

# THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND WORK FOR WOMEN

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## EUROPE FOR WOMEN

There are 130 million women in the European Community, that is, 51.6% of the total population. As full citizens of the Community, their daily life is influenced by all Community activities and policies. There is no field that does not affect women's way of life, work, budget or health, whether it be the price of milk (agricultural policy), vocational training of unemployed youth (social policy), the time a driver spends at the wheel of his lorry (transport policy), sales arrangements for records and cassettes (competition policy), door-to-door sales (Community programme for consumer protection and information) or the fight against inflation (economic policy).

Since the establishment of the European Economic Community in 1957, specific measures have been taken with greater or lesser frequency, depending on the period, to improve women's lot. The first was the inclusion, in the "Social Provisions" chapter of the Treaty of Rome, of Article 119, which stipulated that men and women should receive equal pay. In the 1960s, various studies, symposia and seminars enabled the broad outlines to be worked out for Community action that mainly concentrated on employment and labour, fields in which the Commission has a certain power of initiative and intervention.

Following the Paris Summit in October 1972, the Commission proposed to the Council of Ministers a Social Action Programme<sup>1</sup> laying down the following aims:

"To bring about a situation in which equality between men and women obtains in the labour market throughout the Community, through the improvement of economic and psychological conditions, and the social and educational infrastructure".

On 21 January 1974, the Council adopted a Resolution<sup>2</sup> on this programme, expressing the political will to adopt necessary measures to this effect, in particular:

"to undertake action for the purpose of achieving equality between men and women as regards access to employment and vocational training and advancement, and as regards working conditions, including pay ...

to ensure that the family responsibilities of all concerned may be reconciled with their job aspirations".

To promote implementation of this aim, on 12 February 1975, the Commission forwarded to the Council a Communication<sup>3</sup> on the "Equality of Treatment between Men and Women Workers (access to employment, to vocational

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<sup>1</sup>Bulletin of the European Communities - Supplement No 2/74.

<sup>2</sup>Official Journal No C 13, 12 February 1974.

<sup>3</sup>Document COM(75)36.

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training, to promotion, and as regards working conditions)". This Memorandum is in some respects the Community programme for women workers. It was based on studies<sup>1</sup> carried out on this subject and on consultation with the circles concerned, i.e. representatives of both sides of industry - trade unions and employers - and government representatives. After briefly analysing the problems, the Memorandum formulates guidelines for action at both national and European levels.

The main instruments available to the Community in this field are financial (assistance from the European Social Fund, see p. 13) and legal. Among the latter, the Council directives set up a legal framework which specifies the aims for the Member States but leaves them the choice of means of implementing them. Thus, three directives have been adopted, one concerning equal pay for men and women in February 1975, the second concerning non-discrimination against women in employment and at work in February 1976, and the third concerning the progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security in December 1978.

More recently, at the Rome Summit in March 1977, the Heads of State or Government gave priority to unemployment of women and its remedy.

These actions are far from solving all the problems that confront women but they do help to improve attitudes, provide an incentive or set an example (specific financial measures), and change socio-economic structures (legal instruments) gradually but in a lasting way.

#### I. SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

In all Community countries except Ireland (49.9%), women form over half the total population (50.2% in the Netherlands, 52.3% in Germany).

In 1975, 38 million European women were employed or were seeking employment - i.e. 37% of women over 14, with the following distribution:

employed full time	68%
employed part-time	21%
employed on an occasional basis	4%
seeking employment	7%

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<sup>1</sup>See IV - Some Books and Documents, p. 17.

Source: Labour Force Sample Survey, 1975 - Statistical Office of the European Communities, Luxembourg.

Most part-time work occurs in Denmark and the United Kingdom, least in Belgium and Italy.

Women's share in total employment is as follows:  
(as % of the total working population)

Germany	37,7 %
Belgium	34,4 %
Denmark	41,6 %
France	37,2 %
Ireland	26,6 %
Italy	28,1 %
Luxembourg	28,4 %
Netherlands	24,3 %
United Kingdom	33,8 %
Europe of the Nine	35,9 %

(Source: Report on the Development of the Social Situation in the Communities in 1976<sup>1</sup>)

The female working population is broken down as follows between the main sectors of activity:

	Agriculture	Industry	Services
Germany	8,8 %	30,9 %	60,3 %
France	8,8 %	25,1 %	66,2 %
Italy	14,5 %	33,9 %	51,7 %
Netherlands	1,7 %	17,2 %	81,1 %
Belgium	3,8 %	26,8 %	69,3 %
Luxembourg	8,7 %	13,7 %	77,6 %
United Kingdom	1,1 %	27,3 %	71,6 %
Ireland	7,8 %	25,7 %	66,5 %
Denmark	4,0 %	17,5 %	78,5 %
Europe of the Nine	7,1 %	28,1 %	64,8 %

(Source: Labour Force Sample Survey - SOEC, Luxembourg)

<sup>1</sup>Published in conjunction with the Tenth General Report on the Activities of the European Communities - April 1977 - Brussels, Luxembourg.

In May 1975, in connection with International Women's Year, the Commission carried out a sample survey in the nine Community countries<sup>1</sup> comparing the attitudes of men and women to certain problems of society: women's status, opportunity in life, feelings of happiness and satisfaction, attitudes to jobs, social reforms, political participation, the European Community and European unification. A few significant data from this compilation are given below:

- comparative opportunity for men and women in life: women have:
  - as much opportunity 49%
  - more opportunity 10%
  - less opportunity 36%
  
- main reasons for women having less opportunity:
  - family commitments (children, home ...) 44%
  - men's attitudes 32%
  - occupational attitudes 20%
  - upbringing 18%
  - legislation 11%
  
- 60% of the women interviewed would, if they had the choice, prefer to work
  - those already working 80%
  - those not working 56%
  
- the social reforms thought to be most important for the improvement of women's status:
  - provision of a flexible working week 42%
  - easier and less costly access to child-minding services, etc. 40%
  - a wage for the work done in the home 33%
  - easier access to jobs for mothers returning to work 26%
  - better distribution of household tasks 22%
  
- 34% of women and 36% of men believe that politics is better left to men.
  - in the choice of a representative in Parliament
    - 11% of women have more confidence in a woman
    - 6% of men have more confidence in a woman
    - 33% of women have more confidence in a man
    - 42% of men have more confidence in a man

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<sup>1</sup>European Men and Women - A comparison of their attitudes to some of the problems facing society. December 1975, Brussels.

**NB:** A second survey "European Men and Women in 1978" has been carried out and will be available in 1979.

Classification of Community countries' replies to three questions on their idea of political participation:

Politics should be left to men (score according to degree of disagreement)	Women and men should play the same role in politics (%)	More confidence in a man than a woman as political representative
1. Denmark 1,03	1. Denmark 78	1. Denmark 17%
2. United Kingdom 0,85	2. United Kingdom 68	2. Netherlands 26
3. Ireland 0,75	3. Ireland 65	3. France 31
4. France 0,69	4. Netherlands 61	4. United Kingdom 34
5. Italy 0,56	5. Italy 58	5. Luxembourg 34
EC Average 0,52	EC Average 57	6. Ireland 38
6. Netherlands 0,44	6. France 52	EC Average 38
7. Germany 0,11	7. Germany 50	7. Belgium 38
8. Belgium -0,13	8. Luxembourg 47	8. Italy 44
9. Luxembourg -0,16	9. Belgium 45	9. Germany 44

- 55% of women (63% of men) think the Common Market is a good thing
- 64% of women (75% of men) are in favour of the unification of Europe
- 32% of women (37% of men) consider that the development of the European Community could change women's condition for the better; 3-6% of men believe it would have a negative effect; 75% of women and 57% of men see no connection between the two. The latter conclusion points up the failure to perceive the limited but in some cases decisive influence of the Community in changing attitudes and legislation on the subject in the member countries.

## II. WHAT THE COMMUNITY IS DOING FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

### A. Earning a living, but at what cost?

The basic provision concerning pay for men and women is Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome:

"Each Member State shall during the first stage ensure and subsequently maintain the application of the principle that men and women shall receive equal pay for equal work.

For the purpose of this Article, 'pay' means the ordinary basic or minimum wage or salary and any other consideration, whether in cash or in kind, which the worker receives, directly or indirectly, in respect of his employment from his employer.

Equal pay without discrimination based on sex means:

- (a) that pay for the same work at piece rates shall be calculated on the basis of the same unit of measurement;
- (b) that pay for work at time rates shall be the same for the same job".

It is worth pointing out that this Article was included in the Treaty of Rome not for egalitarian but for economic reasons: it was intended to ensure that free competition was not distorted by the employment of women at lower rates than men for the same work.

This principle has been difficult to apply, to say the least, so it was thought advisable to reinforce the basic legal provisions in order to facilitate its application in practice. On 10 February 1975, the Council adopted a Directive<sup>1</sup> relating to the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women. The main provisions are:

- exclusion of discrimination based on sex (in particular in the job classification system),
- the right of recourse to judicial process for workers who consider themselves discriminated against,
- protection against dismissal as a reaction to a complaint or to legal proceedings aimed at enforcing compliance with the principle of equal pay.

The right of recourse to judicial process is important, as it quite simply means that any worker who considers himself wronged by failure to apply the principle of equal pay can appeal to the courts (or national authorities) and even bring his case before the Court of Justice of the European Communities in Luxembourg.

This has occurred twice (a Belgian air hostess versus the State, then versus the State-owned airline company) in 1971, 1976 and 1977. The judgment<sup>2</sup> given by the Court on 8 April 1976 highlights the twofold purpose, economic and social, of the Community: it is "not merely an economic union, but is at the same time intended, by common action, to ensure social progress and seek the constant improvement of the living and working conditions of the peoples of Europe".

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 75/117/EEC - OJ No L 45 of 19 February 1975.

<sup>2</sup> Court of Justice of the European Communities, Case 43/75 [1976] ECR 455, 8 April 1976.

The Court further found that Article 119 was binding and held that prohibition of discrimination as regards remuneration between male and female workers covered all such discrimination, whether direct or indirect. It applies to action by public authorities and extends to all collective labour agreements and private contracts. In future, whenever judgment is given in favour of women workers they will be entitled to receive compensation backdated to the date of this judgment by the Court of Justice of the European Communities (April 1976).

However, Article 119 is without effect on the duration of work contracts, even if they have pecuniary consequences which are prejudicial as regards allowances on termination of service. The Court referred to this question in its Decision of 8 June 1978<sup>1</sup> and added that it falls within the field of application of Community law relating to the principle of equal treatment as regards working conditions (see below, the Directive of 9 February 1976).

To implement Article 119 and to conform to the Directive, Member States introduced provisions on equal pay into their legislation as follows:

United Kingdom (1970), France (1972), Ireland (1974), Belgium (1975), Netherlands (1975), Denmark (1976), Italy (1977); in Germany the principle of equal pay is laid down in the constitution.

However, differences in pay persist in the various Community countries, and stem from far-reaching and deeply rooted causes mainly related to the structure of the labour markets.

#### B. Thirty-eight million women at work

Certainly, the situation of 38 million European working women differs from one country to another. However, in varying degrees, the same main characteristics are found everywhere:

- women's employment is mostly concentrated in certain sectors and certain categories, usually the less qualified, with low pay and limited promotion prospects, such as in the textile industry, certain processing industries, services and distribution.
- there are serious deficiencies in vocational guidance and training for girls and women: limited choice, preference for short courses leading to lower qualifications and consequently fewer opportunities, little use of possibilities for subsequent training.
- lastly, family life (marriage, motherhood), whether an actual or potential interruption in working life, has an influence on women's careers.

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<sup>1</sup> Court of Justice of the European Communities, Case 149/77 [1978] ECR 1365, 5 June 1978.

If the situation is to evolve towards true equality of opportunity, women's right to work must be recognized.

Specifically, as set out in the Memorandum<sup>1</sup>, the following steps should be taken in each country:

- elimination of legal discrimination,
- encouragement of action to redress the all too frequent imbalance in employment and promotion possibilities and working conditions,
- upgrading of jobs in sectors mainly staffed by women (by the revision of job specifications and the enlargement of career prospects),
- review of conditions of recruitment, particularly upper age limits for access to certain posts.

The following recommendations on working conditions are contained in the Memorandum:

- careful attention to measures ensuring the safety of workers in general and of pregnant women in particular, as well as special protective arrangements for the latter;
- prohibition of dismissal on grounds of pregnancy and payment of full salary or wages during the whole period of legally approved maternity leave;
- development of more flexible working hours to take account of workers' family responsibilities;
- provision for part-time workers of opportunities for promotion in accordance with their qualifications and experience, and of "fringe" benefits and social security benefits on a proportional basis.

In order to show the Community's desire for action in respect of employment and work, on 9 February 1976 the Council adopted a Directive<sup>2</sup> "on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions". By equal treatment is meant the absence of any discrimination based on sex, marital status or family status.

To achieve equal treatment, legislators in Community States must now weed out the slightest discriminatory measures that may be contained in any laws, regulations or administrative provisions with respect to employment, working conditions and dismissal in any sector or branch of activity.

As in the case of equal pay, the Directive provides for recourse to judicial process and protection against dismissal as a reaction to it: a woman who considers she has been discriminated against and institutes legal proceedings to enforce her rights cannot be dismissed by an employer for that reason. This Directive is addressed to both the public and private sectors and applies to laws and regulations, collective agreements and individual contracts of employment.

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<sup>1</sup> Document COM(75)36, 12 February 1975.

<sup>2</sup> Directive 76/207/EEC - OJ No L 39, 14 February 1976.

To meet the requirements of this Directive, the following Member States have adopted specific legislation: United Kingdom and France in 1975, Ireland and Italy in 1977, Denmark and Belgium in 1978.

However, the characteristics of women's employment cannot be dissociated from its roots in education, vocational guidance and training.

C. From school to work - the battle against discrimination

Apart from developing the personality, one of the main purposes of education is to prepare individuals to take their place in society and at work. Therefore everyone should be given the best opportunities, without discrimination or prejudice of any kind. Yet there are differences between education and academic and vocational guidance for girls and for boys and in their vocational training.

These differences stem mainly from traditional concepts and prejudices about the stereotyped roles of men and women and lead to misconceptions about the actual possibilities of work open to women and ways of making use of those possibilities.

To remedy the situation, the Memorandum on Equality of Treatment between Men and Women Workers<sup>1</sup> proposes that Member States take the following action:

- promote equal opportunity for boys and girls in the general education systems and consider the possibilities of extending effective co-education;
- ensure non-discriminatory educational guidance offering a wide range of choices, and encourage awareness among teachers of the need for such guidance;
- develop vocational information and guidance so as to enlarge the range of choices beyond the traditional types, and warn people against taking up careers with no scope for development;
- ensure that vocational guidance and training services for men and women re-entering the labour market after an interruption operate on the basis of individual interest and potential without regard to sex or marital status;
- ensure equality of access for men and women to occupational apprenticeship and training schemes as well as to all levels of further and higher education;
- provide special opportunities for education and training to enable women to re-enter employment after a period of interruption.

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<sup>1</sup> Document COM(75)36.

The Directive<sup>1</sup> on equal treatment contains an article on vocational training which enables women who think they have been discriminated against on grounds of sex or marital status to have recourse to the judicial process in order to obtain redress.

To take the matter further, in November 1975 the Commission organized a seminar on vocational guidance and training of women, the conclusions of which will be used as a basis for a recommendation to Member States on the subject (in the Commission programme for the second quarter of 1977).

The Education Committee<sup>2</sup> attaches special importance to problems encountered by girls, particularly in transition from school to working life.

The Resolution<sup>3</sup> of the Council of the European Communities and Ministers of Education of 13 December 1976 calls for the implementation before 1980 of special actions to "ensure equal educational opportunities for girls".

In its report<sup>4</sup> to the Council, the Education Committee proposed that:

"Measures should be promoted to encourage girls to make the widest range of occupational choices, particularly through appropriate modifications to the systems of guidance about choices of course and future career within the final period of compulsory full-time education".

At Community level, an action programme was adopted which included a series of pilot projects, with one in Denmark particularly for girls.

**A study was made on equality of opportunities in secondary schools.**

Lastly, a seminar organized by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training<sup>5</sup> organized a meeting in autumn 1977 of European specialists on education, vocational guidance and training for women. Following the seminar a study was undertaken on experiments in the vocational training of women, particularly in non-traditional areas.

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<sup>1</sup>Directive 76/207/EEC - OJ No L 39, 14 February 1976.

<sup>2</sup>The Education Committee was set up on 6 June 1974 and has 10 members: nine representatives of the Member States and one from the Commission. It is responsible for the preparatory work for the Council of Ministers of Education and for coordinating implementation of a Community education policy.

<sup>3</sup>OJ No C 308, 30 December 1976.

<sup>4</sup>From Education to Working Life - Bulletin of the European Communities - Supplement No 12/76.

<sup>5</sup>The Centre was set up on 10 February 1975 and its task is to assist the Commission to encourage, at European level, the promotion and development of vocational training and continuous education. It also helps to implement the common vocational training policy.

D. Family life

Women in our society play a particularly important role in family affairs. Care should therefore be taken to ensure that this responsibility does not handicap women in other areas, particularly working life. To this end, the Council Resolution<sup>1</sup> concerning the social action programme seeks "to ensure that the family responsibilities of all concerned may be reconciled with their job aspirations". To achieve this, Member States can implement the proposals formulated in the Memorandum<sup>2</sup>:

- the planned development of day nursery and other officially approved child care facilities for children under three, as well as of arrangements to facilitate the care of such children at home;
- the extension, in both urban and rural areas, of nursery schools, and of facilities for the supervision of children of school age outside normal school hours and the provision of creative leisure-time activities for them;
- the provision, where this is not made at present, of paid leave for either the mother or father in the case of a child's illness;
- the extension of facilities and arrangements (in particular, care of children at home and home help) for workers responsible for sick or elderly dependents.

E. Social security - a system is being worked out

The Directive<sup>3</sup> on equal treatment for men and women provides for a subsequent proposal defining the substance, scope and arrangements for application of the principle of equal treatment in the field of social security.

In line with this Directive the Commission has undertaken a study on existing differences between men and women here. Differences were found in public schemes (statutory schemes) and private schemes, or those resulting from employment agreements. They mainly arise from the traditional idea of the family, where the father was the breadwinner and the mother kept house. Consequently there is discrimination against women, particularly as regards their dependents.

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<sup>1</sup>OJ No C 13, 12 February 1974.

<sup>2</sup>Document COM(75)36, 12 February 1975.

<sup>3</sup>OJ No L 39, 14 February 1976.

On 19 December 1978, on a proposal from the Commission, the Council of Ministers adopted a Directive<sup>1</sup> on the gradual implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards social security. The Directive applies to the working population, including self-employed persons, workers and self-employed persons whose activity is interrupted by illness, accident or involuntary unemployment and persons seeking employment and to retired or invalidated workers.

Within six years, Member States must eliminate existing discrimination in statutory social security schemes that provide protection against the following risks: sickness, invalidity, old age, accidents at work and occupational diseases and unemployment.

The Directive does not apply to supplementary occupational schemes (which will be the subject of later proposals), family benefits, except in the case of family benefits granted by way of increases of benefits due in respect of the risks referred to above, determination of pensionable age even if it results in pecuniary disparities or the transfer of pension rights to widows.

F. The European Social Fund - What does it do for women?

The European Social Fund, set up under the Treaty of Rome, is one of the Community employment policy instruments. Its financial resources are used to support Community policies (e.g. workers leaving agriculture or the textile industry, migrant workers, handicapped persons, young people under 25) or national employment measures, particularly in the case of structural difficulties.

Men and women have access without discrimination to all operations to which the Fund contributes financially. However, to help solve certain problems peculiar to women on the labour market, since 1 January 1978<sup>3</sup> the Social Fund has been contributing to vocational training operations for women:

- aged over 25 (those aged under 25 fall under the heading of young people),
- who have lost their job or wish to return to work after a break,
- without qualifications or whose training is inadequate.

These operations must include vocational training within the framework of measures aimed at preparation for working life, or at motivating new choices of occupation, and at facilitating entry into occupations where there are job prospects.

Preference is given to operations leading to employment or to training in non-traditional areas, in other words, sectors where women are under-represented and traditionally male occupations.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ No L 6 of 10 January 1979.

<sup>2</sup> Brochure "Women and the European Social Fund". Directorate-General for Information - Information Service for Women's Organizations and Press, 200 rue de la Loi, 1049 Brussels.

<sup>3</sup> Council Decision No 77/804 of 20 December 1977, OJ No L 337.

The Social Fund budget includes special appropriations to promote, implement or give financial assistance for preparatory studies and pilot schemes intended to:

- inform the Community authorities of the range of areas to be opened to Fund assistance;
- develop experiments that could be used as a model for other operations.

In the last few years, five of these studies have dealt or deal with women.

A return to work after 35 years poses special problems for women who either interrupted their working life for family reasons or have never worked. A case study of 400 women who came to the "Retravailler" Centre in Paris, revealed the main difficulties of reintegration into working life:

- ignorance of the labour market,
- obsolescent qualifications,
- lack of self-confidence, etc.

This course (five weeks part-time) is designed to achieve the following:

- knowledge of self and skills,
- updating of these skills,
- provide psychological support,
- provide information on training and occupations,
- prepare for working life,
- assess motivation,
- give vocational guidance.

This experiment could serve as a model for other projects to prepare women for return to the working world.

The experiment carried out in Paris by the CREAC (Centre de Recherche et d'Etudes pour l'Adaptabilité des Cadres) (Research and Study Centre on adjustment of managerial staff) concerns women who urgently need paid employment but do not have the minimum qualification required by an employer. Its aims are to:

- provide training that is immediately useful,
- inculcate a practical approach to business life and environment.
- encourage a process of progress and promotion.

The course alternated psychological and occupational training in certain techniques (shorthand-typing and secretary/bookkeeper) with periods on the job (to prepare for and facilitate recruitment).

The project carried out at Manchester University concerned women of mature age and their opportunities for return to employment.

It was possible to see whether the courses were adapted to the objectives, to assess the degree of satisfaction obtained in the job, the impact of resumption of employment on family life, and the different social attitudes to reintegration.

It revealed various needs:

- psycho-sociological preparation of the family environment,
- increased specialized education and training services,
- development of guidance,
- change in attitudes to the possibility of taking up a career late in life.

The main aspects of two pilot schemes at present in preparation include:

- increasing the awareness and preparation for work of women from rural backgrounds in a zone where urbanization is a priority: the project is designed to facilitate integration into working life in an urban environment by providing preparatory training to enable them to assess the situation, orientate themselves and be in a position to undertake vocational training proper. This phase is preceded by an information campaign to increase the awareness of the target public and the population in general and thereby reduce resistance in family and working circles.
- training for the reintegration of women in new activities on a part-time basis: this is to meet socio-cultural needs in modern cities that can no longer be entirely met by voluntary workers (needs of small children, young people, adolescents, the maladjusted, the sick, etc.. and various municipal services). This project is carried out in two phases:
  - a survey to determine needs in this respect and available resources,
  - development of programmes and training methods for certain types of employment chosen in the light of the results of the survey,
- training of girls as engineers with a view to:
  - making this sector aware of the professional contribution properly trained women can make,
  - opening up employment prospects for women in a sector which does not traditionally employ women,
  - increasing the awareness of girls and those responsible for guidance (counsellors, schools, parents) of the new possibilities open to women nowadays.
- training of unemployed women and placing them in traditionally male occupations.

### III. WHAT THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION IS DOING FOR WOMEN

#### A. Bureau for questions affecting womens' employment

In November 1976, within the Directorate-General for Social Affairs, the Commission set up a Bureau for questions affecting womens' employment, which demonstrated the Community's desire to respond to needs in this area.

This office is mainly intended to promote equal treatment between men and women at work. For this purpose the office disposes of an essential legal instrument: Community Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions. The Directive, which entered into force on 12 August 1978, implies that Member States have already introduced into their national legislation the necessary provisions to eliminate discrimination against women and to give persons (men and women) who consider they have been wronged the means to make good their claims while being adequately protected against any reaction by the employer to a complaint within the undertaking or to any legal proceedings.

The Community not only produces legislation, it follows it up with the Member States to see that it is enforced. This follow-up is the task of the Bureau for questions affecting womens' employment. The Bureau is concentrating its operations on vocational training financed with assistance from the European Social Fund which has made specific provision for women.

The result is that the Bureau functions as coordinator between the appropriate departments of the European Commission and follows an active policy to promote the interests of women.

It also acts to make people aware of the results women may achieve if they make good use of the means available, which are as yet too little exploited. Women must not only be informed of their rights but must also be prepared to exercise them.

It is nonetheless true that the fundamental prerequisite for change towards equal treatment is the transformation of attitudes in employers, workers and teachers, families, and women themselves. To promote this transformation and stimulate it, in 1976 the Commission had a film made, called "Equal Chances, Equal Opportunities", to illustrate Community legislation in favour of women. The film is intended for all types of public, and by showing individuals in actual working and social situations illustrates prejudices, conflicts, failures, successes and, especially, innovations. It lays particular stress on the importance of choice of occupation by girls and women, and demonstrates the possibilities for developing equality between men and women workers on the basis of results already achieved. Furthermore, going beyond the problems of women at work, the film describes the search for a new way of life, achieved by a better balance in relationships between men and women who from an early age should have "the same respect for the same life".

## B. Information Service for Women's Organizations and Press

In March 1976, a symposium was held in Brussels, attended by 120 women representing at a high level the political, social and cultural circles in the nine countries, in order to assess the results of the sample survey<sup>1</sup> carried out in 1975.

During the discussions, proposals were referred to the Commission which would lead, inter alia, to the creation in the Directorate-General for Information of a service to maintain a continuous dialogue with women's organizations, to inform them and document them on various aspects of European integration, and to help them exchange information from one organization to another and from one country to another.

The Information Service for Women's Organizations and Press has undertaken its first operation to increase the awareness of women in general during the election campaign for the European Parliament. In each Member State the service acts as a catalyst and coordinator of women's organizations and supports their activities: many seminars, symposia, information days and round tables have been organized in this way, mainly to raise women's consciousness and inform them of the forthcoming elections to the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage.

Ad hoc documentation has been prepared for these circles: this supplement and another on "The European Social Fund and Women" have been printed in six languages and are distributed on request.

Lastly, in response to the wish of women's organizations for an exchange of information and as an expression of solidarity, a liaison and information bulletin "Women of Europe" has been brought into being and is published in six languages. The bulletin is distributed on request to persons in charge of women's organizations, women with political responsibilities and to journalists working in the press and the other media.

To inform readers of women's magazines, campaigns have been launched in collaboration with women's magazines with a wide circulation - one in each Community country.

In 1977 these magazines simultaneously published a questionnaire in the form of a competition on readers' attitudes to women's condition, the building of Europe, direct elections to the European Parliament, etc. Publication of the questionnaire led to many articles on the European Community.

In 1978-79, a further campaign on the specific topic of direct elections to the European Parliament mobilized other magazines (with an overall distribution of 5 million): this was a readers' competition to design a poster publicising the first European elections.

The winning poster, chosen by a European jury, was printed by the Commission departments and distributed in all the member countries.

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<sup>1</sup>European Men and Women - A comparison of their attitudes to some of the problems facing society, December 1975, Brussels.

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