

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

How many women were candidates and how many were elected?

The European network of experts "Women in decision-making" conducted a study into the participation by women candidates in the European elections. Of a total of 7 739 candidates throughout the European Union in June 1994, 2 064 were women i.e. 26.7%. This is a significant (4.9%) increase over the 1989 elections when women represented 22.9% of the candidates (1 170 women).

In 1994 the highest percentage of women candidates was in Belgium (38.7%) and France (33.7%); the lowest in Italy with only 14.3%. The network found that there was a significant increase in women candidates in some countries: Greece (+13%), Belgium (+11.3%), Portugal (+10%), Ireland (+9.8%) and France (+8.4%). However, while numbers are on the increase in these countries, there was a drop elsewhere: Denmark (-4%), Germany (-3.5%), Italy (-2.9%) and the Netherlands (-2.4%). The network will be investigating the underlying causes. The network also analysed the number of women candidates by political family. It was found generally that the number of women candidates increased by one fifth and one third in most political families. *The complete report, including individual-country reports, can be obtained on request from the secretariat of the Women in decision-making Network, 33A rue Mercelis, B-1050 Brussels. Tel (32 2) 521 77 23, Fax (32 2) 514 40 28.*

WOMEN AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Austrians (men and women alike) say yes to the European Union

While 12 June last was an important day for the European Union with the Euro-



WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

Dear Reader,

As you will read in this issue, the Summit of Mediterranean and European Women took place in Marrakesh from 27 to 29 May 1994.

For the first time, in the train of the Israeli-Arab peace process, women leaders from the entire Mediterranean basin and Europe came together to discuss how they could contribute to peace in the Mediterranean and encourage development and regional cooperation and see what action they could take to ensure that they receive a fair share of responsibility at all levels of decision-making in the political, economic and social fields.

At the close of the summit, the participants issued the "Marrakesh Declaration", which defines women's priorities for forthcoming events and expresses the main concerns which will be discussed at the United Nations Conference marking the beginning of the Third International Decade for Women in Beijing in September 1995.

At the top of their list of priorities they put the elimination of illiteracy among girls and they asked international institutions and States to give joint compulsory education for girls a special place in their programmes.

The constant interplay between the two major themes of the summit: "Women for peace and peace for women" showed how closely they are linked and how democracy and development cannot progress, in particular with regard to women, unless they are accompanied by a peace process. The participants set up the WAM: Women's Action Mediterranean, a set of specific networks to enable them to meet the challenges they face by developing relations between women in the Mediterranean and Europe through

Follows page 2

pean Parliament elections, attention that day also focused on Austria, the first of the four applicant States to hold a referendum on accession to the Union. A clear majority voted to join the Twelve: 66.4% "Yes" against 33.6% "No". A turnout of over 80% was evidence of the interest shown in the future of the country. While it had been predicted that women would vote against their country's membership of the European Union, a large majority said "Yes" even if they were less enthusiastic than the men: 70% of men were in favour as against 62% of the women. It is also interesting to observe that voting patterns varied widely according to age: by and large support for membership was stronger in the older age groups than in the younger ones (70% of the over-60's said "Yes" as against only 55% of the under-30s).

Austria is the first of the four applicant countries (the three others being Finland, Sweden and Norway) to have confirmed the government's choice. In the autumn, the other countries will also decide by referendum (on 16 October in Finland, 13 November in Sweden and 28 November in Norway). The Austrian "Yes" should encourage them likewise to vote in favour of membership their fears being much the same as those expressed by Austrians: fear that their voice would not be heard among those of the powerful countries in the Union; fear that they would be worse off economically. Perhaps even more so than in Austria, Nordic women worry about their rights in the event of accession to the Union. Opinion polls conducted in these countries show that women are more strongly opposed to membership than men. What are they afraid of? Apparently that after accession they would lose some of the benefits available under social legislation and legislation on equality in their countries. This hesitation is understandable because the applicant countries offer greater protection than the Treaties. For example, Norway gives 52 weeks' parental leave on 80% salary or 42 weeks on 100%, four weeks are specifically for the father; Sweden requires firms with 10 or more employees to prepare an annual plan to promote equality; firms in Austria can receive public aid if they launch positive action for women, etc. However, although some minor changes will have to be made, the protection granted in these countries will not be affected by membership. Their governments have launched information campaigns to con-

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vince women to vote for European Union. Let us hope that if these countries do join the Union, their policies on equality will serve as examples for the Twelve.

Women and European integration

On 25 May last a conference on "Women and European integration" (both for the present Member States and for the applicant States) was held in Brussels. It was organized by the CEPS (Centre for European Policy Studies) and the Equal Opportunities Unit in the European Commission.

The conference began with the presentation of the results of a Eurobarometer opinion poll conducted for the European Commission in autumn 1993. They show that women are less involved in the European Union and in European policy in general and that they do not have sufficient information about these matters.

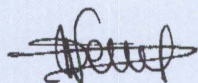
Three major topics were discussed: the attitude of women towards European integration, the policies and programmes which influence that attitude and proposals for future action. There were a number of contributions dealing with the economy, politics and their place in Finnish society. References to the pre- and post-referendum situation in Denmark showed similarities with Finland, the hesitation of Finnish women being explained by fears that social benefits will be lost with alignment on similar provisions at present in force in the European Union.

Another major topic was the under-representation of women in Community institutions. Several speakers referred to the measures which could bring about greater balance between men and women: the third action programme 1991-95 by the Equal Opportunities Unit in the Commission, improvements in British legislation on the basis of European law, the increasingly concrete and systematic action taken by the European Parliament and the part it plays in bringing the message home to the Council and Commission, the fight for equal opportunities through the courts in order to enhance the position of women etc. were among the items highlighted.

In the same vein, the European Women's Lobby wished to see a European constitution stipulating that men and women are citizens of the Union.

Continuing of the editorial

wider access to posts of responsibility at all levels in order to bring about peace and to develop the region. There will be four networks: an interparliamentary network for the exchange of experiences in democracy, a network of senior NGO officers to promote the role of the civil society, a network of journalists and key figures from the cultural world who will help to mould the emerging feminine consciousness and encourage women to become involved in society and a network of businesswomen who will ensure that women take part in economic development by achieving greater independence and more power. The task of the WAM is to activate the networks, to stimulate cooperation between women throughout the region, to support the peace process, to encourage women to take part in the decision-making process and to attain the objectives set out in the Marrakesh Declaration. The scale of this project and the cooperation and interdependence it will generate will give Mediterranean and European women the role of forerunners in building peace throughout the region and make them indispensable and inevitable partners in societies which promote progress and democracy.



Simone Susskind
Initiator of the dialogue between
Israeli and Palestinian women

Several associations and organizations whose work involves women in decision-making reported on their activities. They emphasized the need for women to be associated with the formulation of European policy, something which would undoubtedly be the cornerstone of any fundamental change for women in Europe. Carole Ludlow, Head of the CEPS Conference Division who chaired the conference, stressed that several participants had called for an "Equal Opportunités" portfolio to be given to a member of the enlarged Commission which will take up office in 1995.

Conference documents are available from: CEPS, 33 rue Ducale, B-1000 Brussels. Tel (32 2) 513 40 88, Fax (32 2) 511 59 60.

WOMEN AND PEACE

At the invitation of the Government of Morocco and with the European Commission's support, the first summit of Mediterranean and European Women was held in Marrakesh from 27 to 29 May. The theme was "women and peace." This summit brought together women ministers, members of parliament, opinion leaders in the cultural and economic worlds, representing the countries of the Maghreb, the Mashreq and Europe for the first time.

The aim of this summit was to confirm the role of women in building peace throughout the Mediterranean by consolidating the peace initiative in the Middle East and by strengthening the numerous measures relating to development, cooperation and women's rights which are already being implemented in the region. Women are undoubtedly the driving force behind the peace process in the Middle East. By forging new links in the Mediterranean basin they have acted as pioneers. In recent years their activities have become more formalized.

In the eastern part of the region, Palestinian and Israeli women have combined their efforts since 1989 (date of the first international conference of Palestinian and Israeli women) to promote the principles of self-determination on both sides and to educate people to be tolerant and to cooperate on the basis of equality. In 1992 a decision was taken in Brussels to establish the "Jerusalem Link - a Joint Venture for Peace." Its aim is the full emancipation of Palestinian and Israeli women in their respective societies and to offer them a model for mutual assistance and cooperation in the new era which is dawning. In the western part of the region, several meetings have taken place in recent years between north African and southern European women with a view to exploring common spheres of interest. Two parliamentary conferences were organized in Tunis to strengthen links between European and Tunisian women members of parliament. Nevertheless, to date, no attempt has been made to combine these measures to ensure cooperation between women and to set up a network between women in the Mashreq (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Palestine) and the Maghreb (Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria) and Turkey.

The Summit set itself the target of bringing together women members of parliament, influential figures and leaders from Europe, North Africa and the Middle East to establish a framework for exchanges, cooperation and joint action and to involve women in the implementation of peace. An unprecedented move. The conference broached numerous topics as a way of addressing some basic concerns which will be dealt with at the United Nations Conference (Beijing, September 1995) to mark the beginning of the Third International Decade for Women.

Action by women to consolidate the peace process in the Middle East, their action in conflict areas in the Mediterranean, peace and participation by women in the decision-making process, peace, women and development, women, civil society and democratization, etc. are among the many topics which were discussed at the summit. At the end of the three days of debate, the women present adopted a declaration – the Marrakesh Declaration – which stressed the many vital issues for women in these regions but also in other parts of the world. The declaration appealed to the Corfu European Council to give the education of girls “priority in its Mediterranean policy by including it in the policies which can qualify for financial assistance” because it must be stated that “two thirds of the illiterates in the world are girls, while the right to education is a basic right for all without exception.”

While the signatories of the Marrakesh Declaration welcomed the peace process in the Middle East, they reaffirmed the need to continue the peace measures in this region. They undertook to promote educational and peace programmes and to “fight against discrimination, intolerance, extremism, violence and other misdeeds which endanger women or infringe their rights and jeopardize all that has been achieved for them.” While the Middle East occupied centre stage, the women did not forget that war was raging on Europe’s doorstep. They asked the international community to defend Bosnia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The summit will also spawn networks of women members of parliament, senior women NGO officials, businesswomen, women journalists and students in the Mediterranean and Europe. The aim of these networks will be to bring about peace in the Mediterranean and to emphasize common values while respecting differences.

For all information please contact: Simone Susskind, 63 av. d’Auderghem, B-1040 Brussels. Tel (32 2) 230 62 32 or 230 38 46, Fax (32 2) 230 33 58.

INFORMATION/ COMMUNICATION

Committee of the Regions: a new body from which women are almost absent

The Committee of the Regions was set up under the Maastricht Treaty to represent the interests of the regions of Europe and to strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the European Union. Its role is important because it must be consulted in many matters: regional policy and economic development, rural development, transport and communications networks, urban policy, education and training, energy, people’s Europe, social and economic cohesion etc.

The Committee of the Regions has 189 members, but only seven of them are women. All the members are elected representatives of the regional and local governments in the Member States. The members of the bureau, the chairman (Jacques Blanc, France) and the vice-chairman (Pasqual Maragall, Spain) were elected at the Committee’s first meeting in March. Women are under-represented: of the 28 members making up the bureau, only one is a woman, Florella Ghilardotti (Italy). The Committee would appear to be closely following the male bias of the other European institutions.

European forum on positive action to promote equal opportunities

The Pietro Seveso Regional Foundation, with the support of the European Commission’s Equal Opportunities Unit and the Lombard Region (Italy) organized a European Forum on positive action for women entitled “Equality and quality: a fresh boost for women and firms”, in Como (Italy) on 3 and 4 June. This Forum demonstrated how much women could gain from an innovative approach to the development of human resources

and how important was the part which could be played by positive action in helping to attain “Total Quality Management” (TQM) objectives by using the experience acquired in telecommunications and other sectors. Business circles are beginning to recognize that if women have better prospects and participate more in TQM, organizational efficiency and the smooth running of business can be improved. Specialists in equal opportunities, TQM and human resources managers at the Forum considered possible solutions to enable women to develop their professional potential. This Forum also attained one of its objectives: to encourage cooperation between the appropriate economic circles and through contacts, partners and active networks to stimulate an extensive exchange of information and experience and encourage the promotion of innovation and good practices.

Information: Antonella Schulte-Braucks, Equal Opportunities Unit, DG V, European Commission, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels. Tel (32 2) 295 71 59, Fax (32 2) 295 70 23.

Informing women about Europe

A year ago the European Documentation and Information Network for Women (EUDIF) became operational. The primary aim of this association is to encourage the circulation of information on the rights and situation of European women and to enable associations and/or public administrations who so wish to communicate with each other and to cooperate on joint projects.

During 1994 EUDIF is conducting a survey of women living in ten countries of the European Union (Germany, United Kingdom, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Spain, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Portugal). The aim is to assess the level of information on Europe and to determine what women need to increase their awareness of the issue of European citizenship. EUDIF also hopes to measure the level of interest and awareness of Europe and the European democratic process among women.

Although the report contains only partial results (the survey is still in progress in Greece, Italy, Portugal, Germany and Luxembourg) so far, a clear trend in the level of information of European women is already emerging.

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The first finding is that there is a real lack of information about the European institutions and Europe generally. Access to information on Europe is also poor: barely 50% of the women state that they have access to written information on Europe and information on radio and television is clearly not very accessible since 62% of women do not make use of it. However, of the 27% who do, a large majority (88%) use television as the means of information.

Women know little about the bodies responsible for disseminating European information. Nonetheless, they make various suggestions concerning the type of information which Europe should put out: the needs most frequently expressed are for more general information and for information on the operation of the European institutions. This result is relatively paradoxical because this lack of information contrasts with the interest shown by women in Europe (but probably not in the Europe that is being built). While an interest in Europe can be detected in the answers given, there are doubts about the democratic nature of the European Parliament since it is seen as having a minor role (advisory role) or no role at all. The answers reveal a distance, taken or imposed, between Europe and its institutions and the people. The much repeated desire to see the European Parliament obtain more power is also very significant.

It cannot as yet be concluded, in the light of this survey, that there is a "specifically feminine" demand for information. Since only women were questioned their answers cannot be compared with those of men. EUDIF will endeavour to do so in future studies.

Information: EUDIF, Maison des Associations Internationales, 40 rue Washington, B-1050 Brussels.

New video cassette on the childcare network

"Can you feel a colour?" is the title of the video cassette filmed in childcare services in Denmark and Italy. It shares ideas and work experiences with parents and children. The video cassette presents new thinking on the services and shows what can be achieved when the conditions are right.

The cassette is currently available in English and Danish. It will shortly be produced in Italian and Dutch and the other language versions will follow. To

obtain the video, contact Claus Jensen, 20a Mondrupsvej, Stavrup St By, DK-8260 Viby J or Bronwen Cohen, Children in Scotland, Princes House, 5 Shandwick Place, UK-Edinburgh EH2 4RG.

CONFERENCES

Gender and ethnicity in Europe, 19-21 September, third level research seminar organized by the Finnish Institute in London and the European Research Centre in Kingston.

Information: Pirkko Hautamäki, Finnish Institute, 35-36 Eagle Street, UK-London WC1R 4AJ. Tel (071) 404 3309, Fax (071) 404 8893.

Women in power, Women empowered, Yesterday, today, tomorrow, Berlin, 29 September - 2 October. This annual conference of the European Women's Management Development Network will discuss industrial restructuring, changes in the labour market and women's employment, emphasizing the close links between all these topics.

For further information contact: EWMD Annual Conference 1994, Kongress Büro, c/o ES Meeting Planner, Potsdamer Strasse 99, D-10785 Berlin. Tel (030) 262 98 22, Fax (030) 262 99 23.

Violence in the family, Amsterdam 13-15 October. It will deal with physical and sexual abuse of children and women and ill-treatment of the elderly. Discussions will centre on diagnosis, therapy, prevention, legal aspects and the problems which confront the participants in their daily work.

Information: Bureau PAOG-Amsterdam, Tafelbergweg 25, NL-1105 Amsterdam. Fax (31 20) 696 32 28.

PUBLICATIONS

Directory of member organizations of the European Women's Lobby in the European Union. As an aid to effective communication, it describes the range and scope of national and European women's organizations. It is divided into three parts: European organizations, national organizations and corresponding member organizations. Each part provides basic information on addresses and telephone and fax numbers, the countries where the organiza-

tion operates, the aims pursued, activities, publications, specialization, future projects, methods used etc.

The directory costs ECU 20 and is available in French and English from: European Women's Lobby, 22 rue du Méridien, B-1030 Brussels. Tel (32 2) 217 90 20, Fax (32 2) 219 84 51.

Monitoring childcare services for young children: discussion paper.

The Third Community Action Programme to promote equal opportunities for men and women requests the European Commission to indicate what information on childcare services the Member States should collect. At present it is difficult to collect and compare information. There are sometimes significant differences between the national systems, many of them reflecting the different definitions and cultural approaches to childcare. This report analyses the current situation and makes recommendations for the standardization of data at European level in order to improve information generally in this area.

It is available (ref. V/460/94) from the Equal Opportunities Unit, DG V, European Commission, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.

Women in decision-making - Facts and figures on the part played by women in political and public decision-making in Europe

a brochure published by the European network "Women in decision-making." It gives the number of women in the European Parliament and national parliaments, the European Commission and national governments, regional and local policy and in the civil services of the Member States.

This brochure may be obtained free of charge from the European Network "Women in decision-making", 33A rue Mercelis, B-1050 Brussels. Tel (32 2) 512 77 23, Fax (32 2) 514 40 28.

Editor in Chief and coordination:
General public - Citizens' advice desks,
Women's Information
European Commission
Directorate-General for Information,
Communication, Culture, Audiovisual.
Rue de la Loi 200, B-1049 Brussels
Tel. (32 2) 299 94 16