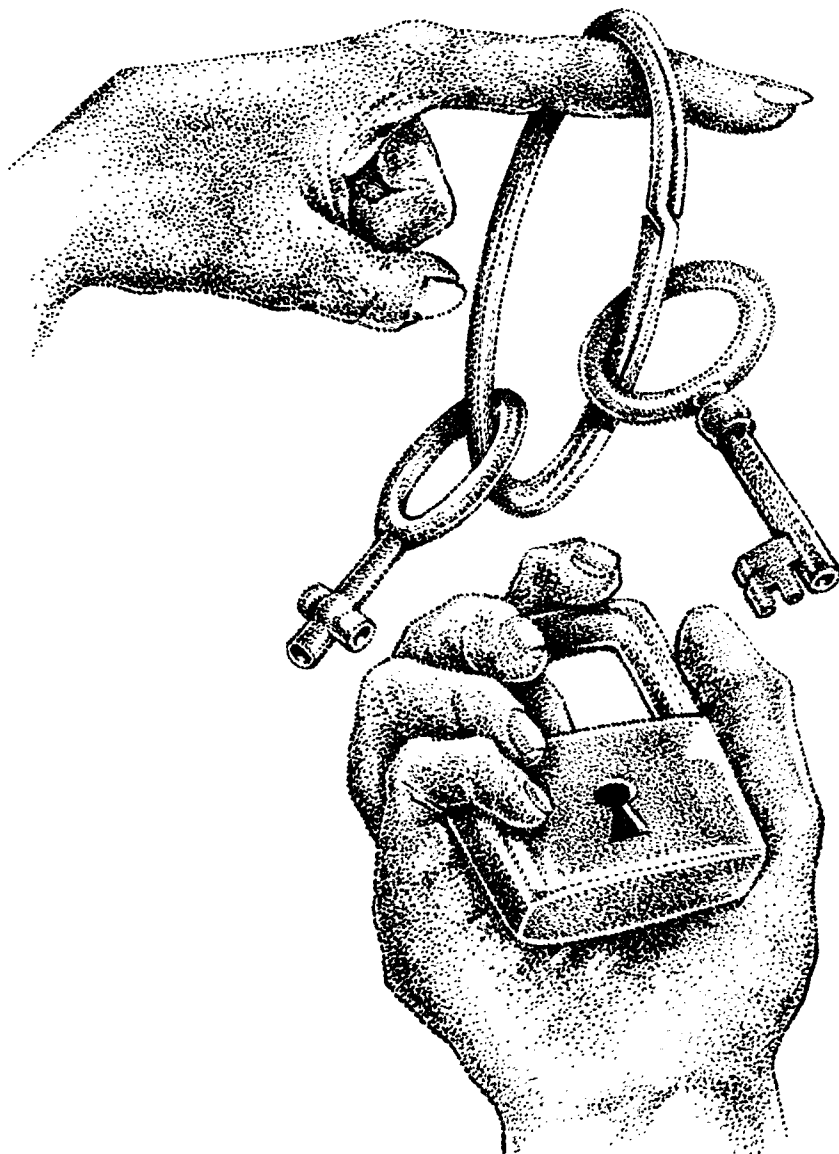


Women of Europe

Brussels, September/October 1979 - no. 11/79



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FACTS, INSTITUTIONS AND LAWS IN THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES

B E L G I U M

Women's Status and the Prime Minister

Belgium's premier, Mr. W. Martens, has set up a "women's status cell" in his cabinet consisting of Madeleine van Raemdonck and Miette Pernot. The former is a member of the government's political staff, the latter a member of the socio-economic staff: right at the heart of affairs, they are both well placed to air their views on Government bills.

Their task is to coordinate efforts and to work in liaison with other ministerial departments.

Useful address: Cabinet du Premier Ministre
16, rue de la Loi
1000 Brussels

Equal opportunities in education

The Ministry of National Education has created a board to promote equal opportunities for boys and girls in the realm of education.

The board's terms of reference will be to express views, conduct research and propose the steps to be taken on all issues associated with training for working life and the provision of equal opportunities for boys and girls. The board may also consider the teaching facilities that should be provided to help boys and girls - and later men and women - to achieve a harmonious relationship in the school and family and in their social, economic, cultural and political lives.

Useful address: Ministère de l'Education Nationale
Cité Administrative
1000 Brussels

Illegitimate children and Belgian law

A young woman has taken action against the Belgian State on the grounds that the law has required her, an unmarried mother, to adopt her own child and that even after adoption she does not enjoy all the effects to which she is entitled.

She has just won her case: The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg has given its judgement that Belgian legislation on the status of natural children is an infringement of the European Human Rights Convention which declares that all children are equal and that legitimate and illegitimate children have equal rights.

Useful address: Ministère Belge de la Justice
Place Poelaert 3
1000 Brussels

"Househusbands"

For the second time the Belgian courts have confirmed that a young married man without a fixed occupation may be considered as the "dependant" of his working wife. On this occasion the case was heard in Brussels. It was brought by a young man who was planning to start studying again; for the time being, the couple's sole income was to be the wife's earnings as a nurse. If a husband has the status of his wife's "dependant" he is entitled to full social security benefits, like any housewife.

F R A N C E

Family policy coordination

Madame Monique Pelletier, the Minister for Women's Status, has been given the task of coordinating government policy on family matters. A "joint ministerial committee for the family" has been set up for this purpose and the Prime Minister has appointed Madame Pelletier as its chairman.

Useful address: Ministère délégué à la Condition féminine
39-43 Quai André Citroën
75015 Paris

Businessmen's wives, businesswomen's husbands

Two important decrees have been issued in favour of the spouses of businessmen and traders. One states that a husband or wife of the head of a business who also works in that business may be named in the Trade Register with no formalities other than making a statement to the clerk of the Commercial Court. Although not acquiring the status of "commerçant" in his or her own right, he or she will - according to the second decree - have election privileges and will be eligible for Chambers of Commerce.

Similar decrees are planned in the near future that will confer benefits on the spouses of craftsmen.

Useful address: Ministère du Commerce et de l'Artisanat
80 Rue de Lille
Paris 7

Senior women civil servants

A recent joint ministerial committee with responsibility for measures relating to women reached the decision that the Secretary of State for the Civil Service would draw up an annual comparative table of appointments to certain senior positions in the administration (directors, heads of decentralized local sections, etc.).

Jobs .. the feminine version

"Trop de métiers n'ont pas encore de féminin" - "too many jobs still have no feminine name" - is the catchphrase displayed on posters all over France, produced by the department of the Secretary of State for Women's Employment. They depict a large jigsaw puzzle map of France on which are highlighted some of the jobs that no longer cause an eyebrow to be raised when they are done by women: a "lady magistrate", a "carpentress", a "conductress" of orchestras, etc.

Two advertisements have been shown on French television to bring the campaign for the diversification of women's occupations right into the home.

A summary survey on the impact made by the campaign has revealed a steady growth in acceptance of the idea, especially by the heads of small firms and executives. At the same time, the survey has shed light on a certain ambivalence in the attitudes of interviewees, who still attach equal importance to family life and to a woman's right to work.

Useful address: Secrétariat d'Etat à l'Emploi Féminin
25, Avenue Charles Floquet
75700 Paris

A Women's Exhibition

A "Salon de la Femme" is touring France from September to November. Under the auspices of the Ministry for Women's Status, the travelling exhibition has been mounted with the help of the European Commission's information services. The aim underlying this mobile exhibition is to provide an informative "live newspaper" dealing with issues of outstanding interest and topical subjects that will promote a two-way channel of communication with the public.

Information on legal and social matters is provided by women representatives of the Ministry for Women's Status, jobs and careers are dealt with by Radio-France, energy saving by the French national electricity company and so on.

The European Commission's information services are providing literature and films produced to make it easier to find out about the policies and structures of the European institutions. A hostess welcomes men and women visitors and gives them immediate replies to any questions they raise, especially on Community efforts affecting women such as the measures adopted to improve women's lot in the world of work, consumer protection, education policies and the quality of life.

Useful address: Maud Linder
29 Avenue Parc St-James
Neuilly sur Seine (France)

Bureau d'Information des Communautés Européennes
61 Rue des Belles Feuilles
75782 Paris Cedex 16

G E R M A N Y

Ten years after

The views expressed by German women on equal rights have changed hardly at all over the past ten years. When asked in 1979 whether they thought that the principle of equal rights for women was being put into practice, 5% gave an unqualified "yes", 23% replied "in most cases", 46% "only partly", 15% "not often" and 9% "not most of the time".

Useful address: EMNID Institut
Bodeschvingstrom 23-25
4800 Bielefeld

Equality in the eyes of the Bundestag

For the past thirty years non-discrimination against women has been embodied in the constitutional law of the Federal Republic but - women claim - "in the reality of everyday life it is written in small print". A committee set up by German Parliament, the Bundestag, on "Woman and Society" has held a public hearing that has confirmed this disillusioned view.

Created in November 1973, the committee consists of representatives from all the political parties as well as independent experts. When it submitted its first report in November 1976, it aroused no reaction in the Bundestag.

Ursula Schleicher, a Christian Socialist member of the Bundestag, a member of European Parliament and the chairman of the committee, pointed out that its terms of reference were to find new ways of promoting equality for women. This was the reason why it had organized a public hearing to which German and non-German experts were invited. It concentrated upon inequalities in the world of work and how women could reconcile their family responsibilities with their careers.

Although everyone agrees that work is a basic factor in equality, there were conflicting comments on certain issues, such as parental leave. How could a fair balance be achieved between parental leave and wages paid to mothers? There is not enough information to evaluate such delicate questions as the relative rights of the mother and the child. On the same lines, should we be encouraging part-time work or a general reduction in working hours? How can full equality of the sexes be achieved unless we move towards a sharing of roles by men and women? The education received by children in the school is vital in this respect. It was suggested that a permanent committee should be created to monitor the application of legislation.

I R E L A N D

Pension rights victory

The Irish Labour Court has decided that the Department of Public Services is in breach of the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act over its pension scheme for public representatives and servants.

The action, brought before the Court by Senator Mary Robinson, queried the rule in the scheme which entitled the widow of a male senator with eight years' service to a pension after his death. The same right did not apply to widowers of women senators. The Department of Public Services claimed that if Senator Robinson won her claim for equal pension rights the same benefits would have to be extended to married members of the 18,000 female staff in the civil service. The senator was represented by the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union.

Useful address: Irish Transport and General Workers' Union
Liberty Hall
Dublin 1

Remarriage without divorce

A Dublin mother of four is considering further action following a decision by the Irish Director of Public Prosecutions that her husband's illegal second "marriage" in a Roman Catholic Church does not warrant prosecution.

The decision highlights an anachronism in Irish law whereby annulment of a marriage is not allowed; however, under Canon law, marriages which have taken place in Catholic churches can be annulled. The Church also permits remarriage after annulment. Neither these Church annulments nor subsequent Church remarriages are recognized by the Irish State.

The complications arise because the State continues to recognize the first marriage, while the second is recognized by the Church. As a result, the "second" spouse can have no matrimonial claims to his or her partner's property. Children of these "second" marriages remain irreversibly illegitimate even if the couple subsequently marry legally on the death of the first spouse. Any claims these children may make on their parents' property may be superseded by the legal rights of legitimate children.

Useful address: Aim Group
14, Upper Leeson Street
Dublin 2

I T A L Y

Ministerial committees on women's status

Mr. Francesco Cossiga, Italy's new Premier, has decided to replace the Under-Secretariat for Women's Status by newly created ad hoc committees within the ministries concerned (Health, Employment, Justice and Education), which will be entitled to deal with all matters related to women's status.

L U X E M B O U R G

Extending maternity grants

In its budget for 1980, the new Luxembourg Government has announced several measures designed to improve the material well-being of families. During the first phase, for instance, maternity grants will be given to a wider range of women, to include those who work in their husbands' workshops or on their farms; they will later be paid to all mothers, although the final arrangements have not yet been decided. The cost of this operation will be 87.5 million Belgian francs. Another step being planned is to set up a fund to guarantee the payment of alimony, to which 10 million Belgian francs are to be credited; this will provide security for divorced women. Finally, in an attempt to encourage parents to look after their small children in their own homes, the Government plans to pay a grant to those bringing up their children at home, as well as allowing the mothers of young children to take a year off from their jobs without losing any pension or career entitlements.

Useful address: Ministère de la Famille
2a Rue de Strasbourg
Luxembourg

Growing female unemployment

Opportunities for women on the labour market are dwindling: once again, the number of women seeking work has outstripped the number of men. According to recent statistics from the employment authorities, 52% of job applicants for whom work cannot be found are women, while 64% of job applicants under 25 are girls.

It is of interest that 48% of unemployed women were looking for office jobs. The situation is particularly worrying in the industrial region in the southern part of the Grand Duchy, an area traditionally dominated by the iron and steel industry.

Useful address: Administration de l'Emploi
34, Avenue de la Porte Neuve
Luxembourg

N E T H E R L A N D S

The authorities and their staff

The public authorities should make provision for the care of young children so that women can combine work in the civil service and a family just like their male colleagues. This will give women a better chance of carving out a career in the civil service.

A report has been brought out by the Werkgroep Emancipatie (emancipation work group) set up as part of the Dutch Home Ministry. The report overlooks nothing: part-time work, flexible working hours, hot meals, etc. It points out that only 18% of civil servants are women, compared with 27% in the working population as a whole. Furthermore, approximately half of the female civil servants are on the lowest rung of the salary ladder, while no more than 1% have reached the top.

Useful address: Ministerie van Binnelandse Zaken
Schelldoekshaven, The Hague

Night shifts?

The Emancipatiekommissie (Emancipation Commission) has been giving thought to an amendment of the law on working at night to bring it in line with the EEC directive on equality of status for men and women.

The Commission's opinions were divided on this occasion. Some of its members believed that it would do more harm than good to lift the ban on women working at night, and that the problem should first be considered in the broader context of improving working conditions as a whole. Another section of the Commission thought that any form of discrimination would be the first step towards injustice. If women are given greater protection, this will only perpetuate discrimination.

However that may be, the Commission as a whole feels that all night shifts should be banned.

Useful address: Emancipatiekommissie
J.C. van Markenlaan, 3
Rijswijk

Emancipation in the Netherlands

The Dutch national consultative committee on women's emancipation is aware of the interest aroused in its efforts outside the Netherlands and has published a compilation of its recommendations to the Dutch Government, translated into English.

Useful address: Emancipatiekommissie
J.C. Van Markenlaan 3
Rijswijk

Women and higher education

The proportion of the female population in higher education has risen from 4% in 1971 to 9% in 1976, while the proportion of the male population has risen from 7% to 13%. The figures are quoted in the statistical publication brought out by the Ministry of Culture, Leisure and Social Work.

The publication also reports that the percentage of women in the working population has stabilized at a level of approximately 25%. It appears that an increasing number of women are working in what the Dutch call the "fourth sector": social and medical services.

Useful address: Ministerie van Cultuur, Recreatie en Maatschappelijk Werk
Steenwoordelaan, 370
Rijswijk

UNITED KINGDOM

An equal pay problem for the European Court in Luxembourg

The Court of Appeal in London has referred an equal pay case to the European Court in Luxembourg for an interpretation of Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome.

Mrs. Wendy Smith, a stock room manageress, was paid £10 less than her predecessor in the job, a man. The case turns on the working of Britain's Equal Pay Act of 1970, which implies that there must be equal pay where men and women employees are engaged on the same work *at the same time*. The question to be decided by the Luxembourg Court is whether the Act applies to like work where the woman succeeds the man in the job, in the light of Article 119 and the EEC directive on equal pay.

The Equal Opportunities Commission helped Mrs. Smith to take her case to court. This is the first time that an EOC-assisted case has been referred to the Community Court.

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

Equal opportunities: a balance sheet

The Equal Opportunities Commission has recently published its Third Annual Report. While there is "strong evidence of a deeper awareness among the public" that equality matters, in certain fields - notably earnings - the momentum "has almost certainly come to a halt". The Commission warns that the momentum towards equality will be lost unless both sides of industry, trade unions and employers, ensure that it is maintained.

Faced with economic recession, high unemployment levels and the fact that women tend to occupy the lowest paid jobs, the Commission has now decided to shift the emphasis of its work from equal pay to ensuring equal opportunity for women at work in terms of recruitment, training and promotion, and to the investigation of indirect, rather than direct, discrimination in these areas.

In 1978, the Commission gave advice to over 4,000 enquirers and paid the legal costs of 86 applicants appealing against sex discrimination in tribunals and county courts.

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

Women workers in Northern Ireland

Women represent 42% of the total work force in Northern Ireland but today there is more unemployment among women than ever before. Part of the trouble is that traditional manufacturing industries, such as textiles, have contracted during the last ten years. Formerly the majority of the work force in such industries were women; now they have to find outlets in the service industries and office work, in insurance and banking and in the fields of health and education.

Many full-time jobs have disappeared and more women are engaged on part-time work. At present about one in three women work part-time, particularly between the ages of 30 and 44 when they are raising their families.

These facts emerge from an enquiry sponsored by the Northern Ireland Equal Opportunities Commission and prepared by two women economists at the Queen's University, Belfast: *Manpower: a statistical survey of women and work in Northern Ireland*.

The unemployment position is worse in Northern Ireland than in the rest of Britain. Unemployment among Northern Irish women rose by 100% between 1971 and 1977 while unemployment among men increased by 50% in the same period.

The report also notes that the Equal Pay Act, 1970, has helped women to improve their earnings in relation to men's from 60% in 1970 to 71% today, but the Commission blames trade unions as much as employers for lack of better progress. "There is still obvious ignorance surrounding the concept of equal pay", it says.

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

The rights of wives

The Equal Opportunities Commission has protested in a strongly-worded statement to the Government proposal to withdraw the right of British women marrying foreign husbands to settle with them in the United Kingdom. From what is known of Government intentions, it appears that British men, on the other hand, would retain the right to bring their foreign wives to settle in the country.

If the Government intentions are put into practice, says the Commission, this would be the first Government action which would reduce the rights of British women to equality of treatment and status since the passage of the Sex Discrimination Act in 1975.

Useful address: Equal Opportunities Commission
Commission House
20, Grosvenor Hill
London W1X 0HX

M I L I T A N T A C T I V I T I E S

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

European Trade Union Confederation

At the third statutory congress of the ETUC, its outgoing president, Heinz Oskar Vetter, stressed that existing policy "reduces hundreds of thousands of women to no more than an industrial reserve balancing on a seesaw which will - depending on the needs of the economy - tip now towards the kitchen, now towards the factory".

The general resolution approved by the congress stated that the ETUC will "pursue courses of action whose aim is to guarantee equal rights to all men and women workers in our society". In particular, the Confederation will oppose any argument against women's right to employment and will act to achieve equality of treatment for men and women.

Useful address: Confédération Européenne des Syndicats
Rue Montagne aux Herbes Potagères, 37
1000 Brussels

1980: an "alternative conference"

As everyone knows, the final venue for the United Nations Conference for Women in 1980 will be Copenhagen. That Conference will review the first five years of the Decade of the Woman.

It has been confirmed that an "alternative conference" will also be held from 14 to 30 July 1980, organized on the lines of the "Forum" in Mexico on the fringe of the official conference in 1975. The alternative event will take the same themes as its official counterpart: employment, health and education.

A special effort is to be made to ensure that a large number of women from the developing countries attend the alternative conference. It has been suggested that every woman from an industrialized nation who is to take part in the alternative conference should arrange for the financing of the travel and subsistence costs of a woman delegate from the Third World.

Useful address: Kvindernes U-landsudvalg
Købmagergade 67 1tv
1150 Copenhagen

Country women of the world

The 16th triennial conference of the Associated Country Women of the World will be held in Hamburg from 11 to 23 May 1980, to be attended by 1,300 women delegates from 69 countries. The practical arrangements for the conference are being made by the German association of country women, Deutscher Landfrauenverband.

Useful address: Deutscher Landfrauenverband
Andreas-Hermes-Haus, Godesberg Allee 142-148
5300 Bonn 2

The Associated Country Women of the World
50 Warwick Square
London SW1V 2AJ

European Union of Women

At its 13th general assembly held in Bonn, the European Union of Women elected a Swedish president, Ingrid Diesen (a member of the Moderata Samlingspartiet). She is taking over from Lady Elles, a member of the Conservative Party in Great Britain. Anne Barrow is the Union's new secretary general.

The European Union of Women has produced a publication of about 50 pages on the "International Year of the Child - 1979", setting out the thoughts of its member organizations on the subject.

Useful address: European Union of Women
32 Smith Square
London SW1P 3HH

Women and Public Office

The World Federation of Twinned Towns - United Towns has held a conference at Saint-Vincent in the Aosta Valley, Italy, on the theme of encouraging the holding of public office by women. About 200 women members came from 16 European and African countries to analyze in detail all those factors which restrict the access of women to responsible office in the public domain and to express their determination to promote developments in this direction.

A written report is available at the Federation's headquarters; a tape recording of a particularly helpful round table discussion is also available to anyone interested.

Useful address: Fédération Mondiale des Villes Jumelées-Cités Unies
2, Rue de Logelbach
75017 Paris

Dialogue between the women's press and companies

The International Association of Women's and Home Page Journalists (AIJPF) has a membership of about 400 journalists from 34 nations. Its aim is to help them in their profession, one of the ways being to arrange for the regular pooling of information. The AIJPF Foundation, in turn, consists of a number of concerns (in Belgium these number 25 at present, rather more in France and rather fewer in Italy, and so on) whose objective is to help AIJPF in its mission. It does this in particular by establishing a two-way channel of communication between the press and companies to promote the interests of consumers by providing the maximum amount of information to journalists on the economic, technical and social aspects of the industrial and business world. Regular contact is maintained by means of briefing trips, round table meetings, discussion lunches and so on. These help journalists writing for the women's press to be better informed about the economic and social world in which they live, and therefore to pass on that knowledge to their women readers.

Useful address: Association Internationale des Journalistes
de la Presse Féminine et Familiale
President: Madame Léa Martel
Secretariat: Boulevard Charlemagne 1, boîte 54
1040 Brussels tel. 02/736.80.15
(every morning)

B E L G I U M

A woman president for the Christian Worker's Movement

Mrs. Janine Wynants, aged 54, has been appointed to head the Mouvement Ouvrier Chrétien. The current president of "Vie Féminine", a movement that promotes adult education for women in the world of work, Mrs. Wynants has been described as an "energetic personality, with a mind open to the outside world". During her eleven years with Vie Féminine, she has guided the movement in the light of careful thought about the new problems that women are facing, especially in the areas of adult education, the promotion of culture and help to families and immigrants.

The Christian Movement that Mrs. Wynants is now to preside is an important body; the members of its inner core are union leaders from the Confederation of Christian Unions, representatives of Christian friendly societies and self-help bodies and delegates from Vie Féminine and youth movements.

Useful address: Mouvement Ouvrier Chrétien
Rue de la Loi, 121
1040 Brussels

"Voyelles"

"Voyelles" is the name of a new monthly magazine which first made its appearance in Belgium early in September. It aims to be a periodical in which "cooking will take its place beside politics, psychology beside society, fashion beside the economy, the home beside the world".

Created, managed and written by women, "Voyelles" will also belong to women: it is published by a cooperative company in which every reader can buy shares.

In its second issue, "Voyelles" will print a questionnaire as part of a two-fold survey which will shed light on what its women readers think about two problems: politics and sex. It will be the first exchange in the debate.

Useful address: Voyelles
Boulevard de Waterloo, 99
1000 Brussels

French-speaking party women

The Front des Francophones - FDF - is a party set up to defend the rights of French-speaking natives of Brussels. It is the largest party in Brussels today and has an "FDF women's association" with committees concerned with all the problems being tackled by the party.

The only party in Belgium with a woman chairman, Mrs. Antoinette Spaak, the FDF is also one of the very few political groups to have had a woman at the head of its list of candidates for the European elections.

"Firmly persuaded that the best way to bring about the triumph of feminism is for women to unite," to quote Gisèle Leunen, the vice president, "the women of FDF have had the idea of holding regular meetings of women from all French-speaking parties in Belgium. For the past three years they have been coming together to decide on the points that most urgently need to be brought up in their own parties."

Useful address: Association des Femmes FDF
127, Chaussée de Charleroi
1060 Brussels

Women bosses

Structural steelwork, foundrywork, brewing, heating: the Belgian association of women heads of companies has members who are active in every sector, not only those sectors customarily thought of as "female". Founded in 1948, the "Association Belge des Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises" represents all those women who own or effectively run an industrial concern or a business, either on their own or with a husband or member of the family. As the years have gone by, the Association has moved up to the front line of battle in fighting for wider recognition of women's rights in areas such as their legal rights in marriage as embodied in Belgian law, a married woman's legal capacity and tax arrangements for husbands and wives.

Mrs. Armand Dutry, the president of the Belgian Association, has also presided the World Association since the spring of 1979.

Useful address: Association Belge des Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises
Boulevard Général Wahis, 15
1030 Brussels

Speaking out

The Belgian trade union confederation, Algemeen Belgisch Vakverbond (ABVV for short), has brought out a booklet with the title of "Heb je zeg, ken je rechten" - speak out, know your rights. As a union body, ABVV wants to help its members and its women militants to obtain forthright, accurate information about the problems with which working women are concerned.

How to look for a job, read a contract, register as unemployed, retire: the booklet provides practical advice on the major turning points in a woman's working life.

Useful address: Nationaal Veranteoordelijke "Vrouwen" van het ABVV
Mevr. Marina Hoornaert
Hoogstraat, 42
1000 Brussels

Consumerism: a new concept

Consumer protection is no longer a narrow field; it is no longer restricted to immediate, material concerns. The concept of consumer protection has been broadened and is paving the way for a new model of consumerism. Quoting examples in support of her contention, Fanny Fuks - an economist and the president of the National Council of Belgian Women, has reviewed the new developments in consumer affairs in a booklet that is now generally available. Its text was used as a working document in the course of a seminar on the theme of "Women of Europe for a more human and just society" conducted jointly by the Belgian Council of the European Movement and by the National Council of Belgian Women (French-speaking section).

Useful address: Fanny Fuks
Conseil National des Femmes Belges
Place Quételet, 1a
1030 Brussels

Infor-Femmes

If you are passing through Liège, you will find a friendly welcome at Infor-Femmes' new and spacious premises at 10, Rue Trappé. Open every day from 8.30 to 12 and from 1 to 5.30 p.m.

Useful address: Infor-Femmes
10, Rue Trappé
4000 Liège

D E N M A R K

Women claim special statute

"True equality cannot be achieved by treating unequal things in the same way", declares Dansk Kvindesamfund, the Association of Danish Women. Founded in 1871, it is the oldest women's movement in Denmark.

The Association has published its proposal that a special statute be created for women. By "statute" it means a set of measures which will help to counteract the discrimination suffered by women at every level of society.

It implies that women should be treated more favourably than men, at least for a specified transitional period until true de facto equality of the sexes is achieved.

This special statute can be brought into being in several ways. The Association declares that the first priority is to establish quotas for men and women, for instance:

- amending electoral law so that women will take up 50% of the seats in Danish Parliament (the Folketing), municipal councils and the general departmental councils;
- passing a law that will give women 50% of the seats on elected committees;
- passing a law giving women 50% of the seats on committees of experts and advisory bodies.

The Association also calls for changes in the working conditions of those engaged upon political work. For instance,

- people engaged on political activities must be entitled to obtain release from their jobs;
- to the extent possible, political meetings should be held in the daytime;
- loss of earnings due to political activities should be made up out of public funds;
- municipal authorities should provide ample facilities to enable parents with young children to participate in political life.

Equality on paper is not enough

The Association of Danish Women has put forward many arguments in favour of its proposed special statute for women. Although in principle Danish women have the same rights as men, they have been forced to recognize that equality on paper does not automatically lead to equality of status in practical terms. Women are under a handicap from the start and they need to be given preferential treatment, at least for an interim period.

For or against - more often against

The Association's proposal has sparked off a lively debate in the press and on the radio and television. Some people are in favour, others are against the motion, but the "cons" are in the majority.

The main people arguing against the suggestion are those with political authority, who are essentially men, although some women - mostly from the Conservative Party - have also come out against it.

The argument most commonly advanced by the proposal's opponents is that a political post must be given to the candidate best qualified to hold it, without consideration of sex. The Association's reply is that the criteria governing qualifications are defined by men, above all old men. This means that women are discriminated against because they do not have the same qualifications as men.

Special statute for men

The Association has also pointed out that men have benefited from special status for many years without anyone finding it odd: it has been traditional for a number of places to be automatically reserved for male candidates applying for teacher training colleges. The explanation given is that most teachers in primary education are women, a situation that cannot be considered as healthy. "If we accept that it is 'unhealthy' for the teaching staff of a primary school to be dominated by a single sex, in this case women," asserts the Association, "should we not draw the logical inference; is it not just as unhealthy for the rest of society to be dominated by men?"

The Association has also drawn public attention to the fact that other countries grant women special status. In Sweden, for example, efforts have been made for many years to help women take up posts in the civil service that were traditionally held by men. Today Sweden is implementing a policy giving women preferential conditions for a transitional period.

Figures that speak louder than words

A survey conducted by the Danish Council for equality of the sexes has shown that there are sound reasons for seeking new ways of achieving true equality. In 1976, the Council investigated the number of women members of public bodies or councils. Its findings were far from encouraging: only 8.7% of the bodies surveyed were women.

Following this survey, the Council asked the Prime Minister to take action to deal with the situation. He wrote a letter to the ministries stressing the need for a fairer balance between men and women. In 1978, the Council arranged for another survey: it showed that the proportion of women holding seats on those bodies had risen to 9.2% - not a very impressive outcome of his efforts.

The Council then tried to find out what opportunities women had had to be elected to public bodies. First of all, it drew up a list of the bodies that had met regularly throughout the period from 1976 to 1978. It added up the number of seats formerly occupied by men which had fallen vacant during the period as well as the number of new seats created by increasing their membership. It found that 900 new members had been appointed to a total of 357 bodies between 1976 and 1978. Out of these 900 seats, only 72 had gone to women. During the same period, 28 women members had been replaced by men.

The survey furnishes objective evidence for the claim made by the Association of Danish Women that even though men and women are equal in law they have not automatically become equal in practice.

Useful address: Dansk Kvinderamfund
 Niels Hemmingsensgade, 10
 1153 Copenhagen K

Useful addresses, letters and replies

Wherever possible, Women of Europe quotes a "useful address" for each item of information it mentions. This helps gradually to create a network of solidarity throughout Europe. If that address is really to be useful, however, two things must happen:

1. our women readers must write (and we know they write a good deal);
2. the bodies they write to must reply (we are not quite so sure that they always do).

F R A N C E

The abortion debate

Several thousand women have marched through the streets of Paris to demonstrate in favour of "total and final decriminalization of abortion, the abolition of all restrictions and dissuasive measures and the provision of facilities for safe abortion on demand".

At the same time, Choisir - an association presided by Maître Gisèle Halimi - was holding an international symposium at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on the theme of "Choosing to give life".

During these three days of discussion, reports and thought, it became apparent that there was still a good deal of room for progress, both in the legislative field and in terms of public awareness and attitudes.

The debate organized by Choisir came at a time when the law on the voluntary termination of pregnancy was to come before French Parliament for review after the first five years of its existence.

"The choice of whether or not to give life is a matter of freedom. We ask you to give us the means whereby we can exercise this freedom, not to judge us." declared Maître Halimi at the round table meeting at which members of French Parliament from all the parliamentary groups were represented to discuss the abortion law.

Whatever the status of legislation in France and Europe, however, it is important to take a closer look at male attitudes. In the words of Jacqueline Nonon, head of the Bureau for questions concerning women's employment in the European Commission who was chairing a discussion among trade unionists, "there must be a policy of interchangeability of roles; women must be better integrated in political and economic life and men must be better integrated in family life".

Useful address: Choisir
30, Rue Rambuteau
75003 Paris

tel. 277 33 00

A children's charter

As part of the activities for the International Year of the Child, the Associations Féminines et Familiales des Hauts-de-Seine - a group of women's and family associations in the area of Hauts-de-Seine - has produced a report under the title of "Un Projet pour les Enfants".

This "children's charter" is available on request. It contains ten chapters on the themes of the family, preparations for the arrival of a new baby, pregnancy, the new baby, caring for the baby, bringing up the child, environment, disadvantaged children, gifted children and adoption.

Useful address: Délégation à la Condition Féminine
Préfecture des Hauts-de-Seine
177, Avenue Joliot-Curie
92013 Nanterre Cedex

Femme 2000

An association led by Yvette Roudy, a Socialist member of European Parliament, "Femme 2000", has launched a survey on women at work that is both French and European.

"The silence shrouding discrimination at work cannot be allowed to continue, it must be broken;" declares Yvette Roudy, "the legal machinery exists but it is not used and few women know their rights."

The questionnaire being distributed by "Femme 2000" contains fifteen clear-cut questions that tackle four major themes without any hypocrisy: access to employment and recruitment; training; promotion; and earnings. Women are invited to quote specific, concrete instances.

In this way, "Femme 2000" hopes to compile valuable evidence and bring to light cases of discrimination that would be covered by the law. Although the questionnaire is to be distributed in France first, it is being translated and distributed in other European countries to provide invaluable material for comparison and promoting widespread solidarity among European working women.

Copies of the questionnaire can be obtained by writing to the headquarters of Femme 2000.

Useful address: Femme 2000
162 Boulevard de Montparnasse
75014 Paris

G E R M A N Y

Deutscher Frauenring E.V.

A non-political and non-denominational association of women, Deutscher Frauenring was founded exactly thirty years ago at Bad Pyrmont to promote the civic education and solidarity of women.

Under the presidency of Eva Ehrlich, the association now has a membership of 7,500 divided into a hundred or so local groups. Deutscher Frauenring is directing its efforts and discussions towards topical themes such as urbanization, vocational retraining for women, the environment, reform of the schools and the provision of assistance to the elderly.

Deutscher Frauenring is on the German Council of the European Movement and is also a member of the International Council of Women and the International Alliance of Women.

To mark the International Year of the Child, the association has conducted a particularly interesting discussion on the theme of the child and its environment.

Useful address: Deutscher Frauenring E.V.
44 Ludwigstrasse
6300 Lahn-Giessen

Blind women

Out of the 80,000 registered blind persons in Federal Germany, 56% are women. A braille magazine is produced especially for them with the name of "Unter Uns" (between ourselves). It is directed mainly at younger women, and is a team mate for another magazine entitled "Frauenwelt" (women's world) which is written with the older woman in mind.

Useful address: Unter Uns
Am Schlag
3550 Marburg

No admittance for men

To establish numerical equality between men and women, Liberal women have had an original idea: no more men should be accepted as party members until women make up 50% of its ranks. The decision has already been reached by the Berlin-Tiergarten section of the German Liberal Party.

Useful address: FDP Bundesgeschäftsstelle
Baumscheidstrasse, 15
5300 Bonn 1

Anti-nuclear campaign

"Courage", a magazine for self-employed women, has launched a campaign against nuclear energy. More than 15,000 women have signed a petition forwarded to the Bundestag. In addition to a moratorium, the signatories are calling for a referendum on the use of nuclear energy in Federal Germany.

Useful address: Courage
Bleibtreustrasse, 48
1000 Berlin 12

Women on works councils

According to a recent analysis conducted by the German trade union congress, DGB, the number of women elected to works councils has been growing steadily. In 1978, approximately 33,000 women were elected to these bodies representing the work force in factories and workplaces, bringing the proportion of women representatives up to 17.1% of the total, compared with 11.4% in 1968. They are even starting to take the chair of works councils: 10.7% are chaired by women.

Useful address: Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund
Abteilung Frauen
Hans-Böckler Strasse, 39
4000 Düsseldorf 30

I R E L A N D

Those who mourn and grieve

Following the wave of terrorist bombings in Ireland, Anne Kavanagh, chairwoman of the Council for the Status of Women that represents 32 national organizations, issued a statement saying: "The Council for the Status of Women expresses its sense of shame and sorrow at the loathsome acts carried out in the name of Ireland in the last few days. We know from those who have approached us that we speak not only for the members of our organizations but also for the great majority of women throughout the country who seek, through us, to express such feelings.

"We are aware of our responsibility to work for the creation of a society in which such deeds would be unthinkable."

The statement ended: "Our hearts go out to those who mourn and grieve".

Useful address: Council for the Status of Women
29 Merrion Square
Dublin 2

Women's vote a reality

"Anyone who tries to deny that there is a women's vote after this is ignoring reality and will certainly pay dearly for the mistake in the next election": so said Ireland's Government Opposition Leader, Garrett Fitzgerald, when the last of the recent Euro-votes had been counted. The fact is that women performed better than anyone had dared hope in the fight for European Parliament seats and in the local elections, which ran simultaneously.

The five women running for Europe polled 11% first preference votes and in fact represented almost 11% of the candidates. Two - Eileen Desmond and Sile de Valera - were elected and the remaining three gave their male counterparts an unprecedented run for their money.

Nuala Fennell, for instance, came within a hair's breadth of winning a second Fine Gael seat; Monica Barnes, virtually unknown in rural Leinster, polled a staggering 21,000 first preference votes - and she had never run for public office before. Jane Dillon-Byrne, for Labour, did well and while most of her transfer votes went to her party running-mates, over 1,000 of them went to another woman in another party.

In the local elections, history of a similar kind was being made. Dublin's sitting Lord Mayor, Paddy Belton, was ousted by a 22 year old schoolteacher, Mary Flaherty. One local authority ward returned a female majority giving the same authority an overall female total of 29 per cent. Many other local councils came close, with 20% to 25% representation being recorded. The most spectacular result, however, came in Waterford where Katherine Bulbulia - a newcomer to elections, to the neighbourhood and to her party, Fine Gael - not only beat one of her party's Dail frontbenchers in a constituency which had never before returned a woman but also topped the poll.

"I doubt if we'll ever have to ask 'why not a woman?' again" was the verdict of Phil Moore of the Women's Political Association which, less than a decade ago, began its campaign to get women into politics at a time when women's representation in government was around 2 per cent.

Useful address: The Women's Political Association
Rosney House, Albert Road
Glenageary, Co. Dublin

Feminists from North and South come together

Feminists from Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic have recently formed a Women's Feminist Federation with the intention of uniting feminist groups on both sides of the border. They plan to pass news and information between member groups and to hold regular meetings to decide on common issues.

Useful address: The Women's Feminist Federation
8 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

A tax on marriage

As in Belgium, there are growing protests in Ireland against the way that married people are taxed. Francis and Mary Murphy, both schoolteachers, are challenging the Income Tax as it applies to married couples and have brought their case before the High Court.

The couple married in 1975 and have an infant daughter. They say they have to pay £500 more a year than they would have if they had been living together without marrying.

The Irish income tax authorities regard a wife's earnings as those of her husband and their combined earnings are assessed at a higher rate. Separate assessment is permissible but a couple still pays the same total amount in tax.

Useful address: Married Person's Tax Reform Association
52 Lakelands Avenue
Stillorgan, Co. Dublin

Housing difficulties

In a country where there is no divorce in the eyes of the law, Irish women who separate from their husbands often experience difficulties in finding accommodation. There are two reasons: either they cannot earn enough to meet housing costs in the private sector or because they may not qualify for rehousing (if they have previously been housed by a local authority) so long as their husbands occupy a family home allocated to them by an authority.

In any case, there is a chronic shortage of local authority housing, especially in Dublin. It is to investigate these difficulties that the Aim Group has formed a housing sub-committee. Its first task will be to compile a national survey as evidence of the plight of these homeless women.

Useful address: Ms. Clara Clarke
c/o Aim Group
14 Leeson Street, Upper
Dublin 4

I T A L Y

A law on rape

The Italian Women's Liberation Movement, supported by the Italian Women's Union (Unione Donne Italiane) and many other feminist groups, has proposed a bill (in Italy, legislation may be put before Parliament by popular demand) to combat the violence of which women are the victims.

"In the first place, the intention underlying our proposed bill is to change the customs and mentalities which still prevail in our society. We feel that it would not be very helpful to change the criminal law unless a campaign has first been conducted on problems that have never been tackled or, if they have, have been very badly handled."

The main points embodied in the bill are: trials should be public and not held in camera, to ensure that women can attend the sessions and ensure that women victims of rape are not depicted as the accused rather than the accuser; women's movements should be able to act as plaintiffs taking civil proceedings in criminal cases and to be legally represented at trials; methods of investigation and questioning should be changed so that the victim is not called upon to go into all the embarrassing and distressing details; the rape victim should not have to prove her lack of consent; such cases should be dealt with more quickly than is customary for criminal cases to avoid trials that drag on and on and the need for the victims to give evidence on such traumatic events many months after they have happened; the concept - one that is new to Italian law - of "group rape" should be introduced and the minimum penalties increased; special attention should be paid to sex attacks committed inside marriage, which are no more excusable than any other form of violence.

A "proposal generated on the initiative of the people" must be supported by the signatures of 50,000 citizens; work on collecting those signatures has already started.

Useful address: Movimento di Liberazione delle Donne
Via del Governo Vecchio 39
Rome

After the European elections

The National Council of Italian Women (Consiglio Nazionale delle Donne Italiane) has completed a critical analysis of the European elections.

Noting that the proportion of women elected to European Parliaments is larger than the proportion of elected members of Italy's national Parliament, The Council said that this development is evidence of greater participation and commitment to Europe on the part of women, both voters and the elected.

The Council wonders whether the absence of women from the political scene may not be a sign of a more concrete approach to reality and the concern to face problems more squarely so that an earlier solution can be found. This attitude may be the cause of their distrust of what the parties say and how they act. The European political scene is new and the parties do not have such a stranglehold as they do over national issues.

Women may view Europe with ~~an~~ undisillusioned interest. They may look on this new Europe as an opportunity to end the imbalance that has always been characteristic of women's destinies.

Useful address: Consiglio Nazionale delle Donne Italiane
Via Ennio Quirino Visconti, 55
Rome

Women's associations and the Vietnamese boat people

Thirty five women's associations which had met before the summer on the initiative of Ines Boffardi, then Secretary of State for Women's Status, in the presence of representatives from the Foreign and the Home Ministries, decided to pool their efforts to help Vietnamese refugees wishing to settle in Italy.

Housing, help, work and education: the women's groups mobilized all their resources. "Italian families will not find it in themselves to bar their doors to children so victimized by misfortune. It will be the best and most concrete way of contributing towards the International Year of the Child" stressed Ines Boffardi.

A family policy for Europe

The Centro Internazionale Studi Famiglia (international centre for family research) is to hold a European symposium in Milan in June 1980 on "a family policy in Europe". Government responsibilities, the role of families, the tasks of social workers and the views of politicians: these will be the guidelines for the work that is being planned.

Useful address: Centro Internazionale Studi Famiglia
Via Giotto 36
Milan 20145

NETHERLANDS

Surnames

A women's group from Rotterdam has decided to launch a national campaign to the effect that the children of divorced parents should be allowed to choose their mother's surname rather than that of her divorced husband.

The group will be very interested to hear from any women who have had experience on this subject.

Useful address: Groep Naamrecht
Vrouwenhuis Rotterdam
Van Vollenhoven straat 62
Rotterdam

UNITED KINGDOM

Seven candles for Spare Rib

Spare Rib, the well known British feminist magazine, has just celebrated its seventh birthday. It is run by a collective group of 15 women, each of whom receives £6 a day in pay. All of them help with the work that is to be done, whether it is sweeping the office floor or writing the articles.

The circulation of Spare Rib is 25,000 copies a month, although it is estimated that about six women read each copy. The publication is economically viable, which is no mean achievement on the very tough women's magazine market.

It is Spare Rib's ambition to write about rather than for women; it has women readers of every age. Over the years, in the light of experience it has become apparent that women are basically interested in problems of health, pregnancy and childbirth, their relationships with children, unequal opportunities at work, sexual abuse and the lot of women in other countries. These questions are rarely discussed frankly by other women's magazines.

The letters from women readers and the unsolicited articles sent to the editor prove that Spare Rib is truly responsive to women's concerns.

Useful address: Spare Rib
27 Clerkenwell
London EC1

Women doctors

The number of women doctors is increasing all the time but they have still failed to obtain the more senior posts in medicine. In 1970, 29% of medical students were women; by October 1978, this percentage had risen to 38%. It is likely that half of the students graduating from medical school in the mid-80's will be women.

As things are today, however, women account for no more than 9% of National Health Service consultants, 18% of senior registrars and 21% of senior house officers.

Useful address: Medical Women's Federation
Tavistock House North, Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9HX

The way chambermaids live

Thirty chambermaids at one of London's famous hotels, Grosvenor House, have been sacked because they struck for better working conditions. Ellen Gallagher, who led the protest, had no experience in labour disputes but she succeeded in winning from the management a pay rise from £34 to £43 a week for chambermaids living in and to £58 for those living outside the hotel. She also obtained an agreement that they should work no more than five days at a stretch rather than a seven day rota.

Unfortunately, neither Ellen nor her 29 colleagues gained any of these benefits: no powerful hotel workers' union supported them and, following five weeks of tension, the women were dismissed. They hope that an industrial tribunal will order them to be reinstated but the company that owns the hotel, Trust House Forte, has already let it be known that there is no question of taking on any employee who has been dismissed. In the meanwhile, the chambermaids have been forced to look for other jobs.

Scottish Convention of Women

Since its inaugural meeting in February 1977, the Scottish Convention of Women has been engaged on an even larger number of very concrete activities: a report to the Equal Opportunities Commission on married women and income tax, a seminar on equality in education in Scotland, planning a research programme on women and under-achievement, in cooperation with the Nevis Institute, and a critical study of children's periodicals, etc.

Useful address: Scottish Convention of Women
Mrs. Amy Jamieson
1 Douglas Crescent
Edinburgh EH12 5BB

Mutual help for women

Many mothers, separated from their family background, come up against serious difficulties in catering for their children under school age during the day. The Pre-School Playgroups Association, a body subsidized by the authorities, is trying to end this isolation.

Its aim is not to provide care for the children of working mothers but to offer mothers an opportunity to broaden their horizons by contact with other parents and to give them a little freedom during the week, secure in the knowledge that their child is in good hands.

The Association was created as a result of an article which appeared in the Guardian in 1961, when Belle Tutaev invited readers to join a campaign to obtain more nursery schools for the under-fives.

The response to this appeal was very great, so great that in 1962 the PPA was set up. Today, 11,000 "playgroups" have been brought into being, caring for almost half a million children whose ages range from three to four and a half. Groups for children under 3 have in many cases been created in conjunction with these playgroups.

More than half of the playgroups are run by parents' committees and 81% of the groups have parents as leaders. At an average price of 38 p. per session, they are held for two to three hours a day.

The venture has taken on unexpected proportions with the help given by the Open University, which has organized courses for parents. Very special attention has been paid to handicapped children and the children of immigrant workers. Many mothers associated with the playgroups have discovered that they have an unexpected talent for organization or teaching that stands them in good stead when their children are older and they return to jobs or training.

Useful address: Pre-School Playgroups Association
Alford House, Aveline Street
London SE11 5DH

Labour Women in Conference

Major concerns at the National Conference of Labour Women held in mid-June included a call for a free local authority service of care and education for all children under five; a plea for the introduction of paternity leave; a demand for a minimum basic wage to help the low-paid, most of whom are women; and an attack on continuing sex discrimination, particularly in the field of tax and social security legislation.

A report on the May general election prepared by the Chief Women's Officer, Joyce Gould, noted that despite emphasis on sex equality in the last few years there had been no improvement in the number of women nominated, short-listed or selected as Labour candidates. Of the 52 Labour women candidates (out of a 623 total of all candidates), only 21% (11) were elected, compared with the 43% of successful candidates on the full Labour list.

"The party," said Joyce Gould, "must give immediate attention to overcoming the obstacles to women's full participation in politics." She believes that it is at the pre-election level in the constituencies that attention must be directed.

Useful address: Joyce Gould, Chief Women's Officer
Labour Party, Transport House
Smith Square
London SW1

Women's Farm and Garden Association

As its name implies, the WFGA is an organization catering largely for women in farming and in the country. It is a member of the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organizations in the European Community (COPA) and produces a lively journal, covering a wide range of agricultural interests.

The WFGA makes an annual award of £100 to agricultural or horticultural students (irrespective of sex) wishing to widen their area of study either by an overseas visit or by working on a specific and specialized project. The winner of the award is expected to produce a well-researched written report which will be considered for publication.

The 1979 bursary has been awarded to Peter Jeffries, a fourth year veterinary science student at Liverpool University. He plans to specialize as a vet in fish diseases and the bursary will help him to go to America to further his studies.

Useful address: Women's Farm and Garden Association
Courtauld House, Byng Place
London WC1E 7JH

IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Two women presidents - A striking feature of the formal opening of the newly elected European Parliament was the presence of two women who presided the Assembly in turn. First of all, Madame Louise Weiss, in her capacity as the senior member, presided the inaugural session with outstanding authority and aplomb. She then passed over her powers to the newly elected president, Madame Simone Weil.

It is only right that a woman should preside a Community institution, but it is still uncommon and the event deserves mention. Simone Veil's election to this office not only testifies to her exceptional personality but also typifies the growing part that women are taking in building a new Europe.

Changes: Signora Maria Antonietta Macciocchi (Italian Radical Party) has succeeded Leonardo Sciascia on his resignation from European Parliament. Signora Leonilde Jotti (Italian Communist Party) has given up her mandate as a European deputy because she has been entrusted with senior office in Italian Parliament. Mrs. Shelagh Robert (Conservative Party) stood as a candidate for European Parliament for a second time, since her election had been invalidated when she won in June. She has now been re-elected with 41,096 votes, against 32,632 for the Labour candidate and 23,842 for the Liberal.

Special supplement: Before the end of the year, Women of Europe will be bringing out a special supplement on the women who have been elected to European Parliament (their political background, their membership of committees, etc.).

In the Bureau: Madame Danielle De March (French Communist Party) has been elected Vice President of the European Parliament Bureau. Madame Colette Flesch (Luxembourg Liberal) has been elected questor.

"Women's" posters - The European Commission is preparing an exhibition of election posters produced for the European elections. It would be a pity if some of the posters designed by and for women were to be overlooked. If you have not already done so, please send us your posters, two of each if possible.

European Commission
Directorate General for Information
Special projects (Fairs and Exhibitions)
200, Rue de la Loi
1049 Brussels

In the aftermath of the election campaign - Women of Europe is not being "chauvinistic" in recounting all the activities of the women who have been elected to European Parliament. European women's interest in Parliament did not stop short once they had cast their vote. Now that women have won a place in Parliament, the vital issue is the role they can play there.

Committee work - On the Parliamentary Committee responsible for Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport, Mrs. Gaiotti (European People's Party) stressed the need for special effort in keeping women informed. She proposed no changes to the budget for 1980 but reserved the right to do so next year.

In the political groups - Mrs. Castle and Mrs. Van den Heuvel have been elected vice-chairwomen of the Socialist Group, while Mrs. Cassanmagnago-Cerretti is the vice-chairwoman of the European People's Party. Mrs. Boserup is the treasurer to the Communist and Allies Group. Mrs. Tove Nielsen and Mrs. Flesch are vice-chairwomen of the Liberal and Democratic Group and Mrs. Ewing and Mrs. Chouraqui hold the same office in the Group of European Progressive Democrats.

A precaution - The Socialist Group bureau has decided to support a proposal from Barbara Castle and others that a public register be maintained of the financial and business interests of all European MP's.

An ad hoc committee - The Socialist and Communist Parliamentary Groups would like an *ad hoc* committee to be set up to study women's rights. According to the Socialists, "in no field are the rights of women as members of the European Community respected". The Communist Group feels that such a committee should investigate aspects of women's status in the EEC nations and submit regular reports to European Parliament.

A general debate - The Christian Democrat Group has called for a general debate on the position of women in the EEC, to be held in June 1980 as a forerunner to the United Nations World Conference to take place in Copenhagen late in July 1980. The Group would like a delegation from European Parliament to go to the Conference, led by Madame Veil. As part of the preparations for both the June debate and the July Conference, the Group would like the European Commission to issue a three-fold report on women in the Community and health, work and education.

.... STOP PRESS

European Parliament has decided to set up an AD HOC COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS to prepare for a Parliamentary debate in the summer of 1980, in the light of a "Committee basic report", so that decisions can be reached on steps towards solving problems of concern to women in line with the Treaties of Rome. Parliament is also asking Parliamentary committees to formulate proposals in the light of these discussions, the final aim being to achieve equal rights for women in every sector. Parliament was asked to give its opinion on a draft resolution presented by several women (from the Socialist and Communist Groups and non-attached members) and by some of their male Socialist colleagues (including the Group leader, Mr. Glinne) and Communist colleagues, as well as the chairman of the Liberal Group, Mr. Bangemann. Finally, Parliament heard Mrs. Maij-Weggen, who had proposed an amendment in the name of the Christian Democrat Group to the effect that women's problems should be treated in an "integrated" manner on all Parliamentary committees. Mrs. Van den Heuvel, who had introduced the motion, agreed to the amendment on condition that the *ad hoc* committee was set up immediately, since a deadline had been set for its work (summer 1980).

T H E C H A N G I N G E U R O P E A N C O M M U N I T Y

Energy and research

The new four-year energy research programme proposed by Mr. Guido Brunner and presented by the Commission has been approved by the EEC's Council of Ministers. Expenditure on solar energy has multiplied almost three-fold, while the efforts being made to save energy have doubled. Nevertheless, the 125 m. u.a. budget proposed by the Commission and passed by European Parliament was cut to 105 million units of account by the Council.

The programme is divided into five sub-programmes (the funds allocated to the first programme for 1975-1979 are quoted in brackets):

- energy savings - 27 million u.a. (11.38 m.u.a.)
- hydrogen production and use - 8 m. u.a. (13.24 m.)
- solar energy - 46 m. u.a. (17.50 m.)
- geothermal energy - 18 m. u.a. (13.00 m.)
- energy systems modelling and strategic studies - 6 m. u.a. (3.88 m.)

The abbreviation "u.a." stands for European units of account, with 1 u.a. being equivalent to approximately U.S.\$1.4.

In the field of solar energy, emphasis is still being placed on the production of energy by photovoltaic conversion, advanced solar energy heating technologies and the production of energy from the biomass - all processes for which the prospects are particularly good in the Community. Allocations are also being made for completion and trials of the 1 MW solar power station on which building work has started in Sicily.

Research on energy savings has been directed towards the three main consumer sectors: domestic, industry and transport. Two more important sectors have been covered as well: energy conversion and the conveyance and storage of secondary energy.

In financing the "hydrogen production and use" sub-programme, allowance has been made for the fact that hydrogen will be a competitive energy vector only in the long term, although it already plays an important role as a source material in the chemical industry.

In the field of geothermal energy, work will concentrate on identifying the regions where the prospects are promising, evaluating their geothermal potential and conducting research on the use of dry hot rock.

In the four sub-programmes, there is a general tendency to develop prototypes and bring pilot projects into being, thus improving technologies and bringing forward the date at which demonstrations and applications can be launched.

A European catalogue of research on women's employment

The European Commission's Bureau for questions concerning women's employment has started work on a catalogue of current studies and research by universities and institutes specializing in the field of women's work.

The main objective in so doing is to promote contact among those who specialize in the same subject, pave the way for an exchange of ideas and experience and prevent overlapping and thereby save time and money.

The first part of the catalogue covers Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom. This working document (reference V/522/79-EN, Study no. 77/31) is available free of charge to university research workers on request.

The catalogue will go on to cover the other EEC countries in its second volume.

Useful address: Bureau for questions concerning women's employment
European Commission
200, Rue de la Loi
1049 Brussels

Price monitoring

In the second "consumer action" programme that it has recently finalized, the European Commission proposes to set up a special department to keep a check on price trends in the Community as a whole and to detect any price distortions, anomalies, the exertion of undue influence over prices and under-the-counter manipulation.

The department envisaged will not have direct powers of coercion, but it will at least be able to keep a vigilant watch over the leading sectors, starting with the food industry.

The European Commission is also concerned with consumer information. EEC legislation already exists on labelling, packaging and the display of food products, its aim being to give the consumer as much information as possible. Now the Commission would like to check on the extent to which the directives are in fact being implemented in each country.

The new action programme incorporates another new idea: voluntary agreements between consumers and manufacturers. These "European collective consumer conventions" would be in line with the Commission's general policy of involving consumer bodies with concrete efforts to formulate the policies that closely concern them.

In the early stages, the European Commission will encourage this type of convention in certain specific sectors, such as after-sales service and professional ethics.

A map of the nine EEC nations

A wall map of the European Community, its member states, their regions and administrative subdivisions is published by the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

The map, measuring 110 x 148.5 cm, can also be obtained from the Commission's information offices in the language of your choice.

Useful address: Office des Publications Officielles des Communautés Européennes
Boîte postale 1003
Luxembourg

The European Social Fund and Women

Funds of 18 million units of account (approximately U.S. \$25.2 million) have been allocated to women in the European Social Fund's 1979 budget. Following a reminder sent to the member states by Mr. Vredeling, the member of the European Commission with responsibility for Social Affairs, the volume of applications for aid has increased sharply and now far exceeds the funds available. The total amount for which application has been made by mid-autumn was more than 30 million u.a.

Private organizations are also entitled to apply to the European Social Fund with regard to their projects, but they must do so through the appropriate national ministry and have already been promised financial help from the authorities. Useful guidance on this subject can be obtained from the booklet entitled "The European Social Fund and Women", published by the European Community's information services.

Useful address: Fonds Social Européen - Commission Européenne
200, Rue de la Loi
1049 Brussels

R E S E A R C H, M E E T I N G S, B O O K S

Probleme der Frauenarbeitslosigkeit in der gegenwärtigen Krise (the problems of female unemployment in the current crisis) by Brigitte Nauhaus is a sound and cogent study which places women's unemployment in its proper perspective, on both the individual and the collective levels. When a woman becomes unemployed, the implications are far greater than the loss of a job.

Pahl-Rugenstein
Gottesweg, 54
5000 Cologne 51

Idea e realtà della donna (woman: the idea and reality) is an anthology compiled by Maria Teresa Garutti Belenzier which helps the reader to take a more searching look at preconceived ideas of "eternal woman", "woman's vocation" and so on. The reality, as evoked by about thirty authors in the book's 200 or so pages, is a good corrective. Published by Città Nuova as part of its "Idee" series.

Women in Africa and Development Assistance is a report of the seminar held by the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies as a result of which 18 Danish women's organization decided to pool their resources as part of Kvindernes U-landsudvalg (women and development).

Kvindernes U-landvalg
Købmagergade 67 1 tv
1150 Copenhagen

Le travail à temps partiel (part-time work) is the title of a report drawn up by Michel Lucas, French Inspector General of Social Affairs, for submission to the French Minister of Employment and his colleague, the Secretary of State responsible for Women's Employment. Representatives of workers and employers took part in the work on which the report is based. It sets out many realistic solutions to the problems.

Ministère du Travail
127, Rue de Grenelle
75700 Paris

Donna, privato e politico (woman, the individual and the politician) opens with an account by 90 year old Camilla Ravera compiled - with 20 other personal stories - by Erica Scroppa, who presents long and lucid documentary histories by women of our own century. Published by Mazzotta Editore.

In "Pour une Europe socialiste" (issue no. 152 of the journal, Socialisme), Emilienne Brunfaut discusses the equality of men and women in Europe at length. She provides figures and references, but also sets out thoughts, criticisms and hopes on this subject. An interesting and comprehensive picture.

Socialisme
13, Boulevard de l'Empereur
1000 Brussels

Europa: Medien und Frau (Europe: the media and women) is a substantial work of documentation consisting of about a hundred close-printed pages, prepared by Freier Deutscher Autorenverband (German free union of authors). It is a major effort in terms of the number of articles it contains and the quality of the contributions.

F D A
Pacellistrasse 8
8000 Munich 2

L'apprendistato della politica (a political apprenticeship) is a book of reminiscences in which Miriam Mafai tells of the period from 1943 to 1948, when Italian women shook off the yoke of the Rocco Code, the Fascist civil code, and went on to work actively in the political parties, speak out and campaign for equality. Published by Editori Riuniti (Rome).

Le statut juridique de la femme: marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance: nothing is overlooked in this special issue of "Cahiers d'éducation civique" on the legal status of women. Using simple language, it sets out highly complex legal concepts - concepts which are now the subject of heated controversy.

Better Lives for Disabled Women, is a book designed to help disabled women to combat the double drawback of being female and handicapped in our society. Jo Campling, the author, deals openly with problems of sex, pregnancy, child rearing, work and dress. With many practical suggestions as to how to mitigate the difficulties, Jo Campling points the way towards leading as normal a life as possible, in other words depending on others as little as is feasible. The book is both unique and invaluable.

Virago Press
5 Wardour Street
London W1V 3HE

Féminisme, one of the series "Que sais-je" written by Andrée Michel, opens with a reminder: the word "feminism" has been a part of the French language since 1837. The author, a research director at France's National Scientific Research Centre, describes the position of women from palaeolithic times right up to the second half of the 20th century. Published by Presses Universitaires de France.

Ideology, Gender, and Political Action reports on an international survey conducted by Barbara Farah and M. Kent Jennings in Austria, the Netherlands, West Germany, Great Britain and the United States. Although it is universally true that women are in the wake of men in political matters, the distance between them varies from country to country and tends to be less when the subject of concern is education and political interests.

Center for Political Studies
Institute for Social Research
University of Michigan

Les femmes et la responsabilité dans l'entreprise d'aujourd'hui is the proceedings of a day's seminar on women and responsibility in the company of today, organized by the Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales. In this school of advanced business studies, the number of women students has risen in the space of ten years from none at all to 34% of the student body - a trend which should be duly noted by business concerns.

Centre d'enseignement supérieur des Affaires
1, rue de la Libération
78350 Jouy-en-Josas

Feminisme et mouvements de femmes is a special issue of the journal, Problèmes politiques et sociaux (no. 369), published by Documentation Française, devoted to the subject of feminism and women's movements. Basically, it consists of a selection of articles that have recently appeared in the French-speaking press, throwing light on both radical feminism and some of the major topical issues.

La Documentation Française
124 Rue Henri Barbusse
93308 Aubervilliers

Women and Underachievement provided the theme for the Equal Opportunities Commission in awarding 13 research contracts to a total value of over £200,000. Research will be on women at work, the problems of working mothers, women in male-dominated professions and other subjects.

Equal Opportunities Commission
Overseas House
Quay Street
Manchester M3 3HN

Research on women's vocational training

In collaboration with Brussels Free University and the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium's centre for socio-economic studies and research is conducting a survey of vocational training and career guidance for women. What steps should be taken to prepare women for a career? How should they be taught to take advantage of new outlets?

The Centre is seeking all the information available in this field - from business and industry, from the authorities and from women themselves, for their experience is invaluable. Any particulars will be gratefully received by Christine Jonckere.

Useful address: Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Socio-Economiques
Rue Vilain XIII, 9
1050 Brussels

The language ability of women foreigners is the focus of Dr. Hermann Müller's concern. At the Frankfurt Goethe University, he is the director of a research project which will continue until 1981, its purpose being to improve the ability of foreign women not involved in the world of work to communicate and learn the language of their host country.

Obviously, the target of research is the group of wives of immigrant workers who have to stay at home. These women are generally overlooked and there is little concern for them in the public's mind. They face specific problems which need to be brought to light in detail.

Useful address: Projektgruppe KomMA
J.W. Goethe-Universität
Senckenberganlage 13-15
6000 Frankfurt 1