

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

A FULL PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN

The Equal Opportunities Unit starts the year with a very full work programme. The NOW initiative (New Opportunities for Women), officially launched at a seminar on 31 January and 1 February, coincides with the beginning of the third Action Programme for equal opportunities (1991-1995). Other important issues are also on the agenda for 1991. For the information of our readers, we will mention a few of the documents currently being prepared:

- recommendation on childcare
- code of conduct on the dignity of men and women at work
- communication on women's unemployment
- assessment report of the second action programme on equal opportunities
- report on the application of directive 87/613 on vocational training for women
- report on the application of the 1985 resolution on equal opportunities in education.

The Unit will also continue with the action being carried out in various networks and working groups. For the record, these networks/working groups were set up by the Unit to ensure the widest possible mutual exchange of information between the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities. Each network/working group consists of national representatives (experts or official representatives) and a European coordinator (see box on p.2).

NETWORK NEWS

The Working Group on equal opportunities between boys and girls in education, which met in Brussels in December, reported on



WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

NEWS ON THE EQUALITY POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY



*Dear Readers,
The date of 3rd October 1990 will mark an historic step on the road to European construction: the reunification of a people and a nation: Germany. Sixteen million citizens from the former GDR have now joined us in our ideals of liberty, democracy and solidarity.*

Our generations are happy to have experienced and shared these great moments. What is more natural than that each one of us should make a welcoming gesture in our own way and within the limits of our resources. The "Women of Europe Newsletter" which thus far was published in French and English only will now be produced in German too.

This decision will certainly delight the members of the European Parliament—especially Marlene Lenz—who, being very sensitive to distribution issues, have always exerted pressure to get our newsletter published in the nine official languages, which is one of our future priorities.

Moreover, whatever kind of architectural design the "common European house" takes on, we are sure that the economic and social links between the European Community—now enlarged—and Central and Eastern Europe will multiply. This rapprochement must lead to a broad movement of solidarity and understanding among all European citizens, and more particularly, we believe, among women.

And it is by circulating information that we intend to make our modest contribution.

Fausta Deshumes La Valle

the work undertaken in 1990 covering various sectors and different forms of action. The Working Group has publications on equal opportunities in teacher training, research on equality in the new information technologies, an "equality manual for schools" comprising practical lessons and notes for teachers and pupils, research/action on equality strategies in educational institutions (United Kingdom) and another one on girls and the new technologies at secondary school (Denmark). The Working Group is also involved in a video project involving Denmark and the United Kingdom, which describes good practices to help guide girls in their choice of career, and a seminar to disseminate the research/action on equality for foreign girls at primary school.

The Working Group welcomed the very positive assessment of the programme carried out by TENET (teacher training network) on the integration of equal opportunities into teacher training. In 1990, the second phase of this three-year programme, which will end in 1991 with an information dissemination phase, involved the organisation of seminars and workshops, together with the dissemination of material, methodologies and programme contents. There is also a plan to organise a European conference in the autumn.

The 1991 working programme will be based on the Third Action Programme for Equality, and future priorities will be established on the basis of an analysis of the progress obtained in this area.

Contact: Helle Jacobsen, Equal Opportunities Unit.

FEMINIST STUDIES: SEMINAR

Following the European Parliament's recommendation on promoting research on women, and in collaboration with the European University Institute of Florence, a seminar on **feminist studies in the European Community** was held in Florence from 17 to 19 January. Starting with a general analysis of employment related to gender, the seminar provided a forum for in-depth discussions on the following subjects; women and the

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES NETWORKS/
WORKING GROUPS**

Network on Women in Local Employment Initiatives

Coordinator: Caroline Turner, PO Box 16017, GR – Thessaloniki 54410, Tel: (+30 31)917.916
Contact in the Unit: Eva Eberhart

Childcare Network

Coordinator: Peter Moss, Thomas Coram Research Unit, University of London, Institute of Education, 41 Brunswick Square, UK – LONDON WC1N, Tel: (+44 71)278.24.24
Contact in the Unit: Janet Hemsley

Working Group on Vocational Training

Contact in the Unit: Els van Winckel

Network on Women in the Labour Force

Coordinator: Danièle Meulders, c/o DULBEA, 50 av. Fr. Roosevelt, B – 1050 Brussels, Tel: (+32 2)642.41.12
Contact in the Unit: Els Van Winckel

Group of the Consultants promoting Positive Actions in Industry

Coordinator: Marie-Pierre Tournier, c/o Information et Entreprise, av. Franklin Roosevelt 10, B – 1050 Brussels, Tel: (32 2)640.01.70
Contact in the Unit: Janet Hemsley

Working Group on Equal Opportunities in Education

Contact in the Unit: Helle Jacobsen

Network on the Application of Equality Directives

Coordinator: Dr. Ferdinand von Prondzynski, Lecturer in Industrial Relations, University of Dublin, Trinity College, IRL – Dublin 2, Tel: (+353 1)77.29.41 ext 1024
Contact in the Unit: Evelyn Collins

Steering Committee for Equal Opportunities in Broadcasting

Coordinator: Margaret Gallagher, 7 rue du Docteur Roux, F – 75015 Paris, Tel: (+33 1)45.67.24.36
Contact in the Unit: Evelyn Collins

These networks/Working Groups were launched during the second Action Programme for equal opportunities. The Unit will launch a tender for any person or organisation interested in contributing to the implementation of the third Action Programme. This will be published in the Official Journal of the European Communities (expected in March).

... State, women and the Law and the image of women in the media. At the end of the event, a round table on the strategies and institutions promoting feminist studies in the European Community underlined the need to support and develop theoretical and practical research in this sector.

Contacts: Eva Eberhart, Equal Opportunities Unit, Dott. Valeria Russo, Institut Universitaire européen, Villa Schifanoia, Via Bocaccio, 121, I-Firenze.

**INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATION**

Delegation from Norway

Representatives of the National Equality Council of Norway, as well as a representative of the Institute of Social Research, were received by the Women's Information Service in December. The visitors described their organisations and were informed about the European Community's policies

and initiatives to promote equality and information campaigns to raise awareness of this issue. Norway holds the world record for participation of women in political institutions: there are 8 women in its 19-member Cabinet, 35.7% in the Chamber, 40.6% in the county councils, and 31.2% in the town councils. Women make up almost 50% of the active population and maternity leave lasts for 24 weeks.

European Women's Lobby

This new pressure group has submitted a motion to the Council of Social Affairs Ministers, and another to the members of the Inter-Governmental Conference on Political Union. The first concerns the third action programme for equal opportunities, and demands that it is effectively implemented. The second motion is more general and demands a revision of Article 118A of the Single Act to extend qualified majority voting to social affairs. In fact, the Lobby, which consists of a large number of national and European women's organisations, considers that measures in the social area as well as those concerning equality between men and women must be adopted on a qualified majority vote.

Coordination: Jacqueline de Groot, 1^{re} Place Quêtelet, B-1030 Brussels. Tel: (32.2)217.90.20.

**COUNCIL OF
SOCIAL
AFFAIRS**

Social Affairs Ministers, meeting on 18 December, gave their agreement on the proposal for a directive to improve the health and safety conditions at work for temporary workers and those with fixed term contracts. The first decision taken in the context of the Community Charter on Fundamental Social Rights, this directive is aimed at ensuring that these workers benefit from the same level of protection, in the area

... of health and safety at work, as other workers in the enterprise. It also implies that these workers must be informed of any risks in their work and must be subjected to the same medical supervision as their full-time colleagues. As for the other two proposals for a Commission directive on atypical work (concerning the working conditions of workers in precarious jobs and distortions of competition), these will be placed on the agenda of the next Council of Social Affairs in mid-April.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Protection for pregnant women at work

On the submission of a report by Mrs. Rangoni Machiavelli (Italy, chairwoman of the group on miscellaneous activities), the Economic and Social Committee unanimously adopted (apart from 5 abstentions) a positive opinion on the proposal for a directive to protect pregnant women who have just given birth. The opinion confirms the broad manner in which the Commission interprets article 118 A of the EEC Treaty (on conditions at work) and has produced a consensus as regards night work by women: pregnant women or those breastfeeding cannot be obliged to do night work.

Useful address: Economic and Social Committee, Rue Ravenstein 2, B-1000 Brussels.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

WOMEN'S RIGHTS COMMITTEE

The Women's Rights Committee met in Brussels on 18 and 19 December. The Chairwoman, Ms Christine Crawley

(Soc. United Kingdom), reported on the action during the Italian Presidency—considered unsatisfactory—to promote women, and regretted that there was no informal council on this subject. She criticised the refusal by the Social Affairs Council to examine the document on protection for pregnant women.

The Committee also deplored the fact that this same Council meeting simply “expressed an interest” in the third action programme on equal opportunities, and that it postponed the adoption of a supporting resolution to one of its forthcoming sessions (the first one in 1991 will be held in April). Ms Anna Catasta (Gue, Italy) stressed the importance of this resolution in ensuring that the Member States implemented the programme, and ensuring its financing for the next five years.

Increasing the loans from the European Social Fund

The interim report by Christa Randzio-Plath (Soc. Germany) on the functioning of the European Social Fund was unanimously adopted. It demands an increase in the loans for fighting women's unemployment which is considerably higher than men, some of this loan being used to finance the infrastructure necessary to ensure women can participate more in projects.

The report also stresses the importance of offering women training in the professions of the future rather than in traditional areas. The Committee considered that a report should be submitted to the European Parliament every year on the implementation of the loans and the achievements of Social Fund programmes.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT MEET

Given the general under-representation of women at the various decision-making levels, Raymonde Dury (Soc. Belgium) took the initiative of organising a meeting of women Members of Parliament attending the Conference of Parliaments of the European Community (Rome, 27-30 November) in order to discuss this

question. Ms Dury also submitted an amendment which was included in the final resolution, calling on the Community to pursue positive policies to promote equality between men and women at work, in social and private rights, education, participation in public life and access to political mandates at every level.

WOMEN AND 1993

At a press conference organised in Brussels on 16 January, Marijke van Hemeldonk (Soc. Belgium) submitted to the press and public her report on **the consequences for the women in Europe of 1993**. The conclusions of the report, adopted by the Women's Rights Committee (see **Women of Europe Newsletter No. 13-14**) stressed the dangers of the Single Market for women if certain measures were not adopted.

The report stressed that mobility must be facilitated (support measures, childcare, maternal and parental leave, guaranteed salary) and access to vocational training developed. Similarly, it is vital to launch a debate on the classification of jobs, the basis for social benefits and the minimum salary. The report also mentions the efforts to be made in transport in cross-border regions, in public and private life and in the integration of minorities. It calls on women ministers and decision-makers to exert pressure on the European Community, the Council of Ministers and the two sides of industry to propose adequate measures.

Information: European Parliament, 97-113 rue Belliard, B-1040 Brussels.

COURT OF JUSTICE

Dekker Ruling (12.11.90)

“Refusal to recruit a person because of pregnancy can only arise in connection with women, and therefore constitutes direct discrimination based on sex...”. This

...

... was the opinion of the European Court of Justice in November on the refusal of a Dutch employer (training centre for young adults) to take on Ms Dekker, pregnant, because her maternity leave would cost too much. The Court declared that if an employer turns down an application by a pregnant woman who is otherwise qualified for the job in question, he is infringing the 1976 directive on equal treatment between men and women with regard to access to employment and training.

Aldi Marked Ruling (12.11.90)

In another ruling, the Court considered that it was possible to dismiss a woman for illness resulting from pregnancy or childbirth. In a case between the Danish company Aldi Marked and an employee dismissed following an illness which had resulted from her difficult confinement, the Court considered that male and female employees are equally exposed to illness. "Even though it is true that certain problems are peculiar to one or other sex, the main question is whether a woman is dismissed for absenteeism because of illness under the same conditions as a man. If this is the case, there is no discrimination based on sex."

Leloup Ruling (10.12.90)

In the name of equality, the European Court of Justice extended to men an advantage that only women in Belgium could enjoy thus far. Belgian social legislation states that married women and widows do not have to pay social self-employment contributions if they have had or have a salaried husband affiliated to a social security organisation. The plaintiff's lawyer, Mr Leloup, explained to the judges that at the moment, men may find themselves in a situation where they are not "economically strong". The judges considered that refusing men this possibility would infringe the provisions of the European directive of 19 December 1978 on equal treatment of men and women concerning social security.

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

PUBLICATIONS

Equal opportunities for men and woman – 3rd Community Medium-term Action Programme 1991-1995, COM(90)449 final, November 1990, Commission of the European Communities. In all official Community languages.

Mothers, Fathers and Employment V/1653/90-EN, European Commission Childcare Network. Document on employment, unemployment and the economic activity of mothers and fathers with children aged from 0 to 9 years in the European Community. The report updates the analysis made in 1988. It includes the twelve Member States and presents a series of tables and graphs on the various aspects of the employment of parents. It is currently being translated into French.

Guide to support for Women's Employment Initiatives in the Member States of the European Economic Community, V/1735/90-EN, a collection of sources of support for women's employment enterprises and initiatives in the European Community. Compiled by Caroline Turner, it is available in English only.

European Synthesis report 1989/90 of EEC Network on Women in Local Employment Initiatives, V/1736/90-EN, by Caroline Turner (Report by network of experts on the local employment initiatives for women), available in English only.

Quality of childcare service, V/1730/90-Fr, Report on the Barcelona seminar organised by the European Commission's childcare network on 4-5 May. Available in French and English; currently being translated into Spanish and Italian.

In the context of these technical seminars, the Commission has just published the following reports:

Childcare needs for families in rural areas, V/1732/90-FR, Report on the Athens seminar, 1-2 April 1990.

Working in childcare centres with children under 4 years, V/1733/90-FR, Report on the Leiden seminar, 27-28 April 1990.

Men as carers for Children, V/1731/90-EN, V/1733/90-EN, Report on Glasgow seminar, 18-19 May 1990. Currently available in English; being translated into French, Spanish and Italian.

Information: Equal Opportunities Unit, Directorate General on Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.

Women in senior public service positions – Career development: a strategy to optimise human resources, Studies and documents, ISBN 90-6779-056-7, European Institute of Public Administration, O.L. Vrouwplein 22, BP 1229, NL-6201, BE Maastricht, published by B. Wurster. Also available in English.

The impact of the Single Market on each industrial sector: the challenge for the Member States, ISBN 92-826-1818-8. Special edition of *Europe sociale*, 1990. Published in all official Community languages. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, L-29825 Luxembourg.

Poverty 3 – List of projects: presentation of 27 Model Actions and 12 Innovative Initiatives in the Third Community Action Programme against poverty, 1990. Distributed by the GEIE "Animation et Recherche", BP 52, F-59003 Lille Cedex.

The effects on women of the creation of the Internal Market in 1992, with particular reference to the problems of black and ethnic minority women in the UK, preliminary study prepared for Anita Pollack (Soc. United Kingdom), member of the European Parliament, by Jane Goldschmith. European Parliament, 97-113 rue Belliard, B-1040 Brussels.

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