



**Women at work  
in the European Community**

**50 questions  
50 answers**



Text by

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and

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Brussels, March 1984

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1. **Do women appear in the Treaty of Rome, which establishes the European Community?**

Women as such are not mentioned in the Treaty of Rome but women at work are discussed in article 119, which states that:

"Each Member State shall during the first stage ensure and subsequently maintain the application of the principle that men and women should 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 should be pointed 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 in the industries of the Member States was not distorted by the employment of women at lower rates than men for the same work.

2. **What does the Community do for women?**

European Community action on behalf of women is taken on two levels: legislative and financial.

Since the Community is essentially an economic organization, it has concentrated on the position of women in employment in the broad sense of the term. Now, however, its horizons are broadening and it is concerning itself with other aspects of women's social and political life.

3. **Which EEC bodies have a special concern for women's issues?**

Within the Community, the bodies and departments that deal with matters of concern to women are:

- (1) the **Commission of the European Communities** and, more specifically,

the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs  
and Education:

Bureau for questions concerning employment and equal treatment  
for women;

Social security division;

European Social Fund (operations concerning categories  
of persons);

Education, vocational training and youth policy division.

the Directorate-General for Information:

Information for women's organizations and press.

- (2) **European Parliament** and, within Parliament,

the committee of inquiry on the situation of women in  
Europe.

- (3) **CEDEFOP** - the European Centre for the Development of vocational  
Training.

Addresses:

- (1) 200 Rue de la Loi, 1049 Brussels

- (2) Robert Schuman Building, Plateau du Kirchberg, Luxembourg

- (3) Bundesallee 22, 100 Berlin 15

4. **Why and how did the Community start to pay special attention to women?**

In the 1960s the Commission published regular reports on the difficulties of putting Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome into practice.

In the early 1970s, a study on the employment of women and the problems encountered in the EEC Member States was followed up by national surveys on the position of women in paid employment.

These investigations, together with the labour shortage due to the economic growth of the time, highlighted the need for EEC-level action in the field of women's employment.

After the Paris summit meeting in October 1972, the Commission presented a Social Action Programme to the Council of Ministers in which the following aims were proposed:

"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 expressing the political resolve to adopt the necessary measures to achieve this aim, 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," and

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

To implement this aim, on 23 February 1975 the Commission forwarded a Communication to the Council on the "Equality of Treatment between Men and Women Workers (access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and as regards working conditions)". This Memorandum was in some respects a community programme for working women, formulating guidelines for action at national and European levels.

The Commission has been supported and encouraged in its efforts by women's movements and pressure groups, which have made a substantial contribution to the development and expansion of activities in this field.

**5. What European legislation exists on equality between men and women?**

As proposed by the Commission, the Council of Ministers adopted three directives designed to promote equality between men and women in the following fields:

Pay on 10 February 1975, Directive 75/117 "on the approximation of the laws of Member States relating to the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women";

Employment and training on 9 February 1976, Directive 76/207 "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";

Social security on 19 December 1978, Directive 79/8 "on the progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security".

On 29 April 1983, the Commission sent the Council of Ministers a draft directive on the principle of equal treatment for men and women in supplementary and occupational social security schemes.

**6. What is a "directive"?**

A directive is a binding Community legal instrument adopted unanimously by the Council of Ministers. It states one or more specific objectives which the Member States are to implement within a given period. Unlike a "regulation", which has the immediate force of law, a directive leaves each Member State the choice of the most suitable form and method within its own legal system - laws, regulations, circulars, decrees, orders, etc. - of bringing its national legislation into line with the Community law created by the directive by the specified date.

**7. What happens if a Member State fails to comply with a directive?**

In its role as the "custodian of the Treaty" and Community law, the Commission has the right to take infringement proceedings against Member States failing to incorporate EEC directives into their national law.

In practice, infringement proceedings usually take this course:

- (1) the Commission departments note or consider that there has been an infringement: for example, they may feel that a Member State has not publicized the measures it has adopted or that the measures taken are inadequate; alternatively, a complaint may have been lodged with the Commission (see question 9);
- (2) the Commission writes a letter reminding the Member State in question of its obligations and asking for its observations within a given period (normally two months);
- (3) if the Member State does not reply or if its reply is unsatisfactory, the Commission sends a "reasoned opinion", not asking for further comment but calling upon the Government to take the necessary steps within a given period, its duration depending on the nature of those steps;
- (4) if the Member State does not comply with the "reasoned opinion" or if the steps it takes are inadequate, the Commission refers the matter to the Court, which gives its judgement on the case and may find against the Member State.

**8. Who can go to the European Court of Justice?**

Individuals do not have direct access to the Court of Justice of the European Communities; cases may be referred only by the Commission under infringement proceedings, or by national courts.

A woman who wants to press for her rights under European legislation must first make her claim before the appropriate legal authorities in her own country. A national court might refer a case to the Court of Justice if it needs an interpretation of Community law - for example if EEC and national law are in conflict or if the precise implications of Community legislation are unclear (the Court's jurisdiction empowers it to issue preliminary rulings - see article 177 of the Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community).



**9. What can an individual do if he or she feels that EEC law is not being enforced?**

All that an individual or corporate body needs to do is to write a letter to the Commission complaining about any act or measure that is seen as contrary to the provisions of the Treaty of Community law.

The complaint is considered by the appropriate departments within the Commission, which decide whether it should be listed in the register of grievances. If so, the Commission may bring the case or first collect additional information from the Member State concerned.

**10. How does directive 75/117 define the principle of equal pay?**

The principle implies the elimination of all discrimination on grounds of sex with regard to all aspects and conditions of remuneration for the same work or for work to which equal value is attributed.

In particular, when a job classification system is used in determining pay, the same criteria must be applied to male and female workers and it must be drawn up in such a way as to eliminate any discrimination on grounds of sex.

**11. What obligations did directive 75/117 place on Member States? And how long were they given to comply with those obligations?**

By 12 February 1976, all Member States were under an obligation to abolish all discrimination between men's and women's pay arising from their laws, regulations and administrative provisions.

They also had to take the necessary measures to ensure that any discrimination embodied in collective agreements, wage scales, wage agreements or individual contracts of employment were declared null and void or amended.

**12. What steps were taken by the Member States to apply article 119 and Directive 75/117?**

The main measures introduced by each Member State to enforce the principle of equal pay were as follows:

<u>Belgium</u>	Collective Labour Agreement n° 25, 15.10.1975; section 128, Law of 4.8.1978; and Royal Decree of 10.9.1981 <sup>1</sup> .
<u>Denmark</u>	Law of 4.2.1976 <sup>2</sup> .
<u>France</u>	Law of 22.12.1972; Decree of 2.5.1979 <sup>1</sup> ; Law of 13.7.1983
<u>Germany</u>	Section 3 of the Basic Law of 23.5.1949 and Law of 13.8.1980 <sup>1</sup>
<u>Ireland</u>	Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act 1974, amended by the Employment Equality Act of 1.6.1977
<u>Italy</u>	Section 37 of the Constitution and Law of 9.12.1977.
<u>Luxembourg</u>	Grand-Duchy Regulation of 10.7.1974 and Law of 20.5.1983 <sup>1</sup> .
<u>Netherlands</u>	Law of 20.3.1975 and Law of 2.7.1980 <sup>1</sup> .
<u>United Kingdom</u>	The Equal Pay Act of 1970, amended by the Sex Discrimination Act of 12.11.1975, and a recent Order <sup>1</sup> .

**13. How are workers informed of their rights in the field of equal pay?**

To comply with the directive, Member States must ensure that measures designed to achieve equal pay are brought to the attention of employees by all appropriate means, for example at their place of employment.

In Belgium, the text of Collective Agreement n° 25 must be attached to employers' internal work regulations; a brochure explaining the Agreement has been sent to all management boards in the country.

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<sup>1</sup> For the outcome of infringement proceedings, see Question 15.

<sup>2</sup> Proceedings now being taken: see Question 15.

In Denmark, the Equal Treatment Council has given wide distribution to an information booklet.

In France, the law of 22.12.1972 must be displayed at places of work and recruitment.

In Germany, the text of the Directive has been forwarded to employers' and employees' associations.

In Ireland, the law has been widely publicized in the media and explanatory booklets have been distributed to employees.

In Italy, the law has been brought to the notice of employees at works and union meetings.

In Luxembourg, the law has been publicized through the trade union and women's press.

In the Netherlands, a leaflet has been widely distributed; it has a detachable section which women can use in submitting a complaint.

In the United Kingdom, the Government has conducted an intensive advertising campaign to remind employers of their obligations. A guide to the law and explanatory booklets have been distributed and are available at employment offices.

**14. What are the rights of people who feel they have suffered from discrimination in matters of pay?**

To comply with the directive, Member States must guarantee all workers who feel they are the victims of discrimination the right of recourse in the courts and must protect them against dismissal by their employers as a result of complaints made within the company or in courts of justice.

Although procedures differ from one country to another, industrial tribunals are usually the authorities empowered to enforce the principle of equal pay after every attempt has been made to settle the matter by mediation or conciliation.

**15. Have infringement proceedings been taken by the Commission of the European Communities to enforce Directive 75/117? What judgements has the Court of Justice delivered on these proceedings?**

In the light of a report to the Council in January 1979<sup>1</sup>, the Commission embarked on legal action on seven cases. Four countries amended their legislation while the cases were under way: Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands. Two countries appeared before the Court of Justice: Luxembourg and the United Kingdom. Proceedings are under way against Denmark.

The following is a summary of the infringements noted and the outcome of proceedings.

Belgium. Discrimination continued in certain "household allowances", particularly in the civil service. A letter of formal notice was sent to Belgium on 30 March 1979, followed by a "reasoned opinion" on 19 May 1980. The matter was brought before the Court of Justice on 16 March 1981 but was deleted from the Court register of cases on 25 November 1981 when the Commission withdrew the case: on 10 September 1981, a Royal Decree had been passed in Belgium ending all discrimination on the grounds of sex in the granting of this allowance.

Denmark. Danish law does not include the concept of "work of equal value" and does not nullify discriminatory clauses in labour agreements. A letter of notice was sent on 30 March 1979, followed by a reasoned opinion on 25 October 1982. The case was referred to the Court of Justice on 18 July 1983.

France. Certain supplementary pay benefits were given to employees considered to be "heads of families" in a few companies in the para-public sector.

A letter of notice was forwarded on 3 April 1979. France passed a decree on 2.5.1979 ending the measure that had included the assumption that a "head of family" could only be a married man.

Germany. Article 3 of the Constitution was so loosely worded that it did not guarantee the application of the principle of equal pay. A letter of notice was sent on 3 April 1979. A law was enacted on 13.8.1980 to remedy the situation but only insofar as workers governed by private law are concerned. Fresh proceedings are being brought on the grounds that this measure covers only civil servants in the strict sense of the term and is not in line with Directive 76/207 on equal treatment (see question 25).

Netherlands. The law of 30 March 1975 on equal pay excluded public sector employees from its field of application. A letter of notice was sent on 3 April 1979, followed by a reasoned opinion on 19 May 1980. A law was brought in on 2 July 1980 amending Dutch law and bringing it in line with Directive 75/117.

1 available from the Commission of the European Communities,  
200, rue de la Loi, 1049 Brussels.

Luxembourg. Discrimination continued in the granting of "head of the family" allowances in the civil service and in certain collective labour agreements in the private sector (banking and insurance, etc.). A letter of notice as sent on 3 April 1979, followed by a reasoned opinion on 19 May 1980.

The matter was referred to the Court of Justice on 16 March 1981, which delivered a judgment on 9 June 1982 stating that, in allowing this provision to continue, Luxembourg had failed to comply with its obligations under the EEC Treaty.

A law was enacted on 20 May 1983 altering the conditions for the granting of the "head of the family" allowance along the lines laid down by the Directive.

United Kingdom. The Equal Pay Act gave a restrictive interpretation of the concept of "work of equal value". A letter of notice was sent on 3 April 1979, followed by a reasoned opinion on 19 May 1980. The case was referred to the Court of Justice on 18 March 1981, and on 6 July 1982 it issued a judgment stating that the United Kingdom had failed to comply with its obligations under the Treaty of Rome.

**16. What judgments has the Court of Justice delivered on the issue of equal pay?**

Nine cases have already been referred to the Court of Justice of the European Communities by national courts for an interpretation of Article 119 of the Treaty and Directive 75/117.

Three judgments have been delivered as a result of proceedings brought by a Belgian air hostess, Gabrielle Defrenne.

In **case 80/70**, certain questions were raised. Does a retirement pension constitute a benefit paid "indirectly" to the employee? Is the fixing of different age limits for retirement for air stewards and stewardesses an infringement of Article 119? And do air stewards and air hostesses do the same work? On 25.5.1971, the Court replied to the first question in the negative, so that the other two questions did not arise.

It should be pointed out that discrimination in social security matters is now covered by Directive 79/7, while discrimination regarding age limits (working conditions) is now covered by Directive 76/207.

**Case 43/75** raised the problem of the direct applicability of Article 119: can employees use this Article as grounds for judicial proceedings or do they have to refer to their national legislation ensuing from the Article? The Court held that Article 119 is directly applicable to cases of direct and open discrimination (while indirect and concealed discrimination is a matter that should be dealt with by national law). Nevertheless, this direct effect of Article 119 may not be used as grounds for a case - for example, in attempting to obtain back pay - brought before the date of the Court judgment, 8 April 1976.

**Case 149/77** again raised the issue of whether Article 119 is applicable to working conditions having a financial effect, in particular a clause stating that women's contracts of employment are automatically terminated at the age of 40, but not men's. In its judgment delivered on 15.6.1978, the Court stated its view that Article 119 is strictly limited to discrimination in matters of pay and that the question is covered by Directive 76/207, which did not exist at the time the facts occurred.

A fourth case, **129/79**, came before the Court as a result of a case brought by a British employee, Wendy Smith, who was receiving lower pay than the man whose job as stockroom manager she had taken over in a pharmaceutical wholesaling firm. The issue at stake was whether Article 119 and Directive 75/117 apply to the same work done at different periods; the Court judged that they do in fact apply.

**Case 69/80** concerned two British employees, Duran Worringham and Margaret Humphreys. The problem was whether contributions paid by an employer to a retirement benefits scheme and the benefits provided constituted "pay" within the meaning of Article 119 and Directive 75/117 and, if not, whether Directive 76/207 was applicable. The Court replied that contributions paid by the employer in the name of employees to a retirement benefits scheme by means of an addition to the gross salary constitutes "pay" within the meaning of Article 119.

**Case 96/80** raised the following issue: does the fact of working part-time justify a lower hourly rate of pay than for the same work done on a full-time basis? The court replied that a difference in pay between full-time workers and part-time workers does not amount to discrimination prohibited by Article 119 unless it is merely a way of deliberately reducing pay to part-time workers on the grounds that that group of workers is composed exclusively or predominately of women.

In **case 12/81**, the legality of an employer (in this case, British Rail) granting reduced fares for the families of male but not female employees after retirement was challenged on the grounds that the benefit was not compatible with article 119, Directive 75/117 or Directive 76/207.

In a judgment given on 9 February 1982, the Court ruled that in this particular case, under article 119, the practice was in fact discriminatory.

**Case 19/81** related to a man who contended that he was being discriminated against by his employer (again, British Rail) because it allowed women to qualify for a voluntary redundancy scheme when they reached 55 whereas men had to wait until they were 60. The Court was asked whether a benefit of this kind is covered by Article 119, Directive 75/117 or Directive 76/207.

In a judgment given on 16 February 1982, the Court first said that the problem of interpretation did not concern the original benefit as such (and, as a result, did not come under article 119 or Directive 75/117);

this was a question of whether discrimination existed in the conditions governing access to the voluntary redundancy scheme. Stating that the principle of equal treatment set out in article 5 of Directive 76/207 of 9 February 1976 did in fact apply to the conditions of access to such a scheme, the Court pointed out that article 7 of Directive 79/7 of 19 December 1978 on the implementation of that principle in matters of social security allowed Member States to exclude decisions on pensionable age from its scope. Under British law, that age is 60 for women and 65 for men. The Court reasoned that the offer of access to a voluntary redundancy scheme in the five years leading up to that retirement age, even if it is not the same for men and women, does not amount to discrimination on the grounds of sex within the meaning of article 5 of Directive 76/207 of 9 February 1976.

A case submitted by the Dutch courts is pending before the Court. In **case 23/83**, the following question was asked: does the term "remuneration" also include the "compensation" that public sector employers, pay over and above the maximum contribution towards a retirement scheme to the tax authority, in view of the fact that this compensation is given only to the husband where both husband and wife are civil servants.

**17. What are the fields covered by the "second" directive (equal treatment in employment)?**

Directive 76/207 covers the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards:

access to employment: there must be equal access to all jobs or posts, whatever the sector or branch of activity - i.e. the public, para-public or private sectors, independent occupations and agriculture;

promotion: there must be equal opportunities for promotion to all levels of the occupational hierarchy;

access to vocational training; there must be equal access to all types and levels of vocational guidance, vocational training, advanced vocational training and retraining;

working conditions: the principle of equal treatment must apply to all conditions, to include dismissal, all forms of leave and holiday, working hours and various employment-linked benefits.

**18. How does directive 76/207 define the principle of equal treatment?**

The principle of equal treatment means that there shall be no discrimination on grounds of sex in any of the fields listed above, either directly or indirectly, for example by reference to marital or family status.

**19. What obligations does Directive 76/207 place on Member States? And how long are they given to comply?**

To achieve the objectives of Directive 76/207, Member States were required to take every step to achieve the following by 12.8.1978:

- (a) abolish any laws, regulations and administrative provisions contrary to the principles of equal treatment;
- (b) declare that any provisions contrary to the principle of equal treatment that are included in collective agreements, individual contracts of employment, internal rules of undertakings or rules governing independent occupations and professions are null and void;
- (c) revise laws, regulations and administrative provisions contrary to the principle of equal treatment when the concern for protection which originally inspired them is no longer well founded; a preliminary examination of those measures should be carried out by 12.2.1980;
- (d) enable any persons considering themselves wronged to make their claims in the courts.

**20. What exceptions does Directive 76.207 allow?**

The Directive allows three types of departures from the principle of equal treatment:

Member States may exclude occupational activities for which the sex of the worker is a determining factor by their nature or context (as in the case of the acting or modelling professions);

provisions concerning the protection of women, particularly as regards pregnancy and maternity;

measures to promote equal opportunity for men and women, in particular by removing inequalities which affect women's opportunities in employment (positive discrimination).



**21. What steps have the Member States taken to apply Directive 76/207?**

The Member States have taken the following steps in order to comply with Directive 76/207:

<u>Belgium</u>	Title V of the Law of 4.8.1978
<u>Denmark</u>	Laws 161, 162 and 163 of 12.4.1978
<u>France</u>	Law 75/625 of 11.7.1975 Law 82/380 of 7.5.1982 <sup>1</sup> Decree 82/886 of 15.10.1982 <sup>1</sup> Law 83/635 of 13.7.1983
<u>Germany</u>	Law of 13.8.1980
<u>Greece</u>	A bill is being drafted
<u>Ireland</u>	Employment Equality Act of 1.6.1977, amended by the European Communities (Employment Equality) Regulations 1982, which came into force on 30.9.1982 <sup>1</sup>
<u>Italy</u>	Law 903 of 9.12.1977
<u>Luxembourg</u>	Law of 8.12.1981 <sup>1</sup>
<u>Netherlands</u>	Laws of 1.3.1980 and 2.7.1980
<u>United Kingdom</u>	Sex Discrimination Act of 12.11.1975
<u>Northern Ireland</u>	Decree of 2.7.1976

**22. How are workers informed of their rights under this Directive?**

In the case of the first directive, Member States had to take the necessary steps to inform workers, for example at their place of work.

Except for French legislation, national laws do not have specific clauses on the provision of information. In France, under the law an employer must report to the work force each year on progress with the comparative status of men and women in the company. In Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom the new measures have been widely publicized (by circulars, booklets and posters).

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For the outcome of infringement proceedings, see question 25.

23. **What are the rights of those who feel they have been the victims of discrimination in access to employment or vocational training and in their working conditions?**

The rights of the victims of discrimination and the paths open to them are the same as in the field of pay - see the reply to question 14.

24. **Has the Commission analysed measures implementing the directive in the nine Member States?**

In December 1979, the Commission forwarded a detailed questionnaire on the application of the directive to Governments, women's employment committees and working groups and the two sides of industry. Based on the replies furnished late in 1980 and early in 1981, it drew up a report which was then approved by the Commission on 15.12.1980. The report was then approved by the Council in July 1981 and can be obtained on request.<sup>1</sup>

The report shows that while there had been remarkable progress in the legal recognition of the principle of equal treatment for men and women, at every level in the Member States, there is still much to be done in translating the principle into practice. The position of women in the world of work has not greatly improved, mainly because of the economic crisis.

The report outlines the progress made by Member States with their legislation, but it also points out the shortcomings.

The Commission concludes the report by a proposal that Member States that have not yet applied the Directive in full be urged to take the necessary steps.

A review of the steps taken by governments to apply this directive in their own national legislations shows that no Member State has tackled this task in an altogether comprehensive manner.

In formulating a conclusion on the practical application of the principle set out in the Directive, the Commission intends:

- (1) to request employers' and employees' organizations to meet at European level to seek ways and means of eliminating indirect discrimination and to reach a joint definition of equality programmes; and
- (2) to continue with and extend the positive action already being taken under the Social Fund and the policy on education and information, defining new fields of action in close cooperation with the national agencies responsible for promoting equal opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> Write to Bureau for Questions affecting Women's Employment, 200 Rue de la Loi, 1040 Brussels.

**25. Have infringement proceedings been brought to enforce Directive 76/207?**

The Commission has brought cases against the following countries:

Belgium

The law on equal access to vocational guidance and training had not been brought into effect. Only women public sector employees, not men, were entitled to paid leave to look after children. A letter of notice was sent on 30 July 1980, followed by a reasoned opinion on 8 May 1981.

Discrimination in parental leave was ended by a Royal Decree in July 1981.

With regard to the law on equal access to vocational training and guidance, the Commission introduced an account before the Court of Justice on 1 June 1982. The Commission withdraw its action after Belgium passed a Royal Decree on 19 June 1983 giving equal treatment in access to vocational training imparted in schools.

Denmark

The law does not provide for equal treatment in access to vocational training and in working conditions unless employees work in the same place of employment; in certain cases the Law is even interpreted as applying only to workers doing the same work.

A letter of notice was sent on 30 July 1980. A reasoned opinion followed on 15 April 1982.

The Commission decided to refer the matter to the Court of Justice on 25 May 1983.

France

Equal access to employment in the public sector was subject to restrictions not allowed by the Directive.

A letter of notice was sent on 30 July 1980 and a reasoned opinion on 12 May 1981. France felt that it had eliminated the discrimination by passing Law 82/380 and Decree 82/886 with an annex listing the civil service bodies for which men and women could be recruited separately.

The Commission considered that the Decree did not comply with the directive and sent a further letter of notice on 22 August 1983.

France failed to adopt general measures guaranteeing equal treatment in all the fields specified by the directive.

A letter of notice was sent on 24 August 1982. Law 83/635 was enacted on 13 July 1983. As soon as the Commission has been officially notified of the law, it will consider whether it complies with directive 76/207.

Germany

The laws do not cover equal treatment for independent occupations and professions or equality in vocational training in the school; they do not specify the excluded occupations; and they provide for leave for the care of a child only in the case of women employees.

A reasoned opinion was sent on 29 October 1982. The Commission has decided to refer the matter to the Court of Justice.

Ireland

The exceptions allowed by law were broader than authorized by the Directive, and not all persons had the right of recourse. A letter of notice dated 29 July 1980 was followed by a reasoned opinion on 9 October 1981. The case was withdrawn on 26 April 1983, since Ireland had amended the Employment Equality Act by the "European Communities Regulations".

A second infringement arises from exceptions made in treatment in matters of recruitment to public sector employment (the prison service, police), to work in private residences and to employment by close relatives. A formal notice was sent on 8 March 1983.

Italy

The law provides for equal treatment only under certain working conditions, and the conditions governing adoption leave for men and women employees differ.

A letter of notice was sent on 30 July 1980, followed by a reasoned opinion on 4 May 1981. A case was brought before the Court of Justice by the Commission on 1 June 1982, and the Court found in favour of Italian law.

It seems that Italian women's associations view Law 79 of 25.3.1983 on "recruitment by name" as an infringement of the directive.

Luxembourg

No legal measures had been introduced to comply with the Directive. A letter of notice was sent on 19 July 1979, followed by a reasoned opinion on 28 March 1980. The decision to refer the matter to the Court of Justice was reached on 15 July 1981.

The enacting of a law on 8.12.1981 brought the infringement procedure to an end.

A review of the law by the Commission revealed that it is not clear as to the persons to which it applies and also that it does not clearly define working conditions. Its section 2 also contains certain restrictions on access to employment that are contrary to the directive.

A letter of notice was forwarded on 5 July 1983.

Netherlands The laws enacted on 2.7.1980 and 1.3.1980 authorize public and private sector employers to depart from the principle of equal treatment under a general clause on recruitment, which conflicts with the directive. Men are also excluded from access to jobs in family help departments. A reasoned opinion was forwarded on 20 May 1983

United Kingdom The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 does not nullify clauses in collective contracts of employment that conflict with the directive, nor does it amend any provisions that do not uphold the principle of equal treatment in collective bargaining, companies' internal regulations and the statutes of independent professions. It allows exceptions in small firms (employing fewer than five) and jobs in private households. It lays down special rules conflicting with that principle in the case of men wishing to train for or practise the profession of midwife. This also applies to the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976.

The Court of Justice ruled in favour of the Commission, except for the matter of midwives, in November 1983.

Section 7 (2) (b), (c) and (d) of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and certain measures in the Sex Discrimination (N.I.) Order 1976 allow exceptions to the principle of equal treatment that are not covered by the directive (for example, in matters of personal care). British law also allows an exception in the matter of courses organized by physical education institutions.

A letter of notice was sent on 1 July 1982.

**26. What fields are covered by the "third directive"?**

Directive 79/7 applies the principle of equal treatment, as defined by directive 79/207 [see question 18], to social security in the following fields:

statutory schemes which provide protection against sickness, disability, old age, accidents at work, occupational diseases and unemployment;

social security assistance intended to supplement or replace these schemes.

It does not apply to survivors' benefits or family benefits (except those granted by way of increases or benefits due in respect of the above risks), or to maternity benefits.

**27. What obligations does Directive 79/7 place upon Member States? And how long does it give them to comply?**

By 19 December 1984, Member States must abolish all the laws, regulations and administrative provisions contrary to the principle of equal treatment regarding:

the scope of the schemes and the conditions of access to those schemes;

the obligation to contribute and the calculation of contributions;

the calculation of benefits, including increases in respect of a spouse and dependents, and the duration and retention of entitlement to benefits.

They must also ensure that any people considering themselves discriminated against in matters of equal treatment can pursue their claims in the courts.

**28. What exceptions does Directive 79/7 allow?**

Member States are allowed to exclude the following from the scope of measures required by Directive 79/7:

the determination of pensionable age for the purposes of granting old age and retirement pensions;

advantages in respect of old age pension schemes granted to people who have brought up children and the acquisition of benefit entitlements following periods when employment has been interrupted because of bringing up children;

the granting of old age or invalidity benefit entitlements by virtue of the wife's entitlements (the "widower's pension");

increase in long-term invalidity, old age, industrial accident and occupational disease benefits for a dependent wife.

**29. Has the Commission reviewed progress with implementation of the Directive?**

On 5 January 1984, the Commission forwarded an interim report to the Council on the implementation of the New Community Action Programme on equal opportunities for women (see questions 40 to 48). This report includes an analysis of indirect forms of discrimination and exceptions not covered by the third directive.

The Commission has also been considering cases of possible backsliding by Member States by comparison with their position at the time of adopting the directive. For example, on 5 July 1983, the Commission decided to send Belgium a letter of formal notice in the light of a complaint made by the Women's Liaison Committee.

It felt that the Royal Decree of 24 December 1980 in Belgium amounted to even more marked indirect discrimination against co-habiting women than under previous measures, in that it introduced the concept of a "co-habiting party" when determining the amount of unemployment benefits.

A grievance was also made known to the Commission on a new social security scheme in the Netherlands: since the law of 1 January 1983 was brought in, the criterion of "person supporting the family" has replaced the former criterion of the head of the family, something that is seen as an indirect discrimination against married women.

### **30. What is the European Social Fund?**

The European Social Fund is the financial instrument used by the Community to put its employment policy into practice.

It was set up by Article 123 of the Treaty of Rome "in order to improve employment opportunities for workers in the Common Market", with the task of "rendering the employment of workers easier and of increasing their geographical and occupational mobility within the Community".

To this end, the Fund gives financial aid to vocational training operations organized by private bodies or public authorities, presented by the Member State Governments.

Both men and women obviously have access to all its operations, whether they are designed to help people leaving the land, the unemployed or those at risk of unemployment, the under-employed, people who work in economic sectors adversely affected by technological progress or the under-25s who are seeking work or who have never been employed.

Between 1978 and 1983, the ESF allocated a specific budget to vocational training schemes for women under 25 becoming redundant and women hoping to return to work after bringing up their children. Priority was given to schemes providing training for the type of employment in which women have traditionally been under-represented and for sectors in which new technology is being introduced.

Policy has now been significantly revised. In view of the changing economic situation, in a decision issued on 17 October 1983 the Council stated that the Fund should become a more active instrument in support of employment policy and that the range of beneficiaries should be broader. In this spirit, the Fund is now to be used to encourage the implementation of policies that will give manpower the vocational skills needed to obtain stable employment and expand the opportunities for employment. The Fund is helping to finance vocational training and guidance, recruitment and wages support, socio-occupational integration as part of geographical mobility and technical services and consultancy designed to create more jobs.

The beneficiaries of efforts subsidized by the Fund come under three headings:

1. The under-25s who find it particularly hard to obtain work because they are untrained or because their training is inadequate;
2. The following people aged 25 or over: the unemployed or those at risk of unemployment, women wishing to return to paid employment, the handicapped aspiring to be an integral part of the working world, immigrant workers, and people employed in small and medium-sized undertakings who need to retrain as a result of the introduction of new information technology;
3. Those who are to work as trainers, vocational guidance experts or placement officers.

Since the resources available fall far short of the applications for financial support, on 22 December 1983 the Commission drew up guidelines for the administration of the Fund, setting out an order of priority for applications<sup>1</sup>.

Three principles have been taken as guidelines for the administration of the Fund:

in its support, the Fund is to concentrate on action in favour of the under-25s (75% of all its resources) and in favour of employment in disadvantaged regions;

priority is to be given to action reflecting Community objectives in the matter of employment and vocational training: vocational training in new information technology, the campaign against unemployment, the advancement of equality for women, the integration of the handicapped, alternance training, the integration of immigrant workers and their families, Community policy on the labour market;

priority is to be given to action of an innovatory nature under action programmes decided on by the Council that contribute towards the development of Member States' policies and practices.

In combining these three principles, the guidelines give priority to a broad range of efforts in priority regions and a narrower series of actions outside those regions. In this way, the Commission can work towards a few "supraregional" Community objectives such as the promotion of positive action for women.

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<sup>1</sup> Commission guidelines for the management of the European Social Fund for financial years 1984 to 1986, Commission of the European Communities, COM(83)711 final.



**31. Is the policy being pursued by the European community in the field of education and vocational training having any impact on equal opportunities?**

The resolution of the Council of Education Ministers of 9 February 1976 embodies the Community's resolve to make its policy in the field of education an instrument for the achievement of equal opportunities.

The resolution inspiring the Commission's efforts states that:

"The achievement of equal opportunities with a view to full access to all forms of education is an essential aim of the education policies of all Member States, and its importance must be emphasized in liaison with other policies of an economic and social nature in order to achieve equal opportunities in society."

In 1977, the Commission launched a four year programme on the transition of young people from school to working life<sup>1</sup>. Although one of the themes was the advancement of equal opportunities for girls, none of the projects proposed took such an objective as its specific aim. This aspect of the programmes was, however, taken into account in work on and assessment of the projects. A Community seminar was held in Luxembourg in May 1979 on the subject of the preparation of girls for working life. One of the programme evaluation reports was on "girls and the transition to work". In its conclusions, it stressed the special difficulties encountered by girls and women in negotiating that transition, pointing out that certain measures seemed likely to extend the range of opportunities for women and should be brought into being on a wider scale.

In its resolution of 12 July 1982, the Council of Education Ministers adopted a second programme of pilot projects for 1983 to 1986, bearing in mind these conclusions and recommendations<sup>2</sup>.

Under the second programme, priority was given to the active participation of girls in pilot projects to help them to acquire skills giving them access to vocational training and a wider range of careers.

With the aim of viewing the lessons of these pilot schemes against the broader political setting and organizing an intensive exchange of experience acquired in the course of the projects, the Commission called on a team of experts and a network of national political coordinators set up for this programme. In view of the importance of the subject of "Equal Opportunities", an expert from this team was appointed to study all the different aspects.

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council, 13 December 1976.

<sup>2</sup> Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council, 12 July 1982, regarding measures with a view to improving the preparation of young people for working life and facilitating the transition from education to working life, OJ C 193, 28 July 1982.

Finally, the Commission was urged to take action to promote equal opportunities by the resolution of 19 September 1983<sup>1</sup> on the introduction of new information technologies in education. The aim of this resolution was to promote the exchange of information on experience acquired by educational systems in Member States with the introduction of young people to new technologies, especially the pooling of information on strategies leading to broader participation by girls in school and learning activities affected by new information technology.

In order to achieve the objectives set out in these resolutions and make education an instrument for more enlightened attitudes, the Commission also worked on a series of actions designed to end the stereotyped ideas we retain on the respective roles of men and women in society.

- 1) Actions designed to cover the widest possible field of application, Community-wide or within a local authority area. In this spirit, the Commission has produced two studies. One is on the image of women in education<sup>2</sup>. It is a summary of research undertaken in Community countries on sexist stereotypes in school textbooks and an analysis of their findings. Based on a field survey, this report also makes proposals on alternatives to the customary stereotypes and proposes an educational model for teaching staff and the authors of textbooks. The report sets out its conclusions as material that can be used by the Commission in encouraging fresh effort.

The second report examines the educational system in Ireland, a country which is a special<sup>3</sup> case in that desegregation is not an official tenet of education<sup>3</sup>. This was a subject that calls for investigation, especially as views on the need for desegregation are now being questioned in certain quarters.

- 2) The Commission relies on the support of the media in achieving its aim of making the widest possible public aware of the problem.

The Commission has asked the European School Television Committee to produce a film on "choosing one's adult life at the age of ten". It is to show various occupations and should help boys and girls to view the choice of a career without being influenced by sexist considerations.

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1 Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council, 13 December 1976, on measures relating to the introduction of new information technology in education.

2 "The image of women in the educational context", Jeanine Terneu-Evrard, Brigitte Evrard, October 1983. Report to be published by the Commission.

3 "Institutionalised Sex Differences in Subject Choices and Examination Performances in Irish Post Primary Schools", Employment Equality Agency, June 1983.

- 3) Action to promote the direct involvement of children in Community thinking on equality. The Commission has proposed the theme of "equality" for the 1984-85 competition for the European Day for Schools. All pupils from 10 to 20 will be invited to submit an essay on the future of boys and girls in Europe, to be judged by age groups.

In the field of vocational training, the European Community is pursuing a policy, mainly backed by two resolutions, which is also having an impact on the advancement of equality.

The resolution of 11 July 1983 creates a general framework for the development of European policy on vocational training for the 1980s<sup>1</sup>. Seen as an instrument for an active employment policy and as a means of giving young people a realistic preparation for working life and adult responsibilities, vocational training policies are also envisaged as an "instrument for the promotion of equal opportunities for all workers in their access to the labour market and the exercise of various occupational activities".

With this in mind, the resolution calls on Member States to take steps to "encourage women to participate more in training that will facilitate their access to skilled jobs, in particular to occupations in which they are under-represented". The Commission is called on to implement action that will help to desegregate the labour market, by planning pilot schemes that will, by improving basic job skills, improve the employment prospects of women workers at risk of unemployment, as well as projects designed to provide more information on the training facilities available to women, and a programme of study visits for specialists in vocational training.

The resolution of 2 June 1983 concerns training in new information technology<sup>2</sup>. It states that one of the purposes of such training is to promote equality of opportunity and calls on Member States to include as part of their vocational training policy the retraining and integration of women at risk of losing their jobs as a result of new technologies, or women wishing to return to employment.

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution of the Council of 11 July 1983 concerning vocational training policies in the European Community for the 1980s, OJ C 193, 20 July 1983.

<sup>2</sup> Resolution of the Council of 2 June 1983 on measures relating to vocational training in new information technologies, OJ C 166, 25 June 1983.

32. **Apart from Commission action in the fields of vocational training and education, what other types of Commission intervention not specifically associated with women have an impact on equal opportunities?**

In many other fields, the Commission has forwarded proposals on the advancement of equality to the Council. In particular, it has drawn up a draft recommendation on reducing and reorganizing working time, a communication on the employment of young people and the development of local initiative, and finally a Commission communication on female unemployment to the Standing Committee on Employment<sup>1</sup>. Following a brief presentation of the nature of women's work, this communication analyzes specific aspects of female employment. It goes on to set out a typology of policies and measures to combat female unemployment in Europe and evaluates their results.

Finally, in the broader context of measures designed to stimulate economic revival and restore employment growth in general, the Commission has proposed guidelines to combat women's unemployment.

The principles underlying the campaign are:

women's right to economic independence, especially in a period of recession;

the development of positive discrimination as a strategy that may help to improve job prospects;

the integration of Community policy objectives;

the incorporation of all these principles into action at every level.

Of the measures suggested in the Commission communication, some are designed to promote equality in

job creation and recruitment,

training, vocational guidance and placement,

data compilation and the pooling of experience,

supporting measures:

information campaigns and the development of social infrastructure.

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<sup>1</sup> Women's unemployment in the Community, Commission of the European Communities, COM (83) 653 final.

**33. What is the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP)?**

Created in 19751, CEDEFOP has the following tasks:

- (1) "to assist the Commission by contributing its scientific and technical activities towards the implementation of a common vocational training policy";
- (2) "to contribute to the development and coordination of research";
- (3) "to promote the exchange of information and experience";
- (4) "to establish a selective documentation service with regard to current data, recent developments, research and vocational training structures";
- (5) "to disseminate useful information and documentation";
- (6) "to facilitate concerted action in solving vocational training problems";
- (7) "to provide a meeting place for interested parties".

**34. How did CEDEFOP start to pay special attention to the problems faced by women?**

Sine the start of its work in 1976, CEDEFOP has devoted special attention to the specific difficulties arising in women's vocational training. Its objective in this field is to promote the vocational advancement of girls and women and to increase their chances of access to the labour market by creating new training opportunities.

With this objective in mind, in September 1977 CEDEFOP held a seminar on equality of opportunity and vocational training. Among the seminar conclusions and recommendations were research, the compilation and dissemination of information on innovatory action in this field, the encouragement of experimental programmes and action to change girls' and women's attitudes and broaden the choice of careers open to them.

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Further information from CEDEFOP, Bundesallee 22, Berlin 15.

**35. What action has been taken by CEDEFOP to publicize innovatory vocational training programmes?**

In pursuance of its mandate, in 1978-79 CEDEFOP embarked on a survey of innovatory vocational training and guidance schemes for women in the nine Member States.

A national report has been drawn up on each of these nine surveys and is available in the original language. A summary report and an index of the experiments (published in the six European Community languages) gives an overview of the findings.

To highlight the link between equal opportunities, innovatory training, employment and advancement, CEDEFOP has held a seminar on education, vocational guidance and training for women for professional advisers and placement specialists.

To supplement this information, CEDEFOP has produced a general interest booklet for distribution to the public describing the most significant aspects of the innovatory projects surveyed in its survey on "new perspectives for women".<sup>1</sup>

**36. What incentive has CEDEFOP provided for innovatory vocational training programmes?**

To ensure that experiments in vocational training are translated into widespread practice, CEDEFOP sounded out firms that might implement new projects; 27 programmes for the vocational advancement of women through training were drawn up, covering seven countries - Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. This project has now been completed and the results are available.

CEDEFOP has also expanded its work in two specific fields:

it has produced a report on the skills and training needs of spouses who help in small and medium-sized undertakings;

it has produced a report on information technology and the training of skilled manpower in the service sector. The report embodies the findings of an analysis of the literature on the subject and interviews with experts in the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

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<sup>1</sup> Apply to CEDEFOP, Bundesallee 22, Berlin 15.

**38. Who provides information for women and how?**

The European Commission could not itself provide information directly to the 139 million women in the European Community; as is obvious, it reaches women through the press and women's organizations.

It was in fact at the request of representatives of women's organizations that the European Commission set up a working unit within the Directorate General for Information with the responsibility of informing the press and women's groups. This was the start of a permanent dialogue through which the Commission learns about women's aspirations, makes its own guidelines and policies known, shows precisely how European integration will benefit its women citizens and promotes the widespread circulation of ideas and information among organizations and countries.

The unit responsible for press information and women's organizations achieves these objectives in various ways:

- (1) it publishes "Women of Europe", a bi-monthly magazine produced in seven languages for all the women (and all the men) actively working for women;

Women of Europe furnishes three types of information:

on the aspects of EEC policy that most affect women; for example, in the ten issues published in 1982-83, "Women of Europe" regularly reported on the work of the European Parliament and the Committee of Inquiry into the situation of women in Europe;

on the changing status of women in the institutions and legislation of the ten EEC countries;

on the activities of national and international women's associations, each working in its own way for women's status and for Europe.

- (2) the unit also publishes supplements on EEC policies of specific concern to women. In 1982-83, it published five special issues on the status of women in Spain and Portugal respectively, statistics on women, the action programme for equal opportunities, Community law and women and women in agriculture;
- (3) it encourages, participates in and sometimes contributes financially towards discussions, seminars, training courses, etc., arranged by women's groups on EEC themes.

For example, it arranged the first European colloquium of women's associations in Bonn in May 1982, the aim being to introduce the Action Programme for Equal Opportunities and make a preliminary contact between those associations and the Committee of Inquiry;

It has cooperated with the Women's Committee in the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organizations in the European Community on a colloquium in Grado in November 1982, which discussed steps to be taken at national and European level to improve the legal and social status of women farmers;

It has arranged a European colloquium of women elected to local government: Pisa in Italy was the venue for a meeting of 150 women local government officials held on 22 to 25 November 1983 to discuss equal opportunities, employment, peace and the European elections;

It has organized seminars for Portuguese and Spanish women in the period leading up to their countries' membership of the Community (in Lisbon in March 1982 and in Madrid in November 1983).

- (4) The unit produces audiovisual information on the subject of "women in the European Community":

It has created an audiovisual dossier on "women in the European Community" to be used by the organizers of meetings of women's groups. This dossier consists of a set of 50 colour slides, a recorded cassette and an organizer's guide. The French prototype is almost ready and it is to be followed by versions in the six other languages.

It has produced a publicity leaflet for wide-scale distribution at exhibitions and events attended by the public at large.

- (5) It conducts opinion surveys for comparative research on men's and women's attitudes to certain problems in society, such as the changing status of women, women at work and employment questions, women's involvement in society and politics and general attitudes to Europe and the European elections.

**38. What were the findings of opinion surveys commissioned by the unit responsible for women's organizations and the press?**

As of this date, there have been four major surveys on opinions relating to the status of women in society and changes in that status.

Surveys were conducted in 1975, 1977 and 1983 on changes in European behaviour and attitudes towards the status of women in society.

A survey in 1980 related to women's perception of discrimination at work.

The first survey marked International Women's Year and was conducted in May 1975.



The survey covered 9,500 people, both men and women, aged 15 and over. The findings were embodied in a report published in December 1975<sup>1</sup>.

In view of the interest aroused by this first survey, the European Commission decided to embark upon further research at the end of 1977. The aim was three-fold:

- (1) to find out whether attitudes to the women's and/or feminist movement had changed between 1975 and 1977;
- (2) to look more closely at a number of questions such as the effects of women's employment on the formation and development of their socio-political attitudes;
- (3) and, in the run-up to the direct elections to the European Parliament, to identify the women likely to participate more actively in the event.

The second survey was based on a sample of 9,000 people of 15 or over, as before. A report on its findings was published in February 1979<sup>2</sup>.

The 1975 and 1977 surveys contributed a great deal of interesting information, the most important items being summarized as follows:

- (1) Between 1975 and 1977, the debate on women's status had not increased in importance in European public opinion. "It may be," as stated in the conclusions to the 1979 report, "that growing concern with other issues, such as inflation and unemployment, has dampened the interest beginning to be shown in the question of women's rights." It may also be that "the public has to some extent grown accustomed to the changes in law, attitudes, customs and ways of talking about the issue and is therefore less inclined to think about a problem supposedly being dealt with".
- (2) The two surveys conducted in 1975 and 1977 revealed a broad similarity in the replies given to men and women to most subjects, the most marked exception being that women were far more in favour of women working, as evidenced in both surveys.
- (3) Finally, the 1977 survey disclosed that a relatively large proportion of women aspired to greater participation in society and politics. It also showed that their actual participation lagged far behind their aspirations.

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<sup>1</sup> Decision of the Commission of 9 December 1981, OL L 20/35 by women in paid employment.

<sup>2</sup> Decision of the Commission of 9 December 1981, OL L 20/35

In 1980, a third survey was conducted on women's perception of discrimination in employment, at the request of the Ad Hoc Committee on Women's Rights in European Parliament. It covered women in paid employment and was designed to find out how they saw themselves and their position by comparison with their male colleagues.

The survey was carried out on women in paid employment to find out how they perceived their own situation by comparison with that of male colleagues.

The survey's main findings related to the perception of differences in eight respects: recruitment, promotion, training, wages, bonuses, holidays, retirement and tax. It is of interest that 13% of the group of women in paid employment had suffered from discrimination or felt that women were at a disadvantage by comparison with men in most respects in their own workplace. An equivalent number of women had not been on the receiving end of discrimination themselves but thought that women were at a disadvantage in most respects. The remainder - the largest group - said they had found no differences between men and women at work. At first sight this finding may be surprising, but the reasons may be that about one third of the women worked in public sector jobs where there is far less discrimination, and that many of them worked in all-female environment and had no experience of competing with male wage-earners.

Women who saw themselves as being at a disadvantage felt that this arose mainly in pay, followed by promotion and then by opportunities for further training.

The survey also established that women in paid employment whose immediate superiors were women were less likely to feel discriminated against in the workplace, whatever the sex of their colleagues.

It seems that the perception of discrimination depends on psychological factors: the women complaining most of discrimination were widows and divorcees and those with formal diplomas and higher education.

In the spring of 1983, in view of changing economic conditions and after several years of work to achieve equal opportunities, the Commission decided to pursue its research programme by carrying out a fourth opinion poll under exactly the same conditions as the two surveys undertaken in 1975 and 1975. The findings of the latest survey pointed to certain interesting conclusions.

European thinking has changed by comparison with 1975 in that less importance is attached to the problem of the position of women in society.

At the same time, there is less prejudice as to male and female roles and far less marked discrimination in attitudes.

It is clear that there is widespread recognition of the legitimacy of the desire for equality but not much support for organized women's liberation movements or their efforts, among either men or women. The movements are generally approved when they seem to achieve true equality at work or equality of opportunity to rise to positions of responsibility in political parties, but seven interviewees out of ten disapproved of any attempt to bring about a radical change in society.

In theory at least, Europeans now appear to be in general agreement as to the principle of equality for men and women in three spheres; at work, in political involvement and in non-differentiation of roles within the family. In practice, however, what progress has been made?

#### 1. Equality in the workplace

Thirty per cent of the women stated that they were married and not in paid employment.

Three main factors may explain this lower rate of employment among married women: family responsibilities connected with young children, their own preferences and their husbands' preferences.

On the subject of whether women preferred not to work, half of those without a job said that they regretted this fact. In the light of the survey, it seems that the feeling of frustration at not having paid employment is one of the reasons why the problem of women's status is seen as so important.

Regarding the preferences expressed by men, there were few who supported the traditional pattern (29%), but when questioned as to the situation in their own homes 52% said they would prefer their wives not to have jobs.

Women in paid employment said they were just as motivated in their work as men but they derived less satisfaction from it. It seems that their situation was less satisfactory in terms of the range of jobs to which they could aspire, pay, promotion and job security.

One notable fact was that a large majority of men and women in Europe agreed that in periods of high unemployment a man has more right to work than a woman (60% of men and 59% of women), although this priority did not gain universal acceptance, since fewer young people of both sexes or women with a higher level of education agreed with the proposition.

2. Participation in social and political affairs

Despite the general opinion that women now have just as much right to be involved in politics as men, the level of participation in everyday life is far lower than that of men.

We should not, however, rush to the conclusion that women lag behind men in the socio-political sphere, since:

- 1) Even among men, the younger they are the less close do they feel to any political party. In other words, there is a general move away from "politicians' politics".
- 2) Women, especially younger women, are more concerned with other controversial topics - for example, the major social issues - than with politics in the strict sense of the word.
- 3) Finally, there is a propensity among women - and this is probably a new trend - to opt for a different form of political involvement: street demonstrations.

As of this time, then, it seems that women's interest in "public affairs" is taking new forms that represent a departure from the traditional model of political participation.

Women continue to feel that they should take part in the electoral system. The percentage of women voting in parliamentary elections is very close to the percentage of men. In the case of European elections, despite the fact that they are poorly informed on European Parliament, almost as many women stated that they intended to vote (51%, compared with 55% among men).

**39. What does the Bureau for Questions affecting Women's Employment do?**

Set up in 1976, the Bureau's terms of reference are broad: it helps the European Commission to achieve its own mandate by implementing Community decisions, ensuring that they are applied and, when necessary, proposing new decisions.

In helping to translate EEC Directive 76/207 into practice, for instance, the Bureau draws up progress reports on its implementation and also prepares infringement proceedings by which the Commission calls the Member States to order (see question 17 and the questions that follow). Another of the Bureau's tasks is to keep a close watch on Community legislation affecting women's employment. It is the body that proposes and defends proposals for legal instruments and various Community measures to promote equal opportunities.

The Bureau also represents the Commission in coordinating the positions of the ten Member States in dealing with the many international agencies concerned with women's employment, such as the OECD, Council of Europe and the United Nations (including its International Labour Office). As part of these duties, it is preparing the European Community position with a view to the United Nations conference that is to close the Decade for Women in 1985.

In addition to this work on statutory regulations, the Bureau is active in the operational field. It has a watching brief over the European Social Fund's activities affecting women (see question 29). The Bureau also takes part in research and study arranged by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP, based in Berlin).

The Bureau has a small budget to support women's employment projects of an original kind brought into being by national women's organizations or centres. It takes part in seminars and discussions at European level associated with equal opportunities for women.

Within the Commission, the Bureau is the inter-departmental coordinating body on all specific aspects of Community policies affecting women (such as vocational training, employment policy, including young people's employment, the adaptation of working hours and local ventures).

The Bureau is now concentrating on the New Action Programme for the promotion of equal opportunities. It is conducting a series of research to pave the way for Community efforts to formulate legal instruments, the supervision and monitoring of existing instruments and the incentivisation of positive discrimination.

**40. How did the New Community Action Programme on the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Women come into being?**

To take stock of past achievements and discuss future prospects, the Commission organized a conference in Manchester in May 1980 which brought together representatives<sup>1</sup> of national committees for women's employment and equal opportunities<sup>1</sup>. The conference highlighted the fact that legislation to eliminate discrimination is only one step towards true equality for men and women in their working lives; the obstacles to change are inherent in systems linked with the labour market such as the apportionment of family responsibilities, education and the processes whereby individuals learn to become members of society.

There is an evident need for new strategies for action in fields not strictly covered by the Treaties or where the Council has not expressed a clear-cut political resolve.

The New Action Programme was also inspired by the demands formulated in European Parliament's resolution of 11 February 1981 on the position of women in the European Community, in which it called on Community institutions to intensify and broaden Community activity in this area.

Several international bodies have drawn up programmes that bear witness to the same concerns.

Finally, national women's employment or equal opportunities committees, women's associations and the Youth Forum of the European Communities have called on the Commission to give fresh impetus to its work on the promotion of equal opportunities.

In response to these calls and in view of economic and social change, in December 1981 the Commission approved a New Action Programme on the promotion of equal opportunities for women in 1982-85, presented by Mr. Richard, Commissioner responsible for employment, social affairs and education.

**41. What attitude did the Council of Ministers adopt to the New Action Programme?**

In a resolution<sup>1</sup> dated 12 July 1982, the Council gave its view on the New Action Programme<sup>1</sup>.

It undertook to support action along the lines defined by the Commission in this field. In its explanatory memorandum, it stressed three important factors:

the risk of exacerbating the inequalities in employment that still exist in practice in the present crisis;

the need to press on with and intensify community action at a time of economic crisis;

the need to achieve equal opportunities in practice, in particular by means of positive action programmes.

42. **What specific action has been planned under the New Programme?**

The New Programme has taken as its goal the achievement of equality by a twofold approach: reinforcing individual rights and the achievement of equal opportunities in practice.

Eight actions are planned to reinforce individual rights.

Action 1. To reinforce and monitor the practical application of the directives in the ten Member States, their progress and the interpretation given to Community measures at national level, with particular attention to indirect discrimination.

Action 2. To encourage workers to avail themselves of little used means of redress in matters of equal treatment.

Action 3. In accordance with Directive 76/107, to revise national and Community protective legislation with a view to abolishing unjustified protective legislation and to promote equal standards of protection for men and women.

Action 4. To extend the principle of equal treatment to occupational social security schemes and to social security sectors not now covered by equality legislation or where exceptions are made; and to revise certain traditional concepts such as the "head-of-household" so that women are equally entitled to social security rights on an individual basis.

Action 5. To apply the principle of equal treatment to self-employed women and women in agriculture, improving their occupational status through amendments to civil, commercial and tax law.

Action 6. to revise income tax systems which indirectly have an adverse effect on women's employment.

Action 7. To extend parental leave and leave for family reasons, and at the same time to build up the network of public facilities and services for a more equitable sharing of parental responsibilities.

Action 8. To improve the protection of women during pregnancy and motherhood while abolishing discrimination against pregnant women in recruitment.

Eight actions are planned to direct the work of the Commission and Member States towards achieving the goal of equality in practice.

Action 9. To promote outline legislation at national level for the furtherance of positive action designed to help women take up employment in non-traditional sectors.

Action 10. To prepare women for working life by promoting the diversification of occupational choices for women and their mastery of new technologies, in particular by guidance and initial and continuing training.

Action 11. To make girls, their families and schools aware of the new career opportunities to which they can aspire.

Action 12. To encourage desegregation in employment in all sectors and occupations and at every level of the occupational hierarchy.

Action 13. To assess progress towards equal treatment in employment and desegregation.

Action 14. To promote the right of immigrant women to equal access to employment and training.

Action 15. To encourage the sharing of occupational, family and social responsibilities by men and women so that women can play a more active role in the working world and in political and social life.

Action 16. To increase the awareness among the general public of positive aspects of women's integration into all sectors of society, thus calling the traditional sex-related roles into question.



**43. What is the timetable for the implementation of the measures planned?**

Measures initiated in 1982:

Actions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 15

Measures initiated from 1983 onward:

Actions 2, 4, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16

**44. What are the respective roles of the Commission and the Member States in implementing the objectives defined by the New Programme?**

Member States are called upon to embark on the following action:

the creation or strengthening of ad hoc bodies to promote women's employment and equal opportunities;

the establishment of a network for the exchange of information and for consultation;

measures designed to extend the principle of equal treatment and do away with the obstacles that still hamper its application;

the implementation of legislation on positive action and the promotion of new legislation;

the intensive dissemination of information;

setting up service cooperatives, the provision of community facilities and services;

the compilation of comparable data on women's status;

the promotion of study and research on the subject.

The Commission will support Member States in their efforts by concentrating on the following measures:

setting up and leading groups of experts;

analysis and comparative research on national experience and situations with regard to the action to be taken to clarify Community guidelines;

the dissemination of information;

the preparation of new Community legal instruments;

organizing seminars;

support of action undertaken in Member States, in particular through the channel of the European Social Fund and CEDEFOP;

the publication of reports on survey findings.

45. **What new body has the Commission set up to aid it in its task of implementing the New Programme?**

Under the New Action Programme, the Commission has decided to set up a body with the special responsibility of helping it to fulfil its task: an Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women<sup>1</sup>.

The Committee has 20 members, mainly the representatives of national committees on women's employment and equal opportunities. Representatives of both sides of industry attend meetings as observers.

Following the Manchester conference in May 1980, an informal liaison group had met regularly to advise the Commission on equal opportunities. This group was the basis for the formally structured Advisory Committee, whose terms of reference are:

- to assist the Commission in drawing up and implementing its policy on the promotion of employment and equality of opportunities for women;
- to ensure the continuous exchange of information on experience gained and measures undertaken in Member States.

Being a consultative body, it gives its views or forwards reports to the Commission at the Commission's request or on its own initiative.

46. **What progress has the Commission already made with the actions proposed under the New Programme?**

Action 1. The Commission has set up a group of experts to define indirect discrimination.

Action 2. The Commission is conducting comparative analysis of experience in Member States.

Action 3. Research has been completed.  
The Advisory Committee has forwarded its view to the effect that most protective legislation should be withdrawn.  
The Commission is examining the findings in the light of directive 76/207.

Action 4. Research conducted to pave the way for a legal instrument has been completed. A draft directive has been brought out (see questions 47 and 48).

Action 5. Research has been completed.  
A draft directive has been forwarded to the Council of Ministers.

Action 6. An analysis has been completed.  
The Commission is to take appropriate steps in the light of its conclusions.

<sup>1</sup> - - - - -  
Decision of the Commission of 9 December 1981, OJ L 20/35

- Action 7. A draft directive has been forwarded to the Council. Research on community amenities and services has been completed.
- Action 8. The Commission has embarked on comparative analysis.
- Action 9. An analysis has been completed.  
The Advisory Committee hoped to draw up a Community legal instrument along the lines suggested by the New Programme. With this in mind, the Commission held a seminar to bring the matter to the attention of political decision-makers in September 1983.  
A draft Council recommendation is now being drawn up.
- Action 10. Research is under way to investigate the impact of new technology on women's employment and their training needs. The Commission has given its support to various measures in this field.
- Action 11. A group of experts has been set up with the priority task of providing information on careers accessible to women in the light of the introduction of new technology.  
The Advisory Committee is contributing guidelines on desirable action.
- Action 12. Research/action in the banking world has been completed and a seminar held to present its findings.  
The Commission is supporting action in banking along these lines.  
The Commission has also allocated budgetary resources to support the formation of cooperatives.  
Finally, comparative research on desegregation in the civil service and the opportunities for the promotion of equality there has been completed.
- Action 13. A group of experts has been set up.
- Action 14. Research on legal measures and administrative practices has begun.  
CEDEFOP is undertaking comparative analysis of training action and is evaluating training programmes (including language programmes).
- Action 15. Research is under way.
- Action 16. Two reports have been initiated, one on the image of women in the media, the other on the position of women working in the media.

47. **What are the latest legal instruments to supplement existing European legislation on equality for men and women?**

1. On 29 April 1983, the Commission forwarded a draft directive to the Council of Ministers on implementing the principle of equal treatment for men and women in occupational social security schemes.
2. On 22 November 1983, the Commission forwarded a draft directive on parental leave and leave for family reasons to the Council of Ministers.
3. On 15 March 1984, the Commission sent the Council of Ministers a proposal for a directive on the application of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in self-employed occupations, including agriculture, and on protection during pregnancy and maternity.

48. **What fields are covered by these draft directives?**

1. Directive on applying the principle of equal treatment to occupational social security schemes.

The draft directive goes further towards applying the principle of equal treatment in matters of social security as set out in directive 79.7, in that it extends it to occupational schemes, to include:

schemes based on collective labour agreements applying to a company or to one or more branches of an occupation;

company schemes, set up or planned unilaterally by the employer for its work force or certain categories of its work force;

schemes set up by the representatives of an occupation engaged in non-salaried work (craftsmen, the professions, etc.).

2. Directive on parental leave and leave for family reasons.

The directive defines parental leave and leave for family reasons which, within the meaning of directive 76/207, form part of the working conditions in which there must be equal treatment for male and female workers.

Parental leave is the right to take time off for a specified period when a child is born (or adopted). It should be taken after the end of maternity leave (or, if the child is being adopted, leave granted to settle the child in the family), and before the child reaches the age of 2 (or 5 in the case of a handicapped or adopted child). Leave for family reasons is a right to take time off for a short period to attend to emergency situations arising in the home.

The right to parental leave and leave for family reasons applies to both the public and the private sectors and to part-time workers.

The draft directive includes measures relating to parental leave - the form of leave, its duration and the retention of accumulated rights, the guarantee of returning to a job, etc. - as well as measures relating to leave for family reasons such as the nature of emergencies, whether or not the leave should be paid and its duration.

3. Directive on "Equal treatment for self-employed women"

The purpose of the proposal is to give women actively participating in a family business the right to an occupational status (such as the right to be their husbands' professional partners or to employee status) or to give certain rights to self-employed women (rights to social security on their own account, vocational training and professional representation).

It also provides for the protection of women in the event of pregnancy and maternity by the provision of replacement services or indemnities (social security or other forms of public social protection).

**49. What is European Parliament doing for women?**

At the time of the first European elections, the proportion of women elected to European Parliament was remarkably large, with enough women to form a political group in their own right had they wished. European Parliament is now one of the democratic institutions with the highest percentage of female representation, one Member of Parliament out of six being a woman.

This meant that Parliament has paid far more attention to the status of women. In the course of debates, for example, Parliament has called for more resources to be allocated to departments within the European Commission concerned with women's issues. It also insisted on a woman finally being appointed to the Commission, and urged that more women be taken on as senior officials in the administration of Community institutions (not only the European Commission but also the Court of Justice, Council of Ministers, Economic and Social Committee and the Court of Accounts).

In the period leading up to the United Nations world conference on women (in Copenhagen in July 1980), European Parliament approved a motion tabled by Suzanne Dekker on behalf of the Social Affairs Committee.

The resolution called for a general effort to inform women and for various reports to the European Commission on health protection and social security, the labour market, the occupational, pay and social status of single women and women heads of households, etc.

The Commission was also asked to present a report on the legal status of women in countries applying for membership of the Community.

A major debate took place in the spring of 1981. To pave the way for the debate, Parliament had decided to set up an

Ad Hoc Committee on Women's Rights

chaired by Yvette Roudy. The Committee's report, drafted by Johanna Maij-Weggen, was based on meetings with women's organizations, personal case histories recounted at public hearings, letters received, reports drawn up by the European Commission, etc.

In its concern for clear and comprehensive information, the Ad Hoc Committee on Women's Rights launched a survey conducted by the European Commission on women's perception of discrimination at work<sup>1</sup>, as well as a survey in press organizations on the status of information concerning women.

In February, the public galleries of European Parliament were packed with representatives of women's organizations and journalists from the women's press who had come to hear the debate. The very high calibre contributions to the debate concluded with a vote in favour of the Committee's resolution. Its main points concerned the practical application of Community directives, improved economic and social participation for women, in particular by adapting to the changes brought about by the introduction of new technology, the formulation of a "European statute" for women working in small and medium-sized undertakings and special help for women in developing nations<sup>2</sup>.

The Ad Hoc Committee completed its mandate on 8 July 1981. On the same day, European Parliament decided to set up a Committee of Inquiry on the Situation of Women in Europe, with a watching brief over the implementation of action called for in the February 1981 resolution. That Committee completed its mandate on 17 January 1984.

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<sup>1</sup> See Supplement 5 to "Women of Europe", "European Women in Paid Employment".

<sup>2</sup> The record of the debate and the full text of the resolution were printed in "Women of Europe", issue 19/81.

50. **What was the Committee of Inquiry's mandate and what results has it achieved?**

The Committee of Inquiry, chaired by Maria Lisa Cinciari Rodano, is the first such body to be set up by European Parliament. Its terms of reference were:

to ensure that the guidelines adopted by European Parliament in its resolution of 11 February 1981 are being adopted as quickly as possible;

to monitor changes in the status of women in Member States, especially as a result of the implementation of Community directives.

The inquiry is broken down into 18 themes, with each of the 18 Committee members taking responsibility for one of those themes, i.e. the application of the first two directives, status of the implementation of the third directive, the situation of women in Greece, changes in working hours, vocational training, new technologies and their consequences to women's employment, action planned under the European Social Fund, health, women immigrants, women in family businesses, the status of women in Community institutions, women of the Third World, information, parental leave and social services, tax, women in disadvantaged regions, education and women in decision-making centres.

In carrying out its mission, the Committee has established a good working relationship with the Commission, Council, Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities and other European Community bodies.

Its work so far has included the following.

1. The Committee of Inquiry has given several formal opinions:

on the Community's New Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women, 1982-85, in a report passed by an almost unanimous vote of Parliament on 12 May 1982;

on the reform of the Regional Fund, proposing amendments that take more account of the situation of women; Parliament took this as a broad basis for its adoption of an opinion on the proposed amendment to the Fund regulations submitted by the Commission;

on the proposed directive on voluntary part-time work, in a report drawn up for the Committee of Social Affairs and Employment;

on the revision of the Social Fund, stressing the need for maintaining a chapter of the Fund devoted to special intervention for women;

on the proposed directive on temporary work;

on the draft resolution on vocational training policies in the EEC for the 1980s and on the draft resolution relating to measures for vocational training in new information technologies;

on the draft directive relating to the implementation of the principle of equal treatment in occupational social security schemes.

2. Under the budget procedure for financial year 1983, it succeeded in persuading European Parliament to vote on 16 December 1982 for amendments on:
  - specific information for women;
  - action by the Social Fund in favour of women;
  - implementation of the new action programme.
3. It has arranged public hearings
  - in Athens, in September 1982, on the situation of women in Greece,
  - in Rome, in November 1982, on the situation of women in the Third World,
  - in Luxembourg, in April 1983, on the education and vocational training of women.
4. It has completed its 18 reports inquiring into the situation of women in Europe. In the light of the conclusions arrived at by these 18 reports, it has drawn up an important proposal for a resolution on the action to be taken and expanded in order to achieve equal opportunities for men and women. The Committee of Inquiry arrived at a twofold conclusion in the course of its work: that the Community bodies had taken practical action on very few of the measures called for by European Parliament in its resolution of 11 February 1981; and that, due to the impact of the economic crisis, the situation of women deteriorated between 1981 and 1984, placing at risk the achievements of the 1970s in the field of equal rights.

On 17 January 1984, Parliament debated this proposed resolution. The very lively discussions led to a vote for most of the measures set out in the proposal. From now on, the European Community is to direct its efforts on behalf of women towards the following objectives:

- upholding and expanding equal opportunities,
- upholding and expanding women's employment;
- equal responsibilities for men and women in political, cultural, social and family life;
- greater public awareness of women's rights,
- the rights of immigrant women,
- women and development policy,
- the situation of women in Community institutions.



SEVERAL RELATIVE BOOKS AND DOCUMENTS

COMMISSION DES COMMUNAUTÉS EUROPÉENNES

Rapport de la Commission au Conseil sur l'état d'application du 31 décembre 1972 du principe d'égalité entre rémunérations masculines et féminines. Bruxelles, 1973 - 45 p. SEC(73)3000 final

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Report of the Commission to the Council on the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women, situation on the 31 december 1972. Brussels, 1973 - 45 p. SEC(73)3000 final

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Bericht der Kommission an den Rat über den Stand der Anwendung des Grundsatzes des gleichen Arbeitsentgelts für Männer und Frauen zum 31 Dezember 1972. Brüssel, 1973 - 45 s. SEC(73)3000 eng.

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COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Report of the Commission to the Council on the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women in Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom. Situation on the 31 December 1973. Brussels, 1974 - 52 p. sec(74)2721 final

KOMMISSION DER EUROPÄISCHEN GEMEINSCHAFTEN

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COMMISSIE VAN DE EUROPESE GEMEENSCHAPPEN

Verslag van de Commissie aan de Raad over de stand van toepassing op 31 december 1973 van het beginsel van glijke beloning van mannelijke en vrouwelijke werknemers in Denemarken, Ierland en het Verenigd Koninkrijk.

Brussel, 1974 - 52 blz. SEC(74)2721 def.

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Beretning fra Kommissionen til Rådet om anvendelsen af princippet om ligeløn for mænd og kvinder i Danmark, Irland og Det forenede kongerige Status pr. 31. December 1973 - 52 s. SEC(74)2721 endelig udg.

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Relazione della Commissione al Consiglio sullo stato d'applicazione al 31 Dicembre 1973 del principio di parità tra retribuzioni maschili e femminili, in Danimarca, in Irlanda e nel Regno Unito.

Bruxelles, 1974 - 52 pag. SEC(74)2721 def.

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Bruxelles, 1975 - 215 p. X/608/75

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COMMISSION FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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για τον τρόπο εφαρμογής της απόφασης της 12ης Αυγούστου 1980 περί ίσης μεταχείρισης ανδρών και γυναικών, όσον αφορά

- την πρόσβαση απασχόλησης και προαγωγής
- την πρόσβαση στον επαγγελματικό προσανατολισμό και την επαγγελματική εκπαίδευση
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