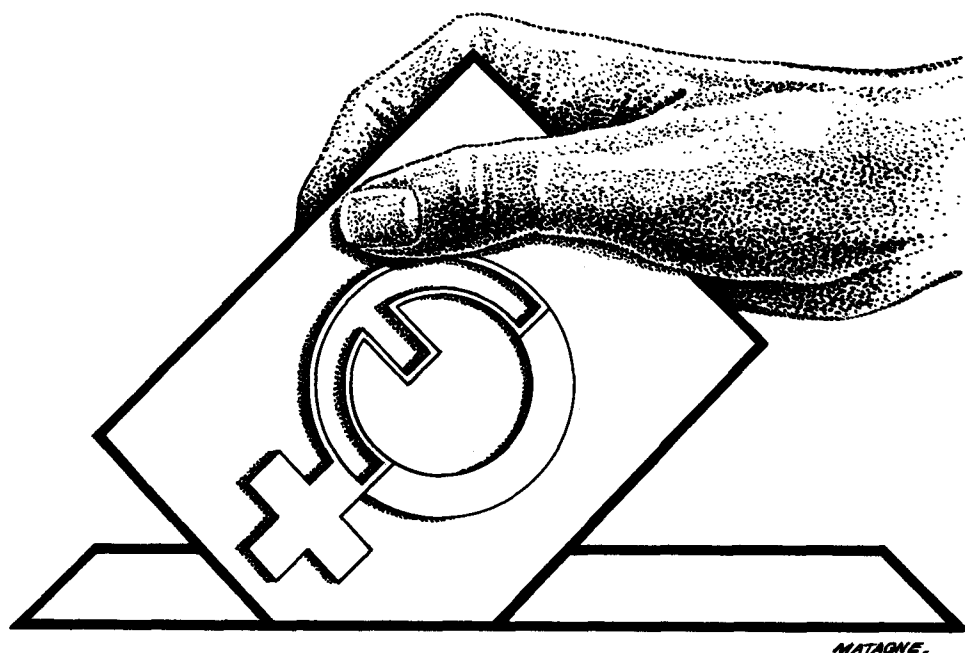


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IN THIS ISSUE

The changing European Community	3
Equality in social security	4
The European Social Fund and Greek women	5
The European Social Fund	6
The environment: 10 years of action	7
Eurobarometer	8
Children of separated parents	9
Information from Women of Europe	11
European Parliament	12
January 1984 session	12
Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry	18
February 1984 session	19
Towards a family policy?	22
Facts, Institutions and Laws	23
Militant activities	45
Research, Meetings and Books	62

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THE CHANGING EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

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"THE COMMUNITY NEEDS TO BE GOVERNED,

THIS IS THE ONLY REAL ISSUE"

Addressing European Parliament, Gaston Thorn - the President of the European Commission - expressed his concern at the European Community's inability to adapt and reach decisions.

"Years have been wasted by the Member States in trying to promote their national champions and exacerbate intra-Community rivalries rather than taking advantage of their complementary nature as European countries which will help them to stand up better to outside competition. Even where we have made progress, we have been unduly cautious. This dilatoriness in taking action, this hesitation in making the necessary adjustments, this dissipation of national effort, are the outward signs of an immense need: Europe's need to be governed. . . . In politics, the right decision is the decision reached at the moment when circumstances make it vital for something to be settled. Indecision on the part of the Council of Ministers has all too often condemned the Community to do too little, too late."

In all likelihood it is this conviction that will guide the forthcoming European elections: men and women voters will register the desire for courageous decisions to be taken, however painful they may be.

"Equal opportunities" action programme

"Few laws but plenty of practical measures" is the gist of the interim report on the Community's action programme on equal opportunities drawn up by the European Commission.

Since this is an interim document and so much information has been received from national Governments, the report contains a brief review of the measures adopted and encouraged by the Member States. It shows that although there has been only few laws on equality for women, many more positive and practical steps have been taken, with various effects in such fields as employment, education and vocational training. Most progress has been in launching special training programmes for women, the appointment of advisors with special responsibility for equality within job centres, information campaigns, etc.

Equality in social security

By 22 December 1984 at the latest, the European Community directive on equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security is due to come into force in the Community countries.

To assist Governments in complying with this directive, the European Commission has produced an interim report describing the progress that has been made towards its application in their countries.

Some Member States have not waited for the deadline to amend their legislation. Four countries - Germany, Denmark, France and Italy - appear to have made satisfactory headway in the legislative field and no major problems have arisen in applying the directive.

This is also the view of the Committee for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, whose formal opinion is published as an annex to the Commission's report. The Committee points out that there are still a few matters to be settled in Belgium, where a head of household who is unemployed, man or woman, receives more favourable treatment; the problem is that only 5% of heads of household are women, creating a potential form of indirect discrimination. Also in Belgium, quite apart from differences between men's and women's age of entitlement to pensions, there is discrimination in the methods of calculating pension rights: the contribution rate for a "couple" is available only to married male workers. There are also discrepancies between minimum levels of pension. Under Belgian social security regulations, unemployed women receive less maternity benefits than they would if they had a job.

As to the Netherlands, the Committee expressed clear reservations about amendments to the law, since the concept of the male head of household as the breadwinner ("kostwinner") has not been altogether eliminated.

In the United Kingdom, most of the new measures are in the field of dependants' benefits, in which there will now be equal treatment. Nevertheless, various inconsistencies still have to be ironed out. For example, it is the husband's age which determines when a couple is entitled to a pension and it is the husband's earnings from full-time employment which decide whether a couple is entitled to family income supplement. In the matter of free medical aid for those staying in other Community countries, a husband is entitled to such care for his dependent wife but a wife cannot obtain it for her dependent husband unless he is disabled.

The European Social Fund and Greek Women

It is no secret that vocational training schemes for adult women may be eligible for financial help out of the European Social Fund, but the general public may not be aware that information seminars and work groups are being arranged to brief those responsible for vocational training.

What could be done in Greece to encourage training and work for women in non-traditional trades? What is already being done in the field in Italy and France? To encourage the pooling of experience and information, a large Greek delegation visited Sardinia and then Bologna, where its members met their counterparts from Italy and France with the same concerns.

European Social Fund officials whose sphere of competence includes training schemes for adult women felt it would be helpful to introduce Greek women, civil servants or the heads of organizations, to training schemes that are in full swing.

The Greek women, officials from the Ministries of Employment and Education and women members of the Xen Ellados association and the Petra cooperative, were thus able to have face-to-face discussions with Italian women trainees and trainers. Most of the schemes visited were in Sardinia, an island region far from the European centres of power which has to contend with many of the same types of handicaps as Greece.

The Greek delegation then went to Bologna, where French training promoters had been invited to present their training activities by the European Social Fund. The French schemes had been chosen as examples both because they are making successful progress in economically vulnerable regions and because the methods they use and the skills in which they train women could readily be emulated in Greece.

During the working meetings, three main concerns became apparent: how to train trainers, how to promote job creation and what measures should be taken to support the training and make it more effective.

All the women of Greece, Italy and France who took part in this seminar stressed the importance of the ties created by this effort. Not only had they swapped experience but they had also highlighted ways of transferring know-how to Greek agencies and a new form of technical training support from both the trainers and the women themselves.

On the Greek side, the participants saw this seminar as an opportunity to create momentum within Greece by means of communal discussion and thinking whose effects would be felt right down the line, reaching those responsible for the vocational training of women at the local as well as the national level.

Now that officials have seen for themselves what has been achieved in Italy and France, Greece should be encouraged to submit plans for a growing number of viable projects to the European Social Fund.

Useful address: European Commission - European Social Fund
200 rue de la Loi
1049 Brussels

The European Social Fund: Guidelines

The European Commission has laid down guidelines for the administration of the European Social Fund in financial years 1984, 1985 and 1986.

Since the number of eligible applications far outstrips the amount of credit available, the Commission will, as in the past, decide which ones should be given priority.

It should be borne in mind that when reviewing the Social Fund the Council of Ministers decided that at least 75% of the available funds should be directed towards regions with overriding priority, in other words Southern Italy, Greece, the French Overseas Departments, Ireland, Northern Ireland and Greenland.

With due regard to these basic rules, the Commission's list of priorities was:

1. action that contributes towards achieving the "social guarantee" and promotes the employment of the under-25s, particularly those with inadequate or inappropriate job skills;
2. action supporting the conversion or restructuring of companies, promoting technological progress in small and medium-sized firms or paving the way for innovation in economic sectors of special importance to the economic future of Europe;
3. action helping to create new jobs;
4. action to promote the socio-occupational integration of certain categories of people (women, immigrants, the handicapped);
5. action of an innovatory nature coming within the context of Community action programmes and contributing towards the development of Member States' policies and practices.

Banks and equal opportunities

Under the Community action programme for equal opportunities, Commission representatives have been meeting the management of banks and banking staff unions.

In the banking sector, about half of the staff is female (compared with 36% in the working population as a whole). While this puts it well ahead in terms of female employment, only 2% of senior jobs and 13% of jobs in middle grades are occupied by women.

The Commission views banking as a pilot sector for its efforts to promote equal opportunities. The series of meetings ending in agreement among those represented that they would continue in their efforts and that there would be closer cooperation among banks in the Community to work for true equality of opportunity.

Specific steps have already been taken in this direction by Société Générale de Banque (Belgium), Banque Bruxelles Lambert (Belgium), Midland Bank (United Kingdom) and Banque Scalbert Dupont (France).

The Environment: 10 years of action

Water, air, noise, chemicals, waste: in the space of ten years, the European Community has brought in more than a hundred pieces of legislation to protect the environment.

The United Nations Conference on the human environment held in Stockholm in 1972 marked the beginning of a general awareness of the problems of the environment. Had not rapid action been undertaken, we would have risked a deterioration in the quality of life - and even human life itself.

The European Community was one of the first bodies to react, by drawing up a programme of action on the environment. The tenth anniversary of the launching of this programme is a good opportunity for a brief review of the progress that has been achieved.

In general, Community policy on the environment has provided considerable encouragement for planning the necessary ecological measures both at Community level and within individual countries. It has also helped to establish a common attitude, common goals and common principles, and has generated a broad range of legislative measures whose results are beginning to become apparent.

Any common policy must both stimulate and incentivate all the separate bodies responsible for its application. It provides the framework for dialogue, harmonization and a regular exchange of views and experience among member countries. Within a common market, there is an obvious need to harmonize measures, for if they were to be planned and implemented on a purely national basis they would distort competition or create new obstacles to trade, or they might prove ineffective because the problems with which they are designed to deal know no frontiers: the wind and the air have little respect for administrative boundaries.

Many aspects of environmental policy have to be considered at continental or even world level. This is the reason why the European Community is the geographical and political entity that can be most effective in the solution of the many ecological problems which could be seen as purely national concerns.

One figure will suffice to illustrate the problem: 2,000 million tons of waste are produced in the Community every year. It is only by working together and pursuing the same principles that this great tide of rubbish can be properly dealt with. The storage, transportation, labelling, recycling and possible re-use of waste and the risk-free disposal of non-recuperable waste materials: all these problems should be solved by mutual agreement.

The European Community's forthcoming plan of action on the environment will be directed in particular towards the conservation of resources. Environmental protection is seen as the key factor in economic development and the proper management of resources.

This plan of action is designed to ensure that due consideration is given to the environment when planning for various fields such as agriculture, energy, industry, transport and tourism. It is also considered essential that the impact of any form of human activity on the environment be assessed in advance if it is likely to have a marked effect. The need, then, is to reconcile economic and ecological factors.

EURO-BAROMETER: Europeans, the Community and Parliament

The 20th "Euro-Barometer" public information poll conducted on behalf of the European Commission, under the responsibility of J.-R. Rabier, reveals small but significant changes in pro-Community attitudes of a majority of Europeans and a fairly worrying decline in familiarity with the European Parliament.

Attitudes towards Europe and the European Community

In the autumn of 1983, Europeans in general said they were in favour of European unification: the average was three out of four (but six out of ten in Ireland and four out of ten in Denmark). Except in the U.K., however, opinion trends between 1972 and 1983 show that overall support has declined in every country. In Greece, where seven polls have been conducted so far, there has been a substantial rise in public approval of European unification.

More specifically on the European Community, interviewees were asked about their country's membership of the Community. In an average of 55% of cases opinions were positive, the highest percentages being found in Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Italy. The Danes continued to be the most negative, but the gap between them and people who saw membership of the Community as a "good thing" narrowed to 26% and 35% respectively. For the first time since the autumn of 1978, a relative majority of the British, i.e. 36%, see the Community as a "good thing", compared with 28% who still see it as a "bad thing". In Greece, public opinion has "legitimized membership", since those in favour have risen from about 40% in 1981 to 47% whereas negative replies have dropped back from 22% to 12%.

One of the conclusions reached by the poll is that public attitudes to Europe in some countries are not directly linked with views as to the current state of agreement among member States, which appears to indicate that they see no alternative to the Community.

Attitudes to European Parliament

The image of European Parliament is "very fluid" but not negative. According to 45% of Europeans (rather more than the average in the case of Italians, Greeks and the Irish), Parliament has "a good deal" of power or "enough", but 40% hold the opposite opinion (especially in Germany).

Six people out of ten would like to see European Parliament playing a more important role, especially the Italians, Greek and French. Nevertheless, the interviewers warned against overestimating the significance of these replies in view of the general lack of information about Parliament.

In the view of most people interviewed, European Parliament should have more power to give it more control over the way the Common Market works: this was stated by 80% of Italians and, at the other end of the scale, 59% of people in Britain and 58% in Ireland. Only 38% of the Danes feel this way, but 35% of them did not reply to the question. Most of the people interviewed also felt that European MPs are too distant from their electors.

57% of interviewees "agreed to some extent" that the creation of a European political union should be the main objective of European MPs, while 15% "did not agree on the whole" and there were 28% "don't knows".

The positive and negative replies were respectively 58% and 9% in Belgium, 17% and 40% in Denmark, 53% and 13% in Germany, 50% and 18% in France, 66% and 10% in Italy, 68% and 13% in Luxembourg, 62% and 19% in the Netherlands, 60% and 18% in the United Kingdom and 69% and 5% in Greece.

The children of separated parents

André Damseaux, a Belgian Liberal Member of European Parliament, asked the European Commission whether there are any Community measures to prevent the kidnapping of children of divorced or separated parents by one of the spouses. This is the full text of the reply.

There are no Community measures whose effect is to prevent the situation described by the Honorable Member as it arises in disputes over the custody of children between a divorced woman who is a national of one Member State and her husband who is a national of an outside State.

A situation of this kind may occur between two divorced or separated spouses who are nationals of two EEC Member States. The Brussels Convention of 27 September 1968 concerning the "judicial competence and enforcement of rulings in civil and commercial matters" is not applicable to the custody of children. In the same way, national legislations of Member States differ from each other, so that a spouse to whom a court has awarded custody does not enjoy the same protection throughout the Community that would enable him or her to have the child returned as quickly as possible.

The legislation of certain Member States prescribes that a court to which a matter is referred is empowered to reconsider a previous court's decision in the interests of the child, and to withdraw the right of custody from a spouse to whom it had previously been awarded in order to award custody to the spouse who formerly only had visiting rights. On the other hand, the legislation of other Member States considers that such a court does not have this power of reappraisal. Even though the situation between parents who are nationals of two different Member States is so far from satisfactory, it is even less satisfactory when one of the two is a national of a third State. To overcome this problem, however, laudable efforts have been made within the Council of Europe and the Hague Conference on international private law.

The Council of Europe Convention of 20 May 1980 on the recognition and enforcement of rulings regarding the custody of children and re-establishment of custody of children has been in force since 1 October 1983. It has been ratified by four States: France, Luxembourg, Portugal and Switzerland. It has been signed but not yet ratified by Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom.

This Convention, which represents undeniable progress, nevertheless allows signatory States to make certain reservations, in particular maintaining the court's power of reappraisal in the interests of the child.

The European Commission has made every effort to coordinate the attitudes of Member States regarding this point in order to evolve a common attitude in favour of an expeditious procedure for the recognition and enforcement of the rulings in question. Its efforts have unfortunately been unsuccessful. This lack of coordination detracts from the prospects of supplementing the said European Convention by Community measures.

The Convention of the Hague Conference on private international law, signed on 25 October 1980, on civil aspects of the international kidnapping of children, was designed mainly to bring about cooperation between the national central authorities, principally to ensure the immediate return of children.

It came into force on 1 December 1983. As of this time, it has been ratified by four States: Canada, France, Portugal and Switzerland. It has been signed by Belgium, the United States and Greece.

The children of separated parents (continued)

The European Commission would like every Community Member State to ratify both Conventions at the earliest possible time.

As for bilateral conventions in this field, although they do exist between Member States and between Member States and non-EEC States within Europe, they are rare - to the point of non-existence - with third States outside Europe.

Development cooperation

Negotiations are continuing between the European Community and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries which signed the Lomé Convention regarding its renewal.

Mr Pisani, the European Commissioner responsible for this matter, pointed out that there is broad agreement between the "ACP" countries and the Community on reaffirming the basic principles of reciprocal cooperation, i.e.

respect for each country's sovereignty;

ACP States have sole responsibility for the development of their own economy and society;

the two groups are interdependent and therefore their interests are mutual.

The European Community was able to agree to the four goals which the ACP States wished to incorporate:

an effective contribution should be made to the economic and social development and to the cultural advancement of ACP States in pursuance of their own development strategy and priorities;

cooperation among ACP States in general and at regional level in particular should be strengthened in order to arrive at a "collective autonomy";

there should be a contribution towards the achievement of a fairer and more balanced international economic order;

greater mutual understanding between the governments and peoples of the two partner groups should be encouraged.

The European Community would like to include in the next Convention the concept of "respect for human dignity" because of the "close and evident" link between this and the concepts of the "greater wellbeing of man and the development of his abilities".

E R R A T A

In Supplement n° 12 to Women of Europe, "Community Law and Women"

Page 10 - for "Law of 22.11.72", read "Law of 22.12.72"

Page 18 - for (classified on) "5.12.78, read "5.12.79"

Page 64 - for "directive 79/8 deposited on 21.5.81" read "directive 79/7 deposited on 21.5.81"

Page 78 - for "the revision of legislators" read "the revision of legislations"

Page 84 - for "directive 29/7" read "directive 79/7"

Page 101 - for "even if directly by the employer" read "even if indirectly by the employer"

INFORMATION FROM WOMEN OF EUROPE

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Produced by Blanche Sousi-Roubi and Isabelle von Prondzinski, Supplement n° 13 to Women of Europe is on the subject of women and farming.

The first part of the Supplement is a legal study on important aspects of the daily lives of women farmers: social security, access to vocational training, access to farming organizations, relief services and the legal status of women on the farm. A country-to-country comparison sheds light on the improvements that every woman farmer can hope to see in various sectors.

The second part is the final report of a seminar held in Grado on "the legal and social position of women in agriculture", together with a report by the Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry into the Situation of Women in Europe entitled "the problems of self-employed women, particularly in agriculture, trade and crafts".

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WOMEN IN STATISTICS

Maria J. Gonzalez has updated and revised Supplement n° 10 to Women of Europe, entitled "Women in Statistics", which is now appearing under the same title as Supplement n° 14 to Women of Europe.

Population, employment and education and training are the three main fields in which the latest and most significant figures have been gathered. In most cases, the figures for 1979 have been presented side by side with those for 1981, to give a clearer overview of the economic and social position of women.

Useful address: European Commission
Directorate-General Information
Information for Women's Organization and Press
200 rue de la Loi
1049 Brussels

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

January 1984 Session

In the course of its January session, European Parliament was addressed by Claude Cheysson, the French Minister for Foreign Relations and chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Community until June 1984. Mr Cheysson explained the programme for the period during which France was to chair the Council: the main aim, he said, was to find a way out of the impasse in which Europe of the Ten now finds itself by contributing solutions to the problems which have dragged on from one Council of Ministers to the next and by formulating new policies. Mr Cheysson said he would pay particular attention to any measure helping to improve the status of women.

THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN EUROPE was the theme of the major debate of the session, whose starting point was the coordinated report and the 18 studies on specific themes formulated by the Committee of Enquiry into the Position of Women chaired by Maria Lisa Cinciari Rodano (Italian, Communist).

It will be recalled that, following a decision reached by European Parliament on 8 July 1981, the Committee had been given a two-fold mandate: on the one hand, it was to ensure that European authorities were applying the guidelines adopted by Parliament in its resolution of 11 February 1981; and, on the other, it was to keep the changing status of women in Europe under review.

According to an analysis by the Committee of Enquiry, the situation deteriorated between 1981 and 1984. This deterioration, arising no doubt as a result of the economic crisis, may well be aggravated and lead to a return to the segregation of tasks within the family and society according to sex and to stereotyped ideas. The motion submitted to Parliament for its approval called for a redoubling and broadening of efforts to promote equal opportunities for men and women, women's employment and greater awareness of the role of women in the life of society.

There were 166 proposed amendments to the proposal (about 10 of which were withdrawn by the Committee of Enquiry before the debate began). Of these, 45 were put forward by the European People's Party, 36 by the Communist group, 22 by the Liberal and Democratic Group, 17 by the European Democratic Group, 14 by the Non-attached Group, 9 by the Socialist Group and 3 by the Group of European Progressive Democrats.

The motion was adopted by 125 votes. The 17 votes against and 55 abstentions were due to the European People's Party, a few Conservatives and several Irish MEPs.

As adopted, the resolution generally follows the recommendations set out in the individual reports plus a few additional factors. For example,

- the Council of Ministers was called on to give priority to monitoring the application of directives on part-time working, temporary employment, parental leave and equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security (amendment presented by Johanna Maij-Weggen, (Neth, European People's Party);

- measures to combat the "housewife's syndrome" and to help unmarried women who have to combine a job with domestic responsibilities (amendment proposed by Doeke Eisma, Neth, Non-attached);
- the setting up of an alimony compensation fund so that alimony payments can be advanced if the parent responsible for defaults (amendment by Marie-Claude Vayssade, French Socialist);
- recognition of the role that Community legislation has played, due to the incentive of the European Commission, in improving the status of women (amendment from the European People's Party).

During the session, MEPs had an opportunity to hear Yvette Roudy, French Minister for Women's Rights, who it will be remembered was a Member of European Parliament and chaired the ad hoc committee on women's status.

This was the first time a "specialist" minister had taken part in Parliamentary debate. It is the custom that only the Chairman of the Council of Ministers and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs are present.

Yvette Roudy gave a broad-ranging talk on the measures adopted in France to improve women's status. She announced a "special council of ministers" in Paris on 8 March, to be attended by the Ministers for Labour, Employment and Social Affairs to discuss "Community action for the employment of women in a Europe of economic, technological and social change". She will make every effort to persuade her Education Minister colleagues to convene a special council meeting on the education of girls.

"You can count on me," concluded the Minister, adding "and I know I can count on you."

During the debate, Maria Lisa Cinciari Rodano painted a general picture of the current situation and stressed that the corollary to an improvement in the position of women would be an improvement in interpersonal relationships and life in general. "We are not asking for too much," she declared, "and there is no conflict of interests between us: success in another country is not envied but is welcomed as something worthy of emulation."

Paola Gaiotti de Biase, Italian Christian Democrat and author of the report on equal pay and treatment, pointed out that Community legislation has undoubtedly helped but is still not enough. What is needed now is to ensure that the new high technology jobs will not be taken over by the men.

At the time of voting, Paola Gaiotti de Biase announced that she would not vote in the final ballot because of an article in the resolution speaking of women's struggle against religions that do not guarantee their human rights. "My group has abstained because of this article," she said; the paragraph may have been referring to Islam (as was in fact the case), but she deplored the wording on the grounds that it was Socialist provocation.

Ien van den Heuvel, Dutch Socialist and the rapporteur for the directive on social security, protested that national legislations take the family as the point of reference for social security benefits. She regretted that they tend to accentuate rather than reduce the dependence of women on men. This is an indirect form of discrimination with very adverse effects, she argued.

A reduction in hours of work (with the longer term objective of a 35-hour week) was urged by the German Socialist, Heidi Wieczorek-Zeul, who presented the report on shorter working hours and the reorganization of work. She also hoped to see a shorter working day so that tasks could effectively be redistributed between men and women, and she was forthright in calling for enforcing measures.

Speaking for herself, she expressed reservations as to the earlier retirement of women: since they earn less than men, they would be placed at an even greater disadvantage compared with men than at present.

A 35-hour week was not seen as the solution by the German Liberal, Mechtild von Alemann, the rapporteur for vocational training. Speaking on her own subject, she called for true equality, something that does not exist at present. This could be achieved by specific measures abolishing the age limit for access to employment and refresher training for women wanting to return to work after their child-bearing period. The latter measure is particularly important if the prospects of their families are to be bright, she argued: if children have "happy and courageous" parents because they are free to choose their own way of life and work, they will have more chance of growing up like them.

The author of the report on new technology, Antoinette Spaak (Belgium, FDF), acknowledged that the training of women in new technology is altogether inadequate; it is a form of training that should start in the school. Unless an "offensive" attitude is adopted in this field, women will regress rather than progress.

A similar concern was expressed by Johanna Maij-Weggen, the rapporteur on women and the European Social Fund. Describing her visits to schemes for boys and girls financed by the Social Fund, she had noted that only the boys worked on computers while the very few girls there were relegated to typewriters - and ancient typewriters to boot. The Social Fund and the Regional Fund should be reviewed to ensure that women come closer to equality, she said.

It was a man, Doeke Eisma (Neth, Non-attached), who was the author of the report on women and health. Although he was anxious that there should not be excessive polarization of men and women (women's emancipation, he reminded his listeners, also means male emancipation), Mr Eisma thought the Community should act on certain specific points: cancer prevention, sex education, information on contraceptives and support for women taking legal action as the victims of sexual violence, which should be treated as a crime.

The report on the status of women migrants was presented by Vera Squarcialupi (Italian, Communist Group), who pointed out how much immigrants have done for their host country (we must give them what we owe them for what they have done for us, she said) and the vulnerability of migrant women on several levels. To overcome this situation, there must be legislation on the black labour market, illegal traffic in labour and the right to stay in the country. Training specifically suited to these women should be arranged to help them to reconcile the traditions to which they are accustomed with their access to a new world.

Women in agriculture and self-employed women are at a particular disadvantage, declared the French Liberal, Simone Martin, who called for a legal status that would give them the same rights as their husbands.

The Greek Socialist, Calliope Pantazi, rapporteur on the situation of women in Greece, declared that with the encouragement of the Government her country was making headway despite the enormous distance it had to travel to catch up.

German Christian Democrat Marlene Lenz spoke of the place of women in European Community institutions. They occupy 60% of the lower rank grade B and C jobs, but those at the top are always men; women's promotion prospects are poor and there is no woman member of the Commission. There should be at least one (Yvette Roudy, speaking at a press conference, had argued that there should be at least two or three).

In her turn Anne-Marie Lizin (Belgian Socialist) reviewed the position of women in the Third World. The issue is of vital concern to us all, she said, for the exploitation of women is universal in nature although it may take different forms depending on the culture or country. The European Community has a role to play in weighing the impact its projects in developing nations will have on women and in launching training and education schemes.

Discussing the question of informing women, British Conservative Gloria Hooper argued that it would be wrong to exaggerate the difficulties and that due recognition should be given to the progress already achieved. She cited women who had reach the summit of power, as well as the fact that even though women are not very numerous in European Parliament there are more there than in any national Parliament. Directing her comments towards the European Commission, Gloria Hooper called for the tiny unit concerned with women in the Directorate General for Information to be given an adequate staff at last and independent status.

Dame Shelagh Roberts, another British Conservative, covered the subject of tax systems, which are rarely neutral. In some countries, especially the Federal Republic of Germany, wives are discouraged from doing a job by punitive taxation. The changes needed are not just in the law but in attitudes. For example, people must understand that allowing a woman to be financially independent does not necessarily weaken the bonds of marriage, but rather the contrary.

Sylvie Leroux (French Communist) called for problems associated with maternity (parental leave, facilities for the care of small children) to be viewed and solved in a broader context so that women who wish to do so can be both mothers and workers.

The problem of infrastructure also arises in disadvantaged regions, where women are doubly penalized, stressed Sile de Valera (Irish, European Progressive Democrats). The whole subject of women's vocational guidance should be reconsidered and encouragement given to cooperatives, although it will be impossible to do without subsidies in the initial stage.

Discussing the obstacles to the social betterment of women, the Luxembourg Christian Democrat Nicolas Estgen, who presented the report on the education of girls, listed three obstacles to the social betterment of women: narrow-minded prejudice among men, the jarring fanaticism of some women and methods of education. He said that allowance should be made for certain differences, calling upon mothers not to be sexist themselves in the way they bring up their daughters.

Nicolas Estgen having described women as "sleeping beauties", the Italian Socialist Maria Antonietta Macchiocchi commented "we are not waiting for the handsome prince to wake us up with a kiss; we are wide awake already".

Presenting the report on women in decision-making centres, Maria Macciocchi (Italian, Socialist) deplored the flagrant inequality in the Governments of the ten EEC Member States, where there are only 16 women ministers out of 180, 16 secretaries of state out of 122 and very few women parliamentarians (ranging from 23% in Denmark to 4% in Greece). The same situation is to be found in the universities, the media and the upper echelons of the political, social, scientific and artistic hierarchies.

During the general debate, a call for new legislative measures to supplement existing legislation, including a directive on positive discrimination, was made by French Socialist Marie-Claude Vayssade, whereas Belgian Christian Democrat Alphonsine Phlix pleaded for women not to try to take over from men but to work together with them to create a fairer society. Gaullist Mr Gauthier was in favour of cooperation between the sexes but criticized the report for its "desire to lump everything together", its "egalitarian philosophy" and even its "intellectual terrorism". While he rejected this philosophy, Mr Gauthier was in favour of measures that might improve the Community's judicial apparatus in the field of equal opportunities.

Another man, on the other hand, Italian Communist Guido Fanti, unreservedly supported the conclusions of the report and called for a European Parliament standing committee on women's status. He hoped that the women's issue would be seen as at the heart of efforts to revitalize Europe.

Katharina Focke (Socialist) deprecated the way in which equality directives were being applied in her own country and saw the report as very timely. Else Hammerich from Denmark (Movement against Denmark's membership of the European Community) supported women's rights but wondered whether the Community in fact has the right to concern itself with the issue. Belgian Liberal Jeanne Pauwelyn said that we should be concerned about the all too common practice of wife-battering.

Women have been unjustly treated far too long, acknowledged British Conservative John Purvis, who declared himself a resolute feminist; he hoped, however, that we would concentrate on the essentials and not be side-tracked by minor issues.

The sexual harrassment of women in the workplace was mentioned by French Socialist Yvette Fullet, who regretted that the final report only just touched on the subject. She congratulated women courageous enough to denounce it openly. Discussing the same theme, Dutch Socialist Annie Krouwel-Vlam, spoke of another form of sexual violence that is more widespread than is generally believed: incest.

Returning to the use being made of existing Community resources, Belgian Socialist Marijke Van Hemeldonck criticized Governments for failing to make proper use of the means at their disposal; for example, the Belgian Government had not applied for the help to which it was entitled in counteracting female unemployment.

Ivor Richard, European Commissioner with responsibility for social affairs, said that the Commission has at least made a start on all the action recommended by the Committee of Enquiry three years before and feels that it has not been idle. Its powers are limited, however, and it is hard to force Governments to accept additional legislation. The most urgent need now was to bring in two directives: one on equality in pension schemes and the other on parental leave.

Mr Richard went on to point out that in February the European Commission would also be presenting a directive on the status of self-employed women and women farmers. On the subject of vocational training, the European Commission had asked the German Government for information on measures it was to apply that might make the position of women in certain fields even more difficult.

On the other hand, Mr Richard thought it was "extremely improbable" that a directive on tax systems would be adopted as things now stand. He fully recognized, however, the value of the experience of women who, in a male-dominated society and a period of crisis, have not been content just to protest but have proposed and introduced change themselves.

Consumer protection

Catherine Lalumière, French Secretary of State for consumer affairs, has briefed the Parliamentary Committee on the environment, health and consumer protection on the programme during the French chairmanship of the Council of Ministers; we should not expect miracles, she said, but the intention is to forge ahead with many projects to ensure that consumers no longer have the status of "vulnerable individuals" condemned to "passivity or systematic protection".

Catherine Lalumière thought that progress could and should be made with proposals for Community directives on misleading advertising, liability for faulty goods, doorstep selling and rapid publicity on the risks of hazardous products.

She would also like to make further proposals on consumer credit, consumer protection and trade, improving the machinery for settling disputes concerning consumer goods, a census of accidents in the home, additives in food products and methods of sealing the containers of dangerous substances.

During the January session, European Parliament discussed a whole range of other important issues such as European Commission proposals on agricultural prices, research and energy, safety in the workplace and the disposal of radioactive waste.

European Parliament adopted a resolution set out in the report by Marie-Jane Pruvot (French Liberal) on a patient's charter. Nevertheless, feeling that the original text had been changed too radically, Ms Pruvot refrained from voting. The text as adopted calls for a true "patient's charter" covering such matters as treatment, the free choice of doctor and medical institution, the right to know about one's diagnosis, treatment and prognosis, the confidentiality of medical records, recourse to the courts and the right to die in dignity. On the last of these points Parliament rejected amendments calling specifically for euthanasia in clearly defined cases if the patient so wishes. Speaking on behalf of the European Commission, Mr Richard said that a report on medical confidentiality was being drawn up and that a report on preventive medicine would be presented at the end of 1984.

Parliament also passed a motion submitted by Dutch Socialist Hemmo Muntingh which called for Community action against "acid rain". If we do nothing, he said, we shall deprive the earth of its lungs.

The transmission of nationality

During the same January session, European Parliament unanimously passed a motion put forward by Maria Lisa Cinciari Rodano (Italian Communist) on the transmission of nationality.

Parliament asked the European Commission to draw up a recommendation for Member States on equal rights in the transmission of nationality.

There should be equality in the transmission of nationality:

- by the father and mother to both legitimate and natural children;
- following marriage between two people of different nationalities.

The need is to achieve equality for men and women in this field while respecting the principle of the undesirability of accumulating nationalities. There should be a recommendation along these lines because of the complex legal situation arising out of the differences between the legislative systems of Member States.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY ON THE POSITION OF
WOMEN IN EUROPE

The debate on the position of women in Europe which took place during European Parliament's January session did not mark the end of the mandate of the Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry; on the contrary, it now has the task of ensuring that the guidelines adopted by Parliament are taken into account by Community bodies.

The Committee went straight back to work on the 1st February by reviewing the interim report on the implementation of the new Community programme of action on the promotion of equal opportunities for women. The Committee feels that in some directions little progress has been made and would like to know the intentions of the Council of Ministers and the European Commission by putting an oral question to them on the parliamentary floor.

The Committee also discussed the interim report on the third directive, on equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security. According to the members, the report does not always make the concept of indirect discrimination clear.

The view of Ms Phlix (Belgium, European People's Party) on the "parental leave" directive was adopted by the Committee. Amendments will be proposed to the effect that: the right to such leave should be extended to people who are not parents but who in fact care for the child; if only part of the leave entitlement is taken up, the remainder may be taken later; Member States should spell out the "important family reasons authorizing leave"; in those Member States where the arrangements are more favourable they should be continued; and the person taking leave should in fact care for the child during the period of leave.

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE

if you are particularly concerned with any of the issues debated by European Parliament ...

if you would like to know more ...

if you would find out precisely what was said on the floor and even the reactions in the chamber (heckling, applause, etc.) ...

your useful address is:

European Parliament
Secretariat General
Minutes Division, B.P. 1601
Luxembourg

February 1984 Session

IN ITS FEBRUARY SESSION, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT TOOK A STEP THAT WILL SHAPE THE WHOLE OF EUROPE'S FUTURE: IT VOTED TO APPROVE A PRELIMINARY DRAFT TREATY ESTABLISHING A EUROPEAN UNION.

The passing of a resolution on the Treaty, the focus of complex discussions and negotiations among the political groups, marked the culmination of a process launched four years earlier by Altiero Spinelli (Italian, Independent elected from a Communist list) with the support of what was then dubbed the "Crocodile Club", from the name of the Strasbourg restaurant where early informal meetings were held.

As worded, the resolution states that as soon as the Treaty has been ratified by a majority of Member States whose population makes up two thirds of the total population of the Community, the Governments of those States will meet to hammer out an agreement on procedural matters and relations with those States that have not yet ratified the Treaty.

The aim of this clause is to give the peoples of Europe a chance to state their views straight away rather than allowing the matter to moulder in government files. A good deal of tricky negotiation between groups was needed on the clause and it was feared that amendments might be made to the text that would alter its spirit. The fears were unfounded, however, and the draft Treaty is to be forwarded to national Parliaments; in the meanwhile, it is the turn of political parties and the citizens of the Community, both men and women, to air their views.

Despite the enormous majority - 238 votes in favour and 31 against with 43 abstentions, in other words 303 of the 434 MEPs voting - the difficulties are not yet over.

Concluding his presentation, the rapporteur Altiero Spinelli said that the determining factor may be the attitude adopted by France. "We must speak to the soul of France," he said, addressing himself direct to President Mitterand; France must understand that the course of action on which we are embarking today is the only real response to the "challenge to its existence" faced by Europe.

Altiero Spinelli's worries were shown to be well founded when the French MEPs voted: although all members of the Liberal and Christian Democrat groups voted "yes", the Socialists abstained, the Communists voted "no" and the Gaullists did not take part in the ballot, with the exception of François-Marie Geronimi and Gérard Israel, who quoted General de Gaulle: "let us not insult the future, let us say yes to this plan".

The same reluctance was expressed by the Danes, except for one Liberal. Among the British MEPs, most of the Socialists voted against and 23 of the Conservatives voted in favour, their colleagues abstaining or voting against. The only Greek Communist not to vote against the measure was Mr Kyrkos; all the Socialists abstained.

Firm support was expressed by Italians of every party and by MEPs from Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands (except for Socialist Johan van Minnen). There were a few abstentions among the Germans and the Irish.

The draft treaty is now being forwarded directly by Parliament's President, Piet Dankert, to national Governments and Parliaments, explaining its scope.

Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands

Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, on an official visit to Parliament, took up the theme of European Union. Speaking during a formal session, she declared "You are right to put forward this bold plan," giving her blessing to a venture which "obliges European Governments and Parliaments to reflect".

The Queen came out firmly in favour of one of the most delicate points in the draft Treaty, the acceptance of majority decisions (as is known, the systematic insistence on votes being unanimous is one of the factors that has caused the Community's decision-making process to seize up), "although the interests of minorities should be respected".

"Political democracy was born in the 18th century," said the Queen, "social democracy in the 19th; if European democracy is to be born in the 20th century, our task must be accomplished in only 16 years."

The President of the Commission

During the February session, European Parliament also heard the Commission's 17th general report as presented by its President, Gaston Thorn. He did not try to minimize the difficulties today but said they could be overcome if a series of partially interlinked problems could be solved: reform of the common agricultural policy, reform of the institutional system (Mr Thorn expressed himself very strongly in favour of the draft European Union treaty for which Parliament had just voted) and the formulation of a true plan for the future.

However vital, budgetary and agricultural reforms will not be enough unless they are accompanied by a plan for revitalization.

In the debate that followed, MEPs as a whole were fairly pessimistic about the outcome of forthcoming European Council meetings, criticizing both the Council of Ministers and the Commission.

Female unemployment

Rising female unemployment was again a matter of concern to European Parliament. In an emergency debate, it adopted a resolution presented by Marlene Lenz on behalf of the European People's Party group. Opening the debate, she expressed her approval of the move under the French chairmanship to hold the meeting of the Council of Employment Ministers on 8th March, International Women's Day.

German Socialist Heidi Wieczorek-Zeul and Dutch Socialist Ien van den Heuvel suggested amendments removing all mention of "flexible" working hours from the text of the resolution. Unless there are checks and controls on such flexibility there is a danger of women and girls being relegated even further to an employment ghetto than today, they pointed out.

Speaking for the European Commission, Mr Tugendhat referred to what his colleague, Ivor Richard, had said about the whole issue in the debate on the position of women in the January session.

In the resolution, Parliament pointed out that rapid changes are occurring in the structure of the family in European society. It stressed the advisability of reorganizing working hours now that the concept of men's and women's roles has evolved. It hoped that, in the general debate on the issue, thought would be given to:

the promotion of programmes for young people's education and training of young people without any restrictions that handicap girls; such training should include courses leading to future-oriented careers in the service industry and technology. There should also be many more programmes designed to improve working conditions and family life.

flexibility in the organization and reduction of working time, with scope for part-time work and job-sharing if the worker so wishes, especially in certain stages of a person's career (when family obligations are at their most demanding or in the period leading up to retirement).

the promotion of female employment by introducing a shorter working day, week and/or year and a shorter working life, through the joint action of Member States; employers and unions should accept responsibility for working to achieve this aim. The cost of such measures should not be a sticking point if they are tailored to the needs of individual regions and economic sectors and to the scale of companies, and if they are designed to help launch economic revival.

A FOOTNOTE

Women in Europe

Early in February, a conference was held in Amsterdam on "Women of Europe - a Socialist way of emerging from the crisis", arranged by the Union of Socialist Parties in the European Community and the Partij van de Arbeid (the party of work, in the Dutch Socialist Party).

The Socialist women made it clear that it is in this very period of crisis that the road leading back to dependence is barred; another path is opening out to women, the path to independence and autonomy.

TOWARDS A FAMILY POLICY?

European organizations concerned with the family had a chance to air their views at a public hearing arranged by European Parliament on 22 and 23 February 1984.

The hearing was arranged by the Parliamentary Committee on Social Affairs and Employment, following a motion passed by Parliament in June 1983 in response to a suggestion by Maria Luisa Cassanmagnago Cerretti (Italian, European People's Party).

The family? "An affective, educational, cultural, social and economic unit, the user and consumer of goods and services as well as a unit in the process of change." This was the definition adopted by European Parliament last year. During the public hearing, the stress was on the process of change. The fact that in the Community an average of one marriage in three ends in divorce was mentioned several times.

There was a good deal of discussion about the relationship between the family and work and the importance of striking the right balance in the amount of time devoted to work and to family life without reinforcing the traditional division of roles between man and woman, father and mother. Part-time working was seen as a positive step towards this end, with the proviso that it should be both the man and the woman who work part time so that tasks in the home can be equally shared.

In the same way, parental leave was seen as desirable, although the period of one month was seen as "ridiculous" by several women speakers.

The inventory of problems to be solved included the decline in the building of low-rent housing, Microchip technology was not seen as a problem in itself, but since it makes it more feasible for women to work from home there is a risk of their isolation. Another point raised was the need to reassure young people, who are often afraid of entering into commitments - in this case the commitment of marriage and the even greater responsibility of a family.

Another question: how can the generation gap be bridged, the gap that is creating an educational vacuum between the over-40s and the young?

Many speakers called on governments to consult family organizations when they are taking decisions affecting families - for example, on the subject of parental leave and part-time working.

Another grave problem is the struggle against poverty. The poor in the Community number 30 million; how many of them are low-income families?

COFACE (the Confederation of Family Organizations of the European Community) wanted to see scientific research in three fields: population forecasting; genetics as a means of preventing disability; and the effects of traditional working hours on the family.

The next step is to draw up a plan of action. The procedure suggested was to invite the European Commission to draw up a programme for submission to the new European Parliament in the spring of 1985.

FACTS, INSTITUTIONS AND LAWS

BELGIUM

Boys and girls in trouble

The Committee on Women's Employment has given a firm "no" to a request from the Belgian Minister of Justice that the principle of equality for men and women in recruitment should not apply to the specific case of staff caring for junior delinquents or children at risk of becoming delinquents.

According to Jean Gold, the Justice Minister, that principle should not be applied to the letter when recruiting educational and supervisory staff for Government "establishments for observation and supervised education" since, in his view, staff responsible for the discipline or teaching of these young people must be of the same sex as those in their charge.

The Committee listened to the views of experts from the Justice Ministry, who confirmed the Minister's arguments and added that, for example, a teacher or supervisor should be protected against allegations from a young person by which he or she might be compromised. Similarly, a woman teacher might be at risk if she were unable to control the physical violence of which a group of aggressive boys aged 14 to 21 is capable.

In expressing its view on the subject, the Committee said it was aware of the delicate relationship between teaching and supervisory staff and very disturbed young people. Even so, the Committee was convinced that this is not a matter of whether the applicants are male or female but whether they have the requisite abilities and are the right people for the job.

The Committee felt, then, that the conditions and demands of the job, the nature of its duties and the risks it might entail should be clearly explained at the time of recruitment. Both men and women applicants could be made aware of any additional problems that might arise as a result of their sex, but this should not turn into a process of intimidation.

Discussing the subject of responsibility towards the children, the Committee stressed that "these young people with problems are entitled to be educated by both male and female teachers", something that "is undoubtedly of value to them in redirecting them".

The Committee concluded that there was no question of allowing the exception requested by the Justice Minister and expressed its "totally negative" opinion.

Useful address Commission du Travail des Femmes
Ministère de l'Emploi et du Travail
52-53 rue Belliard
1040 Brussels

Women's employment advisers

Mr Hansenne, the Minister for Employment, has given his general agreement to the appointment of "women's employment advisers". On an experimental basis, ten women will be appointed with special responsibility for establishing fruitful contact between jobless women, placement agencies and potential employers. They will also report on practical and psychological obstacles to the recruitment of women.

In the civil service

Commissioned by and under the auspices of the Committee on Women's Employment, a survey on "the place of women in civil service departments" is to be carried out by the national social law centre in Brussels Free University's institute of sociology, with Eliane Vogel-Polsky in charge.

Three ministries are to be covered by the survey: Justice, Communications and Employment. In the first phase, comparative statistics will be compiled on men and women at every level of the hierarchy, whatever the service rules under which the administrative staff are employed. In the second phase, these raw figures will be checked by officials in the ministries concerned (analysis of special situations, interviews, etc.). The third phase will be to find out where the "bottlenecks" are - the grades in which women are patently over- or under-represented. In the fourth part of the survey, in-depth research will be conducted to find the reasons for the disparities. The final part of the project will be devoted to devising and analyzing possible corrective measures.

Useful address Dr Vogel-Polsky
Centre National de Droit Social, Institut de Sociologie,
Université Libre de Bruxelles, Avenue Jeanne
1050 Brussels

Sexual harrassment

Women are harrassed at work in Belgium, as elsewhere, but the country has no definition of sexual violence or research on the subject.

At the suggestion of the Committee on Women's Employment, the Minister for Employment has signed two research contracts, one with Mrs Garcia and the other with Mrs Hermans in the French- and Dutch-speaking faculties of Louvain Catholic University respectively. This nationwide research should build up a picture of harrassment in the work place (both physical and emotional constraints) to evaluate the consequences; this will lead to the next stage, the proposal of remedial measures such as making people more aware of the problem, educating the public and legal remedies.

Useful addresses Dr Garcia
Groupe de Sociologie Wallonne
"Femmes, Famille et Société"
Université Catholique de Louvain
1348 Louvain-la-Neuve

Dr Hermans
Faculteit der Psychologie en Pedagogische Wetenschappen
Katholiek Universiteit Leuven
3000 Leuven

Women in Sport

Louvain Catholic University's institute of physical education has completed an interesting survey on the "factors determining the practice of sports by women" and "the practice of sports by women in Belgium".

In a chapter on physiological determining factors, the authors described the biological differences and similarities between men and women: genetic and hormonal factors and bodily and muscular differences.

Nevertheless, because of biological differences social pressures are exerted to inculcate specifically male and female roles: boys and girls are imbued with a sense of their rights, duties and behaviour patterns that model their personalities according to their sex. "The environment exerts a strong influence; if boys lag behind, it helps to reduce the gap; if girls lag behind, it helps them to accept the gap."

The authors note that "women's entry into the world of sport has many things in common with their entry into the working world". It is a man's world (or was at first), where one group - the male - dominates and the other - the female - is dominated, although here too women's protests are having some effect.

"Sport for women is vital to the social system," the report concludes, but with this warning: "sport may be a means of self-fulfilment but it is also a form of manipulation. And although women are encouraged to practise sports, one of the reasons is that it has become a necessity for a country's economic, social and political system".

Among the facts and figures cited in support of this view is: "at the Montreal Olympics, East German women were so successful that it was due to their endeavours that their country ranked second in the world. Women made up 40% of the East German team and walked off with over half of its gold and silver medals. As a comparison, women accounted for about a third of the Soviet team, 25% of the American team and roughly 20% of the British, German and French teams."

Useful address Université Catholique de Louvain
Institut d'éducation physique
1-2 Place Pierre de Coubertin
1348 Louvain-la-Neuve

Women farmers

While working for her degree in agricultural engineering, Micheline Detraux carried out a survey on the position of women farmers in the province of Liège. In the interviews she conducted as part of her research she found three different types of farmer's wife:

on the dairy farm, where her contribution is vital and she works regularly (twice a day) right through the year. All the work is done by the husband and wife, and every woman feels it is vital that there should be a complete understanding with her partner.

on the large agricultural farm, where the woman's work is not absolutely essential but is needed mainly when time would otherwise be wasted. It is her role to be available when needed. Although her workload is fairly substantial it is difficult to quantify as it is invisible and compartmentalized.

on a jointly run farm, where the woman is in a special situation. The farm is managed not just by one couple but by a group of partners. The workload is first shared out among the partners and then subdivided between each husband and wife. The wife often finds it extremely hard to find her niche. She has to make her mark both as a farmer (by conveying the concept of competence) and as a woman (a rival).

Useful address Micheline Detraux
108 Chaussée de Marche
4121 Neuville-en-Condroz

D E N M A R K

National elections

Following the national elections of 10 January 1984, the Equal Opportunities Council (Ligestillingsrådet) noted with satisfaction that the number of women elected to Danish Parliament, the Folketing, had risen from 42 to 46.

Of the 1,139 candidates standing for election, 299 were women - a record number in the country.

Under the Danish electoral system, voters may cast a preferential vote for a candidate from a list presented by the political party of his choice. The average number of preferential votes cast for women candidates was 1,519, compared with 1,337 for men.

Useful address Ligestillingsrådet
 Niels Hemmingsensgade 10
 1153 Copenhagen

Women more radical than men

In the period leading up to the January 1984 national elections, "Information", a daily newspaper, published some of the findings from a survey on the attitudes and behaviour patterns of women voters.

One of the conclusions of the survey was that "women are as a general rule are more radical in their politics, more 'lefty' than their menfolk". The researcher, Jørgen Goul Andersen reached this and other conclusions from what women said about social issues, ecology and security. He found them to be tougher opponents to any reduction in social rights, nuclear warheads and the use of nuclear energy for civil purposes.

"If the only people to have voted were men, nuclear energy would probably have been introduced in Denmark already," commented Jørgen Goul Andersen.

The survey also revealed that women's political leanings appear to depend on their status on the labour market and the nature of their jobs.

Homebound women and women working part-time tend to vote like their husbands, whereas most married women with a full-time job prefer a party further to the left than their husbands' choice, and they vote that way too.

Working life, then, appears to be more important than married life in shaping one's political ideas.

Useful address Danske Kvinders Nationalråd
 Niels Hemmingsensgade 10
 1153 Copenhagen

F R A N C E

Marriage

Last January the "Conseil Economique et Social" - economic and social council - considered a report on the consequence of the married state in terms of the legal, tax and social security systems. Presented by Evelyne Sullerot, this report, the first of its kind, reached the unhappy conclusion that legislation is incoherent and that there is a wide gap between the intentions of those who make the laws and the ways in which they are applied.

The report noted a steady decline in the number of marriages, a steep rise in the divorce rate (one marriage in three now ending in divorce) and a considerable growth in the proportion of children born out of wedlock: from 5.8% in the 1960s to 11.4% in 1980 and 14.2% in 1982. These factors have substantially added to the numbers of unmarried and divorced people (12 million 1980) and single-parent families (928,000 in 1981) as well as common law marriages.

In the section of the report dealing health and social issues, it was argued that mothers have too many prerogatives and the recommendation was made that parental authority in families where the parents are not married should be exercised by both father and mother.

The report concluded by regretting that children have rarely been the focus of concern of our society over the past few years; it expressed the belief that in the long run society may deprive young people of a sense of responsibility at the age when they should be starting up families of their own.

Women in the judiciary

In 1984, 50% of judges and 26% of investigating magistrates are women. At a time when the presiding Judge of the Court of Cassation is a woman, Simone Rozès, the rise of women in the judiciary is evidenced by the results of the competitive examination among law graduates for the Centre National d'Etudes Judiciaires, the college that leads to a career in the judiciary: out of the 232 successful candidates, 133 were girls, i.e. 57.3%.

The overall proportion of women who are leading vice presidents of chambers, leading judges and judges, as well as prosecuting and investigating magistrates, is 37%, although the percentage is as high as 43% in the Paris region. In 1984, then, justice will to a great extent be administered by women.

Equality at work

The decree enforcing the law on equality for men and women at work enacted on 13 July, which gave financial aid to promote that equality, has been published in the French official gazette, the "Journal Officiel", on 1 February 1984 (84-69). It defines the procedures for giving grants to employers introducing measures to help women close the gap.

Legion of honour

For the first time a woman has been named as member of the Council of the National Order of the Legion of Honour. Suzanne Bastid (commander of the Legion), an honorary professor of international law, has presided the United Nations administrative court since 1979. Vice president of the French Commission for UNESCO since November 1980, she was elected to the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences in 1971; in 1982 she became its president, the first woman ever to have chaired such an academy.

Marguerite Durand Library

In 1931, the city of Paris accepted a legacy of books collected by Marguerite Durand - a dedicated upholder of women's rights since 1897 - thus setting up the first official library of documentation on feminism.

The library is devoted to the women's cause, their status over the centuries, their role in society and the family, women's work and all their activities. It contains 15,000 books and booklets, the oldest dating back to the 17th century. They cover a very wide range of subjects: feminism, legislation, religion, the arts, science, social work, the lives of famous women, theses (Marie Curie's, for example), novels, poetry, drama and childrens books, as well as many periodicals and 3,600 files classified by subject or person.

Useful address Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand
 21, place du Panthéon
 75005 Paris

Women and politics

The association called "Dialogue des villes de France", chaired by Monique Pelletier, has pointed out that since March 1953 there have been 72,131 women elected officials in the French municipal councils. It had carried out a survey of all towns with a population of over 10,000, except Paris, Lyons and Marseilles, to find out about women assistant mayors and the areas of special responsibility assigned to them.

Out of 3,682 assistant mayors, 650 (19.5%) are women. A typical woman assistant mayor is 45 and is concerned with social affairs, education or culture.

Monique Pelletier says there is now a "woman's vote" and that women have earned political credibility. She feels they have a clear contribution to make by bringing a wind of change into local politics. She would like to see them involved in every single election in the future, ranging from the European elections this summer, local elections in 1985 and national elections in 1986.

Voting patterns

A review of the factors determining which way people vote, conducted as part of research on voting, has shed light on the complexity of the four structures most commonly used when analyzing voting patterns: age, sex, religion and socio-occupational classification.

It seems that the sex of the voter is less and less of a determining factor, with the borderlines between men and women voters becoming blurred. Janine Mossuz-Lavau, speaking at the second congress of the French Association of Political Science, pointed out that women no longer abstain from voting any more than do men, that they are just as conscientious as men about seeing that their names are on the electoral registers and that they are no longer more conservative than men.

Equality

Yvette Roudy, Minister for Women's Rights, has presented the 1984 plan of action for equality. Its focal points are employment and vocational training, education and guidance and civic equality.

The most symbolic reform is the one on which the Ministry of Justice is now working: it is to eliminate any form of discrimination between men and women that still exists in the Civil Code.

Portrait of the Frenchwoman

Three major surveys have been conducted in France for Paris-Match, Figaro and Magazine-Hebdo, painting a picture of the status of Frenchwomen in the 20th century.

The Frenchwoman of 1984 is apparently both feminist and traditional (according to Sofres, one of the research bodies), convinced that working is essential to her happiness (59%) and independence (50%). The condition of women in France still poses many problems, according to 65% of women and 60% of men.

Although it is very common for women to work, the French believe (according to the second of the research bodies, B.V.A.) that a woman is more successful in life if she devotes herself to her home and children (60%) rather than a career (24%). The pattern among the under-25s differs, however, with a roughly equal proportion in favour of each alternative. It should be noted that three quarters of the people who completed their education at the primary level, half of those with secondary education and one third of people with a university education see family life as the gauge of a woman's success

According to 60% of women (and 56% of men), there should be more part-time jobs to improve their lives; 90% of women believe that being a mother is just as vital as working. They list the factors determining success in their lives in order as being children (52%), marriage (46%) and work (33%).

The reason why Frenchwomen have or would like to have a job is not the desire for success of any kind (20%) or equality with men (15%). Among the improvements to their status, most commonly cited are an increase in the number of day nurseries.

Of the 11 women who deserve the title of "woman of the century", first comes Edith Piaf (39%), followed by Marie Curie (34%).

The revolution in women's looks, in the view of 39% of respondents, came when they stopped wearing corsets. Two out of three Frenchwomen (72%) think fashion and make-up unimportant but attach considerable importance to the figure; 42% of the women said they engaged in sport. The household appliance that has most changed their everyday lives is the washing machine (72%). The event that has most changed their lives? The pill, according to 34%. The development of contraception, in the opinion of 81% of women, has improved women's lives a good deal (these views being held by 14% and 72% of men respectively), as has abortion (49%). They are more conscious of noise-generated pollution (or pollution by waste) than of nuclear risks. They are very willing to economize on energy.

Two out of three women feel that access to positions of responsibility within companies would not change anything, but 74% of women would like to see more elected representatives. They would like to acquire responsibility and authority.

Employment in associations

In Seine-et-Marne, a survey on its 6,040 jobs in health and social services has shown that 70.8% are done by women. Except for sport, where the proportions are reversed, one third of the jobs are done by men and two thirds by women. This imbalance, which is even more marked in the field of health and care ($\frac{1}{4}$ men and $\frac{3}{4}$ women) is total in the field of social support services, 98.9% of whose workers are women.

Adding this to the number of people employed as home helps, the proportion of female service staff in Seine-et-Marne associations is estimated at about 30%.

G E R M A N Y

National service for women

According to a survey conducted by the Allensbach institute for population research whose findings were published in January 1984, 75% of adult German women are against military service for women and 15% in favour. Although women are recruited to the ranks of a few armies (in Israel and the US, for example) most Germans disapprove of the idea of a woman with a gun.

Should national service be compulsory for both women and men? When the question was put to a German public in 1979, 16% were in favour. In the meantime, more and more women seem to be coming round to the opinion that, at a time when we are well on the way towards equal rights, national service obligations should be shared too.

In the eyes of the German defence ministry, the question will arise in practical terms at the end of the century. With the decline in population growth over the past few years, there will be a 30% drop in the number of young men of national service age.

Useful address Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach
Allensbacher Berichte
7753 Allensbach am Bodensee

Hamburg

The committee for women's equality - Leitstelle Gleichstellung der Frauen - has announced the introduction of a directive on the advancement of women civil servants in the Hanseatic city of Hamburg on 1 January 1984.

A survey on equal opportunities for men and women in the Hamburg civil service conducted by the Gewos Institute in 1980 showed a considerable increase in the number of women in public service, although it pointed out that they rarely held the higher positions and that in their working lives they were hampered by stereotyped ideas of the roles of men and women.

The new directive will help to counteract this trend and to give women working in the Hamburg civil service more security, especially as it contains practical measures relating to their earnings.

Useful address Leitstelle Gleichstellung der Frauen
Postfach 10 55 20
2000 Hamburg 1

Girls and the baccalaureate

More girls than ever have been passing the baccalaureate: 39% in 1975 and 44.8% in 1983. Unfortunately, fewer girls than boys want to go on to higher education: only 53.4%, compared with 69.9% of boys.

Useful address Bundesministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft
Postfach, Heinemannstrasse 253
53 Bonn 1

North Rheinland- Westphalia

In its report on women, the Ministry for employment, health and social affairs in North Rheinland-Westphalia focusses on prejudice and discrimination against women and warns against the factors that militate against any improvement in women's position at a time of grave economic crisis and unemployment, with the risk that women are being made to return to "their own homes".

There is an increasing desire among women to reconcile work and family. With the benefit of better job training, women see employment as vital, not just because of the income it contributes to the household but also because it entitles them to a pension, gives them financial independence, provides outside contact and boosts their self-confidence. There is still, however, a good deal of prejudice against employing mothers with young children in Germany, just as there is in Scandinavia, France and the US.

The essential aims, as part of efforts to further the right to work and equal rights to training and jobs, must be access for women to training and employment at all occupational levels and equal opportunities for promotion and higher earnings. There is a need to change the conditions of working life so that the mother and father can strike a better balance between the demands of work and the family. This implies shorter working hours and the introduction of parental leave for both parents, as well as greater flexibility in the opening hours of day care nurseries.

If the roles traditionally assigned to men and women were to be redistributed, men would be able to take over more of the domestic and family tasks. This change in mentality should begin in the school. In the meanwhile, women have already become more aware; progress depends not just on the attitudes adopted by men and women but also on the economic context which will make change possible.

The Ministry has also published a report on the skilled vocational training of young women for industrial and technical callings, entitled "Mädchensache" (girls' problems). The publication describes the job problems faced by women and looks for the causes; it suggests a few solutions that will promote policy on equal opportunities.

Useful address Ministerium für Arbeit, Gesundheit und Soziales
 des Landes NW
 Frauenbericht - Leitstelle Frauenpolitik
 Postfach 11 34
 4000 Düsseldorf 1

Battered wives

Mr Geissler, Minister for the Family, has expressed his respect for women working in hostels for battered wives. At a press conference, he deplored the difficulties in finding accommodation and promised financial help to the hostels. He also hoped to draw up recommendations to local authorities financing the 120 or so hostels that already exist in West Germany, although he could not promise concrete help from the Government.

Useful address Bundesministerium für Familie, Jugend, Gesundheit
 Pressestelle
 Kennedyallee
 53 Bonn 2

Commitment among women

Women must not be bound by party considerations but should express their solidarity and ideological commitment if they are to advance the women's cause, argues Annemarie Schuster, Secretary of State in Schleswig-Holstein. She has criticized the lack of information for women in the political field and has called for greater interest in the issue among women.

Speaking of the role of women in society, the recently appointed Minister of Social Affairs, Countess Brockdorf, stresses the need for women to do unpaid work in this period of economic crisis, although she calls on all young women to train for a career.

Useful address Sozialministerium
 Brunswikerstrasse 16-22
 23 Kiel 1

Women's unemployment

There has been a steady rise in female unemployment over the past decade. The Social Democrat group in the Bundestag has put a written question to the Government calling for an explanation and Government measures to solve the problem. According to the group, there are special features of female unemployment. The proportion of women in employment by comparison with the total female population stood at 44.3% in 1950, but today it has risen only to 50.6% (of women between 15 and 65); 46.8% of married women work. The traditional segregation in female employment continues: 57% of women work in offices, insurance companies, banks, cleaning firms and hospitals, and 50% of young women are employed in 7 occupations, including those of hairdressers, nurses, secretaries and social workers.

Useful address SPD-Fraktion
 Bundeshaus
 53 Bonn 1

Elderly women

Out of a population of 61.7 million in Germany, there are about 12 million over-60s; of this 19%, 7.6 million are women.

The Social-Democrat group in the Bundestag in Bonn has been looking into the position of older women, for whom 1983 was a dramatic year in economic and social terms. The average income of blue collar women workers in that year was 424 DM, that of women office workers 768 DM, their earnings amounting to only 30% to 50% of men's.

Even though women have helped to rebuild Germany after the second world war, they are now the group treated with least regard by the politicians. They are poor and isolated, but they would still like to play a full part in social and political life and to fight for their rights.

Herta Däublier-Gmelin, chairman of the committee for women's equality, has given assurances that the political group of which she is a member (SPD) would be embarking on legislative action to improve the lot of elderly women.

Useful address SPD-Bundestagsfraktion
 Bundeshaus
 53 Bonn 1

Women and public opinion

The Allensbach Institute has published a survey on the role of women in society, commissioned by Mr Schlee, Minister of Employment and Social Affairs in Baden-Württemberg. Its findings are that:

- most women would like to have a job as well as a family as it broadens their social contacts and gives them financial independence;
- families are in favour of the mother having a paid job;
- children complain of poor relationships with their fathers;
- women deplore the fact that domestic chores are not shared;
- women are very interested in returning to the working world.

Several projects designed to improve women's position, such as "Start mit 35" ("start at 35"), have been set up at the Minister's request.

appointments

Eva-Maria Lemke, a member of the Bremen Regional Parliament, has been appointed Minister of the Environment to replace the elected candidate, Hede Lütje, who died at the age of 45 before she had even taken up office.

Heide M. Pfarr, professor of law in Hambourg, has become the vice president of the University of Hambourg. She is well known for her work on women's equality and the right to work.

Melitta Walter, a teacher, has been elected president of Pro Familia, the first woman to hold this position. She aims to make sex education and family planning information more generally accessible through the work of Pro Familia.

Court judgement

A pregnant salesgirl was receiving less in commission because her employer felt that customers preferred to be served by non-pregnant saleswomen. The industrial tribunal, however, ruled that pregnancy did not affect a shop's turnover and upheld the plaintiff's claim that she should be entitled to the same commission as her colleagues.

Statistics

In Berlin, 9 of its 478 Protestant pastors are women; in Germany as a whole, 8% of pastors were women in 1983, compared with 2% in 1964.

In the majority

In West Germany, women outnumber men by 270,000, with 32.2 million women in its population of 61.7 million.

G R E E C E

Act on Equality in Labour Relations

An Act on equality at work was approved by Greek Parliament on 12 January 1984 and came into effect on 2 January (1414/84).

This approval is a positive and important step towards eliminating discrimination at work on the grounds of sex.

The law abolishes certain restrictions on women's access to "heavy or dangerous" jobs, gives women the right to family allowances and other benefits and sets up administrative machinery at various levels to ensure that the law is properly applied.

As mentioned (in "Women of Europe", n° 33), the scope of the statute is restricted to people with a contract of employment under private law and the liberal professions. It does not cover the civil service, a limitation that generated a good deal of criticism in debates both inside and outside Parliament. Other points that were raised by the media and in public discussions arranged by women's associations, in which union representatives and experts in labour law were represented, related to certain clauses of the new legislation. Its provisions on earnings were seen as too vague; its definition of the term "family allowances" (a percentage of wages or salaries paid by the employer) was thought to be over-restrictive; it was criticized for lowering the minimum age at which girls are allowed to undertake hazardous jobs to 16 rather than raising the minimum age for boys to 18; and it was pointed out that adequate provision had not been made for the dissemination of information to the work force on its rights.

These points were also raised at a discussion between the Ministry for Employment and representatives of women's organizations, the unions and several political parties, broadcast live over the national TV network. It seemed that the Government was prepared to accept certain changes, but in the event the law went through without any major amendments.

Three more women prefects

The Greek Government has recently been making significant changes to its appointments of prefects, in consideration of their record during the first 18 months of their term of office.

In most cases, the changes consisted of "shifting" prefects from one prefecture to another, swapping their areas of jurisdiction or the transfer or appointment of prefects to other posts in central Government.

Not one of the six women prefects in office since March 1982 has been replaced or transferred in this process, and three more women have now been sworn in as prefects to take over from men, bringing the total up to eight. This is an indirect but eloquent sign that the first women prefects have met the challenge successfully, thus opening up the path for others.

The Media

Many non-governmental organizations working on behalf of women have complained of the image of women conveyed by programmes and particularly the advertising on radio and television programmes as well as the absence of specific programmes on women's rights.

For example, two locally produced women's programmes, "Genithika Gyneka" ("born a woman") and "Gynekia Portreta" (women's portraits), showing the true problems and experiences of contemporary women, were taken off the air a year ago and replaced by a weekly programme called "Polyplevro" ("multi-sided"), designed to convey a less feminist and more "balanced" view of current social issues. The programme was not as popular as its two predecessors and was soon dropped.

Representatives of several women's organizations visited the radio and television authorities to discuss the situation. There was vague talk on the part of officials of remedying the situation and including such programmes in their schedules for the future, but so far no practical action has been taken.

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS - JUNE 1984

We had hoped to report on the activities of women preparing for the European elections in June 1984 in each issue. The intervals at which "Women of Europe" is published, however, and the time it takes to produce and translate the publication mean that we cannot give such comprehensive, timely information as we would like. We also feel that the press provides better coverage of the run-up to the elections than on the previous occasion.

It is only reasonable, then, to acknowledge the limitations imposed by our resources and make our apologies - which we now do.

United Nations Conference on the Decade for Women

The 1985 world conference that is to consider and evaluate the results of the United Nations decade for women, whose aims have been to promote equality, development and peace, will:

- set up an international tribunal to review how the aims and objectives of the Decade have been achieved;
- formulate future-oriented strategies for the advancement of women between now and the year 2000.

Leticia Shani has been appointed Secretary General of the world conference. Other activities are being arranged for non-Governmental organizations and the women concerned. (Useful address: Ms Virginia Hazzard, 777 United Nations Plaza, 11th floor, New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.)

Promotion Thèrèse Gastaut has been appointed head of the U.N. information service in Geneva. Of French nationality, she has headed the U.N. Bureau in Brussels since August 1974. Our congratulations to Mrs Gastaut, who took up office in Geneva late in January 1984.

I R E L A N D

Succession rights tested

The Irish Supreme Court has ruled that a person born out of wedlock has no succession rights. This is the situation which Nuala Fennell, the Women's Affairs Minister, proposed to rectify with a new bill that will give children of married and unmarried parents equal rights, among these the right of illegitimate offspring to a share of their fathers' estates.

The Supreme Court ruling highlights the inequity in the present law. Both Government parties and the Fianna Fail opposition are in favour of change.

Where are the top women?

There are no more women in top jobs or trade union posts than there were seven years ago. Creche facilities are still virtually non-existent and many pension schemes still discriminate against women. This is the sorry picture in Ireland, according to a survey by the Irish Conference of Professional and Service Associations.

The study of 45,000 white-collar workers (about half of them women) covered recruitment, promotion, training, maternity, temporary and part-time work, pensions and trade unions. Ninety two per cent of the women were rated as being in the four lowest work grades, with only 8% in top administration and management levels compared with 25% of men.

Useful address Irish Conference of Professional and Service Associations
 93 St. Stephen's Green
 Dublin 2

Labour opposes abortion

Socialist politician Brendan Halligan was the only Irish MEP to vote in favour of an amendment to the recent report on women calling for harmonization of Europe's abortion laws. Back home in Ireland there were complaints, a threat of censure and proposals to expel him from the Labour Party, which opposes abortion. In the event, these were dropped in favour of a statement by the leader of the Labour Party, Dick Spring - the deputy prime minister - reiterating the party's position on the issue.

Alcoholism in pregnancy

Foetal alcohol syndrome, which affects babies born to heavy drinking women, is occurring more frequently in Ireland. A large Dublin maternity hospital, the Coombe, reckons that 23 cases have come to light in the past four years and that the true figure may be higher.

In the United States, about one third of all birth defects and mental retardation is thought to be related to maternal alcoholism, and the Surgeon General there has recently advised pregnant women not to drink at all. In Ireland, the Health Education Bureau gives the same advice. "There is no agreement on minimum safe levels, so it is best not to take chances," it says.

Useful address The Health Education Bureau
 7 Ely Place
 Dublin 2

I T A L Y

How much is domestic work worth?

Work in the home accounts for about a third of the gross national product. Having regard to the contribution made by about 13 million housewives, Christian Democrats have tabled a bill in both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate that gives recognition to the social value of domestic work.

Domestic chores are repetitious and not very rewarding, pointed out Maria Pia Garavaglia, Tina Anselmi, Anna Nenna d'Antonio and Anna Maria Nucci Mauro in the Lower House, and Gabriella Ceccatelli, Sandra Codazzi and Rosa Russo Jervolino in the Senate. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that such work by women furthers the wellbeing, quality of life and harmonious development of their families and society as a whole.

Section 4 of the bill suggests a fund in each region "to encourage the setting up and running of housewives' cooperatives", which might be for the purpose of production or social solidarity cooperative groups.

Useful addresses: Gruppo parlamentare D.C. Gruppo parlamentare D.C.
Senato della Repubblica Camera dei Deputati
Rome Rome

Equal opportunities

A "national committee for equal opportunities for men and women workers" has been formed by the Italian Ministry of Labour.

The Ministries concerned, political parties, unions and women's groups will be represented on the "Comitato Nazionale per le pari opportunità tra lavoratori e lavoratrici", as well as several women appointed for their experience and expertise in the field, including Tiziana Treu, Renata Livraghi, Bianca Beccali and Maria Vittoria Ballestrero.

Families in a process of change

Many bills have been tabled by men and women Socialist senators in the light of changing trends in the Italian family. On the subject of the family name, for example, the proposal has been made that husband and wife should, at the time of marriage, notify the registrar which of their surnames they wish to use for the family unit they are founding, and this name would then be transmitted to any children of the marriage.

Another bill, this time on family businesses, suggests that a de facto situation should be recognized in law: the rights associated with the ownership of a family business would be extended to the husband or wife.

On the recognition of natural children, Socialist Senators have called for an end to the system whereby minors under the age of 16 may not acknowledge their own children.

Useful address Gruppo parlamentare Partito Socialista Italiano
Senato della Repubblica
Rome

Railways

Out of the 19,223 people employed by the Italian State Railways 873 are women, according to figures recently published by the Ferrovie dello Stato. These include 5 women among the 362 stationmasters in leading stations, 15 of the 513 stationmasters in small stations, 139 among the 775 assistant stationmasters and only 9 of 607 guards.

The Railways provided further details: 66 of the 918 travelling ticket inspectors are women, as are 70 of the 1,510 blue collar railway workers. Finally, there is only one woman in the group of 2,203 train drivers. Not one crew member of the small number of ferries owned by Italian Railways is a woman.

Banking

Commissioned by the Federazione Autonoma Bancari Italiani (autonomous federation of Italian bankers), Bologna University's department of sociology has conducted a survey on women in Italian banks. This is part of a broader campaign for the active dissemination of information on which the European Commission has embarked (see p. 6).

According to figures that date back to 1977 but are still significant, women are far less well represented in Italian banks and credit institutions than the Community average (24% and 46% respectively). This proportion has declined even further: at the close of 1982, only 60,000 of banking staff of 310,000 were women.

Women working in banks tend to be young, 82% of them being under 35. They also have a good standard of education: 67% have a certificate of lower secondary education, 10% have completed their secondary education and 13% have a diploma of further training.

As in the rest of the Community, women feel that they are heavily discriminated against in Italian banks. For example, 60% of women are relegated to subordinate jobs and 40% are in a low grade. There are very few women in management or among senior executives.

The strongest motivation for joining a bank seems to be financial independence (80), with only 18% of the women interviewed saying that their main reason was to add to their family's small income.

The rigid way in which banking is organized was the reason why women wanted to see greater flexibility in working hours, with 84% of the women interviewees in favour of "flexitime".

Career prospects? Forty seven per cent of the women staff had never been promoted, 35% said they had gone up the "routine steps of the ladder" and only 18% said they had made a career for themselves through their own merits. They saw two reasons for the discrimination of which they felt themselves to be the victims: male prejudice and their family situation, in that order. Their job satisfaction rate was only 52%, far lower than the average found among women staff in other branches of the service sector.

Useful address Federazione Autonoma Bancari Italiani
 Via Piave, 2
 21100 Varese

L U X E M B O U R G

Discrimination

In a parliamentary question to the Minister for the National Economy, Luxembourg MP Erna Hennicot-Schoepges quoted from a comparative survey on equal pay at European level and asked for more detailed explanations of the blatant discrepancies between the earnings of men and women in the country.

According to the survey, the gross pay packet taken home by Luxembourg women is 39.7% smaller than that of their male counterparts. The Grand Duchy comes at the bottom of the list of the ten European Community Member States in this respect: the gap is 26.8% in Germany, 27.4% in Belgium, 22.3% in France and 13.3% in Italy.

Unmarried mothers

Luxembourg Parliament has brought in a new law providing for financial help to young couples at the time of the birth of a child.

From now on, loans under agreements freely entered into by the borrower and a financial institution will be granted on the basis of the amount of savings they have accumulated, although it may not exceed 300,000 Belgian francs. The rate of interest is to be laid down by a regulation. The loan must be used to finance the cost of setting up a home, but not to pay for the home itself.

This new system of loans is designed for the under-30s, but unmarried mothers or fathers or common law marriages are excluded.

Another clause stating that the concessionary credit is available only to couples who have waited a certain time before having children has aroused opposition from the Socialists, who see this form of State intervention in family planning as morally reprehensible and totally ineffective as an incentive.

For a majority of the Christian Liberals, family policy is above all an ideological issue.

The parliamentary debate took place in a highly charged political atmosphere; the Minister for the Family wound up the debate by deploring "those who place themselves outside society by refusing to marry but expect the Government to support their attitude".

The Minister concluded: "unmarried people who co-habit must not think they can behave as if they were living in the virgin forest".

At the end of the debate, the bill was passed by 40 votes, with 12 abstentions.

N E T H E R L A N D S

A guide to grants

The Ministry for Employment and Social Affairs has brought out a free guide on how to obtain grants from the authorities for any project or work associated with emancipation policy.

Useful address Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid
 Postbus 20801
 The Hague

Taking liberties

At the request of Mrs Kappeyne van de Coppello, Secretary of State for Emancipation Policy, a working group on women's employment from Groningen University is to conduct a survey on the problem of undue familiarity in the workplace, the aim being to prevent and counteract sexual harassment at work.

Earnings

In 1990, every adult should be able to provide for his or her own needs through paid employment. Secretary of State Kappeyne van de Coppello does not believe in a salary for housewives or househusbands or for the unemployed; she recommends cutting the working week to 32 hours instead. If there is not enough paid employment, both men and women will be entitled to social security benefits. The aim of this proposal is to end all disparities between men and women, based on the idea that the heterosexual relationship is not the pillar of society.

Her report also deals with sexual violence, health and education, and takes a special look at the problem of women immigrants.

Useful address Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid
 Zeestraat 73
 The Hague

Social security

At a congress of the Christian Democrat Party at Breda, the prime minister, Mr Lubbers, declared his Government's acceptance of the principle of equality for men and women in matters of social security. Nevertheless, in view of the financial difficulties at the present time, he felt that individual claims should be moderated. Finance Minister Ruding recently expressed his own doubts as to whether equal rights in social security could be achieved, in view of the cost it would entail.

A chair in feminism and Christianity

The theological faculty in Nijmegen has created a chair unique in Europe: "feminism and Christianity", the first holder of which will be Catharina Halkes. Students will be able to take an examination and present their thesis on the subject of feminist theology.

Divorce

The Dutch Family Council - Nederlandse Gezinsraad - has proposed that advisory and guidance bureaux be set up to which all those applying for divorce would be directed. They would draw up files to be forwarded to the court as an aid in reaching its decision.

The Council believes that this would avoid the situation in which the better off partner goes to a lawyer, to the detriment of the other partner who is unable to afford a lawyer's services.

Mathematics

Fewer girls than boys choose to study mathematics, a situation that will not change unless mathematics is taught in such a way as to bring the subject closer to the reality of pupils' lives.

This is the conclusion of a survey conducted by the University of Amsterdam for its "science shop" (wetenschapswinkel).

Useful address Universiteit van Amsterdam
 Wetenschapswinkel
 Spuistraat 210
 1000 GD Amsterdam

Equal pay

Fewer and fewer women are using the law to enforce their right to equal pay out of fear of dismissal, notes the Committee for Equal Treatment - Commissie Gelijke Behandeling - in its recent annual report.

In 1982, there were only 18 requests for consultation on the subject, compared with 32 in 1981. The trend is becoming more marked now that equal treatment for men and women is viewed as a luxury in the current economic situation rather than a vital need.

The Ministry for Social Affairs and Employment hopes that the bill on compensation to be tabled in Parliament in the spring will help organizations and works councils to take action if the law on equality is infringed.

Justice

Dutch judges take a tougher line with men than with women and more often send unmarried people to prison than the married: these are two of the conclusions reached by Gerda Breembroek in her thesis for the university of Groningen entitled "sex and penalties". She has studied the criminal records of 781 women and 697 men and has noted that women are more likely to receive a fine than men who have committed comparable offences and less likely to be given an unsuspended prison sentence.

UNITED KINGDOM

"Womanpower"

The Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland has released a report on the impact of recession on female unemployment and earnings in Northern Ireland, by Janet Trewsdale and Mary Trainor. According to the authors, women's average hourly earnings are still lower than men's. In 1981, they were approximately 76% of men's average hourly earnings in Northern Ireland, but this figure dropped to 72.7% in 1982. In 1981, over 43% of women in Northern Ireland were working or looking for work. Between 1979 and 1981 the proportion of women looking for work has increased at the expense of those in work, with a 11,200 decline in the number of women in employment.

Among those women who are not working or seeking work, there has been a huge increase in the number of married women who classify themselves as "retired" regardless of their age. The authors comment that the partial explanation may be the growing scarcity of jobs in the Province as the recession deepens. However, married women continue to make up 60% of the female work force there.

Over one third of working women are employed part-time, compared to 2% of men. Nearly three quarters of these women are in the 25-55 age group and about half are aged between 25 and 45. The vast majority of female part-time workers are married (84%), and the proportion of women working part time increases with the number of their dependent children.

In October 1982, the Government introduced a new method of measuring the unemployed in the United Kingdom, the effect of which was to exacerbate a system that already seriously under-recorded the extent of female unemployment in the province. Two groups of women will now disappear from unemployment statistics: women who have not paid the full national insurance stamp and married women who have claimed unemployment benefit for the maximum of 12 months and who, because they are living with their husbands, are not entitled to supplementary benefit. The true rate of female unemployment, calculate the authors, is 18%, not the official rate of 12.6%.

Useful address Womanpower N° 3
 Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland
 Chamber of Commerce House
 22 Great Victoria Street
 Belfast BT2 7BA

Equal pay

In the United Kingdom, amendments to the equal pay legislation came into effect on 1 January 1984. Following a ruling by the European Court of Justice in July 1982, women are able to claim equal pay for work of equal value in line with the 1975 Community directive.

The new legislation has, however, been criticized by women's organizations and the Equal Opportunities Commission for allowing "market forces" to influence decisions on "equal value".

Meanwhile, a private member's sex equality bill presented by Jo Richardson, Labour spokeswoman on women's rights, designed to plug loopholes in the present sex discrimination law, failed to pass the House of Commons last December.

Computers

Girls should learn about information technology and not leave it to the boys: this is the message sent by the Equal Opportunities Commission to over 5,000 girls' and mixed secondary schools in the U.K. together with a pack containing books, leaflets and a poster to be used by teachers to encourage more girls to learn about computers and acquire the confidence they need to have an equal chance in the industrial revolution.

A unique college

Denman College near Abingdon in Oxfordshire is a National Federation of Women's Institutes college of higher education that is unique in its field.

Dating back to 1803, the building can accommodate 74 students. About 4,700 members of the Federation and 2,000 students go there each year to attend one or more of a range of 200 courses for every taste and interest.

The courses take place from Mondays to midday on Fridays and from Friday evenings to Sundays. In January, a weekend course was devoted to politics in Europe, and 25 national representatives met to discuss the value and importance of the June European elections. Kay Young, representative of the Federation on COFACE, chaired the course, whose main aim was to encourage local members to take an active part in the forthcoming elections.

She stressed that Women's Institutes are always interested in the consumer, the family and social affairs as they are of particular concern to women, and that they acknowledge the influence of the Community on national legislation.

Useful address Denman College
 National Federation of Women's Institutes
 Marcham
 Abingdon, Oxfordshire

Greater London Council

The Women's Committee of the Greater London Council is continuing its policy of giving financial help to struggling women's groups.

In February 1983, the Family Welfare Association received a grant towards a project to help those, mainly women and often isolated, who have to care for elderly parents at home.

Matrix, a feminist architectural collective based in Hackney, London, also received a grant towards administration costs. It works mainly with women's groups, offering a full range of architectural services by helping to search for appropriate buildings for its clients, supervising work and encouraging the involvement of women builders.

Useful address Jennifer Simon, Press Officer
 Greater London Council, County Hall
 London SE1 7PB

Homelessness among women

Homelessness among single women is a growing problem in the U.K. The Women's National Commission, which comprises 50 women's organizations in Britain and acts as an advisory committee to the Government, has investigated their plight and has found that hostel beds for homeless single women are little more than one tenth of those for men, while women who are mentally ill often have to live in totally unsuitable conditions.

Women are also "hidden homeless" because, in desperation, they may resort to sleeping with casual sexual partners to obtain a roof over their heads or stay in violent homes because they have no acceptable alternative.

The WNC believes that women's homelessness could be tackled faster and more effectively than men's because women take better care of their surroundings and respond well to a liberal, flexible regime. Meanwhile, it is calling on the Government to undertake an in-depth enquiry into problems facing homeless women with a view to overhauling the whole system.

Among other activities of the WNC, reported in its 1983 bulletin, was a decision to seek membership of the Community Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in order to work alongside the Equal Opportunities Commission on issues which both organizations see as of great importance.

Useful address Women's National Commission
 Government Offices, Great George Street
 London SW1P 3AQ

Wanted: more women engineers

In the United Kingdom, women account for only 1% of qualified engineers compared with 10% in the U.S. WISE '84 - standing for "Women into Science and Engineering" - is helping to change this state of affairs by a promotion drive, sponsored by the Engineering Council and the Equal Opportunities Commission, to encourage girls to become engineers.

Among the women working in engineering in general, 94% have unskilled or clerical jobs or work as machine operators. At a press conference, Sir Kenneth Corfield, chairman of the Engineering Council, and Baroness Platt of Writtle, Chairman of the Equal Opportunities Commission, stressed the importance of women's involvement in science, industry and technology. "Industry will be greatly helped," said Sir Kenneth, "if we acknowledge and encourage the intelligence which girls and women can bring to engineering"; it is a vast pool of talent and ability that the country is failing to tap.

This conversion has to start in the schools and industry. Only 8.6% of engineering graduates from universities and 3.2% from polytechnics are women. Now 200 major engineering companies have been invited to take part in the WISE campaign in conjunction with local authorities, schools and colleges, in a series of projects throughout 1984.

Useful addresses The Engineering Council Equal Opportunities Commission
 10-16 Maltravers Street Overseas House, Quay Street
 London WC2R 3ER Manchester M3 3HN

M I L I T A N T A C T I V I T I E S

I N T E R N A T I O N A L
O R G A N I Z A T I O N S

A twentieth anniversary

The International Association of Women's and Home Page Journalists is celebrating its 20th birthday this year.

The association, whose members work not only in the press but also in radio and television in many countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Canada, Hungary, Israel and Ghana), is recognized as a non-governmental organization by UNESCO.

In May of this celebration year, its 11th Congress is to be held in Tel Aviv, under the auspices of the National Federation of Israeli Journalists. Its theme is to be "the press, health and wellbeing".

Useful address A.I.J.P.F.
 Boulevard Charlemagne 1, boîte 54
 1040 Brussels

Liberal women

A "European section" of the Association of Liberal Women has been set up under the chairmanship of Irène Heirens.

The association is open to women of all schools of thought and nationalities. Its members do not have to belong to a political party.

The aims of the association are to study political, economic and social problems, both European and international, and to propagate liberal ideas.

Useful address Association des Femmes Libérales
 Section européenne, Boulevard Clovis 25
 1040 Brussels

European university women

Disregard the address given in "Women of Europe" n° 32! This is the right address to contact the "University Women of Europe":

c/o Jans Gremèe
Waalsdorperweg 71
2597 HR The Hague, Netherlands

Marianela Garcia Villas. An Italian MP, Ettore Masina, has proposed that the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize be awarded posthumously to Marianela Garcia Villas, chairman of the Committee for Human Rights in Salvador (see "Women of Europe" n° 32). Written support for the proposal should be forwarded to Pax Christi, 3 rue Argand, 1201 Geneva 1.

B E L G I U M

A great Belgian writer

To mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of Marie Gevers, the first Belgian woman writer to be elected to the Royal Academy of French Language and Literature, where her only women predecessors had been Colette and Anna de Noailles, an exhibition has been held at the Brussels Palais des Beaux-Arts.

Agriculture

The "Unions professionnelles agricoles féminines" - U.P.A.F., or women's agricultural vocational unions - have elected their new national president, Marie-Jeanne De Keyser. She officially takes over from Cécile Stassart in her new office on 16 February.

Women offer a helping hand

In the autumn of 1983, the Belgian Federation of university women intervened on behalf of Rita Ibarburu, a Uruguayan patriot, who had been sentenced by her government to 8 years' imprisonment ending in October 1983.

It is well known that the regime in Uruguay often fails to release prisoners who have come to the end of a prison sentence, and for this reason the Federation wrote a letter on the subject to the Belgian Minister for Foreign Relations, Léo Tindemans.

Rita Ibarburu was released. And Léo Tindemans has now told the Federation that in a month or two she may come and settle in Belgium.

Useful address Fédération belge des femmes diplômées des universités
29, rue Blanche
1050 Brussels

A working lunch

In January, following the 10th anniversary of the Nationale Vrouwenraad (national women's council in Flanders), the King and Queen of Belgium invited a delegation from the council to a working lunch at their chateau in Laeken, where the fellow guests were Premier Wilfried Martins, Vice Premier Jean Gol, Social Affairs Minister J.L. Dehaene and Education Minister D. Coens. The subjects discussed over lunch were women's participation in power, the application of the three EEC directives on equality, the U.N. conventions on women's nationality and the elimination of discrimination against women and equal access to education and vocational training.

Useful address Nationale Vrouwenraad
Middaglijn 8
1030 Brussels

Battered women

In March 1983, the "battered women's collective" in Liège reopened a hostel to accommodate women victims of mental or physical violence from husbands or partners.

This hostel, where they find practical help, is managed through the efforts of militants, both paid and unpaid. The collective is publicizing its work by special events and discussions where a video or film made by a Berlin hostel is shown. Its title: "women's patience is men's strength".

Useful address A.S.B.L. Collectif "Femmes Battues"
 9, rue Soeurs de Hasque
 4000 Liège

Adult education by and for women

The activities arranged by the "Centre féminin d'éducation permanente" - the women's adult education centre - in January to March 1984 have included meetings of the group on "the new dynamics of the women's movement" to discuss the subject of "weakness and power", and a course on "introducing information technology".

Useful address C.F.E.P.
 Place Quételet 1A
 1030 Brussels

"Woman of the Year"

For the second time, the Belgian women's national council invited journalists to award the "woman of the year" prize to a woman or group of women "who, in Belgium, has made the greatest contribution towards the advancement of women or their integration at the political, economic or social level".

Béatrice Fraiteur of "Médecins sans frontières" - "doctors without frontiers" - has been voted the prize this year. She is 27 years old and is now working in Afghanistan. The four runners-up, Marie-Ange Leroy, Francine Meert, Sulamite Peretz and Marcelle Houbeau, are involved in a broad range of valuable, courageous and generous activities.

Useful address Conseil national des femmes belges
 Place Quételet, 1a
 1030 Brussels

Women honoured

In December 1983, the Avon Prize - created 5 years ago - was awarded to three graduates: Adèle Hauwel, followed by Jacqueline Flament-Durand, department head at the laboratory of pathological anatomy in Brussels Free University's Erasmus Hospital, and Denise Tolkowsky, composer and pianist.

Adèle Hauwel became a member of the Belgian group committee of "La Porte Ouverte" in 1945 and has worked unremittingly within this "open door" agency, taking part in many campaigns against discrimination on the grounds of sex. In 1975, she published a major book entitled "Les Ephémérides du Féminisme", the fruit of ten years' work.

The Dr Charles Ketelaer prize has gone to three researchers, two of them women, for their work on platelet sclerosis: Elisabeth Hooghe and Anne Baron.

Poverty

The European seminar in Como arranged in May 1983 by the International Association of the Charities of St. Vincent of Paul (under whose umbrella work over 90,000 women in Europe and 200,000 in the world) has led to the production of two books on "the aggravation of poverty: a challenge" and "bold enough to change: a Utopia?". The volumes testify to the search for practical ways of alleviating the distress that is so widespread, and they look for specific community action for the 40,000,000 known poor in the European Community itself.

Useful address Association internationale des charités de St-Vincent de Paul
Rue d'Alsace Lorraine, 38
1050 Brussels

Natural children

At the end of the day's discussions organized in October 1983 at Liège University on "topical aspects of affiliation law in Belgium", the Belgian federation of university women noted the way the law discriminates against natural children and deplored the problems caused by delays in applying to domestic law a judgment delivered by the European Court of Human Rights on 16 June 1979 criticizing Belgian law in this respect, delays that have led to great deal of insecurity.

Because of this, the Federation has appealed to all Belgian MPs to see that the filiation law is reformed speedily and that the revised law embodies the principle of equality for all children and automatic maternal filiation as required by the international authorities.

Extra work

The "Fraternité des Veuves" - the "widows' fraternity" - has set up an employment agency and has arranged courses in English to help its members find work to supplement their pensions.

Useful address Centre "Accueil et espérance"
Rue de la Prévoyance, 58
1000 Brussels

FRANCE

Mum = Dad?

"Are the father's and mother's roles interchangeable?" was the question put to 2,000 people by the World Movement of Mothers, not just in France but in many other countries as well. When asked "who do you think should mainly care for the children?" more than 90% said "both parents". Among the under-18s, 95% were in favour of a non-sexist education, compared with 90% in the 18-25 age group, 83% of the 24-40s and 78% of the 40-60s. There was unanimous agreement that a career is equally important to boys and girls, with more than 95% holding this opinion. In the same way, the future is less that certain if one is to believe the 69% of parents who, when asked "do you act as you intended to do?" replied "no".

Useful address Mouvement Mondial des Mères
56 rue de Passy
75016 Paris

Europe and the United States - what of the future?

The women's committee of the European Movement in France held a major colloquium late in December 1983. Its theme was "relations between Europe and the United States: the future?". It will be recalled that two previous ventures arranged by this organization, on the themes of energy and information technology, were highly successful.

The premises of the National Assembly were packed with an audience of over 400 people listening to the distinguished speakers, who included former Foreign Minister Jean-François Poncet, Chris Petrow, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in France, Avis T. Boholen, deputy political counsellor at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, Professor François Duchêne, Professor Alfred Grosser and others.

Roland de Kergorlay, former European Communities ambassador in Washington, observed "nothing would be more deplorable than a widening gap between the economic dynamism of the two sides of the Atlantic Ocean".

All the speakers stressed the dangers of protectionism, "a flight forward which solves nothing".

One leitmotiv of the colloquium was that "the American attitudes criticized by Europeans are often due to their political absence from Europe rather than deliberate intention on the part of the United States".

Professor Alfred Grosser, in a discussion with Professor Stanley Hoffman, raised the key problem of defence: until Europe is politically integrated, the defence of Europe cannot be strictly European, a sort of "third bloc" without real substance.

The Atlantic Alliance will gain in credibility and be more solid if Europe finally decides to speak with a single voice, pointed out George Berthoin.

Discussing cultural relations, Professor Louis Leprince-Ringuet, chairman of the French Council for the European Movement, placed the stress on Euro-American scientific cooperation: the more Europe pools its efforts in the scientific field, the easier it will be for Europe to achieve parity and fruitful exchange, in a spirit of friendship and reciprocal aid.

Amiel Van Teslaar, the Parisian Director of New York University, highlighted the time gap in mutual awareness. In the 1980s, Americans are still conscious of no French writer later than Gide, Sartre and Camus, whereas Europeans rarely know the successors to Hemingway, Steinbeck and Dos Passos.

The Honorary Director General of the European Commission, François Fontaine, spoke of the conflictual aspect of cultural relationships between the Old and New Continents, especially the sort of cultural imperialism of which the latter is accused. "But cultures cannot be imposed by decree," observed Mr Fontaine. The wise thing under these circumstances is to accept emulation and competition between those who hold the same basic values dear.

Opening the colloquium, Jeanine Lansier - the linchpin of the event from start to finish - declared that "western solidarity is a fundamental factor in world equilibrium". This theme was expressed in different words by Georges Berthoin in winding up the colloquium: "America and Europe are part of the same historic family".

The words that ended the colloquium sounded a warning: "most of the dramas by which the world is shaken are due to the absence of Europe. And our vital dialogue with America will be positive only if we resolutely start again to integrate Europe".

Useful address Organisation française du Mouvement européen
Commission féminine - Présidente: Mme J. Lansier
24, rue Feydeau
75002 Paris

Promoting the cause of women

During its general meeting in November 1983, Promo-Femmes - a movement founded in 1980 to promote the image of women at work - pointed out that despite laws and campaigns designed to improve the image of women working in the public sector and to further their careers, in the French Post Office there has been little progress towards equality because of the official view that no injustice exist. And yet such injustice does exist. In working life, for example: one man in two is allowed to retire at the age of 55, but only one woman in 12. It exists in earnings and promotion: men have more rapid career prospects since their military service counts towards promotion. Women are handicapped by motherhood, as it makes young women "undesirable" in the eyes of the Post Office and often hampers their careers.

There is nothing in recent legislation that ends the discrimination in the Post Office, because it has come into being as a result of insidious, piecemeal measures that have circumvented equality laws and have given men privileged status.

Promo-Femmes exhorts women to take a good hard look at their position and to write or telephone so that they be helped to defend themselves on all sides, even within their union. It concludes: "we have remained a silent minority all too long. Since we are in the minority we shall remain so, but let us not remain silent".

Useful address Promo-Femmes
BP 10907
75326 Paris Cedex 07

Community welcome

"Accueil des Villes de France" is a body that provides information to executives moving home and helps them to integrate in their local community, but it has been extending beyond its original sociological milieu and doing more than introducing newcomers to their society.

It is concerned not just with moving from one town to another but with changing lifestyles. Over the past few years, a growing number of both women and men have been joining the very largely female membership (90%) of the local branches of "Accueil".

It is left to women to tackle the problem of integrating new arrivals in their host community, since integration into a new working environment is usually the employer's concern.

Useful address Accueil des villes de France
13 rue de la Cossonnerie
75002 Paris

Minerva

The first female recruitment advisory bureau has been set up in the region of Lille. "Minerve", as it is called, has all the resources needed: assessment and earnings tables and a battery of tests to determine efficiency, attitudes and job skills. In the space of five months, about 20 jobs have been found and more and more applications are coming in from women who want to move on to other fields.

Useful address Minerve
 B.P. 319, 517 Avenue de la République
 59701 Marcq-en-Baroeul Cédex

Women and the economy

An association called "Fémin'autres" was founded in Paris in 1982 as a result of the efforts of a collective of women of different nationalities who wanted to define women's place in the economy more clearly and add to their economic weight.

Under a convention, 50 local initiative jobs in the economic field are to be created in France as a whole, and "Fémin'autres" will be responsible for filling them.

Useful address "Fémin'autres"
 72, rue du Château-d'Eau
 75010 Paris

G E R M A N Y

Women mining engineers?

Mining apprentices, nicknamed "Beflissenen" or "eager beavers", have to "get down to work courageously and not try to show off in any way", according to a recommendation by the mining industry federation. But this is just what Jessyka Beuys is prevented from doing by a 1938 law forbidding women to go down mines, which is still on the statute book.

Before being enrolled in the Mining College, a young person must have had practical experience. In the interests of equal treatment for women, the College has decided to exempt Jessyka Beuys from this requirement, saying that she will have to catch up with the practical work during the course of her studies. An exception to the law is being recommended that would permit her to work underground.

The 1938 decree - passed when the Nazis were in power - authorizes departures from the ban on women working underground "if these are in the public interest". When the dispute first arose, the statement was made that "the training of women is not a matter of public interest".

It will be interesting to see how the matter turns out.

New technology

Over 30% of the jobs now being done by women in offices, insurance companies and banks are likely to disappear or to be replaced by work done from home.

The unions are calling for protection for women's office jobs as well as shorter working hours and new job creation.

Two unionists, Eva Scharnewski (Industriegewerkschaft Chemie, Papier, Keramik) and Elfriede Hoffman (Gewerkschaft Handel Banken Versicherungen), have launched a campaign against VDU-based homeworking, warning of the threat to women once they no longer enjoy the legal protection provided in the workplace. Women will be exploited, they say, because it will be their computer screen that decides when they have to work. Since women have to cope with the demands of home and family as well, they will be working on into the evenings and at nights.

These dangers were discussed at the congress on the "future of women's work", together with ways of combating female unemployment on the introduction of new technology. Women want shorter working hours, a fairer distribution of jobs and quotas for women on the labour market. They view unemployment as a threat to their identity and they would like to see women's cooperatives and a women's trade union.

Useful addresses	Elfriede Hoffmann c/o H.B.V. Tersteegenstrasse 30 <u>Düsseldorf 30</u>	Eva Scharnewski IG Chemie önigsworther Platz 5 <u>3000 Hanover 1</u>	Frauen- und Lesben- referat Universität Bielefeld <u>Bielefeld</u>
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A housewives' union

Deutsche Hausfrauengewerkschaft (the German housewives' union) is a public agency founded in 1979 to defend and promote the interests of the family. Its aim is official recognition for the job of housewife and househusband, leading to social security for those working in the home in their own right.

The union - D.H.G. for short - is working for a better pension system for women and men in the home, an allowance for bringing up children, a national accident insurance scheme, more adequate health insurance, nationwide support for those wishing to return to the working world and part-time working.

Without ties to any political party, D.H.G. works at national level.

Useful address Deutsche Hausfrauengewerkschaft e.V.
 Marianne Grams
 Windmühlenbreite 56
 3180 Wolfsburg 1

G R E E C E

Women and nuclear power

While the European peace movement was stepping up its efforts during the long winter months, especially after the breakdown of the Geneva negotiations, Greek organizations were dedicating themselves to serving the same cause, mainly by arranging marches, demonstrations, etc.

In this climate a new organization has been formed, bringing the number of pan-Hellenic peace bodies up to four. It is unique in Greece in that it consists entirely of women. Its efforts are to be concentrated on the effective control of nuclear weapons and power. Its members are women scientists, workers, housewives, writers and actresses of all ages, political creeds and social categories who have pooled their efforts to found Elliniko Gynekio Antipyriniko Kinima (Greek women's movement against nuclear power).

Explaining their motivations and aims, they have declared: "As women, giving life to and caring for children, we feel under an obligation to fight for peace and against destruction. As Greek women, since our country is the cradle of civilization, we feel under a twofold obligation to do so. It is our hope and our pride. We shall go on the offensive and join the universal crusade against the bomb and for the preservation of life and peace".

To judge by the names on the list of founders, it is clear that this is a real attempt to broaden the political and social base of the movement as widely as possible.

The group would welcome contact from similar women's organizations.

Useful address Elliniko Gynekio Antipyriniko Kinima
 Xanthou 2
 Athens 106 73

A film festival

In January, the Kentro Erevnon gia tis Gynekes tis Messogiou (the Mediterranean women's research centre) organized the first film festival for Mediterranean women in Athens. During the whole of the week, 10 films showing their way of life and specific problems were shown in one of the cinemas in the Greek capital, most of them for the first time.

Falling in love, struggling for her rights, lamenting in the midst of ruins, moving the world: these are some of the images that build up a picture of Mediterranean woman.

The festival was organized in cooperation with Teniothiki tis Ellados (the Greek film club) under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture. The centre is planning to hold festivals every two or five years, and the festival films will shortly be touring several provincial towns.

Useful address Kentro Erevnon gia tis Gynekes tis Messogiou
 Leoforos Alexandras 192 B
 Athens 115 21

Family Planning

The family planning association - Eteria Ikogeniakou Programmatismou - in furtherance of its policy of spreading the word on family planning and mobilizing women's groups (see "Women of Europe" n° 25) held a one-day seminar on women and family planning in mid-December.

A wide range of aims and interests was represented by the 16 women's organizations that sent delegates to the seminar. The participants divided into work groups to discuss the definitions and aims of family planning, its institutional and legal bases in Europe, family planning and the State, private initiative, economic change and women's rights.

The seminar, held in the Athens arts centre, was highly successful. With a few minor reservations, delegates managed to hammer out an agreement on a number of important points and proposals relating to family policy at national level. They may be summed up as follows:

- the term "family planning" is normally used to describe a very broad and complex set of issues and social activities;
- in the future, the Government, which has only recently given official recognition to the importance of family planning, should assume a growing role, although it should not be the only authority to intervene;
- the costs incurred for family policy should be borne by the Government;
- family planning is a more comprehensive and effective way of serving women's rights than any other measure or policy in this field, for example legislation on abortion;
- existing legislation should be amended so that family policy can be adopted and implemented in the public and private sectors.

The seminar organizers were happy to learn that several organizations (including a majority of young members such as those from the Y.W.C.A.) would like to incorporate family planning in their educational programmes.

Useful address Eteria Ikogeniakou Programmatismou
 Solonos 121
 Athens 106 78

A women's diary

Eleni Pampouki is the owner of a well known bookshop in the centre of Athens which has a unique collection of old editions of Greek and other feminist literature. This year, it has brought out a pocket diary for women, designed for feminists and containing information on the history of the women's movement in Greece, photographs and other documentation on its progress.

Useful address "To Vivlio - to Pedi"
 Sina 38
 Athens 106 72

I R E L A N D

Women's centre in print

Dublin's thriving Women's Centre is now publishing a monthly newsletter called "Round-up - Women's News". It gives information about regular events at the centre, where a number of groups are now based, as well as at other regular women's venues. Price: 10 p. plus postage.

Useful address The Newsletter Group
 Women's Centre
 53 Dame Street
 Dublin 2

Who cares about the carers?

This is the question posed in the title of a new study of single women in Ireland who give up careers to care for elderly or infirm relatives. According to the Council for the Status of Women which commissioned the study, full- and part-time carers should be entitled to social security payments in recognition of their work. Alternative institutionalized care would cost the State an extra £10 million, the Council points out.

Useful address Council for the Status of Women
 54 Merrion Square
 Dublin 2

Fight against abortion

The Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child wants Ireland's abortion referral centres to be closed down and is seeking legal advice on how this can be done.

At present at least two Dublin-based organizations, the Open Door Counseling Service and the Well Woman Centre, supply clients with information about abortion in the United Kingdom. Abortion is banned in Ireland. It is known that 2,500 to 3000 Irish women avail themselves of abortion in Britain each year.

SPUC, which started four years ago, was involved in the Pro-Life Amendment Campaign which last year successfully brought about a constitutional amendment ensuring that no law permitting abortion could be enacted.

Useful address SPUC
 7 Eden Quay
 Dublin 1

Focussing on women

The Women's Political Association has run its seventh seminar, with speakers from the U.S. and Europe taking part. The organization has been a stepping stone to politics for many women, including Ireland's Education Minister, Gemma Hussey, who chaired one of the seminar sessions.

The main speaker was Janet Radcliffe-Richards, the American broadcaster and journalist who wrote "The Sceptical Feminist". An American nun, Madonna Kolbenschlag, author of "Kiss Sleeping Beauty Goodbye", also spoke.

Useful address The Women's Political Association
 187 Pine Valley
 Dublin 14

Examining rape victims

Women's Affairs Minister, Nuala Fennell, is concerned about a Galway hospital's decision to cease forensic examination of rape victims.

She has asked for a full report following the disclosure during a recent rape trial that the hospital would no longer undertake this work.

Meanwhile the Rape Crisis Centre has asked senior maternity and casualty staff to discuss proposals for a new system to deal with rape victims and wants hospitals to continue examinations until appropriate procedures are worked out.

Useful address Rape Crisis Centre
 2 Lower Pembroke Street
 Dublin 2

I T A L Y

Women and the Communist Party

The seventh national conference of Communist women in Pisa provided the Italian Communist Party with a forum for a debate on the status of women in Italian society in this period of crisis.

Lalla Trupia, national leader of the Communist Party women, pointed out that women can help to guide the Party in new cultural and political directions.

Discussing the theme of "woman's life inside and outside the Party", the militants meeting in Pisa observed that women must take political action at every point in the spectrum of Italian social life.

Useful address Partito Comunista Italiano
 Via delle Botteghe Oscure
 00186 Rome

Social identity and subjectivity

This was the theme of a seminar arranged by Progetto Donna ("Project: Woman") in cooperation with the International Free University of Social Studies.

How can one's image of oneself and one's social identity be reconciled? This was the keynote of the debate in the gathering of 200 university women and experts in the world of work and the arts, led by Lietta Tornabuoni.

The introductory report pointed out how much tension is created by the diverging behaviour patterns designed to preserve one's social identity and an individual's image of himself or herself, built up in the light of his or her plans for life and work.

The decoding of "implicit philosophies" and discussion of the "margins of freedom" were points of departure for the search for a new balance between subjectivity and identity - a problem of particular importance to women.

Useful address Progetto Donna
 Via del Tritone 46
 R o m e

On the land

"Woman, the family and the farm in the world of agriculture" was the theme of the national congress convened in Rome by the Movimento Femminile della Confederazione Nazionale Coltivatori Diretti (the women's movement of the national small farmers' union).

The views expressed at this congress included the idea that women's emancipation in towns - independence through their work and freedom of choice - is more apparent than real; we should return to the rural model to restate the problem of women's progress, their function and their achievements.

Several speakers expressed their concern over the changes that take place in women's role with the shift from a rural to an urban society.

Useful address Movimento Femminile
 Confederazione Italiana Coltivatori Diretti
 Via XXIV Maggio, 43
 R o m e

In-justice

"In-giustizia" (a play on words meaning both "in [the name of] justice" and "injustice", is a bimonthly publication that hopes to propose solutions to the topical problems of women and to delve down to women's deepest roots, within the family, in the working world and in society.

The publication has also set itself the aim of being a focal point for women's complaints and where possible, assisting them to reach a solution.

Useful address In-giustizia
 Donne e giustizia dell'UDI di Milano
 M i l a n

L U X E M B O U R G

An open letter

The Socialist women of Luxembourg have taken due note of the suggestions that Yvette Roudy is to convey to the Council of European Ministers of Employment on 8 March, International Women's Day, devoted to Community action in the field of women's employment.

They have taken the initiative of writing an open letter to the Luxembourg Minister of Employment and Social Security, Jacques Santer, drawing attention to this special meeting of European Ministers, which they see as of prime importance to all European women. "Through your good offices," they wrote, "the Luxembourg Government can take this opportunity to consider the position of women in France and follow in French footsteps by creating a special ministry for women's rights."

The Socialist women concluded: "would you please let us know whether you will give us an appointment after 8 March 1984 to tell us about your conclusions following this crucial conference".

Useful address Femmes socialistes
 7, rue du Bois
 Bridel

"Daytime mothers"

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has been going through a period of expansion in women's employment over the past few years and is now faced by a thorny problem: the shortage of day nurseries and care centres for children whose parents both work.

Of the many private schemes designed to fill the gap, of special note is the project set up by Caritas Luxembourg. With the backing of the Ministry for the Family, it has set up a network known as "Fir ons Kanner" (at the service of our children) to place children with "daytime mothers".

Caritas has opened two contact agencies, one in Diekirch (in the North) and the other in the town of Luxembourg, each with a social worker to handle applications from parents and choose suitable childminders.

The social worker, the "daytime family" and the child's parents are in constant contact so that they can iron out any problems that arise regarding the child's care.

Useful address Caritas
 "Fir ons Kanner"
 Luxembourg

N E T H E R L A N D S

A peace camp

In January, a group of 40 or so women followed the example of the Greenham Common women and set up a peace camp opposite the main gate to the Volkel air base, with 11 women staying there permanently. They have announced that they are protesting against the arms race and the deployment of nuclear weapons already stored at the base.

Playboy

The "Duvelse kring" (women devils' circle) has recently taken over the stock of Playboy magazines from two Communist bookshops - Pegasus and Atheneum nieuwscentrum - and thrown them in the canals of Amsterdam.

The group declares that this is one more sign that being leftwing does not mean that one is not sexist, and is prepared to do the same thing again if bookshops continue to sell this "shameful magazine".

Travel

Lidia Hofma, who is divorced and has a child, is the head of the Charter Travel Centre in Amsterdam. She feels that woman who travel on their own do not get value for money.

In the light of her own experience, she has reached the conclusion that only a special travel agency providing package tours for women can end this discrimination. The first women's tour, to Tunisia, was arranged at Christmas. It was a great success, and she is planning further trips to England, Scotland, Spain, Israel and Egypt.

Useful address Charter Travel Centre
 Keizersgracht 168
 Amsterdam 115 CZ

"Women and Health"

The International Contraception, Abortion and Sterilization Campaign, I.C.A.S.C., has arranged a fourth conference on "women and health" to be held late in July 1984 in Amsterdam. The three themes of the campaign will be discussed there, with speakers recounting their own experience followed by discussions in work groups.

Useful address International Contraception, Abortion & Sterilization
 Campaign
 473 Grays Inn Road
 London WC1

SHELL

Karin de Segundo-Platerink is the first woman to have been appointed a director in the 80 years of existence of the Shell group. She took up her new duties as manager of the Shell sales company in Uruguay on 1 February 1984.

Having babies at home

About 30% of pregnant women are at high risk of complications during their pregnancy or childbirth and need the backing of a specialist hospital environment. The remaining 70% can perfectly well bring their babies into the world without this sophisticated support, argued midwife Nicole Hanekamp at a congress in Amsterdam in January organized by Stichting Beter Bevalen (the Foundation for better childbirth).

Newsworthiness

Men are more often at the centre of news than women. Nevertheless, when newspaper stories are on women they receive more space. When photographs of men are printed in the press they tend to be head and shoulders, looking serious; women, on the other hand, are shown full-length and with a smile.

These observations were made by Addy Kaiser of the Department of Mass Communications in the University of Utrecht. The results of her survey have been embodied in two reports entitled "Wie is nieuws?" (who's newsworthy?).

Women doctors

Although women doctors, like their male counterparts, would like to specialize, they rarely set up as general practitioners and tend to work as hospital doctors, according to a survey by C. Hermann, woman director of the Midden Kennemerland district department of health and welfare.

UNITED KINGDOM

British Women Pilots Association

This Association was formed in 1955 with the help of the Women's Engineering Society. Amy Johnson, one of the most famous of all women pilots, was president of the Women's Engineering Society for a number of years. When she was killed in a flying accident in 1941 the Society founded a scholarship in her memory. The first scholarship was awarded in 1955 and, at a gathering to mark the occasion, several women pilots decided to form an association of their own.

The Association aims to promote the training and employment of women in aviation, and to enable women to meet and exchange knowledge. Activities, both national and local, include flying weekends, competitions and demonstrations. Members also receive a magazine.

Useful address The British Women Pilots Association
 25 Foubert's Place
 London W1V 2AL

Multinationals

Diane Elson and Ruth Pearson have launched a project on women and multinationals in Europe. They hope to collate research material on the impact of multinationals on women in Europe and to stimulate research on women's work in such companies.

They would like to contact people interested in this field and to receive information from all European countries.

Useful address Ruth Pearson - Women and Multinationals in Europe
 School of Development Studies
 University of East Anglia - Norwich NR4

Setting up in business

Heather Randall, an expert in news services and the newspaper world, decided a few years ago to set up her own small news service to cover legislation and events at Westminster in easily digested form for businessmen, MPs, etc. Randall's Parliamentary Service was born.

About four years ago, however, she realized how few people in the business world know or understand Community legislation. Helped by a friend, she made contacts in the Commission and with European Parliament. While it was at first difficult to sell her Euro-information, this part of her work now occupies a large part of her time and that of her tiny staff.

She issues a monthly "EEC News Briefing" to subscribers, packed with crisply written information about current or proposed Community legislation, debates in European Parliament, rulings of the Court of Justice and so on. Many firms subscribe to her service although she never advertises.

"There is much more interest in Community matters now than there was two or three years ago," she says, and "it is politically and intellectually much more interesting."

Useful address Randall's Parliamentary Service
 7 Buckingham Gate
 London SW1 6JY

Sexual stereotyping in advertisements

Following a resolution adopted by the Women's Conference last year, the Trades Union Congress is to campaign against advertisers who portray women as sex objects or housewives (or both) in the media or advertisements.

At meetings with the Advertisers Association, the TUC complains that stereotyping creates a picture of women as passive and domesticated, as sexually licentious vamps or as the victims of male violence. Such images, it insists, degrade women and weaken their position as workers and trade unionists.

The TUC is preparing a pamphlet in support of its case; meanwhile the advertisers argue that the TUC attaches too much importance to the images used in advertising and that stereotyping is much less prevalent than before.

Useful address T U C
 Congress House, Great Russell Street
 London WC1

Low-paid hairdressers

The Northern Ireland Women's Rights Movement, a small feminist pressure group, has caused a stir by its revelations of the plight of hairdressing apprentices in the provinces. In a report they revealed that, out of a sample of 78 young people, 15% received a wage of £25 a week, but two thirds (66%) were being paid less and some took home only £10 a week. Fewer than half had a recognized lunch break and most worked a 40-hour week. Although apprentices are supposed to have a three-year training, few were certain when they would be regarded as qualified.

The pressure group has called for a full study of conditions in the hairdressing industry. Minimum terms and conditions, it says, should be established by the Government or a wages council.

Useful address N.I. Women's Rights Movement
 18 Donegall Street
 Belfast BT1

RESEARCH, MEETINGS AND BOOKS

Over Our Dead Bodies: Women Against the Bomb by Dorothy Thompson has been published by Virago Press. Proceeds from its sale will go to the Peace Movement.

Europas Frauen - gleichberechtigt? "Are European women equal before the law?" ask Hortense Hörburger and Fritz Rath-Hörburger, whose book is introduced by a preface by Heidi Wieczorek-Zeul, Socialist MEP, who outlines her ideas on a European policy for women. The authors review in detail the Community legislation designed to bring about equality between men and women and the policies of Member States in this field. WI-Verlag Düsseldorf, Postfach 8609, 4000 Düsseldorf, 234 pp.

At the **Frankfurt Book Fair** in October 1983 it was noted that "women's" series and new women's publishers are still springing up like mushrooms. The publishing house of Frauenoffensive paved the way in 1973, followed by Sub Rosa in 1974. In 1977, Angela Praesent (of Rowohlt) took charge of the "new woman" series of paperbacks. Knaur is another paperback publisher that has taken up the idea; this year it is bringing out a series entitled "women and literature", with an initial print run of 10,000 copies per title.

Some major publishing houses have a special interest in women and society: S. Fischer, for example, and C.H. Beck. Others like Osterreichischer Bundesverlag have rediscovered feminist literature predating National Socialism, as with a book whose title could be translated "the silence of oblivion".

(Information taken from the Agence Femmes Information Bulletin, 21 rue des Jeûneurs, 75002 Paris.)

French university women At its colloquium in January 1984, the Association française des femmes diplômées des universités presented two files on women's problems and international cooperation. AFFDU, 4 rue de Chevreuse, 75006 Paris.

Femmes et Mondes (women and worlds). An appeal to readers: "what are we going to do to combat prostitution?". The reply from the "Mouvement du Nid", an organization set up to help prostitutes and eliminate their calling is "subscribe to help them". The Movement is very much in need of new subscribers. Femmes et Mondes, 7 rue du Landy, 92110 Clichy.

The Feminist Archive is both a reference library and a museum, with a collection of works by women - brochures, conference documents, pamphlets, periodicals, posters, photographs, books, theses and manuscripts. 8 St. Saviour's Terrace, Larkhall, Bath, Avon, U.K.

I.A.V. (international women's movement archive). "Weet ik veel ..." - "what do I know ..." - is the title of the biannual inventory of studies on women compiled by I.A.V., which coordinates research in this field. I.A.V., Keizersgracht 10, 1015 CN Amsterdam.

"Frauensprache" (women's language) is a book by Senta Trömel-Plötz, who believes that men use language as an instrument of power in everyday life, in politics and on television. She calls on women to change language so that they can change society. Fischer-Verlag: Frauensprache and Gewalt durch Sprache.

Mikroelektronik-verändert sie unser Leben? and **Kindheit in einer technisierten Welt-Erziehung für eine Welt der Technik?** are two books published by Deutscher Frauenring E.V., Ludwigstrasse 44, 63000 Lahn 1 (Giessen) on the question of whether the microchip will change our lives and about childhood and technical education in a technological world.

Leggere donna is the journal of the "Donna" documentation centre which organized the seminar on "feminist publishing: 15 years of self-management" in Ferrara, as reported in "Women of Europe" n° 29. Centro Documentazione Donna, Contrada della Rosa 14, Ferrara.

The publishers Van Loghum Slaterus have produced a collection called **Alternatieven** (Alternatives), which includes **De sociale positie van vrouwen: balans en beleid** (the social position of women: a review and a policy) by Anneke van Doorne-Huiskes, Deventer, 1982, D1.2. **Horstink** has published a series which is about to include **Vrouwenbeweging: tussen macht en emancipatie** (women's movement: between power and emancipation), Amersfoort, 1982, Dossier DIC 89. **SUA** publications, **Staat en seksenstrijd: naar een feministische staatstheorie** (the State and the sex war: towards a feminist theory of the State) by Hanneke Stasse, Trees Mom and Mieke Eijkmans, Amsterdam, 1982. Finally: **Socialisties-Feministies Teksten deel 7** (Socialist and Feminist Texts, volume 7), produced by feminist publishing house **Sara**, Amsterdam, 1982.

Frauen an den Universitäten (women in universities) looks at the position of girl students in universities and colleges in relation to the male hierarchy in the scientific field. By Ulla Bock, Anne Braszeit and Christiane Schmerl. Frankfurt, Campus Verlag, 1983.

Signs is one of the best known journals dealing with women's problems in recent years. The spring 1982 special issue (vol. 7, n° 3) is devoted to "feminist theory". Signs, Journal of Women in Culture and Society, the University of Chicago Press, 11030 S. Langley Avenue, Chicago IL 60628, U.S.

Femmes en difficulté dans la région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur is a report on women in the region of Provence, the Alps and the Côte d'Azur and the local facilities available to help them solve their problems. Graif, 300 avenue du Prado, 13008 Marseilles.

The Spanish Ministry for Culture has commissioned a survey on women in the Spanish universities of today under the title of **La investigación sobre la mujer en la Universidad Española contemporánea** by Maria Angeles Duràn Heras. Published by Dirección General de Juventud y Promoción Socio-Cultural, ISBN 84-85961-14-5, Madrid.

The Norwegian institute for social research - Institutt for samfunnsforskning - has published a report on women and employment. The articles it contains analyze economic and social developments in Norway over the past ten years and consider new ways in which women have been working, as demonstrated by the changing structure of the sexes in the working world. I.S.F. Munthesgt. 31, Oslo 2, Arnlaug Leira, ed. ISBM 033-3671.

The language of women is the theme of research undertaken by Patricia Niedzwiecki for her thesis at the Paris VII University (Sorbonne). As well as a research scholarship from the British Council, she obtained a grant from the Dutch Education Ministry to evaluate trends in the use of non-sexist terms and neologisms in the Netherlands.

Anyone interested in the subject or who has information to contribute can contact Patricia Niedzwiecki direct at 47 rue de Roumanie, 1060 Brussels.

La production sociale des femmes by Géry Coomans is a global study on women's employment. The author attempts to evaluate the contribution made by women to social production in the commercial and private spheres. He considers the ways in which women integrate on the labour market and shows how women earn lower wages. He also tries to shed light on the processes of social selection, taking into account the determining factors implacably imposed by the prevailing logic, and the complex social conflict caused by the secret logic whereby women are both the objects and subjects of their history. Université de Bruxelles, Avenue Paul Héger 26, 1050 Brussels.

Pénélope. The autumn 1983 issue of this magazine on women's history (n° 9) is on women and technology. It reviews the myths and the way women and technology are depicted in popular novels, examines the division of tasks and roles by sex and women's position in the face of new technology, as well as the impact of feminism in this field. PENELOPE, published by the Groupe d'Etudes Féministes de l'Université Paris 7 and the Centre de Recherches Historiques de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 54 Boulevard Raspail, 75270 Paris Cedex 06.