

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

PART-SESSION

The Structural Funds and Women

During Parliament's debate on the Structural Funds, Pádraig Flynn, Member of the European Commission, explained the Commission's approach regarding the European Social Fund. He said that the Fund had to become "a more sensitive, more effective and more flexible instrument for combating unemployment". Important progress has been made in the field of equal opportunities. Indeed, equal opportunities is becoming a specific priority in the rules governing the European Social Fund. Furthermore, a specific provision relating to equal opportunities has been added to Article 1 of the ESF Regulation (concerning the most disadvantaged regions of the Community) stipulating that all activities carried out in connection with the objectives of that article must abide by this principle. It should be noted that the Commission proposal concerning the ESF addresses most of Parliament's concerns.

Reports adopted

At Parliament's part-session in Strasbourg (21 to 25 June 1993), three reports by the Committee on Women's Rights were adopted. Firstly, the report by Raymonde Dury (Soc, Belgium) on the IRIS network and vocational training for women (A3-0199/93). Underlying this report is the certainty that in the Single Market, it is those workers who are the best trained, most mobile and most able to adapt to structural change who will benefit most by economic growth. However, women will not start out on an equal footing with their male counterparts and their low level of skill will not increase their chances on the employment market. Segregation between women and men still remains in this field (see article on the "Employment in Europe in 1993" report). In this context, specific measures will have to be introduced for the vocational training of women. Parliament therefore calls on the Commission to ensure the continuation of the IRIS network for a further period of at least five years whilst allocating it additional resources enabling IRIS to become a genuine resource centre for women's vocational training and employment. Another request is for the network to take part in the implementation of a Community policy on the vocational training of women and the dissemination of information on good practice in this area. Parliament is also calling for the equality dimension to be taken into account in the Structural Funds and stresses the need for all programmes to give systematic consideration to immigrant women.



WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

Dear Reader,

Belgium has taken over the presidency of the Council of Ministers of the European Community at what is a crucial time for Europe with an agenda loaded with many burning issues: the economic recession, the war in former Yugoslavia, the Community enlargement negotiations. However, the magnitude of the tasks faced by the Belgian presidency (which began in July) is made even greater by the fact that it has to implement the Maastricht Treaty on European Union, ratification of which should be completed in the coming weeks or months. During the six months of its presidency, Belgium, a founder member of the Community, which, as the President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, rightly points out, has always remained faithful to the spirit of the authors of the Treaty of Rome, will have to take up a number of challenges of fundamental importance to the Community and its people.

The Presidency's central concern will be economic revival and the fight against unemployment, which must be accompanied by an effective social policy. At the head of the Social Affairs Council, Jytte Andersen will be succeeded by another woman, in the person of Miet Smet. Her overriding priority is the promotion of employment. But in her dual functions as Minister of Employment and Labour and Minister for Equal Opportunities, Miet Smet will also devote special attention to equal opportunities policy. The minister will first and foremost have to break the deadlock on the directives on parental leave and the reversal of the burden of proof. During the Belgian presidency, Miet Smet also wants to achieve progress in the matter of night working for women and men. Furthermore, she is hoping to hold an informal council session on the equality issue and to organize two important symposia on the subject. The first of these would be held in October on the subject of equal pay and the classification of tasks for women and the second in November on the subject of safety at work with a special discussion on the subject of stress at the workplace. Miet Smet's intentions in the area of social policy are clearly as numerous as they are ambitious. We shall report on this in due course.

Many hopes have been placed in this presidency. Let us wish it every success in fulfilling the tasks awaiting it.

Anne-Blanche Haritos

Anne Blanche Haritos

During the same part-session, the European Parliament also adopted the report by Hedwig Keppelhoff-Wiechert (EPP, Germany) on the evaluation of unpaid work by women (A3-0197/93). This report clearly shows the scale of the phenomenon. More precisely, 81 million women in the Community currently stay at home, 9 million of whom are involved in their husbands' professional activity. This work accounts for between 30% and 75% of the Community's GDP, depending on the method of evaluation used, and is comparable with professional activity but is not recognized as such. The report emphasizes the need to obtain a proper status for women's unpaid work, which would first require various changes in the field of social protection and occupational status. In this connection, the European Parliament calls on the Commission to present a recommendation encouraging the separation of social security entitlements and promoting measures designed to reconcile occupational activity with family duties. It also calls on the Commission to establish criteria for the analysis and evaluation of the various aspects of unpaid work performed by women. Member States are asked to recognize unpaid work performed within the family, particularly time devoted to children, by introducing a proportional increase in pension entitlements. Furthermore, family law should be adapted within the Twelve in such a way as to protect women in the event of divorce.

Lastly, Parliament adopted the report on the situation of women in Central and Eastern Europe (A3-0198/93) presented by Marlène Lenz (EPP, Germany). The transition to democracy and the market economy in the Central and Eastern European countries has had many consequences for the situation of women in those regions. The report deals particularly with the situation of women on the basis of documents from Poland, Hungary, the Czech and Slovak Republic, Romania and Germany (including the former GDR). Generally speaking, the economic and social situation of women has greatly deteriorated in recent years. The women of these countries are poorly represented in decision-making positions, in both economic and political life, are concentrated in certain specific sectors and are often paid less than men. They are also severely affected by unemployment. Against this background, the European Parliament calls on the governments of the countries concerned to take measures to ensure the full participation of women in political and social life, to involve them in decision-making at all levels and to afford them access to all occupations whilst helping them to cope with their family responsibilities. An appeal is also made to the European Commission to make information on Community programmes more accessible to the women in those regions. Lastly, the European Parliament should hold a conference with women representatives from Central and Eastern Europe to examine the problems they are having to contend with.

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights met in Brussels on 28 and 29 June 1993 with Christine Crawley (Soc, UK) in the chair. She expressed her satisfaction at the fact that Bruce Millan, Member of the Commission, had accepted one of the most important amendments concerning the reorganization of the Structural Funds, i.e. respect

for the principle of equal opportunities in all activities carried out under the Funds.

An exchange of views took place between the Committee on Women's Rights and Terence Wynn (ESP, UK) on the general budget for 1994. The draft budget indicates that the subsidies allocated to the European Women's Lobby are to be severely reduced from ECU 350 000 this year to ECU 200 000 in 1994. This decision seems inappropriate to the members of Parliament, who have stressed the excellent work of this organization, which plays a fundamental role at

various levels, such as its role as mediator between the women of the European Community and the women of the northern countries which may soon be joining the Twelve. Furthermore, 1994 will be the year of the European elections. The Lobby will have to organize numerous activities in order to mobilize women for the elections.

The Committee on Women's Rights has also pressed for sufficient funds to be allocated to preparations for the World Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995, in which the European Commission will have no small

EMPLOYMENT IN EUROPE IN 1993

In July the Commission published the Report on Employment in Europe 1993 analysing the features, prospects and employment policies of the Twelve. It contains various data on the labour market, analyses of their interaction with other variables and points out possible consequences.

Pádraig Flynn, Member of the Commission with responsibility for employment, industrial relations and social affairs presented the report and declared that the prospects for economic growth were poor. More growth was needed, but growth alone would not resolve the problem of unemployment. A new approach must be found soon. The report stresses the progress made towards establishing a genuinely European labour market. It analyses the extent to which convergence has been achieved by the Member States in such vital areas as labour costs, productivity, trends in working time, education and training. One chapter is devoted to women in employment. The conclusions of the report are summed up below.

Unemployment

Unemployment will remain the major economic problem facing the Community throughout the 1990's. In 1992 employment levels fell and will continue to fall this year. By the end of 1994 unemployment in the Community will have reached 12%. Within the Community, however, the distribution of unemployment is very uneven. In addition to regional inequalities there are also inequalities between the sexes: unemployment rates are much higher among women than men. In April 1992, 12% of women were unemployed as against 8% of men. However, activity rates among women have risen markedly in the last 20 years. Between 1965 and 1991 the number of women in employment rose by 13 million (whereas the number of men in employment fell by 1 million). Over the same period 7 million new jobs were created for women and only an additional 1 million were created for men). Women still account for only 39% of the labour market, although they make up 51% of the population of working age.

Women's activity rates vary depending on different variables. Activity rates have increased most in the 25-49 age group, at a time when the great majority of women have family responsibilities. It is a surprise to note that activity rates have risen more sharply among women with children than among childless women. In most Member States, however, the activity rates of women with two or more children tend to be lower.

The level of education is another factor which has some bearing on this figure. Higher levels of education are matched by higher levels of employment. Activity rates of women with a higher education certificate in the 25-49 age bracket is 80% or over in all Member States, which is roughly the same as for men in this age group. On the other hand, activity rates of women with basic education or less is 60% in nine countries and below 40% in Ireland and Greece.

Part-time and temporary work: typical of women's employment

Part-time working is another notable aspect of women's employment. In 1991 only 4% of men on average were working part-time, compa-

red with 28% of women. This type of work is more commonly found among women over 50. In most Member States there is close correlation between part-time working and family responsibilities. In addition, part-time working is far more frequent among women than men. In 1991, 36% of temporary part-time jobs were held by women. Most women accept temporary work out of necessity rather than choice.

Concentrations of women in certain branches

Although at present women are better educated and in some cases obtain important posts, the large-scale entry of women to the labour market has not been matched by a significant diversification of sectors in which they work or the types of work performed. In 1991, 75% of women in employment were in the services sector and only 50% of men. Women participate, in particular, in two main sectors: health, education and other services in this sector, and in distribution and catering. In short, two trends stand out in women's employment. First, today a large number of women are better educated and better qualified, which gives them access to better positions in the labour market. The career profiles of women in this category increasingly resemble those of men. It should be noted, however, that these women are concentrated in the public sector or in jobs with similar profiles. The second trend concerns less well-qualified women. Their activity rates tend to increase, especially in administration and services. While professional advancement seems possible for women with a certain level of education, it is much less certain that less qualified women can improve their position on the labour market.

Low wages

The segregation of women and men on the labour market is one of the main reasons why the gap between the earnings of men and women (between 20% and 30%) persists in different situations. Application of the principle of equal pay for equal work is of limited effectiveness when jobs are distributed unequally between women and men and when the economic value of the work is assessed according to the sex of the worker concerned.

Clearly, the problems of employment go deep. The outlook in this area is gloomy: according to the report the signs are that there will be no recovery before spring 1994 at the earliest. At the end of the current year average unemployment could be as high as 12%. Mr Flynn expressed the general view of the Commission when he said there could be no miracle remedy, but real progress could be made if they tackled a wide range of issues simultaneously. They must develop production methods which would lead to more jobs in new sectors. The operation of labour markets must be improved. He considered that the report provided a useful contribution to the debate launched by the Commission (the Community-wide framework for employment presented in May, and the mandate given to President Delors at the Copenhagen European Council to present a white paper on growth, competitiveness and employment at the summit in Brussels later this year are the other two essential texts on Community thinking on employment). This report will be further examined during Employment Week in October 1993. Useful address: Structural Employment Policy and Labour Market, DG.V.B.1, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.

part to play. Other matters were emphasized such as the importance of continuing the IRIS and NOW programmes but also the Commission's obligation to allocate 12% of its information budget to women. This request was reiterated by Christine Crawley, who underlined once again the shortage of information for women as proven once more a short time ago in the referenda on the Maastricht Treaty.

At the same meeting, two draft reports were adopted by the Committee. Firstly the report by Lissy Gröner (Soc, Germany) on pornography, considered as sexual violence when it produced stereotypes of women or when it glorifies violence or treats women with contempt. The report states that the pornography market needs to be brought rapidly under control in order to ensure the protection of young people and the dignity of women. At the same meeting, the draft report on the new social dimension of the Maastricht Treaty presented by Ria Oomen-Ruijten (EPP, Netherlands) was also adopted. This new dimension must systematically include the principle of equal opportunities at the various levels of collective agreements. Furthermore, women will have to be better represented in trade unions. However, the committee did not adopt all the amendments to the opinion on medical research into congenital malformations, new technologies and ethical aspects presented by the rapporteur Hiltrud Breyer (Greens, Germany).

Lastly, the Committee on Women's Rights was addressed by Adrienne Germain, Vice-Chairwoman of the International Women's Health Coalition, on the work of this organization, which concerns itself with the health of the most disadvantaged women in the world's poorest countries and teaches them methods of birth control.

Also invited to address the committee at the same meeting was Lily Boeykens, Chairwoman of the International Women's Council, who announced a conference to be held in Brussels in the autumn of 1993 to analyse the economic and social situation of women in the post-Maastricht era.

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

(32 2) 284 21 11 or Plateau du Kirchberg, L-1919 Luxembourg.

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

NGO operations for women in Central and Eastern European countries and States of the former Soviet Union

General guidelines have been laid down for the joint financing of measures adopted by the NGOs in Central and Eastern European countries, and for certain operations in the States of the former Soviet Union under the heading of "development" and "women". The Community proposes to finance measures proposed by non-governmental organizations which have the following objectives:

- the establishment and/or reinforcement of local NGOs which direct their activities particularly at individual rights, the situation of women as regards employment, health and equal opportunities issues;
- the development of strategies and/or viable structures particularly in the field of employment and health in which the women beneficiaries can continue and follow-up the operations initiated or launch new ones.

A budget of ECU 600 000 has been allocated for operations in Central and Eastern European countries. Proposals (in five copies) must be received before 30 September 1993, when the assessment of the projects will begin.

Information: Mr S. Christiane, Directorate-General for External Relations Phare Operational Unit, Commission of the European Communities 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels. Tel: (32 2) 299 19 00.

INFORMATION-COMMUNICATION

Fathers in families of tomorrow

A number of seminars were held at the initiative of the Danish presidency, which ended on 30 June 1993. The seminar on "Equal Opportunities in the Future" held in Aarhus in May, highlighted the importance of integrating the "equal opportunities" concept into political, economic and social life. This fundamental issue of equality of opportunity does not arise solely in a professional context. The increase in the number of women in employment has radically changed traditional family structures. Reconciling professional and family life raises the question of childcare and calls for a redefinition of parental roles. To date, less attention has been paid to the role of the father and his prospects for securing equality of opportunity in respect of his children and family life than to the many roles assumed by the mother. This important issue of "fathers in families of tomorrow" was debated in Copenhagen on 17 and 18 June 1993 at a conference organized by the Danish Social Affairs Ministry in association with the Commission of the European Communities.

Most of the 150 delegates present at the conference (lawyers, sociologists, psychologists, teachers, NGO and government representatives and representatives of the two sides of industry), shared the view, to the consternation of some, that both parents, and certainly today's fathers, may feel the need to develop a fresh approach to their relations with their children and their spouse, given the changes permeating contemporary society. Most speakers agreed that the benefits to both children and parents are greater when the father's role extends beyond that of head of the family and figure of authority to that of companion and negotiator. Various studies have demonstrated the importance of shared roles for father and mother as an aid to a child's development.

...



Commission des Communautés européennes
DG X, Unité «Information Femmes»

rue de Trèves 120
B-1049 Bruxelles

•••

Even so, a number of speakers and participants pointed out that when it comes to the division of responsibilities, women, whether consciously or subconsciously, jealously guard their traditional responsibilities, even where this creates problems with regard to the reconciliation of professional and family life. This view undoubtedly echoes the point made by Peter Moss, Member of the Commission's "Child Care" network, underlining Article 6 of the recommendation on childcare adopted by the Council in 1992. This Article calls upon Member States to promote and encourage a more equal sharing of parental responsibilities between men and women and to enable women to have a more effective role in the labour market. Legislation can support changes in society but it cannot be the driving force making for change. Success ultimately depends on the ability to recognize the strong and sometimes negative feelings which such change necessarily entails.

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

TOP 93 Fair

The second "Top 93" took place in Düsseldorf from 1 to 4 July 1993 under the patronage of the President of the Bundestag, Rita Süßmuth, with the financial support of the Equal Opportunities Unit and the Information for Women Unit of the European Communities. Over 300 exhibitors participated, including the Federal Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Women and Youth, regional government, the media, women's organizations and CREW (Centre for Research on European Women). During this four-day event, the only one of its kind,

women came together from all over Germany to take part in around 50 seminars, debates and workshops on women at work and positive action. To conclude the event the "Top 93" prize was awarded to Csilla von Boeselager for her tireless efforts in support of the refugee cause. She also received the Women in Europe Prize in 1991.

Information: Hilde Albertini, Information for Women Unit, DG X, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049, Brussels.

SEMINARS

From dictatorship to democracy: Women of the Mediterranean and Central and Eastern Europe, Barcelona, 16 to 18 September 1993. An international conference organized by the University of Barcelona and the European Network for Feminist Studies in association with the Catalan Institute for Women. The completion of European Union has highlighted the need for increased cooperation and exchanges between women of the Mediterranean and Central and Eastern Europe. This conference will focus on the role of women under dictatorships and during the period of transition to democracy. It will also analyse the strategies developed to promote women's action in society, in order to help develop a framework for promoting the emancipation of women in the global context of the building of Europe.

Information: Mary Nash, Departament D'Historia Contemporania, Facultat de Geografia i Historia, Baldri i Reixach, s/n, E-08028 Barcelona. Tel. (93) 449 85 10.

Growing Old Without Violence, Brussels, 21 September. A conference organized by the

Council of French-Speaking Women in Belgium, to mark the European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations. *Information: CFFB, square de Meeûs 28, B-1040 Brussels. Tel. (32 2) 514 49 49.*

Second European Women Summit: Women, economics and social policy, organized by the International Council of Women (ICW) in conjunction with DG X of the Commission of the European Communities, 27 September 1993 in Brussels. *Information: ICW, 62 rue Belliard, B-1040 Brussels. Tel. (32 2) 238 27 40 (41-42-43).*

New approaches to the organization of work: "the challenge to companies and families", a seminar organized by the Commission of the European Communities, to be held in Brussels from 30 September to 1 October 1993. Two main themes will be addressed. The first of these, entitled "Work in the Future", will examine the concept of "Euro-mobility" and its implications for families. The second will focus primarily on working hours, homing in on two main issues: organization and flexibility at work and the effect of cultural change on firms and families.

Information: Frédérique Deroure, ECHO, 47 rue Van Aa, B-1050 Brussels, Tel. (32 2) 649 46 93.

Editor in Chief and coordination:

Anne Blanche HARITOS
WOMEN'S INFORMATION UNIT
Commission of the European
Communities

Directorate-General for Audiovisual
Information, Communication and Culture
Rue de la Loi 200, B-1049 Brussels
Tel. (32.2)299.94.11

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.

To help us amend our mailing list quickly would you please complete the slip below and return it to us.

Thank you.



(Slip to be detached or copied)

In which language do you wish to receive the Women of Europe Newsletter?

FR EN DE ES IT PT GR DK NL

(Circle the language chosen)

State the number of copies you wish to receive:

SURNAME: FIRST NAME:

ORGANIZATION:

ADDRESS:

.....

Subscription No: (See address label)

Return slip to: Commission of the European Communities
DG X, Women's Information Unit, rue de Trèves, 120, B-1049 Brussels
Tel: (32 2) 299 94 16 • Fax: (32 2) 299 92 83