priority areas:

- Continuing and intensifying action relating to:
 - teacher training;
 - diversification of vocational choices;
 - research on the underlying causes of persistently uneven patterns of access to, and options taken after, education and employment for boys and girls.

- Subsidising national and European actions in the following areas:
 - school teaching material and text books;
 - training of science and technology teachers;
 - encouraging awareness amongst teachers and parents.

It should be mentioned here that, although the Action Programmes in the field of education and training financed by the Commission are addressed to both sexes, they all explicitly contain an equal opportunities objective. An evaluation report on equal opportunities in the EC programmes completed in January 1993 shows that despite good intentions a more pro-active, interventionist approach is needed if any real increase is to be produced in the number of women participating in the programmes.

3. Dissemination of the conclusions and results of research

The Commission subsidised a number of conferences and seminars in the following countries:

- Ireland (September 1991, September 1992);
- France (May 1992);
- Belgium (May 1991);
- Brussels and Paris (June 1991, October 1991 and September 1992) organised by the ETUCE (*European Trade Union Committee for Education*).

It should be noted, though, that the spring of 1993 saw the preparation of major awareness activities at European level, taking effect in the first half of 1994 and promoting an exchange of good practice in the three main areas. These activities comprised European seminars dealing with stereotypes in school text books (Athens).

awareness raising for parents (Madrid) and a summer university for the training of trainers and teachers (Lisbon).

4. Projects supported by the Commission

One of the activities of the Commission was to subsidise and supervise projects submitted by one or more Member States through the members of the Working Group.

In 1992 a dozen national projects were supported by the Commission. Six of them dealt with girls and new technology (diversification of vocational choices), three others tackled stereotypes and awareness-raising in education and one project examined jobs with decision-making responsibilities.

It should be noted that since 1993 the revival of EC activity has created, between the Member States, new partnerships and networks bringing a new development of the european dimension. As a result, there has been an almost three-fold increase in the number of projects supported in 1993 (32) and a doubling of the overall budget allocated by the Commission.

In June 1993 four projects were in progress:

- an international research project conducted by three British universities and three Greek universities on developing models for introducing equal opportunities into secondary education;
- research on education strategies in teacher training colleges, conducted by Belgian and French trainers;
- a programme on diversification of career choices for girls in vocational and technical secondary education in the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium, in Ireland and in Spain.

Finally, 32 projects were adopted in 1993. In 1994 information will be circulated on the most representative types of project and on the results achieved. A bibliography of recent teaching materials produced by the Working Group on Equal Opportunities in Education will be drawn up and will be published shortly.

C. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE NATIONAL REPORTS

1. Legislation, regulations or agreements

In four countries legislation, regulations or agreements appear to have been introduced in the field of education since the start of the third programme.

- Belgium: - 29/1/1992: Agreement of the Flemish government to upgrade technical education (for girls too).
- 17/6/1992: Decree issued by the Flemish government to diversify girls' education in technical and vocational education.
- Denmark: Taking account of equal opportunities in regulations governing career guidance for young people.

- France: An agreement was signed between the Secretary of State for women's rights and the Secretary of State responsible for technical education (1989).
- Spain: The second equal opportunities plan includes several educational objectives.

2. Action taken

COUNTRY SUBJECT	B	DK	E	F	UK	I	IRL	L	NL	P	D
Diversification of school and vocational choices	X	X	X	X	X			X			
Elimination of stereotypes:											
- school text books			X					X		X	
- awareness and training of teachers				X				X		X	
- publication of brochures	X				X						
- video production							X				
- documentation										X	
Development of curricula				X							
Lifelong learning			X							X	
Awareness-raising amongst parents			X								
Setting up of a committee	X										

The national reports indicate that the action taken is mainly in the field of diversification of vocational choices and the eradication of gender stereotypes.

3. Organisations involved and synergy between them

The national reports indicate that action organised in this field has generated synergy between the education sector and the organisations responsible for equal opportunities in the following countries:

- the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium;
- Spain;
- France;
- Ireland.

Other benefits have also accrued from cooperation with:

- enterprises in the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium;
- parents' associations in Spain;
- the ONISEP (National Office for Educational and Careers Information) in France;
- the CEDIM in Portugal.

D. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE ETUC REPORT

The ETUC report does not contain any information on this subject.

E. EVALUATION

Of the three objectives defined for the third programme in the field of education only one was achieved by June 1993: the report on activities conducted between 1988 and 1992. The two other objectives i.e. the definition of priorities for the year and circulation of information on the lessons learned from the TENET¹ programme, were pursued in the following months and are thus a little behind schedule.

- Since the end of the TENET programme, this field of action had been in a period of transition. However, this transitional period has now come to an end. The budgets have been increased and a resurgence of activity is well under way.

The Member States also form partnerships through the national representatives on the working group. The main advantage of this was that the activities promoting the diversification of occupational choices complemented one another well in the majority of the Member States. Although they differed from country to country, the other activities were also in line with the objectives of the 1985 Resolution and the new priorities defined by the Commission. However, there was little in the way of legislation, regulations or agreements in this area.

2. VOCATIONAL TRAINING

IRIS

A. GENERAL OBJECTIVES SET OUT IN THE THIRD PROGRAMME

The Commission will continue the exchanges of experience and knowhow through the IRIS network and develop this network so as better to identify women's training needs, to encourage innovative training and to develop European methodology in this field. In the light of the evaluation report of the 1987 recommendation and the experience of IRIS, the Commission will propose appropriate action.

¹ Teacher Education Network

B. ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSION

1. Evaluation of the IRIS network

The IRIS network was evaluated in the course of 1992 and its activities since 1988 (the year in which the network was set up) were assessed.

The main points shown in this evaluation are:

- Number of projects in the IRIS network: 71 in 1988, 472 in 1992 and 534 in 1993.
- Most of the projects are for unemployed women or women returning to work.
- 64.8% of the projects deal with new information technology, 37.8% with the creation of businesses and management training and 80% are addressed exclusively to women.
- The duration of the training schemes generally varies from one to three years.
- A third of the projects offer childcare facilities.
- Three quarters of the projects do not have funding guarantees after 1993.
- Many projects are being run in Italy, Denmark and Spain whilst there are fewer in France, Germany and the United Kingdom.
- France, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands have a coordination unit funded by national authorities.

In 1992 the network's activities were as follows:

- Seminars: four national seminars and one transnational seminar in each country accounting for 36% of the IRIS budget.
- Exchange visits: 73 members of the IRIS network participated in these exchange visits, accounting for 4.8% of the budget.
- National technical meetings: personnel from a quarter of the projects attended this type of meeting, accounting for 2% of the budget.
- Publications:
 - the IRIS Bulletin - four thousand copies quarterly;
 - projects directory;
 - seminar reports;
 - a record of the qualifications obtained (discontinued in 1990);
- A database: personnel from 25% of the projects used the database in 1991.
- Electronic mailing facilities.
- Grants:
 - for promotion;
 - for transnational partnerships;
 - for support (only in 1990).

The evaluation concluded that:

- The main benefit of the seminars was the development of transnational contacts. The people who were interviewed, however, would welcome smaller and more specialised seminars in the form of workshops, with an emphasis on the training of trainers.
- Exchange visits are most popular. The reports of the visits should be improved.

- The national technical meetings are regarded as being very useful for pooling experience. There should be more of these and written minutes should be prepared.
- The publications have a fairly wide readership. However, they should be available in more languages and more practices and methods should be included.
- The database played an important part in finding partners for NOW. However, it should contain more precise information on the projects.
- The electronic mailing facilities were used very little.
- The size of the grants was thought to be too small and the time taken to process applications too long.

The evaluation report also reveals that there is synergy between IRIS and NOW, EUROFORM, FORCE, PETRA, EUROTECNET and COMETT.

The impact of IRIS at Member State level was deemed to be beneficial particularly in view of the low budget. However, few employers and political decision-makers seem to be aware of its existence.

At European level insufficient information on examples of good practice had been disseminated and there was no standard method for assessing projects.

At the end of the evaluation a series of recommendations were made and some of them have already been incorporated in activities for 1993.

Recommendation 1:	There is a need for written material on the lessons learned from IRIS. New material is being prepared. It will explain what has been achieved via partnership grants and will be distributed in the Member States.
Recommendation 2:	There is a need to assess individual projects. A study is being conducted to prepare a file on evaluating training projects. This will examine current practice in the projects whose organisers are members of IRIS.
Recommendation 3:	Publications need to be distributed more widely. Current resources have enabled the distribution of publications in German.
Recommendation 4:	National coordination units should be set up. These national units are, in principle, provided for in the second phase of IRIS (1994 to 1998). However, the decision to set them up depends on the results of a feasibility study conducted in the first six months of 1994 and on the national authorities.
Recommendation 5:	Closer links with other European networks are needed. Systematic links with FORCE and PETRA are planned.
Recommendation 6:	Projects which are more representative of innovation within each Member State need to be selected.
Recommendation 7:	Better progress reports of work carried out under the terms of IRIS grants are needed. It was decided to grant the subsidy on the basis of the progress report.
Recommendation 8:	Subsidies should be given to members of IRIS who wish to attend meetings but do not have sufficient resources.
Recommendation 9:	There should be translation and interpretation into more languages.
Recommendation 10:	Subsidies should be granted more quickly.
Recommendation 11:	The network's <i>turnover</i> should be reduced. Those organising projects with a limited life were no longer to be admitted to the network, but training organisations were to be included.

<p>Recommendation 12:</p>	<p>The role of the working group on vocational training should be defined as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to seek to secure funding for a national coordination committee; - to encourage those running innovatory projects to join the network; - to participate in selecting projects; - to coordinate between IRIS and other programmes; - to help to define a policy for IRIS through discussions with political decision-makers and employers' and workers' organisations.
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With regard to recommendation 12, the members of the Working Party who replied to the questionnaire referred to some of the proposals in the recommendation in defining their role. They think that their duties are to:

- inform all the partners involved at national and European level;
- to help define a European vocational training policy;
- to organise and coordinate activities at national level;
- select and assess projects;
- ensure that there is transfer of innovation.

However, none of them mentions:

- seeking funds for the national unit;
- coordination between IRIS and other programmes;
- contact with the employers associations and trade unions.

2. Defining future policy

After the completion of its first phase, it is necessary to redefine the lines along which IRIS will work in the future.

One of the keys to IRIS' future is the setting-up of the national technical assistance units. The members of the Working Party who replied to the questionnaire mentioned these as a means of enhancing the network's efficiency.

The plans for the new IRIS network, including the national units, also provide for two categories of members:

- organisations, employers' associations or trade unions conducting vocational training for women in order to promote equal opportunities;
- the proposers of model projects, with innovatory aspects fulfilling very precise criteria. These projects will be given the "IRIS" label, as a sort of mark of quality.

Finally, the IRIS evaluation report also sets out the following strategy for the future:

The network's strategy should include:

- *addressing the problems of unemployed women, in particular those trained for traditional male jobs;*
- *strengthening the part played by IRIS and generating awareness of women's needs amongst training organisations;*

- *close cooperation with FORCE to promote equal opportunities in implementing this programme.*

3. Studies

As well as monitoring IRIS, the Commission has commissioned studies on vocational training on subjects defined by the Working Group.

4. Action in conjunction with the employers associations and trade unions

The Commission chairs and provides technical assistance for the Social Dialogue Working Group on Education and Training, which is currently producing a Joint Opinion on Women and Training. The decision of the Social Partners themselves to make a joint statement on this subject can be regarded as a very positive indication of their concern.

C. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE NATIONAL REPORTS

The questionnaire sent out to Member States did not contain specific questions on IRIS, only on guidance and vocational training in general.

D. EVALUATION

The Commission has certainly promoted exchanges of experience and know-how through IRIS, an objective of the third programme. The network has expanded from fewer than 100 members in 1988 to over 500 in 1993.

At present it is difficult to say whether these exchanges have enabled women's needs to be defined more precisely or innovatory training methods to be promoted. On that issue, the report submitted by the Working Group does state that:

"The overall impression is that IRIS is a potentially useful network, but that its potential is somewhat under-utilised (...)

Only 20% of the IRIS programmes reported having adopted changes or innovations because of ideas they have obtained through IRIS. This is probably due to insufficient circulation of information on good practice originating in model programmes.

The evaluation report also points out that employers and political decision-makers in the majority of the Member States are not familiar with IRIS except in countries where there is a national coordination unit.

The conferences and the large number of widely circulated publications ensure that IRIS has a fairly strong internal and external profile, although one might well ask whether a circulation of 2 000 copies each in three languages (French, English and German) is sufficient for twelve countries where more than nine different languages are spoken.

NOW

A. GENERAL OBJECTIVES SET OUT IN THE THIRD PROGRAMME

The NOW initiative offers Member States, in the framework of transnational operations, the possibility of cofinancing action aiming to:

- *add value to and promote women's qualifications, as well as changing the enterprise culture so as to enable women to create their own enterprise or cooperative;*
- *assist the reinsertion of women into the "regular" labour market with a view to avoiding worsening the exclusion of women from the labour market and the vulnerability of female employment.*

The Community will finance additional measures to support childcare facilities and technical assistance in order to reinforce the effectiveness of vocational training and employment promotion measures at regional and local level, particularly in the least developed regions.

More particularly, the measures eligible for aid under this initiative are:

1. *Creation of small businesses and cooperatives by women.*
2. *Measures concerning guidance and advice, pretraining, training and access to employment with a view to professional reintegration.*
3. *Complementary measures:*
 - *development of childcare facilities*
 - *technical assistance measures.*

The implementation of these measures can be supported by the Community networks for equal opportunities such as IRIS, the childcare network and the positive action in enterprises network.

B. ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSION

1. The Commission manages more than 800 transnational projects with the aid of technical assistance from the national coordinators in each country.

Information on the scale of partnerships is presented in the document "NOW - implementation" (September 1992). This report states that a database on action taken is currently being prepared.

2. Several seminars were organised under the NOW programme. Examples are as follows:
 - International launch seminar in Brussels.
 - Launch seminar in each country.
 - Two topical international seminars on:
 - diversification of vocational choices (Bonn);
 - integration of women's needs in employment policies (Madrid).

In 1994 two other seminars will be held, dealing specifically with:

- reconciling work and family responsibilities (Rome);
- creation of enterprises by women.

The aim of these thematic seminars is to compile guides to good practice to be distributed on a large scale.

There were also a number of relevant publications:

- a quarterly information bulletin on the Community initiatives EUROFORM, NOW and Horizon.
 - A NOW brochure.
 - A guide to Community initiatives.
 - A guide to childcare facilities.
 - Seminar reports.
 - A catalogue of projects (in hand).
3. A study was conducted specifically on the effective interaction between NOW and the IRIS, LEI and Reconciliation programmes.
 4. Information aimed at the employers' associations and trade unions is planned for 1994. A document on NOW has been prepared for the social dialogue working group on education and vocational training.
 5. The process of linking projects to form a network is now under way, the aim being to draw maximum benefit from what has been achieved in each of them. A document has been drawn up as a preliminary step to forming the network and a guide to good practice is also planned.
 6. An Extraordinary Meeting of the Advisory Committee was organised on 28 April 1993 in order to examine the contribution of the ESF, and in particular the NOW initiative, in promoting equal opportunities. A questionnaire was sent to all the national coordinators of NOW and to the members of the other equality networks.

C. EVALUATION

As pointed out above, it was not intended to conduct an evaluation of NOW in this report. However, it has been deemed helpful to reproduce some information from the document on the implementation of NOW (September 1993) which offers an initial analysis of the projects:

- Each project has at least one partner in an Objective 1 region and thus reinforces training for women in these regions.
- The projects mainly provide for exchanges of trainers, methods and training programmes. Exchanges of trainees are arranged if it is important for them to have contact with each other.
- The projects are implemented by a wide range of operators - local, regional and national authorities, vocational training and equal opportunities organisations, women's associations and NGOs.
- Participation by employers' associations and trade unions (one of the Commission's priorities) is still on a relatively modest scale but plays a significant part in several Member States.
- Some Member States have underpinned the projects by encouraging several national operators to cooperate on a given activity.
- Projects for the creation of businesses by women strengthen the arrangements to support women entrepreneurs (information services, formation of networks between projects, etc.).
- Many projects make provision for the entire cycle of training from the counselling and guidance stage right through to follow-up in employment.
- Particular emphasis is placed on childcare facilities to make it easier for women to take part in training activities and enter into working life.

A first review of NOW was conducted in 1992. This review examines the targets and the launch of the NOW programme. It does not contain any figures or precise information on the nature and results of the partnerships. As NOW was several months behind its implementation schedule, it was too early to carry out an evaluation of this type.

The report states that:

- NOW and the Community Support Frameworks clearly complement one another.
- The launch campaign for NOW had a very pronounced impact in the Member States, particularly on the profile of the Community networks for equal opportunities and the national equal opportunities bodies.
- There is little involvement in NOW on the part of employers' associations and trade unions.
- The national coordinators played a crucial part in implementing action.
- The most efficient national technical assistance facilities appear to be those which have made arrangements for cooperation between bodies responsible for employment policy, vocational training, equal opportunities and the ESF.
- The IRIS network appears to have been heavily involved in setting up partnerships.
- There is also some synergy with other networks.
- Experts from these networks feel that links with NOW should be incorporated explicitly in their specifications.
- The majority of the projects constitute conventional vocational training projects. However, the following aspects are regarded as innovatory:
 - accompanying measures;
 - programmes addressed exclusively to women;
 - transnational projects;
 - the national coordination structure.
- The transnational partnerships have not yet had any demonstrable multiplier effect.
- Evaluation and monitoring are concerns apparently shared by the majority of the Member States.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND GUIDANCE

A. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE NATIONAL REPORTS

1. Legislation, regulations and agreements

The national reports revealed very little in the way of legislation, regulations, or agreements on vocational guidance and training since the inception of the third programme. The only instances of these are as follows:

- an action plan for vocational training (1992 in the Flemish speaking part of Belgium);
- a second equal opportunities plan in Spain;
- a contract between the state and the regions in France for a vocational training plan;
- the Portuguese report mentions the ESF framework programme, which no doubt applies to all other Member States.

2. Action undertaken

The action undertaken in the national reports can be summarised as follows:

Themes	Country	B	DK	E	F	UK	I	IRL	L	NL	P	D
Vocational training (projects, courses, operations etc.)		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Integration and guidance courses monitoring information		B	X	X						X		X
Awareness-raising and promotion of women's employment				X								
Recommendation								X				
New contributions for vocational training		X										
Financial aid for women					X							
Specific action for women in rural areas				X	X							
Creation of a special body (committee/commission/boutique)		X						X	X	X		

The table shows that many vocational training activities were conducted in practically all countries. Integration (into work) activities are less widespread, given that they are only mentioned in Belgium, Denmark, France and Germany. The remaining activities are characteristic of only one or two countries.

3. Organisations involved and synergistic effects

The national reports mention relationships between equal opportunities and employment services and vocational training organisations in:

- Denmark;
- Spain;
- France;
- Ireland;
- Luxembourg.

France and Denmark involve not only the regional authorities but also, amongst others, chambers of commerce, employers' associations and trade unions.

B. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE ETUC REPORT

The ETUC report mentions the document *Working women in Europe* adopted in 1990 which reveals the importance of training in integrating women in the employment market.

It also mentions organisation of a seminar on women and vocational training in February 1992 and the joint opinion which followed delivered by the ETUC, UNICE and the CEEP.

In the clothing and textile sector the trade unions and the employers' associations are currently negotiating a common position on women and training.

In September 1993 a meeting was scheduled by the ETUC women's committee to assess the impact of IRIS and NOW in each Member States.

3. POSITIVE ACTION IN ENTERPRISES

A. GENERAL OBJECTIVES SET OUT IN THE THIRD PROGRAMME

In the area of positive action within enterprises the Commission will:

- a) *ensure more systematic use of positive action measures within the framework of the Council recommendation of 13 December 1984 on the promotion of positive action for women;*
- b) *produce an updated report on Member States' action;*
- c) *in particular, continue to promote good practice on equal opportunities policies and positive action initiatives in the public and private sectors in cooperation with the employers' associations and trade unions and relevant networks as an integral part of personnel policies and management of human resources;*
- d) *make funding available for model programmes of positive action by employers' associations and trade unions.*

B. ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSION

Since the start of the third programme, this field of action has been in a state of transition. Indeed, as their contracts had expired, the network of experts, which had focused on assessing the achievements of the second programme, ceased its activities during 1992. During 1992 the Commission redefined its priorities and in March 1993 a new call for tenders was launched to get the new network back on its feet. This network started up in September 1993.

The Commission laid out the following strategy on the basis of the evaluation of the second programme, the opinions delivered by the Advisory Committee and various reports including the ETUC report on positive action in trade unions:

- The Commission will concentrate on what can be best achieved at Community level, leaving the Member States to take action in areas where a national approach is more appropriate.
- Work will concentrate on two priority sectors with common features throughout Europe, namely telecommunications and health.
- A greater effort will be made to encourage the employers' associations and trade unions to take on a more active role in positive action.
- Reconciling work with family and social life will be one of the major concerns.
- The Commission will facilitate joint action taken by the Member States on specific subjects.
- It will pursue research on the benefits of positive action and will circulate information on good practice.
- It will provide information through a newsletter and undertake information campaigns on positive action.

Since the start of the third programme some of these activities have taken place.

1. Evaluation and promotion of the activities of the positive action network in the second programme.

1991 was mainly devoted to assessing the activities conducted during the second programme. Several reports were written which were intended to capitalise upon what had been learned.

The following documents were produced:

1991 - Evaluation study of positive action in favour of women (published in French and English).

1991 - Practical handbook/how to design and organise positive action in training exclusively for women (published in French and English).

1992 - Positive action network. Motivating factors, obstacles and courses of action (published in French and English).

1991 - Evaluation report on actions developed during the second phase of the second action programme (1986-1990).

Funds were also set aside in 1991 to publicise the results through a seminar for employers in each country. A conference was held in the United Kingdom during the UK Presidency. A report was published after the conference. Three other seminars were also organised, two in the United Kingdom and one in Spain.

2. Financial support for model projects

During the period covered by this evaluation, four subsidies have been granted for positive action.

3. Studies in the field of telecommunications

So far two studies have been subsidised to analyse jobs and conditions for positive action in the telecommunications sector in Europe.

C. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE NATIONAL REPORTS

1. Legislation, regulations and agreements

Since the start of the third programme very little in the way of legislation, regulations or agreements on positive action has been adopted by the Member States.

The following measures are mentioned in the national reports in:

- Belgium (draft agreement in 1993-1994 to strengthen positive action);
- Spain, with the second equal opportunities plan;
- Italy, with laws 1/124/1991 and 215/1992 in favour of positive action and women creating their own enterprises;
- Germany, with the law of 1 January 1993 setting out the requirements for positive action in enterprises and the law on equal opportunities of 21 April 1993.

2. Action undertaken

SUBJECT	COUNTRY	B	DK	E	F	UK	I	IRL	L	NL	P	D
Technical and/or financial support for public or private enterprises for implementing positive action		X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	
Integration of positive action in social measures		X										
Equal opportunities plans for enterprises		X			X							
Creation of a support structure (committee or council)		X										
Setting up of courses			X									
Conferences, awareness-raising seminars (or campaigns)			X	X		X						X
Publication of brochures				X		X						X
Prizes awarded to enterprises							X	X	X		X	
Report to be delivered		X			X							
Development of models							X	X				
Financial aid for women					X							
Formation of a network		X										
Action in conjunction with training organisations		X				X						
Measures relating to recruitment examinations									X			

The actions which have been taken vary considerably. Belgium appears to be the country where most activities took place in keeping with the objectives of the third programme whilst other states restricted themselves to conducting awareness-raising campaigns (Spain and Germany).

3. Organisations involved and synergy

The national reports point to synergy between the equal opportunities agencies and employment and labour departments, enterprises and local and national government in Belgium, Denmark, France, the United Kingdom and Germany. In France the trade unions also lent their cooperation.

In the United Kingdom training organisations and the Engineering Council were also involved.

D. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE ETUC REPORT

The ETUC report points out that many trade unions are making an effort to incorporate positive action in collective agreements in Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Germany.

At European level positive action model programmes at sectoral level are planned for the coming months.

E. EVALUATION

The process of transition reduced the number of actions and studies undertaken in the first phase of the third programme and the network only restarted up its activities in September 1993.

These activities are several months behind the schedule set by the 1992 action plan. Action has been taken to raise the profile of and capitalise upon the activities of the second programme. This was a deliberate move and came after *mature reflection by the Commission* as an evaluation of the activities conducted during the second programme showed that they had not achieved the desired results.

A new strategic approach was thus defined comprising several new elements:

two priority sectors were chosen. This makes for a more selective and economic approach:

Telecommunications was chosen because it is a leading-edge sector which is in the process of restructuring and is a "new technology" sector with both public and private operators.

- for positive action to gain acceptance in enterprises it will have to be proved that: *there are benefits for enterprises taking an interest in women.*

Henceforth, emphasis will have to be placed on management of human resources, total quality management, flexibility etc.

The report on the motivating factors in setting up positive action (V/1604/92-FR) states that:

The main motivating factor is the positive action scheme's contribution to better management of human resources. The pragmatic approach to positive action makes it possible to motivate a company which would be prepared to initiate a positive action programme under external pressure (political and/or social).

The section "why launch positive action" no longer has to focus exclusively on the prejudices against women, but must stress the role that positive action can play in optimising the management of human resources.

This factor is an innovatory element of the third programme but is also the result of prevailing trends in positive action in Europe. This confers legitimacy and credibility on positive action initiatives amongst enterprises, thereby allowing positive action to shed its ideological aspects.

The partnership between the Commission and the Member States was mainly in evidence in the Advisory Committee. In fact, a working document to define the network's priorities and strategy was submitted to the Advisory Committee in order to obtain its opinion on several specific problems, in particular the criteria governing the choice of a priority sector, the points stressed in the Council Recommendation of 1984 and the groups of disadvantaged women to be targeted.

Apart from the deliberations of the Advisory Committee, it is not so much the legislation, regulations or agreements instituted by the Member States which complement each other as the action undertaken. Only four countries instituted general measures but virtually all the Member States lent their support to positive action in public or private enterprises.

As regards the employers' associations and trade unions, complementary activities were pursued along two lines: the integration of positive action in social dialogue and designing of positive action models.

4. CREATION OF BUSINESSES BY WOMEN

LOCAL EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES (LEI)

A. GENERAL OBJECTIVES IN THE THIRD PROGRAMME

The Commission with the help of the network of experts on women's local employment initiatives will continue to promote the LEI programme particularly in areas not eligible under the NOW initiatives.

B. ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSION

1. The activities of the network and the LEI programme

LEIs are promoted by:

- a programme for aiding the creation of businesses and employment for women;
- a network of experts responsible for organising the programme.

Under the guidance of the Commission, the network of experts is managed by a coordination team in Greece. *Grant management* is taken care of by a group belonging to the national crafts and trades confederation (Italy).

The network's tasks (in cooperation with the programme's grant management) are as follows:

- to provide counselling, information and technical assistance to women who wish to create small enterprises;
- to promote the LEI programme in the Member States;
- to assess projects;
- to monitor implementation of subsidised projects;
- to draw up annual monitoring reports;
- to cooperate and interact with the NOW programme.

The LEI programme and network offer the following means of promoting entrepreneurship:

- grants;
- technical assistance;
- publication of documents;
- promotion of good practice and transnational partnerships.

Up to December 1993 projects had to fulfil the following conditions to receive a grant:

- create a minimum of two jobs for women;
- send the application before commencing operations;
- to be registered legally and to be able to provide evidence of the jobs created.

The grant is 1 500 Ecus for full-time job and a maximum of 7 500 Ecus may be awarded.

The two main selection criteria are:

- economic feasibility;
- innovatory character in the local context.

The annual reports for 1991 and 1992 on the network and grant management contain the following figures:

	1991	1992
Project applications received	1231	2786
Non-eligible projects	144	377
Eligible projects	1087	2069
Subsidised projects	258	340

The figures indicate that there are more applications for eligible projects than funds available.

The grant management team set up a database enabling statistics to be compiled by country on the types of enterprises created (context, status, size, etc.), the staff employed and the women involved (age, status, studies, experience). Please refer to the annual reports for these statistics.

The members of the network and the grant management team offer the project organisers advice, information and technical assistance to help them submit applications. There are a great many applications for assistance. On average the grant management team handles around 15 written applications and 15 telephone calls a day. Between January and May 1993 the twelve experts dealt with some 4 200 inquiries, 90% by telephone, 8% by post and 2% by fax. The coordinator handled around 40 applications a month.

The network publishes a biannual newsletter in English and French. Stocks of the first two, of which 4 000 copies were printed, are exhausted. Only 3 000 copies of the third newsletter will be printed for budgetary reasons.

Two practical guides have been drawn up on "exporting" and generating ideas for enterprises. 4 000 copies were printed in French and English. It is the view of the Commission that these guides, which are effectively teach-yourself materials, should be translated into the other seven official community languages.

The annual report of the network states that the network's experts and the coordinator have developed contacts with the following programmes and departments: NOW, IRIS, ESF, DG XXIII, CEDEFOP, PHARE. They have also developed links with non-Community countries such as India, Lithuania and Russia.

Links with NOW vary, depending on the national expert involved. Some national experts, such as the Spanish, English, Dutch, German and Italian experts, helped to set up NOW projects. The network coordination team helped to establish transnational partnerships. Finally the experts of the LEI network in the following Member States (Greece, Spain, United Kingdom, Ireland, Netherlands, Italy and France) submitted applications to NOW for projects to set up, help and monitor businesses created by women.

2. Other activities of the Commission

Apart from the project and network activities the Commission also subsidised:

in 1991:

- a seminar in Spain

in 1992 and 1993

- three studies on women entrepreneurs in Europe entitled:
 - review of Community intervention in women's initiatives in Europe.
 - women's enterprises, what women entrepreneurs are doing in practice, the place of the enterprise in women's career profiles.
 - portraits of women entrepreneurs.

These studies are currently in progress.

Various colloquia and conferences are planned for the coming months one of which will be cooperation with the OECD.

C. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE NATIONAL REPORTS

1. Legislation, regulations or agreements

According to the national reports only Italy has introduced legislation with the law of 21 May 1992 in favour of women entrepreneurs.

2. Action undertaken

Subject	Country	B	DK	E	F	UK	I	IRL	L	NL	P	D
Financial aid		X			X		X				X	X
Courses for women setting up their own businesses			X	X		X					X	X
Formation of networks and clubs			X	X		X					X	
Publication of brochures						X						X
Awareness-raising campaign						X						X
Activities in rural areas						X		X				

Here there are fewer and less varied activities in the Member States, the majority being grants, courses and the formation of networks for women creating enterprises.

3. Organisations involved and synergy

The national reports mention very little synergy in this specific area. There are contacts between the bodies responsible for equal opportunities and the networks and associations of women creating their own enterprises in Denmark, Portugal and Germany. In the United Kingdom, training organisations, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Rural Development Council and local enterprises are also involved.

D. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE ETUC REPORT

The ETUC report does not provide any information on this subject

5. RECONCILIATION OF WORK AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MEN AND WOMEN

A. GENERAL OBJECTIVES SET OUT IN THE THIRD PROGRAMME

The action proposed is intended to reduce the barriers to access to and participation in the labour market by women, via measures designed to help reconcile work and family responsibilities.

- a) *The Commission will adopt a recommendation on child care services*
- b) *The Commission will produce a guide to good practice to supplement the recommendation giving guidelines on the information that Member States should collect regularly in relation to childcare services.*
- c) *The Commission will also continue to support the childcare network, enabling it to reinforce the NOW initiative and inter alia to monitor developments, evaluate policy options, collect and disseminate information and establish criteria for the definition of quality in child care services.*
- d) *Finally the Commission will finance innovative action projects, notably in the rural areas, as a complement to the NOW initiative. In this context, particular attention will be given to the situation of families with additional needs, in particular those in rural areas and those looking after the disabled or elderly people.*

B. ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSION

- a) In March 1992 the Council adopted a Recommendation on childcare
- b) Following this Recommendation, a guide to good practice is planned and will be completed and distributed during 1995.
- c) With the third programme the network changed its name. It is no longer only called the childcare network but the network on childcare and other measures to reconcile work and family responsibilities for men and women. This means that there has been a shift in emphasis towards the wider concept of reconciliation. The network's activities have thus been extended to fields other than childcare which is reflected in studies and publications in the following fields:

Structural funds:

- participation by several experts in drawing up the guide to childcare facilities prepared for NOW;

Rural areas:

- a report on childcare services for rural families is being drafted;
- a report on the structural funds and childcare in rural families is being distributed. Number of copies printed: 200 in English, 300 in French. Number of copies distributed: 150 in English, 250 in French

The quality of services for young children:

A document on the criteria of the quality of services was published in nine languages and circulated very widely (30 000 copies). This document contains a questionnaire to get feedback from readers; the replies will be analysed and published.

The costs and funding of childcare services:

A report is being drafted on the situation in the Member States.

Types of parental leave:

A review of the types of parental leave in the Member States has been completed in 1993¹.

Men as carers:

A working party is examining ways of increasing men's involvement in childcare. A seminar on this subject was organised in May 1993 in Ravenna and a report has been published in 1994 by the Commission as part of the programme for the international year of the family².

Mothers, fathers and employment:

A second report on parents' employment (the first was dated 1990) was published in 1993. It covers the period 1988-1991³.

Parents' employment and childcare:

A large conference was organised in Copenhagen in 1992 attended by over 200 people from 16 countries. The subject was parents' employment and childcare: policies and services in the European community and in the Nordic countries.

The fight against racism in childcare services:

In 1991 a project subsidised by the Commission aimed to increase childcare provision capacities to cater for the needs of ethnic minorities⁴. This was an exchange programme between four countries (Belgium, France, Italy and the United Kingdom). A European week was organised in the course of the project. One of the objectives of the network was to circulate information on the outcome of the project.

Organisation of a database:

At present the database contains several thousand addresses of organisations dealing with the problems connected with reconciling work and family commitments. The members of the network do much to circulate information at national level and describe their duties as follows:

- *To inform relevant organisations and individuals on the activities of the network and of broader Commission policies relevant to the subject of reconciliation.*

1 Doc V/773/94

2 Doc V/7593/93

3 Doc V/5787/93

4 Doc V/7213/93

- *Trying to start cooperation with other groups/individuals of the various countries (networking and learning about developments and good results elsewhere).*
- *To activate political and social relations.*
- *To organise an information system.*
- *To act as an established and reliable reference point for agencies, institutions, and individuals who need information support in organising projects and initiatives, etc.*

Subsidising of studies:

The following subjects have been tackled:

- the situation and care of elderly or disabled women;
- the production of an employer's guide for the care of elderly people;
- single women in Europe;
- lone-parent families in Europe;
- the care of elderly persons.

C. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE NATIONAL REPORTS

1. Legislation, regulations and agreements

Eight national reports mention legislative measures or action plans in this field:

- Belgium: the law of 5 August 1991 comprises measures on behalf of the father for maternity leave under certain conditions and extension of paternity leave to three days.
- Denmark: an action plan and policy in this field were established for the years 1990 to 1993.
- Spain: the second equal opportunities plan covers the objectives in this field.
- France: the law of 27 January 1993 sets out measures to be taken to reconcile family and working life.
- United Kingdom: the law of October 1991 obliges local authorities to publish a report on available childcare facilities every three years.
- Ireland: legislation for adoption leave and the possibility of parental leave is currently being studied.
- Luxembourg: the law of July 1992 sets out the procedure for family and education benefit.
- Germany: the law of January 1992 provides for an allowance for parents at home and parental leave. On 21 April 1993 a draft law was submitted to give added protection to part-time workers.

2. Action undertaken

COUNTRY	B	DK	E	F	UK	I	IRL	L	NL	P	D
SUBJECTS											
Creation of child minding or childcare facilities	X				X						X
Pilot projects	X	X			X			X		X	
Assignment of childcare personnel	X				X						
Training of childcare personnel	X									X	
Studies, research	X		X	X			X			X	
Special measures: flexible working time career break							X				
Formation of a discussion group	X						X			X	
Parental allowance											X
Financial aid for childcare										X	
Allocation of funds from employers' contributions	X										
Publication of brochures and guides	X	X									
Debates, conferences, seminars, campaigns	X		X								X
Integration of this issue in positive action	X										
A competition for enterprises respecting the needs of the family											X
Drawing up of a charter	X										

Only the Dutch and Italian reports do not mention any activities in this field. In the other Member States there is considerable variety in the action undertaken with studies, research and pilot projects leading the field, just ahead of the setting up of child-minding (five countries) or childcare (four countries) facilities.

3. Organisations involved and synergy

It is in France and Belgium that the greatest variety of organisations involved in this field are mentioned. Apart from the equal opportunities departments and the Ministry for the family, the Ministry of employment and the employment agencies, training organisations, family allowance funds, SOFRES, CNRS, radio and television broadcasting companies, etc. are all mentioned.

The other reports do not highlight any synergy with the exception of the German report which places on record the part played by the trade unions, social services and employers.

D. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE ETUC REPORT

The ETUC report shows that there are great differences between the Member States in terms of childcare. Whilst France and Denmark are well equipped in this field, Ireland and Greece have practically no facilities. Any progress which has been observed must be seen in relation to the original situation.

The ETUC's efforts in this field were devoted to the document *Working women in Europe* where the importance of this matter in terms of the equal opportunities issue is underlined. The ETUC women's committee approves the Recommendation, but does not consider it to be a strong enough measure to help reconcile work and family responsibilities.

E. EVALUATION

The activities undertaken in this field show that the objectives of the third programme have been pursued effectively by the Commission and the network. The approach to this issue at Community level has benefited greatly from the work done in this network which has been innovatory.

Dissemination of information was a prime objective and the network did succeed in raising the profile of and capitalising upon action in this field.

It is indubitably the subject of reconciling working and family lives (on which the Council adopted a recommendation in March 1992) which prompted most complementary action by the Member States in the form of legislation, regulations and agreements. This is borne out by eight of eleven reports which also mention a fairly wide range of other activities, especially studies, research and pilot projects.

Through the Recommendation, the Commission calls upon the Member States to take action, with frequent references to their national, regional and local responsibilities in this area. It also invites the Member States to report on action taken within three years of adoption of the Recommendation.

The Advisory Committee has been discussing this issue regularly since December 1991. This is one of the subjects which elicited action from the Advisory Committee: in October 1991, a letter was sent to the Director General of DG V underlining the importance of reconciling work and family responsibilities for equal opportunities and in January 1992 a working group was set up.

No specific arrangements appear to have made to set up partnerships with the employers' associations or trade unions.

Only one project to set up transnational links was subsidised. This was thus not a priority objective, except in the case of the exchanges made possible by international conferences.

6. THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MARKET

A. GENERAL OBJECTIVES SET OUT IN THE THIRD PROGRAMME

The Commission will continue to launch and support research and studies on the problems encountered by women for their full integration in the labour market on equal terms with men. Particular attention will be given to the situation of the most disadvantaged groups of women and issues such as the impact of 1992 on women's employment, women in atypical employment and new developments in the organisation of working time. In this context the Commission will continue to promote the development of statistical data on the situation of women, including the improvement of existing concepts, indicators and methods.

The Commission will also continue to support the network of experts on Women in the labour market in order to ensure a continuous flow of information on new developments concerning women's employment in the Member States and to ensure greater familiarity with the results of ongoing research in this field across the Community.

B. ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSION

- The network of experts, which has been in existence since 1983, continued its work. The subjects which were studied were as follows:
 - The position of women in the labour market: a final report was produced and a summary in nine languages was distributed as a supplement to the Women in Europe publications. An English publisher is to publish a collection of articles illustrating the situation in each country.
 - Segregation in the employment market: there are 12 national reports and the final report was published in Social Europe. A summary in the nine languages is being distributed by the services of the Commission.
 - Determining pay and discrimination - criteria for pay: a final report based on the 12 national reports was completed in August 1993.
 - Flexible working: a study is still in progress.

Apart from the studies, the network published the "Bulletin on Women and Employment in the EC". This is a new venture introduced by the third programme and presents the results of research. 4 000 copies of the first report (October 1992) were published in French and English and stocks are now exhausted. 8 000 copies of the second report (April 1993) were published. The third report was published in October 1993.

In addition to the network's activities, the Commission supported national conferences in Valencia, Bonn, Milan, Athens, Sangallen, Oxford and Antwerp.

Further research has already been commissioned by the Commission on:

- unemployed and economically inactive women (in hand);
- *Women in the European Community* in collaboration with the SOEC;
- atypical employment (to be published in Social Europe);
- a forward-looking study on women's employment in the year 2000 (in hand);
- women returners (in hand).

C. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE NATIONAL REPORTS AND THE ETUC REPORT

The questionnaire sent to Member States and to the employers' and workers' organisations did not contain any questions relating to this specific action.

D. EVALUATION

The objectives of the third programme appear to have been pursued and attained on the basis of the studies conducted by the network.

Although it is difficult to establish a direct link between political decisions and the studies conducted, it is clear that these, with their wide circulation, contribute to the process of raising awareness of equal opportunities.

According to the Commission's documentation services, the Bulletin on Women and Employment and Issue No 36 of Women of Europe on the position of women in the labour market are amongst the documents most frequently requested.

With the third programme the network changed its coordination and the Bulletin on women and employment was launched. The subjects covered are innovatory, particularly equal pay.

OBJECTIVE III

IMPROVING THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY

1. WOMEN AND DECISION-MAKING

A. GENERAL OBJECTIVES SET OUT IN THE THIRD PROGRAMME

To encourage measures intended to promote the participation of women in decision-making in economic and social life.

In particular the Commission undertakes to:

1. *Liaise with the European Parliament and strengthen links with the political parties and other relevant opinion formers in the Member States with a view to raising awareness of the fundamental importance of having more women in the decision-making process. Encourage through the organisation of conferences and other measures an increase in women's representation in politics at European and national level.*
2. *Set up an expert network on women and decision-making to analyse the barriers facing women in the decision-making process and to propose policy options.*
3. *Initiate and fund specific action and research projects in the private sector and the public sector.*
4. *Support and cooperate with organisations actively monitoring women's participation in public life such as the European Women's Lobby as well as with national equality institutions and networks.*

B. ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSION

1. Formation of a network of experts

This network has three tasks:

- to work out and propose action and strategies;
- to provide support for national activities in the field;
- to monitor and assess strategy.

A series of activities have been carried out or are planned:

- A "sales pitch" setting out the reasons for and possible approaches to achieving equal participation for men and women in decision-making in public life, but in particular politics (not yet published).
- A survey entitled *Statistical data on women in decision-making* published in English, 600 copies of which have been distributed since the beginning of the year.

- A study in collaboration with the ETUC on the role of women in decision-making in trade unions.
- A directory of addresses of women's organisations, journalists, members of Parliament, researchers, trade unions and others has been drawn up and is used by the coordination team to provide information on the network's activities.
- A conference in Athens on women in power followed by a summit organised in collaboration with the European Women's Lobby (attended by 500 people). On this occasion a declaration calling for a greater balance of power between women and men was signed by women politicians from various Member States. The text was distributed in the nine Community languages, mainly in the form of some 100 000 post cards and posters reiterating the key passages of the declaration. Furthermore, at the symposium on 8 March 1993 national action was initiated in various Member States on the basis of the Athens declaration.
- A conference report and press review (containing forty articles) was produced.
- Promotional measures for the participation of women in the 1994 European elections: a basic kit of material for pursuing various national tactics to encourage voting in favour of women was presented at a seminar on "Women and the 1994 European elections" held in Brussels in October 1993 and attended by European MPs.
- A brochure for the public on women and decision-making is currently being prepared.
- A second summit for women in power will be organised in 1995 to determine what progress has been made and to decide what course of action can be adopted in the future.

Next year the network will concentrate on women and decision-making in local and regional authorities whilst pursuing its activities in connection with the European elections.

2. Other activities of the Commission

The Commission has subsidised 11 seminars in the following countries: United Kingdom, Denmark, Italy and Greece. It has also subsidised five studies, one of which in collaboration with the European Parliament, on the participation of women in political parties at European level (ecologists - socialists - PPE - liberals).

The Commission also provided funding for producing a video on the Athens conference and a 12-episode series on *Women and success*. A programme has been set up for co-funding activities in connection with the European elections. A selection board made up of an MEP, an official of the Commission and a specialist on women's information issues has been formed. 74 projects have been submitted to the Commission. 15 projects from 11 Member States (all except Luxembourg) have been selected, one of which was submitted by the Women's European Lobby.

C. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE NATIONAL REPORTS

1. Legislation, regulations and agreements

The following countries have adopted general measures in this area since the start of the third programme:

- Belgium: draft law (April 1993)¹ to increase the number of women on electoral lists and subsequently the number of women in Parliament.
- Spain: the second equal opportunities plan covers the objectives in this area.
- Netherlands: a programme entitled Horizon 1995. An opinion drawn up on women in politics and public administration.
- Portugal: a resolution endorsing the Athens declaration.
- Germany: a draft law to increase women's representation in committees and public bodies.

2. Action taken

COUNTRY SUBJECT	B	DK	E	F	UK	I	IRL	L	NL	P	D
Positive action to increase the number of women in decision-making posts, including quotas			X		X		X	X	X	X	
Awareness-raising activities (campaigns, advertising)			X		X					X	
Studies	X		X						X		
Reports to be submitted							X				X
Formation of a network							X				
Training							X				
Financing									X		

Spain, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands are pursuing activities intended to increase the number of women in decision-making posts. Apart from the measures mentioned above, nothing similar is mentioned in the reports of the other Member States which prefer specific awareness-raising activities, contacts or studies.

3. Organisations involved and synergy

In general, the national reports point to synergy between equal opportunities' departments and administrations, government, political parties, international and European organisations.

¹ The law has been adopted on 24.5.1994

D. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE ETUC REPORT

The ETUC points out that the national trade unions report a number of campaigns on women in decision-making posts in trade unions. Some establish a quota, others do not.

At European level, the ETUC Congress adopted an overall policy providing for:

- an amendment to the constitution guaranteeing the presence of women up to group delegation level;
- a special budget;
- integration of equal opportunities in all aspects of policy.

Changes have been made with regard to the presence of women in the decision-making bodies of the ETUC.

In December 1992 a seminar was held which set out the following aims:

- a conference is to be held every five years;
- one woman delegate from each confederation is to attend the conferences;
- all policy documents must include equal opportunities aspects;
- a report on the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the participation of women in trade unions must be submitted at the conference.

A study financed by the Commission is in hand on the participation of women in trade unions.

A network of women in the trade unions of the countries of eastern and western Europe was created.

Training for ETUC policy makers is to be organised to ensure that they incorporate equal opportunities in their proposals.

E. EVALUATION

Although this is a new field of action, the activities developed by the Commission and the network have fulfilled the objectives of the third programme. Discussion of the issue of women in power has intensified markedly at Community level.

Previously, only four countries tackled this theme explicitly. The network has enabled the other Member States to be brought up to date on progress in this area.

The Athens declaration enabled the question of women's participation in political power to be raised everywhere.

The members of the network have acted as a relay between the Commission and national and local authorities. There is also coordination in awareness-raising activities, such as the use of an identical kit or activities for Women's Day on 8 March.

According to the national reports, five countries adopted legislation, regulations or agreements and the majority of the Member States took action mainly with a view to increasing the number of women in decision-making posts. At this level the actions taken by Member States thus complement each other.

According to the ETUC report, this complementarity also extends to trade union level.

An ETUC study is being conducted in collaboration with the network to determine the mechanisms influencing the position of women in trade unions. Furthermore, the network has also included in its directory a large number of trade unions, mainly in Ireland and Germany.

During the first year of the network's operations (1992), activities were not focused on transnational partnerships, except when European conferences were organised. Some members of the network do wish to develop the pooling of experience. Furthermore, the co-funding programme for 1994 will take into consideration the transnational aspects of the action proposed when projects have been selected.

Since the beginning of the year the network has been producing an internal newsletter summarising the action taken at national level. This should enable experience to be pooled better.

The network advertises its activities widely and has designed modern communication tools (videos, posters and publicity kits, etc.) to maintain a high profile.

The fact that a second conference on women in power is planned in 1995 should fuel the debate on this subject and ensure that maximum benefit is drawn from action in this field.

2. MEDIA

A. GENERAL OBJECTIVES SET OUT IN THE THIRD PROGRAMME

The Commission will continue to promote change in the representation of women in the media industry as well as in the institutional and professional environment of media organisations and will also develop innovatory programmes and materials which challenge traditional images and promote positive images of women and men.

With the assistance of the Steering Committee on Equal Opportunities in Broadcasting and Television, the Commission shall continue to analyse the relationship between the employment status of women in the media and the output of these media and develop guidelines to address the issue of representation of women in the media industry and their portrayal by the media. The Commission shall also support initiatives which encourage innovation in programme and media content and promote positive images of women including the continuation of its Niki prize.

B. ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSION

Two subjects are dealt with here: employment of women in the media industry and the image of women.

1. Women's employment in the media industry

The Steering Committee for equal opportunities in television and radio broadcasting originally created in 1986 started up again in 1992 after an interruption of eight months due to a change of the coordinators. In principle, its remit is confined to women's employment in the media industry.

Its aims are to:

- ensure regular exchange of information, experience and documentation on equal opportunities between top level personnel in radio and television and radio broadcasting organisations;
- promote the spread of positive action projects to improve the status of women in the media;
- monitor regularly the practices and structures of employment in connection with equal opportunities in this sector.

The following themes were dealt with:

- sexual harassment at work, equal opportunities for employees with fixed-term contracts and casual workers in radio and television broadcasting, the place of women in radio and television programmes and in decision-making.
- The next subject to be tackled will be improvement of working conditions in order to reconcile family life and working life.

The following action was taken:

- The network coordinators established personal contact with public service radio and television broadcasting organisations to encourage them to take action conforming with the recommendations of the Steering Committee.
- A newsletter ("A l'Antenne") was published in the nine Community languages.
- A video *Countdown to Equality* was produced as a joint venture between the Commission and the 17 audiovisual organisations.
- A brochure on "Equal opportunities in European radio and television broadcasting: a practical guide" was published in nine languages. This has the twin aim of advertising the Committee's activities and forming a guide for promoting positive action in radio and television broadcasting organisations.
- A leaflet was produced on the Steering Committee in French and English.
- Positive action in public service radio and television broadcasting organisations was encouraged by, for example, a grant from the Commission (RTE Ireland, NOS Netherlands, ERT Greece).
- Research was funded on: women's employment in European Press and the evaluation of positive action in the media industry.
- The Commission made arrangements to cooperate with the UER (European Union of Radio and Television Broadcasting), a person was nominated to liaise between the two and an *ad hoc* group to promote equal opportunities was set up. A conference on women's employment and the image of women in the media industry is planned for 1995.

- Cooperation with the commercial sector: collection of information and establishing contacts with independent producers.
- Subsidies and participation in seminars and conferences.

2. Improving the image of women on television and in the press

- In 1992 the NIKI prize event was held in Amsterdam at the Netherlands radio and television broadcasting organisation NOS. This is a joint venture by DG X and DG V which takes place every two years and which falls into two parts: the award ceremony and a conference. A report on the conference and the prize-giving ceremony was published by the NOS.
- In 1994 the NIKI event has taken place in Lisbon.
- A programme for co-funding films which is accessible to the public and private sectors has been launched. A selection board made up of two officials of the Commission, the Steering Committee coordinators, a media consultant and an official of the media programme meets three times a year to select films which best meet the programme's aims. The selection criteria are as follows: the subject must be related to an issue of the third programme, the financing plan must be viable, the project must be ready in the budgetary year and, in addition, there must be an undertaking from the broadcasters that the film will be shown. Balanced distribution of this funding between the countries is also a selection criteria.
- Subsidies were granted for seminars in the United Kingdom, Italy, France and Germany.
- A study on the image of women in the media industry is in progress.

3. Activities relating to women's employment and the image of women in the media

- Guidelines on the image of women and women's employment in the media industry are being prepared. A study was conducted on the situation in Canada where there is a great awareness of these problems and arrangements have been made to collaborate with the European Union of Radio and Television Broadcasting.

C. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE NATIONAL REPORTS

1. Legislation, regulations and agreements

The national reports mention very little in the way of legislation, regulations and agreements since the start of the third programme apart from the second equal opportunities programme in Spain, the Horizon 95 programme in the Netherlands and a recommendation on women's and men's roles in the media industry in Ireland.

2. Action undertaken

COUNTRY SUBJECTS	B	DK	E	F	UK	I	IR	L	NL	P	D
Positive action in radio and television organisations	X										
Publication of brochures	X									X	
Production of videos	X									X	
Posters	X										
Conferences/seminars		X					X			X	
Official monitoring of advertising productions				X	X						X
Recommendations				X							
Setting up of a committee									X		
Studies/research											X

3. Organisations involved and synergy

In this field the equal opportunities services mainly work with radio and television broadcasting organisations, journalists' representatives, ministries of culture and employment and advertisement councils.

D. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE ETUC REPORT

There is no information on this subject in the ETUC report.

E. EVALUATION

It is useful to remember that this specific area of activity covers two very different problems (women's employment and the image of women in the media industry). Even though both of them are related to the media, the frames of reference and the strategies adopted are very different. The subjects handled by the Steering Committee are close to the issues examined in the sections on positive action, women and decision-making and reconciliation, whereas the image of women is a quite different matter - more a question of awareness, information, the arts and communication techniques, attitudes, values and a sense of well-being.

Employment: It is thanks to the third action programme that the problem of women's employment in this sector is still on the agenda. Some tangible action has resulted - a post for an equal opportunities officer was created for Greek television (ERT), and a policy to prevent sexual harassment at the BBC was devised.

People interviewed thought that the Steering Committee could be made more effective, mainly by extending its activities to independent or non-public sector television.

As regards the partnership between the Commission and the Member States, recommendations from the Steering Committee (on employment) are sent by the Director General of DG V to the directors of national radio and television broadcasting organisations. This partnership is underpinned by action on the ground by the Committee's coordination team.

The Steering Committee has also raised its profile by producing a large-circulation newsletter, a video and by action in the field. The joint activities of the Commission and the EUR should strengthen the action provided for by the third programme.

The image of women: it is too early to judge how effective action in this completely new field has been. However, the new guidelines are certain to enhance its effectiveness.

What has been done is thought to have been innovatory.

The programme for co-funding films brings a novel approach to this issue by encouraging producers to take an interest in the image of women.

Some 20 films are submitted at each meeting of the selection board and a balance is maintained between the films from various countries. Only Luxembourg has not applied to have a production co-funded and Denmark has only submitted one application.

3. WOMEN'S STUDIES

A. GENERAL OBJECTIVES SET OUT IN THE THIRD PROGRAMME

During the last few years a new specialism called women's studies has developed which, in some cases, has been fully institutionalised in universities and research centres, whereby the situation of women is considered from a global and multidisciplinary perspective. A new initiative proposed in the present programme is to collect more systematic information on this development, to disseminate and to support it with a view to stimulating similar initiatives across the Community.

B. ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSION

The third action programme provides for action relating to women's studies which aim at integrating women in the labour market. Although action in this field commenced with the second programme, this is the first time that it has actually appeared in a Commission programme.

A survey on women's studies and research was conducted in 1987-1998 in the twelve Member States using a questionnaire. The aim was to collect data on the people, groups or centres engaged in one or more activities relating to women's studies. All the data collected were used to create a database called GRACE. In 1990 this gave rise to the GRACE project which had two aims:

- to enlarge the database;
- to disseminate the information in the base and to encourage similar ventures at national level.

1. Enlarging the database

In 1990 questionnaires were sent out for the new update. Unfortunately, few responses were obtained (32%) and it was then decided that this task should be left to future national structures for coordinating Union policy on equal opportunities which would take charge of GRACE in the Member States.

2. Disseminating information and encouraging similar ventures

- Several bilingual thematic publications (5000 copies in French and English) were published.

These brochures, which were distributed by GRIF (Groupe de recherche et d'information féministe - Women's research and information group), are entitled:

- Power and empowerment in politics;
 - Women's studies;
 - Women and work;
 - Image and media.
- Two annual reports were also published and distributed.
 - In future, information from GRACE will be distributed via the national structures for policy coordination. Negotiations are currently being conducted with eight centres. The main selection criterion is that they should be well-equipped and organised.

To help the Commission and the people in charge of the GRACE project, a voluntary ad hoc scientific committee was set up. The duties of the scientific committee were to identify the most suitable national structures for policy coordination, to determine the titles and selection criteria for the thematic publications and finally to prepare subjects for interdisciplinary seminars. It should be pointed out that this is not like the working parties in the other areas of action and the members were chosen on the basis of their expertise and not as national representatives.

- Interdisciplinary seminars were organised on the following subjects:
 - European strategy (March 1991);
 - The feminisation of knowledge (February 1992);
 - Impact on the curriculum (March 1992);
 - New trends in feminist studies (1993);
 reports of which have not, apparently, been published.
- A research project is in progress on women's studies and European integration and a seminar on this subject has been held in October 1993.
- The Commission has also subsidised several national seminars (two in France, one in Portugal, one in the Netherlands and one in Greece).

C. ACTIVITIES PRESENTED IN THE NATIONAL AND ETUC REPORTS

The national and ETUC reports do not contain any information on this subject.

D. EVALUATION

The Commission's activities are concentrated on GRACE and are aimed at developing this source of information, publicising its existence and giving fresh impetus to women's studies.

As a consequence of this activity, some progress has been achieved, e.g.:

- a course on women's studies is to be introduced in Lisbon;
- links have been formed between some research groups (Groupe Simone, Toulouse and the CEDREP, Paris);
- the issue of women's studies has awakened renewed interest in several countries;
- there is a more open attitude towards Europe amongst female researchers;
- there has been an increase in the number of requests to use GRACE.

Nevertheless, despite growing interest in women's studies, the information held in GRACE is underused.

4. AWARENESS-RAISING AND INFORMATION

A. GENERAL OBJECTIVES SET OUT IN THE THIRD PROGRAMME

Awareness-raising

- *The Commission shall continue to improve the amount and quality of information available on all issues identified in the third action programme.*

Information

- *The Commission shall publish and disseminate studies, research and evaluation reports within the framework of the present programme.*

- *The Commission shall also ensure that all its general information programmes include and take full account of factors pertinent to women, especially in the programme of information relating to 1992.*
- *The Commission shall promote and support the development of cooperation and information exchange between documentation centres, specialist libraries, archives and any other centres possessing an important source of information on women.*

B. ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSION

I. Awareness-raising activities

Awareness-raising activities cover all general information activities on equal opportunities and the third programme:

- A leaflet on the Equal Opportunities Unit was prepared. It describes the Commission's principal activities within the framework of the third programme in nine languages.
- Brochures on various aspects of equal opportunities policy are being prepared and will be distributed in nine languages.
- A funding application form specifies the type of activities which can be funded; by whom they can be submitted; what percentage of the funding may be contributed, for what duration; selection criteria and the procedure for obtaining funds. This is also available in nine languages.
- DG X's women's information service cooperated with DG V in publishing:
 - A number of supplements to the Women in Europe booklets: the third action programme, child care and the position of women in the labour market (1983-1990).
 - The Women of Europe newsletter. This provides information on studies carried out and conferences supported by the Commission.
- DG X also published a leaflet on Equal Opportunities for Women in the Community in the series Europe in Movement prepared by DG V. It was published in English and is soon to be translated in the other Community languages.
- A catalogue of the documents available at the services of the Commission is regularly updated and circulated widely.
- The Commission has also supported national general information conferences on the problem of equal opportunities, in Arhus, Copenhagen, Athens, Barcelona, Valencia, Strasbourg, Marseille, Brussels, Luxembourg, Amsterdam and several German cities.
- In order to give to its activities in this area a distinctive trademark, the Commission has adopted a logo with a general theme and eight specific subthemes for the networks. This logo was used at the Athens conference and the women's summit organised by the network for women and decision-making, for certain publications like the guide on *How to combat sexual harassment at work* or for printing posters, greetings cards, visiting cards, and covers for publications.

2. Specific information

Several national or international conferences on specific subjects have been organised for each specific field of action. In some cases publications are produced:

- research or evaluation reports with small circulations (approximately 100 copies in two languages);
- network information bulletins with a wider circulation issued by the network coordination teams. Up to two, four or six thousand copies are printed in two or three Community languages (French, English, German or Spanish);
- information dossiers such as the LEI dossiers. The majority are distributed in two languages, some in nine.

Some activities have produced fewer publications than others such as education, positive action, mainstreaming and development of the legal framework.

3. Development of cooperation and exchange of information between documentation centres

A study was carried out on resources in terms of information and documentation on equal opportunities in the European Community. It takes stock of the current situation, sets out recommendations and identifies the major obstacles to exchanging information.

At national level these obstacles are as follows:

- a lack of national documentation centres in some Member States;
- a lack of coordination between existing centres;
- a lack of data processing equipment in some Member States;
- a lack of standardised indexing systems;
- a lack of factual data and/or inability to access them;
- a lack of funds;
- linguistic obstacles.

Four models are proposed to improve the exchange of information on women:

1. A Community information network made up of national centres or centres acting as national focal points, and an international centre for Community data. Telecommunications would facilitate the exchange of information.
2. A Community information service in one of the Community institutions or one of the national centres.
3. A network of data bases in the national centres and the Community centre.
4. A Community data base on women, its input entered into a central computer and coordinated by the Commission or by a national centre with data being supplied by other national centres.

Following the completion of this study and the opinions delivered by the Advisory Committee, a voluntary coordination group from the information and documentation centres on women was set up. It met for the first time in April 1993 and was attended by representatives of the 12 Member States in charge of public or private documentation centres. The aim is to devise a strategy and action plan to provide better information and to involve more women in the construction of Europe.

C. EVALUATION

It is certainly too early to judge the effectiveness of strategies for developing cooperation between documentation centres as this process is still in its infancy.

Much of the Commission's work is devoted to specific awareness-raising and information campaigns. However, it is difficult to appraise their effectiveness and impact.

In order to take the analysis a little further, a quantitative study was carried out using the following indicators:

- the number of requests for information documents received between January 1992 and June 1993 by the Commission services, the requests being broken down by countries and cities;
- the number of systematic dispatches carried out in the same period on the basis of the Commission mailing lists, also broken down by countries and cities.

The figures are only indicative and show that:

- the greatest number of requests (24.3%) were received from the United Kingdom, followed by Belgium (22.5%), Germany (18.4%) and France (10%), with the other eight countries sharing the remaining 25% and accounting for less than 5% each. The countries at the bottom of the list are Denmark (1.12%) and Portugal (0.72%);
- an analysis of documents sent out automatically show that the United Kingdom still heads the list with 16.3%, followed by the Netherlands and Belgium with 16.3% and 13.7% respectively, then Italy, France and Germany, all three of which receive approximately 10% of the total. The other six countries share the remaining 25% with Luxembourg only accounting for 1.3%.

Requests also come from countries other than the Member States. Between January 1992 and July 1993 requests were received from Sweden, Switzerland and South Africa (22, 15 and 10 requests respectively) whilst from Portugal and Denmark only nine and 14 requests for information respectively were received, and only one per country in 1993.

III. OVERALL EVALUATION

The Third Action Programme was innovatory on several grounds: it tackled the question of the quality of women's employment; it introduced the idea that the status of women in society is an equality issue; it brought in the concept of mainstreaming; it developed the theme, hitherto not tackled, of women in the decision-making process.

When judged in terms of the evaluation criteria for its entire spectrum of activity, the third programme is, in general, internally coherent, is consistent with the principle of mainstreaming and has raised the profile of equal opportunities.

Examination of each specific area of activity confirms that, at mid-term, virtually all the declared objectives of the third programme have been pursued.

As regards "Implementation and development of the law" and "Integration of women in the labour market", action is based on the achievements of the second programme and has been extended as provided for by the second and third programmes.

Although in an entirely new field, the activities aimed at "Improving the status of women" also proved effective. The majority of these activities had to be creative and inventive and here again a great deal was achieved in the "Women and decision-making", "Media", "Mainstreaming" and "Awareness-raising" areas.

Generally speaking, considering the programme's limited budget, the objectives for the actions selected for the first phase of the third programme were achieved to a very satisfactory degree.

On the other hand, coordination and complementarity between the Commission and the Member States have not developed to the extent recommended in the programme.

In the third programme, "coordination" is an important concept which is linked with complementarity. In fact, the programme reads as follows :

The evaluation of the second programme has shown that the effectiveness of any measure increases considerably when complementarity is ensured between measures taken respectively at Community and at national level and when there is a certain degree of coordination in their implementation.

If complementarity and coordination are interconnected, links should exist between the Commission and the national authorities (or the employers' associations and trade unions) so that they can coordinate the efforts directed towards a given field of action.

Since the start of the third programme, several Member States have introduced legislation, regulations or agreements in the three priority areas of the programme.

It is indubitably the subject of reconciling working and family lives which prompted most complementary action by the Member States. Other issues on which the activities of the

Commission and of the Member States complemented one another well were the protection of the dignity of women and men at work, equal pay, job classification and the protection of motherhood.

Besides legislative measures, the most frequent categories of activities implemented by the Member States in each of the three priority areas are: pilot projects (research), awareness-raising and information activities, producing written documents and audio-visual material, organisation of training.

Other activities are less frequent but still representative: creation of support structures (Commission, committee, network, club, etc.), financial aid for women, financial aid for enterprises, activities in rural areas.

The areas in which activities complement one another best are equal opportunities at school, vocational training and guidance, reconciling work and family and work responsibilities.

In other areas there are far fewer complementary activities and they are less diversified. This is the case with Positive action, Women entrepreneurs, Women and decision-making and the Media.

A central role in the coordination with the Member States was played by the **Advisory Committee on equal opportunities for women and men**.

It had an important part in implementing partnership. The third programme states that:

The Advisory Committee on equal opportunities has an important function to perform as a partner in implementing the third action programme. The action of the Advisory Committee will be strengthened through sustained collaboration with the Commission. National experience is an important resource for the Commission, enabling it to compare the outcomes of the different measures at national level, to assess jointly the principal obstacles to equality and the main areas of success as well as to propose Community guidelines.

Since the introduction of the third action programme on equal opportunities for women and men, the Advisory Committee has been very actively involved in its launching and implementation. The Committee has been informed on a very regularly basis of the action undertaken at Community level in the framework of the third programme.

This flow of information between the Committee and the Commission has enabled the equal opportunities bodies in the Member States to make their actions more Community-oriented. The intensive exchange of information on equal opportunities policy has encouraged national equal opportunities bodies to bring their measures into line with the European approach. A good example of this partnership is the Spanish equal opportunities action programme: it has the same timescale as the third Community action programme and its aims and objectives refer to the third Community action programme.

As the members of the Advisory Committee have been actively involved in new areas and types of action, new types of cooperation between the European Commission and the Committee have been established. By way of example, the Advisory Committee has

developed a new form of cooperation on equal opportunities in the Structural Funds, more specifically on the ESF and the NOW initiative.

This recasting and more active functioning of the Advisory Committee did not reflect fully the principle of partnership envisaged by the third action programme. Although much attention and time was devoted to information from the Commission to the Committee, less feedback was provided by its members. Answers to questionnaires, requests for comments and remarks on draft texts and overviews of recent developments in the equal opportunities area were often delayed or remained unanswered.

This could be caused by the limited resources and powers of most of the national equal opportunities bodies. They provide a very heterogeneous picture: their status, composition, functioning and impact vary considerably. The general feature of the national equal opportunities machinery is too little real influence and impact on women's issues.

The policy of partnership and complementarity with the social partners has also not developed as was intended.

The third programme states the necessity of concerted action with the employers' associations and trade unions. However, only in two cases have arrangements for coordination been made:

- participation by the Commission in the social dialogue group for education and training and preparation of a joint opinion on vocational training;
- ETUC research on the role of women in decision-making.

Progress with partnership between Member States has been even poorer; indeed, there is hardly any cooperation at all apart from the NOW programme, under which projects must be transnational in nature in order to be eligible for funding.

Coordination and complementarity between the Commission, the Member States and the social partners should therefore be much more actively pursued and arrangements should be considered which would allow increased synergy between measures at national and European level.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION

Mid-term report on the third Community action programme on equal opportunities for men and women (1991-1995)

1. On 17 October 1990, the Commission adopted the third medium-term Community action programme on equal opportunities for men and women covering the period 1991 to 1995¹, which was endorsed by a Council resolution of 21 May 1991².

With a view to the completion of the internal market at the end of 1992, following on from the action programme relating to implementation of the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers and on the basis of previous Community activities in the field of equal opportunities, the third action programme emphasised the importance of encouraging women to participate fully in the jobs market and the need for the value of their contribution to be properly recognised.

Despite the significant progress made as a result of the impetus given by the Commission in particular and in spite of the steady increase in the proportion of women in work, it was clear that most low-skill, poorly paid and insecure jobs were still being done by women, that the rate of unemployment among women was higher than that among men, and that most of the long-term unemployed and the majority of people near the poverty line were women.

Given this socioeconomic situation, the programme provided for action to be taken in three priority areas:

- implementation and development of the legal framework;
- integration of women in the labour market;
- improving the status of women in society.

The programme also stressed the need to strengthen partnership arrangements between the Commission, the Member States and the social partners, and provided for the

¹ COM(90) 449 of 6 November 1990

² OJ C 142 of 31 May 1991, p.1

principle of equal opportunities to be incorporated into all relevant policies and programmes at both Community and national level ("mainstreaming").

2. In its resolution of 21 May 1991 concerning the third action programme, the Council called on the Commission to prepare a mid-term report on equal opportunities and equality of treatment policy in the Community and to present its findings to the European Parliament, the Council and the Economic and Social Committee.

This report is particularly important in the sense that it is part of a continuous and ordered process and represents an integral part of the preparatory work for a fourth action programme on equal opportunities, which will be finalised sometime in 1995 and will establish the broad lines of Community policy in this area for the period 1996-2000.

In order to collect the necessary information, two questionnaires were sent to the Member States and the social partners. The attached report was drawn up on the basis of the replies and of documents and information available to the Commission.

The aims of the exercise were as follows:

- to set out the measures taken in the first phase of the third action programme (1991-1993);
- to suggest improvements which could be made in the second phase;
- to prepare measures to follow on from the third programme.

The conclusions can be summarised as follows:

The third action programme is innovative as regards equal opportunities; it is intrinsically coherent and fits in well with the principle of mainstreaming. It is a high-profile programme. Nevertheless, there is a certain lack of overall coherence in the programme, which pinpoints a wide range of needs and a correspondingly wide range of activities; this would have needed far more coordination than was allowed by the financial resources allocated for the purpose. The next action programme should therefore be more highly integrated, which would mean that the number of measures envisaged would have to be reduced and priorities rearranged. With respect to each measure, an effort should be made from the outset to set out more precisely the nature and scope of the given aims, and to assess what measures need to be taken and what means (i.e. human and financial resources) are required to achieve them.

Overall, the third programme is progressing satisfactorily in terms of the measures which have been introduced and given the limited budget available.

On the other hand, the partnership and additionality between the Commission and the Member States have not developed to the extent recommended in the third programme. This could be because of the weak position at national level of the equal opportunities agencies, which are quite often marginalised or only have limited resources at their disposal. Partnership and coordination with the Member States should therefore be much more actively pursued, and procedures should be introduced which allow increased synergy between measures at national and European level. In this connection, the

functioning and role of the Advisory Committee should also be looked into with a view to making it a more effective means of strengthening the partnership set-up.

The policy of partnership and additionality with the social partners has also not developed as was intended. Progress with partnership between Member States has been even poorer; indeed, there is hardly any cooperation at all apart from the NOW programme, under which projects must be transnational in nature in order to be eligible for funding.

It is essential that the Commission intensify its policy of following up and evaluating progress made in creating equal opportunities for men and women, and that it set up arrangements enabling it to observe, monitor and more accurately measure the progress made towards achieving its aims.

3. Various factors have to be taken into consideration before the measures to be taken following completion of the third programme can be specified:

The socioeconomic situation has changed radically in the period since the third programme was adopted. When the internal market was on the point of completion, there were high hopes of positive effects for the citizens of the Community in the first phase of the programme, especially as regards the creation of more jobs. In the meantime, however, the European Union has been faced with a serious employment crisis which means it has been and still is difficult to implement an equal opportunities policy. As a result, many women are being currently pushed out of the jobs market and are seeing advances which they assumed were firmly established coming under threat. Women make up the great majority of the unemployed in most of the EU Member States and in all cases have the jobs which are the most insecure and most at risk. Moreover, gender segregation of the jobs market, which should have declined with the influx of huge numbers of women in the '80s, was in fact consolidated as a result of the economic difficulties at the beginning of the '90s.

Parallel to this, equal opportunities policies underwent a significant shift in perspective: the aim of doing away with discrimination because it is unfair was reinforced by the practical point that the structure of society and demographic trends make it impossible to ignore the vital contribution made by women to the changes taking place on the labour market.

Finally, the debate at international level concerning the position of women in the run-up to the United Nations conference in Beijing, and which also was taken up in the conclusions of the Cairo population conference, is clearly in favour of the idea of empowerment and full citizenship for women.

In the interests of consistency, the planned initiatives will have the priority aim of making tangible progress in the three key areas referred to in the White Paper on Social Policy, namely the desegregation of the employment market, the reconciliation of working and family life and greater participation of women in decision-making processes. It should also be ensured that the policy of equal opportunities be firmly established as part of the EU's general social policy.

The Commission's intention is to organise the various initiatives around an overall strategy and vision which can act as a catalyst for getting things done and achieving a consensus. While not dispensing completely with more established measures to combat

past and present discrimination, it will place more emphasis on the role of women as participants in the structural changes currently taking place in all fields of activity.

In line with the recommendations in the mid-term report on the third programme, the Commission will take an approach which is more integrated and which will reorganise priorities and attempt to create a higher profile for itself and complement more effectively the measures carried out in the Member States and by the social partners. It will place increasing emphasis on equal opportunities forming an integral part of all relevant policies and programmes of the EU, while offering support to the Member States so that this can also be achieved at national level.

With a view to making these partnership arrangements with Member States more effective, the Commission took the initiative in 1994 and presented representatives of national equal opportunities bodies meeting within its Advisory Committee with a proposal for the joint financing of a series of "national animation strategies". The aim of this is to heighten women's awareness of the advantages of the European enterprise in an area which affects their daily lives. Several such programmes are already under way; if they show favourable results in practice, the Commission might consider pursuing them or indeed widening their scope.

Finally, the Commission takes note of the fact that the effectiveness of the EU's action programme for equal opportunities for men and women will hinge on increased cooperation between the Community and the Member States. To this end, particular attention will be given to opportunities for consolidating national and Community arrangements with respect to the formulation, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies for the promotion of equal opportunities.