

Women of Europe

Brussels, March/April 1978 - No 2/78

THE FIRST EUROPEAN ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE FROM 7 TO 10 JUNE 1979

"The time has come to fix the date for the European elections and stick to it": that is basically the message that women all over Europe have conveyed to their Governments on the eve of the meeting of the European Council in Copenhagen attended by the Heads of State and of Government of the European Community.

The idea was born in Italy on the initiative of a committee of the Italian Council for the European Movement, responsible for coordinating women's initiatives in connection with the preparation of the European elections

The appeal to the statesmen was worded as follows:

"Women, who see the obsolescence of the nation state and the building of a united Europe as preconditions for the new society to which they aspire,

who represent 52% of the European electorate and, as a consequence, are a decisive factor in this important political choice,

on the eve of the meeting to be held in Copenhagen on 6 and 7 April,

invite the Heads of State and of Government to set a date for the European elections, an institutional act decisive for the new Europe, and warn Governments that failure to fix such a date would not only have serious negative repercussions on the political and economic crisis in European countries, but would nullify the enthusiasm and hopes of all those who for so many years have striven for Europe.

By this appeal, the signatory organizations express the aspirations and will of European women."

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Further information is available from the Commission's press and information offices in the countries listed on page 2.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Facts and laws (p. 4)

Militant activities (p.)

The European Community in action (p.)

Studies, meetings, books (p. 23)

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FACTS AND LAWS IN THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES

G E R M A N Y

Women on television

On behalf of the Federal Ministry for Youth, Family and Health, a survey was carried out in Germany on how women are presented and their affairs treated on television. Six weeks were spent examining films, documentaries and articles from this point of view.

Several facts came to light:

- very little space is devoted to women on television programmes - first place is given to men, in both documentaries and films;
- the customary images are of women at home, the mother, and particularly young, pretty single women practising a "dream" profession;
- the problem of double work (job and housework combined) is never touched on;
- women on television are apolitical;
- serious thought about the particular situation of women is almost non-existent;
- the under-representation of women is reflected in the television networks themselves, where responsible posts are seldom held by women.

From this, it is clear that television does not provide an accurate, objective and realistic picture of the position of women today. Far from presenting to the public new models of behaviour better adjusted to social reality, it perpetuates the more traditional models.

Useful address: Pressereferat des Bundesministeriums
für Jugend und Familie
Kennedy allee 105
53 Bonn.

B E L G I U M

Equal access to employment

The Commission du Travail des Femmes (Commission on women's employment) attached to the Ministry of Labour organized a study day on "How to achieve equal access to employment". To view the subject in perspective, ten undertakings from the private, public, secondary and tertiary sectors were examined.

Representatives from these undertakings (employers and workers) discussed a variety of problems with officials of the departments concerned; for example, posts that could not at present be opened to women; those that

could be but were not; posts exclusively held by women that could not be entrusted to men; posts exclusively held by women which could be held by men, etc.

In conclusion, participants noted that all the experiments relating to equal access made so far had been successful; they wished the results were more widely known.

Useful address: Commission du Travail des Femmes
Ministère de l'Emploi et du Travail
53, rue Belliard
1040 Brussels.

Two pilot studies

The Commission du Travail des Femmes has just formed two teams of unemployed university graduates to carry out two pilot projects, one in Flanders and one in Wallonia.

The projects' main purpose is to look into the possibility of training and employing women in occupations hitherto reserved for men. The studies will begin in April.

Useful address: Commission du Travail des Femmes
Ministère de l'Emploi et du Travail
53, rue Belliard
1040 Brussels.

Equal treatment

The Ministry of Employment and Labour has drawn up a draft law relating to the application of the Directive of the Council of Ministers of the European Community on equal treatment for men and women.

The draft law has been submitted for the opinion of the various Ministries whose competence covers sectors which will be affected.

The law would give Belgian women legal protection in line with European Community law.

Six weeks leave before birth

Having been asked to give an opinion on the advisability of obliging expectant mothers to take six weeks leave before birth, the Commission du Travail des Femmes was against this measure in the present circumstances. Under the current law, an expectant mother can either take the six weeks before birth or add it to the compulsory post-partum eight weeks rest period.

However, in view of the dangers of premature birth, the Commission suggested that the father, mother and doctors be informed of the socio-economic and medical factors that contribute to the risk of premature birth while taking care not to give the working mother a guilt complex.

D E N M A R K

1965! 1975! 1985?

Article by Karen Dahlerup,
Chairman of the Council for Equal
Rights,
Member of the European Parliament

The Danish Women's Commission began work in 1965 by making a number of in-depth analyses of the general situation of women in our society.

In 1975, Anker Jørgensen, Minister of State set up the Council for Equal Rights. The seven members of the Council are appointed on proposals by the women of Greenland, the trade union organizations (Landsorganisationen i Danmark), the employers' association (Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening), the National Council of Danish Women (Dansk Kvinders Nationalrad) and the joint council of organizations of Danish officials and employees. The chairman of the Council is appointed by the Government.

The guidelines for the Council's work are part of its terms of reference, which state that the Council should:

- work towards reducing inequality between women and men
- keep an eye on changes in society, legislation and the labour market
- analyse the factors impeding equality of the sexes
- propose measures to remedy the situation
- act as a consultative and coordinating body for the public and local authorities in connection with problems of equality.

As the Minister of State said in his 1976 New Year's address, the Council for Equal Rights is "the vigilant eye of society".

In the two years since its creation, the Council has mainly directed its efforts to the situation of women as regards employment.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, women's opportunities for employment improved considerably. Women resolutely entered working life and from 29% of the work force in 1960 they rose to 38% in 1970. According to the latest figures, 41.5% of the work force are now women, namely 1 050 000 women for 1 430 000 men.

This substantial increase is mainly due to the fact that married women now often work outside the home. For example, 73.6% of married women in the 20-34 age group have an occupation. Despite the international crisis and present unemployment in Denmark, 70 000 women joined the labour force between April 1974 and October 1976.

In Denmark, women have access to the same training opportunities as men and have exactly the same entitlement to unemployment benefits in the same economic conditions; this also applies to married women.

All this might lead one to think that all is well - but such is far from being the case. When the crisis began, at first men were worse hit by unemployment than women; later, both were affected to the same extent.

More recent studies have shown that in Denmark, as in the rest of the Community, the unemployment rate for women is going up alarmingly. The reason is the same everywhere.

Women who worked during the economic boom and shared in social progress now form an extremely vulnerable group. They were not given all they deserved: their labour was used without giving them sufficient opportunity to consolidate their position. They were not given the necessary training, for example.

On the basis of a number of studies, the Council for Equal Rights has approached the Government with requests and proposals designed to attenuate the increasingly negative effects of unemployment among women and ensure that they are better armed when the economic recovery gets going.

One of the demands of the Council for Equal Rights is that all bodies providing training courses should be obliged to offer this training directly to women - even in areas in which men traditionally predominate.

Five-week courses have been organized to bolster women's confidence in themselves. The object is to make them understand that men and women have the same right to work and inform them of immediate and longer-term employment and training opportunities.

The first of these courses began on 9 January. It was intended for women who had been unemployed for over 200 days; all costs were covered for the entire duration of the course.

A proposal for employment measures solely and directly concerning women has been submitted. Another proposal provides for a wage subsidy for firms undertaking to train women in new areas.

A very detailed proposal concerns the training of employment agency personnel and is intended to impress on both guidance counsellors and placement staff the need to help eliminate the division of the labour market by sex, by openly encouraging women to take up activities which have so far been a male preserve.

Almost without exception, members of the Government have welcomed this and other proposals, and the Council for Equal Rights is closely following their implementation.

It will need a great deal of imagination on the part of the decision-makers if we are to attain the goal we set ourselves for the end of the international women's decade in 1985: equality between men and women as regards working conditions.

FRANCE

Jacqueline Nonon's plans

Jacqueline Nonon, chief administrator in the Directorate-General for Social Affairs at the European Commission since 1958, was appointed by Mr Giscard d'Estaing to head the Délégation à la Condition féminine (Delegation on the Status of Women), taking over from Nicole Pasquier, who has become the secrétaire d'Etat (State Secretary) for women's employment.

After going through the files at Lyons, Jacqueline Nonon decided that her main goal would be to try to change peoples' attitudes: "We must see that the Legislation adopted is actually applied".

Jacqueline Nonon proposes to follow the policy outlined by Françoise Giroud in her "Projet pour les femmes" (plan for women) published in 1976, a task Nicole Pasquier had already begun.

At the European Commission, Jacqueline Nonon was in charge of the Bureau for questions concerning women's employment. She played an active part in drafting the Community Directive on equal treatment for men and women as regards working conditions. "Women at work", therefore, continues to be one of Jacqueline Nonon's main concerns.

One of the first files brought to Jacqueline Nonon's attention was a study by the Aviso Conseil company (49, rue Servient - 69002 Lyons) on "Le rôle des Parents dans l'orientation scolaire de leurs enfants" (parents' role in their children's educational guidance). The conclusions were so interesting that the Délégation à la Condition féminine organized a round table discussion on the subject at the Palais de Luxembourg in Paris.

From the study it appears that parents only make use of school guidance as an exceptional measure, and as a rule only the mother contacts the school establishments. The bodies providing information on guidance problems are little known and seldom contacted: one mother in three seeks no outside advice about a problem which, in any case, is not tackled until late in the child's schooling (at about 14). Some 31% of mothers consider that guidance is more important for a boy than for a girl.

There is still very little diversity in the careers chosen by girls: teaching and para-medical professions. There is, however, a divergence between mothers and daughters: mothers wish their daughters to take up "prestigious" and satisfying occupations, whereas the girls seem to prefer practical, down-to-earth activities.

Information for parents should be improved. They are suspicious of early guidance as they know little about the guidance process and the avenues opened by education.

Useful address: Délégation à la Condition féminine
31, rue Mazenod
69426 Lyon Cedex 3. Tel: (78)62.20.26

The situation of lone women

There are six million women living on their own in France: to help them accept their responsibilities the Délégation à la Condition féminine has published a "Practical guide for lone women".

In some 40 pages the guide gives all pertinent information as regards social legislation, vocational training, employment, taxation, etc. Widows, divorcees, separated women and unmarried mothers will find there the information they need.

Fifty thousand copies have been printed and the guide is distributed free by the regional delegates, town halls, family allowances funds and social security offices.

Useful address: Délégation à la Condition féminine
31, rue Mazenod
69426 Lyon Cedex 3. Tel: (78) 62.20.26

Women in management

The Comité du Travail féminin attached to the French Ministry of Labour has prepared a file on women in management.

The first part contains a definition - or rather definitions - of the word "cadre" (management level staff), since apart from those used by the statistics and employment departments, others are used in legislation and still others have been adopted in jurisprudence.

The second part covers the statistical aspect - there would seem to be only half as many women in management as there are men - while the third contains a summary of the many specific studies made so far on the position of these women.

In a fourth chapter, the Comité du Travail féminin presents its own conclusions and proposed solutions aimed at employers in both the public and private sectors, and requests that positions of responsibility should be more clearly defined and more generally open to women.

In passing, the Committee considers that the family taxation system should be adjusted to eliminate the tax disadvantage suffered by working wives.

Useful address: Comité du Travail féminin
Ministère du Travail
14, avenue Duquesne
75700 Paris. Tel.: 567.65.44

The French elections

Eighteen women won seats in the recent parliamentary elections in France; previously there were only 7 women deputies. Great efforts have still to be made, since the total number of seats in the Chamber of Deputies is 490.

Of the women elected, 12 are Communists, 2 Gaullists, 2 Centrists, 1 is a Socialist and 1 supports the presidential majority. Mme Simone Weil (Health), Mme Alice Saunier-Séité (University) and the two Secrétaires d'Etat, Mme Nicole Pasquier (Labour) and Mme Monique Pelletier (Justice) have retained their posts in Mr Barre's new Government.

IRELAND

Night work

The Employment Equality Agency in Ireland is an independent body set up under the Employment Equality Act, 1977. The functions of the Agency are, broadly:

- to work towards the elimination of discrimination in employment,
- to promote equality of opportunity in employment between men and women generally,
- to keep under review the working of the Employment Equality Act, 1977, and the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act, 1974.

As one of its first tasks, the Minister for Labour asked the Agency to review the issue of night work for women in industry in the light of equal opportunity and changing patterns of employment.

The Community Equality Directive requested all countries to review the present position. The Agency may make recommendations for amending national legislation on night work for women in industry. Any news of similar reviews being undertaken in other countries would be appreciated by the Agency.

Useful address: Employment Equality Agency
Department of Labour
Davitt House
Mespil Road
Dublin 4. Tel.: 76.58.61

ITALY

Women and the regions

The Consulte femminili regionali (regional women's advisory councils) grew up out of the belief that it would be useful and advisable to establish regular contact between the regional councils and social forces representing the woman's world. In Piedmont, Lombardy, Latium, Campania, Calabria and elsewhere, women's councils were born.

On 1 February, the Consulta Femmine de Basilicate was officially established at Potenza in the presence of representatives of women's organizations and other regional women's advisory councils.

At local level, women are organizing. At Ancona, a local women's council has just been set up and is contributing to the democratic life of the town.

NETHERLANDS

The discussion on emancipation

The Emancipatiekommissie (Emancipation Committee) is continuing its dialogue with the women of the Netherlands. Having published its "notes" for a discussion on emancipation in 1977, it has just made known readers' reactions. Letters, discussions, conversations and press cuttings have thrown light on women's aspirations in this field and are now influencing the Committee's line of thinking.

Useful address: Emancipatiekommissie
J.C. van Markenlaan, 3
Rijswijk. Tel.: (070) 94.92.25

A French language brochure on women in the Netherlands

The Ministry on Cultural Affairs, Leisure and Social Action, under Mrs J.G. Kraaijeveld-Wouters, Secretary of State of the new Dutch Government, has just published a brochure in French on the situation of women in the Netherlands in the series, "Fact sheet on the Netherlands".

In ten pages, with statistics, the document gives a rapid and useful survey of action on behalf of women and underlines the most acute current problems.

Useful address: Ministerie van Cultuur, Recreatie en Maatschappelijk Werk
Steenvoordelaan, 370
Rijswijk.

For women

"Voor vrouwen" (For women) is a 60-page booklet just published by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Leisure and Social Action. Written by women for women, it is stuffed with useful addresses and invaluable information for women who want to know more about the social situation and take a hand in shaping their own future.

Working life, law, trade unions, teaching, health, personal experiences, women's organizations: every aspect is covered. The booklet has been widely circulated and concludes with the words: "Be proud of yourselves".

Useful address: Ministerie van Cultuur, Recreatie en Maatschappelijk Werk
Steenvoordelaan, 370
Rijswijk.

Planning the emancipation of women

The action undertaken by the Emancipation Committee has just been presented in English by Mrs Paula Wassen-van Schaveren under the title "Planning the emancipation of women".

This little work would be useful to those interested in policies in favour of women in the Netherlands who do not know Dutch.

Useful address: Emancipatiekommissie
J.C. van Markenlaan, 3
Rijswijk. Tel.: (070) 94.92.25

UNITED KINGDOM

Sex discrimination and the Law

The Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) came into effect on 29 December 1975 and feminists in Britain have been reviewing how effective it has been after two years in reducing discrimination against women. They are far from satisfied.

Under the Act, sex discrimination is forbidden in employment, education, the provision of housing, goods, facilities and services, and advertising; in employment it is illegal to discriminate because a person is married. Under the Equal Pay Act 1970, women are also entitled to equal pay with men when doing work that is the same or broadly similar.

The Equal Opportunities Commission was created to ensure effective enforcement of these Acts and to promote equal opportunities between the sexes. The Commission has power to investigate firms or other enterprises where it believes sex discrimination exists. The Commission has preferred to use persuasion rather than force, believing that the radical changes in attitudes necessary to abolish sex discrimination can be better achieved that way. Last July, however, it decided to increase the number of its investigations and take a stronger line on enforcement - something welcomed by the more militant women in the UK who feel that the Commission should be much more belligerent on women's behalf.

Nevertheless the Commission has produced a number of reports recommending, among other things, specific action to help women on low incomes (particularly housebound housewives), to change the Income Tax system which still tends to regard a wife as her husband's chattel, and to amend protective legislation which often takes a 'patronizing' view of women's abilities. The Commission has also made a special point of demanding better vocational training opportunity for women.

In addition, often backed by the Commission, increasing numbers of women (about 1 300 by October 1977) are taking their employers before industrial tribunals on grounds of discrimination on pay, and winning their cases.

The Commission's first Annual Report noted that with economic recession, there was a 'tendency' for employers and trade unionists in industry to think of equality of opportunity 'as a marginal rather than a major concern'.

Miss Betty Lockwood, Chairman of the Commission, observed that 'Indirect discrimination is so ingrained in our society that even women are not always aware of it'.

The New Earnings Survey for 1977 showed that women's hourly wages had risen to 75.5% of comparable male rates - a marked increase from only 63.1% in 1970. But an EOC survey of 437 leading companies in Britain showed that only 11% had special policies for their women workers and only 5% were trying to improve employment opportunities for them.

Useful address: Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)
Overseas House
Quay Street
Manchester M3 3HN.

A close look at the difficulties

A study that will take three years and cost £240 000 will soon be undertaken on the initiative of the Social Science Research Council and the Equal Opportunities Commission.

The study will examine all the obstacles met by women who wish to work. Thus the researchers will examine how working couples actually share family duties and the difficulties encountered by women looking for work, both immediately on leaving school and when they have finished bringing up their children.

Useful address: Equal Opportunities Commission
Overseas House
Quay Street
Manchester M3 3HN.

MILITANT ACTIVITIES

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Constitution of the women's section of the Parti Populaire Européen

In Strasbourg at end January 1978 the first General Assembly of the Union féminine démocrate-chrétienne took place; bringing together the women's sections of the Christian-Democrat parties of Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, St. Marino, Ireland and the Netherlands. This is the first time that Christian-Democrat women have met to join in the regeneration of political action in Europe. Through exchanging information and experience, they will seek to promote improvements in women's situation in Europe.

Franca Falcucci (Italy) was unanimously elected to chair the meeting and the General Assembly decided to found the women's section of the Parti Populaire Européen (which as we know includes the Christian-Democrat parties of the Community countries). Franca Falcucci heads the women's section of the PPE as Chairman, with Vice-Chairmen Badenes (France), Fera (Germany), Phlis (Belgium) and Vandebelt (Netherlands). Mrs Barnes (Ireland) is the Secretary-General and the Executive Secretary is A. Maria Cervone (Italy).

Useful address: Section Féminine du PPE
Via del Plebiscito 107
Rome. Tel.: 67.84.098

The European Union of Women

The European Union of Women was founded in Europe after the last war by women from conservative and like-minded parties in Europe.

To study the problems of the new European society, 13 committees were formed, each consisting of three members from each of the 14 member countries. These committees study in depth such subjects as the problems of migrant workers and their families, gypsies, teacher training, women and taxation, the rights of patients under the various health systems, etc.

Lilian Phillips is the Secretary-General of the Union and is looking forward to seeing a number of members elected to the European Parliament at the next election.

Useful address: European Union of Women
c/o Conservative Party Headquarters
32 Smith Square
London SW1P 3HH. Tel.: 222.90.00

YWCA and Europe

At the last meeting at Dworp in Belgium the European regional conference of Young Women's Christian Associations decided to develop a plan of action to awaken women to their role and place in the European Community and help them to understand Community institutions such as the European Economic Commission, the Council of Ministers, European Parliament, etc.

Useful address: World Young Women's Christian Association
37, Quai Wilson
1201 Genève. Tel.: 32.31.00

B E L G I U M

Continuous education

Twenty years have gone by since the Centre Féminin d'éducation permanent (women's continuous education centre) was set up and it is still expanding the range of its activities: the art of public speaking, engineering, do-it-yourself, are but a few of the courses offered. Lectures and discussion-lunches deal with current affairs. The Centre also provides information under the title "Clés pour le travail" (keys to the working world) for women who wish to know more about working life and various courses, training periods, interviews or meetings are organized, centred on problems encountered by women who want to renew their contact with the working world.

The "Mardis européens" (European Tuesdays), are mid-day meetings providing an opportunity for direct dialogue with persons familiar with European affairs and matters currently before the European Community.

Useful address: Centre féminin d'éducation permanente
10, Avenue Franklin Roosevelt
1050 Brussels. Tel: 649 14 46

Women graduates of Belgium and Europe

The Belgian Federation of Women University Graduates has just organized a week-end of reflection on Europe for sister federations in the countries of the European Community. The meeting had two aims: to disseminate accurate information on the operation of the European institutions, and give the federation of women university graduates an opportunity to come together at European level. The idea is now filtering through to federations in other countries.

Useful address: Fédération belge des Femmes diplômées des Universités
45 avenue Legrand
1050 Brussels. Tel: 649 64 06

Women lawyers

In celebrating its twentieth anniversary, the Association belge des femmes juristes has taken on a new lease of life: a monthly bulletin is being launched, fifteen working parties have been set up and new topics are under discussion. Under the Presidency of Mme Yolande Hacquart, the Association is studying business law, tax law, social security, etc. One working party will concentrate on direct elections to the European Parliament.

Useful address: Association belge des femmes juristes
19 rue Guimard, boîte 1
1040 Brussels.

F R A N C E

The position of widows

At present there are over three million widows in France, of whom 90% are over 55. Everyone is familiar with the difficulties of women in such circumstances: bank account blocked, drop in living standards, every sort of social and moral difficulty.

The Fédération des veuves civiles chefs de famille (federation of widows/ heads of households) was set up to promote solidarity. There are 80 000 members and 84 departmental associations. At the recent General Assembly, the Federation called for more State aid for widows, both with respect to pensions and access to the labour market. The number of young widows in France is growing - 90 000 are under 45.

Useful address: Fédération des veuves civiles chefs de famille (FAVEC)
28 place Saint-Georges
75009 Paris. Tel: 526 05 42

French women and Europe

At its 75th anniversary, the Conseil National des Femmes Françaises (national council of French women) made a spot check of a few French women's views on Europe. The women questioned are in a special category as they are mainly members of women's movements.

The results showed that French women's concern about Europe was confined to matters close to home. Their view was neither philosophical nor political, but reflected everyday life - sometimes in a fragmented way. Not the Europe of Robert Schuman or General de Gaulle, then; but a citizens' Europe.

Women show keen interest and considerable scepticism with respect to the European Parliament and political union. An important question recurs: How should we prepare ourselves for Europe?

Useful address: Conseil National des Femmes Françaises
Tour Maine-Montparnasse
Boîte 155
75755 Paris CEDEX.

SOS Battered wives

On the initiative of the Ligue des droits des femmes (league for women's rights) a shelter for battered wives and their children has been opened in a Paris suburb. The problem is more serious than is generally realized: the Délégation à la Condition féminine made a survey in two departments and recorded no less than 10 000 cases of battered wives!

Useful address: not given for security reasons

SOS Femmes-Alternative
Tel: 584 72 52, from 1430 to 1800.

Femmes Avenir

(Women and the future)

On its national day, the Centre féminin d'études et d'information (women's study and information centre) emphasized three topics: the child in the home; the employment of women in the professions; the employment of women in the political arena.

Some original proposals were put forward during the day: limiting the number of electoral posts that can be combined to a maximum of one national and two local posts; temporary quotas to make sure that women are well represented on all national, regional and local committees attached to all bodies where major national decisions are made. Another idea was that continuous education should be open to wives of tradesmen, artisans and farmers.

Useful address: Centre féminin d'études et d'information
43, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré
75008 Paris. Tel: 265 43 68

G E R M A N Y

Catholic women and Europe

"KFD - Intern", the house journal of the Katholische Frauengemeinschaft Deutschlands (Association of Catholic Women of Germany) devoted a large part of its January issue to the European Parliament and the attitude of German Catholics to the European elections.

"Frau und Mutter" (Woman and mother) is a monthly periodical intended for members of the Association and deals with problems of schooling, health, holidays, etc; it also devotes space to consumer questions of interest to mothers of families.

Useful address: Katholische Frauengemeinschaft Deutschlands
Zentralverband E.V.
Prinz Georg-Strasse 44
4 Dusseldorf

The German universities

Fifty years ago Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, a pioneer of women's emancipation, founded the Deutscher Akademischerinnenbund (German Federation of Women University Graduates). This movement has played an important role in bringing social, political and legal questions concerning women to the forefront.

In Germany, the Federation seeks to improve women graduates' chances in their careers and promotes exchanges of views on scientific, legal and other matters.

On an international level the Federation takes part in the activities of the international Federation of University Women and has special relationships with a sister association in the Netherlands, where meetings and seminars are organized on a regular basis. The German Federation plans to organize a symposium on the European Parliament in the near future, in connection with its European activities.

Useful address: Deutscher Akademischerinnenbund
Alfred Mumbächerstrasse 34
6500 Mainz-Bretzenheim.

I R E L A N D

A new address and fresh vigour

The Council for the Status of Women which represents 30 national women's organizations with 250 000 members has just moved into new premises in the building of the Irish Council for the European Movement.

With aid granted by the Ministry of Labour and the European Commission, the Council is attacking its tasks with fresh vigour. The first workshop to be organized was held in Dublin on "effective organization for the voluntary worker". The programme was designed to help women's organizations plan systematically and use limited resources effectively.

Useful address: Council for the Status of Women
27 Merrion Square
Dublin 2. Tel: 76 34 48

I T A L Y

The UDI Congress

The Tenth Congress of the Unione Donne Italiane (union of Italian women) was held in Rome on 19 - 22 January. The Congress was open to all women, whether or not members of the UDI, who believed it would be useful to come together to discuss the creation of a great movement embracing all women.

The 2 000 participants had been appointed as delegates at hundreds of preparatory meetings held throughout the country. There were 870 speakers, including 400 non-members, in the 20 open-ended discussion groups; topics ranged from work, the home, sexuality, to the political and economic autonomy of the movement, abortion, man and wife relationships, etc.

The Congress solved no problems, but indicated ways in which the diversity of environment, culture, and social and economic situation of women could become a source of enrichment and strength. The Congress also revealed the readiness of women to seek and develop new ways of taking part in politics, with the result that the central political proposal of the Congress was realistic and not utopic: it agreed on the need for an autonomous and organized movement which could formulate a common strategy for the different women's movements.

Useful address: Unione Donne Italiane
Via Colonna Antonina 41
Rome. Tel: 679.17.58

The European Movement

A working committee to coordinate women's initiatives has just been set up under the Italian Council for the European Movement. Chaired by Margherita Barnabei, Vice-President of the European Movement, it brings together representatives of all the member organizations of the European Movement, including women's movements in the political parties, trade unions, the European Association of Teachers, etc.

Useful address: Consiglio Italiano del Movimento Europeo
Via Guido Baccelli, 10
Rome. Tel: 574.22.78

Women on television

The Europa '78 Committee of the Consiglio Nazionale delle Donne Italiane (National Council of Italian Women) organized an intense information campaign on the private television networks about the European Community and the significance of direct elections to the European Parliament. A series is at present being broadcast on Tele-Roma '56, a channel with a large audience. A 45-minute programme entitled "Institutions of the European Community" will be broadcast in the cultural activities hour. Diagrams, photographs and interviews will be shown describing the complex machinery of Community activities.

Other broadcasts are being prepared: the European Parliament today and tomorrow; women's responsibilities in Europe; towards the European elections. A group of young people, members of the Associazione internazionale Giovani Europei (International Association of Young Europeans) is taking part in the preparation of these broadcasts, which are being produced by Adriana d'Innocenzo.

Useful address: Consiglio nazionale delle Donne italiane
Via E.Q. Visconti, 55
00 193 Rome.

Women Lawyers

A national committee of European studies has just been set up under the Associazione Giuriste Italiane (Association of Italian women lawyers). The Committee is at present studying the problems of the profession, the

possibility of practising in all Community countries and how to take advantage of the right of establishment. The committee also intends to carry out a comparative study of the related national legislation in the nine countries. This research will promote contacts with lawyers in different countries, which are already widespread through the International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, of which the Italian Association of women lawyers is a member.

Useful address: Associazione Giuriste Italiane
Présidente Avv. Teresa Assensio Brugiattelli
Via R. Giovagnoli 6
Rome. Tel: 58.81.07

A bookshop for women

A bookshop for women has just been opened in Milan thanks to the generosity of artists who have donated the receipts from sales of their works at the "Sibilla Aleramo" Cooperative.

In addition to providing a sales outlet for books by or about women, the bookshop will also be a meeting place for those who want to compare notes or obtain information.

Useful address: La Libreria delle Donne
Via Dogana 2 (Piazza Duomo)
Milan.

NETHERLANDS

Five years of emancipation

"The last five years of women's emancipation in the Netherlands" is a booklet by Hanneke van Buuren, translated into English by Debora Visser and Anje Kaasjager. It reviews the struggle for emancipation since 1840 to the "Dolle Mina's" of the 1970s and the increasing intensity of recent years.

Useful address: Man-Vrouw-Maatschappij publication
p/o Box 746
The Hague.

Information and documentation

An Informatie en documentatiecentrum van de nederlands vrouwen raad (information and documentation centre) has been opened by the Dutch Council of Women. It contains the main publications of women's movements in the Netherlands, press cuttings and documentation collected from four ministries, reports, studies, etc, not to mention research by the Centre itself.

Useful address: I.D.C.
Laan Copes van Cattenburch, 72
The Hague. Tel: (070) 63.10.16

UNITED KINGDOM

SOS Children

The Mother's Union, a church-based women's organization, has started a confidential message service in several big cities for runaway children to leave messages for worried parents. Telephone messages are recorded and a member of the Mother's Union delivers them personally.

Useful address: The Mother's Union
 The Mary Summer House
 24 Tufton Street
 London SW1P 3RB.

The Women's National Commission (WNC)

The Women's National Commission (WNC) is an important link between the British Government and the main women's organizations in Britain. Set up in 1962 with the object of informing women on the implications of Britain's entry into the Common Market, it is Government sponsored and financed, but not controlled, and represents 47 of the most influential women's organizations in Britain through its affiliations.

Its job is to ensure that "the informed opinion of women is given due weight in the deliberations of Government on both national and international affairs".

The Co-chairmen are Miss Ethel Chipchase, Secretary of the Trade Union Congress Women's Advisory Committee, and Lady Llewelyn-Davies, a Member of the Government. The Secretary, formerly of the diplomatic service and Head of the Consular Department in the Foreign Office, is Dr Grace Thornton.

The Commission has advised on a number of matters important to women, ranging from family law reform and abortion to housing the elderly and homelessness. It has been particularly concerned by violence in the family, the laws of obscenity as they affect children, and youth unemployment. With the economic recession the position of young girls has worsened compared with boys, the Commission noted. The percentage of unemployed girls aged 16-17 had risen from 35% in 1970 to 49% in 1977.

Useful address: Women's National Commission
 Queen Anne's Chambers
 41 Tothill Street
 London SW1H 9JX.

THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY IN ACTION

The European Parliament is dissatisfied

Two years after the entry into force of the Community Directive on the principle of equal pay for men and women (Official Journal of the European Communities L 45 of 19 February 1975) the Governments have failed to observe the deadline for reporting to the European Commission on the situation. Consequently, in the absence of data, the European Commission was unable to answer the question on this subject raised by members of the European Parliament at the last session.

The European Commission will not accept the economic crisis as an excuse and will not hesitate to bring Member States before the Court of Justice of the European Communities if Governments do not take the required measures.

The dissatisfaction was general and Members of the European Parliament unanimously called for swift application of the principle of equal pay for men and women.

Part-time work

Dr Olive Robinson of Bath University (United Kingdom) made a study for the European Commission on part-time work in the European Community. Over nine million people work part-time in the Community, but detailed statistics are still not available.

In reply to a parliamentary question, the European Commission did not consider that part-time work should be regarded as an acceptable alternative to full-time work, even in the present circumstances. The aim should rather be to meet individual preferences on a flexible labour market.

Aid to the third world

The European Community provides financial aid to developing countries to improve their infrastructure through the European Development Fund. Among recent measures approved by the European Commission is a programme to improve rural clinics in Lesotho, renovate primary schools in Niger, and build three maternity homes, three pediatric departments, three gynaecological centres and two dispensaries in Mali.

Women at the European Parliament

At the European Parliament, several committees are chaired by women. At the last inaugural sitting, Madame Krouwel-Vlam (Dutch Socialist) was elected Chairman of the Committee on the Environment, Mrs Walz (German Christian-Democrat) Chairman of the Committee on Energy, and Miss Flesh (Luxembourg Liberal) Chairman of the Committee on Development and Cooperation.

STUDIES, MEETINGS, BOOKS

"Le Fait féminin" is a book by the sociologist Evelyne Sullerot (published by the Editions Fayard) which marks a milestone in the history of the feminist movement. It covers the work of a symposium arranged by Evelyne Sullerot and the biologist, Jacques Monod (Nobel Prize) held at Royaumont in September 1976 and attended by 37 distinguished French and foreign personalities from all fields: biology, medicine, history, sociology, psychology, etc.

Illuminated afresh from so many different angles, "Le Fait féminin" recognizes that there are differences, and by accepting them, clarifies the struggle against inequality. Although it has no definite answers and pronounces no final judgements, Evelyne Sullerot's book broaches many taboo subjects and restates old problems in new terms: 528 significant pages.

Il voto delle donne (The women's vote) is the first systematic study of the behaviour of the female electorate in Italy. Carried out by Maria Weber, the study emphasizes the cultural and political subordination of women but shows that new paths are opening out. Between the two extremes - voting like the men, and the "feminist" vote - a synthesis is slowly emerging, oriented towards the two foci of Italian politics: the Christian-Democrats and Communism. But, as the electorate moves towards these foci, inevitably they change and their interests sometimes converge. Another conclusion by the survey is that if parties take account of women's problems they could gain votes (Quaderni di Biblioteca della Liberta - Centro Einaudi - 90 pages).

The proceedings of the conference on "Sviluppo Sociale ed Economico del Paese ed Occupazione Femile" (social and economic development and female employment in Italy) organized in November 1976 under the Chairmanship of Mrs Tina Anselmi, then Minister for Employment and Social Security, has just been published through the good offices of the Ministry of Labour (470 pages).