

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

LAUNCHING OF NOW

NOW, a new Community initiative to promote equal opportunities for women in the area of employment and vocational training was officially launched at a seminar in Brussels on 31 January and 1 February.

The programme will promote the setting up of small enterprises and cooperatives by women, and provide support for advisory and training activities and access to employment. In addition, the programme will provide aid for childcare facilities, support structures for the development of transnational networks and partnerships, and technical assistance to implement these activities.

The seminar brought together officials responsible for the European Social Fund in every Member State, representatives of national employment organisations, the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities, the members of networks and working groups on **vocational training for women, Local Employment Initiatives (LEI) and Childcare**, as well as representatives of the two sides of industry.

European Cooperation

Opening the seminar, European Commissioner Ms Papandreou, stressed the necessity to establish collaboration between Member States, and exchange know-how and experiences in order to develop the social dimension of the Single Market. NOW, which is subject to the regulations and criteria of the Structural Funds, is different from other programmes financed by these Funds which are essentially national.

"The NOW initiative is a milestone in the Third Action Programme", declared Ms Claire Mandouze,



WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

NEWS ON THE EQUALITY POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY



*Dear readers,
As you know, the European Community is the pioneer of and driving force behind equal opportunities between men and women. Since the first Community Directive on equal treatment of male and female workers (13 February 1975), there has been an undeniable change in our societies.*

Progress has been possible thanks to, among others, an institution that has always proved to be an ally for women: the European Court of Justice.

Currently numbering about 50, the Court's rulings constitute a set of precedents which are playing a leading role in the innovative interpretation of the concepts in Article 119 of the Rome Treaty and in the five equality Directives. This European case law, which must be adhered to by the national courts, has undoubtedly contributed to the positive change in attitudes regarding women, and has also helped to improve European living conditions.

Three recent rulings, Dekker (12.11.1990), Aldi Market (12.11.1990) and Leloup (10.12.1990) have just confirmed this, at the same time shortening the distance which sometimes still separates the law from the actual situation in society. We hope that attitudes and behaviour will match this law in the very near future.

This kind of harmony is only possible if women are aware of their rights and if those responsible for implementing laws—magistrates and lawyers, men and women—are familiar with them.

Fausta Deshumes La Valle

head of the Equal Opportunities Unit at the European Commission. NOW will support model activities in the Community context which are likely to have a multiple effect on promoting the employment of women.

This new initiative, with a budget of 120 million ECUs for projects involving women, can therefore be used as a basis to achieve the integration of women into the labour market, a central objective of the Third Programme.

Ms Christine Crawley, Chairwoman of the European Parliament's Women's Rights Committee, emphasised the advisability of a programme of this kind. There are serious obstacles blocking women's access to jobs and she also highlighted the need to take special measures in favour of women. "It is essential to provide childcare facilities, transport to training and work places, and to match working and training timetables to school timetables if we wish to ensure that the NOW employment and training measures are successful", she added. Although the NOW initiative was not the subject of a Council of Ministers decision, Christine Crawley hoped that the Member States would play a positive role in the initiative, although they are not legally required to do so.

Ms Randzio-Plath (Soc., Germany), author of a report on the functioning of the European Social Fund and women, stressed the improvements to be made to the ESF, and put forward some recommendations. She too highlighted the need to finance infrastructures, simplify decision-making procedures, improve coordination, promote monitoring in the various Member States and submit qualitative assessments of activities. She said that women must be given access to training courses geared to forward looking professions rather than opportunities in traditional areas only.

Transferring experiences

Mr Philippe Hatt, Unit Head at the European Social Fund, outlined the procedures for obtaining assis-

...tance under NOW. Projects will have to be presented via a local, regional or national authority. There are five main objectives: promotion of underdeveloped regions, reconversion of regions undergoing industrial decline, combatting of long-term unemployment of over-25s throughout the Community, integration of young people under 25 throughout the Community and, finally, development of rural areas.

Member States wishing to benefit from NOW should submit operational programmes or applications for global subsidies. The level of Community assistance will be decided in accordance with the provisions in the regulations governing the Structural Funds and will take account of the capacity of the national and regional authorities involved. The Member States must submit their projects within six months, in other words by June 1991.

During the seminar, two working groups devoted respectively to "the création of enterprises and co-operatives by women" and "orientation and advice, pre-training and access to employment for professional reintegration" explored the possibility of transnational partnerships and activities in these areas, using practical examples.

The conclusions stressed the catalyst nature of the programme in developing synergy among all those involved in improving working conditions for women. The role of the Equal Opportunities Commissions in the Member States is essential in defining and launching activities, and in preparing ways of monitoring operational programmes. While NOW will provide new opportunities for women, it is for each local, regional, national and Community partner to seize these opportunities and make the new initiative really effective.

Anyone interested in obtaining further information can contact their relevant national authorities (representatives of the European Social Fund) or: Else Van Winkel, Equal Opportunities Unit, or Celia Alexopoulou, European Social Fund, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

C haired by Ms Regina Tavares da Silva (Portugal) since last November, the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities met in Brussels on 20 January. Ms Mandouze reported on the latest developments in equal opportunities policy at Community level and on the Unit's 1991 work programme. This includes, among other things, the consultation of the Member States on the implementation of Directive 86/613 (application of the principle of equal treatment of men and women running their own businesses, including farms), and on the application of the 1987 Recommendation on vocational training for women. During the consultation procedure, the Committee took note of the draft "code of conduct for the dignity of men and women in the workplace". The first part of the "code" sets down principles and definitions, while the second part provides advice to employees, employers and trade unions. The European Commission will probably approve the "code of conduct" in July.

The Committee discussed and asked questions about the NOW programme. It is ready to play an active role in implementing this programme. The Committee members declared themselves willing to work in close contact with the national coordinators and the units providing technical assistance.

The joint launching and implementation by the Commission and Member States of the Third Action Programme was also discussed. Press conferences are planned in the Member States in the near future. These will be organised by the European Commission Women's Information Service.

The Advisory Committee will meet again in April.

Contact: Else Van Winkel, Equal Opportunities Unit.

NETWORK NEWS

T he experts' network on **Local Employment Initiatives for women (LEI)** met in Brussels on 13 February. It reported on its

activities in the various Member States over the last six months, and decided on April as the deadline for granting the final installment of the subsidies to the women's local initiatives. The final installment still comes under the second Action Programme. As the next Programme is soon to be applied, the network discussed ways of adapting Community aid and started redefining the guidelines for granting assistance to women setting up businesses. This should be completed in the spring so that it can be implemented in the context of the Third Action Programme. An information brochure will be issued at the time of implementation. The network also plans to extend its activities to women in the five new Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Coordinator: Caroline Turner, PO Box 16017, GR-Thessaloniki 54410.

The **Childcare** network met in Brussels on 12 February. It is currently concentrating on preparing the Recommendation on childcare which the European Commission plans to adopt in May.

Coordinator: Peter Moss, Thomas Coram Research Unit, University of London, 41 Brunswick Square, UK-London WC1 1AZ.

FEMINIST STUDIES

In the context of the Third Action Programme, the Equal Opportunities Unit has launched a programme to develop feminist studies (see **Women of Europe Newsletter No.9**). It will include new studies on education and research in this area, and will update data bases. This has already been started by GRIF (Feminist Research and Information Group in Brussels). A series of meetings and seminars are planned for this year. The first one will be held in Brussels on 19 March.

Information on this meeting: Véronique De Graef and Gerry Wooley, GRIF, 29 rue Blanche, B-1050 Brussels, or Eva Eberhart, Equal Opportunities Unit.

Equal Opportunities Unit, Directorate General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

East-West Meetings

The Women's Information Service intends to organise specific information activities for women in eastern Europe. In this context, two events are already scheduled for the coming months: a seminar for women in the five new German Länder on the topic: "The 1992 Single Market: opportunities for women in Europe?" Jointly organised by the Women's Information Service and the Deutsche Frauenrat (national German Women's council), it will be held in Bonn from 24 to 26 May.

Another seminar for women heads of enterprise in the East and West will be held in Berlin in September. It is organised by the World Federation of Women Heads of Enterprise, with the support of the Women's Information Service.

Babele Prize

Ms van Hoof-Haferkamp, Director General of the European Commission's Conference-Interpretation service, has received the Babele prize awarded by the town of Genoa and the Cristoforo Colombo Foundation in Italy. The jury's reason for its choice was "the commitment and enthusiasm of Ms van Hoof-Haferkamp in enhancing the image of the interpreting profession, and her work in consolidating the professionalism of interpreters".

MEDIA Programme: Development of European Audiovisual Activities

Given the interest and growing participation of women in the audiovisual industry, we thought it might be useful to publish some informa-

tion on the European Commission's MEDIA programme, even though this is quite removed from our editorial policy (equal opportunities policy).

With an overall budget of 200 million ECUs for the next five years (1991-1995), the main objective of the MEDIA programme is to ensure that the European audiovisual sector takes advantage of the Single Market and to promote cinematographic creativity. MEDIA consists of a series of practical activities to reinforce audiovisual cooperation across borders, and along the whole creation-financing-production-distribution chain. *Information: Ms Caroline Petit, MEDIA Programme Service, Directorate General for Information, Communication and Culture, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.*

Childcare in Europe

Edition no. 31 of the "Cahiers de Femmes d'Europe" devoted to **childcare in the European Community 1985-1990** was officially launched in Ireland by Ms Maire Geoghegan-Quinn, Minister of State to the Irish Prime Minister (see photo). It was also widely publicised in the United Kingdom at a press conference organised by the Commission's Press and Information Service. It will be launched

in the other Member States as soon as the various language versions are produced.

NIKE Prizes on Television

The films which won the 1990 NIKE prizes aroused the interest of European television channels, which have included the films in their broadcasting schedules in response to the desire expressed by the European Commission when the Prize was launched.

Danish television has already broadcast "Dear Sarah" (Irish television film, prizewinner in the "Fiction" category), and "Der Neue Mann" (ARD/Hessischer Rundfunk film, in the same category).

A Dutch television channel (KRO/NOS) also broadcast an extract from "Choices: who'd be a woman?" (ITV/Central Independent TV, prizewinner in the "Programmes for Children and Adolescents" category).

The Greek film "The Clarity of Her View" has already been shown twice on Greek television (ERT).

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the European Women's Foundation whose sponsorship contributed significantly to the success of the 1990 NIKE Prize. The European Women's Foundation, headquartered in Luxembourg, is aimed in particular at fi-



Launch of the "Childcare in the European Communities 1985-1990" report in Ireland (Dublin). From Left to Right: Dr Anne McKenna, Irish Expert, EC Childcare Network; Ms Maire Geoghegan-Quinn T.D. and Mr Terry Stewart, Director, European Communities Office in Ireland.

...nancing initiatives to promote the status of women in Europe. ■

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

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

At its plenary session in Strasbourg on 25 January, the Parliament adopted a resolution demanding coordinated positive action in favour of women to promote equal opportunities, in accordance with the report by Marijke van Hemeldonck (Soc., Belgium) on **1992 and its impact on women**. The Parliament supported the legislation and other measures proposed in the report. These include combatting undeclared work, sexual harassment in the workplace, racial discrimination, as well as the improvement of working hours, childcare and the status of parents. Marijke van Hemeldonck's report deals with a wide range of aspects of equal opportunities in social, professional and family life. It contains a series of measures to be taken by the European Commission, Council or Member States to enable women to benefit more from the effects of the Single Market.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Meeting in Brussels on 4 and 5 February, the Women's Rights Committee discussed at length the working paper on childcare submitted by Anita Pollack (Soc., United Kingdom). A majority of MEPs are demanding a directive based on article 235 of the Treaty of Rome, but the European Commission intends to produce a Recommendation. Opinions diverge further as regards the solutions to be provided: some are recommending an increase and improvement in publicly-funded

childcare facilities while others would welcome a salary for mothers or fathers who take parental leave.

The **assessment of women working at home**, presented in a draft report by Ms Hedwig Keppelhoff-Wiechert (PPE., Germany) led to an initial exchange of views attended by a delegation from the "International Campaign for Salaries for Women Working at Home". Ms Keppelhoff-Wiechert, who is also President of the German Federation of Women Farmers, called for social protection, professional and fiscal status, legal rights for married women and participation in trade associations and training courses for women working at home and for "helper spouses" (conjoints aidantes). Governments should take account of these services by women when calculating Gross Domestic Product (GDP), as these could amount to 30% of GDP. The debate will be resumed in March.

The Committee also listened to a report by Ms Wendy O'Conghaile, member of the Dublin Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. The framework programme under way (1989-1992) covers the development of the social dialogue, working conditions, health, unemployment, the environment, etc. Women's issues are implicitly included, but more account would be taken of these in the 1992-1996 programme, according to Ms O'Conghaile. A round table on new forms of work will be held in Brussels on 22 March.

1991 Work Programme

The Women's Rights Committee then adopted its 1991 work programme. It has planned several hearings for this year: on pornography, migrant women and the sexual abuse of children. A major forum is scheduled for November on the influence of women in the development of Europe. Female members of Parliament from the European Community, the Scandinavian countries and central and eastern Europe will be invited to attend.

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

SEMINARS

Launching of the Third Action Programme in Greece, Athens, 11 and 12 March 1990. This seminar is organised by the Equality Secretariat, 2 odos Moussiou, Plaka, GR-10555 Athens.

A little back and very much forward, Bornholm (Denmark), 20-21 March 1991. National seminar organised in the context of the IRIS network and based on the topic of training for women in nontraditional trades.

Information: Dorte Cohr Lützen, Arbejdsmaretsstyrelsen, Hezjrevej 43, DK-2400, Copenhagen, or: IRIS Unit, CREW, 38 rue Stévin, B-1040 Brussels.

PUBLICATIONS

Programme B: diversification of professional choices for women and girls, final 1990 consolidation report, V/1734/90. Evelyne Sullerot. Available in French and English.

The French translation is available for the following publications (see "Women of Europe Newsletter", N° 15):

Mothers, fathers and employment, V/1653/90-FR.

Men and childcare, V/1733/90.

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