

Women of Europe

Brussels, January/February 1978

No. 1/78

EUROPE'S SPRINGTIME

It is still not to be this year, then, that we go into the polling-booths to choose our member for the European Parliament. This is now official. It is a disappointment which is impossible to hide. Ought not the will to move forward have prevailed over every other consideration?

This delay of a year, however, will be neither a rest nor a pause. Women, in their strenuous work of preparation throughout Europe, have, at the same time, been able to ascertain the hopes of the European Community and the innumerable obstacles, both large and small, which crop up on the way: sometimes indifference, often inadequate information and always lack of adequate means.

A few more months will be useful for organising, convincing, persuading, coordinating, informing, specifying What would have had to be done hurriedly can now be carried out with even greater determination. We have been waiting for so many years

Whether it will be in 1978 or 1979, there will be a springtime for Europe. "Women of Europe", for its part, will profit from this delay by further increasing the knowledge of those women who, sooner or later, will be the electors.

Fausta Deshormes
Information for the Press
and Women's Organisations

56/X/78/E

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PRESS AND INFORMATION OFFICES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

BELGIUM

1049 BRUSSELS
Rue Archimède 73
Tel. 735 00 40/735 80 40

DENMARK

1045 COPENHAGEN K
4 Gammeltorv
Postbox 144
Tel. 14 41 40

FRANCE

75782 PARIS CEDEX 16
61, rue des Belles-Feuilles
Tel. 553 53 26

GERMANY

53 BONN
Zitelmannstrasse 22
Tel. 23 80 41

1 BERLIN 31
Kurfürstendamm 102
Tel. 8 92 40 28

IRELAND

DUBLIN 2
29 Merrion Square
Tel. 76 03 53

ITALY

00187 ROME
Via Poli, 29
Tel. 68 97 22 à 26

LUXEMBOURG

LUXEMBOURG
Bâtiment Jean Monnet B/O
Plateau du Kirchberg
Tel. 430 11

NETHERLANDS

THE HAGUE
29, Lange Voorhout
Tel. 070-46 93 26

UNITED KINGDOM

LONDON W8 4QQ
20, Kensington Palace Gardens
Tel. 727 8090

CARDIFF CF1 1WF
4 Cathedral Road
P.O. Box 15
Tel. 371 631

EDINBURGH EH2 4PH
7, Alva Street
Tel. (031) 225.2058

CANADA

OTTAWA, Ont. K1R 7S8
350 Sparks St.
Suite 1110
Tel. 238 64 64

CHILE

SANTIAGO 9
Avenida Ricardo Lyon 1177
Casilla 10093
Tel. 25 05 55

GREECE

ATHENS 134
Vassilis Sofias 2
Tel. 743 982/83/84

JAPAN

102 TOKYO
Kowa 25 Building
8-7 Sanbancho
Chiyoda-Ku
Tel. 239-0441

SWITZERLAND

1202 GENEVA
37-39, rue de Vermont
Tel. 34 97 50

TURKEY

ANKARA
Kavaklidere
13, Bogaz Sokak
Tel. 27 61 45/46

UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20037
2100 M Street, N.W.
Suite 707
Tel. (202) 872-8350

NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017
245 East 47th Street
1 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza
Tel. (212) 3713804

LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS

BELGIUM

International relations

The "Commission consultative de la condition de la femme" has been set up in its new form by M. H. Simonet, Minister for Foreign Affairs. The role of this Commission is to help the Foreign Minister to decide Belgium's position when problems on the status of women are raised in international fora. This Commission is under the chairmanship of Mme. Marijke van Hemeldonck.

Address for further information: Commission consultative de la condition
de la femme

Ministère des Affaires étrangères
rue des Quatre-Bras
1000 - Bruxelles

Lady members of parliament

The fifteen lady members of the Chamber of Representatives have decided to set up a working group within the Belgian Parliament. This group is composed of lady members of all parties, whether they belong to the majority or the opposition. The aim of the lady members is to draw the attention of their male colleagues, the Government and public opinion to certain priorities "in the framework of a strategy adapted to the women's movement in this time of crisis".

1 Male worker = 1 female worker

A special study group has been set up within the Ministry of Employment and Labour to work out a preliminary draft bill bringing Belgian legislation into line with the Directive of the Council of Ministers of the Community of February 9, 1976 on equal treatment of men and women. The work of this group has been speeded up in such a way that the draft bill can be placed without delay before Parliament, and the Community Directive put into effect by August 1978.

Address for further information: Ministère de l'Emploi et de Travail
53 , rue Belliard
1040 - Bruxelles

Women and the Spitaels Plan

The "Commission du Travail des femmes" (Commission on Women and Work) has issued a notice setting out the benefits available to women under the "Spitaels Programme" (named after the present Minister of Employment and Labour) which envisages the creation of temporary jobs in order to combat unemployment.

The notice from the Commission du Travail des femmes recommends as a priority assistance to teaching staff, which would enable both a reduction in the work load of teachers and a better education for the children. With the same view in mind an increase in personnel has been recommended for a very wide variety of services concerned with the needs of the population and which work for more humane conditions of environment and living. The Commission du Travail des femmes had particularly in mind the improvement of the social infrastructure, the reception and care of small children, etc.

Address for further information: Commission du Travail des femmes
Ministère de l'Emploi et du Travail
rue Belliard, 53
1040 - Bruxelles

Air Hostesses

Eight air hostesses, victims of a measure limiting their career to 45 years of age, have just obtained a 5 year extension (the end of their career has been postponed to 50 years of age) and so returned to their jobs. In order to obtain this result, action by the hostesses was necessary, together with the intervention of their trade union organisation and of the Minister of Employment and Labour. The Commission du Travail des femmes had also received a delegation of these air hostesses.

It will now be necessary for the retirement age of women to be postponed to 55, which is already the case for their male colleagues. The Community directive on the equal treatment of men and women will provide the necessary legal basis. This is in any case the belief of Mlle Defrenne, a Belgian air hostess who, for the second time, has sought judgement from the Court of Justice of the European Communities. It will be remembered that on the first occasion - but then it was a question of the principle of equal pay - the Court of Justice had decided in favour of Mlle Defrenne.

D E N M A R K

Danish women and the election of the European Parliament

Less than 6% of members of the European Parliament are women: 11 parliamentarians out of 198. Denmark has, since 1973, sent three women to represent her at Luxembourg and Strasbourg: Marichen Nielsen (social-democrat) was the first, then Edele Kruchow (left-wing radical) and, finally, Karan Dahlerup (social democrat). What will be the situation when the European Parliament is elected by universal suffrage? Everything will depend on the application of the electoral law that the Folketing (the Danish Parliament) has just adopted on December 2, 1977.

Of the 410 seats which will make up the European Parliament, 16 will be allocated to Denmark, which has already decided that one of these seats should be reserved for Greenland. The 15 remaining seats will be distributed according to the proportional system among the parties which will present candidates in the rest of Denmark. Denmark itself will then form one large constituency.

The lists of candidates will only be allowed to have twenty names and must specify in what order the candidates must appear on the voting papers. No candidate will be able to have his name entered on more than one list at a time. Each party can present only one list of candidates, but several parties will be able to join together.

The parties may choose to present their candidates on a "block" list, which means that they wish their candidates to be elected in the order that they appear on the list, and that the votes in favour of the party shall be assigned to the candidates in the order that they appear on the list. This system is used for local elections and, as experience shows, the No. 1 on the list never fails to be elected, since the list gains at least one seat. On the other hand, it is not unusual for candidates appearing much lower down on the list to be elected.

The parties can, however, also present a list without order of preference, if they wish the candidates to be elected according to the number of preferential votes which they will have received.

It should also be noted that the parties represented in the Folketing have the right to present a list, whereas old or new parties which do not have a seat there must obtain at least 60,000 signatures to be able to present an electoral list. By comparison with the "block" list, the list providing for voting preference offers a much bigger influence to the elector. This will be all the greater for election to the European Parliament since there are only 16 seats available. About 200,000 votes are, therefore, required to elect a Danish member to the European Parliament.

In feminist circles in Denmark voices have been raised in favour of a list composed exclusively of women. Nevertheless this presupposes the collection of the 60,000 signatures required to support the candidature of the 20 women who would appear on such a list.

The idea of an exclusively feminine list is, however, controversial. "Is it a wholly realistic idea?", ask some Danish women politicians. The range of political views is as great among women as among men. What then would be the mandate of a woman elected on an exclusively feminine list by votes of women electors reflecting very diverse political complexions?

Danish women politicians who argue in this way consider that it would be wiser to campaign from now on for presentation of lists which are not "block" lists. Men as well as women who fight for equality of rights between the sexes have no alternative but to campaign within their own parties for lists to be presented without an order of preference at the time of the election to the European Parliament.

F R A N C E

Women in Government

Three women have just entered the French Government. Mme Alice Saunier-Seité, who was "secrétaire d'Etat" (Parliamentary Secretary) for the Universities, has been promoted to the rank of Minister in the same department, and Mme Monique Pelletier, who was given responsibility for reporting on the drug problem, becomes "secrétaire d'Etat" to the Minister of Justice, M. Alain Peyrefitte.

Mme Nicole Pasquier, who was delegate to "La Condition féminine" (Delegation on the Status of Women), becomes "secrétaire d'Etat" to the Minister of Labour, responsible for work for women.

Balance sheet on the status of women

The "délégation à la condition féminine" has just drawn up a balance sheet of rights obtained by women as they appeared in French law at the end of 1977: justice, health, social security, work, professional training, public office. The law references are indicated, and the texts briefly analysed, in the second issue of the delegation's review.

Address for further information: Délégation à la condition féminine
31, rue Mazenod
69426 Lyon Cedex 3.tél.(78) 62,20.26

Collective facilities

Women who go out to work take on a double day's work. Tiredness and shortage of time prevent them, in the majority of cases, from taking on a "third day", that is, to take part in trade union, political and cultural activities, etc. In order to reduce this discrimination, one of the most effective remedies would be to increase collective services and facilities.

The Comité du Travail féminin (Committee on Women and Work)(designated to the French Ministry of Labour) has drawn up a balance sheet of what already exists in France, the functions which these facilities fulfil, the problems which arise over their financing and over feelings among the users. This balance sheet of 53 pages is published in the review "Actualités du Travail féminin" (News on Women and Work).

Address for further reference: Comité du Travail féminin
Ministère du Travail
44, avenue Duquesne 567.55.44
75700 Paris tel:

Working together

The status of wives of farmers is a matter of concern for French members of Parliament. At intervals of a few weeks 2 draft bills have been placed with the National Assembly; one drawn up by members of the majority and the other by members of the opposition. The same concern is apparent in the two texts, i.e. to recognise that farming is the work of a couple and, therefore, to give to wives the rights and powers traditionally reserved for husbands. In order to achieve this, self-employed married couples working together will be regarded as having given each other mutual authority for all professional acts.

The draft bill of the majority has been registered as No. 3252 and that of the opposition as No. 3307.

Useful address for further information:

Présidence de l'Assemblée nationale
Assemblée nationale
Paris

Women and unemployment

In the matter of unemployment as well as work, women are in a less favourable position compared with men. One already suspected it. But the enquiry on women and unemployment, set up by the Ministry of Labour at the request of Mme Nicole Pasquier, then delegate to "La Condition féminine", reveals a great deal of further problems; for example, inequalities even persist as far as unemployment benefit is concerned. While there are more women than men unemployed, they only receive, in all, little more than a third of the total benefits.

The enquiry also reveals that women resist better than men the psychological shock of unemployment. They return more quickly to household tasks than men do to odd jobs about the house. But they are also more pessimistic: nearly 60% do not know when they will find another job up to their expectations; less than 15% hope to find a job in the following 3 months and the rest are even more pessimistic.

Address for further information: Délégation à la condition féminine
31, rue Mazenod
69426 Lyon Cedex 3 tél:(78)62.20.26

G E R M A N Y

Surveys

The Federal Minister for Youth, Family and Health regularly publishes surveys on the role of women in German society. The results are important because they influence decisions taken by the German parliament and government.

A recently published survey recalls man's role and its implication on the position of women in the context of family life, professional life and public and civic activities. This enquiry shows to what extent the "dominant" role of man is rooted in habit. The main conclusions from this enquiry are as follows:

- the majority of men and women take joint decisions concerning the family, children's upbringing, etc. But when it is a question of putting the decisions into effect, 90% of men and women are satisfied with a division of labour which entrusts men with tasks outside the home and women those inside the home;
- the man is the family bread-winner, that is his prime task;
- the man is responsible for his professional life, while that of the woman is their common responsibility;
- the woman is responsible for the upbringing of her children which makes activities outside the house difficult for her;
- a woman's working life does not alter the traditional structure of the family;
- a better training for women increases their influence when decisions are taken jointly;
- women more than men want a change of relationship between the two sexes.

Address for further information:

Bundesministerium für Jugend, Familie und Gesundheit
Kennedy-Allee 105-107
5300 Bonn - Bad Godesberg

I R E L A N D

The status of women

Irish women under civil law, the education of girls compared with that of boys, the employment of women, women and political life, women's organisations in Ireland - such are the main themes of a remarkable document on the status of women in Ireland ("Status of Women") by Mrs. Gemma Hussey, member of the Senate. This document, issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs, gives the addresses of the principal women's groups.

Address for further information: Department of Foreign Affairs
80, St. Stephen's Green
Dublin 2

Joint taxation of married couples

The present system of taxation in Ireland tends to discourage married women from working. The wife's salary is combined with her husband's for tax purposes, thereby putting them in a higher tax bracket than a comparable single pair. For example, if two married people earn £100 per week, each would be taxed £986.50 a year more than two single people with the same income.

The Married Persons Tax Reform Association decided to bring a similar case before the courts to test the constitutionality of what the Association calls a "tax on marriage". In a period of 9 weeks, the Association raised £10,000 in donations to meet legal expenses....

No unemployment benefit for married women with children?

Married women with children in Ireland have been experiencing difficulty in collecting unemployment benefit. Certain officials hold that these women are in fact not "available for work" - since they are caring for their children - and that, not being genuine applicants for work, they are not entitled to unemployment benefit. The Regulations of the Department of Social Welfare provide no form of appeal against their decisions.

Perhaps things are changing. The High Court, before whom the question had at last been brought, has directed the Department of Social Welfare to pay unemployment benefit to a married woman with one child to whom benefit had hitherto been denied.

I T A L Y

Women and civil service

78.1% of Italian women and 83.9% of Italian men are in favour of the introduction of a voluntary civil service which could replace military service. The number of women and men who are opposed to it is almost identical: 10.7 and 11.8%. On the other hand, women feel less concerned about this question. 11.2% of them have no opinion as against only 4.3% of men

20.000 lire per day

A housewife "is worth" 20,000 lire per day for her work as a wife, mother, cook, maid, director of the house, etc. This is what Nello Simonelli, a judge at Trasacco (Aquila) has established to the benefit of Lucia Di Giampietro. This lady, a road-accident victim, had been incapable of working for 10 days and the insurance company only offered 5,000 lire per day in compensation, in accordance with existing law.

The financing of crèches

At the initiative of Signora Ines Boffardi (supported by the christian democrat group) and Signora Cecilia Chiovini (supported by the communist group), the Italian parliament has just approved a law which will ensure the financing of crèches by the regional authority.

N E T H E R L A N D S

Certain discriminations

The "Emancipatiekommissie" (Consultative Commission to the Dutch Government for the Emancipation of Women) is waging a vigorous battle against all forms of sex discrimination. Examples of discrimination are grouped below:

- The local council of Beilen (Drente) has drawn up as follows the "profile" of the ideal mayor (who, in the Netherlands, is a civil servant): "a man less than 45 years of age, preferably married..."
- Mr. B., who wishes to work part-time only, in order to devote more time to his children's upbringing, has not obtained the support of the Employment Office at Purmerend. Women who make the same request do not receive the same lack of co-operation.....

- Mrs. Y. has a good job and her husband is a student. When applying for a loan to buy a house, Mrs. Y. has had to put up with ten refusals. The opposite situation (if Mr. Y. was working and Mrs. Y. was a student) would not cause any problem.....
- Mr. and Mrs. T. wish to buy a house, but the loan is refused on the pretext that the income of Mr. T. is too low. Mrs. T's salary is not taken into consideration: she might still have children...
- In a great number of schools pupils' reports must still be signed by the father: the mother's signature "does not count"...

It was, therefore, with the best of intentions that the Government, in May 1977, drew up a document entitled "Emancipatie - Proces van verandering en groei" (Emancipation - Process of change and growth). A special commission of the Chamber of Deputies was formed to study emancipation policy. It is to this special commission that the Emancipatiekommissie has just made known its views on the government document.

In 50 pages the Emancipatiekommissie presents side by side the Government's position and its own, which is strongly critical. While the Government and the Emancipatiekommissie agree on the fundamental principles and difficulties of this policy, there is disagreement on what action to take.

It is particularly necessary, say the Emancipatiekommissie, to have an integrated policy which applies to men as well as women, for it is not sufficient to grant to women the rights of men. One must also extend to men women's responsibilities. Emancipation should benefit everybody. So, if the right of women to a full-time job should be defended, the right of men to a part-time job should also be upheld.

In a summary booklet made available to the public by the Emancipatiekommissie, it is recommended (under the heading "What can you do?") to the men and women citizens of the Netherlands that they should write to the Government, to their members of parliament, etc., supporting the idea of a law against discrimination.

Address for further information: Emancipatiekommissie
J.C. van Markenlaan 3,
Rijswijk (Zuid Holland) tél. 070/94 92 25

U N I T E D K I N G D O M

Despite the good intentions of the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 and the work of the Equal Opportunities Commission, women's earnings in Great Britain still remain well below those of men. In 1976, therefore, the average salary of women had not even reached two-thirds that of men. While 43.2% of women working full time earned less than £40 a week, only 5.2% of men did. According to the Equal Opportunities Commission's report, from which these figures are taken, one third of working wives contributed between a fifth and a half of their families' incomes. The position is such that, without this financial contribution, the number of families living below the poverty line would treble!

Address for further information: Equal Opportunities Commission
Overseas House
Quay Street
Manchester M3 3HN

Battered women

Each weekend the hospital Saint-Pierre in Brussels takes in some twenty battered women who require medical care. Moreover, in Belgium, 80% of recorded complaints of assault and injury come from battered women. But only 4% of these complaints are the subject of subsequent legal action. Following the example set by Erin Pizzey in Great Britain in 1971, and subsequent initiatives in France, the Netherlands and Germany, etc., a group of Belgian women have just formed a "Collectif pour les Femmes battues" (Association for battered wives) and opened a home, which is already full.

The Collectif pour les Femmes battues offers a temporary shelter to all women - and their children - who are victims of their partners' violence, regardless of their social or economic circumstances, and provides assistance for taking the necessary legal precautions.

Address for further information: not given for obvious reasons of safety

office telephone: (02) 512.61.96

Women and towns

"Through council housing, private houses, suburbs, lack of green spaces, Through commuting, lack of crèches, lack of leisure time, Through roadways, underground systems, round trips, Our lives, our daily round ~~are~~ directed from a distance."

Women live in the towns and are not happy with them. They have been unable either to propose or impose the organisation of the space where their day passes. It is necessary to re-organise the town, think deeply about the housing estate and remodel it according to their tastes; establish women's homes; take part in local committees and transport committees and take up self-defence in order to be able to walk without fear in the parks and roads at night. On this theme of the town a dozen women have written a "Cahier du GRIF" "Hors de chez nous. Femmes et villes".

Address for further information: Groupe de recherche et d'information féministes

rue du Musée 14,

1000 Bruxelles tél: 513.46.92

Women's work and public health

The Suzanne Tassier chair of the Arts Faculty of the Free University of Brussels will welcome this spring eleven personalities from the scientific and political world to speak on the subject of "Travail féminin et santé publique". During the course of these lectures, -which will be open to the public - the speakers will raise not only health problems affecting women, but also the role which each person can have, whether professionally or not, in improving health.

Address for further information: Faculté de philosophie et lettre-ULB
Avenue F. Roosevelt 50,
1050 - Bruxelles

D E N M A R K

Getting to know Europe better

Danish women are trying to get to know Europe better. First of all, 25 chairmen of women's organisations visited the Community institutions in Brussels and Strasbourg in June, 1977, at the invitation of the Danske Kvinders Nationalraad (DKN) and with the help of the Information Services of the European Commission.

Then, 45 local directors of women's organisations, which were also members of the DKN, studied Community policies with Karen Dahlerup, chairman of the "Ligestillingsrådet" (Equal Treatment Council), Karen Ytting, former chairman of the National Council of Danish Women's Organisations and Edele Kruchow, a former member of the European Parliament.

After this meeting, which was held to the north of Copenhagen, a further 40 local directors of women's organisations met in Jutland to study, in particular, the Community directive on equal treatment of men and women and direct elections to the European Parliament.

Address for further information: Danske Kvinders Nationalraad
Niels Hemmingsengade, 8
1153 - København K

F R A N C E

Women's Civic and Social Union

With the approach of the legislative elections in France and of the elections to the European Parliament, the "Union féminine civique et sociale" (U.F.C.S.), which comprises 13,000 active members, and is in regular contact with 250,000 people, seeks to give them the means of making as clear an analysis as possible of the situation. The Union's aim is to enable women to try to be more themselves, thanks to the organisation of information meetings and education in small groups throughout France, and to its publications (Information "notebooks" and educational "briefs").

The methods of analysis proposed, traditionally comprise group research or an enquiry into existing mechanisms and institutions, and, likewise, a serious study of the viewpoints of the different political parties on the major issues which are fundamentally at stake in these elections.

In addition, whenever possible, a deeper analysis of the arguments and plans of the political parties is combined with a questioning of the prejudices and habits of each participant; and with a search for consistency from the standpoint of the personal choices maintained and for a better knowledge of the factors, both individual and common to all, motivating each woman. Such a method of instruction makes it possible to establish one's position with greater clarity and soundness and, at the same time, to overcome emotional blocks and intolerance.

By separating education from campaigning at times as rousing as pre-electoral periods, presents the U.F.C.S., as a women's movement, with a particular problem which its activities reflect.

The "Cahiers d'éducation civique" (Notebooks on civic education) of the U.F.C.S. have just dedicated a special issue to Europe under the heading "L'Europe et nous" ("Europe and us").

Address for further information: Union féminine civique et sociale
(U.F.C.S.)
6, rue Béranger
75003 - Paris tél: 272.17.26

G E R M A N Y

The Deutsche Frauenrat

It was in 1951 that the Deutsche Frauenrat was founded in Federal Germany. At first a simple "information service for matters concerning women", it was subsequently transformed into a federation which, grouping together some thirty women's organisations, now represents about 9 million women. The most recent efforts of the Deutsche Frauenrat have been devoted to tax matters, women's pensions, working hours and international activities. Its reports on pensions and taxes, presented in November 1977, were most favourably received, particularly by the government commission "Frau, Familie und Gesellschaft" (Women, Family and Society).

With regard to international activities, two working groups will operate in 1978. One will be devoted to cooperation with the United Nations authorities and the other will be mainly concerned with third world questions, such as aims and means of development policy, organisation of seminars, cooperation programmes, etc. On the other hand, the Deutsche Frauenrat has, since 1977, undertaken, for the benefit of its members, an information campaign on Europe, in close collaboration with the information services of the European Commission.

The Deutsche Frauenrat has started a monthly paper entitled "Informationsdienst für Frauenfragen", which keeps the various organisations informed about each other's activities and sets out its position on current matters affecting women. Thus the viewpoint of the Deutsche Frauenrat is taken into consideration not only by the feminine press but also by ministers and parliamentarians, both at a local and national level.

Address for further information: Deutsche Frauenrat
Augustastrasse 42
53 Bonn - Bad Godesberg I
tel. (02221) 36.50.05

Frau und Kultur

It is now 80 years since the Deutscher Verband Frau und Kultur e.V. has been publishing a periodical likewise entitled "Frau und Kultur". A special edition has just been devoted to Europe. In it can be found an article by Georg Kahn-Ackermann, Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, underlining to what extent all work undertaken on behalf of Europe today is a democratic act, commonly desired by all governments for the well-being of our citizens. Other features include: the importance which direct elections to the European Parliament assumes for women; women and Europe (facts and figures); action taken on behalf of women by the European Communities; six interviews with women members of the European Parliament; all these articles enrich this edition.

Address for further information: Dr. Rosemarie Rüber- Peiner
Graf-Wyrich-Strasse 12,
4330 Mülheim/Ruhr tel:0208-42.32.90

Frau und Politik

Unemployment, family, drugs, migrant workers: these important current themes are dealt with in "Frau und Politik", the monthly review issued by the women's association of the CDU (German Christian Democrat Party). Also each month the review gives a portrait of an eminent female personality in the political or social field. There are also regular articles on consumer information. Essentially a political organ, "Frau und Politik" keeps its lady readers informed of debates in the German parliament and presents on these occasions the line taken by the CDU.

Address for further information: Annelies Klug
Konrad-Adenauer-Haus
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 73-75
5300 Bonn tél: 544-1

I R E L A N D

Which careers for women?

While the Employment Equality Act, outlawing discrimination in employment based on sex or marital status, became effective in Ireland in July 1977, a great deal of work still must be done to change traditional attitudes. The Council for the Status of Women (which represents thirty women's organisations) took a major initiative when it organised a comprehensive programme on career choices for young girls on the occasion of a general careers and science exhibition.

During the course of five days of discussion, two major themes were dominant: the need for girls to consider jobs other than those traditionally performed by women and to take a long-term view of work. Secretaries, nurses, hairdressers, teachers, saleswomen: the range of jobs which girls consider is not very wide. Too many women, moreover, cease working when they get married. Married women in Ireland only represent 3.5% of the labour force.

The conference, which was organised with the assistance of the Information Services of the European Commission, was also attended by political personalities and government ministers who all stressed the importance of women's position, especially in these times of unemployment.

Address for further information: Council for the Status of Women
c/o Department of Labour
Davitt House, Mespil Road
Dublin 4 tel: (01) 76.58.61

I T A L Y

Information concerning Italy has been collected by the "Comitato Donne di Europa" (Committee for Women of Europe), under the direction of Beatrice Rangoni Machiavelli.

Address for further information: Beatrice Rangoni Machiavelli
via Borgognona 47
Roma tél: 679.88.03

A new look for Voce donne

In December 1977, "Voce donne" (Voice of women), the special page of the political daily "La Voce Repubblicana", celebrated its first anniversary. Every Sunday, Voce donne seeks to give a panorama of women in society and the way in which women alter this society, not only in Italy but also in the rest of Europe and in the United States.

During the course of this first year, the page "Voce donne" has opened its columns to a great number of women who, for the first time, have felt the need to express their views alongside those of journalists and professional writers. The signatures of men are, however, not uncommon on the subject of feminism, nor on the occasion of debates on legal matters concerning women.

During the present course of events, "Voce donne" has mainly devoted space to European problems, to the approaching direct elections to the European Parliament, to the professional training of women in the countries which have recently joined the European Community and to the problems of consumers in the face of the economic crisis which is hitting all the member countries of the Community.

Address for further information: La Voce Repubblicana
via Tomacelli 146
Roma tél: 678.13.41

A political project

A group of Italian feminists have founded the "Lega delle Donne per il Socialismo" (League of Women for socialism). In their view, feminism can in no way change society or improve the quality of life for everyone without a definite political commitment. This league is currently employed in collecting signatures to support the draft bill, popularly called the "50%" of jobs, which should bring into effect the equality envisaged by the Constitution.

Concerning Europe, the League has presented a document to the International Congress of the European Left, held at Rome in October 1977. The theme of this document is: A Europe of the people can be a model for an alternative society.

Address for further information: Lega delle Donne per il Socialismo
via in Lucina 10,
Roma tél: 678.36.42 & 844.81.46

A manifesto for the Women of Europe?

With the election of the European Parliament in mind, the Italian Council of the European Movement has just organised a study seminar for women, which was attended by some hundred leaders and militants from all parts of Italy, from political parties, trades union and from a very wide variety of organisations. During the course of three days' study, they examined the problems which arise in the building of a united Europe. They also had the opportunity to ask the leaders of the women's movements, political parties and trades union, to take brisk action to obtain a wider representation of women on the electoral lists of political parties.

To conclude their work, the participants launched an appeal to all those forces who fight on behalf of women in the nine countries of the Community, so that the women of Europe can present a "unitarian" manifesto on the occasion of the European Parliamentary elections.

Address for further information: Consiglio Italiano del Movimento
Europeo
via Guido Baccelli 10,
Roma tél: 574.22.78 & 574.50.40

In a Christian perspective

To help towards the formation of a Christian Europe, a new association has just been formed in Rome: the Centro Europeo d'iniziativa sociali (European centre for social initiative). This socio-cultural association, which is inspired by Christian values and principles, aims to encourage in a humane manner all European citizens who dedicate themselves to the building of a just and free society. The founders of this association hold that, in order that Europe may present a new image, the point of reference must always remain the human being. The work of the CEIS will extend to several fields: emigration and social services; work and professional training; schools and educational activities; the mass media; European countryside, etc.

Address for further information: Maria Rosaria La Vista
Largo Trionfale 11
Roma

25th anniversary of the CNDI

The Consiglio Nazionale delle Donne Italiane (CNDI) has just held its 25th general assembly. To celebrate this anniversary, the CNDI invited delegates from the National Councils of Women of Belgium, France, Germany, Denmark and Luxembourg to be present at a discussion on the theme "Towards the European elections". The assembly was held in the large hall of the Capitol, where the first congress of Italian women, also organised by the CNDI, took place in 1908.

At the conclusion of the discussions, the delegates stressed their common wish to "see a new European society which was more free, just and independent and more able to guarantee peace". The CNDI will work in cooperation with the sister organisations of the other countries, so that women, too, can be the architects of a new Europe by exercising their right to vote with full understanding and by supporting candidates for the European Parliamentary elections.

Address for further information: Consiglio nazionale delle Donne
italiane

via E. Q. Visconti 55,
00193 Roma

UNITED KINGDOM

Angry women consumers

Two highly influential women's organisations in Great Britain (The National Federation of Women's Institutes and the National Housewives Association) recently cooperated with other consumer groups to urge the British government to campaign for a freeze on many Community farm prices and restraints on others. Beef, sugar and dairy products were the principal targets for the consumers' anger.

Address for further information: The National Federation of Women's
Institutes

39, Eccleston Street,
London SW1 W 9NT
tel: 01 - 730.72.12

Agriculture and consumption

Too often women consumers in Britain are mistaken about the effects of the common agricultural policy on the price of foodstuffs. That is why the European Movement strives to inform women's groups on all aspects of agricultural policy and also on social and regional policy, etc. These are explained in the European Movement's review "Women and Europe" which reaches about 7,000 local, regional and national organisations.

Address for further information: Women and Europe
c/o European Movement
1a Whitehall Place
London SW1 A 2HA tel: 01-839.66.22

Help for battered wives

Mrs. Erin Pizzey has been well known to the public ever since she opened the home for battered wives in Chiswick, in West London. Her policy is to have an open door, day and night, and women who wish to escape the assaults of their husbands, flock there from all parts, alone, or with their children.

A short while ago, Mrs. Pizzey had to wage a legal battle with the Chiswick Council, who wanted to limit the number of women who stay in the home. Mrs. Pizzey was found guilty but only a minor penalty was imposed.

Address for further information: Mrs. Erin Pizzey
Women's Aid
Chiswick High Road
London W4

THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY IN ACTION

Nuclear energy

At the end of November 1977 and the end of January 1978, it was the wish of the European Community, on these two occasions, for nuclear energy to be the subject of a public debate, with the press present. This kind of debate both enables public opinion to be informed on problems of nuclear energy, bearing in mind the energy needs of the Community, and also enables the European Commission to be informed about the areas where new initiatives might prove necessary to meet the needs of the population. Two women figured among the specialists invited: Marianne Dorte Bennedsen, former Minister and member of the Danish Energy Council, and Hanna Walz, President of the Commission for Energy and Research of the European Parliament.

Health the order of the day

Meeting for the first time since the foundation of the European Community, Health Ministers of the nine countries asked the European Commission to continue its research on certain economic aspects of health.

"Health has no price", says the proverb, but in 1975 expenses on health reached over 120 billion dollars for the Community as a whole! That year social expenditure on health represented between 20 and 29 of the gross national product for each country.

With regard to health education, and particularly action concerning the dangers of smoking, the European Commission was made responsible for drawing up a report on the measures being taken, in the different countries of the Community, against the dangers of smoking, including methods of publicity.

Little known figures

What is the average age of marriage in Italy? How frequent is divorce in Germany? What is the employment situation in the Netherlands? Many surprising - and useful - figures can be found in the statistical document entitled "Social Indicators", which the Statistics Office of the European Communities has just published.

Address for further information: Office des publications officielles
de la Communauté
Boîte postale 1003
Luxembourg

Priority in education

Transition from school to work and the mobility of students; these are the two principal elements in the action programmes for education put into operation by the European Community. Pilot projects, residential courses for teachers and administrative staff, meetings - the Education Committee of the Community gives priority to exchanges of information and experience in fields where each country has its own particular customs and policy.

An important document to note is the "Students' Guide" which reviews every one of the institutions of higher education in the European Community. The practical details which abound there make this an indispensable work for those wishing to study in another Community country: possible grants, provision for accommodation, social security, conditions for admission, diplomas gained, etc.

Address for further information: Office des publications officielles
de la Communauté
Boite postale 1003
Luxembourg

The European Social Fund and women

The European Social Fund can from now on give greater help to women. This has been agreed by the ministers of the Nine members of the European Community, following a proposal of the European Commission.

The European Social Fund will thus be able to contribute to financing projects launched in Community countries for the education and professional retraining of women over 25. Priority for financial aid from the Fund will be given to training which has been preceded by preparation for professional life (at the level of basic knowledge, information on working conditions in the undertaking, etc.) and is followed by measures designed to facilitate the entry of women into employment appropriate to their qualifications.

Address for further information : European Social Fund
European Commission
200, rue de la Loi
B - 1049 Brussels

STUDIES, MEETINGS, BOOKS

A publications centre

A "Centre for publications on the status of women" is about to be opened in Turin. This has been decided by the Regional Council of Piedmont at the suggestion of the "Consulta Femminile Regionale" (a women's consultative agency in the service of the regional authorities. In it will be found all the works relating to the legal, social and economic status of women, as well as works and publications on the European Community and its efforts on behalf of women.

Address for further information: Biblioteca Regionale
Palazzo Lascaris
Torino

Women immigrants have their say

How do the women exiled from the Maghreb live in Marseilles? How do Italian women immigrants return to their country? How do Portuguese women immigrants educate their children? These themes, and a great many others are broached in the work "Des femmes immigrées parlent" (Immigrant women speak), published by the Committee of Churches for Migrant Workers on the initiative of its "Commission sur la migration féminine" set up in 1975.

Address for further information: Comité des Eglises auprès des
travailleurs migrants
150, route de Ferney
1211 Genève 20

Feminism since the Middle Ages

Maïté Albistur and Daniel Armogathe have just outlined in over 500 pages the "Histoire du féminisme français". Not surprisingly, one learns that feminism is not new, even though those who had the courage to strive in the Middle Ages, or under the Renaissance, were often in a privileged position, either through birth or fortune. (Histoire du féminisme français, 508 pages, Edition des femmes, 60 FF)

Women and work

The "Revue du travail" published by the Belgian Ministry of Employment and Labour for the past 78, has just devoted a special number to women in work and unemployment in Belgium. Numerous diagrams inserted in the text illustrate the position of women and enable some disturbing comparisons to be made.

Address for further information: Revue du Travail
Ministère de l'Emploi et du Travail
rue Belliard, 53
1040 - Bruxelles tel: 513.40.90