

# **EQUALITY FOR WOMEN**

**ASSESSMENT—PROBLEMS—PERSPECTIVES  
A EUROPEAN PROJECT**

**28 — 30 MAY 1980  
MIDLAND HOTEL, MANCHESTER, U.K.**

**FINAL REPORT**

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The following message from Commissioner Vredeling appeared in the Conference programme.

### MESSAGE FROM MR. H. VREDELING

It is with very great pleasure as well as hope that I address the delegates to the Conference organised in Manchester by the Commission of the European Communities in co-operation with the Equal Opportunities Commission (U.K.), the aim being to draw up a **NEW EUROPEAN PROJECT** for women.

We may certainly take some satisfaction from the fact that the struggle of the European Community for legal rights for women has achieved positive results in the past. However, one must admit that its potential role in advancing the feminine cause has not yet been fully realised.

The strategy of the Community in advancing women's rights took concrete shape six years ago, when the Council of the European Communities decided:

- to take action in order to ensure equality between men and women in terms of job openings, professional training and promotion, together with working conditions, including remuneration;
- to do their best to help to reconcile the family responsibilities of the people in question with their aspirations.

The outcome of the European initiative is well known:

- Three Directives now define the standards by which to measure progress towards parity of treatment between men and women, or more specifically between male and female in terms of:
  - \* parity of remuneration
  - \* access to jobs, professional training, together with working conditions
  - \* social security
- The European Social Fund, together with CEDEFOP (European Centre for Professional Training and Development) has undertaken to support initiatives aiming to diversify the professional training of women
- The ground has been prepared for equal opportunities in education and the fight against women's unemployment.

There is a time for action and a time for thought. The Conference in Manchester is a breathing space which will allow the Commission of the European Communities, together with privileged participants, to define a programme of action for the foreseeable future, bearing in mind the instruments available to the Community on the one hand, and national policies on the other, including the role of the agencies responsible for the implementation of these policies.

One must examine the efficiency of the national structures and systems 'ad hoc', particularly when dealing with the practical problems of implementing Community Directives concerning parity in pay and employment, and propose accompanying measures and the initiatives necessary to stimulate the implementation of equality, particularly in a more general climate of change in the job market in the context of major technological developments.

Our conceptions and preconceptions have altered profoundly in the last ten years. The continuing increase in the rate of women's activities represents an irreversible trend, the consequences of which have to be pointed out, both from the point of view of employers and of social life generally.

The exchanges of points of view in Manchester will take place among individuals from member states who are responsible for working out and implementing policies for the promotion of equal opportunities for women, and in particular women workers. I cannot stress too much the value to us at the Commission of frank and constructive discussions at this Conference. The need for such policies at the mid-point of the International Decade of Women is, I am sure, self-evident.

**H. VREDELING**  
Vice-President  
*Commission of the European Communities*

## STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE

### Background to the Conference

The objective of the Conference was to gather together, from all the member states, practitioners and policy makers in the field of equality for women, to discuss the efficiency of national machinery and methods, with special emphasis on the practical problems of the implementation of EEC Directives, and the supporting provisions and initiatives necessary in a climate of technological and industrial change. The aim was to set out a representative and authoritative consensus on the medium-term agenda for the Commission of the European Communities, for member states and for national commissions.

### Attendance

Representatives were drawn generally from official bodies involved in the implementation of equal opportunities policies or advisory bodies. Relevant government officials from each of the member states were invited but did not constitute a majority in the national representation. Official bodies and relevant government departments were asked to submit names of their six national representatives. In addition to the 54 national representatives selected observers from international and other agencies and the authors of specialist papers were invited. Fifteen members of the specialist feminist press were invited to attend the final session of the Conference.

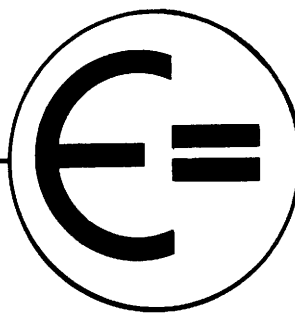
### Conference Format and Style

The Conference was spread over three days, from lunch time on Wednesday, 28th May, to lunch time on Friday, 30th May. All the sessions were plenary and the layout of the main Conference room was so designed to create constructive discussion among the participants. All discussions

were translated into six languages and it was necessary to exert a strict discipline on the length of each of the contributions to ensure a balanced input from each of the member states. The four specialist papers were introduced by the Chair and the authors of the papers were available to answer questions of a factual nature. Coffee and tea were served whilst the Conference was in session to ensure the maximum use of the very limited time. Participants were invited as individuals and not as representatives of their country although it was difficult to avoid using the term "national representatives" throughout the Conference.

The majority of papers were circulated in advance in six languages and it was assumed that participants would have a working knowledge of the papers before the Conference. The sessions were marked by a depth of discussion which revealed the diversity of perspectives as to what should constitute the medium term agenda of the Commission of the European Communities in this area. After detailed discussion of the Conclusions on the final day the Conference was able to reach a consensus on the five major topics under consideration.

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**EQUALITY FOR WOMEN**  
**ASSESSMENT – PROBLEMS – PERSPECTIVES**  
**A EUROPEAN PROJECT**  
**28th – 30th MAY 1980, MIDLAND HOTEL, MANCHESTER, UK**

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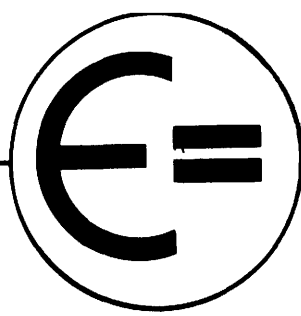
ATTENDANCE LIST

BELGIUM

Ms. E.	Brunfaut	Conseiller du Cabinet	Ministre de l'Emploi et du Travail.
Ms. D.	De Vos	Fonctionnaire	Commission du Travail des Femmes
Ms. M.	Hornaert	Représentante	Fédération générale du Travail
Ms. S.	Kohnenmergen	Représentante	Fédération des Entreprises
Ms. M.	Pirard	Représentante	Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens
Ms. M.	Smet	Presidente	Commission du Travail des Femmes

DENMARK

Mr. S.	Christensen	Fuldmaegtig	Ligestillingsradet
Mr. I.	Lockenwitz	Fuldmaegtig	Arbejdsministeriet
Ms. E.	Munck	Forbundsformand medlem	Ligestillingsradet
Ms. N.	Rasmussen	Fuldmaegtig	Ligestillingsradet
Ms. K.	Thorball	Fuldmaegtig	Arbejdsministeriet

FRANCE

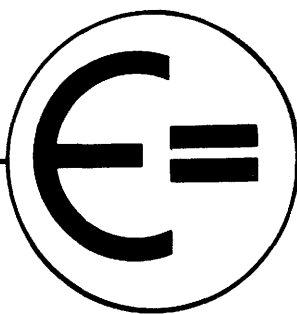
Ms. J.	Abitboul	Chargière de Mission	Délegation a l'Emploi
Ms. M.	Devaud	Presidente	Comité du Travail Féminin
Ms.	Lavin		Comité du Travail Féminin
Ms. M.	Levy	Sécretaire General	Comité du Travail Féminin
Ms. B.	Sousi	Rapporteur	Groupe sur les discriminations et disparités dans le travail féminin.
Ms. R.	Villebrun	Secrétaire CNPF	Comité du Travail Féminin

GERMANY

Ms. M.	Estor	Bundesbeamtin	Bundesministerium fur Arbeit und Sozialordnung
Mr. G.	Halbach	Ministerialrat	Bundesministerium fur Arbeit und Sozialordnung
Ms. B.	Hesse	Regierungsratin ZA	Bundesministerium fur Jugend, Familie & Gesundheit.
Ms. M.	Immenkotter	Ministerialrätin Amt des Frauenbeauftragten	Ministerium fur Arbeit, Gesundheit und Soziales
Ms. M.	Kutsch	Leiterin	Bundesministerium fur Jugend, Familie & Gesundheit.
Ms. E.	Wolf	Leiterin	Hess. Ministerpräsident - Staatskanzlei

IRELAND

Ms. M.	Barnes	Member	Employment Equality Agency
Ms. P.	Curtin-Kelly	Placement Officer	National Manpower Service Department of Labour
Mr. D.	Horan	Asst. Principal Officer	Department of Labour
Ms. R.	McArdle	Chief Officer	Employment Equality Agency
Ms. S.	Meehan	Chairman	Employment Equality Agency
Ms. N.	O'Neill	Member	Employment Equality Agency

ITALY

Ms. M.	Bianchi Olevano	Ministero del Lavoro
Mr. G.	Biancho	Ministero del Lavoro
Ms. L.	Bruni Selvaggi	Ministero del Lavoro
Ms. D.	Lattanzi	
Ms.	Lazzari	
Ms. A.	Ricciardi	Ministero del Lavoro

LUXEMBOURG

Ms. M.	Droessaert-Bintner	Presidente	Conseil National des Femmes
Ms. A.	Lulling	Deputé	Comité du Travail Féminin
Ms. M.	Mousel		Ministère du Travail et de Sécurité Social
Ms. C.	Pleimling	Professeur au Conservatoire	Union des Soroptomistes
Mr. V.	Reding	Deputé	Comité du Travail Féminin

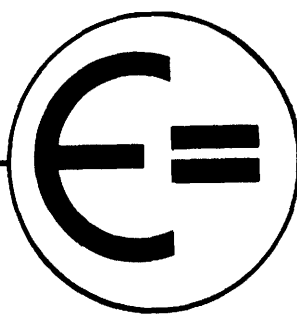
NETHERLANDS

Mr. J.	de Wildt		Ministere voor Cultuur, recreatie, maatschappelijk werk.
Ms. M.	Grotenhuis	Plaatsvervangend voorzitter	Emancipatie Kommissie
Ms. C.	Schermer	Belidsmedevelkskr Sociale Zaken	Ministere van Sociale Zaken
Mr. H.	Smit	Waarnemend salutaris	Emancipatie Kommissie
Ms. E.	ter Veld	lid van de	Emancipatie Kommissie
Ms. M.	Van der A	lid van de	Emancipatie Kommissie

UNITED KINGDOM

Ms. J.	Finlay	Deputy Chairman	Equal Opportunities Commission
Mr. K.	King	Asst. Secretary	Department of Employment
Baroness	Lockwood	Chairman	Equal Opportunities Commission



UNITED KINGDOM Cont'd.

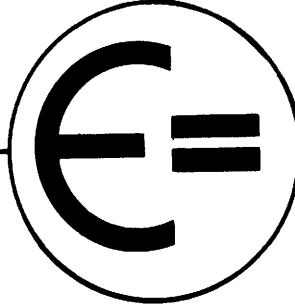
Ms. I.	McCormack	Deputy Chairman	Northern Ireland Equal Opportunities Commission
Ms. A.	Robinson	Commissioner	Equal Opportunities Commission
Ms. J.	Goose	Asst. Secretary	Home Office

MEMBERS OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Ms. S.	Dekker	Member	Ad hoc Committee on Women's Rights
Ms. J.	Maij-Weggen	Rapporteur	Ad hoc Committee on Women's Rights
Ms. Y.	Roudy	Chairwoman	Ad hoc Committee on Women's Rights
Ms. V.	Squarcialupi	Vice Chairwoman	Ad hoc Committee on Women's Rights
Ms. M.	von Alemann	Vice Chairwoman	Ad hoc Committee on Women's Rights

OBSERVERS

Ms. C.	Apprill		Council of Europe
Lady	Howe	Ex-Deputy Chairman	Equal Opportunities Commission
Ms. D.	Lecoultre	Administrateur Principal	O.E.C.D.
Ms. L.	Lisgo	Member Permanent Commission	Youth Forum of European Commission
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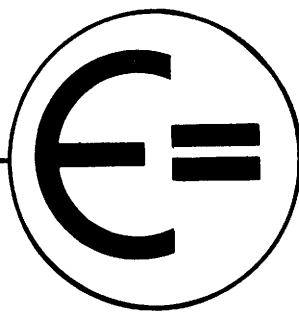
Ms. M. Levy	Comité du Travail Féminin
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Ms. H.B. Schöpp-Schilling	Aspen Institute Berlin

COMMISSION OF EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Mr. H. Vredeling	Vice President
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Mr. H. Tak	Lid Kabinet
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Mr. P. Van Ank	
Ms. F. Deshormes	Fonctionnaire
Mr. J. Vandeput	
Mr. A. Laurent	Fonctionnaire
Ms. K. Van Abshoven	Fonctionnaire

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Mr. J. Eccles	Commissioner
Mr. R. Hopps	Commissioner
Mr. P. Urquhart	Commissioner
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Ms. T. Marsland	
Mr. D. Nandy	Deputy Chief Executive.



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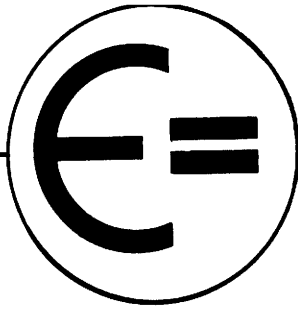
**European Economic Community**

**European Economic Community**

**European Economic Community**

**Equal Opportunities Commission**

**Equal Opportunities Commission**



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Badge Colour Coding

Delegates - Yellow

Observers - Blue

European Community/Equal Opportunities Commission - White

Press - Pink

Services - Green

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

**Wednesday, 28th May, 1980.**

- 10.30 hrs      Registration Opens.  
12.30          Reception, Stanley Room, Midland Hotel.  
13.00          Luncheon.  
14.00          Opening, Session 1      – The present situation in the member states – Introduced by  
Dipak Nandy, E.O.C., U.K.  
16.00          Session 2                – Social and Legislative Arrangements still inhibiting full  
participation in working society, Author: Martine Levy,  
Comite du Travail Feminin, France.  
17.30          Session ends.  
18.00          Reception, Town Hall, Manchester.  
19.45          Dinner.

**Thursday, 29th May, 1980.**

- 09.00 hrs      Session 3                – Persistence of occupational segregation in view of changes  
in the structure of Industry and Work – Author: Margery  
Povall, L.S.E., U.K.  
11.00          Session 4                – Changing relationships and domestic responsibilities  
between men and women:  
Author: Hanna-Beate Schöpp-Schilling, Germany.  
13.00          Session ends.  
13.30          Luncheon.  
14.30          Session 5                – Problems and Possibilities of new technology –  
Author: Jay Gershuny, University of Sussex, U.K.  
16.30          Session ends.  
17.00 hrs      Drafting Committee.  
17.00          Visit to E.O.C.  
20.15          Dinner.  

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18.30          Optional Theatre Visit.  
18.45          Dinner, Royal Exchange Theatre.  
20.00          'Love on the Dole', Royal Exchange Theatre.

**Friday, 30th May, 1980.**

- 09.00 hrs      Session 6                – Discussion of Consensus Document.  
11.30          Session ends.  
13.00          Luncheon.  
14.00          Conference close.

The Conference is co-chaired by Baroness Lockwood, E.O.C., and Nel Barendregt, C.E.C.,  
assisted by Jaqueline Nonon, C.E.C., and Dipak Nandy, E.O.C.

EQUALITY FOR WOMEN

ASSESSMENT - PROBLEMS - PERSPECTIVES

A EUROPEAN PROJECT

28TH - 30TH MAY 1980, MANCHESTER

*Baroness Lockwood opened the Conference by welcoming the representatives to Manchester.*

This was a unique occasion, being the first time within the Community that the national bodies concerned with equality for the sexes in the member countries had come together to make their contribution to the formulation of the Commission's priorities for the next five years on this important issue. It was to be hoped that this active involvement would continue in the future.

A welcome was extended to the authors of the specialist papers and the European observers, whose continuing interest and collaboration would be vital if the recommendations of the conference were to have any practical effect.

The four major papers to be discussed by the Conference shared one overriding common theme, the need for more initiative and more resources at national level and new resources at European level. The varying composition of the national groups would mean that on certain issues, representatives of government or of the social partners would not feel able to go all the way with the national equality bodies. But it was to be hoped that the discussions could be constructive, frank and flexible on the basis of mutual trust. This was a historic conference. It was vital that the opportunity for initiative it offered be seized and used over the next few days.

WEDNESDAY, 28TH MAY, 1980 - SESSION 1 - THE PRESENT SITUATION IN THE  
MEMBER STATES. CHAIRED BY: BARONESS LOCKWOOD (U.K.)

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*Dipak Nandy* presented a resume of the reports of the national equality agencies. The first point to emerge from the national papers was the diversity of the nature, functions and responsibilities of equality bodies. Some were governmental bodies, some were independent agencies, some had law enforcement responsibilities, some had a purely advisory role. They varied in size and in the budgets which were available to them. Several papers made it clear that the equality bodies would like a much more active role, particularly in the formulation of new Directives and the monitoring of the implementation of existing Directives. There was also a great variety both in the terms of reference of these bodies and in the government departments to which they were responsible. In many cases it was clear that the relationship between the equality bodies and the social partners would benefit from a frank and open review which recognised that both had distinctive functions and responsibilities.

The main points which emerged could be summarised as follows:

- an awareness of the fragmented nature of the equality bodies within the Community, leading to a desire for greater co-ordination and exchange between these bodies
- a desire for the recognition of the specific and distinctive role of the equality bodies, both by government and the social partners
- a desire for broader terms of reference together with greater autonomy
- a desire for more active involvement in the initiatives taken by the European Commission at every stage.

*The Chair* then called for contributions from the Conference.

Ms. S. Meehan (Ireland) urged the Conference to consider as a priority the need to harmonise the application of Directives within the Community, with the introduction of legislation where necessary, to ensure that the benefits conferred by the Directives were available to all women.

Ms. M. Smet (Belgium) agreed that harmonisation was necessary to remove inequalities such as those within the tax systems of the different countries. It was true that equality agencies wanted to play a greater role in the formulation of policies but the question arose as to who they should consult with at a European level. One solution would be the creation of a European equivalent to the national equality agencies.

Ms. J. Finlay (United Kingdom) supported the Belgian suggestion. Whether it were achieved by strengthening the existing Bureau or whether a new Committee or Commission were formed, it would improve the communication between the national bodies to great effect.

Ms. M. Grotenhuis (Netherlands) felt that the first priority should be the strengthening of the implementation of existing Directives through legislation.

Ms. M. Hoornaert (Belgium) agreed and questioned whether a European Equality Commission would have any greater impact in this area and in the formulation of new Directives than at present.

Ms. E. Brunfaut (Belgium) urged that consideration be given to strengthening the existing Bureau for Women's Affairs, and this was endorsed by Ms. L. Bruni Selvaggi (Italy) and Ms. M. Devaud (France) who felt that the introduction of a data bank of information available to all the national agencies would be one way of improving the present structure.



Ms. A. Lulling (Luxembourg) urged the Conference to recommend that the European Commission request member states to consult their national agencies when contemplating new Directives. The aim should be to strengthen the existing consultation structures as Ms. Devaud had said.

Ms. I. McCormack (United Kingdom) commented that there was no substitute for the political will to give these issues a higher priority but a co-ordinating body with as wide a membership as possible could have a useful role to play.

Ms. E. ter Veld (Netherlands) felt that it was vital that national discussions on the implementation of Directives, such as on the question of whether the burden of proof should be on the employer rather than the individual, should influence the debate at a European level to ensure the full implementation of Directives throughout the Community.

Ms. N. O'Neill (Ireland) commented that there were obvious points at which the present structure needed strengthening, for example, by using a European equality agency to advise on the allocation of the Social Fund.

Ms. M. Smet (Belgium) explained that her original proposal of a European Equality Agency was just one way of trying to increase the impact that women could have and whatever the structure this should be the priority.

Ms. B. Hesse (Germany) pointed out that Germany was now strengthening its equality legislation at provincial as well as federal level.

This session provided the opportunity for an exchange of views on the staffing and budgets of equality agencies and this opportunity should not be lost.

Ms. M. Barnes (Ireland) commented that this session was also intended to cover the practical problems of the implementation of EEC Directives and urged the Conference to consider the need for national legislation and for equality agencies to have enforcement powers, without which there would be very little to build on in the future.

Ms. S. Meehan (Ireland) reminded the Conference that this suggestion raised the point she had made earlier about the need for harmonisation of national legislation to make common the best results in all countries. The national agencies could play their part by close monitoring of what had taken place in other countries. But they needed to be allocated the resources to enable them to reach individual women in their country. In many cases the resources allocated tended to be enough for administration but not for operation. Agencies could not speak for women unless they were allowed by the availability of resources to take into account the wishes and aspirations of individual women.

Ms. E. Brunfaut (Belgium) agreed that the importance of the national agencies should not be underestimated. The European Commission's Bureau for Women's Affairs could provide information to the national agencies and encourage them to be more active.

Ms. M. Grotenhuis (Netherlands) fully supported the strengthening of the national agencies but emphasised that the present Directives only related to one aspect of women's lives and as well as concerning themselves with the implementation of these Directives the national agencies should be pursuing a broader and more far reaching goal.

*From the Chair, Baroness Lockwood (U.K.) then summarised the discussions.* It had become clear during the session that both the formal and informal sessions of the Conference could serve a useful purpose in increasing the sharing of information on how the different national agencies operated, to discover the strengths and weaknesses of the agencies that were already in existence. There had been an underlying agreement that there was a need for a strengthening of national agencies and as the Conference continued the ways in which this might be achieved would become clearer. If there were either a strengthening of the existing Bureau for Women's Affairs or the creation of some new European Equality Agency, one of the functions of such an organisation would be to monitor the effectiveness of national

agencies. There was a pressing need for co-ordination not only of policies but also of the data on which such policies were based; and this led to the conclusion that there should be a stronger force operating at central level to assist all the agencies in carrying out their national obligations. It should be made clear to the European Commission that if the agencies were to be more effective at a national level then more resources must be made available to them.

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WEDNESDAY, 28th MAY, 1980 - SESSION 2 - SOCIAL AND LEGISLATIVE  
ARRANGEMENTS STILL INHIBITING FULL PARTICIPATION IN WORKING SOCIETY  
AUTHOR: MS. M. LEVY, COMITÉ DU TRAVAIL FÉMININ, FRANCE.

CHAired BY: MS. N. BARENDREGT (CEC)

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*Ms. N. Barendregt opened the session by summarising the points raised by this paper.* This was a very wide subject and it would obviously be necessary to confine the discussion to key issues to enable the Conference to achieve some concrete proposals for change. The starting point must be the legislation which still sees the man as the provider of income for the family and the work of women as secondary to this. It would also be necessary to consider to what extent government policies towards the distribution of income within the family were implemented via the tax and social security systems. The generally agreed aim was to enable women to achieve financial independence within the family unit. Any solutions to these problems would have to bear in mind the economic repercussions of increasing the benefits payable to married women. It was clear that these considerations, together with the psychological and social aspects, were preventing any change at present. Change would have to be effected gradually and a European assessment of the situation would be invaluable. But the aim was still to get concrete action in the very near future.

*The Chair then called for contributions from the Conference.*

Ms. M. Van der A (Netherlands) commented that the approach taken by the Netherlands was towards individualising the system and a start had already been made on existing legislation. The main problem with this approach was ensuring that it did not lead to an increase in the income of higher income groups. Individualisation should not lead to a widening of the differences in society.

Ms. P. Lavin (France) agreed with the Chair that changes in social legislation in favour of women would be costly. But women's hidden contribution to the social security system was worth an enormous amount in money terms and, in any study of the European situation such as had been proposed, this should be balanced against the expense of introducing changes.

Ms. E. ter Veld (Netherlands) questioned whether equality in pension schemes could not be encompassed within Article 119, pensions being treated as deferred pay. The other major problem with individualising pension entitlement was caused by the gaps in women's employment lives caused by their family responsibilities. It was essential that credits should be allowed for men and women in these circumstances. Ms. ter Veld also asked whether the wording of the Equal Treatment Directive could be construed as meaning harmonising downwards, so that men had as few rights as women have now.

Ms. N. Barendregt (CEC) speaking from the Chair, answered this final query by pointing out that the terms of the third Directive on Equal Treatment were also governed by the provisions of the second Directive on improving working conditions. It was clear that much more attention would have to be paid to the wording of any fourth Directive.

On the question of pension rights being seen as deferred pay, there was a case before the European Court on this subject at present, and the Commission hoped that there would be a successful outcome. The Council of Ministers had already agreed to strengthen the Equal Pay Directive in the light of the Court's decision.

Ms. A. Lulling (Luxembourg) questioned the assumption implicit in Ms. Levy's excellent paper that the working woman was in a worse position as regards social security than the woman at home. It had to be remembered that a woman whose entitlement to benefit was dependent on her husband's

contributions was often in a difficult position if the marriage broke up. There were no ideal solutions. Perhaps there should be an independent social security system for women? This would mean that some women who gain from the present system would lose out. At the moment men are worse off than women in relation to retirement age and widow's pensions. One solution would be to require everyone to contribute to the scheme but there would be difficulty in demanding two contributions from a one wage household. With the tax system the ideal would be to tax everyone as individuals and to have a generous family allowance system, but governments often tried to regulate the labour market via the tax system. A firm Community policy which did not penalise working women would be of considerable help.

Ms. M. Levy (France) expanded on some of the points raised by Ms. Lulling. A distinction had to be drawn between women as mothers and women as wives when considering the way the present tax system applied to married women. The recent OECD report indicated that married men obtained greater tax advantages for having a spouse than they did for having dependent children. Any solutions would have to ensure that certain groups in society did not gain disproportionate advantages from the changes. The Commission should help to formulate unbiased systems which would not tend towards these extremes. It was important that the tax system did not become a disincentive to women working in better jobs with higher pay and the chance of promotion. It was not enough for women just to be able to have a job. To achieve true equality they needed to have a good job with prospects.

Ms. M. Pirard (Belgium) commented that all the representatives were concerned as to the effect individualisation would have in practice, particularly on housewives. One solution would be to abolish all derived rights for housewives without children over a transitional period and then provide some temporary compensation via the tax system. Eventually this group would lose any special privileges.

There would also be a second group of housewives with children who would receive special treatment. This suggestion was one way of finding a transitional solution to the problem while waiting for a general change in attitudes.

Ms. N. Barendregt (CEC) commented from the Chair that discussions had concentrated so far on the problems of housewives and the family unit. Consideration should perhaps also be given to cohabiting women and other forms of relationships.

Ms. M. Hoornaert (Belgium) agreed that a distinction had to be drawn between families with or without children. The position of families raising children needed to be protected if the aim was to individualise the system.

Ms. S. Meehan (Ireland) questioned whether the position of women who stayed at home to look after the creature comforts of their husbands should be protected to the same extent as that of women who had children to care for. Legislation and Directives could help to establish the social framework which would facilitate changes in such attitudes to the role of women. This had already begun to happen as a result of the Irish ruling on pensions and survivors' benefits. It was also possible that the same provisions could result in a flexible retirement age, although this still had to be tested before the courts. But it was not enough to ask the European Commission to review all discriminatory legislation. It was necessary to consider the family responsibilities of both men and women. It was clear that those caring for children, the old, the sick or the handicapped were contributing to the national welfare of the country. As present they were not only not rewarded but actually penalised for this. What was needed was a new system of rules and regulations which reflected changing social attitudes and recognised the existence of the symmetrical family unit, in which the roles and responsibilities were shared between husband and wife.

Ms. A. Robinson (U.K.) re-emphasised the importance of the caring and educating roles as being a woman's contribution to the 'social capital' of her country. This contribution should be recognised by the tax, social security and pension systems and be credited accordingly. Unless there was equal enjoyment of both social and industrial capital, there would never be full participation of women in the working section of society.

Ms. L. Bruni Selvaggi (Italy) informed the Conference that the Italian system had gone a long way towards solving all these problems. National insurance contributions were paid by employers with only a minimal amount paid by the workers. There was no discrimination in the social security or pension system. Survivors' benefits applied equally to men and women. Women could work until the male retirement age but in fact rarely worked beyond their maximum contribution point. There was a system of voluntary contributions for housewives. The tax system was individualised, with the man and woman giving a separate tax return and allowance for children being claimed by either partner. Most of the aims that had been under discussion had already been achieved in Italy.

Ms. J. Finlay (U.K.) commented that the Equal Opportunities Commission had long been pressing for the reform of the tax system to remove sex discrimination. Its recommendation was that the individual should be regarded as the basic unit for tax purposes. The Commission had now been asked by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make positive suggestions for change and this was much more difficult. Every solution that was suggested was detrimental to some extent to groups which benefited from the current system. It would be interesting to hear of similar problems in other countries.



Ms. P. Curtin-Kelly (Ireland) thanked Ms. Levy for her informative paper and asked the Dutch and Danish representatives how successful their attempts to individualise the tax system had been, and how it actually worked in practice.

Ms. M. Grotenhuis (Netherlands) replied that changes to the Dutch system were at present only at working party level. The proposal was that people would be taxed individually but would be assumed to be living together. Reductions would apply to those living alone or to families living on one income. The suggestion was that this same method should also be applied to the social security system.

Ms. E. Munck (Denmark) commented that Denmark had not had to introduce any new legislation to implement the third Directive on Equal Treatment in Social Security. As regards the tax system, there was identical taxation for both members of a married couple. Professional income, however, was taxed separately for married couples. There was one major difference in the Danish tax system: there was no tax advantage obtainable for men by virtue of the fact that they were married with a non-working wife.

Ms. I. McCormack (U.K.) reminded the Conference that there was a danger of discussing equality for equality's sake. The main problem was that in terms of social, fiscal and economic matters women related to society through men. The structures of society reflected that basis and there would be considerable material, social and economic cost in changing that condition. Equality should never be seen in terms of equalising downwards. It should be a question of looking at a condition and seeing whether it was of benefit to the individual in society and then discussing equality in that context. Ms. McCormack personally disagreed with the U.K. and Irish recommendations that certain protective legislation applying to women should be removed in the name of equality.

Ms. M. Barnes (Ireland) replied that the Irish recommendations on the removal of protective legislation were aimed at removing obstacles which prevented women from achieving equal pay and opportunities. As well as recommending repeal of existing legislation they had also called for new protection for both men and women.

Ms. E. Brunfaut (Belgium) commented that the discussion had become complicated by introducing the concept of benefit to society rather than concentrating on benefit to women, which of course would inevitably be of benefit to society. There had been emphasis on the caring and educating role of women at home with children, but it should be remembered that working women also had children to care for. In the last few years advances had been made in the field of equality of opportunity. What was needed now was greater consideration of the position of men and women throughout society.

*From the Chair, Ms. N. Barendregt (CEC), then summarised the discussion.*

The objective must be to use legislation to bring about a new form of equality, not just to remove the old barriers to equality of treatment between men and women. It was clear from the discussion that it was essential to pursue the exchange of views and information on discrimination in the present systems at a European level. There was a need for more comparable data to enable the Commission to define the criteria for progressive development in these areas. The final objective must be to create a situation in which women have their own income, and to put an end to the system of acquired rights or rights derived from the husband. This was something that the Community would have to take into account when considering other Directives and it was to be hoped that such concrete measures would result from discussions such as these.

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THURSDAY, 28TH MAY, 1980 - SESSION 3 - PERSISTENCE OF OCCUPATIONAL  
SEGREGATION IN VIEW OF CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF INDUSTRY AND WORK -  
AUTHOR: MS. M. POVALL, LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, UNITED KINGDOM.

CHAIRER BY: MS. N. BARENDREGT (CEC)

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*Ms. N. Barendregt (CEC) opened the session by summarising the points raised by this paper.*

It was quite clear that the boundaries between male and female employment had been very clearly drawn for some time and despite recent changes in working conditions the distinctions between the kind of careers men and women followed had stayed the same.

The paper indicated that the present analyses of horizontal segregation were too broad to be useful. The problem of vertical segregation, the difficulties faced by women in getting promotion, still seemed to persist. The Directive on equal pay for work of equal value should have helped, but it was true to say that as yet it was not being fully implemented in practice. It was clear that more specific measures would be needed to ensure full implementation, with perhaps a major programme of research to establish how this might be achieved. As well as examining the existing job evaluation schemes at a Community level, it would be helpful to collate examples of both good and bad practice in this area to learn from in the future. After two years of the Equal Pay Directive it was clear that a review of its implementation was essential and the Commission could play a key role here. Ms. Povall's paper indicated that data did exist within individual workplaces and within the labour organisations which could be drawn on to provide detailed evidence of the problem. It was vital that these statistics were made more comparable so that they could be put to good use. What was needed was better statistics and better use of the information available at present.

*The Chair then called for contributions from the Conference.*

Ms. M. Pirard (Belgium) welcomed the Chairman's comments on the need for improved statistical information within the Community, which at present bore no comparison with material available in the United States. This point should be made clear to the Commission. Statistics relating to all the member states should be drawn up on a uniform basis. The Commission should also be called on to act on the author's recommendation that the question of job evaluation, of defining what was meant by 'work of equal value', should be studied at Community level as a matter of urgency. This would then provide a tool which would enable some headway to be made towards real equality for women's pay.

Ms. E. ter Veld (Netherlands) commented that the Equal Treatment Directive could achieve very little while women's work remained segregated. While women, because of their childbearing role, continued to be used as flexible reserve by the labour market there was little hope of changing this. There was certainly a need for a re-evaluation of skills. On the other hand, increasing numbers of men were entering traditionally female areas of employment, and pressure had to be exerted to ensure that women could also enter traditional male preserves. Care had to be taken here that these opportunities were available not only to young women but also to those with family responsibilities. Changes would need to be made in the safety standards applied by certain industries. The aim should be to provide protective legislation on a humane basis irrespective of sex and this would need a great deal of analysis before concrete proposals were put forward.

Ms. E. Brunfaut (Belgium) reported that in Belgium a special Commission had been looking at the question of job evaluation. It was relatively easy to make general statements about the problem but more difficult to make a precise assessment of all jobs and professions. It was essential that such surveys be carried out nationally in individual workplaces and the Commission could include this in a more wide reaching Directive. On the question of diversifying women's

work, the crucial question was training and re-training. Women should not merely be offered the jobs men did not want, but jobs with a future. Here good careers guidance was essential and the role of families in this process had to be recognised.

Ms. M. Kutsch (Germany) supported the author's analysis of job segregation as being both horizontal and vertical. Germany was making every effort to get more women into technical jobs. It was vitally important that girls, their parents, the public at large and careers guidance officers accepted the range of jobs open to girls. So far there had been positive results and the prospects could be said to be reasonably bright. Vertical segregation, however, was a much more difficult problem. Germany had been putting into effect an affirmative action programme, although without the legislative base of the United States schemes. The aim was to get companies in the private and public sectors and local authorities to draw up promotion plans for women on a voluntary basis. This was a pilot scheme but it was hoped that positive progress could be made. This kind of scheme could be carried out throughout the Community. On the question of equal pay, most of the main points had already been made. A German survey had shown that the high level of unemployment among women was not due to lack of qualifications but to the fact that they were discriminated against because of their family responsibilities. The possible solutions to this problem would be discussed in a later session.

Ms. J. Finlay (United Kingdom) reported that the Equal Opportunities Commission was very concerned with the question of job segregation. The education system played a major role in establishing expectations and work was being done with teachers to alert them to these problems. It was essential that girls obtained a good craft education to teach them how to manipulate tools and that they pursued mathematics courses for as long as possible in order to increase the number of opportunities available to them. Training and re-training was also essential for young women and those returning to work. Allowance could be made for positive discrimination to help to train women in industries where they

had not been represented or very under-represented. Only limited progress had been made in this area. It was noticeable that less women than expected were able to come forward for such courses because of difficulties with their domestic arrangements. Training of women could only succeed if society then gave them some support in their domestic role, and this question would need to be returned to in the next session.

Mr. S. Christensen (Denmark) commented that in Denmark there was a feeling that job evaluation could never result in completely equal pay. The inevitable conclusion would be that women had the least interesting jobs. The only way forward was to encourage women to enter non-traditional areas of work. This would of course be even more difficult in a period of high unemployment. Women often ended up in the jobs that men did not want to do. There was a need for new initiatives here, particularly in the field of training and re-training.

Ms. M. Povall, the author of the paper, was invited to comment on the doubts expressed by Mr. Christensen on the usefulness of job evaluation. She commented that the aim was to produce a system that people felt to be fair. The danger was that the low status of women's work could be formalised if people were forced to introduce equal pay for work of equal value against their will. But a great deal of this opposition was due to ignorance and the Commission had a role to play here, and could provide information on successful job evaluation schemes.

Baroness Lockwood (United Kingdom) commented that experience had shown that it was essential to keep job evaluation schemes under constant review to prevent any return of discriminatory practices

Ms. R. McArdle (Ireland) pointed out that the resistance to job evaluation was most marked in the trade union movement. Women need to make their voices heard within unions to change this. What was needed was guidelines drawn up by the social partners which would apply throughout the Community.

On a further point, it was clear that there would be no progress towards equal opportunities without a strong programme of affirmative action backed by legislation, as in the United States.

Ms. M. Devaud (France) supported the suggestion of guidelines for job evaluation at a European level. France had also established pilot schemes to combat job segregation but it was clear that the key issue was training. It could still be the case, however, that women with qualifications were passed over by employers. More comparable data was needed on the question of horizontal and vertical segregation. It was vital that the good example set by some countries could be shown to those countries which were being more cautious.

Ms. M. Grotenhuis (Netherlands) asked why no action had yet been taken on the question of providing European statistics in this area, despite the fact that this had been recommended before, for example by the European Parliament. On a further point, did the Conference think that part-time work helped or hindered the desegregation of the labour market?

Ms. J. Nonon was asked by the Chair to reply to the first question.

She reported that advances had certainly been made in the preparation of Community statistics over the last ten years, but it was still very difficult to harmonise data. It was certainly possible, however, to compare the situation in the member states on a number of key issues, such as salary structures, qualifications, working hours, etc. Work was at present proceeding on statistics on training and education for women on a national basis and at Community level. This would provide new material and would be as thorough as could be wished.

Ms. I. McCormack (United Kingdom) agreed with the Netherlands that there were dangers in part-time work being seen as the panacea for all ills. The value of the paper under discussion was that it looked at the structural problems. Pilot schemes to encourage desegregation would not affect the basic structure unless accompanied by legislation. The effect of indirect

discrimination on the persistence of low pay for women had been touched on in the paper and needed to be pursued. This could be the subject of a major EEC initiative, following the approach taken in Britain and Ireland.

Ms. L. Bruni Selvaggi (Italy) commented that despite the outlawing of discrimination by law, horizontal and vertical segregation did occur even in Italy. Progress here was hampered to some extent by the attitudes of women themselves. Although the increase in women's employment had been very great in the last few years, they still had less bargaining power within the unions and less contractual security. On the question of part-time work, it was possible that it could lead to the perpetuation of women's work within the labour market, as suggested by the Netherlands.

Ms. A. Lulling (Luxembourg) felt that the time was now ripe for Community level initiatives to achieve desegregation. These should include legislation to prevent direct discrimination in all countries and also affirmative action to reduce indirect discrimination. But care had to be taken to ensure that real progress was being achieved. Immigrant workers had replaced indigenous men in many jobs, and women should not be pressured into taking the sorts of jobs that men no longer wanted. Another possible pitfall was the creation of new 'women's sectors', as Soviet women had found with medicine and as had happened in education. This could mean going back to the beginning in those sectors and positive action from Europe such as recommendations or guidelines was needed to prevent this.

Ms. M. Levy (France) endorsed the comments of Ms. McCormack on the importance of indirect discrimination in this sector and admitted that it was difficult to define precisely how this operated because of lack of comparable statistics. The author had commented favourably on the advances made by American multi-national companies to the benefit of women workers. It would be useful if the possible approaches such



companies might take could be surveyed at a European level. Finally, the need for dissemination of more information could not be over-emphasised. This should not just be in the form of 'here are our common problems' but 'here are the solutions that we found in each of our countries' and these should be shown in precise and practical terms.

Ms. M. Barnes (Ireland) pointed out that one of the major problems with job evaluation was that it was based on male perceptions and male values in a male world. If European guidelines were to be produced a great effort would have to be made to ensure that they were fair. On the question of training, perhaps the scope of the Social Fund could be widened to allow support for more initiatives in this area to take the male mystique away from certain areas of work.

Ms. E. Brunfaut (Belgium) agreed that European guidelines would be of great assistance to individual countries trying to develop job evaluation schemes. The Social Fund should be used to encourage women into jobs with a future, rather than those which men were now abandoning. A distinction had to be drawn between 'dirty work' which was uninteresting and 'dirty work' which offered opportunities for creativity. Women should not be dissuaded from entering some areas of employment just because they involved manual work.

Ms. M. van der A (Netherlands) supported the Belgian comments but felt that guidelines or recommendations would not be enough. Only Directives would enable true progress to be made. On the question of statistics, much more remained to be done. It was vital to have adequate information before policies were initiated.

Ms. P. Curtin Kelly (Ireland) re-emphasised the need for action with school leavers, for affirmative action programmes and for schemes aimed at women returning to work.

*From the Chair, Ms. N. Barendregt (CEC) then summarised the discussions.*

It was clear that what was needed was structural change. The present system of job evaluation would have to be analysed in depth and alterations proposed. This would not be a once only review but would need to be a continuing process which would take into account those factors which should play a more important role when assessing women's work. To effect this structural change, more comparable statistics were needed, and the Community should take the initiative here and help to make this possible. More research was needed on career development and women should be encouraged to enter the promising sectors of the labour market. Here training was of vital importance and more use could be made of the Social Fund, with the proviso that care had to be taken to ensure that this fund was used to help redistribute the Community's resources in the best possible way. There was clear support for the suggestion of guidelines on affirmative action programmes and the legislative basis for this would have to be looked at carefully.

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THURSDAY, 29TH MAY, 1980 - SESSION 4 - CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS AND DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN - AUTHOR: MS. HANNA-BEATE SCHÖPP-SCHILLING, ASPEN INSTITUTE, GERMANY.

CHAired BY: BARONESS LOCKWOOD (UNITED KINGDOM)

*Baroness Lockwood opened the session by summarising the points raised by this paper.*

The first paper discussed by the Conference stressed the connection between social security and taxation systems in reinforcing women's disadvantage in the labour market. The second paper identified job segregation as the major obstacle to further progress towards equal pay. The paper about to be considered analysed a further dimension: the unequal division of labour in the home, the unequal burden of domestic responsibilities, as another major cause of women's secondary place in the labour market.

The Conference was being invited to consider some specific proposals against a background of economic stagnation and increasing unemployment throughout Europe, which in turn was encouraging a growth in the feeling that women should withdraw from the labour market back into the home. This was, of course, completely unacceptable to women as a whole in Europe.

The importance of the concept of indirect discrimination had already been touched on, and in Britain the successful case of Price-v-Civil Service Commission had shown that the rules and patterns that had once been acceptable in a largely male dominated labour force could not now apply.

The paper contained four major proposals. Firstly, that there should be no erosion of existing maternity provisions. Secondly, that it should be recognised that care of children and other dependants was not solely the responsibility of women, and this led on to the consideration of paternity leave and parental leave for domestic

reasons, where there was scope for a European initiative in setting minimum standards. The third proposition was the need for increased provision for the care of children, school age children and elderly dependants, both through private and public institutions. Fourthly, the paper called for a new initiative in the organisation of working time, including the possibility of a shorter working day. This could answer the needs of working parents better than the possibility of part-time employment, which could tend to perpetuate the segregated labour market, as mentioned in the last session.

*The Chair then called for contributions from the Conference.*

Ms. M. Hoornaert (Belgium) reported that the Belgian representatives were divided on these four points. There was agreement on the first and third proposals but the group did not support the suggestion of a Directive on parental leave, or the call for a shorter working day. The union movement was pressing for a shorter working week as a method of creating new jobs and this was of just as much importance to women as to men. The problem with parental leave was that it would inevitably be taken by women and would have a negative impact on women's opportunities, as the present protective legislation did. Parental leave could be used by governments to reduce the number of women in the labour market. The question of family leave in the event of sickness etc. was another matter and this should be supported.

Ms. L. Bruni-Selvaggi (Italy) commented that in Italy most progress had been made on maternity leave. Parents of children under three years of age had the right of absence from work if a child was sick. The introduction of full-scale parental leave, however, would constitute a serious economic problem. Paid holidays were already the responsibility of employers and it was hard to see how more leave could be borne financially. On the question of the timetable of work, there was already a tendency towards a gradual reduction in working hours in Italy's collective bargaining agreements.

Ms. C. Schermer (Netherlands) felt that the ideas that were being discussed about a proper distribution of work inside and outside the home, were difficult to put into effect because of the resistance of ordinary men and women to such changes in the traditional situation. A higher value needed to be put on paternity rather than just on maternity, and there should be concerted action to emphasise the value of household tasks. On the subject of reducing working hours, above all this was an economic problem, and would not be able to succeed unless a common agreement was reached throughout the Community. Finally, part-time work was valuable whether parental leave was available or not. In many cases the choice for women was between a part-time job or no job at all.

Ms. M. Levy (France) commented that the French Committee had always stressed the importance of support services for families with young children to help establish a fairer distribution of household tasks, rather than expecting men to do the kind of work women no longer wanted to do. On the question of maternity leave, practical changes to make it easier for pregnant women to work would be more beneficial than extending the leave indefinitely, which could have a negative effect on equal opportunities. At present, time off to care for sick children was often written into collective agreements as applying only to women. What was needed was a Community instrument which extended these provisions to men. The Committee was also in favour of the shorter working day.

Mr. H. Smit (Netherlands) pointed out that as long as women did less important jobs than men and were paid less as a result, and as long as more tax and social security benefits were attached to men's work, it was inevitable that women would take the major responsibility for the family. It was essential that men should assume their fair share of these responsibilities and what was needed was the creation of facilities such as creches and nursery schools to enable this to happen. A reduction in working hours would also help, and a five hour working day was not unthinkable at all for both men and women. Part-time work should be available, but for men as well as women. The Community had a role to play in taking an initiative on the reduction

of working hours, which would never come into effect unless there was co-ordination at a European level. This initiative should also cater for parental leave, extended maternity leave and special leave to care for sick children. Only these provisions would give women a real choice between working and caring for their children.

Ms. M. Kutsch (Germany) welcomed the emphasis given in the paper to the sharing of domestic responsibilities. It was the general rule in society at present that family responsibilities were abandoned at the factory gate. It was quite feasible to consider extending maternity leave into parental leave, although it was doubtful how many fathers would jump at the opportunity (the take-up figure for Swedish men was 10% at present). The important point, however, was that all employers should know when hiring staff that any man could take this leave as much as any woman. Contrary to the view expressed in the paper, the German experience of allowing four months maternity leave had not caused women to feel disadvantaged as a result. It had to be remembered that employers would use anything as a pretext for discrimination. It was true that the maternity leave scheme had had an impact on the labour market, and now had to be planned for in the same way that annual leave and sick leave was. But it was incorrect to say that this scheme was introduced for labour market reasons. It was introduced as an extension of social policy.

Ms. E. Brunfaut (Belgium) explained that the differences of opinion on these measures within the Belgian group were semantic ones rather than major disagreements. The wider concept of family leave was preferred to that of parental leave which emphasised the time around the birth. When considering what support services should be provided it was important to include not only nurseries but facilities for old people and the handicapped, and other services which helped women reconcile domestic responsibilities with paid work, such as rapid transport systems and ways of making it easier to get household repairs done. On the question of reducing working hours, this did not contradict the aim of creating new jobs. Care would have to be taken to make any reductions attractive to people, and it would be much better to shorten one working day a week considerably, as a first step, rather than take 10 minutes off each day, which would then be lost going home on the bus.

Ms. N. O'Neill (Ireland) congratulated the author on her important and provocative paper. It was essential to promote the concept of parental leave to prevent the indefinite extension of maternity leave, which could militate against the employment of married women. The question of part-time work should be seen in conjunction with shorter working hours. Women would continue to be exploited as part-timers until men also had the opportunity to work more flexible hours or less hours. As for the provision of daycare facilities, society had to recognise its responsibility for children rather than expecting the burden to be borne by enlightened employers.

Ms. E. Munck (Denmark) felt that maternity leave should be replaced by parental leave, with parents sharing a period of 6 months leave after the birth equally between them. At present leave to care for sick children was tolerated in some sectors but was not given as of right. There was also a need for parental leave in other family circumstances, such as when children changed schools, although it was not likely that this would be achieved in the present economic situation. At present, there were nowhere near enough daycentres for children and women had no choice but to stay at home. Of the Danish women that did work, 55% were part-time and this was a clear indication of the need for shorter working hours to enable men and women to combine work with their domestic responsibilities.

Ms. A. Robinson (United Kingdom) commented that the paper detailed the 'Catch 22' situation women found themselves in. As long as they had lower paid jobs and poorer career prospects they would be the ones to stay at home and care for the family. But at the same time, the reason why women had lower paid jobs and poorer career prospects was because of their family responsibilities. The Commission had produced useful statistics on patterns of employment but comparative figures on other variables, such as daycare provision, school hours, care of elderly dependants were not available to allow a broader analysis of this problem to be made. Such an analysis would lead to an explanation of the problem rather than merely a description. The Commission should do its utmost to expand the data available. On

the subject of part-time work, it was essential that the benefits accruing to employers from such work were considered, perhaps at a European level, with the aim of ensuring that part-timers were treated on the same basis as full time workers.

*The Chair asked the author, Ms. H-B Schöpp-Schilling and Ms. J. Nonon (CEC) to answer some of the questions raised during the discussion.*

Ms. H-B Schöpp-Schilling pointed out that one way of ensuring that men took advantage of parental leave as well as women would be to have some form of parental insurance, by analogy with the Swedish model. This would be used to maintain the family income by paying the difference between the salary of the man and the woman, rather than it being made up by ordinary family benefits. If such a step was taken at a European level there would be no question of unfair competition.

Ms. J. Nonon (CEC) commented that there were great difficulties in obtaining sorts of statistics mentioned by Ms. Robinson, and it was even more difficult to use them. The definition of a creche, for example, was very different in all the member states. For this reason the annual publication on the evolution of the social situation in the Community gave details of provision on a national basis. On the question of whether the present limited provision for special leave for family reasons was being applied in a discriminatory way, it should be remembered that this fell within the remit of the Directive on Equal Treatment, which was of course a binding Directive in operation at this moment.

Ms. N. Barendregt (CEC) felt that in reality there was very little possibility of the Commission being able to exert influence on the way in which a reduction in working hours took place, as the discussion was being led by both sides of industry. The question



of the effect on the position of women was not given priority in such meetings. What was always emphasised was the need for improvement in working conditions, and it was very important for this Conference to stress that any re-distribution of housework and paid work would contribute to such an improvement. It was essential that this element was included in the present discussions rather than being delayed as something to be considered in the future. It was this sort of extra dimension that could be usefully added by the participation of a European equality body in such discussions. On a final point, it was often said that at present women had to choose between work and children. The truth of the matter was that they normally had to opt for work and children as they usually carried this double burden if they chose to work. It was for this reason that these changes were essential.

Ms. M. Devaud (France) felt that it would be most helpful to have an overall European view of the way in which working hours could be reduced to the best advantage of women. It had to be remembered that more women were part-timers or casual workers on indefinitely extending contracts, and the effects of changes on these groups had to be considered.

Ms. A. Lulling (Luxembourg) felt that the needs of self-employed women should be recognised when discussing maternity leave. Parental leave would undoubtedly be difficult economically and the Commission would need to study the possibilities in great depth. On the question of support facilities, the paper stressed the need for innovative childcare facilities, and here the initiative should be taken by the private sector. There was no question that shorter working hours would be more humane but the problem of trying to standardise the implementation of this across Europe would be very great.

Ms. M. Grotenhuis (Netherlands) examined some of the objections that had been voiced to parental leave. It was hard to imagine how such a measure could make things worse than they were at present. On the question of there being a low take-up by men, it would perhaps need to be mandatorily divided between the partners. As to cost, the Emancipation Commission felt that children were the responsibility of society and society had to accept its responsibility for all children whether within a traditional family unit or within one parent families or other structures. Shorter working hours, initiated at a European level, would be of great benefit here. Perhaps what was needed, in the light of earlier discussions of individualisation of the tax systems, was individualisation of children's rights.

Ms. J. Finlay (United Kingdom) supported the suggestion that the Commission should encourage the adoption of parental leave, perhaps with a system of insurance as in Sweden. If more men had this opportunity it would strengthen the bond between fathers and children, would not merely help women but enrich family life generally and by doing so enrich the lives of the children and extend the concepts of their own roles in life.

Ms. M. Pirard (Belgium) felt that it was inevitable that if only women used a parental leave scheme it would be disadvantageous to them in work terms. Parental leave would cause considerable problems for employers even if it was unpaid and could prevent improvements in other areas such as part-time and casual work. It was Ms. Pirard's personal view that binding Community legislation should not be introduced in this area, although guidelines could be suggested. There should be a clear dividing line between maternity leave and parental leave. On the question of working hours, discussions were already underway and Ms. Barendregt was right to suggest that negotiators be made aware of the need to consider the impact on women during these discussions.

Lady Howe (Observer) felt that the Commission could make a major contribution by recognising that all workers, not just women workers, had family responsibilities. As yet this was not even on the negotiating table of those who framed our society, whether unions, management or politicians. The real problem was not housework but caring for dependants, and on average these pressure points in people's working lives were comparatively short. Family leave was very important and in the long term shorter working hours could be the answer. In the short term the current situation had to be improved, by upgrading the status of part-time work as had been mentioned, for example. This should not be seen as short time working but as something which was essential for family development in a modern working and caring society.

Ms. E. Brunfaut (Belgium) pointed out that as well as family and work responsibilities, there was also a need for people to have time for public responsibilities. The arguments against reducing working hours were well known, but the suggestion was only of a very small reduction to the total. As for part-time work it had a limited usefulness but should not be institutionalised. What was needed was a fully equipped social infrastructure available to assist working people. Part-time work was not a real choice but acted as a constraint, putting the brake on promotion for women. This was not in the spirit of the Communique resulting from the OECD conference, which said that women's work was a necessity and a right irrespective of the economic circumstances. A reduction in working hours was a much better alternative to part-time work, and should eventually make it unnecessary.

Ms. B. Soussi (France) wished to make it clear that the problems of women were regularly raised at the Standing Committee on Employment both by the French representative and by Commissioner Vredeling.

*From the Chair, Baroness Lockwood (United Kingdom), then summarised the discussion.*

To some extent contradictory views had been expressed on the question of extending maternity leave. Most representatives, while concerned

with protecting women at this point in their lives, were also concerned that any extension of these provisions would put them at a disadvantage in the labour market. How were these interests to be reconciled? The answer seemed to lie in the concept of parental leave extended to both parents, enabling them both to meet their dual responsibilities. It was true to say that such changes in attitude and changes in approach to parental responsibility were quite revolutionary. Many representatives felt that an initiative had to be taken on this issue at a European level, although concern was expressed that some form of protection should be built in to prevent it applying practical terms to women alone.

There had been a necessarily limited discussion of the need for improved support services and it was emphasised that this encompassed not only childcare facilities, but also provision for the disabled and other dependants.

The discussion of shortening working hours had made it clear that the needs of parents should not be seen as conflicting with the priorities of the social partners. The view of this Conference was that this should be put firmly on the agenda for discussion in Europe.

Further requests were made for more comparable statistics and there was clearly a need for a more scientific approach here if solutions to the problems were to be found.

These were the points that needed to be considered when the consensus document was being prepared.

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THURSDAY, 28TH MAY, 1980 - SESSION 5 - PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES OF  
NEW TECHNOLOGY - AUTHOR: MR. J. GERSHUNY, UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX, U.K.

CHAired BY: MS. N. BARENDREGT (CEC)

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*Ms. N. Barendregt (CEC) opened the session by summarising the points raised by this paper.*

It was clear that growing unemployment in the member states had given urgency to anxieties about the likely effect of the introduction of new micro-processor based technologies. So far there had been little systematic analysis of the possible consequences of new technology, both positive and negative. Not enough was known about the quantitative effects, how many jobs were going to be lost and in what sectors, and to what extent the creation of new jobs would compensate for these losses. It was essential that such an analysis, geared particularly to the position of women, be initiated. Two papers had already been prepared by the Commission on this general theme and one of them had made some mention of the expected impact on the areas where women have traditionally worked, but without attempting any analysis of the full consequences. One consequence could be an increase in the possibilities for work to be done at home, and the effects of this needed to be analysed. What had to be borne in mind was the effect of these changes on the individuals involved, the relationship between the product and the person producing it. If the structure of work was to change there was a need to stimulate discussion between both sides of industry and to involve women in those discussions.

The individual equality bodies undoubtedly had a role here but a European equality commission would be able to exert the greatest influence. The introduction of these changes would also necessitate a change in educational patterns in schools, in professional and vocational training, in adult training and adult education. Account would have to be taken of the different skills required by new technology. The Berlin Centre (CEDEFOP) had already done some work on this subject.

Another area which could be affected was the way in which working time was organised and this could have a great deal of influence on the introduction of job sharing and the reduction of working hours.

*As the author of the paper was not able to be present, the Chair then called on Mr. P. Melvyn, who was responsible for work on this subject within the ILO, to add some more detailed information to guide the discussion.*

Mr. P. Melvyn (Observer - ILO) reported that the ILO was attempting to identify which industrial sectors would be most affected by new technology and to what extent. A number of these sectors would then be studied to identify the impact on employment, occupations and skills. A further study would look at the impact on women's employment.

Gershuny's paper had concentrated on the short term consequences of these changes but it was also necessary to take a longer term view and look at the effects on society as a whole. The other Conference sessions had all concentrated on the evolution of a new society with changed patterns of work and lifestyles. Micro-electronics would play a major part in the creation of this society, both positively and negatively. In positive terms productivity would grow and so would efficiency. Negatively, people could become isolated in the work environment, with only one operator needed for a multi-function word processor, or with word processors installed in homes. There could be some advantages for women in working from home but they could become cut off from the social contacts that work provided and also from trade unions, from any action of solidarity.

It was possible that new areas of employment for women would emerge in the fields of education, training, health and environment, to which women had always had easier access than men. Very little research had been done, however, on the changes that there would need to be in

education and training. A French report was under consideration at present and it was hoped that this could provide some guidelines, but a Community initiative was certainly needed here.

As yet, women had not been participating fully enough in this debate and it was essential that they made their voices heard in these discussions.

*The Chair then called for contributions from the Conference.*

Ms. R. Villebrun (France) felt that the positive and negative aspects of any increase in the opportunities for work to be done at home had to be looked at very carefully. This could negate the progress that had already been made by working women.

Mr. G. Bianco (Italy) pointed out that some of the statistics relating to the employment situation in Italy used in the paper were now out of date. It was clear that industry would have to adopt more flexible working models that could adapt to new production needs. Italy had initiated a programme of state aid to help with re-training and this was beginning to have some positive results. Considerable effort was being put into providing vocational training and re-training for women, to enable them to fill the jobs available and the jobs that new technology would bring.

Ms. T. Marsland (TUC - United Kingdom) commented that if the reaction to the introduction of new technology was merely one of attempting to preserve the jobs at present done by women there would be no hope of implementing any of the progressive measures, such as parental leave, discussed in earlier sessions. Any gain in productivity resulting from new technology should be used to enhance the quality of life for women and men alike. This meant reducing hours of work, increasing holiday entitlement and campaigning for a shorter working week to offset the effects of unemployment. Collective bargaining provided the most effective vehicle for responding to technological change.

Women needed to be able to attend vocational preparation courses, to have access to in-service training and re-training. A comprehensive childcare and education service should be provided by the state and they should be able to work flexible hours. Only if these measures were taken would women be able to take advantage of new technology and compete in the labour market in the future. Cut-backs in public spending on these services would act against women's attempts to achieve full equality. The European equality bodies had a vital role to play in joining with trade unionists to determine the approach to be made to new technology.

Ms. V. Squarcialupi (MEP - Observer) commented that the Commission had a vital role to play in ensuring that new technology was developed in a way that was in the best interests of women. The European Parliament had suggested that there should be detailed monitoring of the changes in the labour market throughout Europe, and particular emphasis would need to be given to the effects on women. The Social Fund could be drawn on even more to improve the position of women. Without such a co-ordinated approach, this third revolution would be something that we would not survive.

Ms. N. Barendregt (CEC) from the Chair, replied that such a monitoring role at national and Community level had already been recommended by the Standing Committee on Employment. The Conference should perhaps request that within this brief, specific attention should be given to the effects of new technology on the position of women.

Ms. E. ter Veld (Netherlands) questioned whether the new technology revolution was something that should be unhesitatingly welcomed. At present there was not enough information for people to be able to make a real evaluation. All the disadvantages mentioned by previous speakers were real enough. A woman working at home would find it very difficult to exert any influence on the results of her labour. It was essential to keep control of the process that was being set in train. There might need to be a new system of social benefits, dependent perhaps on company profits, to cope with the consequences. Women needed to participate fully in these



discussions and adopt a critical approach in the real sense of the word, to ensure that humane relations were maintained between people at work.

Ms. M. Kutsch (Germany) felt that this paper had demonstrated that the future held a bleak prospect for women. They would have lower pay, worse working conditions, the numbers of women in management positions would not increase. It was essential to pursue labour market policies designed to promote the role of women and action needed to be taken on this now.

Ms. M. Devaud (France) commented that she took a more optimistic view than the previous speaker. In any period of accelerated change there were positive and negative aspects to be considered, and on behalf of women it would be necessary to put up barriers against the disadvantages. The suggestion of a European body to monitor changes in the labour market was excellent, and entirely in agreement with her own thoughts. It was vital that these matters were co-ordinated at a European level. Although the disadvantages of some changes, such as the isolation of working at home, had been emphasised, society would need to develop new ways of coping with these changes, such as increased emphasis on community activities and the development of a social life in leisure time. Finally, it was clear that training was a key issue, but there were certainly advantages here. New technology was as new to men as to women, and for once during vocational training they would be on an equal footing. Girls needed to grasp this opportunity to study new technology and then they would start off on their professional careers with real equality of opportunity.

Ms. M. Hoornaert (Belgium) felt that the discussion had centred on the quantitative repercussions of these changes with less attention given to the qualitative effects. Training had been seen as the answer, but what sort of training? It was clear that a lot more information was needed on the subject with perhaps a whole conference devoted to the debate.

Ms. M. Barnes (Ireland) felt that women's contribution to this debate would be invaluable. In the short term it had to be remembered that one third of the jobs traditionally done by women would be likely to be affected. Looking back on the two previous industrial revolutions it was clear that women had lost out, and this should not happen again. A European monitoring body was essential and again a European equal rights committee could make a substantial contribution to this. On the question of training, it was now becoming clear that women's aptitude for languages and art and design could be a good foundation for computer related work. Above all the problems of the dehumanising effect of mechanisation had to be faced and greater emphasis had to be put on the human values of workers. Women had a vital role to play in ensuring that this aspect was fully considered in discussions at every level.

Ms. E. Brunfaut (Belgium) agreed that the previous industrial revolutions had not benefitted women. It was vital that the training offered to women gave them access to the areas of employment where there were opportunities for advancement. The possibility of home based work was truly horrifying. The ideals of equality for women were entirely tied up with the social need for work and the challenge of work. All the Conference discussions would be meaningless if this was the way things were heading. There would be no need to worry about working hours because women would be working at night if they had no time during the day. Such a change would negate all the social progress that had been achieved so far for women.

Ms. J. Finlay (United Kingdom) supported the formation of a European monitoring body. It was essential, however, that women should be well represented on any such body, particularly in view of the fact that there were not enough women in positions of power within the ranks of the social partners.

*The Chair then called on Mr. D. Nandy to add some points on the organisation of working time which he had discussed with the author.*

Mr. D. Nandy (EOC - United Kingdom) reported that the author's practical proposals for dealing with the effects of these changes were included in the additional page which followed the main paper. This emphasised that this discussion could not be divorced from the discussion of working arrangements. There was no point in discussing the sharing out of available work without discussing the mechanisms by which work could be shared out. These questions also had an effect on training. If job sharing was to be considered as a real proposition, then training would have to ensure that the present division of labour did not prevent the sharing of jobs by maintaining a segregated male and female work-force. There was a need for specific training measures to enable women workers to take advantage of those jobs which would still be available in the economy in the medium term future.

Ms. S. Kohnenmergen (Belgium) felt that in this subject the social problem could not be separated from the economic problem. It was essential for Europe's survival that the competitiveness of its industry was maintained. In the long term, the changes could well be for the better, with improved conditions of work as a result of the loss of boring, repetitive jobs and improvements in health and life at home. Women should seize these new opportunities in good time and the Commission should encourage them to consider new kinds of jobs, and to have an openminded attitude towards technological innovation.

Ms. M. Levy (France) supported the optimistic approach of Ms. Kohnenmergen. Positive discrimination in training should be used to enable women to participate in more interesting and more qualified work in the future. On the question of the isolation of women working at home, this would be no more than the isolation of girls within a typing pool or in a factory working with machines. Although it might be seen as a Utopian view, this time of change held out the best prospect for implementing the progressive measures that the Conference had been discussing in its previous sessions.

Ms. M. Pirard (Belgium) agreed with optimism that was now being voiced. On the question of training, there should be some attempt to ensure full equality in all the branches of education and training throughout Europe. Boys and girls needed educating to prepare them for this new sharing of all responsibilities in the home, and in social, civic and professional responsibilities.

Ms. I. McCormack (United Kingdom) commented that it was an indictment of our society that this new revolution was seen as something to be frightened of, where leisure time was feared and human beings were seen as serving machines rather than vice versa. Women had traditionally made the prospect less bleak for themselves through collective action and the development of working at home would be a real threat to this power. The question was one of control, of the power to be involved in the discussions which controlled the development of the new machines. One practical result of this Conference should be the establishment of the right of the national equality bodies and any European equality body to be involved in these discussions.

Ms. M. Grotenhuis (Netherlands) commented that there was no room for complacency in relation to the areas of work that had not yet been affected by new technology. It was necessary to react in advance of changes to achieve as much as possible. In struggling for equality women should not be prepared to accept any role that men wanted to foist on them. Just because 50% of the world wanted to go along one path it did not mean that the other 50% should blindly follow the path that men had chosen. The problem was that society tended to be led by a very small elite, without regard to the wishes of the great silent majority. It was necessary for the silent majority to start speaking up and for women to become part of that elite and begin to make their contributions to the discussions of new trends and new technology.

Ms. N. Barendregt (CEC), speaking from the Chair, commented that the technological revolution could either concentrate even more power in the hands of an elite or alternatively, by allowing small firms access to micro-technology, lead to a real revolution in the structure of society. It was impossible to say which way things would go.

Ms. J. Maij-Weggen (Observer - MEP) wished to confirm the accuracy of the fear expressed by Ms. Hoornaert that new technology would lead to a polarisation of types of employment. This was borne out by a recent survey published in the Netherlands which showed that the opportunities for highly skilled and unskilled workers were increasing at the expense of those jobs that fell somewhere in the middle. It was clear from the evidence that while men had progressed upwards during this period of change, women had gone down, and tended to be over qualified for the jobs they were doing. On a further point, it was essential for women to begin to learn to love machinery in the same way that men did. Machines could be of great benefit to society and women should develop the same understanding and feeling for machines as men possessed at present. A start could be made by interesting children more in the workings of computers.

Ms. P. Curtin-Kelly (Ireland) agreed with Ms. Pirard that joint preparation through education for boys and girls was essential if women were not to become the losers in access to the range of jobs created by new technology. Already many computer-associated jobs were becoming exclusively female orientated and the end result could be similar to the typewriter revolution, which did not revolutionise women's lives in quite the way that had been expected.

Ms. S. Dekker (Observer - MEP) commented that there was no choice as to whether to accept these technical innovations as they were already in existence. They could not be rejected but they could be mastered and used to the benefit of society. But how were women to make their voices heard? Should they do this on all fronts, in trade unions, in consultations with government, through political activity? What did the equality bodies intend to do? There was no time for philosophising.

Ways had to be found to tackle these problems effectively.

*From the Chair, Ms. N. Barendregt (CEC), then summarised the discussions.*

There was no doubt that the introduction of new technology was essential. There were serious reservations, however, about the disadvantages of these innovations and the possible social consequences at work and in society generally. It was necessary to consider the qualitative effects as well as the quantitative, and to do this more information was vital. Women had to be consulted and make their contribution to any monitoring process at a European level, as well as at a national level via the various equality bodies. This would require consultation with the social partners at national level.

On the question of the quality of work, particular emphasis was given to the alienating effects of working at home, which had aroused a great deal of strong feeling during discussion.

Training had emerged as a key issue, with more positive discrimination needed and more use of the Social Fund wherever possible.

Alterations to the structure of working life, particularly to working time, would have positive and negative implications for women and care would have to be taken that the disadvantages were kept to a minimum.

The debate on this interesting subject had been a passionate one.

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FRIDAY, 30TH MAY, 1980 - SESSION 6 - DISCUSSION OF CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS

CHAired BY: BARONESS LOCKWOOD (U.K.)

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*Baroness Lockwood (U.K.) commented that the Conference had been marked by the seriousness of its discussions and the Conclusions would reflect this. Ms. J. Nonon (CEC), who had chaired the Drafting Committee, was called on to present its report.*

Ms. J. Nonon (CEC) reported that it was always difficult to prepare such a document in six languages and there were inevitably imperfections which would need amendment in any final version. The report under discussion was not a legal document or a Council resolution but the Conclusions of the Conference and its participants, and this should be borne in mind when discussing amendments.

*From the Chair, Baroness Lockwood (U.K.), then called for comments from the Conference.*

Ms. I. McCormack (United Kingdom) felt that the question of affirmative action, the concept of indirect discrimination and the problems associated with any future increase in working at home should be given more emphasis.

Ms. E. ter Veld (Netherlands) supported these comments and added that the importance of education and training should be stressed in Section 5.

Ms. N. O'Neill (Ireland) supported the comments on affirmative action, which needed to be backed by legislation. Reference should be made to daycare facilities in Section 4. In Section 6, it was not enough to refer merely to consultation with women, as this could lead to governments calling on token women.

Ms. E. Brunfaut (Belgium) endorsed the comments of the previous speakers and felt the Conclusions should emphasise the need to improve the quality of life.

Ms. E. ter Veld (Netherlands) emphasised that although the problems of women were not exclusively related to employment the general problems women had to face in society did stem from employment. But the problems of women could not be tackled only on the basis of the labour market. This emphasis on the general problems at point 4 of the introductory section would explain the need for an equality body at a European level. On new technology, the consequences for society as a whole and the role of democracy needed to be brought out.

Ms. M. Kutsch (Germany) reported that the German text seemed very different from the English text in many places.

Baroness Lockwood (U.K.), speaking from the Chair, replied that these problems could be resolved with the secretariat at the end of the Conference.

Ms. M. Devaud (France) wished to add a reference to unification of the labour market under point 3 of the introductory section.

Ms. M. Hoornaert (Belgium) expressed reservations about the concertation procedures recommended in Section 1 unless standards of representation were set that included both sides of industry and government representatives.

Ms. M. Devaud (France) did not support this suggestion.

Ms. M. Kutsch (Germany) felt it was not true to say that 'most' equality bodies were representative. On a further point, no clear consensus had been achieved on the establishment of a European equality body. Such a possibility should be 'considered' rather than 'called for'.

Ms. S. Meehan (Ireland) felt that if there was a need to 'facilitate the exchange of information' such a European body could not come too soon.

Ms. E. Munck (Denmark) supported the misgivings of the German delegation on the creation of a super-national equality body.



Ms. M. Devaud (France) supported this view and proposed an amended wording in Section 1 that 'the Commission propose a new system of concertation'.

Ms. E. ter Veld (Netherlands) suggested strengthening Section 2, part of which was amended to read: 'Under no circumstances should the principle of equal treatment between men and women in social security be compromised by the argument of national economic difficulties. As a matter of fact women contribute substantially to the national product and to social security'.

Ms. L. Bruni Selvaggi (Italy) asked that in the first sentence of Section 2 'all countries' be changed to 'most countries', as this problem did not arise in Italy.

Ms. M. Devaud (France) supported the Netherlands amendment but felt that it was 'women's rights' rather than 'women's rights to work' that were affected by the system of derived rights in the field of social security.

Ms. A. Lulling (Luxembourg) supported this amendment.

Ms. M. Pirard (Belgium) also agreed that there was a consensus on this. On the final paragraph of Section 2, dealing with retirement age, it needed to be made clear that the common age would apply to men and women.

Ms. M. Grotenhuis (Netherlands) asked that in Section 2 some reference still be made to women's right to work.

Ms. M. Hoornaert (Belgium) felt that the call for individualisation of taxation and social security systems made in Section 2 was too specific and the formula should be more general.

Ms. E. ter Veld (Netherlands) asked that a reference to speedy implementation of the Equal Treatment Directive in relation to pensions be included.

Ms. I. McCormack (United Kingdom) repeated her suggestion that reference be made to 'positive action programmes' and 'the concept of indirect discrimination' in Section 3.

Mr. G. Halbach (Germany) requested that the reference to guidelines on job evaluation in Section 3 be deleted.

Ms. M. Pirard (Belgium) commented that half of the Belgian group were against parental leave but this seemed to be a minority view.

Ms. M. Devaud (France) felt that the last sentence of Section 4 should merely refer to parental leave for both parents, omitting the reference to compensation for lost wages.

Ms. E. ter Veld (Netherlands) asked that the provision of facilities and resources for the care of children etc. be included within the terms of the Directive proposed at the end of Section 4.

Ms. E. Brunfaut (Belgium) asked that reference be made to the sharing of family responsibilities 'at all social levels and in all spheres of activity' in the last paragraph of Section 4.

Ms. M. Pirard (Belgium) asked that reference be made in the second indent of Section 4 to 'lightening the burden of household costs'. On a further point, the final sentence of the Section should make it clear that any Directive would need to guarantee the possibility of genuine sharing of family responsibilities.

Ms. M. Kutsch (Germany) felt that compensation for loss of earnings should be retained in the last sentence of Section 4.

Ms. K. Thorball (Denmark) asked that the last sentence of Section 4 should call for the Commission to 'consider' a Directive rather than 'formulate'.

Ms. M. Hoornaert (Belgium) agreed with this amendment.

Ms. I. McCormack (United Kingdom) asked that reference be made to a shorter working day specifically in indent 3 of Section 4.

Ms. E. ter Veld (Netherlands) agreed with this proposal as long as it was clear that this was not a reference to part-time work as a solution.

Ms. B. Hesse (Germany) asked that at this same point reference be made to 'new models of working time'.

Ms. M. Pirard (Belgium) asked whether the question of co-education throughout the whole education system could be included in Section 5.

Ms. I. McCormack (United Kingdom) asked that the particular problems of women working at home be referred to in the second paragraph of Section 5.

Ms. M. Hoornaert (Belgium) asked that the reference to 'negotiations' on new technology be removed and replaced by a reference to 'information' or 'consultation'.

Ms. M. Devaud (France) did not agree with this amendment.

Ms. M. O'Neill (Ireland) supported the French view and repeated that it should not just refer to 'women' being present in the negotiations, but 'the representatives of women's organisation or commissions'.

Ms. M. Kutsch (Germany) supported the suggestion of referring to 'negotiations and consultations'. On the question of 'representatives of equality bodies' being consulted, this would only be acceptable if both sides of industry were included.

Ms. E. ter Veld (Netherlands) suggested that there were two points: women contributing to the general discussion in society as a whole and women contributing in a specific workplace.

Ms. Lavin (France) felt that the two points were, rather, that women should contribute through the usual channels of both sides of industry but there was also the need for equality bodies, representative of women, to act in an advisory capacity, with the understanding that both sides of industry were also represented on those bodies.

Ms. A. Lulling (Luxembourg) felt that the points could be covered by referring to 'women or their representatives' being 'associated with the introduction and implementation'.

Ms. J. Finlay (United Kingdom) commented that it was accepted that women would make a contribution via the social partners, but what was needed was 'formal consultation of equality bodies'.

Mr. D. Nandy (EOC - United Kingdom) acting as secretary, proposed that the wording be: 'women should be represented in the negotiations relating to the introduction of new technologies, and equality bodies should be represented in a consultative capacity'.

Ms. I. McCormack (United Kingdom) felt that the equality bodies should be involved in negotiations rather than consultation.

Ms. M. Pirard (Belgium) asked whether the effects of new technology should not be referred to at this point and the need for women to be involved from within the social partners in these negotiations.

Ms. S. Kohnenmergen (Belgium) asked that greater emphasis be given to the qualitative effect on women's employment at the end of the first paragraph of Section 5. On a further point, as a union representative, she was concerned at the unrepresentative nature of some of the equality bodies, which did not attempt to achieve a balance of the social partners in their numbers.

Ms. E. Wolf (Germany) stated that the German group could not endorse the Conference Conclusions until a better German text was available.

Ms. M. Devaud (France) suggested finally that the final recommendations of the Conclusions be strengthened by the addition of two paragraphs.

Baroness Lockwood (U.K.), speaking from the Chair, commented that a lot of thought had been given to these additional paragraphs and suggested that they were included.

Baroness Lockwood (U.K.) then invited Commissioner Vredeling to address the Conference.

COMMISSIONER HENK VREDELING'S ADDRESS TO THE CONFERENCE

1. I sincerely hope that the fact that I only arrived among you yesterday evening does not lead you to conclude that the work of this Conference does not interest me. Quite the opposite is the case. However, yesterday I had to attend a meeting of the Standing Committee on Employment where the problem of the employment trend in the Community was on the agenda. You, better than anyone else, are aware of the central importance of this subject for various aspects of the question you have been discussing for the last few days.
2. Both inside and outside of Europe we are going through a very difficult phase at present. In recent days, the papers have once again been full of reports on agricultural prices, the Community Budget and the continuing problem of the United Kingdom contribution to it. I would be the last to deny that these problems are extremely complicated and particularly disturbing, but at the same time I would suggest that the position of women in present day society, the inequality of women's chances of development, the inequality of their position in the working world; represent a more serious problem and one that is more difficult to solve than the question of agreement on the Budget which fills the headlines almost every day. Some convergence in the position of men and women in society is in fact a more fundamental question than the problem of national contributions to a marginal EEC Budget, and this is something that everyone must admit.
3. I do not believe that many of you are under the illusion that holding this sort of conference, tabling and approving conclusions, etc., is of basic significance for the achievement of that equality for which we have been striving for so long. Discrimination against women, and the fact that they are forced to live out their lives on an unequal level, seems to belong to the very roots of present day Western society. Much more time, much more action perhaps even violent action, will be needed if any significant change is to be achieved.
4. The Danish Minister for Employment, Mr Auken, reported a few weeks ago, at the OECD Conference on Women in Paris, on a survey which had been carried out in Denmark, which is after all a fairly progressive country, dealing with the division of household tasks between couples who were both working.

It emerged that where both partners were working for the same number of hours each day, women spent an average of a further three hours on housework while men spent no more than an average of 15 minutes. I quote Mr Auken's report because it shows very clearly how far we still have to go before we genuinely achieve an equal division of tasks and responsibilities. In the situation which he describes, women simply have two jobs, one paid and one unpaid. The burden of responsibility for housework still rests almost completely on their shoulders.

5. In the course of time more has been written than it has been possible to read on this unhappy social development, on the reasons for it and above all on its results. Some more radical feminist groups are convinced that they know who is to blame: men and male society are responsible for the fact that far fewer girls than boys enjoy secondary and higher education, that a lower percentage of women are represented in the higher professions, and that women are paid less than men for the same work.

Although, by definition, I am not a completely reliable judge, since I am a man and belong to a body consisting entirely of men, it seems to me that it is going too far to expect me to take responsibility on my own shoulders or to allow it to be placed on those of the other members of my sex. All of us, men and women alike, are the products and victims of our past. And this also applies to the organisation and attitudes prevalent in our society. At the same time, a promising and even essential sign is that increasingly and throughout broad

areas of the population an awareness is growing that the present division of roles between the sexes, the inequality of function both within the home and in the broader social context is based on nothing more than indefensible prejudices. At the same time, these are prejudices which were and are accepted and followed by the generations that preceded us and even are still followed by considerable numbers of people in our own generation. They were prejudices which were so strong that they formed an integral part of the way of thinking of many people, both men and women. All of us, whether we wanted them or not were given our roles and accepted them.

6. I should like to stop for a moment and examine this kind of prejudice since in the past, and still today, it has been and is of such basic importance. In my opinion, the only conclusion that can be drawn from the fact that comparatively very few girls enter secondary and higher education is that many parents and teachers entertain the view (or perhaps I should say the prejudice) that girls should find their purpose and fulfilment in marrying and raising a family. Supplemented if they so wish by a degree of socially useful and necessary work on a voluntary and unpaid basis. This way of thinking has often permanently blighted our lives, and not only the lives of women. There are, of course, also a terrifying large number of men who have been victims of the equally unjust social compulsion to pursue a career, with the consequent neglect of their loved ones.
7. Bringing influence to bear on the individual and overcoming prejudice is of basic importance. Of much greater importance than the conclusions of this conference and than the results of many meetings at which you and I spend a large proportion of our time. Of greater importance, too, than the work carried out in recent years at European Community level to give some form to equality between men and women. At the same time, what the EEC has achieved in this area is definitely not without its importance. I should like to examine it for a moment.
8. The "mother" to all our work in this area - if I can express myself in this way in your presence - is Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome. I am sure that you as specialists in this field are familiar with this Article. But perhaps you do not know how it came to be adopted. The fathers of the Treaty were certainly not devotees before their time of women's emancipation. This Article was adopted purely and simply out of the fear that if women workers were underpaid national industries would suffer a negative effect as regards their competitive position.

Article 119 of the Treaty has formed the basis for our legislative work. The Directive on equal pay, the Directive on equal access to employment and the Directive on equal treatment as regards social security have been approved and in part transposed into national legislation. The Commission has examined national legislation based on the Equal Pay Directive. Initially, it was discovered that the legislation in seven Member States contained deviations which necessitated the initiation of the legal procedures provided for in Article 169 of the EEC Treaty. In the meantime, a number of Member States have made the necessary amendments and additions required by the Commission. It is not impossible that the procedure leading to a formal appeal to the European Court of Justice will be initiated in the near future in respect of a few other Member States. The same applies to the "Equal Access to Employment" Directive. Here, too, we have discovered that a few Member States have implemented the provisions of the Directive in their own legislation in an incomplete fashion. I can assure you that we shall not rest until this Directive has also been implemented in national legislation in a complete and acceptable way. The most recent Directive (December 1978) refers to social security. The Member States have until 1984 to implement the Directive in their own legislation. Additional Directives on social security are in preparation. I should also like to inform you that at the present moment I am working on a legislative measure in the area of maternity and parental leave.

9. I think we can agree that the main outlines already exist of a legal structure intended - in theory - to allow women to take and keep their place on the labour market on equal terms with men. But at the same time, like you, I am convinced that there is still an enormous gulf between theory and practice. It is not easy for the individual worker to make use of his or her right to take his or her employer to court if necessary. In too many cases it happens that individual women - even those who are aware of the content of the legislation - are not brave enough to go to court and demand equal pay, for example. I understand this reluctance. What I do not understand is that the natural allies of working women - the trade union movement and also, to a certain extent, the committees and commissions for equal opportunities in the various Member States do not lead a more aggressive policy and aim at making going to court socially and psychologically easier, as well as offer us their good offices in such cases.
10. Mention of these "equal opportunities" committees brings me to one of the themes of this conference. One of my motives in proposing the conference was that almost every Community country now has an organisation whose task it is to uphold and promote the principle of equality between men and women in working life. However, as yet there has been little contact or co-ordination between these "equal opportunities" committees. Co-operation at European level - in the shape of a "European Equal Opportunities Commission" - could be both fruitful and important for the participating national bodies and for the EEC Commission when it comes to devising and carrying out policy in this field. If the Commission could be kept informed of grass-roots thinking and of the wishes being expressed and initiatives being taken at national level, our task of putting forward proposals at European level, would be simplified to a significant degree. On the other hand, the exchange of ideas and experience would also have a stimulating effect on activities at national level. Although the situation undoubtedly differs in detail from one Member State to the next, differences will become apparent in each country between the theory and practice of which I have just been talking. I can imagine that the exchange of information on methods and techniques used to bridge the gap would serve as inspiration to all parties. It can be taken for granted that an umbrella organisation in the shape of an equal opportunities commission could count on wholehearted support from myself and the specialised departments for which I am responsible.
11. Over the past few days, discussion has focussed not only on the functioning of the equal opportunities bodies but also on a great many other subjects. Some of these subjects have caught my attention in particular.

Certain areas of legislation - I am thinking particularly of legislation in the field of social security and taxation - are still permeated with the notion that married woman's station is to carry out her task unpaid and within the four walls of her home.

Married women who go out to work are discriminated against, since certain benefits are paid only to the breadwinner. In all Member States the most complicated areas of legislation are those relating to taxation and social security. However, I can assure you that in the years ahead our efforts will be directed towards making progress in this field, in particular by amending or abolishing discriminatory provisions. The Commission will seek to achieve this firstly by keeping a close watch on how the Member States implement the existing Directive on equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security and secondly by paving the way for new measures.

As for the relationship between the social security and taxation systems, one of the major difficulties here is the choice of priorities. Studies and consultations will be necessary, but these should never be seen as an end in themselves. The European Community's task is not to produce studies but to produce policies.



12. The micro-chip threat has also cast its shadow over this conference. The development of new technologies constitutes a real threat to existing jobs, both from the point of view of quantity and quality. No one can say with any certainty at present how many existing jobs will be lost in the wake of the introduction of high-performance technical equipment. Neither can we predict what the quality of the alternative jobs will be, either as regards physical working conditions or the atmosphere at the workplace. It seems certain, however, that jobs at present held by women will be particularly affected if we allow this trend to sweep over us unchecked. Jobs in the administrative sector - in banks, insurance companies, etc. - a high percentage of which are traditionally held by women, are particularly threatened.

If we wish to avoid a further increase in the very high numbers of women registered as unemployed (6.9% of the female working population in April 1980 compared with 5.1% for the male working population), and disregard figures for concealed unemployment which affects women in particular, further measures will have to be taken. In the first place, I think that we should discard the notion of jobs being specifically reserved for either men or women. There are very few occupations that can be justifiably reserved for one sex or the other. However, if the relationship between certain occupations and a particular sex is to be abolished we shall need a change of mentality, and not only among employers. Women must convince themselves and come to realise that lorry-driving, wielding a hammer or a trowel, operating a crane, working on a building site or on a canal barge are not exclusively male preserves. I hope that it will be possible for the Social Fund to play a greater role in this sphere.

At the same time, men will have to learn two things. They will have to learn not to regard the exercise of hitherto specifically male occupations by women as a threat and they will have to understand that jobs that have hitherto been done mainly by women are not by definition less valuable.

I have already touched on the subject of technological development. Although it is true that technological innovation poses a threat to existing jobs it is also true that it will encourage the creation of new jobs. Women must adapt to this new situation and be in a position to demand a significant number of these newly-created jobs for themselves.

The best solution will be to involve women in the consultations that should be initiated at all levels - including Community level - on the way in which this new technology is to be introduced to working life. It will be difficult for women to become directly involved in such consultations as long as they have little influence in the trade unions, the employers' organisations and the various government bodies. This is partly why the equal opportunities bodies in the Member States, to which many of you belong, are also concerning themselves with the problems posed by the introduction of micro-chips.

13. One of the subjects to which I have been devoting considerable attention over the last few years is work-sharing. I am convinced that the widening gulf between supply and demand on the labour market can only be bridged effectively by measures to redistribute available work. Such measures cannot be introduced without unpleasant repercussions and a degree of social unrest. This is particularly true if we work on the assumption that although shorter working hours will mean an increase in leisure time they will also reduce the scope for people to increase their material prosperity. However, the provision of jobs for large numbers of people who at present have no jobs and no income would constitute an expression of the mutual solidarity and justice that are so necessary at the present time.

The redistribution of paid work should also have a positive effect on the redistribution of unpaid work within the home. It would be a significant and positive social consequence of the measures made necessary by the economic recession and technological development if in the coming decade men and women came to be treated as equals both on the labour market and in the home.

14. I have noted with interest the conclusions you have reached and I can assure you that I shall devote maximum attention to examining how these conclusions can be crystallised into practical policy measures. I have already told you that there will be a need for your expert knowledge and experience, which will hopefully be made use of in the near future in the context of an equal opportunities body functioning at European level. I believe that the European Parliament which is represented here by a sizeable delegation, also has a significant role to play. The Parliament's task will be to ensure that the Commission carries out the necessary legislative work, consolidates policy to improve that position of women and makes funds available under the Budget.

However, a forward-looking policy of this nature can never be executed exclusively and satisfactorily at Community level. There is also a need at national and even local level for appropriate legislation, policies, facilities and hence money, if the situation is to be improved.

And when I speak here of provisions and the availability of funds, I am also thinking specifically of support given to the many important initiatives undertaken by the women's movement, the women's centres - needed if women are to become aware of their own identity - and the "women's shelters", needed to take in women and children who are victims of physical and emotional violence and male domination. I regard it as a task of the authorities to provide the necessary finance for this kind of initiative.

15. One of your Chairmen in the past few days - Nel Barendregt - has been running my personal staff for several years now. Almost every day I have discovered that there is a difference in the way in which the two of us approach everyday problems and the ways in which we prefer to deal with them. This confrontation between us has not always proceeded without some tension, but at the same time it has been a very fruitful experience. It is no more than just and reasonable that women, who have their own way of seeing things, and act in accordance with their own identity, should demand their place in all branches of society and should make their voices heard. It is also just and reasonable for men to be willing, more than hitherto, to hand over power outside the family and within the family to devote their time, energy and human warmth.

*From the Chair, Baroness Lockwood (U.K.) brought the Conference to a close.*

Mr. Vredeling had provided a comprehensive review of the equality situation in Europe, looking not only at the past but into the future. It was to be hoped that the Conference discussions would strengthen some of the developments planned for the future. The Conference had been reminded of the important role the equality bodies had to play not only in helping to formulate policy but also in maintaining contacts with ordinary women in the individual countries at grassroots level. Mr. Vredeling had made it clear that he did not consider equality issues to be peripheral, even when they were being considered in difficult economic circumstances. Finding solutions to these problems would probably offer more hope to Europe than many of the individual economic and social issues which were often given greater priority. The discussions held over the last two days would hopefully lead to the coming together of the equality bodies on a more frequent basis. The Conference would look forward to the evolution towards a European equality body and within the individual countries, national equality bodies would continue to try to implement some of the things which were also seen as needing an initiative at a European level.

It only remained to thank the representatives for participating in the discussions in such a tolerant and understanding fashion. Differences had been expressed but there had been an overall trust and confidence and without that the conclusions could not have been as positive as they were.

Mr. Vredeling's thanks to the Equal Opportunities Commission's staff were particularly appreciated and thanks were also due to Jaqueline Nonon's staff, all of whom had contributed to the success of the Conference. The interpreters had sometimes an almost impossible task and their role too was much appreciated.

Ms. M. Devaud(France) felt she was speaking for the Conference as a whole by thanking Baroness Lockwood for the way in which the meeting had been chaired and the impeccable way in which the Conference had been organised. There had been both a heart-warming welcome and a very efficient one.

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EQUALITY FOR WOMEN  
ASSESSMENT, PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES  
A EUROPEAN PROJECT

CONCLUSIONS

MANCHESTER, 28 - 30th MAY 1980

INTRODUCTION

A conference bringing together representatives of the national committees for female employment or for equality of opportunity, and representatives of ministries concerned with these problems was held in Manchester on 28, 29 and 30th May 1980 on the initiative of the European Community Commission.

The Conference, aimed at the formulation of "a new European plan for women", has highlighted the progress already achieved in the Member States on the basis of the Community provisions regarding equal treatment for men and women at work, which are an indispensable framework for action.

The discussions have, however, brought to light the need firstly for continued efforts to see that Community provisions are effective in practice and secondly to examine fresh areas for possible initiatives.

In this context, the following aspects were stressed:

1. It is essential, on the one hand, to encourage the adoption of strategies with a view to achieving equality as regards access to employment, training and working conditions including wages, as has been tried in certain countries and on the other hand to ensure that these are accompanied by adequate supporting measures, capable of monitoring and of bringing about progress.

2. The taxation and social security systems of most Member States are based on an outdated view of women's role in society and consequently do not fully recognise the just rewards for women's labour.
3. The persistence of occupational segregation keeps women in a position of weakness on the labour market; every effort should be made to promote a more even mix of the sexes in jobs and thus to ensure the unification of the labour market.
4. Every instance of discrimination or weakness in the position of women corresponds to a problem in society at large: consequently, it is becoming increasingly clear that labour market measures alone cannot resolve the employment problems of women.
5. The development of new technologies will have important consequences for the evolution of our society and consequently on employment in general and on the employment of women in particular: steps must, therefore, be taken in good time to ensure that women become integrated at all levels in the occupational hierarchy.
6. The Conference acknowledges the Declaration of the high level Conference of OECD in Paris on 16 - 17th April 1980; it underlines the importance of Community action for the implementation of its conclusions.

The Conference proposes the following conclusions in respect of these various points:-

1. Whilst no one would now challenge the principle of equal treatment there is no doubt that it is only very slowly being implemented in practice. In each of the member states there exist bodies whose aim is to promote equal opportunities between men and women. In most of the member states, these bodies have a representative character. These bodies have already proved their worth, but the resources at their disposal are frequently limited.

As a result, the Conference calls for:

- the strengthening, where necessary, of the role of the existing national Committees by ensuring that they have adequate powers and resources,
- the strengthening of the specialised structures within the services of the European Commission in Brussels in terms of staff and budget, so as to permit them to develop their actions in this area.

In addition, the Conference considers there to be a clear need for specific functions to be discharged in order to facilitate and co-ordinate the exchange of information about experiences at national level, to disseminate information about existing good practice and new national initiatives, to promote discussion about the implementation of EEC Directives and the policy implications of these Directives as proposed or carried out by the national Committees.

The Conference considers that these functions cannot be effectively carried out without the active participation of such Committees. The Conference, almost unanimously, with the exception of one delegate who wants a very flexible formula, asks that:

- the European Commission should develop a system of concertation between these Committees, evolving towards a European Equality Commission, with a view to enabling the Commission at Community level, to support them in their own contributions to the formulation and implementation of Community initiatives.

2. Discussions have shown that in most countries the taxation and social security systems have a disincentive effect as regards the development and the advancement of the employment of married women. Generally speaking, tax systems discourage married women from working. On the other hand, certain social security systems may affect women's rights to work. The system of derived rights deprives women of their own rights to social security. Under no circumstances should the principle of

equal treatment between men and women in social security be compromised by the argument of national economic difficulties. As a matter of fact women contribute substantially to the national product and to social security.

The Conference asks the Commission to undertake initially an evaluation of existing social security and taxation systems with a view to:

- a) assessing the way in which the equal treatment and social security Directives have affected these two domains;
- b) proposing a possible method of progressive solution towards systems based on the fundamental principle of individualisation (regarding the individual man or woman as the basic unit for these purposes).

The majority of the Conference equally recommended measures aimed at making progress towards a flexible retirement/pension system built respectively around a common age at which both sexes may have access to retirement.

3. An active approach is essential for the desegregation of the labour market: the Commission has hitherto attempted to get this message across via the Working Party of Senior Employment Officials. It would now seem, however, that this question needs to be tackled in greater depth.

The Conference calls for a number of initiatives at Community level within the framework of the new concertation arrangements mentioned above:

- the collection and dissemination of improved and more comparable statistics and qualitative analyses;
- the development of a European initiative on 'positive action' programmes to integrate women in the labour market;
- the development of the concept of indirect discrimination at Community level;



- the encouragement and concertation of pilot schemes to train women and girls for non-traditional jobs, particularly in occupations which look like expanding in the light of economic and technical change;
- the extension of the use of European Social Fund or other Community resources for this purpose;
- the formulation of European guide-lines setting out the main objective of gaining general acceptance and implementation of job evaluation schemes and to keep them under regular review in order to give effect to the requirement of Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome which prescribes "equal pay for work of equal value".

4. The Conference further discussed the major issue of the effect of the continuing burden of domestic responsibilities, which still falls mostly on women, and agreed that equality in the workplace cannot be fully achieved unless special measures are taken to ensure a more equal division of labour at home.

The Conference calls upon the Commission

- to safeguard the existing maternity pay and provisions as the indispensable basic minimum;
- to encourage Governments of Member States to make increased provision of facilities and resources for the care not only of children but also of elderly and handicapped dependants, as well as all other facilities capable of easing the burden of family and work responsibilities;
- to ensure that any concertation arrangement resulting from the Conference should undertake to introduce the issue of domestic responsibilities and their consequences in the continuing discussions on shortening hours of work, including a reduction in the working day and the search for new patterns of arranging working time;

- to launch, at European level, a campaign of awareness for the sharing of family, political, social and cultural responsibilities.

The Conference considers that the discharge of family responsibilities is of crucial importance to society as a whole. It specifically recognised that the sharing of family responsibilities at all social levels and in all spheres of activity is an essential precondition of the effective realisation of equal pay and equal opportunity. For that reason it calls upon the Commission to study the possibility of a Directive on the subject of family and parental leave, as well as facilities and services for the care of children and of dependents, and the provision for both parents of necessary guarantees in order to ensure genuine sharing of family responsibilities, in particular through appropriate compensation for lost wages.

5. The Conference notes that national and international studies presently available on the repercussions of new technologies make little reference to the specific situation of women, when in fact such technologies are developing in the very sectors where there is a high concentration of women workers, who are likely to be faced with employment problems.

It notes the concern of women workers in the most vulnerable sectors; it was also underlined that changes in method of production due to new technology should not lead to a situation in which women's employment is confined to the home.

The Conference requests the Commission to summarise those studies that have highlighted the consequences - both positive and negative - of new technologies on women's employment and way of life, or, if this problem has not been analysed, to arrange for a specific study to be made on this matter.

It considers that:

- full information for both young and adult women and adequate incentives and encouragement should be provided for at national and Community level, particularly through CEDEFOP, in order to ensure that women receive a fair share of the benefits resulting from the new technologies.
- training programmes relating to these new technologies should ensure the right to full participation by women, both young and adult. The European Social Fund should pay special attention to support such a policy.
- this subject should be considered as a priority area for "positive action" for the benefit of women in order to fill the gaps caused by labour market segregation.
- women should be represented in the negotiations relating to the introduction of new technologies and its effects; and Equality Bodies should be represented in a consultative capacity at both national and Community level.

The Conference believes that the Commission should organise an appropriate concertation with a view to examining the problem in depth.

In short:

The Conference stresses women's expectations with regard to the role which the European Community, in particular the Commission, could play in furthering equality of opportunities for women;

Supports the Commission's action to implement Community rules;

Requests that the various approaches it has proposed be taken into consideration by the appropriate authorities;

In conclusion, the Conference underlines the need for an expression of genuine will at National and European level to pursue an active policy towards equality between men and women in a world in which rapid change is creating the risk of dangerous imbalances in society if we are not careful.

The Conference wishes that a system of regular consultations should exert effective influence on the decisions of member states, in order that the principles of equality and non-discrimination can be systematically integrated in their general policies.

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The organisation to which each participant belongs is indicated on the Attendance List (pp. IV - X)

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Mr. S. Christensen	Denmark	Ms. M. Grotenhuis	Netherlands
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