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T H E C H A N G I N G
E U R O P E A N C O M M U N I T Y

"WOMEN OF EUROPE" AND EUROPEAN WOMEN

Very soon it will be eight years - a whole eight years! - since the first issue of "Women of Europe" was brought out. What a river of information has poured out through all its pages! How many people have made direct or indirect contact through its truly useful "useful addresses"! From each issue a whole bunch of new ideas, an armful of experience, a harvest of solidarity have been garnered. Every item has illustrated the lively imagination, creativity and firm resolve of hundreds of organizations and thousands of women in every sector of economic, social, political, cultural and university life. The efforts of each one have stimulated and inspired the thinking of others.

No other publication in our Community's history has reflected, so regularly and in so many languages, the process of change in a society as a whole. Its success has above all been the success of women themselves, for "Women of Europe" has done no more than mirror their energy, enthusiasm and effort.

The Decade of Women is coming to an end. In the field of information as in other spheres, we must pause for thought. This is why we are calling on you, our readers (and you number men as well as women), to let us have your suggestions and ideas. What information would you like to have? How do you use the information? How do you pass it on? All your comments will be welcome. We shall consider each one very carefully, although we have to bear our budget restrictions in mind as well as the problems of producing and translating the publication.

Write to us at: "Women of Europe", Directorate General for Information, European Commission, 200 rue de la Loi, 1049 Brussels.

WELCOME! Welcome to the women of Spain and Portugal, since it is now definite that they will be joining the European Community. Over the past few years, we have organized colloquia in Madrid and Lisbon and we have seen for ourselves how dynamic are the women's organizations in these countries. Delegates from Spain and Portugal have also come to the first three colloquia of women's organizations in the Community and have found that the solidarity of women within the Community extends wholeheartedly to them. They have now established many firm links with women in other countries.

We look forward to the date you join us: 1 January 1986.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PARENTAL LEAVE

For some time now the European Commission has been organizing a seminar on equal opportunities for men and women jointly with the country providing the president of the Council of the Community. All the partners concerned with one of the themes contained in the Community action programme on equal opportunities, 1982-85, are invited: Governments, the two sides of industry, experts, equality agencies and associations.

In late March, a seminar was held in Rome on "community child care facilities and services, and parental leave". The arrangements were made by the Italian national committee for equality between men and women (which is attached to the Italian Premier's department), the national committee for equal opportunities (attached to the Ministry of Employment) and the Commission of the European Communities.

The seminar, also attended by eminent people from Spain and Portugal, was opened by Francesco Forte, Minister responsible for relations with the European Community, speaking on behalf of the Italian Government. Odile Quintin, Marisa Cinciari Rodano and Silvia Meeham put what were on the whole the converging views of the European Commission, European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and the European Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities respectively.

The two subjects of public facilities and parental leave were intentionally linked in the Community action programme, forming the theme of one of the 16 courses of action now under way. The aim has been to ensure that the broadening practice of allowing parental leave is matched by the development of community facilities, despite the restrictions being imposed on all sides as a result of the economic crisis.

According to those taking part, parental leave should help to bring about a genuine sharing of parental responsibility by fathers and mothers. The point was made that parental leave provides an opportunity to broaden social law on fatherhood and highlight the family responsibilities of working men, a sign of the spread of more enlightened attitudes.

The guarantee of being able to go back to jobs after parental leave strengthens the position of working women. In Germany, for example, it has been noted that 51% of working women had been dropping out following maternity leave; it is expected that the rate of return to work will rise now that paid parental leave has been introduced in this country.

Speakers stated that the success of parental leave depends on the image that is conveyed. A good example has been set by the Swedish Minister, Ove Rainer (who was at the seminar): he took his parental leave very publicly in the course of his period in office. A responsible father is held in high regard neither by the media nor by his colleagues at work, he confided.

The meeting hoped that parental leave would be available to everyone in both the public and private sector, whatever the size of the unit in which they are employed.

On the subject of community facilities, it is becoming a matter of urgency that political will be clearly stated. The development of better facilities and services is an important factor in equal opportunities policy. Clarification is needed so that planning can be more soundly based, the various services available can be better structured and aligned, their cost kept down and greater neutrality be displayed to parents opting for a career.

How can a policy be drawn up without reliable statistics? The number of under-threes with two working parents, children who are members of single-parent families, children in underprivileged environments who need care facilities irrespective of whether their parents work, the day care places currently available and an estimate of the needs still unmet: all these figures are unknown.

The facilities and services themselves could and should be improved by the training (and desegregation) of personnel, more flexible working hours, a comparison of the respective merits of community or family day care units and individual childminders, improving the status and range of services and reviewing recent innovations such as mini-creches, roving creches, integrated centres and units catering for different age groups.

There was a call for indicators to be defined at Community level for use in monitoring the development of a system of facilities: the number of places in each type of care facility, budgets, an estimate of needs, a comparison of the evolution of parental leave taken by each sex, etc.

The meeting also hoped that the provision of more facilities and services would be backed by aid from the European Social Fund and Regional Development Fund. It concluded by calling on the European Commission to press on with its efforts, more particularly under the new Programme of Action for Equal Opportunities.

The publication entitled "Social Europe" (n° 1/85) prints an account of the seminar on "self-employed women and women in agriculture" held in Dublin in November 1984. The same issue contains an interesting paper on "office technology and women's work" by the Brussels Free University Institute of Sociology. Useful address: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, L-2985 Luxembourg, and the European Commission, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Education, 200 rue de la Loi, 1049 Brussels.

POPULATION STATISTICS IN THE COMMUNITY

The population situation in the European Community is causing serious concern to the Community's Economic and Social Committee. In a report by Mr. Burnel, the point is made that, while the population of the Europe of the Ten is 273 million, the annual growth rate in 1982-83 was only 0.19%. By comparison, Africa - which had a population of 220 million in 1950, the same as in Europe - has now topped 546 million.

People are of course living longer today. In 1951, a man's average life expectancy was 64.0, a woman's 68.2; today it is 70.7 and 78.0 respectively. The infant mortality rate has declined from 31.3 per thousand live births in 1960 to 10.4 per thousand in 1983. The number of births, however, has fallen sharply as well: from 4,692,000 in 1984 to 3,207,000 in 1983 in the Community as a whole.

The institution of marriage is also reflecting the crisis in the family. Between 1960 and 1982, the proportion of children born of unmarried parents rose from 4.5% to 10.2%. Denmark holds the record: in 1982, 38.3% of births were to unmarried mothers.

COFACE (Confederation of Family Organizations in the European Community) met Mr. Peter Sutherland, European Commissioner with responsibility for family policy. COFACE submitted a memorandum on the deployment of a European family policy, stressing the need for a "Bureau of family affairs" to coordinate policies in support of families.

THIRTEEN ANGRY WOMEN

Readers may recall the "Bekaert-Cockerill" affair: women workers at a Belgian firm of this name were dismissed because they refused to be put on part-time work (the "13 angry women" received the "Woman of the Year" prize last year). Ernest Glinne, Member of European Parliament, has now raised the case with the Commission. The industrial tribunal in Charleroi had, it is true, upheld some of the arguments put forward by the Belgian women and ordered their employer to pay compensation. But, Ernest Glinne pointed out, what the women wanted was to have their jobs back. Does the European directive on the subject not imply that people who are wrongfully dismissed must be taken back? And if it is incomplete or vague on this point, should it not be amended so that national laws can be levelled up?

In its reply, the Commission observed that the Charleroi ruling was not yet final and any evaluation of the Belgian legal decision would be premature. According to the Commission, the directive has been infringed only if "the Belgian lawmakers had enacted ineffective sanctions against discriminatory behaviour". The Commission proposes to take Community action to help Member States improve the procedure for claims and appeals.

The Comité de Liaison des Femmes and Vrouwen Overleg Komitee have also returned to the charge in a letter to the European Commission.

This time they complain of the role of the "social conciliator", a civil servant who represents the Belgian Government and can enter into commitments on its behalf. In this affair, the conciliator had explicitly stated that it would be useless to refer to European directives on equality. In so doing, the Committees argued, the official had given his support to the dismissal of the thirteen.

The two Committees put this question to the Commission: "what responsibility can be attributed to a Government, validly represented by one of its civil servants, which publicly allows an act of discrimination to occur and backs it with his authority, even though this act is in conflict with a national law and a Community directive?"

T H E C O U R T O F J U S T I C E O F
T H E E U R O P E A N C O M M U N I T I E S

Marriage and Social Security. In a case brought by Mrs J.W. Teulings-Worms, the Court of Justice is to give its ruling on an important matter of principle: should the factors determining whether an allowance is paid for the inability to work include marital status and income directly or indirectly derived from the spouse's work or the existence of a dependant child? The problem involves the whole question of "family support".

110,000 married women could claim a total of £85 million if the Court of Justice agrees with Jacqueline Drake, who is claiming a weekly invalid care allowance of £20.50 for caring for her severely disabled mother. The allowance is granted only to men, married or unmarried, and unmarried women who give up work to look after a disabled member of the family.

Mrs Drake had to leave her job to care for her mother and is now financially dependant on her husband. A situation such as this, she argues, conflicts with EC directives on equality. She has won her case in the appeal court, but the ministerial department concerned is disputing its judgment.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

March Session The main item on the agenda of the March session was the vote on Community farm prices for 1985/86. As might have been expected, Parliament was even more divided on the vote than it has been in the past: this year, the supporters of the Common Agricultural Policy were faced with a larger and more determined group of hard-liners than ever before.

Rapporteur Pierre-Benjamin Pranchère (French Communist) had proposed a 4.5% price increase and had described the proposal put forward by the Commission as a "provocation" to farmers. Faced with the risk that a Socialist amendment which consisted of a set of criteria (notably the defence of small farmers and disadvantaged agricultural areas) but no financial figures might win a majority, however, Mr Pranchère finally accepted a Christian Democrat amendment proposing a 3.5% price increase. The amendment was approved, but only just, by 149 votes to 139 with 9 abstentions.

Several political groups were themselves split on the vote: for example, Italian members of the Communists were opposed to the price increase, and the French, Italian, Greek and some Belgian members of the Socialist Group supported Mr Pranchère's proposal. The most united groups were the Conservatives (who were vehement in their attack on the "agricultural lobby") and, diametrically opposed to them, the European Democratic Alliance, consisting mainly of Gaullists.

During the debate, the European Commissioner responsible for agriculture, Frans Andriessen, defended his proposals: in his opinion, given the present budgetary constraints, there is no alternative. Mr Andriessen said that Mr Pranchère's proposals would entail additional expenditure to the tune of some 490 million ECU in 1985 and 1,070 million ECU in 1986. The Community could not support such a heavy financial burden, especially since Parliament had voted against the introduction of a tax on oil and fat imports which might have produced additional revenue.

By way of explaining their rejection of Mr Pranchère's motion, several British Conservatives pointed to the blatant inconsistency of a Parliament which one day guarantees its support for the Commission's future policies and the next rejects the first practical proposals put to it by that Commission.

Two days before coming to a decision on farm prices, European Parliament had in fact passed a series of resolutions confirming its support for the detailed programme for 1985 which Jacques Delors, as representative of the Commission, had presented. One of the resolutions, which Parliament adopted by 185 votes to 59 with 18 abstentions, was the joint motion put forward by the European People's Party, the Socialists and the Conservatives approving the outline of this programme and congratulating the Commission on "meeting Parliamentary objectives on institutional reform". A Socialist resolution called for more information on social policy and "Community self-defence in the face of the over-valuation of the dollar" and a motion tabled by the European Democratic Alliance called for the CAP to be maintained and the fisheries policy to be strengthened.

In his address, European Commission President Jacques Delors pointed to the enlargement of the Community as "indicative of our problems" and stated that

Spain and Portugal must enter the Community within the set time limits because "a further six months would do nothing to resolve the situation". If enlargement did not take place, claimed President Delors, it would cause a "deep trauma" in applicant countries and undermine the credibility of any attempts made by the Ten to progress alone, however necessary such attempts might be. Progress had to be made in industry and new technology as well as in the workings of European institutions. Jacques Delors claimed that Europe is undergoing an "industrial upheaval" in which "nobody knows who's doing what any more". The President also stressed the Community's role in the world economy and in relations with the Third World. Europe, he says, must have "character: not a bad character, but character".

April Session During the April session, European Parliament heard a report by Bettino Craxi, Italian Prime Minister and President of the EC Council of Ministers, on the results of the European Council of Brussels and the presidential programme. One obstacle to the Community's development has been removed with the completion of accession negotiations with Spain and Portugal. Both countries will become Member States on 1 January 1986. But much remains to be done on various fronts: there is the question of economic and social policy, including the defence of what Mr Craxi called "the European model" (not excluding adjustment to new technology, providing due account is taken of individuals and their work); relations with non-Community countries, including aid for countries in need and the adoption of a truly "European" stance on problem areas such as Central America; on a political level, the quest for peace and a balanced attitude towards the world powers; and the strengthening of institutions within the Community.

On the subject of European institutions, Parliament was called upon to vote on two resolutions, both of which were passed with substantial majorities. These motions, tabled by Belgian Christian Democrat Bert Croux and German Socialist Hans-Joachim Seeler, called for progress towards a European Union and the convening of a conference to discuss a "concrete and precise" treaty, but also urged consideration for the views of more hesitant countries. This slight amendment, suggested by Altiero Spinelli, chairman of the Committee on Institutional Affairs, and British Conservative Sir Fred Catherwood, facilitated the adoption of the Croux resolution: although it was hoped that all the Member States would attend the conference, the amended resolution ran, States finding it impossible to take part would retain "their right to become members of the Union without any need for further negotiations".

Speaking in the debate, Carlo Ripa di Meana, the Commissioner responsible for this issue, suggested a mandate for the conference, including its extension to new spheres such as the arts, as well as certain security aspects. Mr Ripa called upon Community officials to seize an "unrepeatable" opportunity. "This calls for a collective effort: let's make it", said Mr Ripa.

In response to those expressing a fear of their identities being swamped by an overpowering "European personality", French Socialist Georges Sutra pointed out that "countries with a strong national identity and a real awareness of their own character have nothing to fear; on the contrary, national identity will be strengthened within the Union".

One problem of continuing concern in Europe is unemployment. Parliament discussed the problem again in the presence of Gianni De Michelis, Italian minister and president of the Council for Social Affairs. Mr De Michelis outlined the essentials of a true anti-unemployment strategy: innovation

in training; flexibility on the labour market, particularly by reorganizing and reducing working hours; a constructive social dialogue; and a policy of growth to promote jobs.

Speaking for the Commission, Alois Pfeiffer, the Commissioner responsible for employment, mentioned youth employment measures adopted by the Commission and announced a memorandum on youth policy. Commissioner Peter Sutherland, who controls the allocation of resources from the European Social Fund, deplored the inadequacy of available funds.

MEPs put a series of demands to the Commission: the launching of an extraordinary employment plan entailing a Community "maxi-loan" for the direct funding of employment; the doubling of Social Fund resources over 5 years, mainly to cater for needs in the field of new technology; the strengthening of links between employers and training agencies and support for job creation schemes in small and medium-sized enterprise; the reform of social security systems; and a review of collective bargaining infrastructure at European level.

In emergency debates, Parliament stated its views on a number of topical issues. Following anti-Jewish attacks in France and the murder of Professor Tarantelli by the Red Brigade, Parliament again demanded formal decisions at Community level. It also urged (in the words of French Liberal Simone Veil) that the "brain" behind these murderous actions be sought.

By 63 votes to 40 with 2 abstentions, Parliament declared itself opposed to the policies of the Pretoria government and called for relations between the Community and its Member States and South Africa to be restricted. Willy de Clerq, Commissioner responsible for external affairs, roundly condemned South Africa; he ruled out no measures which might bring to its senses a country that "does not seem to want to understand that human dignity is indivisible: one either respects it or one does not respect it". To be effective, however, measures must be taken by all the Member States.

Party news Mechthild von Alemann, a Member of European Parliament in the last term, has been appointed general secretary to the Federation of Liberal and Democratic Parties of the European Community. By the time this issue goes to press, Colette Flesh, former Foreign Minister in Luxembourg, will have taken up her post as president of the Federation. Simone Veil chairs the Liberal and Democratic Group in the European Parliament.

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Chaired by Marlene Lenz (Germany, European People's Party), the Parliamentary Committee on Women's Rights has been pressing on with its work. During the meeting held in Rome on 18 and 19 March, MEPs exchanged views with the President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Ilda Iotti, the Minister of Education, Franca Falcucci, Secretary of State for Social Affairs Mr Conti-Persini and Vice-President of the Senate Ms Tedesco, who was accompanied by several women members of Italian Parliament.

In their opening speeches, Ilda Iotti and Franca Falcucci argued for a more forceful role for women in political and economic life. Ilda Iotti expressed her disappointment at the under-representation of women in political bodies and spoke of efforts to eliminate discrimination in her country, including

Government legislation on such matters as divorce, abortion and the financing of creches.

Ilda Iotti also said that the Italian government was now working on a bill on sexual violence, which had already gone through the Chamber of Deputies and was awaiting a vote by the Senate. It should be of particular interest to members of the Parliamentary Committee who have embarked on a report on violence against women. The report was being drafted by Dutch Socialist Hedy d'Ancona.

Ms Falcucci's speech centred on the strategic role of new technology in the future economy and the need to train all young people, both girls and boys, in its use.

Most MEPs and many of the Italian MPs with Ms Tedesco joined in the discussion on the failure to inform women of their rights and how to remedy the situation.

Equal pay for men and women in Greece was the subject of a report by the European Commission which was studied by the Parliamentary Committee. Constantina Pantazi, Marietta Giannakou and Johanna Maij-Weggen said that only a very small number of women took cases of discrimination before a tribunal and stressed the need for women to be better informed, particularly on legal aid.

As a demonstration of their resolve to keep in close touch with women and women's organizations, the MEPs used their Rome meeting as an opportunity to publicize their activities in European Parliament and meet many representatives of women's associations, unions and cooperatives run by women. Many problems were discussed and there was a lengthy exchange of views on outworking and women's access to training.

Pressing on with its work, the Parliamentary Committee decided to draw up three reports. The first, to be compiled by Johanna Maij-Weggen, is on the application of the third EC directive on equality in social security matters; the second, to be produced by Constantina Pantazi, is on family policy; and the third, for which Maria Lisa Cinciari Rodano is responsible, is on single-parent families.

Statistics on women who are heads of single-parent families are scarce. Ms Cinciari Rodano would be grateful if associations representing them could make themselves known and supply her with any information on the subject.

Commissioner Peter Sutherland attended the meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on Women's Rights held in Brussels at the end of April and gave an up-to-date report on the European Social Fund. He said that women's participation in projects funded by the Social Fund had increased by 3% in 1984 over 1983. Several MEPs pointed out that, at this rate, it would be the year 2000 before women reached a 50% share.

Peter Sutherland also discussed education (an action programme on equal opportunities for boys and girls in school is in the pipeline), social security (proceedings are being taken against Belgium for its infringement of the Community directive on social security) and family policy (an area in which much remains to be done but where the scope of the Commission is limited).

The Commission Memorandum on Income Tax and Equal Treatment for Men and

Women was analysed by Dame Shelagh Roberts (see Women of Europe no. 38 - "Equality and Taxation"). She expressed disappointment that studies by the Commission had led to a mere memorandum rather than a directive when Member States had recognized the principle of sexual equality as far back as in 1975. Rapporteur Johanna Maij-Weggen said that the Parliamentary Committee on Social Affairs had recently requested a directive to establish separate taxation for men and women. Ursula Braun-Moser indicated that the Parliamentary Committee on Budgetary Affairs would also like to encourage the harmonization of tax systems.

The report prepared by Hedy d'Ancona on "violence to women" is to be presented to parliament in a plenary session in late autumn 1985. Parliament officials have already drawn up a comparative study of legislation on sexual violence in EC Member States. A careful reading gives an idea of the progress made by national legislations in various fields (definition of rape, the holding of proceedings in public or in camera, severity of sentences, respect for the victim's anonymity, compensation for victims, etc). At present, this study (ref. PE 95/816/Ann.I) is available only in French and English.

Useful address: Committee on Women's Rights, European Parliament, Plateau du Kirchberg, Luxembourg

R E N D E Z - V O U S I N N A I R O B I

The Parliamentary Committee on Women's Rights has adopted a resolution pointing out the steps taken by the Community to bring about sexual equality and the important role played by the European Court of Justice. The resolution emphasizes the need to combat all forms of direct or indirect discrimination against women in every sphere. On other important issues such as development and peace, the Parliamentary Committee felt that the European Community should pool its efforts with those already being made by certain individual countries.

Finally, with the Nairobi Conference in mind, the resolution calls for searching analyses in the following areas: attaining the objectives set by the 1975 Mexico Conference (at the beginning of the Decade for Women); measures and action in the European Community and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries to promote equal opportunities; concrete efforts which might improve the situation of women in the Third World and especially in ACP countries linked with the European Community by the Lomé Convention. The resolution, drafted by the Committee on Women's Rights, was submitted to European Parliament and adopted in a plenary meeting during the May session.

Work with the authorities but question them too was the spirit in which the National Council of Belgian Women and its Dutch-speaking counterpart, Nationale Vrouwen Raad, met to consider and express their views on what women wanted at the end of the first Decade for Women.

Comments made by the member groups of these two organizations will be used as a basis for the work of the Coordinating Committee set up in January by the Belgian government, jointly chaired by Madeleine van Raemdonck and Moniek Delvon.

The Pontifical Council of the Laity, after consultation with international Catholic organizations and the Roman Curia, states that women should not

only be "the subject" of laws of benefit to them but also contribute to their own development and the development of society. This view will be expressed by the Holy See's representative at the Nairobi Conference.

Women is the simple, explicit title of a six-page booklet describing UN support for women. It gives a history of the Committee for Women's Affairs since its formation back in June 1946. Produced by the Service for the Promotion of Women, this brochure has been published thanks to a contribution by the Japanese government.

Useful address: Service for the Promotion of Women, International Centre, BP 500, 1400 Vienna

The Book of Hope is the ingenious brainchild of Riane Eisler, Abida Khanum and Gloria Orenstein. It is to be an anthology of poems, phrases and aphorisms in all possible languages, expressing the hopes of women throughout the world. "From the heart of women, a message for the world." All contributions are welcome. The only condition is that they should be written in black on white paper so that they can be reproduced more easily.

Useful address: Gloria Orenstein, University of Southern California, Taper Hall 331 M, Los Angeles, CA 90089-3352

AIDoS are the initials of the Associazione Italiana Donne per lo Sviluppo (Italian women's association for development). AIDoS is active in organizing the Nairobi Conference and is also taking positive action to extend the Decade for Women. Two video films have been produced for use during the numerous discussions in which AIDoS takes part throughout Italy: one reviews the Decade for Women and the other, which will be topical for a long time yet, is entitled "Il nostro carico è pesante, il ruolo della donna nell'economia" (Our burden is heavy: the role of women in the economy).

Useful address: AIDoS, Piazza Capranica 95, int 4, 00186 Rome

When you fill the kettle or have a shower, think of Senegalese women who have to walk several miles every day for a little water. The Soroptimists have decided to mobilize their 77,000 members to raise funds for the sinking of wells in 8 Senegalese villages. The money is to be handed over to UNICEF, which is responsible for carrying out the project.

Useful address: Soroptimist International, 40 Parkside, Cambridge

Three months before the Decade for Women closes, Great Britain has still not ratified the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Women's organizations are concerned. Under the leadership of the Women's National Commission, though, they have produced 12 reports taking stock of the Decade in England. Separate reports have been compiled by women's groups in Scotland and Wales. Lady Gardner of Parkes who, along with Baroness Young, will head the official British delegation to Nairobi, said that the reports had been studied by government officials although she could not yet specify what effect they would have on the British position at the Conference. The British government hopes that discussions in Nairobi will concentrate on women's problems and not be diverted to the political situation in the Near East or South Africa.

Kentro Erevnon gia tis Gynekes tis Mesogiou (institute of Mediterranean women's studies) intends to hold three workshops at the Women's Forum in Nairobi. The aim of the first will be to define a long-term strategy for women's research; the second will focus on women migrants and refugees, mainly in the context of North-South relations, drawing on experience in the Mediterranean; and the third will discuss new strategies for women's

studies, particularly in universities in developing countries.

Useful address: KEGME, Leoforos Alexandras 192b, 11521 Athens

COUNTRY TO COUNTRY:

FACTS, INSTITUTIONS AND LAWS

AND MILITANT ACTIVITIES

B E L G I U M

The debate on abortion in Belgium has been triggered off again by an article published in Journal des Procès (court review). In the article, lawyer Pierre Legros places a liberal interpretation on a decree passed by the French-speaking Community in July 1984 which makes it compulsory for the medical profession to give help with contraception to women in distress. According to Mr Legros, the decree implicitly authorizes the termination of pregnancies in French-speaking Belgium.

With the general election in sight, Belgian MPs are not eager to reopen the debate. Liberal MP Robert Henrion has, however, expressed his amazement that judgments passed on abortion cases should differ in the French- and Dutch-speaking parts of the country. Minister of Justice Jean Gol has said that he would agree to a revival of the debate if it were called for by a majority of party leaders.

The general election next October will not catch women unawares. It has already been decided that a delegation from the National Council of Belgian Women should meet party leaders. In the talks, delegates urge that many more women should be included in each party's list of candidates, and that they should be placed high on the list. They will ask for information on women's policies in the parties' election manifestoes, and will question each leader on his party's support for women candidates, stressing the need to make it clear which of the candidates on the list of candidates are women.

Under the present Belgian system, voters receive a long list of the names of all candidates, and the order in which candidates' names appear is decided by the parties. Parties are designated not by their abbreviated names but by numbers drawn by lots for each election. Only the surnames and initials of candidates are given, which means that voters cannot tell whether they are men or women.

A baby in a dustbin: this shocking discovery has touched the hearts of the Belgian people. The child, who was in very good physical condition, is now in the care of a public social care centre (CPAS). Oeuvre nationale de l'Enfance (national children's charity) and Ligne de Vie (lifeline) have told young women who are worried at having an unwanted child that they can always turn to their gynaecologist or local CPAS for help with this serious problem. Many people want to adopt - many more than the number of children available for adoption. No moral judgement will be made of these women and the mother's anonymity will be respected in the few legal formalities that are required.

Useful address: Ligne de vie, rue du Boulet 24, 1000 Brussels

The National Council of Belgian Women (Conseil national des Femmes belges - CNFB) was founded on 30 January 1905 by the Ligue du Droit des Femmes (league for women' rights), the Union des Femmes belges contre l'alcoolisme

(Belgian women's union against alcoholism and for the improvement of women's status). Recalling those 80 years of struggle, Jacqueline Alixin tells of the recent success in the separate taxation of married couples: "None of the party leaders was very enthusiastic about the idea but all parties included the point on their election platforms, in response to the CNFB campaign. A careful study was carried out with the help of an eminent tax specialist; meetings were held with the chairmen of all the political federations; and press conferences were organized at which all the women, whatever their place in the political spectrum, came out in agreement. A good example has been set.

Useful addresses: CNFB, Place Qu'ételet 1a, 1030 Brussels
NVR, Middaglijnstraat 8, 1030 Brussels

286,384 women were considered "registered unemployed on full benefits" in Belgium in early spring 1985, 95,900 of them being under 25. In this group, 244,821 had worked before they became unemployed and 41,563 were first-time jobseekers. 154,944 of women registered as unemployed this spring had been out of work for 2 years or more.

The problem of battered children has been raised again by a recent court case. At present, there are an estimated 5,000 cases of children maltreated by their parents in Belgium. The Ligue des Familles (league of families) sees the problem of battered children as a direct consequence of parents' financial difficulties, loneliness and fatigue. This is why the league is calling for family aid to be given to all families in which mothers have to cope alone, especially when they have very young children.

Useful address: Ligue des Familles, rue du Trône 127, 1050 Brussels

Fire service personnel "of the male sex" is what local authorities persist in asking for in their job advertisements. Questioned by Volksunie MP Mr De Mol, Interior Minister Mr Nothomb confirmed that the law of 4 August 1978 (article 121) prohibits such discrimination. Mr Nothomb took the opportunity to point out that, according to the latest statistics, 31 women work for the Belgian fire services: 5 paid employees and 26 volunteers.

The "Kindertelefoon" (children's hot-line) scheme was set up in Flanders in 1981 and is growing in popularity. In Ghent, 5,600 calls were received in one year. Between 4 and 8pm every day, children can ring up and talk freely about anything and everything, in confidence and with the certainty of a sympathetic hearing on problems ranging from how to feed a hamster, how to cook an apple pie, how to confess to a small (or big) lie or how to avoid being hit by a sister.

Useful telephone number: Brussels 02/218.70.80

Overleven (survive) is the title of a campaign against world hunger. Even before it was launched, Nationale Vrouwenraad (National Council of Belgian Women) wrote to BRT (Belgian radio/television) calling on the media to place stress on women's role in food production in the Third World. The president of BRT's management committee wrote back thanking the Council for its suggestion and giving an assurance that directors' and producers' attention would be drawn to the matter. The Council's comment: we are very pleased with this positive response but have not as yet noticed much change in programmes.

Useful address: Nationale Vrouwenraad, Middaglijnlaan 8, 1030 Brussels

ATOL stands for "appropriate technology for developing countries", a title which fully explains the association's aim. Technological aid offered to the Third World by industrialized countries often increases dependence and

ATOL wants to introduce a new system which will take account of human realities and encourage autonomy and self-sufficiency. This has led ATOL to reconsider the role and reactions of women in relation to technology in the Third World. How does one react to the "inevitability" of it always being the man who sits behind the wheel of a new tractor?

Useful address: ATOL, Blijde Inkomststraat 9, 3000 Leuven

D E N M A R K

Danske Kvinders Nationalråd (National Council of Danish Women) decided at its general meeting on 1 March 1985 to resign from the committee for co-operation between the Government and women's organizations, set up 3 years ago to suggest ways in which the Government could support the work of Danish women's groups. Cooperation within the committee has not produced any results and all the proposals put forward by the National Council of Danish Women have been rejected. The general meeting of the Council has drawn its own conclusions and decided to resign from the committee.

The committee was formed after the 1980 United Nations' Women's Conference in Copenhagen at which the Danish Government's delegates supported a motion calling on governments to recognize the work of women's organizations and offer them financial assistance. The Government subsequently ratified the UN General Assembly's action programme. Women's organizations have, however, been unable to obtain support for their activities and a meeting with the minister responsible has produced no results.

Useful address: Danske Kvinders Nationalråd, Niels Hemmingsengade 8-10,2,
1153 Copenhagen

The taxation of married couples is the subject of a new report drafted by a Treasury committee. The report concludes that the completely separate taxation of the income and capital of husband and wife would be the only simple solution satisfying the demands for equal treatment in tax matters. Several women's organizations took part in the committee's work.

Under a completely separate tax system, a married couple's income and capital would be divided between the two in the same way as for unmarried couples. Exactly the same methods of calculating tax payments would apply to married and single people. One of the problems of separate taxation is that it is very difficult for tax offices to check that the apportionment of income and capital claimed by a couple is genuine. The committee considers that separate taxation could only be implemented with ease and clarity if there were general tax reforms to reduce "tax speculation".

More women on public committees is the aim of a bill recently debated by the Folketing (Danish parliament). The bill has been drafted by the Conservative Interior Minister but "Det radikale Venstre" (the radical left party) has already proposed similar measures on several occasions. At its first reading, the bill was widely approved by the parliamentary parties.

There are about 8,000 seats on committees, boards and councils but only 11.4% of them are occupied by women. Even ten years ago, women held 8.2% of the seats, demonstrating how slowly progress is being made.

In his parliamentary address, Interior Minister Poul Schlüter said that "these measures are inadequate. They are not energetic enough. In no sense do they correspond to the place occupied by women in society, of which an

important new feature is the practical and theoretical experience acquired by women over the last half-generation." The Minister added that institutional resistance is particularly noticeable: the importance of women's role in society is still not fully appreciated. On the question of qualifications, Poul Schlüter said that they have "never really been demanded of men. I don't think I need say any more on this subject."

The bill stipulates that agencies and organizations nominating a member for a certain committee will have to propose both a man and a woman. The minister will take the final decision as to who will be appointed but it is up to the person responsible to balance the composition of the committee.

Women's involvement in the recent strikes which brought Denmark to a standstill was a striking feature. Interviewed by Lige nu!, the newsletter of the Ligestillingsrådet (equality council), the trades unions confederation (LO) secretary Ib Wistisen pointed out that the proportion of women in the Confederation had increased from 24% to 45% over the last 15 years. Some of the strongest branches of the LO have between 75% and 100% women members. Useful address: Ligestillingsrådet, Frederiksgade 19-21, DK 1265 Copenhagen

F R A N C E

The wives of craftsmen and traders are to be the target of an information campaign on new measures to their advantage. The Council of Ministers has decided that, to facilitate access to the status of "conjoint collaborateur" (co-working spouse), procedures for inclusion in the registers of businesses and trades will be simplified. Only one spouse need submit the application, subject to confirmation from the head of the business later. Useful address: Ministère des Droits de la Femme, 53 av, d'Iéna, 75016 Paris

More women than men work for the Ministry of Education. Excluding university personnel, 922,500 people are employed by this department. The average age is 38, and 63% are women as against 37% men, although there are noticeable variations in individual categories and grades.

In category B, the largest group (360,000), 72% are women. In category A (330,000), only 53% are women. The percentage of women teachers (78%) is higher than women school heads (61%) and 84% of supply teachers are women.

Of the 240,000 non-teaching staff, 63% are women. Here too there are wide discrepancies: 46% women in category A (inspectors, senior administrators), 81% in category B (secretaries, nurses, etc), 54% in category C (technicians, shorthand-typists, etc) and 77% in category D (service personnel).

Night work for women is at the centre of a very important debate. Should it be permissible, on the grounds that restrictions bar women's way to a whole series of jobs? Minister for Women's Rights Yvette Roudy tends to think that it should be allowed but the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) is against night work in general except in certain clear-cut cases such as continuous duty industries and public services.

Antoinette, a magazine which reflects the views of women affiliated to the CGT, quotes a study by the International Labour Office: "all night work motivated solely by financial considerations (eg. to recoup the cost of expensive plant more quickly) should be banned."

The Ministry of Women's Rights notes that "to be more competitive, more and more businesses are introducing - or planning to introduce - night shifts. If women are still prevented from working at night, they are going to find themselves excluded from certain jobs." The Conseil supérieur de l'Egalité professionnelle (higher council for equality at work) has put the matter on its agenda.

Useful address: Antoinette, 50 rue Edouard Pailleron, 75019 Paris

Women's votes during the recent local elections have been analysed by Janine Mossuz-Lavau, research fellow at the Fondation nationale des sciences politiques (national political science foundation). Women's voting behaviour overall seems to have stabilized and is still more or less the same as men's.

The local elections have confirmed trends noted during the European elections: women tend to be more attracted to the right than men, although at the same time they are more suspicious of extremism, left or right, than male voters.

Occupational status clearly influenced women's votes. 34% of women who do not work vote for the left, but the proportion among those who work or are registered for work is 45%.

Useful address: Agence Femmes information, 21 rue des Jeûneurs, 75002 Paris

Marthe Mercadier, the famous French actress, is also the very active president of the association d'Information, de Formation, de Promotion professionnelle des Femmes (association for women's information, training and vocational advancement - IFPPF).

Every 5 or 6 years or so, hospitals have to "downgrade" medical or surgical equipment which is still perfectly usable but has to be replaced by more sophisticated models. This kind of equipment is sorely lacking in all the Third World countries where it could save thousands of human lives. It is difficult to forgive such waste. "To want to preserve equipment is the reaction of any good housewife," says Marthe Mercadier, "but to send it to the countries that need it is an act of solidarity."

Luanda: 18 tons; Douala: 32 tons; Bobo-Dioulasso: 38 tons; Lomé: 22 tons; Warsaw: 160 tons; Beirut: 36 tons. Each month, IFPPF fills an entire container and is planning to double the amount.

"Just give us a ring (Paris 354.28.57), we'll do the rest," says Marthe Mercadier to hospitals with obsolescent equipment.

Useful address: IFPPF, 13 quai St Michel, 75005 Paris

Europe on the air: from April 1985, Radio Enghien, which broadcasts on 90.75MHz in the Ile de France area, is planning a series of programmes called "L'Europe nous concerne" (Europe is our concern). Directed by Erika Chauvin, Elisabeth Grivot and Lydia Illing, the programmes will focus on women in the European Community. Radio Enghien has already gained a following among women listeners by devoting all its programmes on 8 March to women's organizations.

Useful address: Radio Enghien, 46 av. de Ceinture, 95880 Enghien les Bains

L'Aérospatiale, a major national industrial concern, has negotiated a special agreement with the unions on a "plan for equality between the sexes at work". At the end of 1983, women accounted for 10.9% of the company's work force. The recruitment of women is to be given priority in an attempt to increase this percentage. Training for women is also to be encouraged.

A.CO.ARCHI The "Femmes d'architectes collaboratrices" (co-working architects' wives) group set up by the architects' union, UNSFA, is about to form the Association des conjoints d'architectes (association of architects' spouses). According to enthusiast Yvette Rutten, out of a total of 19,000 architects and solicitors, a realistic estimate is that the number of wives who work with their husbands is between 3,000 and 3,500, of whom 2,600 to 3,000 have no legal status whatsoever.

Architects' wives who help their husbands would like a choice of paid employment, the status of their husband's associate or partnership. Continuing training for architects' wives should be a tax-deductible overhead.
Useful address: Yvette Rutten, c/o UNSFA, 26 boulevard Raspail, 75007 Paris

L'Association pour une éducation non sexiste (association for non-sexist education) has already put on a touring exhibition called "Femmes d'hier et d'aujourd'hui - ce que ne disent pas les manuels scolaires" (women of yesterday and today - what the school textbooks don't say). Next project: another exhibition, this time focussing on women's inventions through the centuries, particularly in the field of science and technology. France Parent-Daviet, leader of the Lille branch, would like to make contact with women who have any information on the subject.

Useful address: Association pour une éducation non sexiste,
19 rue du Cirque, 59800 Lille

G E R M A N Y

Apology On several occasions, there has been confusion in Women of Europe over the addresses of the Deutscher Frauenring (German Women's Association) and the Deutscher Frauenrat (Council of German Women). The correct addresses are: Deutscher Frauenrat, Südstrasse 125, 5300 Bonn 2
Deutscher Frauenring, Wall 42, 2300 Kiel 1

30 years already! It was in 1954 that the Deutscher Frauenring (German Women's Association) set up the "Europ-Ausschuss" (Europe committee). Dedicated to women's social and civic participation, Deutscher Frauenring took an early part in European integration and established wide contacts with institutions, groups and MPs. It was due to the Association's constant work in the field of information that, when the time came, women were able to take their place as partners in the Community.

Useful address: Deutscher Frauenring, Wall 42, 2300 Kiel 1

The women of the CDU (Christian Democrat Union) achieved a great success at the Party's national congress in Essen: a whole day of the congress was devoted to women in the family, employment and politics. The 500 or so women present were not just members of CDU: feminist Alice Schwarzer, for example, had been invited to put forward her views. Dr Heiner Geissler, CDU's general secretary and Federal minister of family affairs, stressed the importance the Party attaches to sexual equality.

CDU's slogan, "living as partners", is not motivated by any desire to stereotype women's and men's respective roles. On the contrary, the union hopes to stress freedom of choice and acknowledgement of the individual value of every woman and man. CDU proposes a monthly salary of DM.600 for bringing up a child, to be paid to one of the parents, waged or unwaged, from the time of the child's birth. This would recognize that work in the home and paid employment are of equal value. Other points discussed were

the flexibility of working hours; in the calculation of pensions, recognition of the time spent bringing up children; and a reform of the law on promotion of employment to encourage women to return to work after maternity.

At the end of the congress, women won 6 seats out of 30 on the Party's executive committee.

Useful address: CDU Frauenvereinigung, AdenauerHaus, 53 Bonn 1

Equal shares in the work that is vital to society, whether paid employment or in the home, is the main principle of any women's policy, according to Inge Wettig-Danielmeier, president of Arbeitsgemeinschaft sozialdemokratischer Frauen (women Social Democrats' working group).

The major elements of women's policies should be: the introduction of laws against discrimination; equality for girls and boys in access to vocational training; and a shorter working day.

Women Social Democrats deplore the fact that, 36 years after its inclusion in the German constitution, sexual equality is still an ideal rather than a reality. They intend to improve women's position within their own Party.

Useful address: Arbeitsgemeinschaft sozialdemokratischer Frauen,
Ollenhauerstrasse 1, 53 Bonn 1

In Rhineland-Palatinate, Dr Ursula Hansen has been appointed Minister of Social Affairs, the only woman in its regional government. Bavaria and Rhineland-North-Westphalia are now the only two regions not to have a single woman in their governments.

In Berlin, Hanna Renate Laurien, minister responsible for schools, is to be joined on the regional government benches by Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen who will be responsible for family and youth affairs.

In the Saar, Brunhilde Peter is one of 8 members of the regional government. Already the regional parliament spokeswoman for equality in the Social Democrat group, she will be responsible for employment and social affairs.

A part-time employee has won her case before an industrial tribunal in Hamburg. Her employer was demanding the right to dictate her starting times. The tribunal found the contract "inadmissible", especially as it did not even specify her hours of work.

Useful address: Arbeitsgericht Hamburg, Pressestelle(Case: 6 Ca 691/83),
2000 Hamburg 50

The working world is still slow to change. In office work, 39% of men but only 7% of women occupy managerial posts, and 46% of men but only 36% of women are doing skilled work. On the shop floor, only 6% of women are skilled workers compared with 59% of men, whereas 49% are unskilled "Hilfsarbeiterinnen" (auxiliary workers), as against 9% of men.

Absenteeism amongst women due to illness is noticeably lower than amongst men, according to a study by the Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund (German Trade Union Federation). The figures on absenteeism have remained steady for more than a decade now but the working world is still prejudiced in its lack of confidence in women.

An analysis of why people are off sick belies another misconception: it is not illnesses related to their sex which cause absenteeism amongst women

but mainly chest infections, accidents and spinal and intestinal problems. It is true, however, that many of women's health problems are caused by their twofold responsibilities and workload at home and work. Also, more women than men are employed in low-skilled jobs where, as medical specialists acknowledge, the health risks are greater. The reasons are: workers have a lower standard of education; lack of job satisfaction increases accident risks; and health and safety officers pay less attention to low-skilled workers.

Useful address: Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund, Abteilung Frauen, Hans, Bockler-Strasse 39, 4000 Dusseldorf 30

The situation for women on the jobs market is alarming, says the Leitstelle Gleichberechtigung der Frau (bureau for equal treatment for women) in Hamburg. Competition is becoming increasingly tough not just between men and women but also between young, qualified women and older, less well qualified women.

More and more women are going to be forced to accept low-paid, unskilled jobs. With the arrival of computers and the approaching rationalization of service industries, white-collar workers and secretaries will soon find themselves faced with the same problem.

As recently as 1978, 283 women with educational or socio-educational diplomas were recruited, but the number fell to 60 in 1983.

Useful address: Leitstelle Gleichstellung der Frau, Postrasse, 2000 Hamburg 1

G R E E C E

Women's policies are topical in Greece again this year for three reasons: the dynamism of women's organizations; the end of the Decade for Women, calling for an appraisal of the present situation and plans for the future; and the approaching general election.

Nea Dimocratia (new democracy), the main opposition party, has held the second Panhellenic conference of officials of its women's organization. The strength of the organization, which has some 600 local branches, was behind the conference delegates, and the vast audience of MPs and party officials of both sexes took careful note of the ideas and proposals put forward, all of which should appear in the Party's election manifesto.

The Central Committee of the Greek Communist Party has a section for women's issues which has held a symposium on "the Party's official position on fundamental women's issues and the struggle for genuine change". Party members and officials and guests from the USSR and other Socialist countries came to listen to papers on: the economic crisis and women's right to work; interpersonal relations and the development of women's social awareness; and the ideology of the women's movement.

Enossi Gynekon Elladas (Greek women's union), an organization affiliated to the Socialist Party and chaired by Prime Minister's wife, Ms Papandreou, has arranged a series of four-day seminars. Officials in each region are meeting for training courses in group leadership. The need to improve branch efficiency is now recognized as essential.

At its last Panhellenic conference, Enossi Gynekon Elladas decided to encourage the establishment of local equality councils to improve equal opportunities by taking account of local situations. Two other objectives estab-

lished at the congress were to encourage and develop women's cooperatives and to give women more information on new laws affecting their position.

The law on parental leave (Law 1483/84) has been analysed in detail by Syndesmos gia ta Dikeomata tis Gynekas (league for women's rights). In the panel discussion, lawyers, top civil servants and academics hailed Law 1483/84 as a step towards equality, since it helps parents of both sexes to fulfil their family and work responsibilities. Nevertheless, the Law applies only to workers in the private sector and even then only to those working for firms employing over 100. Parental leave is also unpaid and the employee has to pay full national insurance contributions, including the employer's contribution, during the entire period of leave.

A high-ranking civil servant from the Department of Employment who was present during the discussion reassured the assembly by stating that the next parliamentary ratification of International Labour Office Convention 156 would recommend that the law on parental leave be extended to cover public sector employees.

"The protection of maternity is a State responsibility and a prerequisite of equality": this was the theme of a demonstration in central Athens organized by Omospondia Gynekon Elladas (Greek women's federation) and of a public debate the following day. OGE, a leading Marxist women's organization, is concerned at the problems of working mothers and working couples who want to start a family.

The protection of maternity is one of the points in a three-year programme drawn up by the federation at its last Panhellenic congress. During the congress, the federation expressed its concern at the increase in outworking by women.

Women in the public sector were the subject of a three-day conference organized by Symvoulío Isotitas ton Dio Filon (committee for sexual equality). It was asserted that the current unsatisfactory situation is due mainly to the late arrival of women in the public sector. The recruitment of more women with better academic qualifications is a recent trend. This explains why, as in many other countries, there are so few women in top positions. In Greece as elsewhere, prejudice and lack of confidence die hard, amongst women as much as men.

Foreign guests at the conference confirmed that there are many obstacles to the building of a career for women civil servants, but certain measures tried out abroad have been introduced to improve the situation. The authorities responsible for reforming the public sector who were present or represented at the colloquium will be duly informed of those measures.

Sexual equality and the media is to be the theme of a conference organized by Symvoulío Isotitas ton Dio Filon (council for sexual equality) in conjunction with the Secretary of State for Information.

Sexual equality and education will be the subject of another conference, also organized by Symvoulío Isotitas ton Dio Filon, this time in conjunction with the Department of Education, to be attended by representatives of the teachers' unions.

Useful address: Symvoulío Isotitas to Dio Filon, Mousseou 2, Plaka,
105 55 Athens

Chryssoula Kallia: in memoriam A large gathering paid an emotional homage to the memory of Chryssoula Kallia at the Lykeio Ellenidon (Greek women's Lycée). Wife of ex-minister K. Kallia and director of the Lycée, Chryssoula Kallia exerted a strong influence on women's policies. Head of one of the oldest women's organizations in Greece, she also fostered very close links between Greek communities abroad and their homeland. It was announced that Mr Kallia was offering an award for the best report on this kind of activity.

Useful address: Lykeio Ellenidon, Dimocritou 14, 106 73 Athens

Will abortion be decriminalized? The question is back on the agenda. A group of women (including journalists, actresses, scientists and even political figures) signed a public declaration that they had had one or more abortions. Legal proceedings were taken against them but numerous women, including the Prime Minister's wife, came forward to offer their support to the defendants on the first day of the proceedings.

Women's organizations have expressed every shade of opinion, ranging - at one end of the scale - from an advocacy of the legalization of voluntary termination of pregnancy, to the other extreme, outright condemnation of abortion as a crime against life. The Greek Orthodox Church has not yet issued an official statement.

The Government, for its part, has expressed concern at the sharp drop in the birth rate in Greece. The Health Minister has, however, declared the Government's intention to review "obsolete legislation". The Ministers of Justice and Health have appointed a joint committee of doctors, civil servants and representatives of the Church and women's groups to review the situation and formulate proposals. No date has been fixed for delivery of the report.

As for the women whose public declaration provoked this flood of events, proceedings have been temporarily suspended.

I R E L A N D

40,000 women may obtain better social security cover when Irish law is brought into line with the Community directive on social security. The change should have come into effect on 21 December 1984 but current parliamentary procedure has delayed implementation. The most important effect will be on married workers: under the present regulations, men and women do not receive the same social security benefits.

Useful address: Department of Social Welfare, Aras Mhic Dhiarmada, Store Street, Dublin 1

Maternity leave allowance The Southern Health Board has failed to abolish benefits for maternity leave. The resolution was passed by 22 votes to 6 but the Health and Social Security Minister has indicated that he would reject such an economy measure.

Social security payments for the treatment of the teeth, eyes and ears will be extended to cover pregnant women whose husbands are already in receipt of full benefit. This measure will affect some 30,000 women a year. The Health Minister has indicated that this is only the first step, as he plans not to limit the benefit to pregnant women.

Women engineers in mines and quarries? It has been illegal to employ women in mines and quarries in Ireland since the 1965 Mines and Quarries Act but the Oireachtas has agreed to examine a bill which would allow women to undertake non-manual labour in the mines. There have been consultations between the Employment Minister and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the Federated Union of Employers, the Council for the Status of Women and the Employment Equality Agency.

Useful address: Department of Labour, Mespil Road, Dublin 4

Starting a business: many women would like to start their own business but few apply for the aid to which they are entitled. During a recent seminar, Nuala Fennell, Minister for Women's Affairs, quoted a few figures: only 1% of grant applications to the Enterprise Development Programme are made by women. Under the Small Industries Programme, 5% of the applications received and 3% of the projects backed by the Programme have been submitted by women.

A ray of hope: the Youth Self-Employment Programme has produced better results. Of 525 grants awarded in 1984, 27% were given to brave and imaginative young women.

Useful address: Irish Management Institute, Sandyford, Dublin

Unmarried mothers are subject to discriminations which are causing concern to "Cherish - Unmarried Persons Association". Two cases are cited: one involves a woman member of the police force under threat of disciplinary procedures for having had a child without being married. The reason: "behaviour prejudicial to discipline or likely to cause discredit to the service". The other case involves an unmarried mother threatened with eviction by the local authorities because her father, with whom she was living, has died. The authority has taken the case to court twice, claiming that council housing is reserved for the elderly. Twice the court has ruled in favour of the unmarried mother. The council has declared its intention to appeal.

Useful address: Cherish - Unmarried Persons Association,
2 Pembroke Street, Dublin 2

The age limit on job applicants penalizes women who have chosen to devote a period of their life to bringing up their children. This is the claim made by Ms Martyn who was not offered a job advertised by the North Western Health Board because an age limit of 27 had been set for applicants.

An Employment Equality Agency official backed Ms Martyn's claim but the Health Board refused to give in. The case was brought before an industrial tribunal which ruled against the Health Board and awarded Ms Martyn £13,000 compensation. The case was then taken before the High Court in Dublin which ruled that there was nothing discriminatory about the Health Board's decision.

Useful address: Employment Equality Agency, 36 Upper Mount Street,
Dublin 2

Several feminist groups strongly demonstrated their indignation during a court hearing in Tralee. They were protesting against the exceptional length (one week) of the public questioning of a woman accused of infanticide. A trial of poverty and ignorance: the defendant and four members of her family are suspected of having murdered two newly-born babies whose bodies were found 50 miles apart.

I T A L Y

The "Women's Code" - Codice Donna is a 3,023 page volume setting out the full text of all current legislation on women, plus judgments delivered by the Constitutional Court, EEC directives on equality and the texts of more than 70 international conventions.

This unprecedented publication is the brainchild of the Commissione Nazionale per la Realizzazione della Parità fra Uomo e Donna (national committee for equal opportunities for men and women). It has been produced by Alma Cappiello, Marisa del Bufalo, Laura Remiddi, Maria Rita Saulle and Elena Marinucci, president of the committee.

At a presentation of the volume to Premier Craxi, Elena Marinucci announced that a condensed version in the form of questions and answers is ready for dissemination, entitled "Guida ai diritti della donna" (guide to women's rights).

Useful Commissione Nazionale per la realizzazione della parità fra uomo e donna, Presidenza del Consiglio, Palazzo Chigi, Rome

The regional, provincial and local elections were seen by the equal opportunities committee as a good opportunity to launch a campaign entitled "Vota donna" - "vote woman". Posters and newspaper and TV advertisements featured well known people, men and women, explaining why they were voting for a woman. Alma Cappiello, the campaign coordinator, pointed out that although political parties are putting up more women candidates they rarely give them a chance to build up a solid electoral base for themselves.

Financial cutbacks are still biting hard, and there was little money for the campaign itself. The national committee had the resources to create posters and advertisements but it relied on the generosity of publishers, owners of private TV stations, mayors of large towns, etc. for their publication and broadcasting.

The future of women: new hope for society. Under this title, UFISAS (the international women's union for social research and action) has been pressing on with a debate launched back in 1980 on the social position of women and future prospects. Speaking at a colloquium, Gaetana Cazora Russa, secretary general of UFISAS, said that women in all their diversity have not yet attained full self-fulfilment. Many speakers confirmed the view that society as a whole must shake off its male image and seek true individual values. The idea of a journal in which the debate could be pursued was received with interest.

Useful address: UFISAS, Via Lago di Lesina 20, 0199 Rome

It was "men only" on the ministerial committee appointed to review the problems raised by artificial insemination. Health Minister Costante Degan was insistent that this oversight be remedied and four women have now been appointed: Isabella Coghi, Professor of endocrinology and gynaecology at the University of Rome, Daria Minucci, a gynaecologist teaching at Padua University, Liliana Rossi Carleo, professor of maritime economics at Naples Nautical Institute and Laura Renzoni Governatori, professor of political science at the University of Bologna.

A "twofold success" in their private and public lives: this is the self-appointed aim of today's women managers in their network, "Donne in carriera" (career women). With 350 corporate and 2,000 individual members, the network hopes to help women "negotiate their roles", in other words to cast off stereotyped concepts. "Less competitiveness, more creativity" is the women's approach to a career. Useful address: Donne in carriera, Via Eugenia Chiesa 4, 20122 Milan

A Charter of Rights for Women in Sport has been proclaimed by the women's committee of UISP - the Italian union for popular sport. The Charter's drafters claim that it recognizes the inherent value's of women's sport without being unduly influenced by the pattern of male sport. It states the right to be different as well as the right to physical integrity, rejecting the physical and psychological manipulation to which athletes are subjected. It also claims equal access for women to positions of responsibility in sports federations.

Illustrating the value of such a Charter, when US champion Persa Bercky Jackson recently became pregnant it was found that her case was not covered in the regulations. Under the only rule allowing another sports-woman to take her place in the team, she had to be declared as suffering from an "accident with foreseeable medical results lasting more than six months".

Useful address: ARCI-UISP, 24 Via Ponte Nuovo, Milan

A survey on its members by the Centro Italiano Femminile (Italian women's centre) has shown that only certain population groups are members of an association and involved in social, arts and political activities. The factors that make it more likely are having a high level of education or medium-to-high income or being in mid-life, especially when all these factors are combined.

Of the members replying, 83% wanted their association to be absolutely free to think and act and to be in no way subservient to political decision-making centres. A significant proportion said that women desire a "new pattern for society" in which the priorities are peace, the struggle against drugs, a social policy on the family and better relationships between groups and individuals.

Useful address: C.I.F., Via Carlo Zucchi 25, 00165 Rome

Reviewing the Decade for Women. FIDAPA (the Italian federation of craftswomen and professional women) would like women to be better represented not just at the top but at the grassroots of political organizations. In the same spirit, FIDAPA recommends the strengthening of pluralist bodies working for women, such as the "Consulta", an advisory committee representing women's groups in each region, province and commune. Finally, FIDAPA proposes more coordinated action on enforcing the laws on equality.

Useful address: FIDAPA President: Angelica Biacca Branca
Via A. Turco 45, 88100 Catanzaro

Should housework be socialized? Or at least its value recognized? The first step in this direction has been taken by the regional authority of Latium, which has allocated Lit.1,900 million under its budget, 900 million of which is to be used for housewives' cooperatives.

Women and Technology is the theme of research by the national Equal Opportunities Committee, which has revealed some disturbing facts: although women have been entering the working world in growing numbers over the past ten years, there is a process of polarization which may be a threat to women in the long run. With the advent of new technology, women either have very sophisticated skills or are confined to routine information-handling jobs while creative work is still a male preserve.

L U X E M B O U R G

In the police force women earn less than men at the start of their career. Why do they earn 14% less, asked Viviane Reding, Christian Social MP, even though their training and the work they do are recognized as being identical to those of policemen?

Mr Fischbach, Minister responsible, explained that the initial training period of a male police officer is part of a volunteer army service scheme which is not open to women. Nevertheless, he acknowledged, this created an anomaly. The law is to be amended and Mr Fischbach's Department is to draft a bill allowing women to volunteer for the army too.

Family Planning has been too successful: the budget allocated by the Government will pay for only 1,067 hours' work, whereas 1,836 have in fact been worked. The team, which already consists of 9 doctors, 1 psychologist and 1 marriage adviser, needs to be expanded.

Of those consulting the service, 75% were Luxemburgers, 66% were under 25 and 80% wanted information on married life in general and contraception in particular. Fewer women want their pregnancies terminated: such requests were the subject of only 0.9% of sessions in 1984. In the same year, the service recorded 30 rapes, 11 of which had been committed against children; of these 11, 5 were cases of incest.

Useful address: Planning Familial, 10-20 Rue Glesner, 1630 Luxembourg

Witch hunts were the keynote of an exhibition and lecture organized by Socialist women to mark International Women's Day. The ideological, spiritual and economic background helps us to understand how meagre a choice women have had: to be a saint, prostitute or witch.

It was learned that, in the late 15th century, the City of Luxembourg bought a house equipped with six beds to be used for prostitution. In the same city, there are about 700 documents on "trials" of witches between 1560 and 1700. It is estimated, however, that 2,000 to 3,000 witches were in fact executed during this period.

Useful address: Femmes Socialistes, 2 rue de la Boucherie, 1247 Luxembourg

Divorced women in Luxembourg have for a year now been able to turn to a new association, FEDILUX, for support. A review of its first year by its founders shows how slow attitudes are to change. Prejudice, even among the authorities, has to be fought, but some progress has been made. This new association is facing many problems: it needs permanent premises, it has to cope with more and more calls for help - and when it is money that is needed, how can they be met? It would welcome contact with other associations in Europe tackling the same issues.

Useful address: FEDILUX, c/o Maria Frieden

2, Montée de la Pétruse, Luxembourg-Gare

N E T H E R L A N D S

Two celebrations as part of International Women's Day in the Netherlands are of special note. The "Vrouwen voor Vrede" (Women for Peace) action group demonstrated in Amsterdam and placed flowers on the monument to the memory of the women victims of the Ravensbrook concentration camp. In Voorschoten, there was an official ceremony to name the main street in the Noord-Holland district "Joke Smitlaan" (Joke Smit Avenue). Previously, four other streets in Voorschoten had been named (without pomp and ceremony) after women who played an important role in women's struggle at the beginning of the century: Carry Pothuis, Suze Groeneweg, Wilhelmina Drücker and Aletta Jacobs, the "queen-mother" of feminism. In Voorschoten as elsewhere, most streets are named after men.

Force employers to take on women is the ideal solution recommended by F.H.A.M. Kruse, Director-General for Employment at the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs, during the "Wilma wil werk" (Wilma wants work) conference organized by Raad voor het Jeugdbeleid and the Emancipation Council.

The central point of discussion was the right to work as the key to women and men making their own choice of career. At the conference, the Minister for Social Affairs, Mr De Koning, acknowledged the inevitability of positive discrimination, especially in view of rising unemployment amongst young women. He also stated that, in 1984, 29% of young people under 23 were unemployed and 45% of them were women. Another significant percentage is that, in 1984, 44,000 (54%) of the 81,000 youngsters registered as being unemployed for over a year were women.

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

The violinist Marieke Blankenstijn of the Hague recently won the International Mozart Competition in Salzburg, competing against 30 musicians from 7 countries. Marieke Blankenstijn had already won the Oscar Back Competition in Amsterdam in 1981. She has also played regularly with several symphony orchestras in the Netherlands.

During the Papal visit to the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium, observers noticed the comments and speeches made by women. Several of the women departed from their official texts and raised the controversial issue of women's place in the Catholic Church.

Vrouwenbond FNV (the women's section of the industrial union, FNV) is to open its second college in Tilburg next September and hopes to set up a third college in northern Holland. This was announced by Karin Adelmund, outgoing president of Vrouwenbond and an FNV official. The new president is Maria van Veen. Vrouwenbond FNV's first college, the Alida de Jong school, opened a few months ago in Utrecht. Hundreds of women are studying computer science and management there and the long waiting list for courses is proof of their success. Useful addresses: Vrouwenbond FNV, Leggelerstraat 25, Geeuwebrug/Dwungeloo and FNV Vrouwenbond, Plein '40-'45, Amsterdam

The Commissie Gelijke Behandeling van mannen en vrouwen bij de arbeid (commission for equal treatment of women and men at work) can give information over the telephone on people's rights concerning offers of employment, wages, careers and resignation or dismissal. Useful address: Commissie Gelijk Loon en Gelijke Behandeling, Muzenstraat 30, The Hague

The Zuid-Holland Arts Council has awarded the Zuid-Holland Prize to four women's bookshops in the province: Brood en Rozen (Bread and Roses), Arcadia, Trix and Gaia. The Council sees the bookshops as the women's movement's cultural assets and considers that the literature they sell may have long-term effects on the growing awareness of women.

Useful addresses: Brood en Rozen, Gravenstraat 22, Dordrecht; Arcadia, Nieuwe Haven 310, 2801 EG Gouda; Trix, Anna Paulownastraat 15, The Hague; Gaia, Pieterskerkchoorsteeg 1, Lieden

The University of Amsterdam's Faculty of Economics has decided unanimously to appoint the first professor of women's studies in the management college, bringing an end to a year of difficult negotiations on the subject.

Useful address: Adfeling Vrouwenstudies, Faculteit der Economische Wetenschappen, Jodenbreestraat 23, Amsterdam

Ms Van Es, MP for the PSP (Pacifistische-Socialistische Partij: Pacifist-Socialist Party), has called for changes to medical examination forms which contain questions discriminating against women in contravention of the law on equal treatment. Useful address: PSP-Vrouwen, Postbus 700, Amsterdam

More than 300 people working for children (in playschools, day care units and reception centres, on school crossing patrols, etc) have resigned as a result of recent changes in the taxation of "tweeverdieners" (two-income families). Several hundred more, or 10% of the total number involved, are expected to hand in their notice. These are the findings of an inquiry carried out by the Werkgemeenschap Kindercentra in Nederland (working committee on children's centres in the Netherlands), which covers 3,000 children's centres. In some cases, the mass resignations have led to the closure of centres. The WKN is asking for the reform of this law which affects the most disadvantaged groups of society, namely women and young children.

Useful address: Werkgemeenschap Kindercentra Nederland, Postbus 74, 6860 AB Oosterbeek

Ellen Blazer, the television director, is the winner of the 1984 prize for the arts from the city of Hilversum. This 4,500 guilder prize is an award for all the programmes she has directed over the past 30 years for the VARA television channel.

Supplementary benefit offices are resorting to tougher methods to exclude women who are receiving supplementary benefit. Landelijk Steunpunt voor Bijstandsvrouwen (regional aid for women on supplementary benefit) is having to step in more and more to help women who are forced by the police or the social services to sign an admission that they receive financial assistance from their manfriend and that they form an economic unit with him.

Useful address: Vrouwensteunpunt Zuid-Holland, Westvest 139, 2611 AZ Delft

"De toekomst van de Vrouwenhulpverlening" (the future of medical treatment for women) is the title of issue 4 of Vrouwenhulpverlening. The publication prints the conclusions of a recent congress on this theme and various suggestions for the future. The conference was preparatory to another meeting which is to take place in autumn 1985. Vrouwenhulpverlening is aiming at a new method of treating women's problems at the medical level. The basis of the new method of treatment is groups of women to replace the medical, health and hygiene infrastructure in certain areas. The eventual goal is optimum integration of the treatment of women's problems (for example, battered women and children, the after-effects of a mastectomy) within the existing

institutional structure, both organizationally and in funding.

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

Several MPs for the PvdA, CDA and VVD (Socialist, Christian Democrat and Liberal parties) have expressed disapproval of an advertisement for a vacant post as clerk for the lower house, the Tweede Kamer, which does not explicitly encourage women to apply.

Useful address: PvdA, CDA, VVD, Binnenhof, The Hague

The new magazine DIEN (serve) hopes to improve the position of uniformed women in the police force, fire services, the customs and armed forces. DIEN is named after Dina Sanson, the first woman employed by the Rotterdam police force 70 years ago. The magazine is being launched by the "Vrouw in Uniform" (uniformed women's) foundation, established for the same purpose at the end of 1984. Only 6% of the 30,000 members of the police force are women, and the same proportion applies to the other defence services. Fewer than 30 women work in the fire services. Not to be forgotten, the "Politiewerk is ook Vrouwenwerk" (police work is women's work, too) campaign aims to step up the percentage of women in the Amsterdam police force to 400, or 25% of the force, in the next 6 years. DIEN will be subsidized by the Ministry of the Interior for 10 years and should then be in a position to finance itself. Useful addresses: Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken, Schedeldoekshaven 200, The Hague; Amsterdamse Politie, Elandsgracht 127, Amsterdam

The Dutch government is planning to abolish the right to a minimum daily allowance established by the Ziektewet (law on sickness) for certain population groups. The Emancipation Council points out that women will be hardest hit and that this discriminatory move infringes the European directive on equal treatment for women and men. The Stichting Ombudsvrouw (arbitration body) and the Fondation Rechtenvrouw have introduced an emergency bill opposing the new proposal. They hope to eliminate such discrimination, which would affect both unmarried heads of families and those who are not the head of a family; it is also in contravention of the third European directive on equal treatment in social security matters.

Useful addresses: Stichting Ombudsvrouw, Postbus 18520, 2502 EM The Hague
Rechtenvrouw, Postbus 13162, 3507 LD Utrecht

The position of women and men in our society is reflected in structural inequalities at work. Within local authorities, too, the situation of women is less advanced than men's. These are the opening words of a new policy recently approved by the Amsterdamse gemeenteraad (Amsterdam city council), entitled "A'dam en Eva" (Adam and Eve and A'dam: an abbreviation of Amsterdam). This encouraging policy has already been adopted by other local councils, and should help women council employees to "catch up with" their male counterparts.

Useful address: Amsterdamse gemeenteraad, Stadhuis, Oude Z, Voorburgwal 197, Amsterdam

Pregnant women should be subject to special legislation which does not exist at present. The concept would be morally acceptable only if it did not have commercial connotations. More than 400 people came out in agreement on this principle at a meeting organized by the Juridische Faculteitsvereniging (Association of the Faculty of Law) of Groningen University.

Useful address: Universiteit van Groningen, Juridische Faculteitsvereniging, Postbus 72, 9700 AB Groningen

U N I T E D K I N G D O M

Workplace nurseries: are they a "perk", like a company car? Chancellor of the Exchequer Nigel Lawson, in his budget, failed to reverse the Inland Revenue decision to tax on parents using workplace nurseries for their children. One single mother has been faced with a demand for £720 in tax on these grounds. The tax applies to anyone earning more than £8,500 and can have a devastating effect on working mothers.

Parents backed by the Equal Opportunities Commission have campaigned for exemption on the grounds that such nurseries are "one element of good practice in equal opportunities schemes implemented by many employers".

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

Occupational pensions are largely unfair to women. They are geared to the needs of a full-time, mainly male labour force, and assume women to be financially dependent on their husbands. Yet women represent 41% of today's workforce and 91% of part-timers. Most pension schemes refuse to admit part-time workers, impose minimum entry ages and take little or no account of the broken employment records and maternity and child-care leave that are part of the pattern of women's working lives.

These findings, based on a study for the Equal Opportunities Commission by Ann McGoldrick, confirm the EOC view that the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 should be amended to ensure that occupational pension schemes offer true equality between the sexes.

300 women trade unionists meeting in Southport at the TUC Women's Conference demanded that the three million women workers they represent should have a better hearing from the male-dominated Trades Union Congress. The Women's Advisory Committee was asked to prepare a report on these matters for next year. More specifically, the women felt that the limitations confining their discussions to "subjects relating to the problems of women and young persons" should be lifted.

There was concern for the health of office workers using visual display units. Evidence suggests that they may contribute to abnormal pregnancies and birth deformities, while surveys have shown that computer workers suffer from headaches, sore eyes and backache.

Useful address: Women's Advisory Committee, Trades Union Congress
Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1

In Northern Ireland the Equal Opportunities Commission has published its 8th Annual Report: it dealt with 500 general complaints and 255 individual complaints on equal pay and sex discrimination. The Northern Ireland EOC has granted legal assistance in 39 cases, some of which have attracted wide media attention. Its booklet, "Make it a Woman's World Too", had proved extremely popular.

Useful address: Equal Opportunities Commission (N.I.)
Chamber of Commerce House, 22 Victoria St, Belfast BT2 2BA

Jane Finlay honoured The Queen has awarded Jane Finlay, Deputy Chairman of the Equal Opportunities Commission, the CBE in recognition of her unstinting good work on behalf of women. Jane Finlay has also been elected one of the Vice-Presidents of the EC Equality Advisory Committee by acclaim.

In the business world women managers achieve equal status with men only by being better qualified, more ambitious and more mobile in terms of changing jobs. The price they pay is that they are more prone to divorce and separation than men managers, and tend to stay single or have fewer children than average, according to a survey, "The Career Development of British Managers" published by the British Institute of Management, covering 1,882 managers, including 412 women managers.

Useful address: British Institute of Management, Management House
Cottingham Road, Corby, Northants

The Scottish Women's Rural Institutes, founded in 1917, are today flourishing organizations with 46,300 members in 1,162 institutes and 33 federations throughout Scotland and the neighbouring Islands.

Although the Institutes keep alive the traditional arts, crafts and cookery for which Scotswomen are famous, they also teach sophisticated communication skills through their TV, Media and Publicity Schools, and offer sport, drama and visits abroad. Countrywomen from Holland, Japan and Australia have visited the Edinburgh headquarters.

Useful address: Scottish Women's Rural Institutes
42a Heriot Row, Edinburgh, Scotland

Equal play on the golf course is being claimed by Women in Golf in Northern Ireland. Monica Morgan, former lady captain of Fortwilliam Golf Club, won damages and an apology from Dunmurry Golf Club for refusing to let her play with two men partners on a Saturday afternoon. As a result the N.I. Equal Opportunities Commission is asking all golf clubs to look at their membership rules: since so many women now work, there is no reason for restricting access to golf courses at weekends to men.

Gingerbread is a self-help association for single-parent families. It has 25 groups working in Northern Ireland. On the grounds that Northern Ireland is the most disadvantaged region in the UK and the rest of Western Europe in terms of child care and employment, it has recently published a useful booklet entitled "So you want to start a Day Nursery". It explains how to form an initial committee, gather facts for presentation to the Health and Social Services Board and obtain premises, staff and equipment.

Useful address: Gingerbread (N.I.), 171 University St., Belfast BT7 1HR

Women in the sporting world was a concern expressed at during the events marking International Women's Day in London boroughs. Valerie Wise, Chair of the Greater London Council Women's Committee, explained: "In the sporting world particularly, women have problems of access. It may be because of social norms as regards what constitutes femininity, or because of prohibitive practicalities such as time and transport".

In Hackney, Pamela Gordon is the first woman in London to be appointed Chief Executive of a borough local authority, at a fee of £31,000 a year. "I regret that being a female chief executive has novelty value in 1985;" she said, "the first woman in this position is long overdue."

RESEARCH, MEETINGS AND BOOKS

An association of women's groups in Cologne is organizing an "equal opportunities information mart" at the Town Hall on 4 and 5 October. It appeals to all European women's organizations for their newsletters, booklets, etc. on this theme.

Useful address: Charlotte von der Herberg, President, Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kölner Frauenverbände, Gieselbergstrasse 1, D-506 Berg.Gladbach 1.

Women and Public Appointments is a study updated by Dorothy Kent on the position of women in committees, councils and institutions in Great Britain. Her report comments that the agencies responsible for nominating people for such appointments are themselves largely male-dominated, which tends to perpetuate imbalances. The report can be obtained from the Equal Opportunities Commission, Overseas House, Quay Street, Manchester M3 3HN.

Donna-Uomo: Universo nell'universo - "man-woman: universe in universe" - is the title of issue 3/4 of "Il Cervello e l'Integrazione delle Scienze" ("the brain and scientific integration"), the journal of the Centre d'Etude pour l'Evolution Humaine. This is a monograph on aspects of male-female interaction from the scientific, biological and sociological viewpoints. Useful address:

CEU, Villa Torre di Quinto, Viale Tor di Quinto 58, 00191 Rome

Das darf doch wohl nicht wahr sein! (you cannot be serious!) is the story of the tenacious struggle by Irmgard Sauer to defend the interests of widows. An amazing 450-book book of letters, newspaper articles, conference programmes and the text of legislation. Despite her age (she was born in 1902), Irmgard Sauer never lets go, is never deflected from her purpose and won't budge an inch, whoever her opponent may be. DM.19.80 + postage.

Useful address: Irmgard Sauer, Schorndorfer Strasse 57, 7140 Ludwigsburg.

Le Bancrie by Achille Ardigo and C. Cipolla, is a piece of sociological research on women bank staff throughout Italy. Published by Angeli (Milan), the survey was commissioned by FABI, the leading union federation in the banking sector. It shows that although many women are employed by banks they are not well placed there. For example, only 19% are in jobs where they are in contact with the public.

La princesse Europe, by Paula Begouen Demeaux, is the life story of "Princess Europe", Marthe Bibesco, and - through her - pictures the efforts to unify Europe on the first half of the century. A colourful, exciting page of European history, published by the author herself.

Useful address: Paula Begouen Demeaux, 93 Rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris.

Breaking the Circle by Ailbhe Smyth is a report on the position of women in Irish universities. The law on equality in employment has not changed the type of work being done by women. There is no open discrimination, just a complex system of indirect discrimination which reflects the traditional segregation of women in Irish society as a whole. The trend can be reversed only by positive action, as called for under the Community action programme.

Author of the Guide to Women's Rights in Ireland, Ailbe Smyth teaches at University College, Dublin, and is s founder of its Women's Studies Forum.

THIRD EUROPEAN COLLOQUIUM OF WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS

On the invitation of Nederlandse Vrouwen Raad - the Dutch Women's Council - and in cooperation with the Commission of the European Communities, Directorate General for Information (Information for Women's Organization and Press), 90 delegates from about 60 European organizations met at the Leeuwenhorst Congress Centre in the Hague on 15-16 March 1985.

As in Bonn in 1982 and Turin in 1984, the meeting was attended by Spanish and Portuguese observers.

The Hague colloquium was the third in the series (see "Women of Europe" 26/82 and 35/84), demonstrating the great interest of women's associations in regularly pooling their views and establishing closer ties of cooperation.

Preceding by a few months the Nairobi conference to mark the close of the Decade for Women, the colloquium offered - in the words of its organizers - a "unique opportunity" to review and evaluate progress made under the Community's Action Programme for equal opportunities.

One innovation was made at this colloquium: the focal point of discussions was the theme of "working time - leisure time".

A chapel with stained glass windows at the Leeuwenhorst Congress Centre was the setting for the inaugural session of the third colloquium of women's associations. On a platform of honour decorated with tulips (in Turin it had been mimosa), the President of Nederlandse Vrouwen Raad, Katrien Stoelinger, welcomed the 90 women who had come from all ten EEC countries as well as Spain and Portugal.

Annelien Kappeyne van de Coppello, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment with special responsibility for emancipation policy within the Dutch Government, sparked off the debate by warning of the risk of a deterioration in women's work with the arrival of new technology: there will be more isolation, tasks will be less varied and social contact will be restricted unless they are on the alert. It is vital to keep watch over the quality of women's employment and to channel women workers towards new jobs. This will call for effort not only by governments but by women themselves - and the decisive role played by parents should not be overlooked.

Fausta Deshormes La Valle, who is responsible for women's information in the European Commission, expressed her pleasure at the growing number of women attending European colloquia of women's organizations, seeing this as a sign of their widespread interest in a constructive dialogue with the Community and with other women's groups.

The debate on "working time - leisure time" would, said Fausta Deshormes, be a way in which women could indicate a new direction for society. Nevertheless, the discussions would make their mark only if they were well prepared and followed up and if the exchange of experience were brought to the attention of grassroots members. She hoped that the benefit of these two days would not be confined to a privileged few but would extend to as many people as possible. It was up to the women's associations present to broadcast and disseminate the ideas expressed here, thus helping to create more enlightened attitudes.

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The Community's Programme of Action for equal opportunities was then described by Odile Quintin, head of the Bureau for women's employment and equal opportunities at the European Commission. She pointed out that Member States would comply with their commitments under existing directives only if pressure were brought to bear from below, in other words only if women's associations reminded their governments of their duty.

Reporting on progress, she mentioned the recommendation on positive action adopted by the Council of Ministers in December 1984, as well as the Commission's stand in favour of separate taxation of a couple's income. There are also prospects of progress in the field of education, since a resolution is being passed in June launching a wholehearted promotion of girls' education.

Efforts are currently being made in three directions to encourage the fairer apportionment of tasks, with a review on childcare methods, a long-running debate on the sharing of responsibilities and attempts to bring the problems to the attention of the public at large. Television companies, for example, had been invited to a seminar in June which would tackle the image and position of women in the medium of TV.

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Jessie Larive-Groenendaal, Ien van den Heuvel and Hanja Maij-Weggen, all three of whom are members of the European Parliament Committee for Women's Rights, then took the floor to explain Parliament's role and their committee's terms of reference.

Socialist Ien van den Heuvel observed that "politics cannot make people happy but they can create conditions conducive to happiness. Yet this has not been the case up to the present. We must turn our backs on this kind of politics and resolutely take another path". Liberal Jessie Larive echoed her words: "Let us start by banding together as a pressure group. We have the means: women account for more than half of the electorate ... Let us demand that Community ministers meet at least once a year to discuss the questions that concern us. And let us draw up a clear-cut plan of action for 1985-1990". Taking a specific example, Christian Democrat Hanja Maij-Weggen reviewed the European Social Fund in detail, quoting figures: in 1980, about 11,000 women were able to return to working life with the help of the Fund; in 1981, the figure was only 10,000. Overall, one third of the beneficiaries of grants from the Fund are women, two thirds men. What can women's organizations do? Contact their governments to make sure that the amount set aside for women is commensurate with the number of women without jobs.

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Two papers were used as a basis for discussions. The first, by Elizabeth Garnsey of Cambridge University, was entitled "The Distribution of Working Time; the case for more freedom of choice". Read by Catherine Lemons (also from Cambridge), the paper took as its starting point the principle that "innovations in working time have not kept up with technological advance". The question that arises, then, is how best to manage the time available to us.

Since we "experience difficulties in balancing the time available for private and public commitments", women are often doomed to an exhausting race against the clock. The problem is all the more serious in that the authorities display no enthusiasm for solving it. This is where women's associations can make a vital contribution, because "they have as a central concern the public defence of private values".

"Why," asked Elizabeth Garnsey, "should unbroken, full-time working continue to be the norm?" Furthermore, role specialization leads to the underuse of skills and qualifications, especially among married women. It is a matter of urgency to experiment in many alternative working-time patterns such as flexitime, job-sharing and the staggering of holidays, and to encourage innovatory work-styles among the young.

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The second paper put to the audience for discussion was a report entitled "Sharing of occupational, family and social responsibilities" by Hedwige Peemans-Pouillet, read by its author.

"We [collectively] have enough time to do everything, but it is badly distributed," she argued. She explained that there were millions of unemployed on the one hand and, on the other, millions of people sick from the stress of overwork. Working life makes heavy demands on women with young children, and there are work-disabled people whose numbers would fall if everyone were given the time really to look after themselves.

Paradoxically, there is a positive side to women's unemployment. "Women are now, like men, determined to stay on the labour market in spite of the economic situation, whereas in the past an economic recession tended to dissuade women from seeking employment." It should be realised, however, that unemployment widens the inequality gap and hampers progress towards the sharing of responsibilities, since women make up for the loss of purchasing power by doing more housework. It can be estimated that housework still takes up 1,500 to 2,000 hours a year.

On the subject of women's "double working day", Hedwige Peemans-Pouillet thought it vital that "any policy on reducing working time be backed by a vigorous campaign to spread the concept of sharing occupational, family and social responsibilities".

She felt that equality would be promoted more by a comprehensive adjustment of working time than by individual changes. For this reason, she suggested that each worker in the course of his or her adult life should benefit from a system of "free-time credits". An incidental advantage would be that the unemployed would be recruited to replace those on "credit leave"; it would also reconcile individual with community aspirations without leading to sex discrimination.

The first day of the seminar ended with a reception at the Hague's former Town Hall, the hosts being Secretary of State Kappeyne van de Coppello and the town council. "It was at the Hague Conference in 1984 that the European idea took shape," recalled Fausta Deshormes La Valle, "and, for four generations, the Netherlands has been led by women ... It is a good omen for this colloquium of women's organizations."

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To ease the interpreting problem, those taking part split up into three groups (English-speaking, French-speaking and multilingual), chaired by Ms Stamper, Ms Devaud and Ms Blättel respectively. Each group discussed the four items on the agenda: new ways of organizing working time; the impact of new technologies; the sharing of occupational, family and social tasks; and infrastructure (nurseries, public transport, etc.).

The recommendations on pages 37-39 reflect the ideas expressed by the three working groups.

We should start by stressing the ways in which their ideas converged: all those present thought the emphasis should be on more effective education for girls. Similarly, many wanted women's organizations to be consulted on European Commission proposals at a very early stage. Another point of agreement: any reorganization of working time should go hand in hand with an overhaul of social law and supporting measures relating to the social and human environment.

These observations were made in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, who listened closely to the reports of group discussions and voting on the final recommendations.

Before then, the meeting had been addressed by Denja Pastizzi, director of INSTRAW, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women set up by UNO, whose headquarters are in the Dominican Republic. "We must bring our grey matter together," pleaded Mrs Pastizzi, who also urged closer cooperation between INSTRAW and the European Community.

Marcelle Devaud, chairing the closing session, summarized the discussions with an expertise derived from her many years' experience as president of the French committee on women's work, Comité français du Travail féminin, and her knowledge of European problems on the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women attached to the European Commission.

"We are so overwhelmed by the pace of modern life and the abundance of information beamed at us that we appreciate time more at its intrinsic value... Yet time-value is what points up most the inequalities between men and women. Women's leisure is already too cluttered up; the time does not belong to them because it is essentially devoted to the family, in other words it is time that does not belong to them and them alone.

"We are living in a century of change, but we still labour under a yoke of rigidities inherited from the 19th century industrial revolution. These rigidities lie essentially in the way we organize our lives, our working time, the time we have for ourselves, time devoted to the family and leisure time.

"We, we women in particular, are not managing to impose a new pattern that reflects life - life that flows, develops and expands ... This creation of a new model is, I believe, the aim we should be pursuing ... We have the advanced technologies and all the innovations they bring in their wake; they are the same for men and women, for girls and boys. Women are being offered an outstanding opportunity and it is now up to them to grasp it.

"Women will have won the day if, in a redistribution of working and living time, we progress towards a far broader sharing of roles and responsibilities than in the past."

THE HAGUE COLLOQUIUM RECOMMENDATIONS

(The representatives of Spain and Portugal were present as observers, but wished to give their support to these four recommendations)

The women's organizations of the European Community attending the Colloquium in the Hague on 15 and 16 March 1985,

- aware that the European Commission has submitted draft directives on:
 - equal treatment of men and women in occupational social security schemes,
 - parental leave and leave for family reasons,
 - equal treatment for self-employed women, including women in agriculture, and their protection during pregnancy and motherhood,as well as on voluntary part-time work and temporary work;
- persuaded of the need to strengthen women's rights in matters of equality at work;
- concerned at the Council's failure to reach a decision on these proposals and the negative trends apparent in a number of Member States;
- **CALL ON** the Council to adopt these directives forthwith;
- emphasize that adoption of these directives will be an indication of the Member States' genuine political resolve to promote an effective policy of equal opportunities for women.

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The women's organizations of the European Community attending the Colloquium in the Hague on 15 and 16 March 1985,

- **RECOMMEND** that the Commission of the European Communities press on with research into the reduction and reorganization of working time at Community level, with due consideration for the major changes in the patterns of work being brought about by new technologies and the need to promote greater equality of opportunity and improve the sharing of family and working responsibilities between men and women;
- **CALL** for this research to bear in particular on new ways of organizing working time over a whole lifespan, such as "time credits" for purposes recognized as socially useful (sabbatical leave for political, social and cultural activities, etc.), the procedures for their implementation and their cost;
- **EXPRESS THE HOPE** that this research will lead to the drafting of a new and legally binding Community instrument (directive).

The women's organizations of the European Community attending the Colloquium in the Hague on 15 and 16 March 1985,

- persuaded of the need to equip women with the resources to face up to the challenges to employment in general and women's employment in particular on the introduction and spread of new technology,
- RECOMMEND that the Commission of the European Communities:
 - make girls aware, from primary school on, of changing demands in education and training, and encourage vocational training and retraining programmes for women at all levels and at all stages of their working lives to help them take up the occupations of the future linked with the introduction of new technology;
 - through its experimental network of equal opportunities advisers, give greater support for education and general and vocational training activities in the Member States;
 - encourage the recruitment of women to non-traditional jobs, particularly those involving new technology;
- RECOMMEND that the Member States of the European Community:
 - step up education, training and retraining courses designed to help women enter sectors and occupations linked with new technology;
 - provide for the training of trainers who are alert to the specific problems of women, encouraging women to take up careers as trainers;
 - stimulate the recruitment of women for new jobs and for jobs where new technology has been introduced;
 - ensure that training opportunities are provided for women wishing to return to the working world;
 - submit schemes designed to achieve these ends to the European Social Fund.

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Thank you!

Very special thanks should go to Beatrice Bos, the coordinator of arrangements for the Colloquium on behalf of NVR.

Nederlandse Vrouwen Raad - the Dutch Women's Council - came into being in 1975 as the result of a merger of three organizations. It now numbers forty or so associations with a total membership of about half a million women representing a whole diversity of special interest groups.

Under its plan of action for 1983-1986, NVR has defined two closely related guidelines:

emancipation: the discarding of stereotyped concepts and the traditional division of labour by moving towards more enlightened attitudes;

work: a fairer distribution of paid employment and household duties between the two sexes.

With the help of grants from the Dutch Government, NVR's office at the Hague is (wo)manned by 20 part-time staff.

Useful address: NVR, Laan van Meerdervoort 30, 2517 AL, Den Haag

The women's organizations of the European Community attending the Colloquium in the Hague on 15 and 16 March 1985,

- persuaded of the vital need for a Community policy of encouraging the development of national action and measures;
- aware of the impact of the three "Equality Directives" (75/117, 76/207 and 79/7) and the Action Programme for Equal Opportunities (1982-85);
- concerned at the continuing shortcomings and deficiencies of policy in this field and the growing rate of female unemployment in the Community;
- persuaded of the need for a broad-ranging information policy to bring about a change of attitudes among men and women;
- noting European Parliament's calls for action in this field;
- CALL ON the Commission to propose, before the end of 1985, a new programme expanding, stepping up, improving and broadening the 1982-85 programme in the light of experience;
- REQUEST that the programme take the conclusions of the Nairobi conference into account;
- REQUEST European Parliament to call on the Commission to set up such a programme;
- CALL ON the Council to adopt this programme.

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In accordance with the wishes expressed by those attending the Colloquium, these recommendations have been forwarded to the European Commission, the Council of Ministers and European Parliament.

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ONE OF MANY COMMENTS:

"These annual meetings of women's organizations in Community Member States will be important in finding out about each other's views and planning for action in the years to come.

"These colloquia are, alas, too late to be consulted and to advise on subjects on which decisions are reached by the European Commission over our heads."

Lily Boeykens
President, National Vrouwen Raad (Belgium)

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