

of Europe

Newsletter

Women

Editorial

So here we are, on the eve of the new millennium. Time to take stock and to make our wishes.

Women have achieved much this century — too much to describe in the space of a few lines.

Since the beginning of the century, we have put a lot of effort into a range of activities and made our presence felt. But much still remains to be done. To give just one example: only 30 of the 500 Nobel prizewinners since 1901 have been women! Only 30 women have been acclaimed for their achievements in the service of humanity!

As for wishes, the newsletter would like to wish all women peace and solidarity in the New Year. Our thoughts are with all women who are suffering the consequences of conflict throughout the world — in Kosovo, Chechnya and elsewhere, and also with women in central and eastern Europe who are victims of trafficking and organised crime.

We still have a long way to go ... may the new millennium begin, for all women, in a spirit of hope.

Dina Protti
Head of Section, Information for Women

Madame President, what do you think?



The newsletter interviewed Ms Maj Britt Theorin, new president of the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities.

What are the objectives of the Committee on Women's Rights (CWR) for this legislative period?

I intend to focus on three areas of immediate concern. Firstly, I will promote **more and better jobs** for women. The cornerstone of equality is employment, but the labour market continues to be segregated, with women disproportionately doing low-paid and unskilled 'women's work'.

My first action on equality in the labour market has been the revision of the employment guidelines for Member States for 2000. The employment guidelines for 1999 — drawn up by the European Commission and endorsed by the EU Heads of State or Government at the Vienna Summit in 1998 — specified that gender mainstreaming had to be included in all policies and actions proposed under all four pillars of the EU employment strategy (namely improving employability, developing entrepreneurship, encouraging adaptability of businesses and their employees, and strengthening equal opportunities for women and men). Disappointingly, a very limited number of new equality measures have been launched, small, if any, budget resources attributed, and few quantitative targets have been set. In order for policy-makers to include gender considerations in the national action plans, clear references to equality and gender mainstreaming need to be incorporated into each of the four pillars of the guidelines.

Using the new powers provided by the Amsterdam Treaty, I have prepared a proposal for

such concrete measures on how to make the employment guidelines gender-sensitive. The European Parliament has accepted many of these proposals, recognising that if women are to participate in the labour market on an equal basis with men, they must have access to care facilities for children and the elderly, as well as access to training programmes. Specifically, the setting of targets to measure the inclusion of women in training programmes will be based upon the average of the three most successful Member States in this respect. The Parliament also acknowledged that women disproportionately lack access to productive resources and recognised the need to emphasise special measures, targeted at women, to make it easier to set up and run businesses. Furthermore, the European Parliament recognised that 'all employment statistics should be disaggregated by gender, and within one year,' of the adaptation of the guidelines, 'Member States will develop a set of benchmarks and criteria for the implementation and evaluation of gender mainstreaming in all policies'.

Secondly, I will advocate the **engendering of governance and leadership**. Nowhere is the gap between *de jure* and *de facto* gender equality greater than in the area of decision-making. Equality for women in law is not reflected by equality in representation. European institutions — governments, legislative bodies, public administration, etc. — are governed by male norms. The voices of women are missing from key decisions on national budgets and setting of government priorities. It is in the area of women and peace that a lack of representation is most obvious. Women make up the majority of those affected by conflicts, but are paradoxically absent from conflict resolution and peace transition processes. Peace efforts will only be successful if women in situations of armed conflict are viewed as active agents of peace. The leadership potential of women to make meaningful

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contributions to the peace processes at all levels must be strengthened.

Thirdly, I will promote the **enforcement of women's human rights** to eliminate all forms of violence against women. Through the committee, I will put issues such as sexual harassment, domestic violence, pornography, prostitution, and trafficking in women back on the EU agenda. I intend to highlight that gender equality is not a question of minor socio-economic discrepancies, but part of the general question of human rights in the Member States. The wider objectives of human development cannot be achieved without eliminating discrimination against women.

How do you see your role vis-à-vis the new Commission?

It is a great disappointment that there are only five women Commissioners, particularly as the Parliament had made a point of calling for the number of women to be increased. Since gender discrimination is structural — affecting all political areas — it would have been preferable to have one Commissioner with overall responsibility. The current struc-

ture gives, for example, Vitorini — who is in charge of legal issues — responsibility for the elimination of violence against women.

To accomplish the goals that the Committee on Women's Rights has set for the next five years, it is essential that we establish close ties with the Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, Anna Diamantopoulou. She agreed to set aside specific budget lines for the promotion of gender equality and to present concrete and measurable targets for the advancement of women. Subsequently, all Member States will be required to develop action plans for how to reach these targets.

Do you think that a CWR will still be needed at the end of this period?

The mainstreaming approach is laid out in the Amsterdam Treaty, which emphasises the elimination of inequalities and the promotion of equality between women and men among the tasks and objectives of the Community. Formal decisions about mainstreaming are, however, not enough. Mainstreaming in the Treaty does not automatically imply

equality in practice. Implementation is the key. I will promote gender mainstreaming in all of the work of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. The idea is to reverse past inequalities by introducing gender analysis into policies on, for example, development, nutrition, agriculture, and health, thereby accentuating the gender differential impact of these policies. I have already requested each parliamentary committee to introduce the mainstreaming principle in its work, to appoint a rapporteur on mainstreaming issues, and to present regular progress reports. Monitoring this issue should ideally be the responsibility of the chairperson. Most committees have already given us names and the system should be functioning shortly. Similarly, I have asked every Commissioner how she or he will work to implement the concept of mainstreaming within her/his area of competence.

However, it is overly optimistic to believe that within five years all EU institutions will automatically mainstream gender considerations into all their work. The Committee on Women's Rights will still have to monitor their achievements and push for the full implementation of the Amsterdam Treaty.

Committee on Women's Rights

During its two meetings in November 1999, the Committee on Women's Rights (CWR) — chaired by Ms Theorin — prepared the adoption of the Daphne programme (2000-04): three amendments relating to health and social welfare proposed by the rapporteur, Ms Aviles Perea (EPP, E) were unanimously accepted. The amended report will be put to a plenary session of the Parliament for adoption.

Ms Sörensen (Greens-EFA, B) presented her report on organised crime and proposals for European measures to combat trafficking in women, which is increasing constantly. Four priorities were highlighted for these measures: prevention, help for victims, raising awareness and harmonising national legislation. The lack of adequate legislation in several applicant countries was emphasised. Several MEPs called for the Commission to produce an annual report on this issue.

On the subject of the involvement of women in European research programmes, Ms McNally's (PES, UK) report contained 25 amendments aiming to integrate a series of statistics and measures into the sixth framework programme (a percentage of European grants to be given to women, a quota of 50 % of women in European scientific conferences

and on project grant selection committees, training for young women in science subjects, etc.).

The subject of tourism was tackled from two very different angles: the fight against sex tourism involving children on the one hand, and employment on the other. For the first angle, the opinion proposed by Ms Müller (EPP, D) was adopted unanimously and qualified by 10 amendments aimed at strengthening measures for combating sex tourism and better asserting the rights of the child (particularly in the future European Charter of Citizens' Rights). As for employment in the tourist industry, Ms Kratsa's (EPP, EL) report stressed the importance of mainstreaming in this sector which employs a lot of women, mainly in low-level, badly paid and insecure jobs, and called for the tourist industry to be included in the fifth action programme on equal opportunities. Two amendments were adopted: one in favour of adopting measures to support rural women (agrotourism etc.) and the other calling for the Commission and Member States to launch management training programmes for women in the tourist industry. This report has been forwarded to the Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism for its opinion.

EQUAL initiative up and running

The new Community initiative EQUAL is about the promotion of new ways to combat discrimination in employment, particularly discrimination against women. The Commission has approved guidelines for the period 2000-06 as well as the budget (EUR 2 847 million from the European Social Fund (ESF)). The main innovation of this initiative is its multifaceted approach to coping with the causes of inequality. Accordingly, the implementation of EQUAL will be based on part-

nerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors which will have strong local roots and which will seek to have an impact on national employment policies as well as on a joint strategy.

In order to be finally adopted, the project, which has been approved by the Commission, must now be submitted to the ESF Committee and discussed in the European Parliament.

The European Women's Foundation

The European Women's Foundation has over the past 10 years or so been helping women in the new democracies of central and eastern Europe (CEEC) to take their rightful place in the process of political construction which is taking place. The foundation works on the basis of training courses organised in the CEECs or in Dublin, or in the form of study visits which enable women from the CEECs to see how other women tackle real situations which are similar to theirs. Intensive training programmes in small groups have been organised on the following themes: the role of the media in a free society, setting up and running economic or social pressure groups, organising political campaigns, the European institutions, setting up a business, and public-speaking.

As well as training courses, links have been made and working networks formed between groups of active women in the CEECs (in this case in the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) all with an underlying commitment to freedom and democratic values.

The foundation has been able to carry out this work thanks to the financial support of the EU's Phare-Democracy programme, the Irish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme, Harvard University's 'Liberty' project and a number of other sponsors.

The foundation was created in 1990 on the initiative of a number of active women such as Ms Gemma Hussey, former Irish MP and Education Minister and current director of the foundation, and Ms Beatrice Rangoni Machiavelli, President of the EU's Economic and Social Committee. It is currently chaired by Ms Federica Olivares, member of the management committee of the American Chamber of Commerce in Italy.

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Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities

The situation of women in Mediterranean countries

At the fifth Euro-Mediterranean summit which took place in Antalya (Turkey) on 4 and 5 November 1999, the ESC formulated a series of suggestions to promote the economic and social role of women in Mediterranean countries.

Generally speaking, networks with women in EU countries should be developed. Various small-scale experiments and initiatives have already been supported by the EU under the MEDA-Democracy programme. But in order to significantly increase the participation of women in the employment market, the authorities in the countries concerned have to continue to improve the quality of compulsory education by guaranteeing equal opportunities. For their part, the Community training programmes open to citizens in Mediterranean countries should make sure that they are specifically accessible to women in general and young girls in particular. A specific training strategy should also be developed to respond to the needs of women in Mediterranean countries.

In order to promote entrepreneurship by women, support networks must be created or strengthened (legal

and tax advice, modernisation and marketing). The 'mutual guarantee structures' should be more accessible to SMEs run by women and should work more with guarantee cooperatives in EU countries. This cooperation should, in particular, aim to facilitate the development of joint product and market strategies.

In order to promote the development of micro-businesses and self-employed work amongst women and to move from undeclared work and a subsistence economy to recognised activity, women should also be encouraged to become aware of their own abilities and of the opportunities open to them. This can be done with self-help groups.

Within the European Union, the huge influx of women into the employment market has been accompanied by significant economic and social progress. In the Mediterranean countries a similar process has begun, despite the disparities which exist between them. This trend should be supported and integrated into the project of economic, social and cultural integration of the Euro-Mediterranean region which started in Barcelona in 1995 and was confirmed recently in Stuttgart.

EQUAL: DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

The Commission has provisionally allocated the EQUAL commitment appropriations as follows (million EUR):

Belgium:	70
Denmark:	28
Germany:	484
Greece:	98
Spain:	485
France:	301
Ireland:	32
Italy:	371
Luxembourg:	4
Netherlands:	196
Austria:	96
Portugal:	107
Finland:	68
Sweden:	81
United Kingdom:	376



Rapporteur for the Economic and Social Committee:
Giacomina Cassina (member of the Workers' group, Italy)

Council — OK for the fifth programme

The Labour and Social Affairs Council of 22 October (in Luxembourg) voted unanimously in favour of implementing a fifth action programme on equal opportunities for men and women. Official agreement on the guidelines should not be a problem at the joint Ecofin/Social Affairs Council of 29 November, which aims to put the finishing touches to preparations for the Helsinki European Council.

'Euroland' project

The television programme 'Euroland' is one of the projects to have benefited from financial support from the 'Information for Women' department in 1998. The project was run by 'the Network of Mediterranean Woman Journalists' in collaboration with the public television channel RAI 3. An information bus travelled through different regions in Europe in order to meet women at their workplaces or in associations, to gather evidence and to talk to them about what is being done for women in Europe (programmes, policies, issues). The footage was shown on Italian television in May and June 1999, at the same time as interviews of MEPs were conducted in Strasbourg. The aim of the operation was to encourage citizens to vote in a gender-sensitive way.

In the name of rural women

'The wives of farmers play an essential role in the viability of family businesses. They have been waiting for their work to be recognised for a long time: it is time to tell the world about their role. The importance of rural women's independence and economic self-sufficiency — particularly in poorer countries — must be underlined.' These were the words of Rosa Maria Pruna, President of the COPA (Committee of Agricultural Organisations in the European Union) women's committee, on the occasion of the fourth World Rural Women's Day, whose theme this year was 'Giving credit to rural women'. Ms Pruna mentioned the recognition of the status of women who work in family farms, and social rights in terms of maternity, pensions and divorce. She spoke of the different instruments which can contribute to such rights being recognised, such as forming a company between spouses or a family cooperative.

Events

'Violence-free cities'

Between 25 November and 10 December 1999, the European Women's Lobby organised the 'Violence-free cities' campaign. Events to raise awareness were run in different European cities to fight against violence against women.

To find out more, visit their website (<http://www.womenlobby.org/fr/themes/violence/villesansviolence.html>).

Finland-EU expert meeting on violence against women

At the initiative of the Finnish Presidency of the European Council, a European seminar on methods for combating violence against women was held from 8 to 10 November at the University of Jyväskylä (Finland). Working groups examined different aspects of the problem: criminal proceedings, standards in force in shelters for battered women, evaluation of treatment programmes for violent men, research projects, case studies, prostitution networks and trafficking in women. We will report further on this seminar in the next issue of the *Women of Europe* newsletter which will be a special issue on violence.

To find out more, visit the website (<http://presidency.finland.fi/frame.asp>).

Seville — Forum on violence

The Andalusian Women's Institute organised a forum on gender violence on 11 and 12 November 1999. A presentation by Claudia Garcia Moreno, coordinator of the WHO project 'Violence against women' dealt with campaigns which international organisations are running in order to counter violence against women. Lawyers, psychologists, police officers, philosophers, journalists and doctors all gave their angle on the issue.

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International Women's Forum

The second International Women's Forum took place in Casablanca (Morocco) from 3 to 8 November 1999 under the patronage of His

Majesty King Mohammed VI. Participants from 47 countries came to this event where tribute was paid in particular to rural women, who were well represented. At the end of six days of work, the participants agreed on a series of resolutions which they promised to try to get applied in their different countries on their return. The forum benefited from the financial support of the European Commission under the Barcelona process. It was organised at the initiative of the Bouregreg Association.

'Côté femme' and the European Women's Conference

From 17 to 20 March 2000 two parallel events will take place in the Grand-Palais in Lille (France). 'Côté femme' claims to be the exhibition for all women and is bringing together professionals from the world of women. As for the conference, it aims to become the annual meeting place for women. This year the issue of equal opportunities for men and women in different European countries will be examined, with the participation of local, national and European speakers. On 18 March, a debate will take place on 'the effect of domestic violence on business'.

To find out more, send an e-mail to (c.in.edit.pub@wanadoo.fr) or visit the website (<http://www.idgraphiques.fr/cotefemme/assises.shtml>).

Publications

Documents on employment and social affairs

The publications of the Employment and Social Affairs Directorate-General of the European Commission can be found on-line at

(http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/employment_social/pubs_fr.cfm)

(<http://europa.eu.int/comm>).

