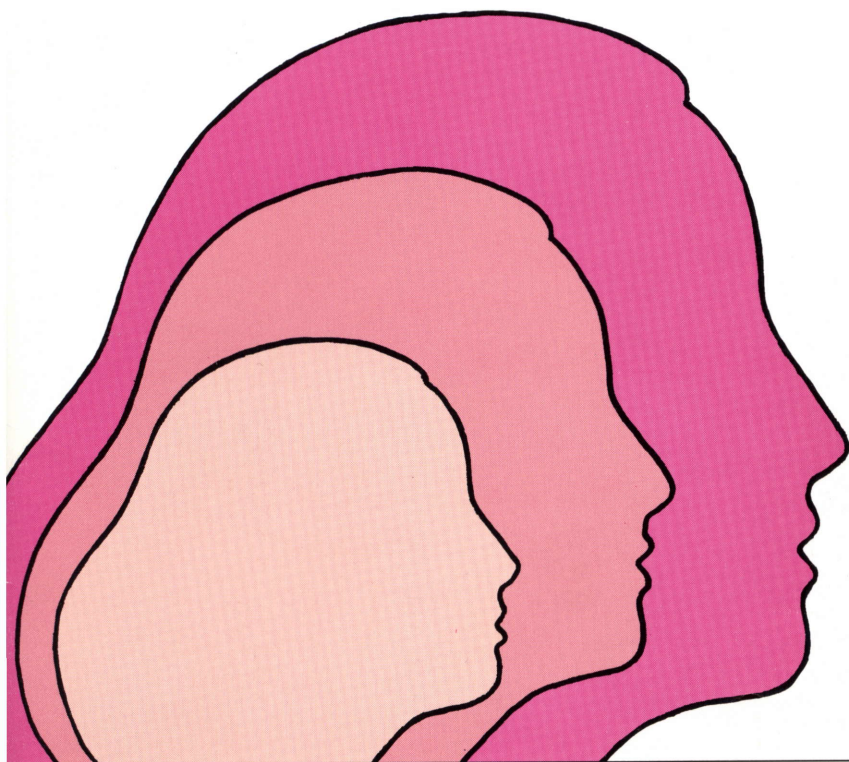


40

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
FOR WOMEN
IN THE COMMUNITY



Europe
on the move

Series!



Jean Guylaux

Over half the people in the European Community are women. There are nearly 168 million of them in the EC's 12 Member States today. Women account for over half the working-age population, and more women than ever before are involved in paid work.

This change in women's contribution to society is one of the most striking phenomena of the late twentieth century. But although they have had the law behind them from the start of the European Community, women have yet to enjoy the equality they are entitled to in theory. Men need to contribute more to family life, while women have yet to make a real impact on decisions affecting the lives of everybody.

Technological advances have meant the decline of employment in manufacturing, and the growing dominance of service industries. This has meant more jobs for women, but not necessarily better working conditions. Most women are still in lower-paid jobs, and most still work mainly with other women in similar jobs and fields. Women are still under-represented in many sectors of industry, the professions and public service.

'Throughout Europe, women are demonstrating their ability to be creative in producing innovative solutions to combat unemployment ... Women's skills and dynamism should be used in the best interests of the European economy.'

*Pádraig Flynn,
Member of the
European Commission*

Giving women the opportunity to realize their potential in all spheres of society is increasingly important for all EC Member States as population growth dwindles. Only by involving both sexes to the full can we develop human resources on really democratic lines.

The European Community has supported the ideal of an equal role for women in society from its inception in 1957. A policy on equal opportunities is vital for a long-term strategy to build a Community that benefits all its people. A network of democratic societies committed to this started with six, then nine, then twelve countries that signed the founding Treaty of Rome.

More and more women are involved in paid work. There is no job they cannot do, and they are entitled to equal pay for equal work, as well as the same terms and conditions at work, and the same opportunities for promotion.

Treaty of Rome: Article 119

' Each Member State shall during the first stage ensure and subsequently maintain the application of the principle that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work.

For the purpose of the Article, "pay" means the ordinary basic or minimum wage or salary and any other consideration, whether in cash or in kind, which the worker receives, directly or indirectly, in respect of his employment from his employer.

Equal pay without discrimination based on sex means:

- that pay for the same work at piece rates shall be calculated on the basis of the same unit of measurement;
- that pay for work at time rates shall be the same for the same job. '

EQUAL PAY, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES – THE LETTER OF THE LAW

The right to equal pay for equal work without discrimination based on sex is set out in Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome.

EC ministers agreed directives — laws transposed into Member States' legisla-



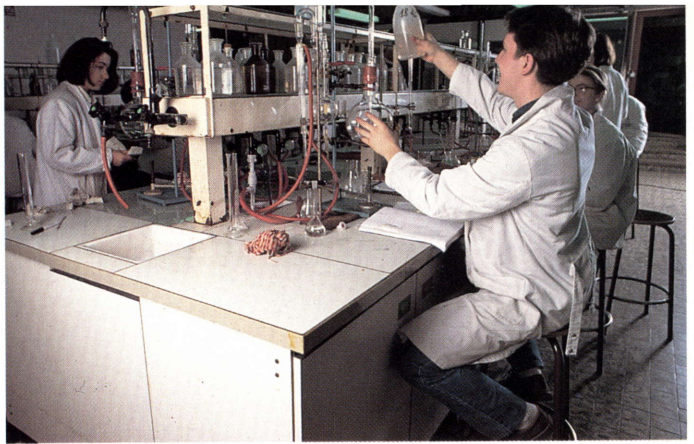
Tim De Waele

tion — on equal pay in 1975, and on equal treatment in access to employment, training, promotion and working conditions in 1976.

Equal treatment in social security, as well as for the self-employed, complements this legislation. Rights to maternity leave and pay, and a guarantee of adequate health and safety at work for pregnant women and nursing mothers were agreed in 1992.

Ministers have agreed recommendations and resolutions intended to encourage good practice on: positive action, vocational training, childcare, combating unemployment, equal opportunities in schools, integrating women into working life, combating unwanted sexual behaviour at work, education, and updating protective legislation affecting women.

The European Court of Justice in Luxembourg has played an important part in developing the jurisprudence in which equality policies are carried out through its contribution in case-law.



Cronenberg

ACTION TO PROMOTE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

There is still a great deal to be done before we can claim women in the Community really get a fair deal and a chance to show what they can do. The European Commission has launched a series of action programmes to provide a framework for its initiatives.

The current programme runs until 1995. It concentrates on improving women's position legally, in the workforce, and in decision-making. Its implementation is being developed with Member States, and in cooperation with employers' and union organizations.

The programme is managed by the Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs. The Commission works

The key to equality and to professional promotion: non-sexist education and training.

Retirement pensions – equality should also apply to these. A woman can no longer be made to retire earlier than a man.



Hudders

' Women are still often segregated into jobs that are less well-paid than those typically taken by men. They are often less well qualified than men, and the jobs they do are often less secure. These are the kinds of inequalities the Community must continue to combat – and it will do so, as one of the ways of making sure women do not bear the brunt of recession. Quality and quantity in women's employment will stay among the Community's top priorities. '

Pádraig Flynn

closely with an advisory committee of representatives from official equal opportunities bodies from Member States, and with the European Parliament.

These are the main components of the Third medium-term Community action programme (1991-95):

A FAIR DEAL IN RIGHTS AT WORK

A team of Commission lawyers monitors how equality-related legislation works in practice. It also has responsibility for developing and drafting laws for employment and social affairs ministers to debate, amend and approve at Council meetings, in consultation with the European Parliament.

One of the Commission's key tasks is to raise public awareness about equality-related rights. This it does with the help of a network of EC legal experts. Individuals can have their cases taken up at the European Court of Justice via national courts.

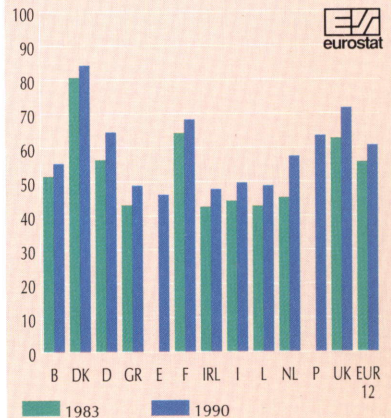
BETTER OPPORTUNITIES TO EARN A LIVING

Getting more women into paid work by promoting job opportunities, entrepreneurship and local employment is the aim of this component.

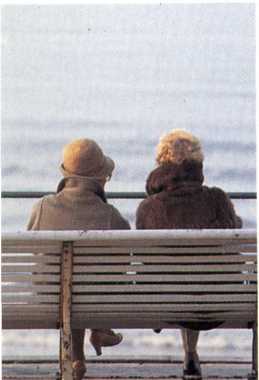
The Commission co-finances initiatives in Member States to get women into better jobs. The idea is to

A growing number of women are involved in paid work .

Percentage of women aged between 20 and 59 in paid work



NB: 1983 statistics for Spain (E) and Portugal (P) not available.



help them fulfil their potential through better education, training and positive action. Upgrading their skills and equipping them with hi-tech know-how is a priority.

Another major concern is helping parents juggle work and caring responsibilities via better services and terms of employment.

GETTING WOMEN IN POSITIONS OF POWER

It is hard to believe over half the Community's population is female, given how little direct influence women have over what happens in our society. The Commission is involved in cultural and social action that extends its mandate on equal opportunities in employment because of the need to tackle the stereotypes that limit women.

The Commission aims to inform women about the role they have in constructing a Community for the 21st century, and supports programmes to boost the numbers of women in positions of power in economic and political life. It has also targeted the broadcasting industry as particularly important in developing a more positive image of women.



COMMUNITY-WIDE NETWORKS SPREAD THE WORD AND WORK

The Commission has set up networks of independent experts in Member States who coordinate activities in specific campaigns.

The letter and spirit of the law:

A network of legal experts keeps an eye on the way laws are implemented, and identifies problems common to all countries. It is also producing an encyclopaedia of equal opportunities legislation and legal decisions.

More jobs, better jobs for women:

A network of economists and labour market analysts conducts studies on trends affecting women in the labour market. Its recent work has examined

Equal treatment for men and women should also apply to the self-employed and to agricultural workers.

the surge in numbers of women in paid work in the 1980s, their segregation into so-called 'women's work', and equal pay.

Training to keep up with the times:

Women need training if they are to benefit from growth and technological development. A network of training schemes, known as IRIS, has been set up to develop training for women, to publicize their needs, promote information exchanges and encourage the involvement of employers and trade unions.

A helping hand for new businesswomen:

Encouraging women to set up in business is the aim of the Local Employment Initiative (LEI) network. There are grants for ventures creating at least two full-time jobs. Innovative projects and those employing disadvantaged women get priority.

Positive action to foster equality:

An employer with a choice between equally qualified candidates should give preference to women. A network of experts is analysing what needs to be done to give women a fairer share of good jobs.

Working and caring – A daily challenge:

Women usually carry the load of caring even when in full-time paid work. Equal opportunities for men and women cannot become a reality

without better services and working terms to help carers combine roles. A network of experts is working on promoting good practice.

Changing minds in school:

There is no job women cannot do. A working party is looking at ways of encouraging boys and girls to range more widely in the subjects they take in school. It also aims to support teachers trying to avoid reproducing anachronistic stereotypes.

Reinforcing positive images of women:

The broadcasting media form a target for action because of their influence on public opinion. A network of

'I believe that the fight for greater equality is one of the most important spheres of current European policy development and that the Women's Rights Committee of the European Parliament has a major strategic role to play in pushing equality policy further up the political agenda in the 1990s.'

*Christine Crawley,
President of the
Women's Rights
Committee in the
European Parliament*

*Pregnant women,
mothers of new-born
babies and nursing
mothers should have
the peace of mind of
knowing they have
secure health and
social rights.*



P. Aché

'For women who already have to combine their professional life with running a home and looking after children, political activity requires considerable sacrifices. Women would be more ready to take them on if they thought they stood a chance of recognition on a par with men. That is far from being the case.'

Simone Veil

senior managers in broadcasting is working on getting more women involved in the industry. The Commission also co-finances audiovisual productions which challenge traditional roles in society.

Encouraging women in power:

A network has been finding out just how few women there are in decision-making, whether in business, politics or public administration. Its first year culminated in November 1992 with a summit of women in power dedicated to boosting female representation.

ked for less developed and rural regions, as well as those hit by industrial decline.

The New opportunities for women (NOW) initiative (1990-93), for instance, has aimed to develop exemplary projects in women's vocational training, backed up with pre-training, counselling and childcare.

BUILDING EUROPE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

STRUCTURAL FUNDS HELP PROMOTE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Promoting equal opportunities is one of the key aims of actions financed by EC Structural Funds — money earmar-

The completion of the single market at the end of 1992 brought benefits for people, not just business. The Charter of fundamental social rights, agreed in 1989, incorporates many points touching women's daily lives — the right to equal treatment, to a fair wage, to social security, to vocational training, to good health and safety at work.

European Summit on Women in Power, Athens, November 1992. Women represent only 11% of members of parliament elected in the EC's 12 countries. They have a long way to go before they have a full say in economic, political and social decision-making.

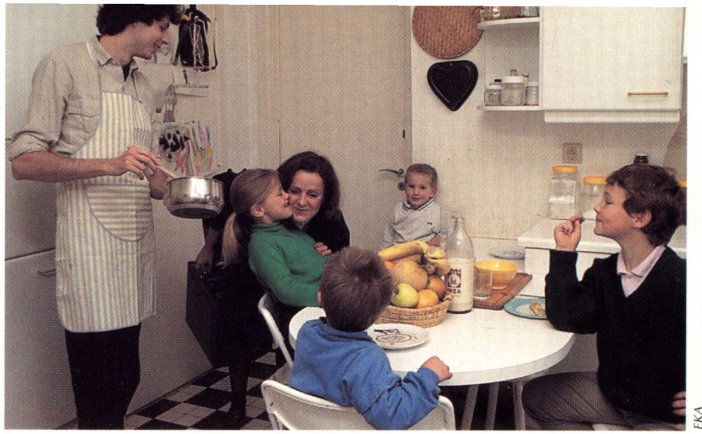
The Community now faces the challenge of planning social policy for the next century. It has to decide how to advance equal opportunities among countries linking their futures through the Maastricht Treaty on European Union. Only if women and men face the future together, on equal terms, can we achieve democracy in its fullest sense.



Vandoulakis/Saites

WOMEN IN THE COMMUNITY – FACTS AND FIGURES

- Women make up more than half the population and look set to outnumber men well into the next century
- Women aged 30 in 1988 can expect to live another 50 years, compared to 44.4 for men
- Nearly 89% of women aged 20-49 in Denmark had jobs in 1991, compared to just over 49% in Ireland. Over 66% of women in that age-bracket are in paid work
- Nearly 74% of EC women aged 20-49 without children were in paid work in 1991, compared to 66% of those with one child, and 42% of those with three or more
- Some 28% of EC women work part-time; 4% of men do
- Over a quarter of women in the Community are heads of households



- Less than half of all women in the Community have children
- Most women in higher education only take short courses
- The widest gap between the sexes in education is in engineering
- Over half the unemployed in the Community are women

Sharing the housework — it is time for a Europe without stereotypes.



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