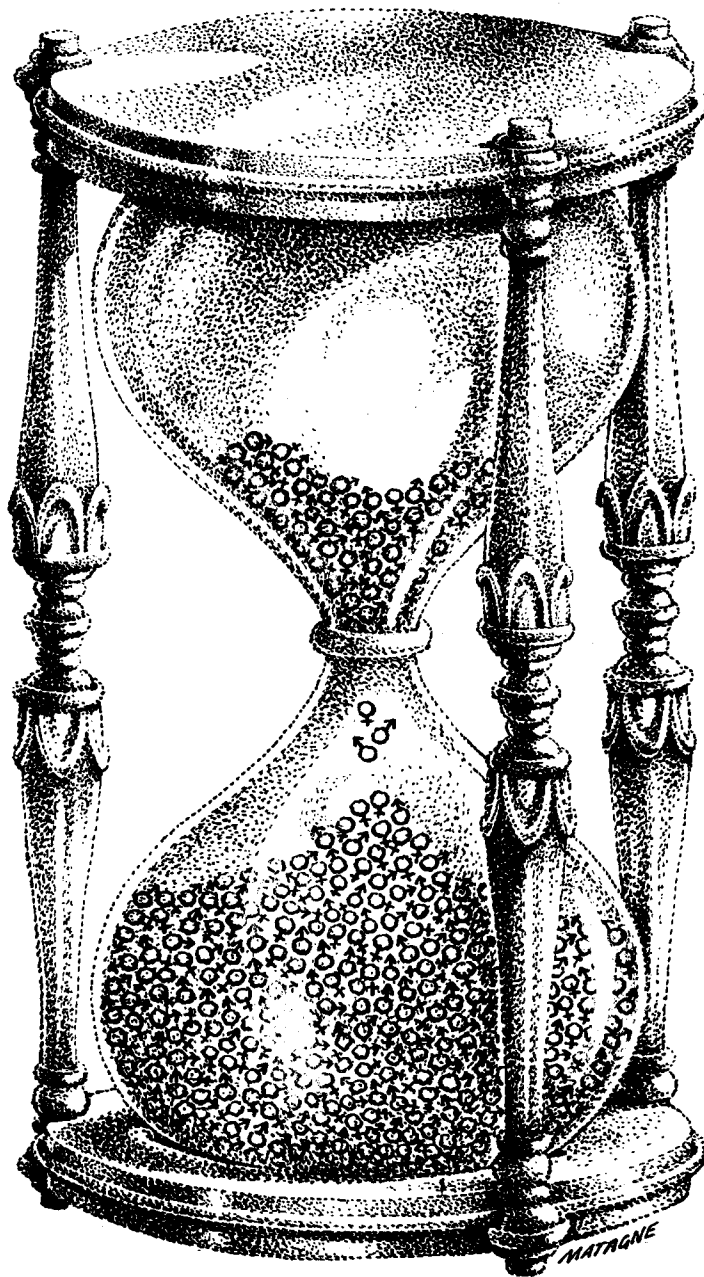


Women of Europe

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IN THIS ISSUE

The changing European Community	3
Parental leave	4
Eurobarometer	6
Women's unemployment	8
The Equal Opportunities Committee	10
Women of Spain	11
Local and regional elected representatives	14
European Parliament	
October 1983 session	17
November 1983 session	19
December 1983 session	21
Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry	24
European Court of Justice	25
Facts, Institutions and Laws	26
June '84: European Elections	43
Militant activities	44
Research, Meetings and Books	62

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THE CHANGING EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

THE SUMMIT AND THE BASE

When they met in Athens on 5 and 6 December 1983, the Heads of State and Governments of the European Community were unable to reach any agreement as to the problems on their agenda: the common agricultural policy, the British contribution to the Community budget, the membership of Spain and Portugal or renewed efforts for European integration. It was a summit setback.

Meanwhile, what is happening at the base? The general public cannot understand why our leaders should hesitate and equivocate at a time when the economic, social and political situation is tenser than ever before. At the base, women have decided long ago and with growing determination where their priority lies: solidarity. Generously, courageously and lucidly, women and their associations are pooling information, tackling new ideas, working on shared projects and building up a truly integrated Europe in their own way.

Many of the amounts of money cited in "Women of Europe" are expressed in "ECUs", an abbreviation that stands for "European Currency Unit". What is this unit?

The ECU is a composite unit based on fixed amounts of currencies of the Member States. Imagine a "basket" in which you have placed 0.828 of a German mark, 0.0885 of a pound sterling, 1.15 French francs, 109 Italian lira, 0.286 of a Dutch guilder, 3.66 Belgian francs, 0.14 of a Luxembourg franc, 0.217 of a Danish crown and 0.00759 of an Irish pound. All these currencies added together come to 1 ECU. This ECU is a "currency of account", and is of great practical use, for example, in working out the Community's budget. A point to note is that the composition of the basket is reviewed every five years or, on request, when the value of a currency has risen or fallen by 25%.

When 1 ECU is then converted back to the national currencies it is APPROXIMATELY equivalent to: 45 Belgian or Luxembourg francs, 2.27 Deutschmark, 2.54 Dutch guilders, £0.56, 8.17 Danish crowns, 6.85 French francs, 1,357 Italian lire, £0.72 (Irish) and 78 Greek drachmas. In practice, the value of the ECU is calculated daily by the European Commission. The ECU itself does not change but, since the value of each national currency fluctuates depending on supply and demand on the currency exchange market, its value against the ECU changes daily.

Parental leave

In reply to a written question put by Hanna Walz, a member of the European People's Party in European Parliament, on the subject of maternity leave and parental leave, the European Commission has clarified a number of points on parental leave in individual countries.

According to information available to the European Commission, mothers are entitled to parental leave - in other words optional leave that can be taken after maternity leave - in the following Member States: Belgium (public sector employees), Germany, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom. The father may take parental leave in Belgium and Germany (public sector employees in both cases), France and Italy.

On the subject of action being brought by the European Commission against the Federal Republic of Germany before the Court of Justice of the European Communities, the point at issue is clause 8 a of its "Mutterschutzgesetz" (law on the protection of mothers), on the grounds that it gives the option of additional leave following statutory maternity leave to mothers only. In its defence, the German Government points out that the grounds for allowing extended maternity leave are considerations relating to the mother's health following childbirth. The intention is also to help the mother to cope with the extra duties and family obligations she has to face at that time on top of her working commitments.

Parental leave: what the Commission proposes

Parental leave, together with leave for family reasons, is the subject of a new proposal for a directive which the European Commission has just adopted on the initiative of Mr Ivor Richard. This proposal comes within the context of the implementation of the Community action programme on the promotion of equal opportunities for women (1982-85). It is also an important element of family policy and a response to the concerns expressed by European Parliament in June 1983.

Parental leave, granted to enable working parents to spend a period at home caring for very young children following maternity leave, exists in several Member States but in different forms, often discriminating explicitly against working fathers and in some cases being wrongly assimilated to maternity leave. The aim of the new proposal is to establish common statutory provisions governing this aspect of working conditions, not just to further the principle of equal treatment for men and women but also to encourage a more equitable sharing of domestic responsibilities between working parents, thus promoting equality for men and women on the jobs market.

The proposal is that a minimum of three months' leave should be an individual, non-transferable right of every working parent with children under the age of two, or under five in the case of adopted or handicapped children. To prevent parental leave being used as a discreet way of encouraging working mothers to withdraw permanently from the labour market, the proposed directive contains a number of guarantees as to acquired rights and the return to employment.

Taking account of the difficult economic situation, the Commission proposes leaving it to Member States to decide whether parental leave should be remunerated. It makes it clear, however, that the concept of paid leave is no less desirable in ensuring that equality between men and women is gradually established in respect of parental leave in practice as well as in theory. It points out that any such allowance should be paid out of public funds, for example under the social security system. The cost of such measures should not be over-estimated, especially in view of the opportunity for replacing workers on parental leave with unemployed people and the fact that parental care of small children will contribute to the overall provision of child care, which is a collective responsibility of society.

Leave for family reasons enables workers to take time off to cope with emergencies or exceptional situations arising in the home such as the illness or death of a spouse or child. Already widespread in the Community in the context of national legislation or collective agreements, the right to this form of leave is also embodied in the proposed directive, although it is left to the discretion of Member States to determine the number of days' leave a year to which workers will be entitled.

EUROBAROMETER: the importance of the environment

In the October 1978 edition of EUROBAROMETER, the protection of our natural environment was stated as being the third-ranking concern in the eyes of Europeans, after unemployment and rising prices.

In April 1982, we learned that about 90% of Europeans approved of ecological movements.

Now the Community has published its first survey on the theme of the environment in the ten Member States, its findings being set out in issue 18 of EUROBAROMETER (October 1983).

The first conclusion it draws is that 20%-30% of Europeans complain of environmental problems in the locality where they live, whereas those concerned about environmental trends in their country or the world as a whole are far more numerous - between 70% and 80%. Perception of the local environment is determined mainly by three "objective" variables: nationality, the size of the locality in which one lives and the type of living environment, whereas perception of national or world environment is determined mainly by one's set of values and political opinions.

The researchers found that the main causes of concern among Europeans are, in descending order: the despoiling of the countryside, noise, air pollution, the disappearance of good farmland, lack of access to open space and the countryside and the purity of drinking water.

The intensity of these concerns varies a good deal in Greece, France and Denmark, awareness being far more acute in regions where the population density is high. Environmental problems also increase depending on the type of local environment. For example, 60% of interviewees who live in the country say they have "no problem", but the proportion falls to 42% in small towns and 28% in large towns.

The survey shows that Europeans are concerned chiefly about the harm to marine life and beaches due to accidents or the leakage of oil from tankers and the manner of disposing of chemical industry and nuclear waste.

Other sources of concern quoted are the pollution of rivers and lakes, air pollution, pollution from other countries, certain plants and animals becoming extinct, the depletion of world forestry resources and the possibility of a change in the earth's climate due to carbon gas.

It was also noted that concern is at its greatest in the Netherlands, Italy and Germany, average in Denmark and Luxembourg, and below average in Greece, France and the United Kingdom. The countries least worried are Ireland and Belgium.

Finally, the survey arrives at the conclusion that 60% of Europeans feel that it is more important to protect the environment than to curb prices. The European average in favour of the environment is 59%, whereas 27% opt for economic growth.

Community action to combat unemployment - local job creation schemes

The Council of Ministers has received a communication from the European Commission on "Community Action to combat Unemployment - the Contribution of Local Employment Initiatives".

Movements such as worker cooperatives have contributed substantially to increasing employment: over the past five years, the number of jobs they provide has increased by about a quarter of a million, from 300,000 to 550,000. Moreover, it has been estimated that approximately 85% of all those now employed under local schemes were previously among the Community's jobless.

In view of these figures, the European Commission has concluded that grass-roots initiative is making a useful contribution by creating additional jobs, particularly for the groups at a relative disadvantage on the labour market. At least a million jobs have been identified as resulting from local employment initiatives, and the number is growing.

Not only does such initiative create jobs but it paves the way for the future development of areas suffering from high levels of unemployment in that it rebuilds confidence, maintains or develops job skills and restores the capacity for individual and collective enterprise.

A series of policy guidelines is being proposed to Member States. The aim is to develop more forceful and coherent job creation policies by:

- encouraging cooperation between all interested parties at the local level;
- setting up support structures to help new small businesses to develop;
- making better use of the funds available;
- reviewing legislation with a view to encouraging the creation of new enterprise, including cooperatives;
- meeting the specific training and learning needs of local job creation schemes.

The Commission proposes support from the Community, drawing on the resources of the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund. It also proposes to examine the requirements of local initiatives for capital borrowing in order to test the potential of global loan practice for the financing of very small business.

The Commission has already stepped in to promote and publicize local employment schemes by financing local discussion and consultation among the parties concerned. Some 20 such discussions have already been held and a further 40 are planned.

The next step would be to finance a Community-wide pooling of information about practice and experience for bodies within individual Member States representing, or in close contact with, local job creation schemes.

Women's unemployment: European Commission ideas

Over the past ten years, women's unemployment has risen steadily, in line with overall unemployment. Differences in unemployment rates in individual Member States are now so wide that Community averages can no longer be regarded as meaningful (the countries with the highest female unemployment rates are Belgium, Italy, France and Ireland). The most striking disparities, however, are in the employment rates for men and women. In 1981, the average rates for Europe as a whole were 56.1% for men and 31.2% for women, with sharp differences between countries (e.g. a female employment rate of 46% in Denmark but 20% in Ireland), despite comparable overall unemployment rates.

The current employment situation for women is alarming, as regards the overall level of unemployment - which is still deteriorating - and the prospect of changes on the labour market which will put even those advantages so far acquired at risk.

In a communication prepared for a meeting of the Standing Committee on Employment, the Commission pointed out the special features of female unemployment. Apart from the rise in the proportion of women who are employed or wish to find employment by comparison with the total female population - and the growing number of married women in that group - and the traditional segregation of women's jobs, the danger of unemployment is aggravated by such factors as family responsibilities, which still weigh more heavily on women, the inadequacy of their job skills, the precarious nature of the jobs they take up and the preconceived idea that women work for pin money.

There are four broad principles governing action to combat women's unemployment:

- the affirmation that women have a right to work and economic independence, especially in a time of economic recession;
- the integration of overall Community policy objectives;
- the development of positive action to improve the prospects of employment for less advantaged groups;
- the incorporation of all these principles into action at every level.

Finally, the Commission has suggested action in what, in the light of experiments already conducted in Member States, are seen as the most appropriate areas:

- job creation and the recruitment of women;
- vocational training, guidance and placement for women;
- more efficient gathering of information on the position of women;
- information campaigns to arouse public awareness of the problems to be solved and to bring about a change in attitudes.

Standing Committee on Employment: women's unemployment

The Standing Committee on Employment, whose members are representatives of employers' and workers' associations, has considered the Commission proposal on women's unemployment in the Community. It has taken due note that unemployment is a matter of particular concern among the women of the Community and that in many countries it is far higher than male unemployment, with specific features of its own.

Budget restrictions, especially in the field of social security and the provision of community facilities and social amenities, inevitably affect women workers more than their male counterparts.

As a result, action is needed to improve women's position and counteract their unemployment, stimulating an economic revival and renewed growth in employment, in accordance with Community policy on promotion of equal opportunities for women (the resolution adopted by the Council on 12 July 1982). The kind of action needed is the reduction and reorganization of working hours, youth employment measures and local schemes. All action should be based on certain fundamental principles:

- everyone has an equal right to work;
- positive action should be taken to improve women's prospects of employment;
- these principles should be reflected in action taken by both the authorities and the social partners.

On the subject of job creation and recruitment in the private sector, a special effort is called for, to encourage girls to opt for non-traditional careers and direct women towards the job sectors of tomorrow (high technology). Public sector employers should set a good example in the matter of equal opportunities.

In discussing part-time voluntary work, the Committee called for efforts to ensure that it is feasible for both men and women over a broad range of activities and that it does not have the effect of adding to the segregation of women on the jobs market.

Vocational guidance and training measures are seen as of great importance because of their fundamental contribution in reducing unemployment among women and imparting the job skills that are needed. Placement, guidance and contact should be as individual as possible, with greater awareness of and expertise in the specific nature of female unemployment. Unemployed women and those who would like to return to employment should be retrained, especially under programmes linked with new technology.

The Committee also pointed out the importance of social infrastructure and measures encouraging a more equitable sharing of responsibility at home and at work. It noted that the Commission will shortly be presenting a draft directive on parental leave and leave for family reasons. It also stressed the need to foster the essential change in attitudes and to launch information campaigns on equal access to training, equality at work, the sharing of domestic responsibilities, etc., as well as to gather information on women's position on the labour market.

The Equal Opportunities Committee

Under the chairmanship of Marcelle Devaud (France), the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities considered and discussed an interim report on the implementation of a Community action programme on the promotion of equal opportunities for men and women. The report, due to be forwarded to the Council of Ministers and European Parliament by 1 January 1984, is a survey of what has been achieved by the European Commission and Member States.

Noting how little progress had been made in the field of equal opportunities over the past few years, one of the main reasons being economic recession, the Committee declared its firm resolve to contribute towards the development of positive action in favour of women. It called for support from the European Commission, as recommended by the action programme, which provides for Community instruments to promote action and create the necessary resources.

The Committee also looked at two draft expert reports. One was on discrepancies in the treatment of men and women in matters of social security in fields not covered by Directive 79/7 on social security systems - mainly survivors' and family benefits and certain allowances or procedures for the granting of retirement and social pensions. The other report was on problems arising in Member States in applying equal treatment directives.

Greece, the newest member of the Community, is just as much bound by its directives as other Member States, and two draft reports have been produced reviewing Greece's progress with the implementation of directives on equal pay and equal treatment in employment.

According to the Greek representative attending the meeting, a bill on the "application of the principle of sex equality in relationships at work" is now before Greek Parliament and is about to become law (see the item in this issue under "Greece").

Culture

The Ministers for the Arts of the Ten EC Member States came together for an informal meeting chaired by the Greek Minister for Culture and Science, Melina Mercouri. They announced their intention of reinforcing cultural cooperation among EEC member States and planning a series of practical measures, to include:

- greater social protection for those working in the arts and culture;
- more effective action against piracy in works of art, and measures to promote the circulation of works of art;
- adaptation of authors' and performers' copyright law to reflect technological advances;
- the drawing up of a list of the essential works of literature of each Member State with a view to their translation into all the other Community languages;
- the setting up of a system of European scholarships for young artists.

The Ministers declared themselves in favour of proclaiming 1985 as the "year of music". Italy offered Florence as the host city for a centre at which a comprehensive file of European works of art could be maintained, the aim being to combat art thefts more effectively.

At their meeting in Paris in March 1984, the Ministers of the Arts will be considering the cultural, economic and social consequences of developments in audiovisual technology.

Women of Spain

Under the title of "THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND SPANISH WOMEN", a seminar was held in Madrid on 10-12 November 1983. Arranged by "el Instituto de la mujer" (the Institute for Women) in conjunction with the European Commission, this was an information seminar on the position of women and Community policies of concern to them.

The 300 people taking part included many representatives of national, regional and local authorities, unions, feminist groups, professional organizations and various associations such as "Women for Europe" and "Women in the Home".

The seminar was designed to introduce Spanish women to those responsible for Community policies of specific concern to them, and also to give people working in the Community an opportunity to learn more about the true position and aspirations of Spanish women - the reason why the papers to the seminar were followed by debate. The Commission speakers described the framework within which EEC policy on equality is being developed. Mr Ivor Richard, for example, said that women's issues are a very important part of his terms of reference and that women form one of the most active and energetic forces for European integration. They are a truly transnational lobby, working with remarkable solidarity towards social objectives common to the whole of the Community. His outline of Community social policy was added to by Odile Quintin, the head of the Bureau for problems concerning women's employment and equality, who described policy on equal opportunities in detail.

The same picture of a social Europe, in contrast to an economic Europe, was drawn by all those speaking at the seminar. Erwan Fouéré centred his talk on environmental protection and the quality of life, pointing out that the aim of Community programmes in this field is prevention rather than cure and that cooperation with groups fighting to safeguard the environment is vital.

Other aspects of EEC activities were also stressed. Vocational training and the work being done by CEDEFOP were described by Maria Pierret. Fausta Deshormes spoke of information policy, of which this seminar itself and "Women of Europe" are manifestations. The Secretary of State responsible for relations with the European Community, Manuel Marin, and the Director General charged by the European Commission with negotiations with Spain, Inger Nielson, reviewed current progress in negotiations. Mr Marin emphasized the importance to Spain of membership, likening the plan to "a true search for identity". The essential role of European Parliament now and in the past in the formulation of Community policy on equality for men and women was reviewed by Maria Luisa Cinciari Rodano, Chairman of the Committee of Enquiry into the Situation of Women in Europe:

"The Community as an institution can be a friend to women. It could be even more of a friend if women and their associations were to place pressure at European level on Community institutions with at least as much vigour and force as are deployed by the great economic monopolies and agricultural pressure groups. If they did so they could help to transform the Community of business into a Community of peoples.

"This is also why I believe women to be more interested in a revival, in a new phase in the move towards European integration. European Parliament has already approved, by a large majority, the report from its constitutional committee on the redrafting of the Treaty to give the European Commission the powers of a real government and to broaden the powers of European Parliament.

"Irrespective of differences in language and nationality, women have a fair number of problems in common: their relationships with men, motherhood and work. We all, to varying degrees, encounter the same difficulties. From my own experience in Europe, I know how easy it is for women to understand each other when we discuss our status and condition.

"The arrival of our Spanish and Portuguese sisters is eagerly awaited so that we can join together in this women's war for a just society, a society of progress for all."

Three round table discussions followed these speeches. The first, on "the influence of Community policy on equal opportunities in Member States", presided by Marcelle Devaud, chairman of the Advisory Committee to the European Commission on equal opportunities, included representatives from national committees from the United Kingdom (Jane Finlay), Germany (Ellen Wolf) and Greece (Cilia Alexopoulou) as well as an Italian expert (Vittoria Ballestrero). Based on a review of how the Committee operates and the work it does (a subject with which Women of Europe is closely concerned and on which it keeps its readers regularly informed), the panel described the direct and positive influence in improving the position of women in Member States exerted by Community policies, directives and recommendations. They quoted practical examples: action brought before the Court of Justice of the European Communities and courts in the United Kingdom, the setting up of committees to monitor the application of directives in individual Länder (regions) in Germany, the founding of the Italian national committee and the law on equality in Greece. They also pointed out that the Advisory Committee acts as a forum where national committees can pool experience and keep a watching brief on progress towards equality - or any backsliding.

The second round table was on "women's participation in political life". It was chaired by Marina Bru, head of the press department for the town council of San Boy (Barcelona). Those on the panel included European MEPs (Maria Luisa Cinciari Rodano and Simone Martin), Spanish MPs (Amalia Mirauzo and Carmen Llorca), a French political scientist (Mrs Mossuz-Lavau) and a representative of the Spanish civil service (Maria Gonzalez).

We cannot give an exhaustive list of the speeches with their wealth of detail and personal experience, but the following were some of the points made:

- very few women are in positions of responsibility in institutions, agencies and decision-making bodies in general;
- there is no model of "female" behaviour and a compromise, sometimes painful, must be made between being a woman and being a politician;
- women display little self-confidence, one result being that a woman will not necessarily vote for another woman; of great importance are movements encouraging women to stand for election and urging women to vote for these candidates if they are as good as the male candidate;
- the segregation of women in practical politics parallels their segregation in employment. A woman in public life (Parliament, town councils or the unions) is generally assigned to fields such as health, education or the arts.

- women in senior positions in the public sector are reluctant to assume responsibility for "women's affairs" out of a fear that their career might suffer and they will be labelled as "feminists" on the grounds that they are over-concerned with women's problems.
- there is a need for mutual support and the exchange of experience among women, whatever their political affiliations (a European union of parliamentary women was proposed by Carmen Llorca).
- if women are to better their status, it is vital that they be represented on all decision-making bodies at every level and in every field so that they are not at a disadvantage compared with men.

Following an outstanding contribution from the Minister of Labour, Joakin Almunia, the third round table discussion, on "Spanish women and membership of the Community", gave the political parties, unions, women's organizations and feminist movement an opportunity to expound their views on some of the matters affecting women in the Community countries. These included:

- the absence of a clear-cut policy on equality;
- the lack of true cooperation among all the groups and associations working to further women's interests, blunting the impact they might otherwise make on the female population;
- the importance of a specific legal framework, an equality law and an action programme;
- the beneficial effect that Spanish membership of the Community might have on women's status, as Community directives come into effect and as Spanish women take part in the work of Community institutions and agencies.

Reviewing the current position of women, the meeting made the following points:

- in the absence of an adequate contraception policy and infrastructure and in view of the fact that abortion is banned (a law permitting abortion in the case of rape, grave risk to the mother or serious malformation of the foetus has been approved but is not yet in force), great distress and unwanted births still continue.
- despite their wish to be part of the working world, women are the main victims of unemployment (with a very high rate of female unemployment), and most unpaid family helpers and workers in the black economy are women.
- women's work is segregated, both vertically and horizontally.
- the lack of future-oriented vocational training is the result of inadequate or non-existent policy on vocational guidance;
- pay discrimination and discrimination in access to employment and job training works mainly against women, as does discrimination within the statutory and supplementary social security systems.

Many issues were aired during the discussions:

- a) many people asked about the consequences of failing to comply with EC directives; steps should be taken to see that the law has teeth and is forcefully applied.
- b) there were questions as to the competence of the Community to influence current and future action in the schools and in vocational training to promote the placement of girls in the labour market.

- c) the groups debated the position of single parents, parental leave, protective labour law, especially legislation on night work, the concept of the head of the family as applied to certain benefits, how to cope with indirect discrimination, the introduction of positive action, women's status within European institutions, quotas for access to employment and job promotion, part-time employment, measures to help women return to work after bringing up their families and a wage for housewives.
- d) finally, social and political involvement was urged, in view of:
- the role and potential of women's groups in times of crisis;
 - the difficulty of integrating into structures which neither match the aspirations of women nor take women's practical needs into account;
 - the delicate compromise between involvement in political and union organizations and their programmes or activities - which may not be hostile to women's interests but nevertheless fail to promote them or, in some cases, disregard them altogether - and militant feminism and participation in the movement to uphold women's rights;
 - the strategy needed to overcome the segregation whereby women are relegated to specific domains (such as health and education).

In her conclusions, Carlota Bustelo, the director of the Institute for Woman, made several points: "Spanish women will benefit from European experience"; "it is the Institute's duty to promote both Government policy to combat discrimination against women and the policy of the women's movement, although it will not replace that movement"; "the experience of the Community shows us that social change to bring about the equality of men and women must be the concern of every political decision-making body in every field of Government action, and be properly coordinated". In addition to the introduction of an anti-discriminatory legal framework, supporting action must be taken to improve women's status and remove the enormous burden of prejudice and stereotyped views of the roles of the sexes.

"Nothing will change unless women participate in the decision-making process", concluded Carlota Bustelo.

Useful address Ministerio de Cultura - Instituto de la Mujer
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Local and regional elected representatives

For the very first time, there has been a meeting of women in elected office at local and regional level. It took place in Pisa at the end of November 1983. Under the banner of "towards a renewal of European society", the event was due to the initiative of the Council of European Municipalities, the European Movement, the provincial authority of Pisa and the Commission of the European Communities.

At its inaugural session chaired by Elisabeth Gateau, deputy secretary general to the Council of European Municipalities, the imbalance in the relationship between women and authority was discussed by Margherita Barnabei, chairman of the International Women's Committee of the European Movement. Women have a duty to come together to create new power and to join forces in active involvement in public life, whether in helping to run a town, administering a region or taking part in the European elections.

"In the forthcoming elections, I think that women will be a vital, determining factor in galvanizing public opinion and awakening the conscience of Europe", declared Margherita Barnabei.

Among the many papers that triggered off discussions were reports on the "Community action programme on equal opportunities" presented by Sarah Evans, "information as an instrument of participation" by Fausta Deshormes La Valle, "the role of regional and local authorities in the balanced development of the Community" by Elisabeth Gateau and an account of their experience as "women on a local authority" by Nuria Albo, mayor of La Garriga, and Maria Luisa Sangiorgio, councillor in the Commune of Milan.

Maria Luisa Cinciari Rodano, chairman of the European Parliament Committee of Enquiry into the Situation of Women in Europe, spoke on "the crisis, a European challenge: women facing problems of work and development".

"A point to be made is that the regional and local authorities can work for the creation of new jobs for women. With this in mind, the Commission of the European Communities has declared its firm resolve to promote and support initiative by local authorities. Women's cooperatives, for example, could be encouraged in many fields.

"As part of their efforts to promote equal opportunities, the regional and local authorities can:

- in their dealings with employers, by agreement with the unions and women's associations, encourage positive action to bring about equality of opportunity and access to posts of responsibility in municipal departments and in health departments coming within their purview;
- in their dealings with the promoters of cultural schemes, take every opportunity to counteract stereotyped ideas and create a better understanding of women's role and rights.

- if school education and vocational training come within their sphere of competence, guide women towards future-oriented sectors of industry and encourage women to train in new technologies."

Such expenditure by regional and local authorities is in fact an investment in production: not merely does it uphold women's rights but it helps to bring about a general upturn in the economy, argued the speaker.

The broad-ranging debate that followed the speeches may be summed up by a comment from Beatrice Rangoni Machiavelli, a member of the Economic and Social Committee of the Community, who took the chair on the second day of the meeting. She pointed out that "women in Europe are one of the most important forces for change because they are not seeking to hold on to power they have never possessed".

Giuseppe Petrilli, the international chairman of the European Movement, called for a united Europe as essential factor to world peace. Europe, midway between two power blocks, should not be trying to create a sort of super-State; it should be working to counteract the paralysis of the raison d'état, the reasoning that underlies the logic of war.

"With its vocation as a manufacturing economy structurally open to the currents of world trade, the Community tends to see itself as the ideal partner for developing nations, starting - for geographical or historical reasons - with those which are its closest neighbours.

"The need is to found peace on a more evenly balanced relationship rather than the practice, daily more common, of repression and violence."

Women of Europe n° 33 - 15 November 1983/15 January 1984 - p. 16

Maria Luisa Cerretti Cassanmagnago, Vice President of European Parliament, reported on recent progress being made by Parliament with the ideal of European federation. It is generally known that Parliament has accepted the idea of a "European union" and that its Constitutional Committee is now drafting a treaty. According to the speaker, this revolutionary agreement deserves support from the forces of momentum in European society, above all women.

"We must say right from the outset that the new treaty will be a great step forward from the Treaties of Rome and Paris that gave birth to the European Community in 1957.

"If it is approved, this treaty will transform the Community into a European Union, in which what is now its executive arm, the European Commission, will have the effective powers of a government. European Parliament will acquire a two-chamber structure (as in every federal state) and will have the power to legislate as well as control over the executive, within the sphere of competence of the Union.

"If the treaty proposed by European Parliament were to be ratified by at least some of the national parliaments, the European Community would acquire a new face and a new style; it would be more effective and be genuinely capable of response to the challenges of our time. The Union would in fact be led by a government having effective powers, even though they might at the start be restricted to economic and monetary matters.

"The Government would be responsible to a parliament elected by the people. The Community would then finally have a democratic structure, for in a democracy a popular vote must be followed by the formation of a government responsible for the the practical imlementation of the political choices expressed by voters."

Fausta Giani Cecchini, who presides the provincial authority of Pisa, called on women elected to local and regional office to make their voices heard in the wide-ranging debate that will be sparked off when the proposed treaty on European union goes before national parliaments.

In winding up the discussions, the speaker pointed out how readily women understand the innovatory elements of European integration and how willing they are to bring them into being. "It is essential," she declared at the end of her speech, "that on the eve of the debate in national parliaments on the proposals for change advanced by European Parliament - one of the basic factors in the choice Europeans will be making in the 1984 elections - local administrators should play an active part in the discussion. Within that body, the people best able to deal with this new theme will be women, for it is women, with their own traditions and culture, who will be called on to contribute the innovatory element. Women have proved themselves the readiest to accept change, perhaps because they have so recently acquired what little power they possess that they are less hidebound by the hard-and-fast cultural traditions of power as it has been administered over the course of centuries".

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

October 1983 Session

European Parliament adopted the Community budget for 1984 on its first reading during the second session in October. After the budget had returned to the Council of Ministers for reconsideration, the second reading took place in December 1983.

The debate and vote came at a particularly difficult time for the Community. As pointed out by the rapporteur, Christiane Scrivener (French Liberal), for the first time in its history the Community was faced with a grave income problem in that its own resources were almost depleted.

Faced by this reality, while regretting the foreseeable effects on the development of new policies, the rapporteur had been holding discussions with each of the competent parliamentary committees in the weeks and months leading up to the budget vote. Each committee was thus well aware of the limits within which it could realistically operate; arbitration and negotiations were conducted to ensure that nobody had to make too great a sacrifice in the final vote.

In many cases, Parliament refrained from asking for substantial credit increases and merely called for a "memorandum" budget item in respect of what it saw as vital policies - a way of preparing for the future. When the funds become available, the budget item in question will already be in existence.

Social policy was the sector in which most requests for funds were made, in particular for education, the preparation of young people for working life and continuing training. Parliament pointed out that, whatever happened, all such schemes should be of benefit to women as well as men. More specifically, it called for more funds for action designed to implement the principle of equality for men and women.

This draft budget contained certain original proposals intended, for political reasons, to serve as a sharp reminder to members of the Council of Ministers and the Heads of State and Government of their responsibilities for the reform of the common agricultural policy and the financing of the Community. The October session, then, was an appeal launched by Parliament with an eye on the European Council meeting in Athens on 5 and 6 December.

Christiane Scrivener placed great stress on this political dimension of the budget. She introduced three components of the "package" which won unanimous approval, or at least a very large majority:

a) an increase to 5% of the reserve for expenditure on the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund guarantee. The Council itself had proposed that a smaller amount be allocated to reserves. Parliament proposed an increase, designed to force the European Commission to be more stringent in its administration of this guarantee and to sound a clear "warning signal" to the Ministers meeting in Athens. This motion was passed by a majority of 284 votes to 43 with 3 abstentions, the opposition coming mainly from French MEPs, whose concern was the future of agricultural policy.

b) the freezing of a refund of 1,202 million ECUs for projects in Great Britain and Germany.

Here again, Parliament intended to make it clear to those who govern the Community that it is profoundly dissatisfied with the repeated recourse to makeshift solutions to the problems of certain countries and demands radical financial reform. There were 262 votes in favour of this motion, 56 against and 7 abstentions. This time, opposition was from the British MEPs, some of whom (including several Conservatives) had been receptive to the idea at first on condition that it did not turn against them if the Athens meeting failed to achieve satisfactory results. Finally, all the Labour members and a majority of Conservatives ("reluctantly", explained some) voted against the transfer of refunds to the reserve on the grounds that they did not have enough assurance that there would be no discrimination against their country. British MEPs recognized that their partners had made a great effort to understand their position - so great as to justify a vote in favour of the motion by some Conservatives, including Mr Balfour and Lord Douro.

c) a motion calling for funds for the creation of a common European industrial policy. It was the Italian Communist, Carla Barbarella, who tabled this amendment to the budget, which was adopted by the Commission and then unanimously approved by European Parliament. It was one of the most dynamic elements in the budget, pointing the way to a future course of action despite current budget restrictions.

Although this was no time for unguarded optimism, the rapporteur declared herself satisfied with the vote. Parliament had made its views clear at a crucial juncture by showing a great capacity for conciliation and dialogue, commented Christiane Scrivener. The budget submitted by Parliament represented a 547,969 ECU increase over the figure proposed by the Council of Ministers.

In adopting a resolution in the report by the British Conservative, Adam Fergusson, by a majority (but a majority of only 168 to 143 and 13 abstentions), European Parliament came out in favour of a move towards a common policy on the procurement and export of weapons.

Some MEPs disputed the very principle that the subject should be debated, as in the case of the French, Irish and most of the Danish MEPs, the exceptions being three Liberals. Others thought that Parliament was perfectly entitled to deal with such matters but thought that the rapporteur's recommendations were militaristic in spirit. This was the stand taken by almost all the Socialists (except the Italian, Carlo Ripa di Meana, who voted in favour, and a few other Socialist from other countries who abstained). This group included the German Socialist, Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, who had tabled an amendment to the Commission setting out clear-cut proposals on a ban on arms exports. The rapporteur himself, although not prepared to accept the amendment, had said that it might serve as a point of departure for useful debate.

The rapporteur also viewed as "interesting" a proposal from the Italian radicals, Emma Bonino and Marco Pannella (who, together with most of their group, voted against the resolution) that the export of war materials should be banned if the purchasing government would not undertake not to re-export them over a period of at least five years.

The Italian Communists differed from the French members of their party in that they did not dispute Parliament's right to discuss security and industrial policy related to arms. Explaining why the Italian Communists were voting against the motion, however, Sergio Segre said that any pronouncement that might appear to foreshadow an increase in arms production would be a political error in the very period in which we seem to be moving towards total anarchy in international society. Vera Squarcialupi (Italy, Communist) described the pacifist demonstrations in Rome and said she also spoke for the nuns and priests who had marched for peace.

Several MEPs - Italians, British, Dutch and German - also discussed the widespread feeling for peace in European public opinion. An appeal from such a large portion of the European peoples cannot be ignored, they argued.

Parliament voted on the resolution tabled by Norvela Forster on the subject of air fares. Almost all MEPs were in favour of greater transparency in pricing and the need to allow for specific problems when determining air fares (as in the case of regions further away from the main cities). When it came to the plenary session, however, especially following the incorporation of amendments suggested by the French Socialist, Maria-Jacqueline Desouches, and the European Peoples' Party (PP), Parliament refused to approve the Commission's proposal as it stood but called for certain changes. In the end, the rapporteur himself did not vote for his own resolution, but it passed by an unusual majority: 44 votes in favour (mainly PP and Liberals), 15 against and 63 abstentions.

On behalf of the European Commission, Mr. Contogeorgis said that a further memorandum was being drawn up on the subject and the comments made by MEPs would be taken into full consideration.

Cultural Policy The promotion of the arts by the Community is a major factor in economic revival and the growth of democracy in our society, was the message of Guido Fanti in his report on the strengthening of Community efforts in the cultural field.

A common policy, however, calls for adequate funds. The Fanti report proposes the allocation of 1% of the Community's budget to cultural activities. As of this time, education, cultural assets and information account for barely 0.04% of that budget.

November 1983 Session

In its November session, European Parliament turned its attention to questions which, each in its own way, may be vital to the life of Europeans: the deployment of missiles in European territory and a start on a reform of common agricultural policy.

It was evident that the debate on missiles in Europe would bring to the surface the deep-seated political divergences on European defence and attitudes to the Geneva negotiations on medium-range nuclear missiles. When the time came to vote, it was those favouring deployment (Christian Democrats, Conservatives, Liberals and also a few Italian Socialists) who won the day.

French MEPs of every political persuasion (except the Communists, who argued for a suspension of missile deployment) took a somewhat different view from the majority in Parliament, since France is not a member of NATO and has its own nuclear deterrent. In speaking in the debate, they stressed that Europe should be independent of the major powers but also roundly condemned the peace movement, which they saw as being totally manipulated by the Eastern Bloc.

Women of Europe n° 33 - 15 November 1983/15 January 1984 - p.20

The French Socialist, Gisèle Charzat, for example, said we should stand firm against the "coercive strategy" of the USSR, while Liberal Simone Veil argued that it is an imposture for pacifists to be seen as those who are truly concerned with maintaining peace.

The joint resolution from the groups sitting on the right of the chamber was adopted by 170 votes, with 108 votes against and 26 abstentions.

The Italian Christian Democrat, Paola Gaiotti de Biase, said that she too would have voted for a resolution presented by Gérard Jacquet (Fr, Soc) calling for continued talks in Geneva but saying that in turn the Soviets should dismantle most of their SS-20s. This resolution was rejected, however, as was a proposal by the Italian Communists making the same demands but calling for a halt on work on launching pads in Czechoslovakia and East Germany.

Another rejected proposal had been presented by Katharina Focke and Klaus Hänsch (German Socialists), who went even further in the direction of pacifism by calling not only for a continuance of the Geneva talks but also for missile deployment in Europe to be delayed without asking the USSR for concessions in return.

Some MEPs took up the cudgels on behalf of the peace movement with vigour and on occasions emotion. They included the British Labour MEP, Richard Balfe (confirming his allegiance to the Atlantic Alliance), the French Communist Danielle De March, the Belgian Socialist Marijke van Hemeldonck and the German Socialist Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul. Describing the horrors of the Nazi regime with tears in her eyes, she said that instead of criticizing the German peace movement the other European countries should be grateful. In the opinion of Antoinette Spaak (Bel, Ind), what emerged from this debate was that Europeans were absent from negotiations on a policy that would determine their future. She felt that the threat now created by the deployment of SS20s pointing towards Europe might encourage Europeans to unite, as they had when threatened by Stalinist Russia.

The same ideological differences emerged in the vote on the situation in Grenada and the Lebanon. A parliamentary majority, again of the right, accepted a resolution justifying U.S. intervention in Grenada. (It should be noted that Edgar Pisani, on behalf of the European Commission, stated its view that the problem should be settled by negotiation.) In the same way, when voting on the Lebanon, Parliament showed its agreement with the drafter of the resolution condemning all terrorist attacks in Beirut, whoever their victims might be, and calling for the perpetrators to be brought to justice.

Parliament held a major debate on how to make better use of the Community's structural funds (the two agricultural "Guarantee" and "Guidance" Funds, the Social Fund and the Regional Fund) and the reform of the common agricultural policy. The second debate was the most important and the most heated, leading to a confrontation between those in favour of budgetary stringency and the strongest supporters of the common agricultural policy. The former group included the British Conservatives, several Socialists and Italian Communists (although the latter were in favour of ensuring that farming continued to be a healthy, remunerative activity). The latter category embraced French MEPs of all groups and the Irish. It should be pointed out that Irish farming is still poor and lags behind the Community average. Even so, the Irish MEPs failed to persuade Parliament that Ireland should be treated as a special case.

The resolution put forward by Parliament's agriculture committee, tabled by the committee chairman, David Curry (British Conservative) tried to reconcile differing needs: to support agriculture in general and farmers' incomes in particular while rationalizing agricultural policy, above all by doing away with the permanent surpluses of certain products. The rapporteur had accepted one of the key measures proposed by the Commission, the introduction of a quota for all products as soon as it becomes apparent, in the light of clearly defined criteria, that there are structural deficits. The proposal was rejected by a parliamentary majority, although such a quota was accepted in the case of the dairy sector in which there are substantial deficits, although for a limited period and on certain conditions. Other proposals that had been made by the Commission met the same fate.

During this very intensive session, Parliament declared itself in favour of a clear strategy on the integration of migrant workers into the Community and deplored the rise of racialism. A report by Danish Liberal Tove Nielsen, made a whole series of suggestions. The resolution pointed out that women immigrants are at a profound disadvantage: already the victims of discrimination in their countries of origin, they have little chance of personal emancipation in their host country. Two amendments by Italian Christian Democrats Paola Gaiotti de Biase and Maria Luisa Cassanmagnago-Cerretti formulated a set of requests relating to legislation in fields such as schools and culture.

Parliament also came out in favour of a Community initiative on the reorganization and reduction of working hours. In response to a suggestion from German Socialist Heinke Salisch, it called for a 10% cut in working hours within two years. During the debate, Raymonde Dury (Bel, Soc) reminded Parliament that part-time work today is done mainly by women and that they often face hardship as a result. When we discuss shorter working hours, we should not forget that they affect women just as much as men.

December 1983 Session

The December session saw the second reading of the 1984 budget on the basis of the report by Christiane Scrivener, following a final meeting with the Council (Parliament and Council being the two "arms" of the European Community budgetary authority). In this second vote, Parliament confirmed the line it had adopted in the first reading: it urged certain policy guidelines rather than asking for what would have been an unrealistic increase in the present economic situation. The first was that the refunds payable to Great Britain (and a lower amount to Germany) should be frozen until March. Parliament acknowledged the existence of a "British problem" but again urged a long-term overall solution to this kind of imbalance. This view, adopted by a majority, was obviously not supported by British MEPs and was rejected outright by the Council. Other MEPs, including the German and some Dutch Socialists, also voted against the budget for different reasons, essentially to express their disapproval of the Council not having taken Parliament's reasonable requests into account. One of these, rejected by Council and written back into the resolution after the vote on the second reading, was the allocation of 600 million units of account towards a "European industrial space".

The rapporteur, Christiane Scrivener (French Liberal) took the floor at the end of the debate and appealed to her colleagues to take the broader view in a Community spirit. She recognized that there was a special problem with Great Britain but pointed out that it was "not the only problem on this earth" and that it should not obscure everything else.

Women of Europe n° 33 - 15 November 1983/15 January 1984 - p.22

The Council was to meet before Christmas to decide on those aspects of the budget still in dispute; since they had not yet been signed by the President of European Parliament, Piet Dankert, they could not be considered as having been officially adopted.

At a solemn meeting, Parliament was addressed by King Hussein of Jordan, its guest of honour. He was the second Arab head of State to have been received by Parliament, following the visit of President Sadat when Simone Veil was in the chair.

King Hussein's visit came at a time of renewed and bitter fighting in the Lebanon, wider dissidence within the PLO and attacks by extremist Islamic elements in Saudi Arabia. The King of Jordan, welcomed by the President Dankert as one of the moderate representatives of the Arab world, started by deploring the fact that religions - Islam, Judaism and Christianity - should in many regions have turned away from their original inspiration. The nihilistic fanaticism now causing such havoc must be restrained by forces such as Europe, which has a role to play in the Middle East - its main task being to prevent the tension there from leading to a confrontation between the super-powers. King Hussein was highly critical of Israel's expansionism; he also criticized the United States and expressed his regret at the divisions and disarray within the Arab world. He felt that the tension would continue until a solution was found to one of the deep-seated causes: the Palestine problem.

The European Council meeting at Athens was the subject of parliamentary debate, as on every occasion of this kind. The summit meeting in Athens ended in failure, but the fact that this failure had not been glossed over by political declarations and vague undertakings was seen as a good thing by MEPs who, realizing the gravity of the situation, refrained from arguments as to responsibilities for the setback. Nevertheless, they wondered whether the European Council was functioning properly - a question also raised by Greek Premier Andreas Papandreou, whose presidency of the Council ended in December (the next president being supplied by France). Mr Papandreou aired his personal view that the Council should restrict itself to major policy decisions. As is well known, however, it is one of the "fatalities which weigh on European Councils" that the recent trend has been to send even the most technical of matters up to this level when the "specialist" councils are unable to agree (as in what was admittedly the vital issue of dairy surpluses, which had been discussed by the Heads of States in Athens for many hours). "We must redefine Europe's position in respect of the major problems of our time," said Mr. Papandreou. Gaston Thorn, the President of the Commission, went even further: as far as he is concerned, the Commission will insist on each specialist council taking decisions on matters within its own purview.

On the final day of the December session, Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by Jaak Vandemeulebroucke (Belgium, Volksunie) calling on the Commission to support a European Poetry festival. Some of those speaking in the debate expressed themselves in verse. Others urged that the festival should be truly European, without undue emphasis on one country or region at the expense of others.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY
INTO THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN EUROPE

The Committee of Enquiry has been pressing on with its preparations for the debate in plenary session being held on Tuesday 17 January 1984.

During a meeting held in Brussels in early November, Antoinette Spaak (Belgium, Independent) was named as the rapporteur for the resolution on women in the home.

Maria Antonietta Macciocchi (Socialist Group) presented her report on "the place of women in decision-making centres". In her conclusions, the rapporteur called for a campaign to make people aware of the issue; European Parliament, she said, should establish an annual award for women who had contributed towards the advancement of other women, and arrange a seminar for decision-makers with a view to eliminating the obstacles to promotion for women to positions of power.

There followed an exchange of views with Ms Antoniou-Laiou, president of the Greek Council for Equality (see "Women of Europe" n° 32), who outlined the action taken by the Greek Government in the field of equality for the sexes in family law, employment, education, etc., and by the Greek feminist movement.

When the meeting turned to the Gaiotti de Biase report on the application of EEC directives, Maria Cinciari Rodano called for the European Commission to propose a directive on positive action. The chairman of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities, Ms Devaud, spoke of the role played by the Committee, taking the opportunity to announce that the Committee had declared itself in favor of a recommendation on positive action.

The amendments to Ien van den Heuvel's report on the 3rd directive on social security was approved, as well as the reports by Mechtild von Alemann on vocational training and Nicolas Estgen on education.

The Committee of Enquiry, chaired by Maria Cinciari Rodano, held further meetings on 29-30 November and 19-20 December. Both sessions were devoted mainly to discussing and voting on the 110 articles of the final version of the resolution.

FOR OUR SPANISH-SPEAKING READERS: 50 Questions, 50 Answers
----- 1982-1985 Action Programme

Two supplements to "Women of Europe" have now been brought out in Spanish: "Mujeres y trabajo en las Comunidades Europeas: 50 Preguntas, 50 Respuestas", and "Para la Igualdad de Oportunidades: programa de accion 1982-85". They describe the position of women in the European Community (legislation, directives on equal pay, equal treatment, employment and social security) and the Community action programme on equal opportunities for men and women.

Useful addresses	Commission of the European Communities Directorate-General Information Information for Women's Organizations and the Press 200 rue de la Loi 1049 Brussels	Bureau d'Information Calle de Serrano 41 5a Planta Madrid 1
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EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

Italy

The European Commission has summoned Italy before the Court of the European Communities on the grounds that equal treatment clauses are not incorporated in all conditions of employment in that country. For example, only women are entitled to leave at the time a child is adopted. The Commission argued that Italy's 1977 law differentiates between the adoptive mother and father and is therefore a form of discrimination as defined by the directive.

The Court delivered its judgment on 26 October 1983. The Commission, it said, had complained that the adoptive father is not entitled to a right that is granted to the adoptive mother: three months' leave after the adopted child arrives in its new family. It dissented from the opinion stated by the Advocate-General, saying that there were good grounds for the distinction since it arose from a legitimate concern to ensure that the manner in which an adoptive child comes into the family resembles as closely as possible the arrival of a family's own newborn baby during this very delicate period.

The regulations governing the taking of time off from work after this initial three month period (for example, if the child falls ill) give the adoptive father the same rights as the adoptive mother.

This being so, the differentiation of which the Commission complained could not, the Court said, be seen as a discrimination within the meaning of the directive.

The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom was also summoned before the Court of Justice. The Commission's complaint was that although the law implementing directive 76/207 nullifies any clause of an individual contract if it is in conflict with the anti-discrimination measures laid down by the law, it makes no provision for the annulment of clauses in collective agreements, companies' internal regulations or the statutes of the liberal professions. The Commission also felt that British law fails to comply with the directive in that it excludes domestic employment and firms with a work force of five or less from the anti-discrimination measures in the law, more specifically clauses 3, 4 and 5.

Finally, the Commission argued that it is contrary to the directive that men are not allowed to train as midwives. The Advocate-General, it should be noted, kept himself informed of all the submissions.

In its judgment delivered on 8 November 1983, the Court upheld the Commission as far as the first two complaints were concerned but dismissed the argument on male midwives.

Useful address Court of Justice of the European Communities
Case postale 96, Plateau du Kirchberg
Luxembourg

FACTS, INSTITUTIONS AND LAWS

BELGIUM

Widows' and orphans' fund

Another court case has been brought in what is being called the "widows' and orphans' fund" affair. This time, the plaintiff is Mrs A. Leroy, a musician working for RTBF, the French-language radio and television organization. She claimed that the State is unlawfully enriching itself at her expense because each month 7% of her earnings is deducted and paid into a fund for widows and orphans despite the fact that it will not pay any pension to her family in return.

The lower court in Brussels has ordered RTBF to reimburse Mrs Leroy the amount of contributions she has paid, but has not forced it do so. It has also recognized Mrs Leroy's right to defend her family's interests. This is an important decision: since the court has acknowledged that the daughter of this woman musician is entitled to a pension, she could bring proceedings against RTBF and the State to gain recognition of the prejudice she would incur were her mother to die.

The "Solidarité-Femmes-Emplois" association that is supporting Mrs Leroy in her legal action points out that the proceedings are of concern to 200,000 women employees in the public sector whose contribution to the Fund serves no purpose, because that scheme pays a pension only to the beneficiaries of male employees.

Useful address Solidarité-Femmes-Emploi a.s.b.l.
 1a, Place Quételet
 1030 Brussels

Adultery and the law

Robert Henrion, the chairman of the PRL (Liberal) Group in Parliament, has tabled a bill that would do away with articles 387 and 390 of the Criminal Code which make adultery a criminal offence.

Mr Henrion points out that in most cases complaints of adultery are made to the police merely for the purpose of supporting divorce petitions, which are the competence of the civil courts. Very often, once charges are brought before the criminal court they are withdrawn by the complainant, which is an abortive use of the judicial system.

In the explanatory foreword to his bill, Mr Henrion dismisses the arguments of those who might object that evidence of adultery as the grounds of divorce would be difficult to obtain unless a complaint is investigated by a police officer.

"According to legal precedents, merely keeping another person's company is grounds for divorce if it is assiduous and constitutes an equivocal attitude, in that it is a grave affront to the spouse. Furthermore, evidence of actual adultery may be obtained by any means of procuring proof that is permissible under ordinary law. Finally, Belgium might be guided by the practice in France, where the injured spouse may call in a court bailiff as a witness."

Dealing with alimony defaulters

With the support of the Social Christian Group in the Senate, Huberte Hanquet has put forward a bill that would set up a "national alimony fund agency" to advance alimony to the beneficiary and then recover the amount from the defaulter.

Useful address Mme Huberte Hanquet
Palais de la Nation
1000 Brussels

The family name

Taking up proposals made by Belgian MPs Klein and Remacle and Senators Lepaffe and Désir, the Belgian association of women jurists has now turned its attention to reforming the law associated with names.

The essence of the reform, says the association, would be that the husband and wife could either retain his and her own surname or take the same name made up of their respective surnames in the order of their choice. When it comes to the child, several arrangements would be feasible depending on the arrangement made by its parents at the time of marriage - although once he comes of age he would be entitled to change the decision reached at the time of his birth.

Useful address Association belge des Femmes juristes
Belgische Vereniging van vrouwelijke Juristen
134, avenue Circulaire
1180 Brussels

DENMARK

Girls' work

20% of girl school-leavers fail to find work and receive no vocational training. This worrying figure was cited at a conference arranged by Ligestillingsrådet (the equal opportunities council) on the theme of "Fokus på unge kvinder" (focus on girls).

According to Helle Degn, chairwoman of Ligestillingsrådet, better use should be made of all the statutory means of positive discrimination. Grethe Fenger Møller, the Labour Minister, echoed her words in recommending that greater equality be achieved through good vocational training. In the debate, several women speakers stressed the vital role of parents in a girl's choice of career. Ligestillingsrådet is planning an information campaign, in close cooperation with the Education Minister and teachers.

Winding up the meeting, Helle Degn urged women to be more ready to accept positions of responsibility. Placing pressure on the leaders of society in the move towards equality is not enough; women must be up there among them, taking part in the decision-making.

Useful address Ligestillingsrådet
Frederiksgade 21,1
1265 Copenhagen

Home helps

In theory, at the time of having children women civil servants are entitled to the support of home helps employed by the authorities. The Danish equal opportunities council, Ligestillingsrådet, has pointed out, however, that such aid is being supplied on fewer and fewer occasions. The local authorities, for example, are not calling on home helps because of budget restrictions.

Ligestillingsrådet's appeals to the Minister of Finance and the Home Minister have achieved nothing positive. The committee on maternity leave set up by the Ministry of Social Affairs, which used to be a major forum for discussion on this kind of problem, is no longer active.

In the hope of sparking off a broad public debate, Ligestillingsrådet has contacted the unions and women's associations. It feels that failure to make use of home helps may have serious consequences for women already employed in the public sector and it may also have an adverse effect on women seeking employment in the civil service.

Useful address Ligestillingsrådet
Frederiksgade 21,1
1265 Copenhagen

F R A N C E

The supreme court of appeal

Simone Rozes, the first Advocate General at the Court of Justice of the European Communities, has been appointed as the leading presiding judge at the Court of Cassation - France's supreme court of appeal. The first woman to occupy this highest ranking office in the French judiciary, Madame Rozes's past achievements include being the first woman presiding judge at the Paris court of appeal.

A campaign on equality at work

"What is the good of acquiring rights if they are ignored?" asks Yvette Roudy, the Minister for Women's Rights. To publicize all the effects of the law on equality for men and women at work which was passed in July 1983, a wide-ranging campaign has now been launched in France.

In addition to a 203-page "Guide to rights at work", of which 200,000 copies have been printed, the Ministry has produced 150,000 copies of a booklet written for works councils to explain the scope and implications of the law and its application within workplaces. A message was beamed out on all three TV stations on 40 occasions during peak watching hours between mid-October and mid-November last. Finally, a million copies of a leaflet are to be distributed to the general public.

Useful address Droit des Femmes
Boîte Postale 3000
75500 Paris Cedex 16

Senior public office

The "Ecole Nationale d'Administration" is a prestigious college whose graduates usually go on to the very top of the civil service in France. It has too few women students. Only 11.9% of applicants entering the college through the traditional channels of admission are girls.

A new route to admission has been recognized: people who have experience but lack academic qualifications are now allowed to apply. It was to have been hoped that more women would take advantage of this arrangement, but in fact out of 47 acceptable applications of this kind only 3 were from women.

The first in-company equality plan

The first ever "plan for equality at work" has been signed by management and unions at the Moulinex factory in Caen (Calvados).

In the spirit of the law on equality at work, the plan includes provision for 50 semi-skilled women workers taking training that will lead to qualifications as skilled workers on a par with men. Another measure is that women will be given priority in taking individual sabbaticals of up to two years for the purpose of education and training.

Parental leave for the care of children

The French ministerial council has accepted a bill on parental leave and part-time working for parents of young children. Under the bill, four new measures would be introduced:

- a parent could choose between unpaid parental leave which would temporarily suspend his or her contract of employment and part-time employment;
- the parent could switch from one of these options to the other on expiration of an initial period of a year or more;
- the right to parental leave or part-time employment would be extended to those employed in undertakings with a work force of less than 100. Nevertheless, the employer would be entitled to refuse to allow such leave or part-time employment if it would have an adverse effect on the running of the undertakings or its production work;
- the right to leave or part-time work would be open to both father and mother, together or in turn.

Useful address Ministère des Affaires Sociales et de la Solidarité Nationale
 8 avenue de Ségur
 75008 Paris

In the Senate

In the elections for a percentage of the seats in the French Upper Chamber last autumn, 22 of the 388 candidates standing were women. No woman was elected - or re-elected.

The Senate now numbers 9 women out of 318 senators, compared with 10 out of 305 before the election. Now that the Senate committees have been formed, only 2 out of the committee officials are women: Brigitte Gros (Democratic Left) is the vice chairman of the committee on cultural affairs and Cécile Goldet (Socialist Party) is the secretary to the committee on social affairs.

Under the banner headline of "eine Politik mit menschlichem Gesicht" - "policy with a human face" - the Minister is also drafting a housing policy that will place more emphasis on the family.

Finally, Dr Geissler hopes to start up a foundation to be called "Mutter und Kind - Zum Schutz des ungeborenen Lebens" (mother and child - for the protection of the unborn life). A launching budget of 25 million Deutschmark is planned. The idea is that no pregnant woman should be prevented from having her child because of her financial situation. The kind of aid offered by the foundation might be clothing and housing, or financial support for women who provide help for mothers-to-be.

Useful address Bundesministerium für Jugend, Familie Gesundheit
Kennedyallee
53 Bonn 2

Equal opportunities: a review

The "Arbeitsstab Frauenpolitik" (women's policy bureau) attached to the Federal Minister for Youth, the Family and Health has published its annual report on its work in 1982. Among the issues it covers, of special interest are the law on equality for men and women on the jobs market and a report on the need for an anti-discrimination law. It describes the many research products conducted with financial support from the bureau, which include reports on the reorganization of working hours, the choice of non-traditional careers by girls, discrimination against women in the law protecting children, equal pay and equality in the working world.

The bureau helps companies in drawing up and implementing plans for equality for women in the workplace (Frauenförderungspläne).

It has also given financial support to various schemes, including a battered wives' hostel in Ludwigsburg.

Ellen Wolff, the head of the agency, is delighted that so many women write to tell her about the difficulties they encounter, especially instances of non-compliance with the principle of equal treatment for men and women, since it shows that working women see the Arbeitsstab as a friend and ally and her staff can then offer direct help.

Finally, the bureau arranges meetings with women's organizations and represents the Federal Government at international conferences.

Useful address Arbeitsstab Frauenpolitik
Kennedyallee
53 Bonn 2

Stucco work: a woman's job too

A girl from Aachen has had to go to the administrative court to obtain recognition of her right to learn the stucco worker's trade. Under a ministerial order, only boys were allowed to train for this job, as it is looked upon as "too tough for a girl". In support of her application, she had given the authority medical certificates showing she was fit enough to do the work. The court ruled that she was entitled to train; the way is now clear for her to fulfil her ambition to take over her father's plastering business (court ruling 3 K 418/82).

Useful address Verwaltungsgericht Aachen
Aachen

Political propositions

At their annual congress, women members of the Christian Democratic Union (representing about 20% of the party membership) have clarified their political ideas. Although the Christian Democrats are in power, its women members feel they do not have enough access to decision-making bodies and would like to increase their influence over Government policy. With this in mind, the congress called for a new appointment: a Secretary of State to the Federal Chancellor with special responsibility for equality. Dr Helga Wex, a member of the Bundestag (the Federal Parliament) was re-elected as president of the CDU-Frauenvereinigung (Christian Democrat women's association) and was asked to convey the congress proposals to the Bundestag.

Their keynote being "the world of tomorrow needs us today", the CDU women members called for a return to a family-centred policy covering various fields such as health, the environment, transport, economics and work. The congress called for extended maternity leave for women and for changes to the tax system through the introduction of separate taxation of husband and wife.

Useful address CDU-Frauenvereinigung
 Adenauer-Haus
 53 Bonn 1

Ratification

The Federal Government has forwarded a bill to the Federal Senate ratifying the UN convention on the abolition of all forms of discrimination against women. The Federal Republic of Germany signed the convention at the Copenhagen Conference in 1980 but stated a reservation regarding military service, since national service for women is prohibited under the German Constitution.

Equal opportunities in Cologne

Early in 1983, "Frauen-Gleichstellungsstelle" - an agency working for equality for women - was set up by the municipal authority of the city of Cologne. Its aim is to provide information on every aspect of equal opportunities and to make people more aware of the reasons for the discrimination of which women are the victims.

In mapping out its general course of action, the agency first conducted a detailed survey of the position of women in Cologne, a remarkable piece of work that left few statistical stones unturned. A systematic comparison with men helped to shed light on the issues at stake, ranging from the number of unmarried women (11,556), the number of girls in technical schools (20,796), average hourly wages (11,23 DM for women, 1.76 DM for men) and the number of women university professors (25, compared with 494 men) to the number of grade I women in WDR, the radio/television broadcasting network (7, compared with 161 men).

To inform public opinion, the agency has produced a small poster outlining and explaining the law on equality at work, as well as a list of all the literature on women that can be consulted in the municipal libraries.

Useful address Büro des Oberstadtdirektors
 Frauen-Gleichstellungsstelle
 Rathaus - Postfach 10 80 20
 5000 Cologne 1

Pregnancy, work and the law

An employer has no right to ask a woman job applicant whether she is pregnant. This has been confirmed by both the Frankfurt and the Bremen industrial tribunals.

A further point was made in Bremen: because it is unlawful to ask whether a woman is pregnant, she is not at fault if the answer she gives is untrue. The reference of the tribunal ruling is 4aCa 4006/83.

Useful address Arbeitsgericht Bremen
 28 Bremen 1

The termination of pregnancy

A review of the law on the termination of pregnancies has been proposed by 52 members of the Bundestag. One of the issues giving rise to this initiative is the financial contribution towards abortion for social reasons that is made by sickness insurance schemes (75% of abortions are carried out on these grounds).

Germany's supreme constitutional court, the Bundesverfassungsgericht, is considering an appeal from a Catholic woman who objects to contributing to a sickness insurance scheme if her money is to be used to refund the cost of abortions, of which she disapproves.

Useful address CDU/CSU-Bundestagsfraktion
 Bundeshaus
 53 Bonn 1

G R E E C E

Equality Council

Six months after their appointment by the Prime Minister, members of Symvoulio Isotitas ton dio Filon - the Women's Equality Council - have been presenting their first publication and outlining their plans to the general public.

The first step taken by the Council was to bring out a booklet describing the major changes in family law approved by Parliament. The publication is to be distributed free of charge throughout the country by prefectures and women's organizations and is intended to reach a wide range of social groups and individuals in every sector of the population.

Discussing its own plans for the future, the Council has announced that it will be concerned mainly with three fields: preparations for new legislation on equal treatment at work; the establishment of administrative machinery to detect and expose instances of unequal treatment; and informing and arousing public opinion on the subject of equality.

Useful address Symvoulio Isotitas ton dio Filon
 Mousseou 2, Plaka
 105 55 Athens

A Bill on Equality at Work

The long awaited bill "on the application of the principle of equality between men and women in the field of labour relations" has been forwarded to Parliament by the Ministry of Labour, and preliminary discussions have already taken place in the parliamentary committee that deals with such matters.

The proposed legislation covers only those women whose conditions of employment are regulated by private law, in other words private sector employees, freelances and professional women. This means that it does not apply to the civil service. The bill is intended to eliminate discrimination against women in matters of recruitment, pay, promotion and other benefits.

The bill would abolish existing restrictions on women's right of access to certain "heavy or dangerous" jobs that have traditionally been considered as a male preserve, except in cases where such access might conflict with the concern to protect mother and child. It would also guarantee equal rights to vocational training, rates of pay, promotion and career opportunities. It also states that male and women employees will be entitled to the same benefits, such as family allowances.

The authorities would, under the bill, set up administrative machinery to disseminate information on the rights of working women, detect and report instances of discrimination and review progress.

Finally, the bill lays down the administrative sanctions that would be imposed on those who persistently discriminate against women. It also explicitly recognizes the competence of certain European Community agencies to intervene in the event of continuing discrimination.

The consequences of a Court ruling

The new collective agreement between public sector employers and employees has established that men and women are equally entitled to family allowances for their dependents. With effect from 1 October 1983, this allowance has been paid to all married women employed in the public sector without discrimination or special conditions.

The collective agreement, which covers more than 26,000 employees throughout the country, states that the family allowance is extended to women as well as men in pursuance of the judgment delivered by the Council of State, ref. 530/1983 (as reported in n° 30, "Women of Europe"). This judgment followed an appeal by 77 women public sector employees. The Council of State held that the family allowance is part of the remuneration payable to married employees and must therefore be paid to all, irrespective of sex.

I R E L A N D

Breastfeeding

According to a Health Education Bureau survey published recently, fewer than one third of Irish mothers are breastfeeding their babies. It also reveals that those who do are more likely to be educated and middle class. Those who do not, say the main reason is embarrassment. One in ten admit they would be too shy to breastfeed in front of their husband, 40% in front of their mothers and 80% in front of their fathers.

The Bureau considers that literature should be produced on the benefits of breastfeeding, and that hotels and shops should be urged to provide facilities for nursing mothers. Breastfeeding, it feels, should be the normal practice for at least the first three months of a baby's life.

Useful address The Health Education Bureau
 34 Upper Mount Street
 Dublin 2

"Non-marital children"

Nuala Fennell, the Minister of State for Women's Affairs, has announced a Government decision to reform the law in relation to illegitimacy. It has also decided to end the official use of the terms "legitimate" and "illegitimate". A bill shortly to be introduced will give non-marital children the same succession rights as the children of married couples. It will also cover actions to prove parenthood, the registration of births and maintenance. The Government has decided, however, not to include some of the proposals advanced by the Law Reform Commission. For example, unmarried fathers will not have the same automatic rights as married fathers.

Useful address Minister of State for Women's Affairs
 Department of Justice
 72-76 St. Stephens Green
 Dublin 2

Pollution knows no frontiers?

The mothers of six babies with Downs' syndrome were all in a class of 11 girls in the same school in Dundalk, Co. Louth, in 1957.

Doctors are now wondering whether this fact may bear any relation with a fire that occurred in 1957 at the nuclear fuels processing plant at Windscale, which lies east of the school across the Irish Sea in England. Studies of winds, weather and radioactivity levels following the fire have been made, and the fact that there was an outbreak of Asian flu in the school at the time has been noted. Two doctors say that a combination of both may have damaged immature egg cells in the girls ovaries.

Ireland suffers from a high rate of Downs' syndrome and the reason is unknown. The doctors' hypothesis, however, comes in the wake of concern in Ireland over the possible effects of nuclear dumping off its coastline.

More married women working

Traditionally, few Irish women have remained in their jobs after marriage and child-bearing, but the situation has now changed dramatically. In 1971, there were only 42,00 wives working; two years ago the figure was 113,000 and it is likely to rise to 180,000 by the end of this decade.

Useful address The Economic and Social Research Institute
 4 Burlington Road
 Dublin 4

I T A L Y

In the Government

There were three women in the Government formed by Bettino Craxi in early summer of 1983: Franca Falcucci, the Education Minister in the previous Government, retained office; Susanna Agnelli was appointed Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; and Paola Cavigliasso who, before being elected to Parliament, headed the "Movimento Femminile dei Coltivatori Diretti" - the women's movement of small farmers - was appointed as Secretary of State in the Health Ministry.

Cabinet affairs

The cabinet office of the President of the Council has announced that a "committee on equal rights and opportunities for men and women" is being set up. Its task will be to promote all forms of action to prevent and eliminate discrimination against women.

Bettino Craxi, President of the Council of Ministers, has made considerable changes in the running of his cabinet; he is to set up five committees responsible for keeping Government policy under review and suggesting new policy. In press speculation as to who would be appointed to the committees, none of the many experts whose names were aired were women.

L U X E M B O U R G

Civil servants' leave

On 10 November 1983, the Chamber of Deputies in the Grand Duchy passed a bill amending the general service regulations for public sector employees as regards leave without pay, part-time leave and part-time employment.

On the subject of unpaid leave, a civil servant may apply for leave of up to one year (although it will not be treated as a period in service) following maternity or adoption leave. The latter is a period of eight weeks' leave granted to a civil servant adopting a child aged 4 or under, starting on the date on which the child arrives in the family, on submission of the child's birth certificate showing particulars of its adoption.

Leave for part-time work is granted to give a parent the opportunity to care for one or more dependent children aged 4 or under, irrespective of service needs. Leave of this kind is given only after maternity or adoption leave or unpaid leave.

Such leave entitles the employee to only half of the normal salary and half the annual holiday, but it is deemed to be a period in service, provided that it is for no longer than one year following maternity or adoption leave. On expiration of the leave for part-time work, the employee may return to full-time duties only if there is a full-time vacancy in the same civil service department and the same career.

On expiration of unpaid leave lasting one year or leave for part-time employment following maternity leave, the employee may be authorized to leave his or her duties on a temporary basis to bring up one or more dependent children aged under 15. After this period, he or she will be taken on again only if there is a vacancy in the original department and career category. Once he or she is taken on again, the employee returns to the same step in the civil service career as at the time of temporarily giving up the duties.

The new measures apply without distinction to female civil servants and to male civil servants whose wives are also employed in the civil service and have been given maternity or adoption leave, although it is expected that it will be mainly the women employees who will take advantage of these rights.

In the course of the debate in the Chamber of Deputies, women MPs voiced fears that this right - which does not exist in the private sector - might work to women's disadvantage in that there would be greater reluctance to recruit women to the civil service in the first place.

In stating its views on the reform, the Council of State wondered "whether the application of these new measures within civil service departments may not have a negative effect and, in the long term, disrupt or even paralyze the service altogether".

In expressing these thoughts, the Council of State pointed out, it had no wish to underestimate the positive aspects of this reform, which introduces working arrangements that are more compatible with family responsibilities; it merely wished to urge circumspection, bearing in mind that the interests of the service must take precedence over personal considerations, however legitimate.

In its provisional memorandum on policy to combat sexual violence against women, published in October 1983, the Dutch Government laid stress on the links between violence and the position of women in our society. It pointed out that protection against such violence is one of the fundamental rights under the Constitution (articles 10 and 11) which upholds the inviolability of the human person and the environment in which he or she lives. Those rights are also set out in articles 3 and 8 of the European treaty safeguarding human rights and fundamental liberties, as well as articles 7 and 17 of the international treaty on civic and political rights.

It is Government policy to work for women's effective access to gainful employment and the right to their own earnings, as these will lead to independence in their personal relationships, behaviour, sexuality and reproduction - the prerequisites for a society free of sexual violence.

The means whereby it hopes to achieve these ends are:

- prevention of sexual violence
- a campaign against sexual violence
- help and facilities for the victims of sexual violence (as is given in the Ministry of Welfare's Centrum Gezondheidszorg Vluchtelingen, Volksgezondheid en Cultuur, "Blijf van m'n Lijf"-hizen, Vrouwenopvangcentra and FIOM-huizen for single parents and their children, and the "children's telephone help-line");
- recognition of the possibility of rape of a woman by her husband;
- a more enlightened role on the part of the police and judiciary and in doctors' attitudes.

Useful address Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid
 Zeestraat 73
 The Hague

REPUBLIC OF MALTA

Agatha Barbara has become the President of the Republic of Malta, the first woman to have held this office. She was the first woman to have been elected to Parliament in 1947 and, eight years later, she was appointed as Education Minister.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

Aída Gonzales Martinez has been elected president of the board of the International Labour Office for one year, the first woman to hold an appointment at this level in Mexico.

UNITED STATES

Anne Krueger, professor of economics at the University of Minnesota, is the first woman to become a vice president of the World Bank since it was founded 38 years ago. She will be responsible for economics and research and will have a seat on the management committee, the Bank's governing body.

CHINA

China has four women ministers: Qian Zhengying is minister for the conservation of water and energy resources, Chen Muhua minister for economic relations and foreign trade, Hao Jianzuo minister for the textile industry and Zhang Zhen minister for the nuclear industry.

UNITED KINGDOM

London's first woman Lord Mayor

In November 1983, Lady Mary Donaldson took up her post as the first woman Lord Mayor of the City of London since records began in 1192. Following ancient tradition, in a horse-drawn gilded coach she headed a procession to the Law Courts to swear before the judges that she would faithfully perform her mayoral duties.

Despite the vast growth of the capital as a whole, the City of London has retained its generations-old form of local government within the famous "square mile". Before she achieved the pinnacle of Lord Mayor, Lady Donaldson had to break through several barriers where only men had ruled before. Married to a famous judge, Lady Donaldson did not begin her public career until her family had grown up. She holds the office for a year. One of her first tasks was to preside over the Lord Mayor's banquet where, according to custom, the Prime Minister of the day gives an important speech. On this occasion the guest was another "first woman", Margaret Thatcher.

Divorce: who pays what?

The Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Bill now going through Parliament has aroused strong and differing reactions from women. The Bill seeks to recognize equality between man and wife by ending her automatic right to maintenance after the breakdown of a marriage.

Since about one in three marriages in the UK are now expected to end in divorce, both men and their second wives have complained about the burden on second marriages of the man having to pay alimony to his first wife even if she is capable of earning herself. The new law, if adopted, would require men to make certain provision for their children, but after an interval maintenance for the first wife could be stopped at the court's discretion.

Research has shown that fewer than one in eight mothers lives solely on maintenance, and this figure is halved ten years after the divorce. Women in the UK are divided as to whether the new financial provisions are fair. According to letters to the national press, second wives firmly support the bill but other women consider it unjust.

When advertising is wrong

The Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 made sexist advertising illegal but, even when good intentions prevail, it is a habit that employers and others find hard to change. This is particularly true where jobs are advertised within an organization, as the Equal Opportunities Commission has recently shown.

In a booklet entitled "So You Think You've Got it Right", it quotes numerous instances of internal advertising that make it difficult for women to apply, for example a case where a vacancy notice was displayed in a part of the company premises where only men could go. Almost without thinking, employers refer to the need for the "right man" or couch their notices in male terms such as "he will require . . . he will be".

By drawing attention to this error, the EOC seeks to persuade job advertisers to change their ways, and illustrates its point by showing the right way to advertise.

Useful address T&GWU
 Transport House, Smith Square
 London SW1

Equality now!

The Equal Opportunities Commission launched a new quarterly magazine in November. Entitled "Equality Now!", it replaces the Commission's former tabloid newspaper, EOC News, providing needed space for in-depth articles as well as news items giving up-to-date information on progress - or non-progress - in the equality struggle.

"We're aiming for a magazine covering activities within the Commission and progress towards equality at work, in schools and in our everyday lives generally", says the Editor, Catherine Cairncross. The magazine is free and already has a circulation of 60,000. New readers are welcomed.

Useful address The Editor, "Equality Now!"
 Equal Opportunities Commission, Overseas House
 Quay Street
 Manchester M3 3HN

Women's Centres and Childcare

The Women's Committee of the Greater London Council has allocated £300,000 towards the establishment of seven women's centres in different parts of London. The aim, according to Valerie Wise, who chairs the Committee, is to establish such centres in all the London boroughs so that women can drop in any time during the day or evening and know they will find company.

In the ten months to the end of October the Committee had also provided grants, many substantial, to 121 child-care projects, concentrating on those for children under school age but also assisting "latchkey" projects offering care for the older children of working parents after school and in the holidays.

Useful address Women's Committee
 Greater London Council, County Hall
 London SE1 7PB

Equality in Education?

A hard-hitting booklet published by the Northern Ireland Equal Opportunities Commission has aroused a flurry in the local press. Entitled "Equality in Education: Are You Providing It?", the Commission queries certain existing practices and lays down guidelines for the avoidance of sex discrimination in the school. It is particularly concerned with the under-representation of girls in science subjects, but the main controversy has arisen over segregated marking of boys' and girls' papers when they move from primary to secondary selective schools in Northern Ireland. The Commission claims that girls are often brighter at the age of 11 than boys of the same age, but this is not reflected in the numbers who pass on to the selective (grammar) schools.

The Commission is also involved in a controversy as to whether a boy should be allowed to wear an earring to school. The headmaster says that all earrings are banned, irrespective of sex, but the Commission has taken the case up on the grounds that the principle could be sex discriminatory, particularly in schools where girls are allowed to wear earrings but the boys are not.

Useful address Northern Ireland Equal Opportunities Commission
 Chamber of Commerce House, Great Victoria Street
 Belfast BT 7BA

Single-sex teaching

According to Peter Wilby, Education Correspondent of the Sunday Times, single-sex schooling - or at least subject classes - is on its way back in Britain.

For the last 20 years mixed-sex teaching has been considered the progressive method, but concern over the failure of girls to take up maths and physics at higher school levels has brought teachers to the view that boys are holding girls back in these particular subjects. Experiments have shown that when girls are taught these subjects on their own the results are significantly better. In one school the number of girls opting for fourth year physics increased from 6 to 39 when single-sex classes were introduced in a comprehensive school. It was found that boys also preferred single-sex classes.

The girls said they were less inhibited in single-sex classes and had more of the teacher's attention. Though they would not want segregation in all subjects, where maths and physics were concerned the boisterous behaviour of the boys hampered their achievement.

Useful address The Sunday Times
 P.O. Box 7
 200 Gray's Inn Road
 London WC1

J U N E ' 8 4 E U R O P E A N E L E C T I O N S
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We shall be pulling out all the stops to report on what women are doing to prepare for the June 1984 European elections. We are not of course advocating a vote for any one candidate rather than another, woman or man; we are merely publicizing information from each European country that may be of benefit to other women, whatever their political views, in other countries.

- ++ At the Congress of the Federation of Liberal and Democratic Parties of the European Community held in Munich in early in December in the run-up to the European elections, a secret ballot was held to appoint the six members of the Federation executive. When the votes were counted, the four at the top of the list were women:

Simone Veil	(France)
Mechtild von Alemann	(Germany)
Beatrice Rangoni Machiavelli	(Italy)
Anne-Marie Neyts Uytterbroek	(Belgium)

- ++ The National Council of "Equipes d'entraide" - "mutual support teams", a Christian charitable body in Belgium - has adopted a motion calling on the political parties to keep the human factor in mind in deciding on their platform for the European elections. Among the suggestions put forward by "Equipes d'entraide" are: a realistic charter for immigrants that would help to build a multi-cultural society in Europe; support for alternative job creation schemes (service, purchasing and production cooperatives, for instance); respect for the human person in public sector services and institutions; the formulation of criteria to regulate the activities of financing and credit companies, etc.

- ++ The "Consiglio Nazionale Donne Italiane" - the Italian National Women's Council - has distributed a questionnaire throughout the country in an attempt to find out about the attitudes of Italian women to the forthcoming elections.

Did you vote in 1979? Are you in favour of revising the Treaties? Would a more powerful European Parliament help to achieve political integration? Seven questions were asked and the answers are expected by 30 May 1984. There will be a draw of completed questionnaires and the 20 women whose names come out of the hat will win a trip to Brussels and Strasbourg.

- ++ Antoinette Spaak has been placed at the top of the list of candidates standing for the French-speaking Front in Belgium at the time of the European elections; she is already a member of European Parliament.
- ++ The Dutch-speaking Social Christian Party in Belgium (CVP) has presented its list of candidates to its members, featuring the names of Rika De Backer, Senator for Antwerp, and Lieve Callens-Monballyu.

MILITANT ACTIVITIES

**I N T E R N A T I O N A L
O R G A N I Z A T I O N S**

Women Engineers

The "Association française des Femmes Ingénieurs" has kindly told us about a contact made through the pages of "Women of Europe". An item on this French association of women engineers brought a response from a sister organization in Canada. Micheline Bouchard tells us that in the French spoken in Quebec there is a feminine form of such words as "engineer", "author" and "doctor" - for example "ingénieure", "auteure" or "docteure". In the French spoken in France, this is not done and the word "femme" has to precede the noun, as in English in terms like "woman engineer" and "woman doctor".

The Canadian association of which she is a member has produced a film entitled "Nous sommes des ingénieures".

Could this contact be a first step to an international network of women engineers?

Useful	Micheline Bouchard	Colette Mathieu-Batsch
addresses	Hydro-Québec	A.F.F.I.
	75 Ouest, boul. Dorchester	10, rue Vauquelin
	<u>Montreal - Quebec HEZ IA4</u>	<u>75005 Paris</u>

Liberal and radical youth

Following the annual congress of the Liberal and Radical Youth Movement of the European Community in Berlin last autumn, LYMEC has elected its officials. For the first time, a young woman was elected: Paola Emilia Cicerone, who is to be the treasurer and who also has the special mission of representing Southern Europe on the LYMEC executive.

Useful address	LYMEC
	15, rue de Spa
	<u>1040 Brussels</u>

Women artists

The "Union féminine artistique et culturelle - Salons internationaux" is a women's union for the arts which regularly organizes international exhibitions of its members' recent works. At each event, awards are presented for a diversity of achievements, such as research or graphics.

In 1984, Belgium will be the host to the next exhibition. In 1983 it was held in Vichy in France, and artists from 29 different countries showed their works at the salon held in Vichy in France.

Useful address	UFACSI - Délégation internationale
	3-84 avenue G. De Greef, boîte 203
	<u>1090 Brussels</u>

European Federation of Women in the Home

A "Fédération européenne des Femmes actives au foyer" (FEFAF for short) has been formed in Brussels by the representatives of homebound women from several EEC countries.

Françoise de Bellefroid (Belgium) of the "Association des Femmes au foyer" (Belgium), Ariane Gouilly-Frossard of the "Association des Femmes actives au foyer" (France), Tina Leonzi of the "Movimento Italiano Casalinghe" (Italy), Margot Carstensen of the Deutscher Hausfrauenbund (Germany) and Joke van Elslander of "Thuiswerkende Ouder, Gezin, Samenleving" (Netherlands) decided to launch the Federation when they found in the course of a meeting that the laws of European countries still heavily penalize those women who choose not to go out to work but to devote themselves to the care and wellbeing of the members of their family.

The new Federation's aim is to represent the housewives of Europe, particularly in dealings with the European Community. It also hopes to use every means at its disposal to encourage and support all those women who choose to stay at home and work for their families.

FEFAF has set itself the task of informing housewives about their economic, legal, political and social rights. It wants to contribute to the mutual understanding and self-awareness of homebound women citizens of the Community.

The Federation has no political affiliation or ideology. It will defend women in the home by taking up their specific problems whatever their ideas, religion or politics.

Any association that is concerned with the economic, social and legal status of women in the home are invited to become members of FEF.

Useful address FEFAF
 avenue de Tervueren 66 - boîte 1
 1040 Brussels

Youth Forum

In 1984, the "women's" working group within the Youth Forum of the European Communities is to stress positive action and equality in social security.

The position that the "women's" working group has acquired within the Youth Forum is of interest: it is now established that the group is entitled to keep a watching brief on proposals submitted to the executive committee affecting the status of young women. Youth organizations sending delegations to the Forum have been asked to ensure that they are made up of an equal number of men and women. It has been accepted that women's encounter groups may be organized in the course of Youth Forum meetings.

Useful address Forum Jeunesse des Communautés européennes
 66 avenue de Cortenberg - boîte 10
 1040 Brussels

Women's worlds

The Second International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women will be held in Groningen (Netherlands) on 17-21 April 1984. The theme of the Congress is "Women's Worlds: Strategies for Empowerment".

The gains women have made throughout the past few decades are now endangered by the economic problems arising everywhere in the world. At the same time, women are becoming more aware of the need to empower themselves personally, socially and professionally.

The Congress programme will include keynote speakers, interdisciplinary symposia, panel discussions, research sessions and poster sessions. Participants are asked to send in their papers in any of the following fields as soon as possible: medicine, management, senior public office, science and technology, employment, agriculture, social affairs, legislation, changes in the family, arts, religion, communication, housing, education and philosophy.

There will be pre-congress workshops and a visit will be arranged to other provinces of the Netherlands and to neighbouring countries (Belgium and Germany).

Useful address Second International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women
 Sociological Institute, University of Groningen
 Grote Markt 23
 9712 HR Groningen

Families

A symposium organized by COFACE took place on 16-17 November last. The subject was families, population and the crisis in Community Europe.

COFACE represents families whose confidence it has won as well as a group that has no voice in society: children. It supports every good scheme, comes out publicly against neglect and wrongdoing and takes part in every dialogue and consultation, in the firm resolve to promote the cause of families in a Europe that will never come into its own unless it works in the service of the individual.

It has been said that the "fight for equality between men and women extends beyond the context of work and concerns the family as a whole", and that "we live in a society run by men".

Family organizations must work together on the action in the fields of social policy, consumerism and the environment. The forthcoming elections to European Parliament are as important to families as to anyone else. Europe must first of all be a community of families: it is up to the organizations representing families to make them aware of the election and influence their decisions.

COFACE pleads for action to combat the decline in the population and its effects on social security. It is vigorously supporting the International Year of Youth in 1984.

Useful address COFACE
 Rue du Trône 57
 1050 Brussels

B E L G I U M

Women's Day

In Belgium, Women's Day is traditionally celebrated on 11 November, a public holiday in commemoration of the 1918 armistice.

In the French-speaking part of the country, Nivelles was chosen as the forum for debates that centred mainly on unemployment-related problems. Many women, it was said, find it "humiliating" to have to sign in at the employment exchange each day. There was also discussion on solidarity among women's organizations with a view to joint action. How can the specific character of each association be preserved while at the same time working together effectively?

In the Dutch-speaking area of Belgium, women convened in Hasselt for a day of discussion, mainly on peace. Parallels were drawn between spending on arms and the "new poverty" created by the recession. The women there reaffirmed their desire to influence society to ensure that public funds are devoted to the welfare of individuals rather than their destruction.

Union women

During study seminars organized by the Belgian trades union congress - the Fédération Générale du Travail Belge - on the position of women in the working world, women unionists noted with interest that a large number of male union officials were present.

During the debates, the women union members expressed the hope that their specific problems would be considered by the union congress as a whole. Are women not an integral part of the body of workers?

The question of part-time working, for example, affects all union members but its repercussions will be far more marked in the case of women. The congress, for its part, has not yet adopted a final stand; it is waiting for a report which will provide a very comprehensive review of the issue.

Useful address F G T B
 Marcelle Hoens - Marina Hoornaert
 Responsables du secteur "Femmes"
 rue Haute, 42
 1000 Brussels

Electronic games

Children find electronic games thrilling - but what effect do they have on young people and their family life? Are they a good introduction to new technology? How to choose? The computer has arrived and teachers and parents have to think about what attitude to adopt. The association known as "Vie féminine" has compiled a dossier (price 50 Belgian francs) entitled "Electronique - Jouons le jeu".

Useful address Vie féminine
 111, rue de la Poste
 1033 Brussels

Action in Flanders

Nationale Vrouwenraad - the Dutch-speaking section of the National Women's Council - has devoted a special issue of its journal, "NR", to the theme of "ten years' work in Flanders". Its review is enthusiastic but not complacent. In the editorial introducing the issue, the chairman of the Council, Lily Boeykens, says that a change of strategy is now needed: we talk too much to each other and not enough to people outside.

All too often the men who hold the reins of power, the people we are in contact with at work and in the home, still know nothing about what women are saying and writing. Women must take the initiative and arrange joint meetings, debates and seminars with men. This is the new guideline for Nationale Vrouwenraad and its programme over the next few months.

Useful address Nationale Vrouwenraad
 Middaglijstraat, 8
 1030 Brussels

Infor-Femmes

The association named Infor-Femmes has just moved to new premises so that it can cope with its many expanding activities. As its name suggests it provides an information service for women, but it also arranges courses, conferences and debates, in the afternoon or in the evening from 6 p.m. in turn.

Another innovation is a cycle of five group dynamics sessions on the theme of "living as a couple in one's fifties" - a period of life in which many problems arise in a marriage.

Useful address Infor-Femmes
 rue de Brederode 29
 1000 Brussels

W.O.E.

W.O.E. stands for Women's Organization for Equality. The members of this Brussels-based organization are of a dozen or so nationalities, their working language being English. One of its plans is to act as a link between the activities of Belgian women and those of various other national communities living in Brussels. Women just passing through Brussels will find a friendly welcome there and an opportunity to find out about life in Belgian society.

Useful address Women's Organization for Equality
 29, rue Blanche
 1050 Brussels

In defence of tug-of-love children

The "Association de Défense des Enfants Enlevés" is about to embark on two-fold action: it will help the mothers of children who have been snatched from them in their attempts to get their children back, but at the same time it will inform, prevent and forestall. By prevention, something can be done at the time when a child is at risk of being taken from its mother. Through contact with other organizations pursuing the same aims elsewhere in Europe, the association can sometimes place simultaneous pressure on the authorities and ministries concerned.

Useful address Association de Défense des Enfants Enlevés
 29, rue Blanche
 1050 Brussels

Emergency telephone number: Brussels 466.39.80

D E N M A R K

Danish women as they were and as they will be

An authoritative book has been published on the status of women in this highly industrialized Scandinavian country. Danish women are not a tiny, exotic group - any more than any other set of women - to be put under the microscope and pored over by learned ethnologists, the book argues. The cause of women in Denmark is not the problem of a quaint minority: women account for 51% of a population of 5.1 million souls.

Useful address Danish Women, yesterday and tomorrow
 Ministry for Cultural Affairs
 Copenhagen

Pilot schemes

In June 1982, the Folketing - the Danish Parliament - brought in legislation to promote job creation, providing for substantial grants to this end. Experience has shown, however, that it is the young men with better vocational skills who benefit from such legislation, while women are relegated to second place.

Two schemes set up by women in Aarhus are particularly interesting. They are aimed at mothers in the 20-24 age group who have no job training and no job experience. According to "Kvindernes fagblad", the magazine of the women members of the LO trade union, under these two schemes every consideration is given to every aspect of the lives of the women involved: their children, housing, relations with their families and personal problems.

One of the projects is in the field of bookbinding, the other in woodworking. Both pilot schemes combine vocational training with practical work to give the young women confidence in their own skills.

Useful address Kvindernes fagblad
 Ewaldsgade 3
 2200 Copenhagen N

Anesia Pinheiro Machado

One of the great figures of the past in women's aviation is Brazilian Anesia Pinheiro Machado, who received a particularly warm welcome on her recent visit to Italy. She flew solo for the first time on 17 March 1922 and only a month later she took her international licence - number 771. The first woman pilot to ferry passengers in Brazil, she was also the first to fly over the Cordilleras in the Andes in a single-engine plane.

A commercial pilot and flying instructor and instructor in instrument flying and link training, she was also a talented aviation correspondent for several specialist magazines. As the "doyenne world aviatrix", in 1954 she was awarded the "Paul Tissandier diploma". With at least thirty decorations, she has consistently proved through her example that women can be the leaders of technical progress.

FRANCE

Vocational training

"Antoinette" the journal of women unionists in the Confédération Générale du Travail, a French trades union federation, has conducted a survey on job training among its women readers and has now set out its findings in the November 1983 issue, n° 222.

The interesting figures show that 45.8% of the women who replied had never been promoted, 26.4% had had more or less automatic promotion and 72.6% felt that they had not been properly informed of the possible choices or outlets at the time of first deciding on the job they would do. In their childhood or adolescence, 79.4% of women said, they had dreamed of a certain occupation, but 84.9% of them had not studied or trained for it. The first job taken by about 40% of the respondents was not the one they had trained for. Women with a technical diploma at the basic, intermediate or even higher level tend to be working merely as "semi-skilled workers"; 28.2% of semi-skilled women workers in fact have such paper qualifications, which would normally entitle a worker to expect a higher grade.

Useful address Antoinette
 50, rue Edouard Pailleron
 75019 Paris

The same issue of "Antoinette" contains an item on the Peugeot 505 Turbo's audio feedback. A suave, pleasant voice - a woman's, of course - reminds you to "put on your seat belt" if you forget. If something goes seriously wrong, a voice says "stop at once - danger". This time it is an order, a matter of life and death, and this time it is a man's voice. An odd mixture of old-fashioned sexism and the very latest in technology!

Women's history

At the Collège d'Echanges Contemporains in Saint-Maximin, a well attended colloquium gave a chance to review progress in the field of feminist historical research.

About fifteen papers were read at this meeting, held to discuss current or recent research. Some of the titles, selected at random, whet the appetite: "the trousseau: a female culture?" by Agnès Fine; "women, power, history", by Michelle Perrot; "is women's history the history of their bodies?" by Catherine Fouquet. The proceedings of the colloquium are to be published by Editions Rivages, 10 rue Fortia, 13 001 Marseilles.

Useful address Collège d'Echanges Contemporains
 834470 Saint Maximin

Prostitution

"Le Nid", a movement in France that works to prevent prostitution, has drawn the attention of all women's organizations to the campaign against prostitution launched by the U.N. sub-committee on Human Rights. Pressure must now be brought to bear on Governments to give due consideration to the suggestions adopted by United Nations Economic and Social Council in May 1983.

Useful address Le Nid
 7 rue du Landy
 92110 Clichy

Building contractors

Two women electricians, two women carpenters and two women painters: this is the work force of a cooperative firm called L'Escabelle (the name means "three-legged stool") in Paris. Since it was set up in autumn 1982, the firm has completed about 50 contracts in Paris and the provinces. The pay by the end of the first year - the same for each woman worker - was 3,500 francs a month. The cooperative members take turns in doing the paperwork. They bought the machines they needed with a 130,000 franc loan (for five years at an interest rate of 12%) from the third bank they visited.

L'Escabelle has acquired the status of an "approved adult training agency", which means that it can give practical courses in carpentry lasting five full days - for both men and women. It plans to teach electrical work and painting as well in 1984.

Useful address L'Escabelle
74, rue de Villiers-de-L'Isle-Adam
75020 Paris

G E R M A N Y

Women engineers? Do they exist?

Since the universities opened their august portals to women early this century, women have not been prevented from taking advantage of the "privilege" of acquiring an academic training. Nevertheless, the status of women engineers invariably lags behind the times due to prejudice and discrimination. Women with an engineering career in industry or technology are always in the minority - about 1% of their professions. All these points were made clear in a recent symposium of women engineers, although they wound up their meeting by sounding an optimistic note. Woman engineers are firmly resolved not to accept the situation any more and to take matters in hand.

Of interest in this field is the work of the Verein Deutscher Ingenieure (the association of German engineers) and the Commission Frauen im Ingenieurberuf (committee on women in the engineering profession), as well as the cooperation being given by the Government and ministerial departments.

Useful	Informationen für die Frau	Der Minister für Arbeit, Gesundheit und
addresses	Deutscher Frauenrat	Soziales des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen
	Südstrasse 125	Leistelle Frauenpolitik
	<u>5300 Bonn 2</u>	Postfach 1134 - Horionplatz 1
		<u>4000 Dusseldorf</u>

A resolution by women doctors

On 21-27 November 1982 the Medical Women's International Association held its 18th international congress in Manila in the Philippines (report in May 1983). Following up on that congress, Deutscher Ärztinnenbund (the union of German women doctors) has forwarded a resolution to the German medical association calling for a ban on female circumcision, a practice that is requested for their daughters by some immigrant parents.

Useful address Deutscher Ärztinnenbund
President: Dr. Hedda Heuser
Brünsteinstrasse 13
8203 Oberaudorf

Single parent families

The German association for single mothers and fathers has brought out a book entitled "So schaffe ich es allein" (how I manage on my own), similar to the publication put out by the French Ministry for Women's Rights. Since no publisher was interested, the association itself has published this paperback, which contains advice, good addresses and a detailed analysis of the problems. West Germany has more than a million single parent families, in 16% of which it is the father who looks after the family. The average income of these families is inadequate: in the case of single mothers it is 48% of the national average. They also have more than their fair share of housing problems.

Useful address Verband Alleinstehender Mütter und Väter
 Kasernenstrasse 7b
 5300 Bonn 1

G R E E C E

Rape and violence

Kinisi Dimocratikon Gynekon - the Democratic women's movement - has set up a committee to study violence and rape and propose specific action by the movement in tackling the problems at stake.

Aware of the reluctance of people to speak freely and openly about their experiences, the committee started by investigating the attitudes of individuals and groups to violence and rape. Its preliminary findings were presented to the public at an all-day discussion in May 1983. This was followed by a second public debate on the role of the press and the media in projecting violence - sexual and other - by treating the aggressors as "stars" and the victims as passive recipients.

The movement has recently produced a carefully compiled and illustrated booklet on the subject, as part of its campaign to bring the issue to the notice of the general public and to win the support of other women's groups, a vital step at this stage.

Useful address Kinisi Dimocratikon Gynekon
 Solonos 128
 10681 Athens

Through new eyes

From 17 to 30 June 1984, it will be possible to see "Greece through New Eyes" in the course of a tour arranged by Enossi Gynekon Elladas (union of women of Greece).

"We shall be stopping at all those places where Greek women have been fighting against injustice, tyranny and foreign occupation and for equality, liberty and human dignity for centuries". English and French will be the languages used during the visit. Reservations should be made by 15 April 1984. The total cost is \$800, \$400 to be paid on booking.

Useful address Enossi Gynekon Elladas
 8 Ainianos St.
 Athens

Housewives' organizations: a landslide?

Only a year after reporting on the first Panhellenic Symposium organized by Syllogos Ellinidas Nikokyras (association of Greek housewives) and a few months after a dramatic appeal to the Prime Minister on the rising cost of living by Panellinia Enossi Nikokyron (the Panhellenic housewives' union), a third organization of housewives has come into being at the national level. Its name is Panellinia Organossi Nikokyras - the Panhellenic housewives' organization. Established early in 1983, this already has several local branches in Greater Athens and about 25 in towns throughout the country.

In addition to these three organizations, several other groups of housewives - each claiming to be autonomous - have been established in provincial towns. The best known are the housewives' associations in Aetolacarnania (Agrinio) and Thessalonica; all these work purely at the local level.

Obviously then, housewives are "in" - or should we say "out" (of the home) - and busily organizing to fight for their rights!

The main goal of the third and newest organization, Panellinia Organossi Nikokyras, is to work for the legal and social recognition of the vital role of the housewife in our society. It will be fighting for the establishment and implementation of the principle of equality within the family, the provision of social security benefits and pensions for housewives, their right to self-fulfilment and to express themselves in creative ways. To help with the latter aim, the organization is setting up an impressive programme of cultural activities.

The new group is anxious to contact other European organizations and groups sharing the same goals and interests.

Useful address Panellinia Organossi Nikokyras
 Vassileos Kostantinou 42
 11635 Athens

Language learning

At the Athens YWCA, "Women of Europe" is used in language courses. In this way, students do not just learn English, for example, but also find out what women are doing and thinking in Denmark or the Netherlands, Ireland or Italy. It is an interesting idea, for two reasons: on the one hand, language teachers in every country can use women's magazines and the journals put out by women's associations as text material; on the other, women's organizations and the press can send their periodical publications to language schools to publicize their activities and concerns.

Useful address YWCA
 Amerikis 11
 Athens 135

I R E L A N D

Women in history

Two recent attempts to restore to women their place in history come with the publication of Unmanageable Revolutionaries by Margaret Ward and Missing Pieces - Women in Irish History, written and published jointly by the Irish Feminist Information and the Women's Community Press. Both identify individuals and events demonstrating the important role of Irish women in shaping history, a role that history books have tended to ignore. The former book costs £IR 6.95 from Brandon Press, Dingle, Co. Kerry, and the latter is available from the Irish Feminist Information, 48 Fleet Street, Dublin 2.

Home births discouraged

A committee of doctors which had been asked by Ireland's biggest regional health board to consider the matter of growing demands for home births has decided that these should be actively discouraged. The decision is bad news for the Irish Home Birth Centre, which has been campaigning for the past two years for the reintroduction of a home maternity service.

The Dublin-based Eastern Health Board has set up a committee on home births in response to the wish of some parents to avoid the high-technology births that are an increasing feature of Irish hospitals.

The main problem is the absence of back-up services, including a flying squad emergency service and specially trained midwives. The Health Board thinks, however, that better back-up would encourage home births and so it is sticking to its hospital-only policy. It says the risks to the baby, if not the mother, are too great.

Useful	The Eastern Health Board	The Home Birth Centre of Ireland
addresses	1 James's Street	3 South Terrace, Inchicore
	<u>Dublin 8</u>	<u>Dublin 8</u>

Pressure group tackles no-divorce rule

As an all-party committee of public representatives sits down to solve the problems of marital breakdown arising from Ireland's no-divorce rule, the Divorce Action Group is stepping up its campaign for an end to the divorce ban.

Its latest broadside is the publication of a book entitled "Social Reform of Marriage in Ireland", which it presented in December to the Tanaiste (deputy premier) Dick Spring, whose party - the Labour Party - supports the introduction of divorce. The Group is also sponsoring a case against the Irish Government in relation to divorce now before the European Commission on Human Rights.

Useful address	Divorce Action Group
	P.O. Box 1357
	<u>Dublin 6</u>

College celebrates women's week

Women's Week at Trinity College, Dublin, has become an important event in an Irish feminist's year. Last year, in the usual packed programme of lectures and lunch-time talks, one of the most topical was given by the Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and a number of Greenham Common peace women. Support for the Greenham protest has grown steadily in Ireland and a number of demonstrations have taken place.

Useful addresses	Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament 16 Lower Liffey Street <u>Dublin 2</u>	Women for Disarmament 32 Dame Street <u>Dublin 2</u>
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Nurses' code bans strikes

Irish nurses have adopted a new code of ethics which rules out strike action in their fight for a cut in their working week to 35 hours. The new code, adopted at a recent annual conference, also states that nurses should follow their consciences on the morality of their actions in matters such as organ transplants, and that they should report colleagues and co-workers who endanger the safety of the individual.

Useful address	The Irish Nurses' Organization 20 Lower Leeson Street <u>Dublin 2</u>
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Changes sought in family planning rules

Irish doctors have called on Health Minister Barry Desmond to revise the family planning legislation introduced in 1979. AIM, the law reform pressure group, has canvassed opinion and finds that most women think the law has not fulfilled its original intention. Nearly a quarter say that information on contraception is not easily available and contraceptive supplies even less so. Nearly two thirds think that contraceptives should be available to anyone who wants them, not only to married people as the law now states. Many people are critical, too, of the present method of distribution by doctor's prescription only, even in the case of non-medical contraceptives. Nearly nine out of ten women think the State should pay, whatever the method.

Useful address	AIM Group Box 738, Ballsbridge <u>Dublin 4</u>
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Publishing Co-operative

On 1 November last, the Women's Community Publishing Co-operative started up business after a nine-month course on women and community publishing arranged by the Irish Feminist Information and with financial support from AnCo and the European Social Fund. The kind of book it will be publishing will be on social welfare, the family, legislation and regional history, as well as autobiographies and fiction. The Co-operative aims to encourage new writing, especially that of minorities. It is also publishing a set of 32 feminist post-cards in cartoon form commenting on Irish life.

Useful address	Women's Community Publishing Co-operative 48 Fleet Street <u>Dublin 2</u>
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I T A L Y

Understanding the future

At the 32nd National Congress of the Associazione Nazionale Donne Elettrici (ANDE) - the national association of women voters - two hundred delegates came to Palermo from throughout Italy to discuss the theme of "understanding the future". Elda Pucci, Mayor of Palermo and a member of ANDE, opened the meeting, and its national secretary, Beatrice Rangoni Machiavelli, introduced the debate. In this difficult period of transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society, she said, it is vital that we understand the socio-economic developments that are taking place so that we can be part of the changes and not stand by passively while others take the decisions. It is the decisions reached today that will determine the quality of life over the next twenty years; the essential need is "global thinking and then local action".

The Congress analyzed the new type of education needed in response to the changes taking place around us. An issue debated at length was the "challenge" to the economy and employment of communications and information technology, as well as its social implications, with emphasis on the role of European women as members of the work force and leaders of business and industry.

Senator Gabriella Ceccatelli, who heads the Christian Democrat women's movement, declared herself in sympathy with the Congress proposals and goals and stressed the role of Italian women as a force of change in their society.

Eleonora Masini, the president of the World Federation for Future Studies (and one of the two women members of the Club of Rome), explained how vital it is to understand the consequences of the choices made today and to build up our own vision of the future. "What we should be teaching our children," declared Eleonora Masini, "is how to live in a changing society." She argued that women are far more capable than men of adapting to changing times, something that will help them to play a growing role in the future.

Useful address Associazione Nazionale Donne Elettrici
 Via del Corso 262
 00187 Rome

Women and politics

"Donne e Politica", the bi-monthly journal of the women's section of the Italian Communist Party, is already 14 years old. In a recent issue, it asked its readers two questions. Is there any sense today in having a magazine for women only? If so, what should it be like?

After a good deal of discussion and controversy, one point won unanimous approval: a women's magazine makes sense only if it is a political and cultural "laboratory". This means that "Donne e Politica" will go on strengthening the ties between women and politics, taking a good hard look at events and highlighting the relationship between women's issues and politics.

Useful address Donne e Politica
 Piazza Grazioli 18
 00186 Rome

Communication

The Casa della Cultura - cultural centre - and the Commission of the European Communities have arranged a "day of thought" on the theme of "communication and women". Held at the press club, the debate gave a chance to hear the views of women parliamentarians, union delegates, the representatives of women's groups and the members of political parties.

How can women communicate with institutions? How can institutions communicate with women? Why are women's issues so rarely aired on the radio and television or in the press? Has the "women's problem" been solved? The figures show that things are very different in theory and in reality. Women are the prime victims of unemployment, they lack job skills, they are segregated. Compartmentalization of roles within the family and society is, combined with discrimination, still an obstacle to further headway by women.

The debate ranged over all types of communication - for example, between women and the working world, the third world, advertising and the environment.

In winding up the debate, Vera Squarcialupi said that the feature of this day's thought about communication and women was the spirit of solidarity with the women's movement, and the theme suggested yet another way of continuing the struggle. She stressed the fact that "communication" is not the province of the mass media of communication alone but is also expressed through general culture and in everyday life. "The time has come," declared Vera Squarcialupi, "for each one of us to accept his or her own responsibilities and not to try to leave our problems to other people". The women's movement should take a far closer interest in the laws that govern information to ensure that the media are more democratic. If women's problems are to become matters of general concern, what is needed is growing professionalism on the part of journalists and women.

In short, we must no longer rely on the makeshift and the unprepared, so that everyone, women just as much as men, attain freedom of thought and expression.

Useful address Casa della Cultura
Via Borgogna 3
202122 Milan

The governing committee of MO.I.CA (the Italian housewives' movement) has hit on the idea of working with the universities to launch a sociological and health survey on women in the home. The findings may be published in the summer.

Useful address MO.I.CA.
Piazzale Stazione 53
25122 Brescia

The O.I.K.I.A. movement (European inter-regional organization of independent groups of housewives) hopes to gain recognition for the calling of the "housewife". It has embarked upon a lengthy project of comparing the vocational aspects of domestic work and legislation on work.

Useful address O.I.K.I.A.
via Cefalonia 4/A
37126 Verona

Women and the media

The "Consulta Provinciale Femminile" - an advisory body representing women's associations in dealings with the Rome provincial authority - has brought out a report on women and the media that focusses on the position of women working in or consumers of the media. From this investigation, it appears that few women work in the world of information and women exert little influence there.

Useful address Consulta Provinciale Femminile
 via S. Eufemia 19
 Rome

Housewives

A federation of housewives' associations has just been set up in Rome under the name of "Federcasalinghe". Associated with Confconsumatori (the Italian consumers' confederation), this new body has embodied in its statutes its intention of working with housewives' associations in every country in the European Community.

The Federation has resolved to represent the moral, social, legal and economic interests of all those who devote themselves full time to the care of their families, men or women, whether by choice or by force of circumstances. Make housework more professional, obtain legal status for "family workers", arrange for Government-recognized training courses: all these are included in the Federation's objectives. Special attention will be devoted to what can be done within families for the mentally and physically handicapped, for drug addicts and alcoholics and for young people whose experience of life has been troubled because of lack of support from their own families.

Useful address Federcasalinghe
 Via di Monte Giordano 36
 00186 Rome

L U X E M B O U R G

A pioneer of feminism

For some time it seems that a growing number of feminist writers are looking back in the past and writing about the life and work of women living in the 19th or early 20th century who were ahead of their times.

Germaine Goetzinger, a Luxembourg professor of literature, has published a monograph on Louise Aston, a German feminist of outstanding dedication to the cause of women.

Born in 1814, Louise Aston began her career as a writer in Berlin in 1844, where she lived a life and independent life. In her first collection of poems, she pleaded for sexual freedom and was banished from the city as a consequence. She married a military doctor and died in Odessa in 1817.

In her book, Germaine Goetzinger outlines and analyzes a chapter in the history of 19th century feminism rather than acquainting us with Louise Aston's own literary work.

(Für die Selbstverwirklichung der Frau, Louise Aston, Fischer Taschenbuch 3743, "La femme dans la société")

United Nations Convention

Signed by the Luxembourg Government in Copenhagen in 1980, the United Nations Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women has not yet been ratified by the Grand Duchy Parliament.

Under the presidency of Adeline Pellegrino, the National Council of Luxembourg Women has now decided to make representations to the Foreign Minister, Colette Flesch, to speed up preparations for the passage of a bill of ratification.

Useful address Conseil National des Femmes Luxembourgeoises
Boîte Postale 160
2011 Luxembourg

N E T H E R L A N D S

Disarmament

The campaign for disarmament is continuing in the Netherlands. In Amsterdam, dozens of women mounted guard in front of the British Consulate to protest against the deployment of missiles in the United Kingdom.

Elsewhere, "Dutchwomen for peace groups" formed a human chain of 12,000 to 15,000 people around the Woensdrecht air base as a protest against the deployment of missiles in Europe.

Useful address Nederlandse vrouwenvredegroepen
Postbus 963
Amersfoort

Argentina

A group of Dutch women has been supporting the action of Argentine mothers since 1979 by forming the SAAM Committee - "Steun aan Argentijnse Moeders" (support for Argentine mothers). They feel that the problem has not been cleared up now that Argentina has a civilian government again. The ousting of the generals raised fresh hopes, but the question of "where have our loved ones gone?" is more anguished than ever.

Useful address SAAM Committee
Voorhoutstraat 4
Haarlem

UNITED KINGDOM

Near the top

Barbara Switzer, who started life as an apprentice engineer, has been appointed deputy secretary general to TASS, one of the leading engineering unions in Great Britain.

She is the first woman to attain such high office in this sector, traditionally a male preserve. Elected to the executive committee of TASS in 1974, she began working for the union full time in 1976. She has also been awarded the Trades Union Congress Women's Gold Badge for services rendered to the union movement.

Useful address TASS
 Onslow Hall, Little Green
 Richmond, Surrey

Women in business

There is a saying that "anyone who can run a home can run a business", and women in Britain are demonstrating this in increasing numbers.

Reporting on the comparatively recent introduction of several successful businesswomen's awards such as "Businesswoman of the Year" and "Women Mean Business", the Financial Times has given examples of women who, using their culinary or fashion skills, have created businesses worth £3 million and £100,000 a year.

Such examples should be an encouragement to women taking a specifically designed business training course in Wales to help them set up in business on their own. Said to be the first such course in Europe, it has been started by the Mid-Wales Development Board with a £35,000 grant from the Community Social Fund and will be staffed entirely by women.

Useful address The Mid-Wales Development Board
 Ladywell House, Newtown
 Powyth SY16 1JB, Wales

Welfare rights

On 21 November 1983, new regulations came into force to comply with the 1978 EC directive regarding equal treatment for men and women in social security. Married women are now able to claim several benefits denied them before, such as the family income supplement and allowances for dependents; a man and a woman living together, whether or not they are married, will be able to choose which one will claim supplementary benefit for the couple.

RESEARCH, MEETINGS AND BOOKS

....AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR! The start of the year is the time for a good diary. The Irish Women's Diary and Guide Book wryly quotes George Orwell's catchphrase from his book "1984": "Big Brother is Watching You!". Apart from the pages for entering the details of one's everyday life, the diary (£IR.2.75) lists courses and discussion groups of interest to women, useful addresses, suggested books (and the bookshops that sell them), health information, etc. The Irish Feminist Information Publications Ltd., 48 Fleet Street, Dublin 2.

Produced by "les Griffonnes", a similar diary published in France is Agenda femmes 1984, this time matched by a publication entitled "une autre histoire" ("that's another story") with accounts of real-life experience - what it was like to work in a mine, for instance, or to be an American woman painter in Paris early in the century or a 4-year-old German girl under National Socialism. An interesting project, created in cooperation with "Mémoires et Histoires quotidiennes", 161 rue de Belleville, 75019 Paris. The diary is published by Maspero, 1 place Paul-Painlevé, 7505 Paris.

The Agenda de la Femme suisse - Swiss woman's diary - comes in a flaming red cover and includes useful addresses and a bibliography. The history recounted here is the history of women's bodies, illustrated by original drawings and texts with a delightful sense of humour. L'Agenda de la Femme suisse, case postale 9, 1223 Cologny-Geneva.

Stavo malissimo ("I was in a really bad way"), by Anna Del Bo Boffino, brings together accounts of three women - a student, a housewife and a young rebel - who tried to overcome their anxieties through lengthy, expensive and gruelling psychoanalytical treatment and through travel to explore the reasons for their unhappiness. How did this quest affect their inner feelings and their relationships with the everyday world outside? The author tells us their stories: three women "in a bad way" because of the rapidly changing society, customs and relationships around them and their own ambivalent, confused and contradictory feelings. All three shed light on the anxieties, conflict and phobias which have silently crept into many women's lives. Edizioni Rizzoli, Via A. Rizzoli 2, 20132 Milan.

Det ufaerdige demokrati - Kvinder i nordisk politik (the incomplete democracy - women in politics in the Nordic countries) is the outcome of fruitful cooperation among several Scandinavian women members of a joint research group whose work has been financed by the Nordic Council. Their conclusion is unanimous: the world of politics is still a man's world. The higher you go up the ladder of power the fewer women you meet. This is why "democracy is incomplete", in turn raising the question: can women change the content and form of politics? Published by Nordisk Ministerråd, Oslo.

Muher ("woman") is a magazine produced by and for the women of Cape Verde. Now a republic, Cape Verde was for a long time a Portuguese overseas territory. The magazine, published by the Organização das Mulheres de Cabo Verde (the women's organization of Cape Verde), highlights the role of women in African society before colonialism. It describes the discrimination introduced by foreign domination once women's work ceased to be seen as productive and women themselves became chattels. It is very revealing about the role played by women in the transformation of African society and in the interlinks between old traditions and new values. Published by OMCV, CP 22, Praia, Republic of Cape Verde.

Nouvelles technologies et emploi des femmes: the proceedings of the colloquium on "new technology and women's employment" in October 1981 have now been published. It is a record of papers and discussions at a high level that are as topical today as when they were spoken. Published by the Commission du Travail des Femmes, Ministère du Travail, 51-53 rue Belliard, 1040 Brussels.

Cambiare la Città. "Women and the home, towns and town planning in society" was the subject of a national conference of Socialist women in Ravenna last March. A book has recently been published on its theme of "changing our towns". Its interesting introduction is by Elena Marinucci, head of the Italian Socialist Party's section for women's affairs, and it contains an analysis from the architectural, technical and legislative viewpoints. Periodical publication: Sezione Propaganda e Comunicazione, PSI, Via del Corso 476, 00175 Roma.

Mukti is a quarterly magazine for Asian women which made its appearance on the newstands in August 1983. In six languages, Mukti is to be a forum in which Asian women can tell their own stories, create their own image, share in their struggles and rejoice in each other's victories, without their views being watered down, camouflaged or told from a racist viewpoint. Mukti, 213 Eversholt Street, London NW1.

Learning Liberation: Women's Response to Men's Education by Jane Thompson is one of a series edited by Jo Campling of Radical Forum in Adult Education. It argues that in democracies such as Great Britain, Sweden and the U.S. education reflects economic interests and patriarchal attitudes that reinforce class and sex divisions, to the detriment of women. It calls for a radical change in the education of women to promote the aim of equality. Published by Croom Helm, £6.95.

Frauen in Familie, Beruf und Gesellschaft is an updated version of an existing report on the subject of women in the family, employment and society. It cites information specifically on women drawn from official statistics relating to various employment sectors. W. Kohlhammer Verlag, Phillip-Reisstrasse 3, 6500 Mainz 42, 1983 edition. DM.8.90.

Guide des droits du travail. The French Ministry for Women's Rights has brought out a guide to the rights of working women, explaining in plain words a person's legal rights in a given occupation and furnishing the information to fuel the fight for equal opportunities for women. Centre National d'Information sur les Droits des Femmes, La Documentation française, Ministère des Droits de la Femme, 1983 edition, B.P. 470-08, 75366, Paris Cedex 08.

Seduta su un vulcano spento - "sitting on an extinct volcano" - is a collection of letters to an imaginary correspondent in which Paola Salvoni Ballerini, a housewife and mother of two, describes and criticizes aspects of her everyday life. Her starting point is love and the shedding of all hate and bitterness. Her aspiration is to persuade men to change the way they behave towards women and release them from the servitude that has lasted so many centuries. Published by La Ginestra, Piazza della Repubblica 4, 50123 Florence.

La mise à nu is an inside account of strikes by women workers at Bekaert-Cockerill and Concord Lighting, which exposed the discriminatory practices still widespread due to de facto complicity between employers and unions and even the Government. The authors of this account (the title means "laying bare") feel that the campaign is strengthening the position of women in their overall struggle for liberation; this is an outburst of democratic resistance in an atmosphere polluted by wheeling-and-dealing and aggravated by the recession.

Feminismus, Inspektion der Herrenkultur (feminism, a critique of male culture) outlines the position of women in different sectors of society. It also aims to give a definition of feminism and the resources needed in putting the ideal into practice. Pub. by Suhrkamp, n° 1192.

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