

# Women of Europe

Brussels, January/February 1979 - no. 7

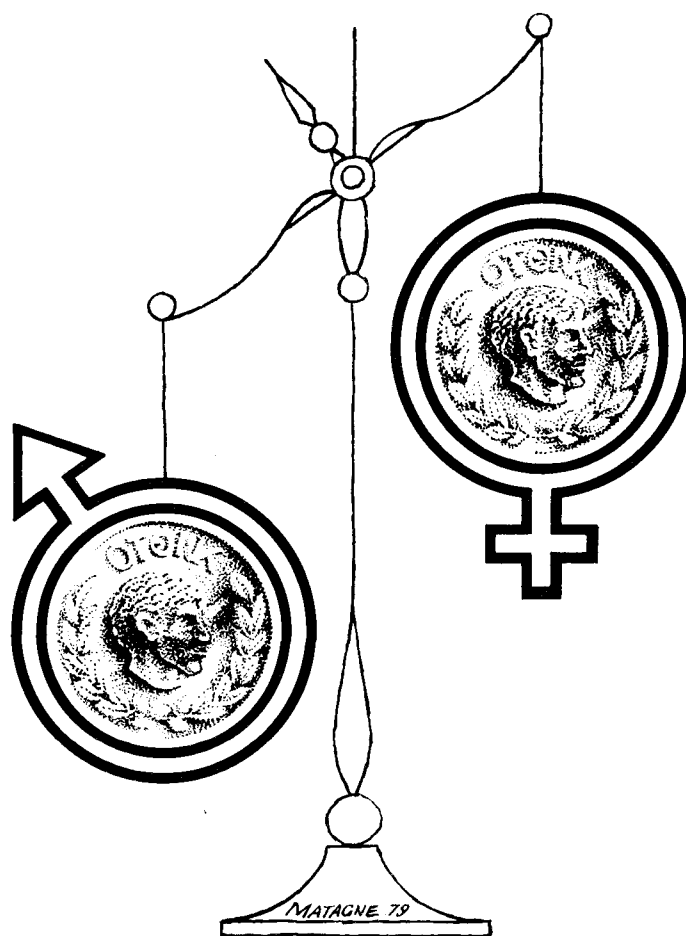
## More and more equal?

Equal pay: we are far from achieving the goal. This is the (pessimistic) solution reached by the European Commission after reviewing the ways in which each country is enforcing the Community directive on equal pay.

May we say that we are not very surprised?

The attitude towards a piece of legislation adopted by certain people is a demonstration of their lack of respect for women.

And it is out of self-respect that the women of Europe will soldier on, demanding respect for the law.



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This bulletin is published by the

**E** Commission of the European Communities  
Directorate-General of Information  
Rue de la Loi 200  
B-1049 - Brussels - Tél. 735.00.40

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FACTS, INSTITUTIONS AND LAWS IN THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES

G E R M A N Y

Tax: a fairer system

The Bundesvertretung der Deutschen Steuergewerkschaft (women's section of the German tax officials' union) and the Deutsche Beamtinnenbund - Bundesfrauenkongress (women's congress of the German civil servants' union) are working for an end to the "income-splitting" arrangement, whereby the joint earnings of husband and wife are divided into two equal tax portions.

Since tax law no longer recognizes problems specific to women and therefore no longer takes into account any special advantages or disadvantages to women, it can be stated that it does not in any way discriminate on grounds of sex. Differences in the treatment of men and women are based only on marital status and, in the case of certain measures, the number of their children. The "income-splitting" system has meant that tax liability ranges widely, depending on family status and the amount of income. Married people benefit from this distribution of the tax burden to the full extent only if one of the two has no income at all. It is a principle, then, that runs contrary to marriage partners sharing equally in household work and is an encouragement for personal taxation.

Useful address: Deutsche Steuergewerkschaft - Bundesfrauenvertretung  
Adenaueralle  
53 Bonn

The Post Office to recruit girls

The Federal Post Office and the Federal Railways are about to embark upon large-scale recruiting among girls who have just completed their education, for both technical and non-technical jobs.

More than ever before, teachers, parents and employment agency advisers should encourage girls to take up manual or technical training in the Post Office and railway sectors. On several occasions, the Minister for Postal Services has used his influence to ensure that greater consideration should be given to women applicants than in the past, thus helping to improve women's employment status. The number of postwomen has risen from 2 in 1970 to 466 in 1977. The Federal Post Office is the largest employer of women in the Federal Republic, with one employee in every three being a woman; 44% of these women employees have part-time jobs.

Useful address: Bundesministerium für Post und Bahn  
53 Bonn

Allowance to be paid to women witnesses

The highest German court has confirmed that a woman who works in the home is entitled to the benefit of receiving an allowance of 6 DM. as compensation for the time taken to give evidence before a court.

Other witnesses who take time but do not lose money receive only 2 DM. The jurists argued in favour of this preferential treatment of housewives on the grounds of the basic law concerning equality of status whose aim is to "bring to an end the undervaluation of a woman's work in her home in the eyes of the law, granting her the consideration to which she is entitled".

Discrimination in social security

The Constitutional Court is examining the question of discrimination against women in calculating the periods of employment on which entitlement to retirement insurance is based.

For years the DGB (German Trades Union Congress) has been demanding an end to the system whereby annuities corresponding, for example, to certain training periods or the first five years of employment under the pension scheme are lower for women than for men.

Useful address:           DGB Abteilung Frauen  
                              Hans-Böckler-Haus  
                              4000 Düsseldorf

B E L G I U M

Parliamentary election results

Men will still be in the majority in laying down the law in Belgium. The lower chamber elected in December 1978 numbers 16 women out of a total of 212 members, slightly over 8%. In the Senate, out of 106 senators elected by direct suffrage only 12 are women. The figures speak for themselves. The question is whether women vote for women. Apparently not, since they account for 53% of the electors and since voting is compulsory. Is it a lack of confidence? Or indifference? Who elected the 35 women deputies and senators? Could it have been the men?

Useful address:           Palais de la Nation  
                              Rue de la Loi  
                              1000 Brussels

The tasks facing the next Belgian Government

The Government that has been formed as a result of the recent national election will have to face many problems of more direct concern to women. The Belgian Association of Women Jurists has drawn up its own list:

1. Civil issues:
  - Reform of the rights of inheritance of the surviving spouse, an essential counterpart to the reform of financial arrangements between married couples.
  - Amendment of the laws on consanguinity and adoption to do away with all discrimination between children, including discrimination based on family origin.
  - Finding an urgent and humane solution to situations giving rise to distress within the context of responsible parenthood.
  - Organization by public or private bodies of specific and effective help to all parents of young children.
2. Tax issues:
  - Elimination of the system whereby a married couple's earned incomes are taken together for the purpose of tax assessment, thus ending all forms of discrimination between citizens living on their own and citizens living together, whether or not they are man and wife; an additional aim is to reduce the incentive to take undeclared employment.
3. Social issues:
  - Total harmonization of Belgian legislation with European directives pertaining to equal pay, equal employment status and job training and equal social security arrangements.
4. Nationality issues:
  - Revision of nationality laws to guarantee status both for the child and for the father or mother.

Useful address:            Association belge des femmes juristes  
                                  c/o Rolande Hacquart  
                                  19 rue Guimard, bte 1  
                                  1040 Brussels

D E N M A R K

Family Law in Denmark

by Inger Pedersen  
Judge in the Civil Courts, Member of the  
Ministry of Justice Committee for  
Matrimonial Questions

It was in the 20's that regulations were brought in establishing equality of status between husband and wife, based on fundamental principles as vital as the independence of each partner to the marriage and their shared responsibility for the running of the household.

Legislation on children has also gradually introduced the principle of the equality of rights of both natural and legitimate children.

Painstaking preparatory work was carried out and coordinated with the other Scandinavian countries before the set of measures acquired the force of law.

In 1969, the law on the ending and dissolving of marriage was modernized and made more liberal, one of the consequences being that the question of which party is responsible for the breakdown of the marriage no longer has any bearing on alimony to be paid to the spouse or on the custody of children.

A new committee on matrimonial questions was created in the same year. Its terms of reference were to consider whether further amendments were needed to legislation, particularly in view of progress and the changing position of women in society. The committee suggested a number of amendments, although none implied a modification to the fundamental principles of equality of status and independence.

It should be pointed out that the committee stated its opinion in favour of continuing the current property arrangements under which any savings and other assets are shared equally in the event of divorce or death. A sociological survey has revealed that a majority of the Danish people is in favour of some form of sharing and that only a tiny minority would like the separate holding of property by husband and wife to become the general rule.

The committee on matrimonial questions was also asked to consider whether some of the legislative measures that create legal obligations as a result of marriage should be applicable to specific situations comparable to marriage.

In practice, this part of the committee's work is of greater moment than might have been thought in 1969, for there has been a sharp rise in the number of free unions. The recently published findings of a sample survey have revealed that approximately 13% of all couples living together have opted not to marry. Although a very large majority of couples (87%) still favour formal marriage, the number who do not is striking.

A recent amendment to Danish law permits an unmarried father to obtain custody of the child of a union in certain cases.

The committee is also concerned with the problems arising from the right to be housed, the possibility of reducing estate duty and the arrangements for the sharing of property when couples have been living together.

Over the past few years, the courts have been called upon to reach decisions on a number of cases that arise when people who have lived together without being married claim the equal apportionment of savings, as prescribed by the law for married couples.

The courts have not in fact applied the law as it pertains to married people to couples living together without marriage but have in a number of cases decided that property should be divided in some other manner.

It is, moreover, becoming increasingly common for an unmarried couple to buy a house or flat jointly and this also means that the home will be shared equally in the event of separation or of the death of one of the couple.

There is little likelihood of the committee on matrimonial questions proposing that married and unmarried couples should be treated in the same way in law.

F R A N C E

Joint Ministerial Council on Action for Women

The "Conseil interministériel de l'action pour les femmes" (CIAF) held its first meeting in December, chaired by Mr. Raymond Barre, the Prime Minister. A number of decisions were reached, based on proposals made by Mrs. Pelletier, the Minister for Women's Status. From now on, each department is to have one full-time delegate with responsibility for women's status, each woman delegate being nominated by the Minister.

In carrying out her mandate, Mrs. Monique Pelletier is also a member of the Comité d'aménagement du territoire (regional development committee), the Fonds d'intervention culturelle (arts subsidy fund), the Office national d'information pour les enseignements et les professions (ONISEP - national information bureau for education and the professions), the Agence nationale pour l'amélioration des conditions de travail (the national agency for improvement in working conditions), the Fonds de la formation professionnelle et de l'emploi (vocational and job training funds), the Comité de gestion de l'Agence nationale pour l'emploi (the management committee of the national employment agency), the Agence nationale d'amélioration de l'habitat (national agency for environmental improvement) and the Haut Comité de la population (higher committee on the population).

The Minister for Women's Status will also take part in preparations for European Council meetings whose agendas refer directly or indirectly to women's status, and she will also be participating in the work of these Councils.

Useful address:            Ministère à la Condition féminine  
                                 Immeuble Mirabeau  
                                 39-43 Quai André Citroën  
                                 75739 Paris - Cedex 15

An experiment

In the spring, the Government will be bringing in a bill which would, if approved, impose a minimum quota of 20% women in the lists of candidates in the 1983 local elections, on an experimental basis.

The political parties will have an opportunity of preparing for this measure at the time of the cantonal elections and the June elections for the European Parliament.

A wage for mothers in the home

Mrs. Monique Pelletier, Minister for Women's Status, discussing wages for mothers working in the home, quoted the following figures:

- if one half of the statutory minimum wage were to be paid each month to mothers in the home with at least one child of under 20, it would cost the State about 48,000 million francs;
- in the same way, if one half of the statutory minimum wage were to be paid each month to mothers in the home with three or more children, it would cost the State about 7,000 million francs.

It should be borne in mind that the total cost of family allowances now paid out in France is approximately 50,000 million. "This demonstrates the unrealistic nature of proposals for a 'mother's wage' from the financial viewpoint, and the wage would, moreover, widen the already broad gap between women in paid employment and women who stay at home" argued Mrs. Pelletier.

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                          Immeuble Mirabeau  
                          39-43 Quai André Citroën  
                          75739 Paris - Cedex 15

#### Alimony

Mrs. Monique Pelletier, Minister for Women's Status, has asked Mrs. Colette Mème, the rapporteur on the Council of State, to propose measures which would improve the position of divorced women.

One of their problems is the irregular payment of alimony. Alimony is payable in respect of 540,000 to 600,000 children and a comparable number of parents. Of these, 36% to 44% are paid regularly, 32% to 35% irregularly and 24% to 27% not at all.

Useful address:           Ministre délégué à la Condition féminine  
                          Immeuble Mirabeau  
                          39-43 Quai André Citroën  
                          75739 Paris - Cedex 15

#### The First 100 days

To mark its first 100 days' existence, the French Ministry for Women's Status has published the first issue of a monthly bulletin on women's status. Besides a good deal of other useful information, it contains the names and telephone numbers of the 26 regional women delegates who can be contacted by women in the provinces and in the French Overseas departments.

Useful address:           Bulletin de la Condition féminine  
                          Immeuble Mirabeau  
                          39-43 Quai André Citroën  
                          75739 Paris - Cedex 15

### I T A L Y

#### A National Commission on Women's Status

The 'Comitato Nazionale di Consultazione per la Partecipazione della Donna alla vita pubblica' (National Consultative Committee on Women's Participation in Public Life), on which many women's organizations are represented, is conducting a campaign for the setting up of a national commission on women's status. According to the Committee, the office of the Under-Secretary of State for Women's Status that has recently been created does not meet the demands of most women's associations and movements, which would like a body with broad representation of women's social movements that might make a valuable contribution in dealings with both Parliament and Government.

For this reason, the Committee is pressing for Parliament to introduce a bill setting up a national commission attached to the Premier's cabinet. A commission of this kind would be consulted on all matters pertaining to women's affairs and would be entitled to take the initiative and monitor the application of equality legislation; it would also have the same powers in all questions of women's employment and the defence of women in the event of discrimination.



Useful address:           Comitato Nazionale di Consultazione per la  
                              Partecipazione della Donna alla Vita Pubblica  
                              Via Ennio Quirino Visconti 55  
                              Rome   tel. 31.42.93

L U X E M B O U R G

Anti-sexist teaching

The Luxembourg Ministry of Education's Teaching Research Centre has recently set up a working group on "Anti-Sexist Teaching".

The group has been asked to conduct a thorough critique of the educational system and text books with a view to eradicating all traces of sexism.

Useful address:           Ministère de l'Education Nationale  
                              Centre de recherches pédagogiques  
                              Luxembourg

N E T H E R L A N D S

Women's participation in social life

The Netherlands is well ahead not only of the Eastern bloc countries in this respect but also of Sweden and Italy, according to a report drawn up by the Eastern Europe working group following its survey on the position of women in the Soviet Union, East Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden. The subjects covered by the survey were rights in marriage and family life, family planning, nursery provision and job opportunities.

Useful address:           Oost-Europa Verkenningen 39 - November 1978  
                              Parstraat 9  
                              Utrecht

National survey on employment

An investigation should be carried out to determine the reasons why so few women have had the opportunity of carving out a good career for themselves, and further thought should be given to women and the jobs market: these are the opinions expressed by a study group attached to the office of the Minister for Scientific Policy, Mr. Peijnenburg.

The group pleads for the introduction of a national survey on employment. Women's poor showing on the labour market is typified by the fact that the jobs they occupy offer no opportunity for an attractive career. Many women are unemployed and absenteeism is predominantly a female failing. The study group would like to clarify the causes of the situation and find solutions which would give women a better chance on the jobs market.

The working group also argues in favour of a survey regarding the reduction of working hours and upgrading of work in general. As proposed by the working group, Mr. Peijnenburg has asked the Economic and Social Council and the Scientific Policy Council for their views.

Useful address:           Ministerie van Onderwijs en Wetenschappen  
                              Nieuwe Uitleg 1  
                              The Hague                                   tel. 070/742.742

Women in the Resistance

The Amsterdam Free University has embarked upon a study of the role of women in the Resistance to the Nazis during the second world war in the Netherlands.

The study will end the widespread state of ignorance on the importance of women's efforts during this period. All those women who were Resistance workers are invited to cooperate on this study, which will be anonymous.

Useful address:           Lidwien Marcus  
                          VU - Hoofdgebouw  
                          Kamer 8A - 34  
                          De Boelelaan 1105  
                          Amsterdam                                   tel. 020/833.057

Equal Rights to Jobs

Soon employers will not be allowed to discriminate between men and women. The legislation will cover contracts of employment for both blue and white collar workers and the advertising of jobs. The Dutch Ministers of Justice, Social Affairs, Education and the Arts, Leisure and Employment have submitted a joint bill to Parliament along the lines of the EEC directive.

One of the aims of the bill is to prevent discrimination between men and women in providing information on the choice of a career, in job training and in access to the professions. Women who feel that they have been the victims of discrimination may refer their grievances to the commissions on equality between men and women, the staff of which will be increased to cater for the additional work.

Useful address:           Ministerie van Justitie  
                          Plein 2 b  
                          The Hague                                   tel. 070/614.311

The cost of being a spinster

Many insurance companies in the Netherlands have increased the premiums payable by single women by 30%. According to the insurers, single women are the group which statistically is at greatest risk. Women in general incur greater medical expense, but in a family this situation is offset by the fact that there is less risk with the husband and children. The very normal problems which occur during pregnancy and childbirth are aggravated by solitude, say the insurance companies.

U N I T E D   K I N G D O M

Resource Centre

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) in Manchester has opened an information centre on all aspects of sex equality. The library's catalogue, known as BiblioFem, lists 40,000 books, pamphlets and archive material concerned with women's suffrage and social conditions from 1860 to our own times. The Centre also has a collection of non-sexist children's books and fiction by, for and about women.

The library contains the relevant Acts of Parliament and Community Statistics.

Useful address: The Librarian  
Equal Opportunities Commission  
Overseas House, Quay Street  
Manchester M3 3HN

Pay: the gap widens

The gap between men's and women's earnings, which had narrowed between 1970 and 1976, has begun to widen again in Britain, according to figures published by the Department of Employment.

In 1970 women's earnings represented 63.1% of men's; by 1975, this percentage had improved to 72.1% and by 1976 to 75.1%. In 1977 there was virtually no change, but in 1978 women's earnings fell back to 73.9% of men's. The original impetus imparted by the 1970 Equal Pay Act seems to be petering out.

The root of the problem is that in general women are still to be found in the low paid and unskilled jobs, while men predominate among the managers and the highly skilled. Until women penetrate this male domain in greater numbers their average earnings will always be less than those of men.

Useful address: Department of Employment  
8, St. James's Square  
London S.W.1

A disappointing picture

A recent survey of 575 British firms provides a disappointing picture of industry as far as equal opportunities for women is concerned. With a few honourable exceptions, such as Sainsbury's, Lloyd's Bank and Rolls Royce, most companies - while taking care to avoid unlawful discrimination under the Sex Discrimination Act - have failed to examine the wider issues of equal opportunities for women workers or sometimes even to acknowledge them.

These findings, published in a booklet entitled Equality between the Sexes: How far have we come?, resulted from an enquiry by the Equal Opportunities Commission conducted to find out how the Sex Discrimination Act was working three years after it was passed. The EOC was upset to discover that the traditional segregation of jobs between men and women was still widespread in industry. When a positive attitude is adopted, however, good results can be achieved: Sainsbury's has introduced a monitoring system to avoid discrimination and has increased the number of women in middle and senior management grades from 41 to 89 in four years.

The EOC has published a "Checklist for Action" as an incentive to employers to change their ways.

Useful address: Equal Opportunities Commission  
Overseas House  
Quay Street  
Manchester M3 3HN

#### Northern Ireland

The role of the Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland has changed from conciliation to that of adviser and negotiator, according to its second annual report.

In the course of 1978, the Commission advised on 188 complaints or enquiries, of which 58 were on questions of equal pay or sex discrimination in employment. In several cases the Commission helped women workers through direct negotiation with employers or by representing them before an industrial tribunal.

On one specific occasion, four women employed in the meat industry asked the Commission for help: they claimed they did broadly similar work to that of their male colleagues but were paid at a lower rate. The Commission advised them on how to make an application to the tribunal; as a result a settlement was reached before the court hearing and each of the women awarded back pay.

The Commission has encouraged other organizations to report on the need for nursery provision for the under-fives and on the position of single-parent families in Northern Ireland. It has carried out its own investigations as to the extent that Further Colleges of Education comply with the sex discrimination legislation. This investigation is of major significance, according to the Commission, as the Colleges are an important link between school and employment.

Useful address: Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern  
Ireland  
Lindsay House  
Callender Street  
Belfast BT1 5DT  
Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland

The Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland is carrying out an investigation into the clothing, hosiery and knitwear industry to examine levels of pay and grading systems to determine what changes are required to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

The Commission has also decided to sponsor a register of women's voluntary organizations in Northern Ireland, to be compiled by Women's Forum.

The register will list as many voluntary groups as possible, whether their headquarters are in Northern Ireland, London or Dublin, provided the organizations are for women, run by women and non-political.

Useful address:     Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland  
                          Lindsay House  
                          Callender Street  
                          Belfast BT1 5DT  
                          Northern Ireland



Towards a less traditional women's press

The International Association of Women's and Home Page Journalists has held a congress at Montreal on the theme of "the Press and Women", attended by journalists from 16 different countries.

One of the three committees in the Congress made special efforts to review ways in which women can make their voice heard through the press. It considered that women's problems are the problems of society and that as a result they should not be confined to the ghetto of the "woman's page".

Nevertheless, it does seem that an item of information will achieve faster and more positive results if it is beamed more specifically at an audience of women readers. There is, moreover, a clear trend towards broadening the content of women's magazines to many subjects other than fashion, cooking, knitting and so on.

The other issues raised by the congress were whether women should bring a new and fundamentally different style to the press by comparison with men, and whether the women's press should restrict its columns to women writers or open them to male journalists as well.

Léa Maretel from Belgium was elected as president of the Association, succeeding Mila Contini who had placed her sustained energy and enthusiasm at the service of A.I.J.P.F. for the previous twelve years.

Useful address:            Association internationale des journalistes de la  
                                  presse féminine et familiale  
                                  Boulevard Charlemagne 1 - boîte 54  
                                  1040 Brussels

G E R M A N Y

Help for women

Most of the 3,800 legal abortions in cases of unwanted pregnancies are carried out because the women in question are facing a critical situation. With this in mind, the Arbeiterwohlfahrt Bezirksverband Niederrhein (Association providing social aid to workers in the Lower Rhein region) has set up an Institute concerned with the problems of maternity.

The Association hopes to provide practical help to pregnant girls who find themselves on their own, with the Institute serving as a model. It also hopes to change the attitudes of society to unplanned motherhood by appropriate action. Above all, it is to work to eliminate and overcome the opposition that is always raised to the termination of pregnancy by families, the authorities, the hospitals, doctors and the religious authorities.

The Institute will also embark upon scientific work and the compilation of archives, mindful of its role in providing an incentive and mutual assistance.

Useful address:            Arbeiterwohlfahrt Bezirksverband Niederrhein  
                                  Mitzer Str. 15  
                                  4000 Düsseldorf

The first Housewife's Union in Germany

The first German union of women working in the home is to be set up in March, 1979, the initiative being taken by a Kiel woman teacher and a housewife, Dr. Gerhild Heuer. The union will be striving to obtain effective recognition in law for household work as a job in its own right, with the introduction of health insurance and an old age pension for housewives. It hopes to remain politically independent, achieving its objectives by "school strikes", "consumer strikes" or, if necessary, boycotting elections.

Useful address:           Dr. Gerhild Heuer  
                              Perserau 16  
                              2306 Schönberg bei Kiel

The German Women's Council

A "women's status balance sheet" has been drawn up by the Deutsche Frauenrat (German Women's Council), whose members are delegates from women's organizations in the Federal Republic with the exception of autonomous groups and the Feminist movement, at its annual meeting at Bad Godesberg.

The chairwoman, Maria Weber, highlighted the shortcomings that still exist thirty years after the introduction of the principle of equality of rights as fundamental law, declaring that it is no longer acceptable for women to be the victims of prejudice; women are no longer prepared to live in uncertainty and in an unsatisfactory situation.

Maria Weber recommended a set of measures that would help to transform the specifically male structures of the world of work, the political world and society.

The Federal Minister, Antje Huber, reported to the Council on the working groups active in her ministry whose efforts would contribute towards a solution to the problems of all women, eliminating the discrimination embodied in law.

Useful address:           Deutscher Frauenrat  
                              Augustastrasse  
                              53 Bonn 2



B E L G I U M

Baby-minders and the State

Belgium's "Association des femmes au foyer" (AFF - housewives' association) has drawn the attention of the Belgian authorities to the problem of child-minding. In many cases, a child is placed with a baby-minder as a last resort because of the lack of day nursery facilities to care for children whose mothers need to work. The child-minders earn from 27 to 65 Belgian francs an hour, after deducting all charges, and they have not been declaring this derisory sum.

Now the Government is demanding that such earnings should be declared, stating that child-minders come under the same heading as other self-employed workers. The measure affects 7,000 child-minders and 23,000 children. If the State were to take over responsibility for these children, it would cost ten times more than the social security payments.

Useful address:            Association des femmes au foyer (AFF)  
                              200 rue de Linthout  
                              1040 Brussels

Self-Help

A new group has been set up by the Maison des Femmes (the "women's house"). A new form of mutual aid and support that started in the United States and has spread to Europe, self-help groups such as this bring a group of women together to discuss their specific problems (for example, a group of divorced women, single parents, etc.), try to solve those problems or learn to live with them.

Useful address:            Maison des Femmes  
                              79 rue du Méridien  
                              1030 Brussels

Women in the Christian Trade Unions

The women's consultative committee in the Federation of Christian Unions (Confédération des syndicats chrétiens) has held its annual meeting at which it suggested that post-natal leave be granted to fathers as well as mothers.

The committee also stressed the fact that, despite all the other problems, employment is still the most serious issue. In 1978 the unemployment figure was 220,000, with 5 out of 8 unemployed being women. Faced with this situation, the committee is in favour of the 36 hour week being extended to all, rather than the creation of part-time jobs specifically for women.

Useful address:            Confédération des syndicats chrétiens  
                              121 rue de la Loi  
                              1040 Brussels

Safety of children in their local boroughs

The Conseil national des femmes belges (Belgian Women's National Council) has drawn the attention of the authorities to the problem of child safety. More than 250 children aged under 18 are killed on the way to and from school each year. Two main factors are responsible: lack of prudence and the urban environment.

The Council is to ask the Ministry of Employment and Labour to set up a team of four people, backed by a town planning architect, as part of the campaign to provide work for the unemployed. This team would carry out a pilot experiment in two local boroughs in the Brussels city area, each with an entirely different environment. For example, one borough might be selected that is an urban area with little open space, while the other might be located near a park or wooded area.

Useful address:           Conseil national des femmes belges (CNFB)  
                          Place Quetelet 1a  
                          1030 Brussels                           tel. 02/219.50.53

Last but not the end .....

The end of a phase: this is how we should view the decision reached by the Groupe de recherche et d'information féministe (GRIF - Feminist Research and Information Group) to cease publication of its "cahier" or note-book. Formed in the summer of 1973, GRIF has been putting out these note-books for the past years, analyzing and commenting on the evolution of the women's movement. The final issue attempts to draw up a balance sheet of the results achieved by women's movements in their struggles: housework, the crisis, the church, motherhood, politics, social security, abortion and contraception are all themes discussed in the last note-book.

After too long a period of difficulties, alienation and oppression, the various feminist movements have finally emerged publicly. It is impossible to place too much emphasis on the importance of reconstituting a collective record of the history of women and their struggles in times past, a subject inexplicably neglected in official history.

In refusing to institutionalize roles in the feminist movement, the women who have been writing GRIF's note-books stress that the cessation of publication is only part of the decision to move towards other tasks within the movement; in any case, "they are only putting the key under the mat; it is there, anyone can pick it up".

Useful address:           Groupe de recherche et d'information féministe  
                          Rue Henri Van Zuylen 59  
                          1180 Brussels

European Tuesdays

Every Tuesday from 12.30 to 2 p.m., briefing sessions are planned where women can hear representatives of all Belgian political parties who are candidates for the European elections.

A team from the Women's Adult Education Centre is also available throughout the week to provide personal contact from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and friendship meetings are held for swapping ideas every Tuesday from 2 to 3.30 p.m.

Useful address:           Centre féminin d'Education permanente  
                          Place Quételet 1a  
                          1030 Brussels

D E N M A R K

Wives ....

Craftsmen's wives, tradesmen's wives, farmers' wives .... on top of their housework they tackle the accounts, help to sell in the shop, work in the fields. Without status, social security or rights, they are relegated to the category dismissively known as "family labour".

The Danske Kvinders Nationalraad (National Council of Danish Women) has organized a seminar to discuss the occupational position of all these helping women, for "we are forced to note that the European Community has never to the present displayed any interest in these women even though it declares that it has the keenest interest in what it calls the 'working' section of the population".

It is a contradiction that reveals a whole state of mind. Women who give their labour to a family concern would like their work to be recognized and, like other women workers, to obtain the full benefits of social security, as well as maternity leave. The Council also urges that tax legislation be reformed, as otherwise any measure that aims to establish parity between men and women is doomed to failure.

In Denmark, for example, husbands are granted substantial tax deductions even when the wives earn more than they do. There is a need for a detailed study of tax legislations within the Community, because tax systems to a very great extent determine how EEC directives are applied when they concern equal pay and rights for men and women on the jobs market.

Useful address:            Danske Kvinders Nationalraad  
                             Niels Hemmingsengade 8  
                             1153 Copenhagen K

F R A N C E

Acknowledging the difference?

According to an article appearing in "CNPF", the journal of the Conseil national du patronat français (a confederation of groups representing employers of all types, roughly comparable to the British Confederation of British Industry), the main obstacles to women gaining a firm foothold in the world of work are more psychological than technical; one should not discount the handicap created by an educational system designed for boys as an additional factor. The Council considers that the legislators have done what they had to do. France has enough laws and decrees; now is the time for the companies themselves to translate the will of Parliament into practical terms.

According to CNPF, the introduction of too many measures to protect women would be self-defeating as they would penalise any company providing a large proportion of jobs for women. CNPF concludes: women need a career, but not necessarily the same kind of career as men. "We must acknowledge the difference."

Useful address:            Conseil national du patronat français  
                             31 avenue Pierre de Serbie  
                             75784 Paris - Cedex 16

### Women at work

At Metz a few weeks ago, some 300 men and women met under the auspices of the Moselle Association for the Promotion of Women's Work. They came from the four administrative departments of Lorraine and also from the neighbouring regions, which are facing the same employment problems as in the iron and steel regions now labouring under difficulties: Wallonia, the Sarre and Luxembourg.

Organized in liaison with the European Commission's Bureau for Questions concerning Women's Employment, this encounter provided a forum of debate on five themes:

- girls and occupational guidance
- working conditions
- access to employment
- work and family life
- training opportunities

Embodying the work done during the encounter, a motion was adopted and forwarded to the governments of the countries represented. It mentioned the "need for early planning of the introduction of new activities which will create jobs, together with a training programme giving men and women the chance of acquiring the qualifications they need, without discrimination and in compliance with the EEC Council directive of 9 February 1976".

### The Louise Michel Club

Created in 1963, the Louise Michel Club is a study and social development club with Socialist ideals. Today it has a membership of over 11,000, grouped in independent sections in 89 administrative departments of France. It is a club that thinks in European terms: it was the first French association as such to be accepted by the European Parliament at Strasbourg.

Starting with the golden rule that no one party has the monopoly of the right and not all the other parties' beliefs are wrong, and viewing Socialism as essentially a state of mind and the heart, the Club has made its mark on most social legislation submitted to the French Parliament. Its Committee of Honour numbers eminent political personalities from the opposition and the majority parties under the chairmanship of Senator Henri Caillavet.

Useful address:           Janette Brutelle-Duba  
                              President of the Club Louise Michel  
                              8 rue Léon Vaudoier  
                              75007 Paris

### Women and feminism

The Union féminine civique et sociale (Feminist Civil and Social Union) has just brought out a special edition of its journal, "Les Cahiers d'éducation civique" on the theme of Women and Feminism. It provides a clearer picture of the respective positions of the feminist movements on the one hand and women's movements on the other. It provides good reading for anyone who wants to know where we stand now. It is supplemented by a short bibliography and a few basic facts and figures.

Useful address:           Union féminine civique et sociale  
                              Cahiers d'éducation civique  
                              6 rue Béranger  
                              75003 Paris

I R E L A N D

Development of personal skills

For the past two years, the Council for the Status of Women has been organizing workshops for women to provide them with the opportunity to become aware of their own self-worth and potential, developing skills that would help them assert and support themselves.

The workshops proved so positive and helpful that the Council has set up workshops for mixed groups - men and women - which would explore interactions and relationships between the sexes and look at the traditional stereotyped roles which both men and women tend to assume.

Useful address: Council for the Status of Women  
27 Merrion Square  
Dublin 2 tel. 76.34.48

Nuclear energy

The Council for the Status of Women, the umbrella organization for 31 national bodies, has called on the Government to set up a commission to enquire into all aspects of nuclear energy before the final decision is taken on a proposed nuclear station in Ireland.

The members of the Council feel that all the implications of nuclear energy should be examined and alternative sources of energy explored in view of the possible long-term effects of this energy source on future generations and the environment.

Useful address: Council for the Status of Women  
27 Merrion Square  
Dublin 2 tel. 76.34.48

Women and politics

The Women's Political Association, founded to encourage Irish women to increase their involvement in party politics and in the debate of all political issues of concern to women, has conducted a seminar on the theme of "Focus on Women".

Gemma Hussey, member of the Seanad Eireann, outlined all the aspects of women's everyday life in which intervention by the European Community might be useful. She dwelt on the condition of women in countries applying for membership of the Community, saying that the status of Portuguese, Spanish and Greek women must be given due consideration here and now to ensure that the negotiations on membership are not solely economic.

"Women in these countries are emerging from the traditional and restricted social role. Like Irish women, they need support and encouragement if they are to take their proper place in the Community" Gemma Hussey concluded.

Useful address: Women's Political Association  
32 Dartry Park  
Dublin 6  
Ireland

I T A L Y

1979: the Year of the little Girl

"Noi Donne" ("We Women"), a body set up by the Italian Women's Union, is to devote the Year of the Child to little girls. A year will be barely enough to review everything in their education that leads them to assume the same role as their mothers and grandmothers for centuries before them.

Useful address:               Noi Donne  
                                  Via Trinità dei Pellegrini 12  
                                  R o m e                                 tel. 656.45.62

Women's campaigns and social progress

The journal of women in the Italian Communist Party, "Donne e Politica" (women and politics), has devoted a special issue to reviewing the events of 1978 as seen by women.

The questions put to women representatives of various political parties and movements included: should women campaign for their rights jointly as part of the struggle for other social and political objectives? On the whole, women replied in the affirmative, viewing feminism as an integral part of the general evolution of society.

Useful address:               Donne e Politica  
                                  Via delle Botteghe Oscure, 4  
                                  R o m e                                 tel. 6711

Soroptimists

The Soroptimist movement has just published the proceedings of a major seminar on "the position of women in Italy on the eve of the European elections". Apart from problems of employment, the Soroptimists are very concerned with family law and woman's status in her home. The movement would like the status of housewives to be reviewed with due consideration to the guidelines stated by the Council of Europe in February 1976.

Holding very many meetings throughout Italy, the Soroptimists are helping to create an awareness of Europe in women's public opinion.

Useful address:               Centro Italiano Femminile  
                                  Via Carlo Zucchi 25  
                                  00165 R o m e

Woman on television

What image of woman does television project? This is the question to which the survey conducted by the Centro Italiano Femminile (CIF - Italian Women's Centre) attempted to reply.

As might be expected, the findings were basically negative. Programmes pay little attention to women and families. The families depicted come from the middle or upper classes but never from rural or proletarian backgrounds. The sharing of responsibility by man and woman is hardly touched upon, or only in the most traditional manner. In the same way, no emphasis is ever placed on the dual role (at work and in the household) of a wife and mother.

According to CIF's report, television provides no more than an unreal escapist outlet and does little to encourage constructive reactions among men and women. In the final analysis, television is a poor reflection of the changes that are taking place in Italian society. It hampers rather than supports the work of women's organizations campaigning for change.

Useful address:            Centro Italiano Femminile  
                              Via Carlo Zucchi 25  
                              00165 R o m e

N E T H E R L A N D S

Information: giving and receiving

The Dutch Women's Council information and archive centre - Informatie en Documentatie Centrum van de Nederlandse Vrouwen Raad - publishes a photocopied compilation of the most interesting articles appearing on women's themes in Dutch newspapers and magazines. Annual subscriptions to this press review, which appears eight times a year, are 27.5 guilders. One of its snippets of information is that a (male) journalist working on the Provinciale Zeeuwse Courand was refused admission to a "women only café" that opened recently in Middelburg. It also reports that there are still thousands of cases of discrimination between the sexes in Dutch legislation and bye-laws. The "Knipselkrant" (press-cuttings journal) covers a period of about six week with a wealth of detail.

The information centre is a place where the journals published by most Dutch women's and feminist bodies can be consulted on the spot, as well as very many reports, studies and brochures issued by the authorities and voluntary organizations.

Useful address:            Informatie en documentatie Centrum  
                              van de Nederlandse Vrouwen Raad  
                              Laan Copes van Cattenburch, 72  
                              The Hague                            tel. 070/63 10 16

U N I T E D   K I N G D O M

Self-Help in Coventry

Britain's major car production city, Coventry, has been badly hit by economic recession. A new "Mums' and Babies' Club" has been enormously successful in the town.

Beginning with six mothers and their children, the Club has grown to 200, the majority of whom are single parents or divorcees although several of its members are pensioners. The Club's activities now extend to talks on a wide variety of subjects and it has a real concern for health care. At first, for instance, only a few of the children were immunized, but now all the children in the Club are protected.

The Club is self-financing and organizes an annual seaside holiday for its members. Pride in the Club has given the women pride in themselves, claims Mrs. Daniels, the health visitor who started the Club.

Useful address:            The Editor, Health Visitor  
                              36 Eccleston Square  
                              London SW1 VPF



A college for women

Hillcroft College in Surbiton, on the outskirts of London, is a unique institution in that it caters almost exclusively for women, particularly older women, who have no formal academic qualifications. Students are selected on personal interview and a short written test.

Students can choose from three major courses, leading to awards in Arts, Social Science or Social Studies at the end of two years' full-time study. Any woman obtaining a place at the College automatically qualifies for a full public grant. The students are of all ages and come from a variety of backgrounds; some are married, some single, some divorced; some have children.

For many women, freed from the pressure of young families, the courses offer the first opportunity consciously to exercise intellectual logic and self-discipline. They have a chance to think issues through carefully and gain insight into the complexity of society and their own role in that society as women. They learn to appreciate the comradeship of women, to organize and to solve problems in common with other women and to respect and be stimulated by them.

The College recently undertook a study to determine why the women decided to become adult students. Nearly all said that their ideas of what is important in life had changed during the years before they applied to the College. They had lost their interest in accumulating material possessions and had experienced a growing sense of social and political awareness.

Useful address:           Ms. J. Campling  
                                  Hillcroft College  
                                  Surbiton, Surrey

A new kind of crèche

London lacks nurseries: setting up a nursery is an expensive business. A group of workers at the Trades Union Congress headquarters, however, has had the bright idea of finding a group of London employers to share the cost of subsidizing a nursery venture, with parents willing to make their own contributions.

The Kingsway Children's Centre, which has now been running for over a year, is the first London crèche to be jointly financed by employers and employees, providing places for 21 children at a weekly cost per child of £33. The parents pay one third of the cost, the employers two thirds.

The crèche is run by a committee of parents, nursery staff and representatives from the union bodies concerned, but the employers have no say in its running.

Useful address:           Kingsway Children's Centre  
                                  Kingsway Hall, Kingsway  
                                  London W.C.2



THE CHANGING EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Equal pay: still far from a reality

The principle of equal pay has not been fully implemented in certain EEC countries.

The European Commission has regretfully reached this general conclusion in the report it has drawn up on the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women in the legislation of member states, a report that has now been forwarded to the Council of Ministers.

The European Commission is to invite bodies representing employers and the employed to meet at European level to give joint consideration to ways of eliminating discrimination between men and women in a particularly sensitive area: job grading.

The Commission is also considering bringing infringement procedures against certain member states (by virtue of article 169 of the Treaty of Rome) which have not yet taken steps to implement the directive in full.

It stresses the need for further efforts by both management and the unions within their own spheres of responsibility to ensure that the principle of equal pay is being properly applied. It has asked the authorities to deploy effective measures as prescribed by the directive. In countries which have an inspectorate of labour, to quote a specific instance, that body should be reinforced. The Commission also deplores the fact that, at the time of adopting the directive, the Council decided not to accept the proposal for the organization of stricter monitoring at company level, backed by sanctions.

It is the Commission's view that no decisive progress can be made unless women - whose resignation or discouragement when faced with the existing state of affairs is understandable - shoulder their responsibilities, a task in which valid support can be furnished by the unions and national committees.

One of the directive's main aims is to make it easier for women to take action in the courts when they feel their rights and interests have been adversely affected. It seems, however, that this course of action has been little used; for instance,

- in Luxembourg and Denmark, no legal proceedings have been taken;
- in Belgium, France, Italy and the Netherlands, no such action has been taken, and there have still been very few suits in Ireland;
- only in the United Kingdom have there been many claims of this nature - during the course of 1976 and 1977, about 2,500 individual cases were brought before the industrial tribunal and approximately half were heard, a negotiated settlement having been reached beforehand in the other cases.



The European Poster Competition

A twenty-five year old Belgian, Kathleen Ramboer, has won the first prize in the poster competition launched by women's magazines in the Community on the instigation of the European Commission department responsible for information.

It was not an easy choice: several hundred drawings poured into the editorial offices of the magazines which had been explaining the whys and wherefores of the European elections scheduled for June 1979 to their readers for the previous two months. Each editorial staff made its own preliminary selection and a European panel of judges chose the overall winner.

The national winners (not all women - they included three men) are to spend a week end in the EEC capital of their choice in April. Afterwards they will meet at the Commission's headquarters in Brussels where national winners will receive a medal presented by Mr. Emilio Colombo, President of European Parliament. The overall winner, Kathleen Ramboer, will be invited to attend the first session of European Parliament after it has been elected by universal vote in July.

|| Kathleen Ramboer's poster, reproduced in colour to the size of  
70 x 100 cm and in the form of 6 x 9 cm stickers, is to be  
distributed by the Community information agencies in each  
capital. ||

EUROFORUM

"Euroforum", a publication issued by the European Commission is to have a new format with an even wider circulation.

"Euroforum" is a twice-monthly review of all the Community's activities, explaining the ways in which EEC policy affects the everyday lives of every European.

All the readers of "Women of Europe" will be receiving copies of "Euroforum" from now on - at least, so we hope. If you do not receive your copy or if you would like us to send "Euroforum" to any of your colleagues or acquaintances, please send a written application to:

Euroforum  
Berl. 2/68  
European Commission  
200 rue de la Loi  
1049 Brussels

RESEARCH, MEETINGS, BOOKS

Women is the title of the third volume of the Directory of Social Change (£7.95), a sort of sociological handbook which here deals exclusively with women's movements. In a foreword, the authors insist that any social change not involving a change in the position of women is futile and is ultimately bound to fail. There can be no genuine progress, they say, if half the human race is lagging behind.

Wildwood House Ltd.  
1 Prince of Wales Passage  
117 Hampstead Road  
London NW1 3EE

Women in Politics is a pamphlet compiled and published by the Conservative Party Women's National Advisory Committee to trace the steps taken by women to enter Parliament and after. In 1918, for the first time in British history 17 women contested the general election and one (from Ireland) was elected. In 1974, 161 women candidates stood for Parliament and 27 were elected: 18 Labour, 7 Conservatives and 2 Scottish Nationalists.

The Secretary, WNAC  
National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations  
32 Smith Square  
London SW1P 3HH

Donna e potere - "women and power" was the theme of a major international conference held in Bellagio in May 1976. The two words are not often linked: power has always been used against women. All women are in agreement in rejecting aggression and oppression. Paola Coppola Pignatelli has compiled a set of the introductory papers presented by women from 13 countries. Women must take power and, once it is in their grasp, the next step will be to change the ways in which it is used.

Donna e potere  
Educazione/ambiente  
Officina Edizioni  
Passeggiata di Ripetta, 25  
Rome

Histoire du féminisme français - collected in two volumes, now available in paperback edition, this work outlines the history of the feminist movement in France from the 16th century to our own times. M. Albistur and D. Armogathe have carried out painstaking research, proving that the movement has deep and centuries-old roots.

Editions des Femmes  
Paris

Objectif Autogestion is the name of a journal just launched by the Centre de formation politique, a women's adult education group concerned with the problem of self-management. Designed as a forum for debate, the journal will make its columns available to anyone who wishes to contribute. The first issue will deal with self-management in teaching, in land policy and in Belgian politics.

Objectif Autogestion - CFRP  
14 avenue de Witthem  
1050 Brussels

tel. 731.43.98

Idées reçues sur les femmes is an encyclopaedia of preconceived ideas of women, illustrated with photographs, texts, proverbs and drawings compiled by N. Bedrines, R. Lillensten and Cl. Touati.

Editions Hier et Demain  
Paris

Il était des femmes dans la résistance - Ania Francos recounts the lives and adventures of the women who took part in the resistance against the Nazis during the second world war, whom history has promptly forgotten.

Editions Stock  
Paris

Europa - eine Chance für Frauen? Does Europe give women their opportunity, asks Christa Randzio-Plath, a question she answers in the sub-title, Der Kampf um die Gleichstellung is nicht verloren (the struggle for equality has not been lost).

Page by page, the book points out the similarity of situations and problems borne by women throughout Europe, clearly showing the political need for strong solidarity among them. The work analyzes the legal solutions as well as partial solutions which might help to achieve equality for women. The author concludes that, despite the legislation which in many cases does not more than reflect progress already achieved, there is a vital need for concrete political projects to present women's claims.

Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft  
Postfach 610  
7570 Baden-Baden

