

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The Women's Rights Committee of the European Parliament met in Thessaloniki from 4 to 6 October. A large number of Greek women's associations sent representatives, who took an active part in the discussions. Debate was centred mainly on the position of women in Greece and especially the under-representation of women in decision-making bodies (Greece has the smallest proportion of women in its national parliament of all twelve Member States and does not have a single woman member of the European Parliament). Participants pointed out that in Greece very few women stood in the October 1993 general election.

Two reports were discussed at this meeting – one by Teresa Domingo Segarra (non-attached, Spain) on the situation of women in agriculture and one by Jessica Larive (LDR, Netherlands) on women in the decision-making process. Finally, the members met the coordinators of the Local Employment Initiative networks and visited a project subsidized by the NOW (New Opportunities for Women) initiative.

Not long afterwards, on 12 and 13 November, Parliament's Women's Rights Committee met again to discuss a long and varied agenda. First to be discussed was the draft opinion by An Hermans (EPP, Belgium) on the many problems encountered by women as a sub-group of the elderly. An Hermans drew attention to the importance of demographic factors (there are more elderly women than men and they are more often affected by the problems of widowhood), financial difficulties (they have lower pensions and income than men) and the health problems which reduce their mobility. She called on the Commission to carry out further research into the most appropriate way of taking care of elderly people and expressed the hope that links might be set up between the organizations which dispense professional care and which are in contact with charitable bodies to exchange their experiences.

Ms Sherby from DG V of the Commission of the European Communities informed the meeting that the Commission would very shortly be publishing a report on the needs of elderly people in the Community and on women at work who bear the responsibility for elderly people. The final conclusions of this



WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

Dear Readers,

The Ministers with responsibility for equality between women and men from the 32 member countries of the Council of Europe have just decided in favour of the adoption of a Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights embodying the fundamental right of women and men to equality and the implementation of a plan of action to combat violence against women (see article in this Newsletter) at a time when the women's movement is celebrating two important anniversaries. First of these is the two-hundredth anniversary of the death of Olympe de Gouges, the French revolutionary guillotined on 3 November 1793 for "attempting to undermine the republic through her writings", which demanded "political rights" in addition to the right to be heard. Olympe de Gouges, who inspired the pre-feminist movement in France, made her mark on history when in 1791, in response to the omissions of the Declaration of the Rights of Man adopted on 26 August 1789, she wrote her "declarations of the rights of women". Unfortunately, history records no more than a tiny fragment of her statement: women have the right to mount the scaffold; they must also have the right to mount the rostrum.

A few days after the commemoration of the death of Olympe de Gouges came the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Louise Weiss, considered to be the "grandmother of Europe", a member of the first directly elected European Parliament in Strasbourg in 1979, and, at the age of 86, its oldest member. Louise Weiss fought tirelessly for peace, justice, human rights, women's rights and European integration. Her untiring campaign for a better world led her quite naturally to crusade for voting rights for women in France. This battle was won in 1945, when women were given the vote for the first time. More than just marking the occasion, these events provide an opportunity for reminding men and women of the need to continue the campaign for the liberation and independence of women. It is also an opportunity to point out that women are under-represented in decision-making bodies and that parity between men and women must be achieved in politics – and in other fields – if the democratic deficit is to be overcome.

Actions such as the "manifesto of 577 for democracy based on parity" (an initiative by the Réseau Femmes pour la Parité in France), which calls for elected assemblies at local and at national level to be made up of men and women in equal numbers, are essential to making the people and their leaders aware that parity of the sexes is a precondition for the achievement of democracy in the same way as the separation of powers or universal suffrage. Such initiatives are all the more important because in a few months' time the voters of Europe will be called upon to choose their representatives to the European Parliament. For this reason the European Network "Women in decision-making" launched a awareness-raising campaign in October calling for a balance in representation between men and women in European political life for the June 1994 European Parliament elections, the results of which are set out in this newsletter.

Anne-Blanche Haritos

Anne Blanche Haritos

report will be adopted at the Committee on Women's Rights meeting on 30 November.

Ms Van Hemeldonck (ESP, Belgium) presented to the meeting her work on the status of women in academic and scientific institutions in the Member States. She found that women are under-represented in important scientific research posts, that women researchers have smaller budgets than their male counterparts and that there is a significant difference in the education which boys and girls receive up to the age of 18.

A discussion was held with a number of women researchers who confirmed the difficulty encountered by women to gain access to interesting posts in scientific circles. Moreover, a concentration of women is to be found in the "minor" sciences (humanities, for example). Professor Rose (University of Bradford) suggested that the European Parliament might give more encouragement to financing for women in research and development. Professor Osborn (Göttingen) called for measures to ensure equal opportunities in science and research. She also called on the Commission to implement positive action in the field of research and to use money from the European Social Fund, DG V and DG XII to support action by women in these areas. In her view, only positive action could help women to find their rightful place in the world of science and technology. Ms Van Hemeldonck concluded that a debate in the House would be necessary and that concrete proposals must be made. Ms Van Hemeldonck's report will be discussed at the meeting of 30 November 1993.

Ms Mebrak-Zaïdi (ESP, France) introduced the opinion on the status of immigrants in the European Community. She deplored the low status of immigrants (rights and obligations) and their lack of integration, and highlighted the cultural problems and special difficulties faced by immigrant women. She argued that immigrant women should have proper status and called for a general debate on the matter in Parliament. The opinion was adopted unanimously with the addition of two amendments requested by Christine Crawley, one on the promotion of mutual understanding to combat racism and xenophobia and the other on voting rights for immigrants living in the Community.

The report by Anna Catasta (GEUL, Italy) on pension rights for divorced and separated women was not adopted in the absence of a consensus. Christine Crawley (EPP, United Kingdom) suggested holding the discussion over for the next meeting and tabling the report at the December part-session of Parliament.

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Finally, a brief preliminary discussion was held on the new accessions to the Community (Norway, Austria, Sweden and Finland). Speaking on behalf of the Commission, Ms Hauf informed the meeting that she anticipated no major problems for these countries in complying with Community equal opportunities legislation; this included Austria, which was gradually adapting its legislation.

Information: European Parliament, rue Belliard, B-1049 Brussels, or Plateau du Kirchberg, Luxembourg.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

POSSIBLE PROTOCOL TO THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS EMBODYING THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT OF WOMEN AND MEN TO EQUALITY?

On 25 October last, during the Third Ministerial Conference of the Council of Europe on equality between women and men, the ministers responsible for equality between women and men in the 32 member countries of the Council came out in favour of preparing a possible Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights embodying the fundamental right of women and men to equality and the drawing up of an plan of action to combat violence against women. The first step towards this protocol was the adoption of a "political declaration on violence against women in a democratic Europe." This declaration condemns "physical, sexual or psychological" violence perpetrated by men on women (traffic in women, ill-treatment, sexual mutilation, sexual harassment, rape, incest) which is present in all social classes and in all societies. On a proposal from the Italian and Austrian delegations, the ministers also adopted a declaration on the violations of women's rights in the territories of former Yugoslavia and decided to coordinate their efforts to provide material and moral assistance to the women-victims.

NETWORK NEWS

WOMEN IN POLITICS LOOKING TOWARDS THE 1994 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

Measures recommending balanced representation between women and men in European political life with a view to the European Parliament elections in June 1994 were launched in Brussels at a two day seminar entitled "Women in Politics looking towards the 1994 European elections." This initiative comes from the European Expert Network "Women in decision-making" coordinated by Sabine de Bethune and set up under the Third Community Action Programme for equal opportunities between men and women.

The democratic deficit in question

There can be no escaping the fact that women are markedly under-represented in political decision-making bodies. Although women account for 19.3% of the members of the European Parliament (much higher than the average of national parliaments: 11.3%), real equality between women and men is still very far off. The network proposes to carry out a major awareness-raising campaign and to support all women candidates to the forthcoming European elections. This seminar is the natural continuation of the commitments given in Athens in November 1992, when women in key posts throughout Europe signed a declaration pledging to work for participation of women in decision-making posts in accordance with the principles of equality and democracy.

The "democratic deficit" in our democracies caused by the under-representation of women in the decision-making bodies was emphasized once again by the 300 participants (leaders of women's associations, women politicians, journalists etc.). Miet Smet, President of the Council (Employment and Social Affairs), stressed the need to encourage women to take their place in society, and in politics too. Women should be encouraged and helped by various means such as increasing solidarity between them (without, however, creating a ghetto), the visibility of the special role of women in politics should be enhanced, improvements should be made to the status of women and the potential for change which women represent and structural measures should be adopted to give women a real possibility to enter politics (such as the quota system).

Although women have made irreversible conquests, politics remains a "citadel largely defended by men" stated Nicole Fontaine, Vice-President of the European Parliament. She told the meeting that women must continue the struggle, because the "pangs of conscience" felt by men about "not having women present in the various areas", and perhaps in politics as a priority, were growing less evident. She also emphasized the need to develop constant communication with the leading figures of European integration within Europe and European institutions. Christine Crawley, who chairs the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights, referred to the informal obstacles which persist for women in politics: the "male mould", the lack of powers delegated by men, the systems for selecting candidates which reinforce under-representation of women, women's lifestyles and the many roles they impose on women, etc. However, it appears that women behave positively in politics but for equal representation to be achieved, mentalities and the programme of the political world must be changed.

"Vote for balance between women and men"

The end of the morning was taken up with presentation of tools and strategies to secure places for women in decision-making bodies. After the measures of the "Women in decision-making" network had been presented and the objectives of the seminar outlined by Sabine de Bethune, Monique van Trappen, from Saatchi and Saatchi presented and explained the slogan and logo created for the campaign: "Vote for balance between women and men." The originators of this concept want it to be clear, simple and precise in order to reach the widest possible audience. The slogan could be rendered in the nine Community languages and adapted to the requirements of various associations and institutions which wish to promote parity. It is easy to use: the central message "the more women elected the greater the balance in politics" can be given in a humorous fashion: "Can you imagine a world with 81% Romeos and 19% Juliettes?", "Can you imagine a world with 81% fathers and 19% mothers?". The answer, of course, is no, and yet this world exists in politics. All the tools presented (logo, slogan, campaign material, video clip, etc.) are available to any person or group who wish to campaign for parity. Guidelines were established so that these ideas and materials will be used to best effect. The experts of the "Women in decision-making" network will take appropriate follow-up action.

Promote parity between women and men on the electoral lists

The second half of the seminar focused on the method of selecting women candidates and on the positive action measures and the laws and regulations designed to encourage balance between women and men on the electoral lists. This round table brought together several leading figures, both men and women, from the political world: Cristina Alberdi, Minister for Social Affairs (Spain), Tina Anselmi, Chairwoman of the committee for equality between men and women (Italy), Leonor Beleza, Vice-President of the Assembly (Portugal), Catharine I. Dales, Minister for the Interior (Netherlands), Gérard Deprez, Chairman of the Christian Social Party (Belgium), Lord Holme of Cheltenham, Chairman of the Hansard Society for Parliamentary Government and Commission on Electoral Reform (United Kingdom), Julian Priestley, Secretary-General of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament and Paul Lannoye, Chairman of the Greens in the European Parliament. The debate centred on quotas. Although opinions differed, speakers and participants appear to support the idea that even if quotas are not always the best means of achieving parity, it seems that in the medium term they are the only means of change which will lead to that end. However, the quota system must be applied in such a way that women will actually be elected, in other words that places they are allocated on the lists give them a real chance.

The last day of the seminar opened with a debate on the measures taken by the European institutions to encourage balance between women and men in all sectors of society and on the contribution of women to European integration. This debate between European Members of Parliament, Barbara Helfferich, Secretary-General of the European Women's Lobby, Rena Lampsa, Chairwoman of the Advisory Committee for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women and Fausta Deshormes, Honorary Director EC, once again highlighted the barriers which block the way to equal opportunities in political, economic and social life. Although a great deal of progress has been made in the European Community over the past 30 years, the speakers urged that there should be no let-up of efforts. They underlined the need for women to make use of the instruments available to campaign for the European elections, to continue the information measures, to bring pressure to bear, to develop solidarity and networks. The Members of Parliament called for support for their efforts in the European Parliament and in the Community and for pressure to be brought to bear on governments so that equal opportunities would be put on political agendas. There was also a call for support for women in key positions and for their work to be made visible through information and the media. Another point made was that countries entitled to two Members of the Commission should be urged to appoint one woman.

The seminar closed with a last round table on the various strategies for communication with the general public and an exchange of views on the measures to be taken to promote balance between women and men in the European Parliament after the elections in June 1994. A number of information and communication experts took part.

In her conclusions, Eliane Vogel-Polsky (Belgian expert of the "Women in decision-making" network) summed up by stating that there was a general consensus on parity and that quotas could, in the medium term, help to attain this objective. She drew attention to the fact that the European Parliament will be associated with the appointment of members of the European Commission which means that the women elected will be able to bring pressure to bear on governments.

Summarizing the last day of the seminar, Hele Jacobse stressed that the campaign should aim at a wide audience and Jos Chabert, Vice-President of the Brussels-Capital Region emphasized the the growing role of the Parliament from 1994 onwards.

Agnès Hubert, Head of the Equal Opportunities Unit at the Commission of the European Communities, concluded by quoting Mr Pádraig Flynn, Member of the Commission: "If we fail in equality, we fail in democracy." The European Lobby and the "Women in decision-making" network were continuing the campaign launched at the Athens conference. The tools have been provided, "our (the Commission's) role ends here, now it is up to you!"

If you wish to use the material available to support your own campaign, or if you would like further information, please contact the European Expert Network "Women in decision-making," 33A, rue Mercelis, B-1050 Brussels, tel. (32 2) 512 77 23, fax (32 2) 514 40 28.



VOTE FOR BALANCE BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN
European Elections 1994

THE LEI PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN: NEW GUIDELINES

As part of its Third Action Programme to promote equal opportunities for women and men (1991-95) the Commission of the European Communities is providing financial assistance for local employment initiatives (LEIs) set up by women. Launched in 1987, the LEI programme moved into its second stage in 1991 and has been entrusted to the *Comitato Impresa Donna-CNA (Confederazione Nazionale dell'Artigianato)*, which manages awards on behalf of the Equal Opportunities Unit. Each year, the Commission provides nearly ECU 1.4 million in funding to encourage female entrepreneurship in the Member States. The network of twelve LEI experts, which provides women seeking awards with information and assistance at national level, is coordinated at Community level by Breakthrough Consultants.

Two years into the new management structure, some 561 companies, selected from over 4 000 applicants, have received awards of between ECU 3 000 and ECU 7 500. With so many applications and in the light of feedback from earlier award recipients, it was felt that the time had come to give the LEI programme new impetus to alter its broad operating principles. From January 1994, two types of award will therefore be available, each supporting different stages of the business life cycle:

1. Awards for the development of a business idea and compilation of a business plan for enterprise creation
In order to be considered for an award, women must demonstrate entrepreneurial and management capacity, in the form of education and training, appropriate experience, access to consultancy and support from enterprise development structures. A limited number of awards are made each year to well-prepared candidates with a business project of an innovative and demonstrative nature in the European context.
2. Awards to help young businesses in the early stages of their development
Women setting up and running their own businesses may apply for a financial award, provided the business was launched no more than two years before and that at least two full-time jobs (or equivalent part-time jobs) for women have been created. Eligibility for awards is restricted to enterprises that demonstrative viability and innovative characteristics in specific fields such as:
 - initiatives in developing sectors (e.g. new technology, environment, culture and leisure);

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- initiatives in male-dominated fields;
- rural initiatives providing a new product or service;
- initiatives meeting the needs of disadvantaged localities or particular social groups;
- transnational initiatives (e.g. joint ventures, import-export, international business services, etc.).

The new application form will be available from the European Unit for the Management of LEI Awards at the following address: *Comitato Impresa Donna-CNA, Service de Gestion des Aides, avenue de la Joyeuse Entrée 1, B-1040 Brussels, tel. (32 2) 280 00 54, fax (32 2) 280 09 01, or from the national headquarters, Viale Aldo Moro 22, I-40127 Bologna, tel. (39 51) 37 33 93, fax (39 51) 37 57 60.*

INFORMATION – NOTICES

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ON THE FRENCH SOCIALIST PARTY'S LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS?

Michel Rocard has agreed to head the French Socialist Party's list of candidates for the European elections in June 1994. But he has named one condition: the list must be "drawn up on a basis of strict equality between men and women, with every other candidate a woman from top to bottom". This solution, also adopted by Germany, looks like one of the best ways of achieving equality between the sexes.

WOMEN OF EUROPE PRIZE

Created in 1987, the Women of Europe Prize is awarded annually by a panel of European judges to a woman nominated at national level who, in the previous two years, has contributed to "accelerating European integration or raising our European citizens' feeling of belonging to a community with a shared destiny".

The national nominees have already been selected. They are: Princess Irina zu Sayn Wittgenstein Berleburg (Germany), Christina Sakellaridou (Greece), Paquita Sauquillo (Spain), Hélène Carrere d'Encausse (France), Adi Roche (Ireland), Biancamaria Tedeschini Lalli

(Italy), Lenie 't Hart (Netherlands), Janina Ochojska (Poland), Ludmila Rakusanova (Czech Republic), Josie Farrington (United Kingdom), Virginia Veiga (Portugal), Marie-Madeleine Schiltges (Luxembourg) and Patsy Sorensen (Belgium).

With Belgium assuming the Presidency of the European Community from July to December 1993, this year's Prize will be awarded in Antwerp. On 2 December the European winner will be chosen from the 15 national candidates by a panel of judges made up of 24 leading European journalists and 12 European personalities. For further information contact: *Angèle Verdin, Women of Europe Prize, Secrétariat général, 193, rue Américaine, B-1050 Brussels, or Women's Information Unit, DG X, Commission of the European Communities, rue de la Loi 200, B-1049 Brussels.*

VIDEO: THE GLASS CEILING BREAKERS

"The Glass Ceiling Breakers" describes efforts in companies and the Community's training institutions to encourage women to break down the invisible barriers which often exclude them from management positions. It shows examples of "sound practices" in various countries and seeks to send a clear message on equal opportunities to politicians and management.

Available in the nine Community languages, this 28-minute video gives an overview of what can be done to improve conditions in the workplace for women. It is recommended for associations, groups, and other information relays seeking a rapid visual presentation of Community policy on equal opportunities.

It is available from *Women's Information Unit, Commission of the European Communities, rue de la Loi 200, B-1049 Brussels, tel. (32 2) 299 94 16.*

SEMINARS

Skills and Training for Women's Economic Development, 31 January - 1 February 1994. Organized by ATHE-NA, the project is subsidized by the Task Force for Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth of the Commission of the European Communities. The Seminar will examine the attitudes and needs of women undergoing training at regional level. An analysis will be undertaken of barriers to training and employment encountered by women in six areas: North

Jutland (DK), Berlin (DE), Dublin (IR), Catalonia (ES), Limburg (NL) and Wales (UK).

For information contact *Catherine Eva, Gateway Europe, Welsh Development Agency, QED Centre, Treforest Estate, Pontypridd, CF37.*

PUBLICATIONS

Trafficking in women and human rights, papers from the Brussels Conference held on 6 March 1993 (second edition). The conference took stock of the situation and opened up the possibility of a new international convention on trafficking in human beings.

Available from the *Service pour la promotion culturelle et professionnelle des femmes, Marie-Thérèse Destercke, Ministère de la Culture et des Affaires Sociales, Communauté Française de Belgique, bd. Léopold II 44, B-1080-Brussels, tel. (32 2) 413 32 26.*

The **Occupational segregation of women and men in the European Community**. This supplement to the Social Europe publication collates reports drawn up at national level by the network of experts on the situation of women in the labour market, and was produced as part of the Community's Third action programme on equal opportunities for women and men. It analyses occupational segregation on the labour market and in specific professions and also examines equal opportunities policies.

For information contact the *Equal Opportunities Unit, DG V, Commission of the European Communities, rue de la Loi 200, B-1049 Brussels, or the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, L-2985 Luxembourg.*

Unemployment of Women in the European Community. Statistics, publication of the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat). This report gives a general overview of employment and unemployment as they affect women in the Community before examining the reasons why unemployment affects certain groups of women.

Available from the *Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, L-2985 Luxembourg.*

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