

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES CALENDAR

30 Sept-2 Oct:

Seminar on the legal aspects of equal opportunities between women and men in the European Community, Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium)

7-8 October:

Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities

7-10 October:

First Fair on Women's Vocational Training in Europe (IRIS)

12 October:

Meeting of the Women's Rights Committee in Strasbourg

13 October:

Meeting of the Selection Committee for audio-visual projects relating to equal opportunities

19 October:

Adoption by the Council of the Directive on improving the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or who are breastfeeding

19 October:

Meeting of the Steering Committee for Equal Opportunities in Broadcasting and of the Women in Decision-making network

20 October:

Women in the new Länder: economic aspects

23 October:

Meeting of the Working Group on vocational training for women (IRIS)

26 October:

Seminar organized by European Women in Trade and Craft SMEs, Annecy (France) on the topic of "Recognition and the Future within the EC"

29 October:

Study day on "Sexual Harassment at Work", organized by the Belgian Committee on Women's Work with support from the Equal Opportunities Unit of the European Commission.

2-3 November:

Summit and conference on "Women in Power", Athens.

## COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

### ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Advisory Committee met in Brussels on 7 and 8 October. Following an update on equal opportunities development at the European Commission, the Committee looked at the restructuring of the



# WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

NEWS  
ON THE EQUALITY POLICY  
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Dear Readers,

*On 19 October, following months of discussions and within hours of the final deadline for its endorsement, the Council adopted the Directive to improve the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.*

*This Directive, based on Article 118 A of the EEC Treaty and announced in the Commission's action programme for implementing the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers, contains a number of minimal provisions to protect pregnant women at work, as well as women who have recently given birth or who are breastfeeding.*

*For the European Commission, this text, though much watered down, still represents an improvement compared with the existing situations in certain Member States.*

*It is important to note that the text also calls for an overall evaluation in 5 years' time, based on reports presented by Member States, which could lead to a possible revision of the Directive.*

*Moreover, the minimum provisions of this Directive, which leave individual Member States the option of introducing better legislation, do not in any way represent a "downwards" harmonization. It is an important first step. Our job now is to improve the provisions adopted by the Council.*

Anne-Blanche Harito

Women's Information Service. The Committee stressed the need, felt throughout all Member States, for more information, and expressed its concern at seeing this function being diluted. The Working Group on the Structural Funds reported on its work, insisting on the need for the Equal Opportunities Committee to be involved in the dialogue on the reform of the Structural Funds, and to ensure that the difficulties of women in declining sectors are taken into account. The Committee then looked at the implementation of the Third Community Action Programme for Equal Opportunities (1991-1995) in Member States, reminding those involved of the need to remain vigilant in order to preserve the progress made to date and to improve the situation of women in all areas of social and economic life.

The work in progress on the Commission's Memorandum on job classification was presented by an expert who explained the difficulties of comparing work of equal value.

Mrs Hubert, who heads the Commission's Equal Opportunities Unit, assured the Committee that trade unions and employers will be involved in the consultations on this memorandum.

The Committee was also informed about work on "mainstreaming" policy within the European Commission. Lastly, it elected a new President, Renata Lampsa (Greece), who replaces Joanna Foster (United Kingdom). The Committee congratulated Joanna Foster and thanked her for all the work she had done. She now becomes Vice-President, together with Grethe Fenger-Moller (Denmark).

Contact: Els Van Winckel, Equal Opportunities Unit. ■

## LEGAL ASPECTS OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

A major European symposium on equal opportunities within the European Community was organized at Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium) by the European Commission, in collaboration with the International and European Law Department of the Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve (UCL). This symposium followed on the 1985 symposium on "Legal equality of women and men in the European Community". The two objectives of this year's symposium were to sensitize an audience of interested legal professionals, not necessarily specialized in equal opportunities legislation, and to provide a discussion forum to assist the European Commission in promoting its equal opportunities strategy. In their con-

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clusions, participants listed the various problems under the different symposium topics, such as national procedures preventing individuals and groups from obtaining their legal rights, the development of "good practice" at national level, and aligning national legislation with Community law in terms of procedures and compensation. Participants went on to draft a list of six main items which can serve as a basis for a Commission strategy to promote access to equal opportunities.

*Information: Orlagh O'Farrell, Equal Opportunities Unit. ■*

### Women and Decision-Making

At the end of its first year of activity, the "Women and Decision-making" network is finalizing a report on women's involvement in decision-making in politics, government, collective bargaining organizations, national advisory committees, etc. During its 9 September, 1992 meeting in Brussels, the network also continued its analysis of obstacles standing in the way of genuine parity between men and women at this level of decision-making. It also put the final touches to a strategy it will be recommending in order to redress the situation. This three-level strategy involves legal and legislative work, changing mentalities and fundamental research. The network will draw inspiration from actions already carried out in certain Member States. The next network meeting is scheduled during the Athens conference on 2-3 November, at which network members will be active participants.

*Coordinator: Sabine de Bethune, 33 A, rue Mercelis, B-1050 Brussels*

### Steering Committee for Equal Opportunities in Broadcasting

Meeting in Brussels on 19 October, the Steering Committee for Equal Opportunities in Broadcasting focused on the question of women in decision-making positions, examining a document presented by the committee coordinators based on 26 responses to a questionnaire circulated to European television and radio organizations. Whilst the results show a small improvement since 1990, the situation is far from satisfactory: in 2/3 of these organizations, there is not a single woman on management boards. The Steering Committee also discussed a series of recommendations for developing new recruitment procedures to enable women gain access to decision-

making positions. We would also point to the latest issue of the Steering Committee's "Women on the Air" information bulletin, available in the nine official Community languages.

*For further information, please contact the coordinators: Kate Holman, 9, Geneesheerstraat, B-1560 Hoeilaart, tel. (32.2) 657.37.26, fax.: (32.2) 657.55.86 or Solange Ortiz, 49 rue Cambronne, F-75015 Paris, tel. (33.1) 40.65.94.52, fax. (33.1) 47.34.46.67.*

### Women and Employment in the new Länder

The Equal Opportunities Unit has introduced a programme aiming to integrate women from the new German Länder into the European Community. As part of this programme, it is organizing a series of specialized seminars. The most recent of these, on women's employment and training in the European Community, was addressed to some twenty women politicians in charge of employment, female trade unionists and representatives of unemployed persons' associations and training projects. Speakers provided information on the work of various European networks involved in women's employment and training, and explained the working of the European Social Fund and other structural funds. During the seminar, participants had an opportunity to see the video film "Frauen auf dem Weg nach oben" (Removing Invisible Barriers), produced by the European Commission and presenting examples of good practice to assist women into taking up management positions.

*Information from Els van Winckel or Angelika Hauf, Equal Opportunities Unit, DG V. ■*

### EUROPEAN WOMEN TRADE UNIONISTS AND MAINSTREAMING

The conference on equal opportunities organized by the Women's Committee of the European Trades Union Confederation (ETUC) in Milan on 28 and 29 September, 1992 provided an opportunity to look at the influence of trade union policies and strategies in this area.

The working parties examined in particular how women's activities had evolved within their own trade unions in terms of representation, the influence of women's

conferences on major trades union conferences, collective bargaining and economic and social policy. Women's representation in trades union management bodies still faces obstacles, in particular concerning involvement in European and international work. The conference stressed the need for women to be present in decision-making bodies, in particular in all permanent ETUC committees.

The Committee also reviewed and revised its "list of demands" relating to the right of employment: the need for training, segregation and upgrading of female jobs, Community-wide regulations governing part-time and atypical employment, burden of proof in the area of equal pay and treatment, and job classification. Equal opportunities should no longer be considered as a specific, limited policy, but should be an integral part of overall policy. This does not mean an end to the Women's Committee. Rather it points to the need to strengthen it to provide both an impetus and a framework for equal opportunity, said Beatrice Hertogs. *Contact: Catherine Byrne, ETUC, 34 rue Montagne-aux-Herbes Potagères, B-1000 Brussels.*

### WOMEN, POLICY AND REGIONS

"Women represent an essential force for innovation within the new European Union". This is one of the messages of the IVth Conference of local and regional elected representatives held in Heidelberg from 9 to 11 September 1992, organized by the Council of European Communities and Regions, with support from the Commission of European Communities, and which was attended by almost 400 local and regional elected representatives.

Female local representatives should not be afraid to make their voices heard in the discussion on women's place in political organizations. This was emphasized by Mrs Gullenstein, the Mayor of Mülheim and Germany's first woman mayor (since 1981). Even if unanimity does not exist, we need to introduce provisional measures such as quotas, delegates declared. During a lively debate on the future of the Union, Danish representatives explained the meaning of the Danish NO to Maastriicht. Vasso Papandreou highlighted the prospects that European political union represented and the importance of women being strongly represented and involved in current decisions. The conference also looked at the problem of migration, calling on the Community to define as soon as possible a joint policy on migration and rights of asylum,

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## IRIS FAIR 1992: WOMEN, A VITAL RESOURCE

*Women account for an increasing portion of the labour market in the European Community. Given the importance of qualifications and know-how in what is a buyers' market, training is becoming an increasingly evident necessity. The recognition of this need as well as new developments in this area explain the large turn-out at the first European Fair on Women's Vocational Training organized by the IRIS network in Brussels from 7 to 10 October.*

### A Potential for Europe

In his opening message, European Commission President Jacques Delors made reference to the Fair's title: women indeed represent a vital potential force and a source of labour and skills in making the Single Market a concrete reality, as well as for strengthening European enterprises. For the President, whilst vocational training for women can help enterprises grow, it is also a fundamental element in combatting unemployment, which affects many more women than men throughout the Community. The IRIS Network has been a positive force in highlighting effective initiatives and revealing good practices in this area, he added. Set up by the European Commission in 1988, it includes almost 500 vocational training programmes, in every Member State, providing training for women in every sector. Although IRIS is now four years old and is proving its vitality by its initiatives in the field, its future remains a cause for concern. Christine Crawley said in her opening address. She reiterated the support of the Women's Rights Committee for the network. Vasso Papatreou, European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, recognized the importance of IRIS' "mainstreaming" role, which is an integral part of the Third Equal Opportunities Action Programme and highlighted its complementarity with other Community initiatives, such as NOW, in promoting women's employment and training. The need to continue and to promote current initiatives on women's training was also raised by Joanna Foster, Chairman of the Advisory Committee and by Ann Greengrass, speaking on behalf of Gillian Shephard, President of the Council of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers of the EC.

### A Genuine Meeting Place

More than 700 visitors attended the Forum exhibition where some 100 training and equal opportunities organizations from all Member States presented their activities. Visitors could also watch multi-media demonstrations, see videos and interrogate an "on-line" database. During the Fair some 20 well-attended workshops examined key issues in women's training. Various experts involved in vocational training also led a series of workshops on other Community programmes.

During these workshops, participants had the possibility to discuss a wide range of issues such as continuing training and equal opportunities (FORCE), sectors undergoing restructuring (ETUC - European Trade Union Confederation), women and new technologies (COMETT), women's training and enterprise culture (UNICE, which represents European employers) and training women in farm tourism (Women's Committee of COPA, the Committee of Agricultural Organizations in the European Community). All these workshops looked at the different aspects of how to guarantee sufficient resources for women's training, at the specific characteristics of training for women, the need to provide women with better and different forms of guidance in the choice of training and adapting training resources to new needs.

### Enterprises and Women

"Equal opportunity is not a women's problem, rather it involves everyone of us", one speaker said. Companies have developed a male culture. We must open them and change their habits from the inside. These habits frequently lead to stress, aggressiveness, heart problems and depression.

Employers have to play a key role in women's training. Gurli Nielsen of the Federation of Danish Employers admitted that "traditional attitudes can change through information and discussion". Firms need to recruit more women but tend to believe that career breaks and flexi-hours make women more expensive than men. "The only solution is to persuade men to share family responsibilities", declared Renata Hornung-Draus, Director of Social Affairs at UNICE.

### Women in the Rural World

Women in farming find themselves in a particularly "high-risk" situation. An estimated 6 million women farmers in southern European countries will have to cease their activities. "These women have played a vital role in the development of the farming industry and are frequently the true managers of the farm," declared Mr A. Hardt from CEPFAR, adding that many of them urgently needed training. These statements were confirmed by participants and speakers who presented experiences in farm tourism and local development in the rural environment.

### Combatting Poverty and Racism

Throughout Europe, with the exception of the United Kingdom, women's unemployment is almost twice as high as men's. Though women do not form a homogenous block, an increasing "feminization of poverty" is emerging. Participants recognized that training for women who have been outside the labour market for a long period needs to include a major element of personal development and pre-training. Speaking from their own experience they added that training must also be flexible and individualized.

Training provides an instrument for fighting against any form of inequality and exclusion. The experience of various members of the IRIS network demonstrates the importance of turning specifically to the categories of women confronted with additional forms of exclusion or inequality, in particular migrant and black women. "As members of IRIS which, in Europe, is identified as a driving force for political change we are responsible for ensuring that every woman has an equal chance of success. We are not talking about undertaking different training programmes, but of introducing an "ethical background" into training programmes".

### New Training Sectors

Various workshops went on to explore new job areas for women: traditionally male professions which women are increasingly entering as well as new qualifications (for example, in environment- and IT-related occupations). When it comes to these new areas, participants stressed the importance of the training of trainers, as well as developing evaluation methods.

### Ensuring a Future for Training

Finally several workshops repeatedly emphasized the increasing need for greater funding from structural fund resources to ensure the future of women's training. Despite the importance of the NOW initiative in terms of exchange of know-how and support for innovative measures, women also need to benefit from other, more richly endowed funds. They should also be given an opportunity to be involved in negotiations on the reform of the Structural Funds.

This first-ever Fair has demonstrated that women's training is no longer a marginal issue. The IRIS network, which is soon at the end of its first phase, has provided both practical and political proof of this. The number of participants over these few days, the involvement of exhibitors and the point of view expressed by the speakers all point to the overriding importance of vocational training for women. It merits the attention of decision-makers and the allocation of the appropriate funding. A dossier on the Fair will be published in the near future.

*For all information: IRIS Office, c/o CREW, 21 rue de la Tourelle, B-1040 Brussels, tel.: (32.2) 230.51.58, fax: (32.2) 230.62.30*

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insisting in particular on the need for initiatives to resolve the special difficulties of integration of migrant women. The conference also expressed its pleasure at the importance of the environment in new Community policies, and reiterated the need to promote "adequate and safe" collective transport services which take account of women's need for mobility today. The theme of the Vth conference will be "Women and Politics".

*Information: Hilde Albertini, Women's Information Unit, DG X, 120 rue de Trèves, 1049 Brussels, tel (32.2) 299.92.32*

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

### A NEW PRESIDENT

The only woman currently at the head of a Community organization, Susanne Tiemann (Germany), was elected President of the Economic and Social Committee (ESC) of the European Community on 21 October. The ESC is a consultative body which is called upon to give its opinion to the European Commission and the Council on economic and social issues. Members are organized into three groups: "employers", "workers" and "various interests" (agriculture, cooperatives, consumers, liberal professions etc.), and 9 sections. A 45 year-old German lawyer and mother of 3 children, Susanne Tiemann, has, since 1987, represented the German liberal professions and doctors within the "various interests" group. In 1990, she was elected Vice-President of this group. She was also elected this year as the first woman president (in 43 years) of the Bund der Steuerzahler, a powerful German association of taxpayers which has several hundred thousand members. Susanne Tiemann, although rejecting the idea of "quotas", nonetheless regretted the fact that very few women commit themselves to leadership positions at European level. Only eleven out of 149 members are women at the ESC.

*Information: ESC, 2, rue Ravenstein, B-1000 Brussels, Tel. (32.2.) 519.92.80 /92.07*

## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

### WOMEN'S RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Meeting in Galway (Ireland) on 28 and 29 September and on 12 October in Strasbourg, the Women's Rights Committee discussed the draft Directive on the protection of pregnant women at work (finally adopted on 19 October).

The Committee also looked at the situation of women in Ireland, in particular at the question of the right to divorce and of abortion, in the run-up to two referenda in that country.

*Information: European Parliament, 97-113 rue Belliard, B-1047 Brussels or Plateau du Kirschberg, L-1919 Luxembourg*

### SEMINARS

**"Women in Power"**: 2-3 November, Athens. The first European summit aimed at bringing together women currently or previously occupying positions of considerable responsibility. This will be preceded by a conference at which several hundred experts from public institutions, associations and organizations will discuss strategies to promote women's participation in power.

*Information: Maria Stratigaki, Equal Opportunities Unit, DG V, Commission of the European Communities, rue de la Loi, 200, 1049 Brussels.*

**"The Mediterranean, a Meeting Place"**: 24 to 28 November, Valencia, organized by the Institut Valencia de la Dona. The meeting will examine the subject of "Women as creators and transmitters of culture" via three major topics: "Mediterranean myths, rites and legends", "Mediterranean people, enduring signs of identity" and "The Participation of women's work in social income: different economic and cultural models in the zone". *Information: Silvia Fajarnes, Institut Valencia de la Dona, c/o Naguera, 9, E-46003 Valencia. Tel.: (34.6) 391.488; fax. (34.6) 391.4421.*

## PUBLICATIONS

**Women of Europe no. 70**: the final issue of this magazine which has contributed much to women's Europe, contains a series of articles marking more than a decade of policy and initiatives to improve the situation of women in the twelve Member States.

*Information: Women's Information Service (address below)*

**Two Steps Forward and One Step Backward**: V/1765/92-EN. L. Valbjorn and M. Hansen. A code of good practice based on over 10 years' experience of political development and activities in the area of equal opportunities in Denmark.

**An Evaluation of the IRIS network – Final Report**: PA Cambridge Economic Consultants Ltd.

**Recommendations for Promoting Equal Opportunities 1986-1991**, V/1802/92-EN, Steering Committee for Equal Opportunities in Broadcasting. This paper deals in particular with the recruitment, training, and protection of the dignity of women and men at work, and working conditions. Available in French and English.

**Non-traditional Vocational Training: Training for Women and Girls in the Netherlands** (V/1766/92-EN) B&A Group.

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

*Erratum: Maternity leave in Belgium (see the table in no. 27 of "Women of Europe newsletter") is 15 weeks, including one obligatory week before and eight after the assumed date of delivery. The other six weeks can be taken either before or after this obligatory period.*

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