

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Advisory Committee for Equal Opportunities met on 28-29 May. This Committee was created to help the Commission with drawing up and implementing its equality policy between men and women. It is composed of representatives from the national committees or bodies responsible for equal opportunities, the two sides of industry and observers from the Council of Europe and International Labour Office (ILO).

After hearing Claire Mandouze, Head of the Equal Opportunities Unit, broach the main guidelines of the Community's Third Equality Action Programme (1991-95), the national representatives presented the priorities of their respective programmes. The Committee then heard a report by a representative of the European Social Fund (ESF) on the planned Community initiative programme for women financed primarily by the ESF. A decision of principle was taken by the European Commission in early May. The programme itself is now being finalised and should be adopted by the Commission this summer.

The latest figures on ESF financing show that the number of women beneficiaries has increased slightly. Women accounted for 39% of ESF beneficiaries in 1987, 40% in 1988 and 41.3% in 1989.

The Equal Opportunities Unit seized the occasion to announce the forthcoming publication of an ESF User's Guide and the organisation of a series of national information seminars on this subject.

For better information

The Committee devoted the second day of its meeting to equal opportunities information strategies for the next few years. For this, the Committee brought together the press offices of the equal opportunities committees and the European Commission's

WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

NEWS
ON THE EQUALITY POLICY
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Dear Readers,

Information on equal opportunities for men and women was the focus of debate at the last meeting of the Advisory Committee for Equal Opportunities.

I have always thought that information is a form of positive action in itself. Statements made at the meeting confirmed this opinion.

Looking back at our information efforts in this area over the past 10-12 years, I can say we have won a difficult wager - within the bounds of budgetary limits and administrative constraints. The main reason for this success lies in the very purpose of our message. The equal opportunities policy is one of the Community policies that can best show how the European Community is a project for change, a project for a more equitable society, one of greater solidarity, in which people's rights are safeguarded and respected and all human resources are used. It is a strong message.

An information policy must stress these aspects, present all achievements, and at the same time strive to change mentalities so as to narrow the gap that still exists between the changing law and the weight of traditions and stereotypes that influence behaviour.

Our aim today is to prepare women for the challenges of 1992. Now more than ever, information has the value of positive action in helping women be more competitive on the job market. As soon as the Community's Third Action Programme for Equal Opportunities is adopted (at the end 1990), it will be at the heart of our message. We hope to mobilise all of the forces involved to spread the word and make the programme known to a wide public.

Fausta Deshormes La Valle

press and information offices in the twelve Member States.

Fausta Deshormes, Head of the Commission's Women's Information Service, stressed the importance of women's participation in changing mentalities and raising the awareness of all concerned. She put special emphasis on the need to coordinate information on women and the launching of the campaign for the Third Action Programme. A round table discussion among the national delegations revealed substantial differences in the structures and budgets allocated for equal opportunities information and enabled the meeting to better assess existing resources and look at how these can be best coordinated to reach optimal potential. As Claire Mandouze pointed out, this also tied in with the "mainstreaming" goal of the Third Action Programme. The Committee concluded that it must continue its exchanges with all parties involved to influence decision-makers and the press more effectively.

NETWORK NEWS

The Expert Network on **local employment initiatives (LEIs) for women** met on 3 May. It was briefed on the progress made in the evaluation of LEIs currently underway. The outcome of this evaluation should be published this summer and will be used to re-define future priorities. The network also heard a report on the management of the grants scheme for business start-ups by women, according to which more than 100 projects have already been selected and financed by the Commission since the beginning of 1990.

The network members then took stock of their work in the Member States. As the 1990 budget was increased, the network decided to conduct major promotional activities in order to spread the word about the possibilities of obtaining Community grants and hopefully increase the number of applicants. As part of this, the network will publish an advertising sheet, called "Contact 91", to be widely distributed, and aimed at broadening links between women's businesses within the European Community.

A pilot edition of a network newsletter is currently under discussion.

Finally, as for the future, the network expressed its hope that the Commission would continue to support and encourage the creation and management of businesses by women. Certain key aspects were singled out including more training (before setting

up companies and business management courses) and measures to facilitate access for women to training that will give them qualifications in this sector; cooperation with other Community networks; and the creation of and support for local and regional information and advising centres for women. The European Commission was asked to encourage the development of LEIs in rural areas and undertake prospective regional studies on sectors with employment prospects, whilst the Member States should focus on encouraging and facilitating partnerships and exchanges between businesses.

Coordinator: Caroline Turner, Dim Chrissoulidi 3, Panorama, GR-Thessaloniki.

The Steering Committee for Equal Opportunities in Broadcasting had a busy agenda for its 15 May meeting. Its members were informed of new EC developments in this area but above all discussed their findings based on questionnaires sent out to television stations.

On the whole, the Committee found a positive approach to equality, accompanied by concrete measures that should lead to conclusive results in the coming years. Despite the crises sweeping some stations, European backing remains very useful.

The Committee decided to produce a film on the current situation and progress made in the area of equal opportunities in television. This film may be shown at the November conference in Athens on women and the media jointly organised by the European Commission and the European Broadcasting Union.

Looking at future prospects in the area of communications, the Committee would like to preserve today's achievements and ensure equality becomes part of the sector's policy. It is important to both improve the image of women on television and increase their presence in decision-making bodies.

Coordinator: Margaret Gallagher, 7 rue du Docteur Roux, F-75015 Paris.

The Equal Opportunities Unit participated in the international seminar on **home work** that was held on 7-10 May by IRENE, an international research centre on restructuring in industry and the services, based in the Netherlands. The aims of the seminar were to analyse the status of homeworkers in the different Member States and various non-EC States and examine proposals to regulate this type of work. The participants welcomed the proposal

by the International Labour Office (ILO) to hold an experts meeting on this subject in October. This will take the form of a tripartite meeting of representatives of employers, trade unions and governments. It will tackle the thorny question of defining this type of work, the differences between countries that regulate this work and those that do not and the application of legislation in this domain.

Information: Dr. Pauline Conroy Jackson, Equal Opportunities Unit.

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

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Nike Prize 1990: More than 20 television networks in the European Community have announced their intention to participate in the 1990 edition of the **Nike Prize**. The Nike Prize is a European Commission response to a European Parliament's request to encourage the production and programming of broadcasts that shed new light on the situation and place of women in Europe.

The participating networks will compete in one, two or three categories of broadcasts: documentaries; fiction/entertainment; and a special category for children or teenagers that is linked to sexual equality.

The European Commission has just named the members of the European Jury, chosen from political, academic and cultural circles. The Jury will be subdivided into three panels corresponding to the three categories being judged. Geneviève Guicheny, member of France's Higher Audio-visual Board, will head the jury for the documentaries category; Tonia Marketaki, a Greek producer, will head the jury for the fiction category; and Anna Home, Chairwoman of the European Broadcasting Union's subcommittee for programmes for children and teenagers, will head the jury for the third category. The European Commission will encourage the diffusion of award winning programmes to promote a change in public opinion and attitudes towards women in Europe.

The award ceremony will take place in Athens on 9 November closing a major conference on the image and

place of women in broadcasting (see above).

Non-traditional professions for women: restaurant owners and chefs: The Women's Information Service has joined forces with the French women chefs Association française des restauratrices-cuisinières (ARC) to reward the talents of women chefs and encourage young women to turn to traditionally male trades, as its equal opportunities policy demands. ARC, which was founded a few years ago when a small number of women chefs were refused membership to the association *Maîtres Cuisiniers de France*, awarded its first trophy to "Mother Chefs" this year.

The ceremony was held in Vichy, France, on 24 April. The Women's Information Service participated in this initiative by offering an EC prize to the youngest finalist, Barbara Tremelet from Trevoux (France), trainee of the catering school at Saint-Chamond.

The Women's Information Service will publish a **Supplement to Women of Europe on Childcare**. Childcare is critical for many families in the European Community where all too often the burden of childcare falls primarily on women. The supplement, based on the work of the network of experts on childcare, will be published in the autumn.

Women's Information Service, Directorate-General for Information, Communication and Culture, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL

MORE DIGNITY AT WORK

European Community employment and social affairs Ministers meeting on 29 May, unanimously condemned sexual harassment, which they considered as unac...

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ceptable, an intolerable violation of a worker's dignity and contrary to the principle of equal treatment as enshrined in articles 3, 4 and 5 of Directive 76/207/EEC.

The resolution on sexual harassment, an initiative of the Irish Presidency, gave Ministers a chance to recognise, for the first time, that sexual harassment is a serious problem for many working women and an obstacle to their integration in the world of work. Sexual harassment is defined as "conduct of a sexual nature, or other conduct based on sex, affecting the dignity of women and men at work, including conduct of superiors and colleagues, constitutes an intolerable violation of the dignity of workers or trainees".

The Council of Ministers said that any behaviour of this type is unacceptable, especially if it is unwanted, unreasonable and offensive to the recipient or when such behaviour creates a climate of intimidation, hostility or humiliation.

More information

In its resolution, the Council of Ministers urged the Member States to launch information and awareness campaigns aimed at employers and workers to put an end to sexual harassment and to remind employers that it is their responsibility to make sure that the working environment is free of sexual harassment and reprisals against those who wish to come forward with evidence to back a complaint. The Member States were also asked to implement appropriate positive action schemes in the public sector.

The Commission was also urged to continue its information and awareness-raising efforts with employers and trade unions and extend them to government bodies and the courts.

For a code of good conduct

The Council asked the European Commission to draw up by 1 July 1991 a code of good conduct concerning the dignity of women and men at work. This code should be drawn up in cooperation with employers and trade unions and after consultation with the Member States and national equality authorities. It should lay down guidelines based on the examples and experiences of the Member States in implementing and pursuing positive action measures aimed at creating a working environment that is respectful of human dignity.

DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

The Council of Ministers responsible for development adopted on 29 May the work programme for women and development put forward by the European Commission. This programme describes how the articles in Lomé IV on the role of women in development are to be enforced (see **Women of Europe Newsletter No. 9**). The Development Council asked the Commission to complete its action programme as quickly as possible by developing similar programmes to cover the EC's cooperation with the countries of Asia, Latin America and the Mediterranean basin.

The Council approved the fact that the new Lomé convention attaches greater importance to the economic role of women and recognises their substantial contributions to development. The convention pays particular attention to women's access to "land, labour, advanced technology, credit and cooperative organisations and appropriate technology aimed at alleviating the arduous nature of their tasks". Their crucial roles in the family, in health, diet and hygiene, as well as their roles in managing natural resources and protecting the environment, are also acknowledged.

Like the Commission, the Council insisted on the need to give women the means to carry out these roles effectively, to enable them to exercise greater independence and to give them the structures allowing them to benefit from their involvement in development.

The Council urged the Commission and Member States to take practical measures to continue and step up their "women and development" activities by developing necessary management schemes backed up by sufficient human and other resources.

Recognising the importance of cooperation between the Member States and the Commission in this field, the Council expressed its satisfaction with the Commission's plans to hold a meeting of national experts on women and development in September 1990.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

At its plenary session of 16 May, held in Strasbourg, the European Parliament finally approved the Van Dijk report on **women and health** (Nel Van Dijk, Greens, the Netherlands). The demands addressed to the Commission in the Parliament's resolution centred on four main points: the position of women working in health-care (possible gaps in the male/female equality directives as regards the health-related liberal professions, improvement of living and working conditions for women in the care sector and information campaigns aimed at the higher ranks of the medical professions); infrastructures (for women of a certain age, childcare for women undergoing treatment); the risks and side effects of using pharmaceuticals (regulation of trials before commercial release; limitations of prescriptions for hormonal products); and violation of the individual's physical integrity (to combat sexual harassment of health care professionals and patients).

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The Parliamentary Committee on Women's Rights, meeting on 22-23 May, was given a provisional assessment by representatives of the European Commission of the various activities under the first two Equal Opportunities Action Programmes. The consensus was that there should be increased coordination of action and more cooperation among the relevant institutions. Goals must also be defined more precisely to achieve a stronger equal opportunities policy under the Third Action programme. The Commission representatives announced the possibility of a large budget in the near future, to promote equal opportunities, in the framework of the reform of the structural funds.

The Committee then discussed the draft report on a **European prize for women**, presented by Carmen Llorca Villaplana (EPP, Spain), and decided to review the proposal after it has been modified to take account of remarks made during the discussion. Maire Geoghegan-Quinn, Irish Minister for European Affairs, invited to the meeting, gave a rundown of the

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contribution made by the Irish Council Presidency of the Council (just six months of 1990) to improve equal opportunities. She reminded the committee of the important Dublin conference on women and the Single Market and the conclusions and proposals made to the Commission, especially those concerning the growth of "atypical jobs", male/female segregation on the labour market and the higher risks run by women in the peripheral regions. The Irish presidency put particular emphasis on the role of the educational system — it had presented in January a document on equal opportunities for girls and boys in education and training. Ms. Geoghegan-Quinn deplored the blocking of certain proposals in the Council (notably the draft directive on parental leave) but congratulated the Council of Ministers on the progress made concerning the document on personal dignity in the workplace (see above).

Turning to the situation in her own country, she said Ireland was in the midst of change. It had some effective mechanisms for promoting male/female equality, such as the Equality Agency and the parliamentary committee on women's rights.

The Committee on Women's Rights then exchanged views on the draft Opinion put forward by Anna Hermans (EPP, Belgium) concerning the Commission's communication on its Action Programme to implement the Community Charter of workers' basic social rights. The Committee noted that this Action Programme includes a series of measures concerning equal opportunities for men and women.

However, the Committee also wanted to tackle issues that concerned women in the other fields: the labour market, employment and wages, improvement of living and working conditions, freedom of movement, social protection, workers' participation, vocational training, health and safety and the elderly.

European Parliament, 97-113 rue Bel-liard, B-1040 Brussels. Tel.: (+32.2) 234.21.11 or Plateau du Kirschberg, L-1919 Luxembourg

COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS, EMPLOYMENT AND THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The European Parliament considers the issue of atypical works as the first priority of the European Commission's Action Programme to implement the Social

Charter. In this connection, the social affairs parliamentary committee meeting in Durham, UK, on 30 May, adopted a resolution on its own initiative resolution on **atypical job contracts and relations** (report drafted by Heinke Salisch, Socialist, FRG). This is a first in the history of the European Parliament and marks the start of a new path to accomplish its legislative task. While it waits for the European Commission to adopt its own draft directive on this subject, the social affairs committee felt it necessary to take the initiative and draft the text of the directive.

This Directive lays down the rules in this complex area.

It sets the general principles of social protection, training, consultation of labour representatives, wage, and the social guarantees attached to the worker's situation. The Committee asks that this Directive benefits from the procedure of EP/Council co-operation.

The boom in unstable, atypical jobs in last years affects a large number of women. This proposal, to be discussed during the June session, merits close monitoring.

COURT OF JUSTICE

The principle of equal pay has benefited men for the first time in the history of the European Communities Court of Justice.

On 17 May, the Luxembourg-based court handed down a ruling concerning the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women to private pension schemes (i.e., financed by employers and replacing the national statutory scheme).

In a preliminary ruling resulting from a case brought by a British national against Guardian Royal Exchange Assurance Group (case C-262/88), the Court found that this type of pension scheme was covered by Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome (equal pay) and that, consequently, setting different conditions of age based on the beneficiary's sex amounted to illegal discrimination, even if such a practice was modeled on the national statutory pension scheme.

The effect of this decision is limited to future claims or claims already underway and applies only to promote occupational schemes. The state schemes fixed the legal pensionable age at 65 for men and 60 for women. According to the court, the allowance

and pension given by employers constitute a "payment" and so men have a right to the same conditions as women under these schemes.

Court of Justice of the European Communities, L-2925 Luxembourg.

SEMINARS

Women and business: what kind of vocational training? Walferdange, Luxembourg, 27-28 September. National seminar held within the framework of the IRIS network.

Information: Pierre Mathieu, Centre de Formation professionnelle continue, Route de Diekirch, L-1220 Walferdange, B.P. 30. Tel.: (+352) 331168.

Equality for women and men in broadcasting in the 1990s, Athens, Greece, 7-10 November. Organised jointly by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and the Commission of the European Communities, the conference will discuss the changes in broadcasting that will occur over the next decade, the growing role of independent producers and the impact that these factors may have on equal opportunities.

Information: EBU, C.P. 67, CH-1218 Grand-Saconnex (Geneva), Switzerland. Tel.: (+41 22) 7987766.

Under the aegis of the **Italian Presidency**, a major seminar on the Third Action Programme for Equal Opportunities will be held in Rome in November. More details and practical information will be available later, but we can already announce the four major themes that will be covered: the promotion of women at work (including in the most underprivileged regions and for the most underprivileged women); the quality of women's jobs (better human resource management, positive action, reevaluation of women's contributions to economic life); combining a career and family (parental leave, childcare services); and the status of women (poverty, power, images in the media).

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