

Women of Europe

Brussels, May/June 1978 - No 3/78

"WOMEN DON'T GO IN FOR POLITICS"

Just when a late spring was making its first timid appearance, eight of the major women's journals in Europe informed their twenty-five million readers of the results of the unprecedented survey they had organized at the request of the European Commission.

The survey revealed that, cutting across national boundaries, readers shared an astonishing number of attitudes, hopes and intentions. No one denies the influence of the European Community on everyday lives - even though the British doubt that it is beneficial. Quite rightly, the women of Europe are determined to make their voice heard so that the European Community comes to grips with some of the main problems of the time; inflation, unemployment, pollution, energy crisis, etc. Who says women don't go in for politics?

At the municipal elections just held in Copenhagen, women candidates collected over 50% of the vote. Despite this success, women hold only a little over 16% of the seats in the Danish Parliament, followed by the Dutch Parliament with nearly 12%. The corresponding figures for the other countries are not worth mentioning. Women are so sparsely represented that the European average is no higher than about 6%.

And what of the European Parliament? In this Assembly, which may be the catalyst of the future, the proportion of women representatives is equally low.

By whom will the 100 million women voting in June 1979 wish to be represented?

Fausta Deshormes
Information for the Press and
Women's Organizations

X/376/78-EN

This bulletin is published by the

Commission of the European Communities
Directorate-General of Information
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 - Brussels - Tél. 735.00.40

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FACTS AND LAWS IN THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES

GERMANY

Thirty professions out of four hundred

The Bundesministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft (Federal Ministry of Education and Science) has earmarked DM 7 million for the vocational training and advancement of girls in occupations so far preserved for men. A Ministerial report confirms that girls are at a disadvantage in many areas of working life.

No less than 60% of girls under 20 are unemployed because their occupations are in the areas mainly affected by structural crises. Out of a possible range of 400 occupations, girls limit themselves to 30. To prevent this concentration on certain occupations, the Ministry is organizing special technical training programmes for girls.

Useful address: Bundesministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft
Stresemannstr. 2
5300 Bonn-Bad-Godesberg

Migrant workers' wives

In Germany there are over 250 000 migrant workers' wives who have no occupation and are therefore isolated on two counts - as foreigners and as women in the home. To obtain more information about their living conditions, the Federal Ministry for Health, Youth and Family Affairs conducted a survey among Italian, Greek, Yugoslav and Turkish women living in Germany.

Most of the replies expressed considerable dissatisfaction. The women acutely missed the extended family environment to which they belonged in their country of origin.

Usually from a rural background, migrant workers' wives are thrown into an industrial environment which calls for rapid adjustment for which they are not prepared.

The Federal Ministry for Health, Youth and Family Affairs is now studying special measures that could be taken to improve these women's living conditions.

Useful address: Bundesministerium für Jugend, Familie und Gesundheit
Kennedy Allee 105-107
5300 Bonn-Bad-Godesberg

BELGIUM

Looking ahead to retirement

The Department for Women in the Ministry of French Culture has just published a brochure entitled "Et si nous y pensions déjà" (Looking ahead). It is available to and intended for all women and contains an astonishing amount of practical information on every possible retirement problem. It is not legalistic and the information concerns wage-earners, the self-employed and civil servants.

There is a special chapter on the pension rights of foreign women.

Useful address: Service de la Femme
Ministère de la Culture française
Galerie Ravenstein 78
1000 Brussels Tel: 513 94 40 ext. 246

Equality as seen by young people

At the suggestion of the Comité pour le travail des femmes, the Ministerie van Nationale Opvoeding (Ministry of Education - Dutch-language section) has just organized a competition in secondary schools.

Secondary school boys and girls were asked to write an essay on the equality of the sexes in our society.

The prize-winners will be declared before the end of the school year and will go off on holidays carrying one of the books offered as prizes by the Information Office of the European Communities in Brussels.

Useful address: Ministerie van Nationale Opvoeding
Secundair Onderwijs
Arcadengebouw
1010 Brussels Tel: 564 82 11

New occupations

The Office national de l'emploi et de la main-d'oeuvre (ONEM) reports that several occupations hitherto reserved for men have now been opened to women. This is the case at Vielsalm, for instance, where ten women are learning to make glasses and ten others kitchen equipment, and at Herstal where the Fabrique National, a large local factory, has organized special training sessions for 42 women in four different departments. Twelve of these women are engaged in long-term training as aircraft engine assemblers.

Further, in several provinces the ONEM has opened special preparatory teaching centres to make up deficiencies in the mother tongue and arithmetic.

Useful address: ONEM
7 Boulevard de l'Empereur
1000 Brussels Tel: 513 82 80

DENMARK

Women gain ground in municipal elections

Article by Hanne Severinsen
Member of the Municipal Council
of Copenhagen

The municipal elections held on 7 March 1978 were not the first in which an intensive campaign was waged to bring more women into politics. The number of women on town councils has been growing slowly but surely. At previous elections there was a tendency for women to join parties gaining ground and leave those on the decline, as very often they were contesting doubtful seats. As a result, women gained less than 2% at the last municipal elections.

In March 1978 things were different, and the proportion of the vote obtained by women went from 12.1% to 17.4%. This percentage varied considerably from one region to another; in Jutland, women obtained 14.3% of the vote and in Copenhagen 50.9% (against 27% at the last elections). The overall percentage, however, was no more than 17.4% due to the fact that in small rural communes the number of members elected to municipal councils is proportionately greater in relation to population size. Consequently, these areas, where women candidates are few, influence the overall average.

The main increase in votes for women came from parties of the extreme left; this is partly accounted for by the fact that most of these parties' gains were in cities, where the percentage of women who vote is particularly high.

Never before have so many women candidates stood in an election. But the decisive factor was the preferential votes, most of which went to women with the result that in many cases the party lists were upset.

In the municipality of Copenhagen, where women obtained a majority, the parties (those participating in the elections) presented 85 women and 187 men; 72 697 preferential votes went to women and 59 260 men, which gives an average of 855 votes each for the women and 316 for the men (if the many votes traditionally cast for the first Burgomaster are deducted, this figure is reduced to 214).

By voting in this way, women were obviously seeking to improve the position given to women candidates when the lists were drawn up; this general tendency seems to have cut across party lines.

What will the consequences be? For the time being, the Burgomasters' and other important posts have been filled, and the influential positions are still held by men. Even in Copenhagen, where women held the majority, all seven Burgomasters are men. On the other hand, three of the four members of the Bureau are women and seven of the eleven parties have a woman as Group President.

Danish women may be said to have seized a couple of strongholds that will be a means to further progress. Many political careers in Denmark have begun with a seat on a town council.

What will women do now that they have gained a foothold? Will they adopt feminist policies regardless of partisan differences? Or will other priorities have to be determined and what will they be? A few timid initiatives have already been made in the last four years. But men can no longer say that women are elected for the sake of appearances, to show that the party means well towards them. Hopefully, in the next four years women will make their mark on the parties in a number of ways so that in the public eye, the political arena will no longer be a male preserve.

FRANCE

The wage gap

The disparity in hourly wages between men and women workers has stood at about 22% for several years.

The pay differential between wage-earners and salaried employees (paid monthly) has been narrowing slowly but steadily with the improvement in women's training levels (40.3% in October 1975 against 42.8% in April 1972).

Nevertheless, the size of the gap shows that women are still concentrated in the least skilled jobs where pay is the lowest.

However, in individual categories the disparities are less marked:

Foremen	13.4%
Employees	17.3%
Workers	22.0%
Supervisors	26.2%

These figures, prepared by the Ministry of Labour, have just been quoted by the Comité du travail féminin.

Useful address: Comité du travail féminin
14 rue du Duquesne
75700 Paris
Tel: 567 55 44

Women's information centre

This centre was set up to help 22 million French women, in particular the 7 million women on their own. It is a private body working in close liaison with the authorities, and with associations and public bodies.

To fulfil its role as a public service and provide free information, the CIF has a representative on hand throughout the year, at fixed hours, in

public places such as Préfectures, town halls, or welfare centres in the Paris region and the provinces.

A team of specialists can give information to both men and women on such varied matters as: family and working life, social legislation, everyday matters and leisure.

Useful address: CIF National
BP 400
75327 Paris Cedex 07 Tel: 705 33 60

IRELAND

Wages and working conditions

The Employment Equality Agency has been asked by the Minister for Labour to investigate whether the ban on nightwork for women, as provided in ILO Convention 89 and the Irish Conditions of Employment Act, 1936, is in conflict with the spirit of the Employment Equality Act, 1977, which prohibits different treatment of men and women in employment.

The Equality Act provides that the Minister may review the provisions of "protective legislation" and after consultation with employer and trade union representatives seek to amend or revoke such provisions if they are found to be discriminatory.

The Federated Union of Employers has been pressuring for the repeal of protective laws since the end of 1975 when equal pay legislation became effective in Ireland. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions, however, thus far, has resisted the idea that the legislation should be abolished by a blanket provision.

Useful address: Employment Equality Agency
Department of Labour
Davitt House
Mespil Road
Dublin 4 Tel: 76 58 61

Snags in the Regulation Order

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions has just asked the Employment Equality Agency to have a closer look at the provisions of the Employment Regulation Order as it applies to the clothing industry. 70% of the workers in this industry covered by the Order are women.

The unisex wage scale, curiously, defines a "general worker with experience" as someone capable of lifting a weight of 36.2 lbs (about 18 kg). Since under the 1955 Factories Act women are prohibited from lifting weights of over 35 lbs (about 17.5 kg), thanks to this little snag they are automatically ineligible for the wage rate for a "general worker with experience".

The Employment Equality Agency will issue an opinion on this case in the near future.

Useful address: Employment Equality Agency
Department of Labour
Davitt House
Mespil Road
Dublin 4
Tel: 76 58 61

ITALY

Prime Minister consults women's associations

During the last Government crisis and in discussions about formulating a new programme, Giulio Andreotti, the Prime Minister, consulted the political parties and the two sides of industry. For the first time he wished to know the views of some women's movements and associations.

The CIF (Centro Italiano Femminile) (women's association) pointed out that since women were kept in a subordinate position, a special effort was required of the political forces. The CIF mentioned some problems of particular concern to women: the fight against terrorism and violence, the campaign against unemployment, education, health and social services, foreign policy.

The CIF also wanted to see austerity measures transformed into a social investment through a policy which clearly showed who would benefit by the sacrifices made. The CIF again urged the Italian Parliament to adopt the law regarding elections to the European Parliament by universal suffrage.

The CNDI (Consiglio nazionale delle Donne italiane) (national council of Italian women), on behalf of the 36 associations it represents, expressed the desire to see an inter-ministerial committee on women's affairs set up, with the participation of all the women's social forces, and attached to the Prime Minister's office.

Next, the CNDI stressed the urgency of implementing the school and university reforms, approving the abortion law, adopting the health reform, establishing socio-health services, and implementing the law on child-minding centres. The CNDI also called for approval of the law relating to the European Parliament.

The UDI (Unione Donne Italiane) (Italian women's union) observed that due to the nature of the present crisis, no emergency measure could be adopted that did not take women into account. The UDI called for the

application of laws specifically relating to women and an affirmation of the social value of motherhood. The urgent need to come to grips with the problem of illegal abortion, improve social services and combat unemployment and illegal work, etc., was also stressed.

In Parliament, Mr Andreotti said that the Government had taken account of the wishes expressed by the women's associations and would look into the advisability and feasibility of setting up a small administrative unit with responsibility for women's affairs.

Abortion in Italy

By 160 votes in favour and 148 against, the Italian Senate finally approved the law on the social protection of motherhood and the termination of pregnancy. The law is regarded as one of the most progressive on this subject and recognizes two basic principles: self-determination and social responsibility. This means that every woman is entitled to make her own decision and receive free treatment in hospitals provided she has reached the age of eighteen, is not more than 90 days pregnant and puts forward one of the accepted grounds under the law.

Minors must obtain their parents' consent, or if that is impossible, must apply to the judiciary, which can authorize termination of pregnancy within five days of the application.

Beyond the ninetieth day of pregnancy, abortion may be authorized for medical reasons by a doctor in the obstetrics and gynaecology department of a public hospital.

All costs will be borne by the regional health authorities, even for women who are not covered by an insurance scheme.

NETHERLANDS

State Secretary for Women's Emancipation

In the new Netherlands Government, Mrs Jeltien C. Kraaijeveld-Wouters has been appointed State Secretary for Women's Emancipation. She will work in close liaison with Dr Albeda, the new Minister for Social Affairs, and has been a member of the Emancipatiekommissie (government advisory committee on emancipation).

The Emancipatiekommissie moves office

The Secretariat of the Emancipatiekommissie, which consisted of only two people when it was set up in 1975, now has a staff of eleven, about half of whom work part-time. The Committee felt cramped in its old quarters and has moved to a new address:

Useful address: Emancipatiekommissie
Bankastraat 137
The Hague

UNITED KINGDOM

A new pension scheme

A new earnings-related pension scheme has just come into effect in the United Kingdom. In future, pensions will be in two parts:

- a basic pension, currently amounting to £17.50 a week for a single person, and
- a supplementary pension related to earnings, with a "floor" and a "ceiling". The floor level will be the same as the basic pension (£17.50 per week in April 1978) and the upper limit, or ceiling, about seven times that amount (£120 per week in April 1978). The supplementary pension will correspond to 1/80 of pay in the bracket between the basic pension and the upper limit for each year. Women will contribute until their 60th birthday (men until their 65th). Provided that contributions are made for more than 20 years, the final pension will be based on the 20 years of earnings that give the man or woman the best pension.

The new scheme favours women in several ways compared with the earlier flat-rate pension scheme. Under the scheme, women will get the same rate of benefit as a man who has the same earnings and pays the same national insurance contributions; they will keep their basic pension rights while away from work looking after children or a severely disabled adult, and inherit the whole of their husband's pension rights if widowed at over 50 (or at any age if left with a young family to support). Women will also have the same right as men to join their firm's occupational scheme (if it has one) and to keep their occupational pension rights when they change or leave a job.

To qualify for these benefits women will have to pay the same national insurance contributions as men. This means that the right of married women and some widows to pay reduced-rate national insurance contributions when employed (as happened previously) will be phased out.

In addition to pension rights, the new scheme will enable married women, for the first time, to receive full unemployment and sickness benefit in their own right.

While broadly welcoming the scheme women have, however, noted two snags. So long as their earnings in general lag behind those of men, comparatively few women will achieve the same supplementary pension; secondly, women will be handicapped by the earlier retiring age (60, against 65 for men).

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), in a recent document, argued forcibly in favour of a common retiring age - 63 - for men and women. However, the response of the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) to earlier representations on this matter has not been encouraging.

Useful address: Department of Health and Social Security
Alexander Fleming House
Elephant & Castle
London S.E.1

News about equal opportunities

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) recently brought out the first issue of a new bi-monthly news-sheet, EOC News. Its aim is to help publicize the Commission's achievements 'that are not headline-catching, but are stages in the slow steady progress towards equality'.

The first issue notes that the EOC again asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Denis Healey, to change the tax laws so that they no longer discriminate against women. Little progress has been made in this area since the passing of the Sex Discrimination Act in 1975.

Another EOC News item: the Commission has recently taken up the case against retailers who insist that women seeking credit must provide male guarantors. Under the Consumer Credit Act of 1974, such retailers could lose their licences, Lady Howe, Deputy Chairman of the EOC, told a conference.

"EOC News" also reports that while 26% of law graduates are women, they account for only 8% of barristers and 6.5% of solicitors. (In the UK, broadly speaking, only barristers practise advocacy; solicitors undertake the basic legal work required by the barrister in Court).

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

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

On 1 June 1978 women held the following seats in the national Parliaments:

Germany		518 members, of whom	39 women, i.e.	7.53%
Belgium	Lower house	212	15	7.07%
	Upper house	181	15	8.29%
Denmark	Lower house	179	29	16.20%
France	Lower house	489	18	3.68%
	Upper house	283	8	2.82%
Ireland	Lower house	114	5	4.38%
	Upper house	60	3	5.00%
Italy	Lower house	630	53	8.41%
	Upper house	322	11	3.41%
Luxembourg	Lower house	59	3	5.08%
Netherlands	Lower house	150	5	3.33%
	Upper house	75	21	28.00%
United Kingdom	Lower house	635	28	4.41%
	Upper house	1 140	54	4.73%

MILITANT ACTIVITIES

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Executive Committee of the European Movement elected Mrs Margherita Barnabei, Vice-President of its Italian Council, to the Presidency of the Commission Féminine Internationale (International Women's Committee). On the threshold of the European elections in 1979 this appointment is of the greatest significance.

Mrs Barnabei succeeds Mrs Yvonne de Wergifosse, former President, to whom the International Women's Committee of the European Movement is to a great extent indebted for its prestige and the development of its activities.

GERMANY

Life in the country

The Deutscher Landfrauenverband (German association of countrywomen) has over 250 000 members and is one of the most active women's associations in Germany. It was founded 80 years ago and in 1948 resumed its work of representing countrywomen's interests.

The association aims to improve the general education of countrywomen and better their chances in an increasingly complex working world. Life styles in the country have been more violently upset by changes in our society than has been the case in industrial regions. To meet this challenge, the German countrywomen's association has worked out a **broad** programme, the ultimate aim of which is to improve women's living conditions.

The association cooperates closely with various European organizations; for example, the Landesfrauenverband is a member of the Committee of Agricultural Organizations (COPA) and the European Confederation of Agriculture.

Useful address: Deutscher Landesfrauenverband
Godesberger Allee 142
5300 Bonn 2

BELGIUM

Vie Féminine

The "Vie Féminine" is a Christian cultural and social action movement for working women; its stated aim is "through cultural action, to awaken in women the desire to participate in all sectors of life and develop their skills to this end. Through social action, the Movement wishes to serve as a channel for participation by working class women in the construction and transformation of society".

Although its present name was only adopted in May 1969, Vie Féminine can rightly claim that its origins go back to the beginning of the century when it was known as the Syndicat the l'Aiguille (the needlewomen's trade union). Through its 125 000 affiliates distributed over 1 200 local sections and 17 regional federations, Vie Féminine leads the way in a great variety of activities.

The aim of the Centre d'Ecoles Familiales Ménagères (housewives domestic science centre) is to supplement women's domestic science training and introduce them to rational housekeeping methods. The Conseil des Acheteuses (buyers' council) teaches women about their role as consumers and represents them on the Conseil de la Consommation (consumers' council) and the Commission nationale de régulation des prix (national price control committee). Through the Entr'Aide Féminine, women can contribute to a supplementary insurance fund, whilst the Epargne nuptiale helps young people to build up a nest-egg that is very useful when the time comes to marry. The savings and loans service provided by Vie Féminine is supported by the Fédération nationale des Coopératives chrétiennes (national federation of christian cooperatives).

The major problems of our time - inflation, unemployment, pollution - can only be validly treated at European level. Strong in this belief, the Vie Féminine movement has decided to heighten members' awareness of the European scene so that every voter will be familiar with the issues when the time comes to vote in the elections to the European Parliament.

Useful address: Vie Féminine
Rue de la Poste, 111
1030 Brussels Tel: 217 74 41 and 217 29 52

Parti Féministe Unifié (unified feminist party)

Looking ahead to the elections to the European Parliament, the PFU decided to include in its electoral lists non party members whose actions, writings and declared positions support feminist principles. In close conjunction with the French movement "Choisir", the PFU is busy preparing an election manifesto to be presented to women voters in 1979.

Useful address: Parti Féministe Unifié
Rue des Aduatiques, 74
1040 Brussels Tel: 736 30 73

Women in the home

On its second anniversary, the Association des Femmes au Foyer presented an account of its activities in its quarterly bulletin. The Association is devoted to upgrading the role of women in the home and promoting their freedom of choice between work at home or outside.

For those who remain in the home, whether or not from choice, the Association tries to organize mutual help and moral support for which all women have a need.

Useful address: Association des Femmes au Foyer
Rue de Linthout, 200
1040 Brussels Tel: 734 28 41

Vrouw en beleid (women and politics)

The Working Party "Vrouw en Maatschappij" (women and society) of the CVP (Dutch-speaking Christian Democrat party) has just published a paper entitled "Vrouw en beleid" (women and politics) in collaboration with the IPOVO (political training institute of the CVP).

In recent years, women have been gaining influence in the CVP and have succeeded in securing a greater share of political posts. This paper of over 100 pages describes the history of the emancipation of women and the problems still facing them in our society, and is intended to provide support for women in their struggle for emancipation.

Useful address: CVP - "Vrouw en Maatschappij"
Tweekerkenstraat, 41
1040 Brussels Tel: 219 10 70

DENMARK

National Council of Danish Women

The Danske Kvinders Nationalraad has had a new President since March 1978. She is Karen Ytting, Director of a Social Centre, who was President of the DKN from 1972 to 1976. The outgoing President, Hanne Søndergård, a school Principal, did not wish to be re-elected as she was moving on to take up new functions this year at UNESCO.

At the General Assembly in March, the DKN adopted the Danish programme for the United Nations Women's Decade and the 1979 International Year of the Child.

Useful address: Danske Kvinders Nationalraad
Niels Hemmingsensgade, 8
1153 Copenhagen K Tel: 14 80 87

FRANCE

European Movement

The Women's Committee of the European Movement organizes special training courses for people holding responsible positions in women's associations. The idea is to increase the number of women active in public affairs and particularly to promote participation in the elections to the European Parliament by universal suffrage.

The Women's Committee of the European Movement devotes particular attention to its activities in the provinces and tries to secure the participation of local and regional women's organizations. Toulouse, Pau, Cannes, Rouen and Lille are among the principal towns at which its action is aimed.

Useful address: Commission féminine du Mouvement européen
Rue Feydeau, 24
Paris 2ème Tel: 236 14 89 and 236 14 92

Political parties and women

The paper on political parties and women prepared by the Union féminine civique et sociale (women's civic and social union) continues to be of current interest, even after the recent French parliamentary elections.

Apart from the quotations illustrating each political party's position, the paper contains the electoral policy statements on the family and action for women made before the election. The UFCS paper will make it possible to check which of these promises are kept in the months to come.

Useful address: Union féminine civique et sociale
Rue Béranger, 6
75003 Paris Tel: 272 17 26

IRELAND

A more equitable system of taxation

In Ireland, married couples pay more tax than two single people with the same income. This form of taxation penalizes women who would like to work outside the home and even deters working women from accepting promotion. The Married Persons Tax Reform Association is combating this state of affairs.

When tackled on the subject, the Minister for Finance stated his opposition to any change and charged that a reform would discriminate against women in the home. In response to protest aroused by his attitude, the Minister then proposed an income-splitting plan whereby each spouse would be chargeable on one half of the couple's total income. However, the Married Persons' Tax Reform Association protested against this decision as it would discriminate against single people and unmarried couples. Further, it would conflict with the principle that all workers should be taxed on their incomes as individuals in their own right.

Rape

The Council for the Status of Women has recently formed a Sub-Committee to draw up a submission on changing the legislation on rape in Ireland. The medical profession, the legal profession and the police were invited to give their opinions and advice to the Sub-Committee, which is chaired by a member of the Council who is also a doctor of medicine. The submission of the Council for the Status of Women will soon be forwarded to the Government and the women's organizations will organize widespread public discussions.

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

The courage to assert oneself

The Council for the Status of Women is organizing a series of residential Workshops for women already in positions involving responsibility and decision-making or those working towards such positions. Within a caring support group (maximum 14 participants), women have an opportunity to become aware of their own self-worth, potential and power. A variety of techniques such as Gestalt, discussion, sharing and non-verbal approaches are used, as appropriate.

Women who have participated in these workshops feel very positive about the effectiveness of such group participation. As well as the learning experience they offer, strong supportive relationships are formed which help and enrich women afterwards in their working and living situations.

For these Workshops, a grant of 50 per cent of the costs can be obtained from AnCO, the national Training Authority.

Useful address: Council for the Status of Women
27 Merrion Square
Dublin 2 Tel: 76 34 48 and 76 56 96

ITALY

An exhibition in Turin

The Italian Federation of Women Artists has organized in Turin an exhibition of documents and objects associated with the origin and history of feminist movements. The intention was to make known the early beginnings of the movement, which has had such a great influence on our civilization in recent years.

One of the most interesting documents on show is a "bibliographical and biographical manual of famous women" (Ungherini), published in French for fear that it would be poorly received in Italy.

Useful address: Federazione Italiana Donne Arti Professioni Affari (FIDAPA)
Piazzale Stazione 1
Padova

ANDE: increasing women's awareness of economic problems

"The Italian economic crisis: European solutions" was the subject of several debates organized by the ANDE (National Association of Women Voters).

In the belief that building Europe is a civic duty, this Association set out to make the electorate, and in particular women voters, more aware of the economic problems confronting the European Community.

During animated discussions in crowded halls, led by university professors, economists and trade representatives, women voters were found to be keenly aware of the difficulties and advantages of monetary union - which would seem to be both the key to a united Europe and a prospective new era in world economic history.

Useful address: Associazione Nazionale Donne Elettrici (ANDE)
via del Corso 262
Rome Tel: 679 49 93

Second International Feminist Congress

At the instigation of the Movimento di Liberazione della Donna (Women's Liberation Movement) and the "Effe" Magazine, the Second International Feminist Congress, in which 2 000 Italian women took part, was held in Rome. For two days, twelve working parties devoted their time to preparing the conclusions to be presented to the plenary assembly on the third day. The subject was violence, which had been the central theme at a similar meeting in Paris last year.

According to an MLD survey of a sample of 1 000 women, 51% had suffered violence from their husbands, 17% from their fathers and 14% from companions.

Women's aggressiveness was discussed at length. In self-defence, women adopted the scale of values imposed by men. The cliché "donna è bello" (woman is beautiful) had given way to "donna è contraddittorio" (woman is contrary). Violence has become a fact of life which many women would rather be without and which can only lead to a dead end. In parallel, discussion moved on to the need for women to rediscover themselves and realize their own potential.

Useful address: Effe
Piazza Campo Marzio, 7
Rome

NETHERLANDS

Fight for Europe

"Vrouw, kom op voor Europa" (Women, fight for Europe) is a lavishly illustrated brochure just published by the Nederlandse Vrouwenraad (Council of Dutch Women), which embraces some 50 organizations with a total of one million members.

Fifteen full pages in colour illustrate the main problems facing Europe today and the solutions on which men and women voters will have to decide in 1979.

The Nederlandse Vrouwenraad hopes that this brochure - which is being widely distributed - will stimulate discussion in the months to come.

For further information the Nederlandse Vrouwenraad recommends writing to the Nederlandse Genootschap voor Internationale Zaken (Dutch international affairs society), Alexanderstraat 2, The Hague.

Useful address: Nederlandse Vrouwenraad
Copes van Cattenburch Laan 72
The Hague Tel: 070 - 65 98 12

Denken and Doen

For 62 years the magazine "Denken and Doen" (Think and Act) has been published monthly by the Nederlandse vereniging van huisvrouwen (Dutch association of women in the home).

Some of the subjects covered are children's rights in the Netherlands, the campaign against noise, bargains of the month, nuclear energy, information on the European Community. "Denken and Doen" wants to encourage women in the home to break out of their isolation and participate in outside activities.

Useful address: Denken and Doen
Jan van Nassaustraart, 89
The Hague Tel: 070 - 24 13 47

UNITED KINGDOM

Some revealing statistics

The UK Section of the European Union of Women recently compiled a paper, 'Equality of Women in Economic Life', which provides some revealing - although not surprising - figures:

- * In the UK in 1976, 40.57% of the working population were women. Of these, over one third (37.8%) were in part-time employment, working less than 30 hours a week.
- * While the proportion of women working in national and local Government averaged just under 40%, there were wide variations in industry, ranging from 3.3% of the total workforce in coal mining to 75.8% in the clothing and footwear industries.
- * While women were well represented in public service, only 6.2% of senior appointments were held by women. A survey of 66 leading firms in 1977 showed that out of 810 directors, only three were women.
- * According to the latest available figures (1974), whereas one trade union member in every three was a woman, only one full-time official in every 32 was a woman.

Useful address: European Union of Women
Mrs Ingrid Dodd
Goldsmith's Cottage
Rolleston, Billesdon
Leicestershire, LE7 9EN

Women in Northern Ireland

The Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland was established on 1 September 1976 under the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 and is an entirely separate body from the ECC in Great Britain, although its objectives are the same.

Since its inception it has organized a number of seminars and issued pamphlets on equality for women in Northern Ireland. In particular it has supported Family Law Reform, urging co-ownership between husband and wife of the matrimonial home.

A recent earnings survey showed that in 1976 the average weekly earnings of women working full-time were £46, while the corresponding figure for men was £68.60. About one-third of women working full-time earned less than £35 per week, but only 5% of men did so.

Understandably in the circumstances, the Commission has announced grants for research projects amounting to £10 000 on matters regarding discrimination against women.

Useful address: Northern Ireland ECC
Lindsay House
Callender Street
Belfast 5DT
Northern Ireland

Women together

Founded eight years ago, "Women Together" is aimed at uniting the women of Northern Ireland across the political and religious divides.

According to David Bleakeley, a well-known politician in Northern Ireland, the organization has 'become a unique lobby for peace in Northern Ireland. Its members have faced terror on the streets with the special kind of authority vested in Irish motherhood. And by stepping aside from the political and religious debate and using time-honoured methods of communication... these women have caught the public imagination and made contact with a hitherto untapped source of public opinion'.

Useful address: Women Together
c/o Mrs Saidie Patterson
32 Woodvale Road,
Belfast BT13 3DB
Northern Ireland

THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY IN ACTION

Attention is being focussed on women's employment at all levels of the European Community. Here are a few examples:

European Social Fund

Since the decision adopted last year by the Council of Ministers of the Community, the European Social Fund may grant financial aid to projects specifically aimed at the vocational training and retraining of women.

In 1978, favourable consideration will be given to applications for aid leading directly to employment openings in an attempt to equalize the number of men and women employed in various occupations by helping women to follow training courses for occupations in which they are at present under-represented.

To ensure maximum benefit from this programme, the European Social Fund will also give favourable consideration to less direct but essential measures, such as guidance and information on openings, placement corresponding to training received, and in the case of women who are returning to work after a break, tuition on the best way to tackle the labour market.

Useful address: European Social Fund
Commission of the European Communities
200 rue de la Loi
1049 Brussels Tel: 735 00 40

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

The Centre has just published an issue of its bulletin, "Vocational Training", entirely devoted to training for women in the European Community. A detailed description of activities for women in each country is supplemented by a complete bibliography.

Since its foundation in 1976, the Centre has included vocational training for girls and women in its programme. First, wide-ranging discussions were held in Europe with the European Trade Union Confederation, the European Centre of Public Enterprises, the European Training and Promotion Centre for Farming and Rural Life, and the Union of the Industries of the European Community.

Following an important seminar held last autumn, the Centre evolved three main lines of action. First, a systematic inquiry would be made into the vocational guidance and training facilities in the nine Community countries. Next, specific operations would be organized together with a sample of undertakings concerned with the problem of equality of opportunity and prepared to promote the employment of women and the equality of the sexes on the labour market. Lastly, action to change attitudes would be supported by more effective dissemination of information on the subject.

Useful address: CEDEFOP
Bundesallee 22
1000 Berlin 31 Tel: (030) 88 10 61

Instruction for girls

Dr Eileen Byrne, responsible for education problems at the Equal Opportunities Commission in the United Kingdom, has just been entrusted with a survey by the European Commission.

Her task will be to coordinate the compilation of information supplied by the nine Community countries on equal opportunities for young girls in secondary education.

This information will provide Mrs Byrne with the material for a report that should further extend the scope of the European Community education action programme.

Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

The Publications Office has just put out a brochure "Vocational guidance and Training for Women Workers". This report was prepared by Mrs Claude du Granrut, Secretary-General of the Committee on Women's Employment, after the European seminar in Paris on this subject organized by the European Commission.

Useful address: Office for Official Publications of the
European Communities
PO Box 1003
Luxembourg

Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities

The members of the Economic and Social Committee of the Community will be re-appointed before 16 September 1978. It should be recalled that as far as possible the Committee should reflect a balance of economic and social forces (agriculture, industry, business, crafts, liberal professions). The European Commission has just informed the Council of Ministers of the importance it attaches to the representativity of the members of the Committee.

The European Commission believes, in particular, that a special place should be set aside for representatives of consumers and specialists in environmental problems.

Now that Governments are drafting their lists of candidates, women's organizations will no doubt make sure that they are adequately represented.

DOCUMENTS AND BROCHURES TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION

The institutions of the European Community have prepared various documents and brochures so that the public should be better informed and can take part in the discussions on the eve of the elections to the European Parliament.

1. The European Community and work for women: this 20-page document sets out the achievements of the European Community as regards women at work. It was prepared by the Directorate-General for Information - Information for the press and women's organizations, from whom it can be obtained free of charge.
2. The European Social Fund: action for women: this year the European Social Fund has specifically focussed on women. In this document, also obtainable free of charge, the unit - Information for the press and women's organizations - explains the advantages of this new type of financial aid.
3. Working together - the institutions of the European Communities: Emile Noel, Secretary-General of the European Commission, is by profession well qualified to explain how the European institutions function. He does this in under 40 pages.
4. Grants and loans from the European Communities: Who can benefit from the Community's financial support? On what terms? The answers, in a 25-page brochure.
5. The Community today and tomorrow: the successes, problems and aspirations of the Community in all spheres, spelled out in simple terms in 45 pages.
6. The European Parliament has produced various brochures with the direct elections in mind. The shortest is "Five questions on the European Parliament", a concise folder which gives five clear answers. The longest is "A 410-seat Parliament for Europe", which in 40 pages gives a brief historical run-down, together with the full text of the agreements signed in September 1976 by the nine Member States of the Community. The most "historical" is: "20 September 1976 - Signature of the Act", which contains the text of the official addresses, facsimilies of signatures and photographs of the signatories. The best illustrated is: "The European Parliament" - a modest title for a very comprehensive and well presented document which describes the Parliament's composition, organization, tasks, terms of reference, foreign relations: nothing has been left out. There are photographs of all the Presidents of the Parliament since its foundation in 1958.

WHERE TO WRITE?

These documents and brochures can be obtained free of charge, or for a small sum, from the following:

The Information Office of the European Communities in your country. The addresses are listed on page 2 of this issue.

The European Commission, Directorate-General for Information, 200 rue de la Loi, 1049 Brussels; the Official Publications Office of the Community, PO Box 1003, Luxembourg.

The Information Service of the European Parliament would also be pleased to assist you. The address is: Robert Schuman Building, Centre européen, PO Box 1601, Luxembourg.