

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

NETWORKS AND WORKING GROUPS

The network following the application of directives relating to equality met on 24 April. Network members were informed of the latest activities concerning the equality initiatives carried out by the Commission (particularly the proposal for a directive on maternity rights and the question of night work).

The resolution on the protection of women's and men's dignity at work, which was proposed by the Irish Presidency and should be adopted by the Council of Social Affairs on 25 May, was also discussed.

The network reported on its work programme which includes the preparation of a legal collection of Community provisions on equality, job classifications and the sanctions and remedies to be introduced to ensure that laws relating to equality are applied.

The network examined the evaluation report on the implementation of the Medium Term Community Programme on equal opportunities (1986-1990) and gave its opinion on the forthcoming Action Programme (1991-1995) currently being prepared. In this connection, the network identified three priorities for the next five years: to clarify existing concepts and laws, guarantee the practical application of laws on equality and develop positive actions.

(Coordinator: Ferdinand von Prondzynski, University of Dublin, Trinity College, IRL-Dublin 2).

The Working Group on vocational training for women (the Working Group of the IRIS network) met on 30 April. Made up of national representatives of the ministries responsible for vocational training and for equal opportunities, the Working Group reported on the

WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

NEWS

ON THE EQUALITY POLICY
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Dear Readers,

The upheavals in Eastern Europe have provided us with the opportunity of establishing more frequent and solid contacts with women in Central and Eastern Europe. The GDR, Poland and Hungary have already produced women's forums and associations which intend to take advantage of the economic and political reforms in their countries in an attempt to meet their social demands.

A sign of the times: the twelve Ministers of Social Affairs met with their Polish and Hungarian counterparts at the end of April.

In addition to the efforts by the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights, the Commission Representation in Bonn, and the cultural attachés from Eastern European embassies, we are trying to make our publications better known beyond the borders of the Twelve and to enrich our "Women of Europe" file. Thus, we hope to be able to organise visits in the near future, and receive women's representatives of socio-professional circles who will describe the changes these countries are undergoing.

In the meantime, at the invitation of the Deutscher Frauenrat, the Service was able to establish initial contacts with women in the GDR at a seminar organised in the FRG from 27-29 April last.

Once we have increased these contacts, we intend to publish "Women of Europe Supplements" which will reflect the situation of women in several Eastern European countries.

Our heading "Central and Eastern Europe" in our "Women of Europe" news letter will continue to provide specific information on women in these countries.

Fausta Deshayes La Valle

implementation in the Member States, of the Recommendation on vocational training for women (24.11.87). It was informed of the latest developments in the activities of the IRIS network: seminars, national evaluation meetings to assess vocational training for women, inter-programme exchange visits, partnerships and sponsorships, publications, etc.

The Working Group examined the new applicant programmes to be selected by the Commission of the European Communities. There are already more than 200 programmes in the IRIS network. This latest selection will mean a further increase of programmes, bringing it to some 250 members.

The Working Group also heard from the coordinator of the network on **Diversification of Vocational Choices for Young Women and Women**, who outlined areas of possible collaboration and common action.

Finally, the Working Group discussed and gave its support to the proposed Third Action Programme on Equal Opportunities.

Coordination: IRIS Unit, CREW, 38 rue Stévin, B-1040 Brussels.

STUDIES

The Equal Opportunities Unit is relaunching the "feminist studies" dossier. Until now, this work was incorporated into the work programme of the network on equal opportunities for boys and girls in education. From now on, it will form a separate dossier. Its work programme will include collaboration with the Council of Europe on these questions, the organisation of seminars and the examination of possible ways of developing data banks to collate information on feminist studies (this work was started by the Feminist Research and Information Group — GRIF).

Collaboration with the European University Institute in Florence is also planned, with the aim of implementing a European Parliament recommendation on promoting research on women and their representation in the academic world.

Contact: Eva Eberhart, Equal Opportunities Unit.

3rd ACTION PROGRAMME ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Advisory Committee for Equal Opportunities will meet on 28 and 29 May. The role of information in launching and supporting the Third Action Programme on Equal Opportunities (1991-1995) is one of the points for discussion. Given the reduced budgetary and staffing resources, it is vital to establish links and make a common effort to publicise this programme.

The meeting, organised by the Equal Opportunities Unit and the Women's Information Service, will also be attended by press officers from the national equality commissions and officials responsible for providing information relating to women in the Commission's press and information offices in the Member States.

Equal Opportunities Unit, Directorate General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels. Tel.: (32 2) 235 22 64. Telex: 21877 COMEU.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Women farmers, health and safety: this was the theme of the European Women Farmers' Seminar (Loenen, the Netherlands, 24-28 April), which is organised every year by the women's section of the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations in the EC (COPA) in collaboration with, and the support of, the Commission's Women's Information Service. This year, the "Centrale van Plattelandsvrouwenorganisaties" (Netherlands) also helped organise the event.

Attended by numerous women farmers and representatives of women's agricultural organisations, the seminar concentrated on three themes: health and safety conditions for women farmers (a major concern because of the "invisible" nature of

women farmers); their legal status (review of directive 86/613 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women who are self-employed including those in agriculture too); pregnancy and maternity rights; the necessary conditions for the achievement of equal opportunities (Third Action Programme on equality, Community information policy on equality and training).

At the close of the seminar a series of recommendations on these three themes were adopted. Participants also called on professional agricultural organisations to join forces and play an active part in the "European Women's Lobby" currently being organised.

Information: COPA, 23-25 rue de la Science, B-1040 Brussels.

The brochure on **Equal rights, equal opportunities: the European Community and women** is now available in the nine official Community languages. It describes European initiatives aimed at promoting equality between men and women and changes in the status of women in the European Community. A "lexicon" plus national and Community addresses form a practical addition to this brochure, which is published by the Women's Information Service of the Commission of the European Communities.

The Women's Information Service took part in the first briefing organised by the "Deutscher Frauenrat" (the National Women's Council) (FRG), to establish contacts with women from East Germany. Held from 27-29 April, the seminar was entitled **The wall is gone. What now?** It attracted East German representatives of women's organisations, the women's press, trade unions and research associations. Ideas and demands were exchanged with the members of "Deutscher Frauenrat", which itself consists of forty member associations representing more than 10 million women in the FRG. The Minister for inter-German Affairs, Dr Dorothee Wilms, welcomed the participants at the start of the seminar.

Information: Deutscher Frauenrat, Simrockstrasse, 5, D-5300 Bonn 1. Tel: (49.228) 22.30.08.

Women in Hungary: this will be the topic of a forthcoming supplement to the **Women of Europe newsletter**. Planned for this autumn and produced by Eva Eberhart, it will provide information on the general political situation of women in Hungary, their position on the labour market and in relation to the family, as well as a comparison of existing equality laws in Hungary and the European Community.

Women's Information Service, Directorate General for Information, Communications and Culture, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.

WOMEN'S UNEMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

To combat long-term unemployment and exclusion from society, it is important that unemployed women should have easier and improved access to Community programmes.

The **IRIS** network, which aims to improve women's access to vocational training, only has as members vocational training programmes for women. This obviously touches a large number of unemployed women. **IRIS** does not, however, include pre-training programmes which have no links with qualifying training courses. On the other hand the **ERGO** programme (Community programme to combat long-term unemployment), accessible to all the unemployed, is not specifically geared to unemployed women. Its aim is to heighten the awareness of the long-term unemployed and to keep them informed through seminars, European-level meetings and exchanges and publications.

As women represent about 50% of the long-term unemployed (this percentage is even higher in certain re-

... gions), they constitute the majority of the group covered by the **ERGO** programme. This is why these two Community programmes decided to strengthen their collaboration. Pre-training programmes for women which cannot join the **IRIS** network should benefit from information about other programmes and in particular take part in the activities carried out by **ERGO** (see below).

This collaboration is part of **IRIS**'s objective to make other Community programmes aware of the "women" dimension.

Contacts: Michèle Teirlinck and Else van Winckel, Equal Opportunities Unit, or Annie Boudier — ERGO.

LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT

The **ERGO** Community Action Programme organised a conference in Dublin (Ireland) on 25-26 April, focusing on the "response to the challenge of long-term unemployment in the 90s". In his opening speech, Mr Bertie Ahern, Irish Minister of Labour and current President of the European Council of Social Affairs, reaffirmed that combatting long-term unemployment was, and remains, the first priority of the Irish Presidency.

He presented the main ideas of the draft resolution which he hoped to see adopted by the end of May by the Council of Social Affairs Ministers. These include training measures to prevent long-term unemployment, initiatives to encourage employers to participate in combating unemployment and the establishment of a network of pilot projects financed by the European Commission in order to carry out exchanges on "good practice" between the Member States.

The seminar stressed the need for a variety of measures and actions to be taken in order to meet the challenge represented by the large number of long-term unemployed during this decade.

It was necessary to provide counselling, information and guidance services for the unemployed (how to survive when unemployed for more than one year, how to re-enter the labour market).

Vocational training adapted to the needs of the long-term unemployed should be developed, taking account of basic qualifications and new skills required because of changes in the labour market, in order to lift the threat of unemployment for those in precarious jobs (which mainly affects women). Although a macro-economic approach is vital, participants highlighted the fact that policies should be defined and action implemented at a local level and be fully integrated into local employment development. The seminar also emphasized the need for an integrated approach, taking account of the social, family and economic position of the unemployed (childcare, measures aimed at sharing family and professional responsibilities, specific infrastructures for single women, migrant workers and the disabled).

Finally, participants stressed the importance of the social partners, while the **ERGO** team expressed the hope that there would be a more positive response from employers.

Information: ERGO, CEI Consultants Ltd. 205 rue Belliard, B-1040 Brussels. Tel: (32.2) 230.60.68.

WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

On 15 December 1989, the European Community and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) signed, for the fourth time, the convention which gives the framework for their cooperation promoting and speeding up the economic, cultural and social development of the ACP countries and consolidating and diversifying their relations in a spirit of solidarity and mutual interest.

The Convention involves 69 ACP countries and the 12 Member States of the European Community and shall last for 10 years (with a renewable financial protocol lasting 5 years).

The Lomé IV Convention lays down the action plan on "Women and development" in the context of cooperation with the ACP countries. It describes the extensive integration of the various roles of women in development.

The convention's approach has evolved from total silence on this subject (Lomé II) to highlighting the importance of women in the socio-cultural dimension (Lomé III). Lomé IV now stresses their considerable contribution to economic development and the resulting need to involve them in development programmes.

In this connection, the Commission of the European Communities has prepared a work programme describing the main aspects of the "Women and development" chapter of the Convention, and suggesting appropriate ways of implementing it. It will be submitted to the Council of Development Ministers on 29 May. The next issue of the **Women of Europe Newsletter** will give the latest developments on this subject.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

At its plenary session in Strasbourg from 2 to 7 April, the Parliament adopted the report drawn up by Anna Catasta (Communist, Italy) concerning a directive laying down minimum safety standards for working on VDUs. The report asks in particular that the directive should apply to all VDU workers, that pregnant women should be allocated other work with equal pay and functions and that VDU workers should be able to take frequent breaks during work and have their eyesight examined by recognised opticians.

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The Committee on Women's Rights approved by a large majority the draft report submitted by Nel Van Dijk (Greens, The Netherlands) on "Women, their health and

...
 the exercising of medical and paramedical professions" during their meeting on 18-19 April. The report stresses in particular the need for improvements for women working in this sector: working conditions (timetables, measures enabling family and professional life to be reconciled, health and safety at work, part-time work and temporary contracts), fair representation of women among general practitioners and specialists, as well as on management bodies, advisory bodies and councils.

Although the position of women as users of health care has improved, they are still exposed to the danger of overconsumption of medicines and, among other things, of tranquillisers. The report asks the Commission to lay down criteria concerning the reliability and safety of certain hormone preparations. Their report should be adopted at the plenary session of the Parliament in Strasbourg.

Marie-Claude Vayssade (Soc. France) submitted a draft opinion for the Budget Committee on the revision of financial perspectives. Five priorities were proposed: the implementation of the Third Community Action Programme on Equal Opportunities; the establishment of specific budget lines for women in the Structural Funds; measures to promote childcare facilities; increase in resources for information purposes (including a specific budget line for the European Women's Lobby) and for the Commission and Parliament staff who deal with "women's" issues.

The draft opinion was adopted.

The Committee on Women's Rights also held a debate with representatives of the Commission of the European Communities and with Mr Frank Boddendijck, President of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities, on the proposed Third Action Programme on Equal Opportunities. The Committee emphasized the need to define very precise, quantifiable objectives, to collect clear statistics and to promote more extensively information on women and their rights.

Next meeting of the Committee: 22-23 May in Brussels.

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

The quality of vocational training for women, now and in the future, Utrecht, (the Netherlands) 31 May and 1 June. First national seminar in 1990 organised in the context of the IRIS network. Three other national IRIS seminars will be organised this year: in France (see below), Luxembourg (in September) and Belgium (in October). A trans-national seminar for these four countries will close the round of seminars, and will be held in Brussels in October.

Information: IRIS Unit, CREW, 38 rue Stévin, B-1040 Brussels, or CIBB, Postbus 1585, NL-5200 BP 's - Hertogenbosch, Tel: (31.73) 12.40.11.

Training young people in business and local development, Limerick (Ireland), 5-8 June. A conference organised by the PETRA programme (Community Action Programme on vocational training for young people and preparation for adult and professional life). The conference will deal with three topics: the development of skills/expertise in entrepreneurial spirit; training for small and medium-sized enterprises and their role in local development; training in new technologies for local economic development.

Information: Youth Exchange Bureau, Armitage House, 10 Lower Hatch Street, IRL - Dublin 2. Tel: (353.1) 61.87.38.

Women managers in the private sector, Athens, 11 June. Symposium organised by the Group of enterprise consultants for the promotion of positive action in industry.

Information: Yannis Piperoglou, ST-EDIMA, Symvouloi Epichiriseon, Michalakopoulou 29, GR - 11528, Athens. Tel: (30.1) 724.55.41.

Vocational training for women: a strategic tool for business and social challenge, Clermont-Ferrand (France), 28-29 June. Second national IRIS seminar which will deal with equality in training, the position of women in in-service training, training for enterprise development and women and setting up businesses.

Information: IRIS Unit Brussels, or RACINE, 211 av. Jean Jaurès, F-75019 Paris. Tel: (33.1) 42.40.27.28.

PUBLICATIONS

Infrastructures and women's employment (V/174/90-FR): the French version of the study on infrastructures and their impact on women's participation in the labour market. School timetables, services (post offices, banks, shops, social services), transport, measures facilitating the sharing of family responsibilities are covered and recommendations are made.

Still available

Enterprise creation by women: motivations, situation and prospects (V/1634/87): available in French and English.

Women setting up businesses in Europe: immigrant and minority women in France, Great Britain, Italy, Portugal and the FRG (V/1871/88): available in French and English.

To obtain these publications, contact the Equal Opportunities Unit, Directorate General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.

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