

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

8 MARCH 1991
MESSAGE FROM THE
COMMISSION

In terms of ethical principles and economic stakes, equal opportunities between men and women must constitute one of the main guidelines to any policy involving the development of human resources. This was the message addressed by President Delors and Commissioner Cardoso e Cunha to the staff of the Commission on the occasion of International Women's Day.

The Third Action Programme (1991-1995) for equal opportunities is evidence of the Commission's desire to continue this action not only in Member States but also within its own structures and its own policies on personnel.

The Commission wants to make particular progress in the field of recruitment, career development, training and the professional recognition of women on its own staff. The Commission also intends developing measures to help improve the reconciling of professional and family responsibilities.

NETWORK NEWS

The Working Group for the Professional Training of Women (IRIS) met in Brussels on 1 March. The NOW initiative (New Opportunities for Women) (see *Women in Europe Newsletter* no. 16) was the main item on the agenda. The working group examined the position of NOW within the Third Action Programme and the role of the IRIS network in relation to this new initiative. It was considered important for IRIS to



WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

NEWS
ON THE EQUALITY POLICY
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY



Dear Readers,

Women's Day is a working day and no time for self-indulgence. The annual celebration of Women's Day gives us the chance to recognise women's achievements but also to look to the future and women of 1991 face a future that is radically different. The destruction of the Berlin Wall has introduced into Europe a whole new group of women with different experiences and aspirations. The creation of the Single Market will bring yet more changes, affecting women's employment and mobility. A new world order is being created in which women have a chance to play a major role and to which they can bring new ideas and skills. Women's Day is a chance for women all over the world to communicate, to raise awareness not only of what they have achieved, but what is still left to do. The European Commission has always recognised the importance of communication in supplementing the legal progress it has made for women. In 1991 it carries this commitment still further with the Third Action Programme on Equal Opportunities, which concentrates on the implementation of rights already acknowledged by law. This year's Women's Day therefore marks a particularly exciting time for us all. It is celebrated from a position of strength, but a strength we will need in order to face all the challenges of the new decade. Soon, I hope, we will no longer need a Women's Day in a man's year but every day of every year will belong to men and women together. Until then, let us use 8th March as a signpost on the way to the future.

Fausta Deshumes La Valle

pursue its own programme of information and creating awareness. Within the framework of its activities, IRIS could assist those involved in women's professional training with the preparation of projects for NOW. IRIS data bases and publications could be used to achieve this, according to members of the Working Group.

Contact: Margarida Pinto, Equal Opportunities Unit.

Experts from the Women in Employment network met on 25 March. Recent work has focussed on women's employment in the banking and textile sectors. Reports on the results of these studies are due to be published shortly. The work programme for the current year was also drawn up: the group will examine developments between 1983 and 1989-1990 and will analyse the position of women in the labour market.

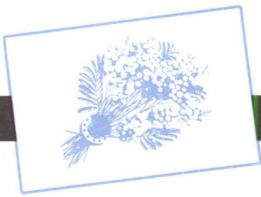
Coordinator: Danièle Meulders, c/o DULBEA, 50 av. Fr. Roosevelt, 1050 Brussels.

WOMEN'S STUDIES: TOWARDS A EUROPEAN STRATEGY

Another seminar on the development of women's studies (see *Women in Europe Newsletter* no. 16) was held in Brussels on the 18 and 19 March. A scientific committee, made up of academics, was set up to coordinate work in this area. The seminar drew up a picture of the situation of women's studies in the Community and agreed on development strategies. Various seminars are planned on the subject; the first of these will take place in the Autumn. It was also decided to examine the possibilities of establishing links with other European programmes such as ERASMUS.

Contact: Eva Eberhart, Equal Opportunities Unit.

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



INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Equal opportunities in European institutions

On the 8 March, the Group for Solidarity of Female Employees in European Institutions held its traditional celebration and organised a one day event on the theme "Questions about COPEC". The group invited all COPEC members (Commission's Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities) as well as members of staff. There was much debate at this event on two reports commissioned by COPEC, the first, a study on the situation of women within the institutions and the second to draw up new guidelines for a second positive action plan (PAP).

Founded in 1984, COPEC implemented a first medium-term positive action programme (1988-1990) aimed at women employees.

Information: Group for Solidarity of Female Employees in European Institutions/Réseau femmes fonctionnaires des institutions européennes, Elisabeth Pouchous, Commission of the European Communities, JECL 77/A, 200 rue de la Loi, 1049 Brussels.

More women participate in ECVF

Although still a minority, more and more women are participating in the "European Community's Visitors Programme", accounting for 25% of those taking part in the programme in 1991 compared to 15% in 1990.

This programme, set up in 1974 and jointly financed and run by the European Commission and the European Parliament, enables people from third countries to visit the European institutions in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg. Thanks to these grants, covering a maximum period of 21 days, visitors can also visit up to three Member States of their choice.

Up until now, approximately 700 grants have been awarded to male and female politicians, journalists, government representatives, trade unionists and academics. The programme will be opened this year to a number of visitors from Central Europe.

Information: The European Community's Visitors Programme (ECVP), 53-55 rue de la Loi (5th floor), 1049 Brussels, tel.: (32.2) 235.55.72/235.44.48/235.48.89, fax: (32.2) 236.43.00.

"Espoir" prize for cooks

A silver platter will be awarded by the Commission of European Communities to the winner of the "Most Promising Woman Chef" ("Espoir des cuisinières") competition in Vichy (France) on 16 April. This is the second consecutive year that the Women's Information Service is joining with the Association of Women Restaurateurs (ARC) and the Academy for Mothers as Cooks (the two French organisers) to encourage young women to specialise in the profession and to reward them for their talents. This initiative was inaugurated several years ago by ARC after the French Association of Master Chefs had refused to accept applications from women.

Information: Mme Simone Lemaire, Le Haut-Tourne-Bride, F-03270 Bosset.

Women's Information Service, Directorate General for Audiovisual Activities, Information, Communication and Culture, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, 1040 Brussels.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The Economic and Social Committee not only wants an internal market but also "a Europe in which citizens can live freely and equally", according to Ms. Susanne Tieman, the Vice-President of the Committee, during a press conference organised on the 5 March in Brussels on the subject "Women and Employment in the European Community". 52% of people working in the Community are women and they often work in so-called "atypical" types of em-

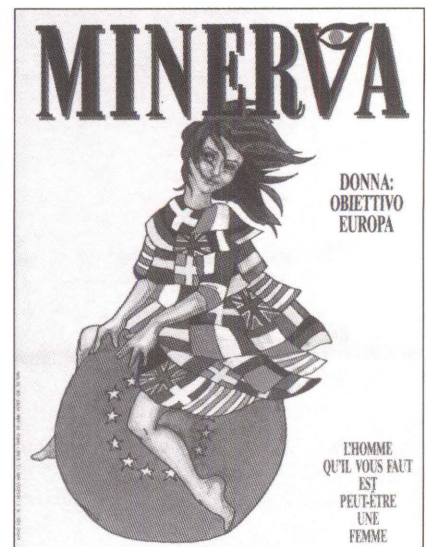
ployment. 28% of working women work part-time, Ms. Tieman said. This conference brought together officials from the Committee, the European Parliament and the Commission as well as other organisations working in this area and women's organisations. Speakers noted that women can make an important contribution to the European labour market. However, "it is not logical that women are not involved in political choices", Maria Luisa Cassanmagnago, President of the European Parliament's Political Committee, said and pointed out that "solidarity between women is essential within the context of institutional reform".

Anna Maria Mammoliti, Managing Editor of the Italian magazine *Minerva*, presented a special issue of her magazine (in French and Italian) devoted entirely to the theme of the conference.

Commissioner Ripa di Meana commented on the recent events in the Gulf and recalled that "women in the European Parliament were able to take a stand against the law of the most powerful and the language of arms and weapons".

However, there are still many obstacles to progress on equality and women run the risk of losing certain benefits they have acquired in the process of "harmonising to the lowest level". In this respect, Elena Marinucci, Under Secretary at the Italian Ministry of Health stressed that Community measures on the

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Cover of the magazine *Minerva* (Managing Editor: Anna Maria Mammoliti) presented on 5 March at the headquarters of the Economic and Social Committee in Brussels.



... protection of pregnant women should not fall short of the most advanced national laws. Beatrice Rangoni Machiavelli, President of the "Various Activities" group within the Economic and Social Committee, pointed out that it has been difficult for Member States to accept Community directives on equality "when Community institutions themselves still fall short of the target". Finally, Fausta Deshormes, Head of the European Commission's Women's Information Service declared that the daughters of the new generation will still have to struggle for equality. "We have made enormous progress in fifteen years. We now have, thanks to the Community, a real range of legal measures at our disposal. "There are now over 50 decisions which have been taken by the European Community's Court of Justice which have set precedents and have to be respected at national level", she pointed out. However, the process of changing attitudes is slower and, she continued, "this is where we have to be active by providing women with information on the work being done at Community level".

Useful addresses: Economic and Social Committee, 22 Rue Ravenstein, 1000 Brussels; Rivista Minerva, 151 Viale Giulio Cesare, I-00192 Roma.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

During its plenary session on 22 February in Strasbourg, Parliament adopted a resolution on the **operation of the European Social Fund**, based on a report by Christa Randzio-Plath (Soc., Germany). In this resolution Parliament "deplores the fact that this fund is still not effective in combating female unemployment", which is much more widespread than male unemployment. The resolution strongly condemns "discrimination against women in the allocation of Community funds". The Parliament calls for the Commission to improve coordination of equality programmes and Social Fund policy and to continue insisting that Member States promote

equal opportunities which is one of the main objectives of the Fund. The absence of programmes to combat unemployment among women within the framework of the Fund's guidelines is resulting in increasing additional programmes which risks disguising the problems. The resolution also calls for the Fund to finance infrastructure measures (costs of training centres, childcare, transport), assistance for the start-up of small enterprises as well as orienting training towards a wider, more "future-oriented" range of professions. Evaluation and follow-up are other priorities Parliament would like to see and it would like to receive an annual report detailing how much of the funds are being allocated to women and the implementation of programmes. The European Commission should assess the efficiency and effectiveness of programmes in relation to professional prospects open to women and this evaluation should take the specific effects on the situation of women into consideration.

EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

If men do not share equally the burden of family and professional responsibilities, then equality between men and women is worth nothing", Christine Crawley (Soc., Great Britain) pointed out in her conclusions to the first European Women's Conference organised by the Confederation of Socialist Parties of the European Community and the Socialist Group of the European Parliament.

The conference, which took place in Brussels on 5 and 6 March, examined women's work and the completion of the internal market as well as how Community institutions can adapt to meet the needs of women.

Christine Crawley stressed the need to improve and strengthen the transparency of Community funds in order to establish what percentage women were benefitting from. Finally, the directives essential for equality - protection of pregnant women at work, atypical work, parental leave and reversal of the

burden of proof -, still pending before the Council, will not, she specified, be adopted without an increase in the number of female lobbies.

Participants called for reforms to be made to Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome within the framework of the Inter Governmental Conference to ensure that this article covers not only equal pay between men and women but also all other financial benefits related to women's work (pensions, childcare, minimum pay etc.)

The Socialist women also called on the Commission to intervene with the German authorities on the matter of gynaecological examinations which are being imposed by border police on women suspected of having had an abortion in Holland. ■

OPEN LETTER

In view of the absence of new initiatives favouring women's rights, 187 Members of the European Parliament from all political groups, except the European right wing, sent an open letter to Mr. Lubbers, Prime Minister of the Netherlands and the next President of the Council of Ministers. Members of the European Parliament are urging the setting up of a Committee of Ministers to study the legislative measures which should be urgently adopted in the area of equal opportunities (burden of proof, childcare, parental leave and sexual harassment). This is an initiative by Dutch Members of Parliament, Jessica Larive (Liberal), Karla Peijs (PPE), Mathilde van den Brick (Soc.) and Nel van Dijk (Greens). ■

WOMEN'S RIGHTS COMMITTEE

The Women's Rights Committee met in Luxembourg on 27 and 28 February. The meeting provided the opportunity for an exchange of views between the Committee and members of the Luxembourg government: Mr. Boden, Minister for Family, Social Hous-



... ing and Social Solidarity, and Ms. Delvaux, Secretary of State for Social Security.

As Acting President of the Council, Mr. Boden recalled the social priorities of the Luxembourg Presidency, particularly the application of the Social Charter. While he regretted that women's issues had been pushed aside and certain pieces of draft legislation had been blocked at the Council, the Committee was delighted at the Council's initiative to organise an informal social affairs council on equal opportunities scheduled for 13 May, and to have the resolution on the third action programme adopted at the Council for Social Affairs.

Increase and transparency of resources

Limited resources and the diffusion of information remain one of the Committee's main preoccupations. Although the announcement of the publication in Germany of the "European Women's Newsletter" was most favourably received, the Committee deeply regretted the impending suppression of the "Women of Europe" magazine and asked whether an intermediary solution could not perhaps be found. Members of Parliament estimated that the task of the Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities (COPEC) will no longer be able to be accomplished without an increase in resources. The priorities for 1991 for this organisation, responsible for equal opportunities for Commission staff, is to carry out a programme to redress the balance between the sexes in the higher echelons of the hierarchy, explained its president, Ms. Gomez from ENTERRIA, when she presented COPEC's annual report. In other respects, the Committee called unanimously for greater transparency in the funds allocated to Community policies concerning women in adopting the opinion by Marie-Claude Vayssade on the 1989 budget for the budgetary control committee. The Committee urged an inventory and a specific budget line to be drawn up for Eastern European women.

The Committee for Women's Rights, which met in Brussels on 19 and 20 March, adopted a resolution submitted by Carmen Llorca Vilaplana (PPE, Spain) on the creation of a European prize for women. This prize, known as "HELENA", will aim to promote the work and merits of women in various areas such as the arts and sciences and will be awarded annually.

The draft childcare report presented by Anita Pollack (Soc., Great Britain) was also adopted. According to the report, there are at least four reasons to justify action by the European Commission in this area. First of all, the promotion of equal opportunities: although childcare should not be considered as "a women's problem", it is women who are paying the price of the lack of such facilities. The objectives of the single market will also suffer because of the differences in services provided between and within the Member States, which constitute an obstacle to the mobility of women. Economic development, which calls for an increase in female labour, is also affected by these services. A final crucial factor is the well-being of children themselves who should have the right to claim equal access to good quality services. The report follows recommendations made by the European Childcare Network which calls for a directive and co-funding with the Structural Funds, for the creation of the necessary infrastructure.

The Committee then held an exchange of views with the Vice-President of the European Women's Lobby, Eva Eberhart, who explained the Lobby's work programme for 1991.

The Committee then held a discussion on an **evaluation of women's work in the home** on the basis of a report submitted by Hedwig Keppehof-Weichert (PPE., Germany) as well as on a draft opinion to the legal committee on the **sexual exploitation of children** presented by Brigitte Ernst de la Graete (Greens, Belgium). These two reports should be discussed further at the next meeting in April.

Information: European Parliament, 97-113 rue Belliard, 1040 Brussels OR Plateau du Kirschberg, 1919 Luxembourg.

PUBLICATIONS

Mobility of Female Workers in the European Community, V/378/91-FR, Christiane Heck, Olivier Plasman (supervised by Danièle Meulders) and Rachel Silvera. In French only.

A Franco-British Comparison of Women Managers and Members of Higher Intellectual Professions, V/342/91-FR, Rosemary Crompton, Linda Hantrais, Nicolas Le Feuvre and Patricia Wolters, available in French and English.

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

Final Report on the Second European Programme to Combat Poverty 1985-1989, COM(91), ISBN 92-77-69265-0. This report on poverty in Europe traces the various stages of the second programme to combat poverty and assesses the action that has been undertaken in this respect. Finally, it provides indications and directions for policies to combat poverty which should be carried out at all levels of the Community.

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