

## EQUAL RIGHTS IN JUNE

2 and 3 June

European Parliament Women's Rights Committee

7 June

"Swedish women facing Europe" – Conference organized in Stockholm by the Swedish Social Affairs Minister, Bent Westerburg

14 to 26 June

World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna under the aegis of the UN Human Rights Centre

17 and 18 June

"Fathers in families of tomorrow" – conference organized by the Danish Social Affairs Ministry in conjunction with the Commission of the European Communities. The primary aim of the conference was to look more closely at the status of the father and his new role.

23 and 24 June

"NOW experience in integrating equal opportunities in training and employment policies". Seminar organized in Madrid by the NOW initiative as part of its 1993 programme.

24 June

"Combatting sexual harassment: a guide to implementing the codes of practice of the Commission of the European Communities" introductory seminar organized by IRS (Industrial Relations services).

24 and 25 June

Meeting in Brussels of the Italian National Network of Women Journalists.

28 and 29 June

European Parliament Women's Rights Committee. Debate with Jytte Andersen, Danish Employment Minister.

## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

### COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The Committee on Women's Rights met in Brussels on 2 and 3 June 1993. A debate was held with Jytte Andersen, President of the Council of Social Affairs Ministers. A number of Members of Parliament again complained about the lack of progress in the Council on the directives on parental leave, social security, atypical forms of employment and reversal of the burden of proof. The President said that the Danish Presidency had felt that too few conditions for making progress on these directives had been met for it to be worthwhile reopening the debate in the Council. She also stressed the need to take positive steps to combat unemployment and the economic crisis by bolstering growth initiatives and the social dialogue while at the



# WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

Dear reader,

*The World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna from 14 to 25 June, focused on the fundamental question of the universality of human rights. No-one would disagree with the statement made by Mr Boutros Boutros Ghali, UN Secretary General, that human rights are the irreducible human minimum, the quintessence of the values whereby we affirm that we are a single human community, and that these rights are inalienable. Although this principle is generally accepted, women issued a different challenge to the conference: to give women's rights their rightful place within the overall context of human rights. To some, this demand could appear to be irrelevant, since the expression "human rights" embraces "women's rights", and a number of international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and, at Community level, the European Declaration on Human Rights, outlaw discrimination on grounds of sex. Nevertheless, while the term "human rights" may well apply to both sexes, true equality of opportunity has still not been achieved. This state of affairs arises in part from the fact that for centuries the rights of women were regarded as secondary to the rights of men and attitudes are slow to change. The deplorable habit of treating men and women in a different way is so firmly rooted in people's minds that the scale of the violations of women's rights is not always apparent to governments and the public.*

*Acts such as those committed against women in the former Yugoslavia or in Somalia have prompted the various women's movements to point out the inadequacy of the initiatives taken to defend women's rights. The World Conference on Women is fast approaching (see the article in this Newsletter) and a variety of conferences and actions in support of women will be held in advance of this important event. Let us hope that the problems of women's rights will not be confined to these initiatives and that they will be seen in the broader context of human rights.*

*Anne-Blanche Haritos*

Anne Blanche Haritos

same time respecting equality between women and men.

Ms. Andersen also announced that, during the Danish Presidency of the Community, a conference on "Fathers in families of tomorrow" was to be held in Denmark in June. This conference, which dealt with one of the objectives of the Third Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for women and men, was concerned with encouraging a redistribution of jobs in the home to achieve true equality of opportunity between women and men. Finally, she expressed indignation at the recent ruling in Germany on abortion which, in her view, was a retrograde step.

One of the current priorities of the Women's Rights Committee is the reform of the Structural Funds. The amendments proposed by Christa Randzio-Plath (Soc., Germany) on this topic were adopted and will be voted on in the June Plenary. While the European Social Fund Regulation includes the promotion of equal opportunities between women and men among its objectives for the first time, Ms. Randzio-Plath expressed regret nevertheless that this aim had not been extended to the other Funds, which also affect a great many women—for example, 34% of those employed in agriculture are women.

A number of other reports were also adopted at the meeting. The report by Hedwig Kerpelhoff-Wiechert (EPP, Germany) on women's unwaged work was adopted unanimously. It calls on the Commission to establish criteria for assessing the importance of this type of work and on the Member States to take account of women's unwaged work in their GNP and to set up adequate individual social security.

The Lenz report (EPP, Germany) on the situation of women in Central and Eastern Europe was also adopted. Commenting on the dangers facing these women, Ms. Lenz called on the Community to do more to help them to establish legal principles guaranteeing their political, economic and social rights. She also wanted to see information on EC programmes made more accessible to them and called on Parliament to organize a conference with women representatives from Central and Eastern Europe to discuss together ways of combatting discrimination. Finally, the report by Raymonde Dury (Soc., Belgium) on the IRIS network and vocational training for women was adopted. We shall return to these reports in the next Women of Europe Newsletter, by which time they will have been voted on in the plenary.

Useful address: European Parliament, 97-113 rue Belliard, B-1040 Brussels, or Plateau de Kirchberg, L-1919 Luxembourg.

### Committee on Agriculture

Meeting in Brussels in June, the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture approved and expanded the Commission's proposed improvements for the reform of the EAGGF Guidance Section. The Members discussed in detail all the amendments proposed by the Women's Rights and Environment Committees ready for the debate at Parliament's June Plenary in Strasbourg. They called, among other things, for measures to assist young farmers and women.

## COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

### THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL POLICY

The Commission has now tabled most of the proposals planned in its action programme relating to the implementation of the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers. The course of the next phase of European social policy has already been mapped out and the key points of reference will be the Community Charter, the progress achieved on the action programme, the new legal and institutional framework provided in the Maastricht Treaty and the main social and economic trends both in Europe and at a wider international level.

It is of vital interest to the citizens of Europe that specific proposals should be submitted on social issues to guide Community policy on this matter over the coming years. Aware of what is at stake, the Commission has decided to launch a wide-ranging discussion on the basis of a Green Paper, which will be submitted to the Council, Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee in the autumn. An invitation to contribute to this process was published in the Official Journal of the European Communities (C 117, Vol 36, 28 April 1993).

What underlies the Green Paper is "the desire for maximum consultation with important groups and organizations in order to gather materials for the analysis of the problems currently facing us with regard to employment, industrial relations and social matters." In addition, it is felt that a high level of contributions from women affected by Community equal opportunities policy should help develop a new perspective on the social policy that is at the heart of the Community project. The Green Paper will thus serve to stimulate thought on how to identify and implement future social strategies.

On 4 June 1993, the Green Paper working group set up by the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities met in Brussels. At the Committee's previous meeting Mr Crespo Valera, the former Director-General of the Commission's DG V, had invited the Committee to contribute to the preparation of the Green Paper. After the working group had discussed the matter and its members had been consulted, the Committee sent its opinion on the Green Paper to the Commission. The Committee emphasizes that the Community must recognize and promote economic, social and cultural rights, which all constitute basic rights. Its policy must be based on the abolition of all forms of discrimination and, in particular, discrimination against women, who are a vital resource for Europe's future. If women are to approve the idea of a European union and lay the foundations, future social policy must be synonymous with progress. Absolute priority must there-

fore be given to measures that make it easier to combine professional and family responsibilities.

A variety of objectives and measures were proposed. They include developing systems that enable workers to stop work temporarily or to alter their working hours without prejudicing their careers; increasing, improving and diversifying training for women, and diversifying women's jobs and careers; improving living conditions for elderly, rural, handicapped and black women, and women belonging to other racial minorities; developing measures to increase women's involvement in the decision-making process; developing and improving measures to fight indirect discrimination; eliminating all discrimination against part-time working women; and developing a real equal opportunities information policy to enable all women in Europe to find out what the Community is doing about women's rights and equal opportunities. Finally, in more general terms, the Committee insisted that an equal opportunities policy should be integrated into every policy area ("mainstreaming" equal opportunities).

A team headed by Pádraig Flynn, Commissioner responsible for social affairs, will take the contributions of the various parties involved and reactions to the Green Paper as a basis for the White Paper they will be preparing for publication in 1994. This paper will present a strategy for meeting the challenge of the recession and sketch the outlines of a post-Maastricht Europe.

### FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

In September 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women will be held under the auspices of the United Nations in Beijing. Womens' associations, governments, UN bodies and the Commission of the European Communities are already preparing for it.

The conference will have two main objectives. The first will be to evaluate the implementation of the "forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women" adopted at Nairobi in 1985 for the period up to 2000. The second will be to establish a basis for action and to look at the principal conclusions and recommendations of the preparatory conferences which will be held on every continent (the European regional United Nations conference is scheduled for autumn 1994 in Vienna).

The Commission will be taking part in this conference. For many years it has been taking a variety of measures to promote women's interests, both at Community level and in the context of its relations with third countries (ACP, Mediterranean, Asian and Latin American). It also participated actively in the previous conferences on this subject and has been regularly represented at sessions of ECOSOC's Commission on the Status of Women, which is in charge of preparing the conference. The Commission will therefore be keeping a close watch on the preparations for the Beijing conference and actively contributing to the process.

The relevant Directorates-General of the Commission have already started working to this end. On 11 June 1993 a first inter-departmental meeting was held to establish direct contact between all the units concerned in order to initiate discussion on how the Commission might contribute to preparations for the fourth World Conference. At this meeting, the various departments presented the measures they were taking to promote women's interests, gave an account of the results of their activities and expressed their first ideas about how to prepare for the Conference.

Agnès Hubert, head of the Equal Opportunities unit in DG V, informed those present that her Unit was administering the budget item for organizing a regional women's conference during the first half of 1994 to prepare for the Beijing conference. This regional conference is to be attended by representatives of government equal opportunities offices, parliaments and NGOs, and can serve as a point of departure for establishing the Community's official position at the Beijing conference.

DGs I, V and VIII will be cooperating to organize discussion of the fundamental issues involved, principally for the preparatory conferences, and to produce the Commission communication for submission to the Council.

After the Vienna Conference on Human Rights (14-25 June 1993), another inter-departmental meeting will be held to discuss the results of this conference and the lessons to be learnt from it.

*Information: Irene Kingston, Equal Opportunities Unit, DG V, Commission of the European Communities, rue de la Loi 200, B-1049 Brussels.*

### NETWORK NEWS

#### IRIS

At a press conference, Raymonde Dury (Soc., Belgium) announced that at the next plenary session of the European Parliament she was going to question Pádraig Flynn, the Commissioner responsible for social affairs, on the future of the IRIS network and on training for women at Community level. She intends to ask Mr. Flynn to initiate specific measures for women's training.

The IRIS report, which was adopted on 3 June by the Social Affairs Committee and will be discussed by Parliament in June, shows the importance of continuing this programme. The main objective of this network is to establish contact between bodies responsible for training women, to enable others to benefit from examples of good practice and to contribute to the development of training methods adapted to women's needs. The report emphasizes that women are trapped in precarious forms of employment and in sectors where they are the first to be affected by the results of the recession. At the press conference Ms. Dury also raised the matter of single mothers facing poverty.

Despite the Dury report, the future of the IRIS network is still uncertain. The report calls for the continuation of the IRIS programme (for a second phase of at least five years) and a higher level of funding (the ori-

ginal allocation of ECU 750 000 has not been increased since IRIS was established in 1988). Ms. Dury concluded by stressing that "next week's vote in Parliament will be a pressure vote" and hoped that the Commission would take heed. The vote will take place on 22 June 1993. We will report on it in our next newsletter.

## NOW

The end of 1993 is the official expiry date of the NOW (New Opportunities for Women) programme. However, in order to allow the projects selected by the Member States to be satisfactorily implemented, the Commission has decided to extend them until the end of 1994. Moreover, in December 1992, because of the great interest the programme had aroused, its budget was increased (to a total of ECU 153 million) at the initiative of all the Member States. The projects will therefore continue until the end of 1994.

Also important, and likely to work in favour of NOW, are the current discussions on the reform of the Structural Funds. The objective of promoting equal opportunities is now an important item in the Social Fund Regulation and there is therefore every reason to believe that measures to promote women's interests will be stepped up, and NOW will benefit.

In this context the Commission has decided to work with national authorities, and with the direct collaboration of the national coordinators, to organize a number of measures to identify the best projects under the NOW programme and to develop similar projects on the basis of their experience throughout the Community until the end of the decade. Three seminars will be organized and their results and methods incorporated in a "code of conduct", to be published and widely distributed. This code will be made available to the two sides of industry and to the public authorities in order to stimulate the development of measures directed specifically at women in all the Member States within the framework of future Social Fund activities (1994-95).

"Diversification of women's professional choices" was the subject of the first seminar, which was held in Bonn on 6 and 7 May 1993. This was closely followed by another on "NOW experience in integrating equal opportunities in training and employment policies". The last will be held in Italy in October and will focus on "Reconciliation between family and occupational responsibilities". At the Dublin Congress on Community human resources initiatives—EUROFORM, NOW and HORIZON—on 22 and 23 November 1993, the results of these three seminars will be presented along with recommendations from experts and those implementing the initiatives at grassroots level. On the initiative of the Committee on Women's Rights, the European Parliament will also be holding a public hearing on 22 September 1993.

*Information: European Social Fund Directorate, Coordination Unit, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels, tel: (32 2) 235 42 95.*

## COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

### COMMUNITY-WIDE FRAMEWORK FOR EMPLOYMENT

At the informal meeting of Ministers of Employment and Social Affairs on 3-4 May 1993, the Commission of the European Communities was asked to present proposals for action concerning the employment situation in the Twelve. The Commission adopted a paper on 26 May 1993 entitled "Community-wide framework for employment", which contains proposals for action at all levels and invites the Twelve to coordinate consideration over the next 18 months of possible lines of action leading to a medium-term improvement in the employment

situation in the Community. It is based on four observations concerning employment: current high unemployment levels are unacceptable and damaging to the Community's competitiveness and to the cohesion of its societies; a more employment-intensive growth pattern is required if employment needs are to be met; an integrated policy response is called for to mobilize all those involved in employment matters; closer economic and political cooperation at Community level must be developed to ensure that national actions have maximum impact.

These observations lead to the proposal that "the Community institutions and the Member States commit themselves to a structured, cooperative and systematic process of analysis and policy reflection on possible solutions to the employment problem with a view to concerted policy action, centred principally on the need to create a more employment-intensive pattern of growth in Europe".

The key starting point is the establishment of an agenda and a timetable aimed at arriving at operational conclusions over an 18-month period between now and the end of 1994. Employment is the top priority of the Belgian Presidency starting in July.

## INFORMATION-COMMUNICATION

### Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)

At the meeting held in London on 28 May, the Standing Committee of local and regional representatives of the CEMR established its work programme for the forthcoming period. It focuses on the preparation of the European Parliament elections to be held in June 1994.

The Standing Committee set itself the task of bringing the situation to the notice of local and regional representatives in countries with few women members (Greece, Ireland, United Kingdom, Italy, Portugal and Spain). This will be achieved through national seminars

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...

aimed at supporting women candidates standing for election and will stress the need to elect more women to the European Parliament. An action will be targeted at the media to involve them in the campaign.

At that meeting, participants reviewed the contacts with countries in Eastern Europe. The CEMR gave an undertaking to associate women representatives in central and eastern Europe with their activities from next autumn.

Information: CCRE (Conseil des Communes et des Régions d'Europe) Secrétariat Général, 41 Quay d'Orsay F-75007 Paris Tel. (33 1)47 05 97 43.

## CONFERENCES

**Citizens' Week:** The fight against discrimination, 6-10 September 1993, organized by ECAS (Euro-Citizen-Action-Service). Different forms of discrimination will be discussed each day: sexual behaviour, age, handicaps, illness, exclusion, race and xenophobia. Information: ECAS, 1 rue Defacqz, 1050 Brussels. Tel. (32 2) 534 51 66.

## PUBLICATIONS

**The Equal Opportunities Unit.** This document contains a succinct and clear account of the Unit's areas of work and the activities and programmes supported in these areas. It is published in English and will soon appear in the other Community languages (V/5879/93-EN).

**Report on equal opportunities programme for boys and girls in education: 1988-92.** It reviews measures promoting equal opportunities in education in the Twelve and presents an array of very interesting examples.

**Women's LEI's innovate.** A special issue of the European women's local employment initiatives (spring 1993) presents various examples of LEIs supported by the Commission of the European Communities. It is available in French and English.

**Women of the South in European integration: Problems and Prospects (V/694/92-EN).** Available in Italian, Greek, Spanish and English. This study reviews the situation of women in four regions in the south of Europe and examines the impact of the European integration process on them.

**Women change decisions (women, decision-making and local strategies: some comparisons between Italy and the UK) (V/694/92-EN).** The report can be obtained from: Equal Opportunities Unit; Margaret Page, MAYA Training Consultancy Research, 127a Albion Road, London N16 9PL, UK; Daniela Pestarini, ELISSA SNC, via Flli Bronzetti 14, I-20129 Milan, Italy.

These publications can be obtained from the Equal Opportunities Unit, DG V, Commission of the European Communities, rue de la Loi, 200, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium.

**Age and attitudes,** Main findings of a Eurobarometer survey, and the **Programme of events for the European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations.** These documents can be obtained from DG V, Social Security, Social Protection and

Living Conditions Directorate, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium. Tel. (32 2)399 04 94.

**Social Europe: Social security for persons moving within the Community.** Available from the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, L-2985 Luxembourg.

*Erratum: Contrary to the statement made in the March issue of the Women of Europe Newsletter (No 32) Karin Junker, MEP and member of the Socialist Group and national President of the German Socialist Women's Association has not set up a new women's organization within the European Socialist Party. She urges the need for better representation of women in the European Parliament to increase their influence, and for a European social-democrat women's organization to include women of all parties to be set up in agreement with the ESP leadership. We convey our sincere apologies to Ms Junker.*

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### Women of Europe Newsletter in the nine Community languages

Hitherto the Newsletter has been published in French, English and German. From September 1993 it will appear in the nine official Community languages.

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