

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

NOW: NATIONAL COORDINATORS MEET THE COMMISSION

A meeting was held in Brussels on 22 and 23 April between European Commission staff and the national coordinators of the Community Initiative NOW (New Opportunities for Women). Representatives from the Member States had the opportunity to present their priorities and to describe the main transnational projects currently being prepared to develop actions under this Initiative, which has an overall budget of 120 million ECUs.

By the end of June, each Member State must submit to the European Commission an operational programme for the next three years (1991-92-93) covering the projects financed by NOW. This new Initiative operates in accordance with the rules of the European Social Fund (ESF) but projects presented under it must have a transnational dimension.

The implementation of NOW is going ahead at different speeds in each of the twelve Member States. However, the meeting enabled common priorities to be identified and useful information exchanged on setting up transnational partnerships. The establishment of information centres for women, training of instructors, provision of aid for business start-ups by women and new technologies were identified as priority themes.

By the end of June, working groups will be organised on each theme in order to prepare operational programmes and a meeting to finalise these is planned for mid-June. However, national coordinators said they would like a longer preparatory period because of the complexity of setting up transnational partnerships between Member States.



WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

NEWS
ON THE EQUALITY POLICY
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY



Dear readers,

The presentation of the Women of Europe Award in Dublin (see p.2) on 19 April emphasised, perhaps more than ever before

in its four-year history, what this prize stands for.

It collected together laureates from each of the twelve Member countries, excelling in the fields of drama, literature, the environment, women's issues, immigration, medicine, the elderly, information, politics and social affairs, before a woman who, herself laureate in 1988, has gone on to lead her country as President - Mary Robinson.

It therefore presented a prize both of unity and diversity; a prize which recognises the variety of contributions made by women and what they offer not just other women but Europe as a whole. Furthermore, it showed a prize which brings women together, establishes contacts, promotes mutual understanding and emphasises that, however different their activities, all are equally important in the achievement of a united Europe.

Such a Europe embraces as much the Mediterranean environment for which the eventual winner, Niki Goulandris, has worked so hard, as the green land of Ireland, as much the cultural significance of Dublin, Europe's City of Culture this year, as the political concerns of Mary Robinson herself.

Finally, as the career of Ireland's President demonstrates, the Women of Europe prize marks a step towards even greater achievements both for the laureates themselves and for women's place in Europe's future.

Fausta Deshumes La Valle

The list of NOW national coordinators can be obtained from the European Social Fund.

Contacts: Celia Alexopoulou, ESF, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels and Margarida Pinto, Equal Opportunities Unit (see address below).

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Advisory Committee met in Brussels on 22 April. After being informed of activities underway at the European Commission, the Committee gave its opinion on the Commission's draft Recommendation on childcare. The Committee was in favour of the draft, but stressed that it was necessary to adopt a global approach (quality of services, principle of equal access to jobs, working conditions for personnel, etc.), as recommended by the European Childcare Network.

The Committee then discussed its role in the Third Action Programme for Equal Opportunities on the basis of a document prepared by its Chairwoman, Ms Regina Tavares da Silva (Portugal). Ms Tavares considered that the Committee must "permit close cooperation between the Commission and the national equality organisations" and be an "essential partner in implementing the Third Programme".

Two major concepts for a new approach to problems were identified: partnerships and "mainstreaming" (the integration of equal opportunities policy in all other policies). The Committee would also like to be consulted not only on questions specifically concerning women but on all measures likely to affect them. In order to better fulfil its task, it needs to reinforce its collaboration with the Equal Opportunities Unit and with the Women's Information Service of the European Commission. Also, it would have to step up exchanges with the experts' network set up by the European Commission's Equal Opportunities Unit, with the social partners and women's NGOs, particularly the European Women's

... Lobby, and with other European or international organisations (Council of Europe, UNO, etc.). To this end, the Committee discussed the establishment of experts' networks under the Third Action Programme (see **Women of Europe Newsletter No. 15**) and said it would like to receive regular information on their membership and activities.

During the meeting, the Chairwoman of the European Women's Lobby, Ms Ana Vale, described the background and functioning of the Lobby, officially established in September 1990, and received an assurance of support from the Advisory Committee.

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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

When a woman of Europe receives the 1990 Woman of Europe Award

Elected "Woman of Europe" in Brussels at the end of 1990 from among eleven candidates from the other Community countries, Niki Goulandris (Greece) had not yet received her prize, a jewel representing two hands joined together symbolising the alliance between men and women, so necessary in the build-up of Europe. This was presented to her in Dublin on 19 April by Mary Robinson, President of the Republic of Ireland and Irish candidate for the Prize in 1988. Welcoming the national chairwomen of the Prize and this year's national prizewinners, Mary Robinson stressed several times the dynamic and innovative role that women can play in the construction of Europe. The president of the Council for the Status of Irish Women, Frances Fitzgerald (herself Woman of Europe for Ireland 1990) spoke on behalf of the Council to highlight the importance of the impetus set by the European Commission for the ef-

fective achievement of equal opportunities.

Invited all over Europe to speak her message "Ecology, a new social ethic", Niki Goulandris will now benefit from institutional support which will make her campaign more effective.

Contact: Woman of Europe Prize, Angèle Verdin, rue Américaine 193, B-1050 Brussels. Tel: (32 2) 649 37 59.

East-West Dialogue

"Knock down walls", "Build bridges", "Live together"—these are some of the themes for discussion at a seminar organised in Gyenesdias (Hungary) from 5-11 May by the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) with the support of the European Commission's Women's Information Service. Women from Community countries and Central and Eastern Europe will attend.

Information: Margit Pedersen, Osterbaeksvej 85 DK-5230 Odense Tel: (45 66) 125268, or Hilde Albertini, Women's Information Service (see below for address).

"Future Chefs" Trophy in Vichy

With her soup made from three types of fish served with scampi and leeks, 19-year-old Céline Cosseron won second place in the "Future Chefs" competition re-

served for female assistant chefs and students of French cookery colleges. She also received the silver plate awarded by the European Community to the youngest prizewinner in this competition. Born in February 1972, Céline Cosseron was the youngest of the five competitors in this category. Reine Sammut, restaurateur-chef at Lourmarin (France) won the trophy for "Women Chefs".

This second "Trophy" competition was held in Vichy on 16 April, and was attended by a number of local personalities. The event was set up and is run by Ms Simone Lemaire-Dajonneau to pay homage to the great women chefs of French cuisine and to encourage young women to follow in their footsteps. The high professional level of the competitors proves, if further proof is necessary, that the old clichés about male chefs should be forgotten. Young women can enter non-traditional professions quite confidently.

It was in order to reinforce this idea that the Women's Information Service of the European Commission became associated with this initiative.

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



Mary Robinson, President of The Republic of Ireland presenting The Woman of Europe Prize to Niki Goulandris in Dublin.

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

As the Luxembourg Presidency considered that none of the questions currently being dealt with at ministerial level were ready for adoption, it preferred to postpone the Council meeting of Social Affairs Ministers scheduled for 15 April. The Presidency felt that the Council would simply have been an opportunity for debate on directives currently being examined (organisation of working hours, protection during pregnancy, temporary and part-time work), with the risk that some "hesitant" Member States would harden their positions.

Informal meeting

Meeting informally on 5-6 May, Ministers for Employment and Social Affairs, arrived at an agreement (with the exception of the British Minister) on the main points of the draft Directive on worker consultation.

However, no progress was made in discussions on a new legislation protecting pregnant women nor on the legal basis of the Directive aiming to reduce the distortion of competitiveness relating to the use of "atypical" work (for example, temporary or seasonal work).

In both cases, disagreement followed concern about the effects on social security systems.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Childcare

According to the Parliament, a recommendation on childcare is an "insufficient instrument to deal with a problem of such fundamental importance". In its resolution adopted in Strasbourg on 19 April, the Parliament asked the Commission to submit a framework directive on childcare services in the Member States.

The resolution, presented with a report by Anita Pollack (Soc. UK), stressed that the inadequacy of childcare structures, notably for children under three years of age, "constituted a major obstacle to the full and equal participation of women in all sectors of society". It is also "significant in the inequality and discrimination which women constantly face in the world of work (low salaries, poor working conditions, atypical work, sectoral segregation and reduced professional mobility)". The Parliament is particularly concerned about groups at a serious disadvantage with regard to childcare, such as children in rural areas, ethnic minority children, handicapped children, children from single-parent families and low-income families.

The ultimate objective of the directive would be "to guarantee access to publicly-financed services for all parents who are in work or training", and for every child up to the age of ten. It should ensure that the Member States set up coherent services and lay down minimum standards for both public and private services, together with efficient inspection procedures. An attempt should be made to achieve "harmonisation at a high level", states the Parliament resolution, which notes wide differences between Member States.

According to the MEPs, the directive should also insist on better training and decent salary conditions for all childcare personnel. Training and re-training activities should be promoted by the Structural Funds.

We would like to remind readers that a study on childcare in Europe (1985-1990) has been published in the **Cahiers de Femmes d'Europe** series and is available from the Women's Information Service of the European Commission.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Atypical Work

The European Parliament's Social Affairs Committee, which met on 2 and 3 April, unanimously adopted the draft recommendation by Ms Heinke Salisch (Soc. Germany) on health and

safety for atypical workers. She stressed that the scope of the Community directive should not be limited, as the Council wished, to fixed-term and temporary work, but should cover all "contracts or employment relations other than permanent, full-time work and which are of a precarious nature". MEPs considered that atypical work does not justify a difference in treatment regarding working conditions.

These conditions included pay during maternity leave.

The Social Affairs Committee also gave its opinion on the 1992 social budget, asking for a considerable increase in financing for measures in the social field. The amendment adopted, which was drafted by Ms Leyla Onur (Soc. Germany), highlighted the resources for vocational training, employment and various Community programmes such as the one combatting poverty. She also demanded an effective doubling of loans from the European Social Fund (ESF) in the 1992 budget and not, as planned, in 1993 only.

Third Action Programme: equal opportunities policy is not binding enough

It is "absolutely indispensable that the Third Action Programme should be accompanied by a Council resolution binding the Member States to implement it and providing a guarantee of sufficient financial resources for this purpose", said Ms Nel van Dyck (Greens, Netherlands) in the opinion adopted nearly unanimously in April by the Social Affairs Committee on the Community's Third Action Programme on equal opportunities between men and women (1991-1995). The Community's legal arsenal must be supplemented and its application reinforced, she said, notably by directives on childcare, on sexual harassment at work and on the creation of quotas on the labour market. The Committee also demands an extension of the NOW Initiative, so that it would last five years instead of three, and with a budget of 350 million ECUs (instead of 120 million ECUs) as well as an increase in the credit destined for LEIs (local employment initiatives).

WOMEN'S RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Against Pornography

Meeting in Brussels on 29 and 30 April, the Women's Rights Committee held a hearing on **pornography**. "The phenomenon of pornography has reached intolerable dimensions", said Ms Christine Crawley, (Soc. United Kingdom), Chairwoman of the Committee, opening the debate. A number of guests from various Member States (journalists, experts, politicians, etc.) gave their views on pornography as a way of exploiting women and children; on the makers and consumers of pornography; on the legal and case-law situation regarding pornography; and on pornography and freedom of movement after 1992. Each expert highlighted the special aspects of the problem in his/her own country, stressing in particular the urgent need to take measures against the sexual abuse of children and the need to develop and improve sex education.

Ms Crawley said that the debate had been very worthwhile, and announced that the Women's Rights Committee would draft a report to highlight the measures adopted in some countries and would submit a resolution.

The main lines of this would include the promotion of sex education, the application of prohibitions laid down in law and the introduction of strict procedures on the opening of sex shops; the control of pornography-production and measures to oppose the laundering of money made from pornography just as for drugs; the study of the effects of the free circulation of products on the pornography market after 1993; the harmonisation of structures to protect women and children and the need to find a balance between finicky censorship and the fight against object "hard-core" pornography.

Childcare

The Committee also had an exchange of views with a Danish representative of "Dansoc Systems", a childcare promoting agency in Denmark. Dansoc, a private agency, offers various services in the social area, including recycling

courses for teachers, the analysis of needs for development of and the function of teaching, and consultation on finance, including national and European funding. Also among its objectives is the exportation of models.

Currently proposing its services to other European countries, Dansoc presents itself as a useful partner with which, practitioners, local and regional policy-makers, trainers, etc., wishing to learn from solutions already tried and tested in Denmark, can have these adapted to their own situation.

The draft report on **the evaluation of unpaid work by women**, presented by Hedwig Keppelhof-Wiechert (PPE, Germany), also featured on the agenda. The aim of this report is to make demands concerning the rights of women (social security, recognition of unpaid work) which have already been made by other bodies (the European Parliament, the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations – COPA, etc.).

The report on the **Third Action Programme on Equal Opportunities**, by Anna Catasta (Soc. Italy) was submitted to the Commission. It demands in particular a multi-annual timetable for directives, the strengthening of the role of the various parties involved such as the Economic and Social Committee (ESC), the social partners and the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities, and also an increase in credit to be made available for its implementation.

The Committee also discussed the draft report submitted by Ria Oomen-Ruijten (PPE, Netherlands) on the application of the third Council Directive on the gradual implementation of the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the area of **social security**. The report states that problems still persist in several countries and that the European Commission should introduce complaints. It also asked for further information as certain aspects were lacking in spite of the survey carried out among Member States. The European Commission representative confirmed that the application of this directive is a first stage and that it will be followed by others.

Useful address: European Parliament, 97-113 rue Belliard, B-1040 Brussels, OR, Plateau du Kirschberg, L-1919 Luxembourg.

PUBLICATIONS

An Evaluation study of Positive Action in Favour of Women, ER Consultants, V/5871/91-EN. Part of the Second Action Programme on Equal Opportunities, the study assesses the positive action undertaken by private sector enterprises, analysing the motives for this as well as the procedures and the content of this action. Available in English only.

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1991 IRIS Directory: Published in the form of a loose-leaf folder, the directory lists 333 IRIS member training programmes. Apart from the presentation of programmes, it includes an index and graphics (on employment sectors, types of training, etc.). Available in the nine official Community languages.

Information: IRIS Unit, c/o CREW, 38 rue Stévin, B-1040 Brussels.

Guide des Initiatives Communautaires Ressources Humaines – EUROFORM, NOW, HORIZON, Commission of the European Communities, 1991. This document describes the conditions of eligibility for the three new initiatives and presents recommendations for the preparation of transnational action. It also comprises a series of practical annexes (objectives of the Structural Funds, lists of persons responsible, information concerning other programmes).

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