

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

NEW WOMAN DIRECTOR-GENERAL

The Commission of the European Communities has appointed Luxembourg Colette Flesch as Director-General of DG X (Information, Communication and Culture). Flesch was the first woman mayor of the city of Luxembourg before becoming Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Minister of Economic Affairs and then Justice Minister. A member of the European Parliament since 1969, she was President of the Development Committee. She is currently vice-president of the Liberal Democratic Reform Group. Flesch will take over as Director-General on 1 June. She is the second woman Director-General. The first was Renée Van Hoof, Director-General of the Joint Conference Interpreting Service.

COUNTDOWN 1992: ACHIEVING THE INTERNAL MARKET

The Commission of the European Communities adopted on 14 March its fifth report to the Council of Ministers and European Parliament on the implementation of the White Paper completing the Single Market. This report contains a review of the Community decisions and procedures as well as progress made on implementing Community legislation into national law, and assesses the economic effects of the Single Market. According to the Commission, the picture is encouraging. European companies are already gearing up for the 1993 deadline and have registered increases in productivity (+20% since 1984) and the number of jobs created (an estimated 8.5 million). The Commission has drafted all the texts planned under the 1985 White



WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

NEWS ON THE EQUALITY POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

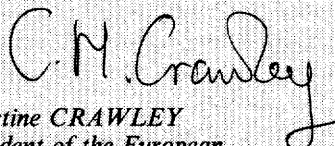
6 April 1990,
1000 days to 1993

In a ferment of activity; from child-care conference to training workshop; from returners access course to employment seminar;

from lobby building to trade union rally; women throughout Europe are preparing themselves for the changing, challenging labour market of the 1990s.

The opportunities and threats of 1993 appear in equal supply. The vulnerable position of women in the economy, the sex segregation into certain sectors, the low pay, the indifferent training record and the restructuring of many labour intensive sectors, where women are a substantial part of the workforce, in response to the European single market, all mean threats to women's work dominating the 1990s economy.

However, the dramatic and inevitable demographic "time-bomb" bringing with it a negative net entry of young people onto the labour market by the year 2000, will mean an opportunity for women to negotiate their re-entry into the economy with more strength. A strength that will be demanding good quality training and retraining, adequate publically funded childcare, access to promotion and equal pay. If the future is female it will be because of the action women take now.



Christine CRAWLEY
President of the European
Parliament's Committee
on Women's Rights

Paper and transmitted all its proposals to the Council of Ministers. Close to 60% of these proposals have already been adopted by the Council. Some are of major importance, such as the opening up of public procurement in certain sectors (telecommunications, energy, transport, etc.), the free movement of capital, merger control legislation and mutual recognition of qualifications. The rate of implementing Community legislation into domestic law has also risen reaching nearly 70% in February 1990 compared to 67% in December 1989.

Difficulties remain, however. They include the mountain of legislation still to be considered by the Council and Parliament; the stalemate over taxation proposals (where unanimity in the Council is necessary); people's Europe proposals (elimination of frontier controls of individuals at the Community's internal borders). All delays could jeopardise the 1992 deadline.

The Commission will appeal to the Heads of Government to get the ball rolling.

SOCIAL ACTION PROGRAMME

The current President of the Social Affairs Council, Bertie Ahern (Irish Labour Minister), would like all the proposals contained in the Social Action Programme to be examined and decided upon before 1992. To achieve this, he has drawn up a timetable in agreement with Vasso Papatreou, the EC Commissioner responsible for Social Affairs, and his Italian and Luxembourg counterparts, who will take over as Council Presidents for the next two terms.

This action plan also specifies the form that these proposals shall take, i.e., directives, regulations, decisions, recommendations and opinions. The Commission has various means of action, ranging from measures which are legally or politically binding to statements of Governments' common position.

In the first group, i.e., legally-binding legislation, are regulations (whose effects are immediate), directives (which set the goals to be achieved and deadlines for compliance but

... leave the Member States free to choose the means and methods for doing so), and decisions (for very specific issues). While recommendations are politically important, they are not legally binding. They simply represent the Member States' commitments to carry out specific policies.

The Commission can also pass measures to influence the Member States which express official Community policies. Thus, the resolutions and conclusions, are not binding but are the products of consensus among the Member States. Action programmes and communications fall into this category.

The Irish Presidency wants to see progress made on all the issues planned by the Commission in the first half of this year, especially proposals on atypical employment, the elderly and the reorganisation of working time.

The timetable for 1990, under the Irish and Italian presidencies, includes the following proposals important for women:

- a Decision on an initiative for the elderly;
- a Directive on atypical forms of employment;
- a Directive on the reorganisation of working time;
- a Directive on vocational training, continuing education and the rationalising of Community programmes;
- a Regulation on social security and the movement of persons within the EC;
- a report on employment in Europe;
- a Directive on pregnant women at work;
- a third Action Programme for Equal Opportunities.

Commissioner Papandreou wants to submit the remaining proposals under the social action programme during 1991. These include the following proposals important for women:

- a Recommendation on childcare;
- a Directive on the protection of young people;
- a Recommendation on social protection systems (common objectives);
- a Recommendation on a code of good conduct on pregnancy and maternity.

THIRD ACTION PROGRAMME FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Equal Opportunities Unit of Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, brought together its many expert networks and working groups (see **Women of Europe Newsletter No. 4**), in a European coordinators meeting on 26 March to examine the first proposals concerning the next Action Programme for Equal Opportunities (1991-95). After presenting their networks' or working groups' activities and plans for the coming months, the different coordinators embarked on a discussion based on a working paper presented by the Equal Opportunities Unit. The meeting highlighted the need to pinpoint priorities and develop strategies to achieve them.

This same working paper was presented to the Advisory Committee for Equal Opportunities at their meeting with the Commission on 2-3 April. This Committee, comprising of representatives from national equal opportunities bodies and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), exchanged views on this programme, a discussion which they had started at the Community seminar held in Dublin in February (see **Women of Europe Newsletter No. 7**).

The Committee singled out the points that it considered important for the next Action Programme, namely, recognition of women's contributions to the labour market; better integration of women at work; integration of women in decision-making, especially in politics; and improvement of women's image in the media.

Participants proposed that the objectives chosen should be quantifiable.

The Committee also examined, with representatives from national ministries who had filled out an evaluation sheet, the achievements of the Second Action Programme on Equal Opportunities (1986-90). It congratulated the Commission on what it had accomplished but pointed out the need for action in specific areas, e.g., the participation of women in decision-making structures and their presence in the media.

To continue the preparation of the Third Action Programme, the Equal Opportunities Unit will organise an-

other Advisory Committee meeting (28-29 May) and consult with employers and trade unions on 5 June. The final text should be ready by the beginning of July, when it will be submitted to the Commission for adoption.

It will then go to the Council of Ministers for a vote at their December meeting, after the European Parliament gives its opinion (consultation procedure between July and December).

CHILDCARE

The **Childcare Network**, meeting in Brussels on 12 March, discussed the series of seminars on the topic scheduled for 1990 (see **Women of Europe Newsletter No. 5**), especially the first two, which will cover childcare needs of rural families (Athens) and childcare services for the 0 to 3 age group (Leiden, the Netherlands). The network said it was essential to take account of the seminar debates and recommendations in the Framework Directive on childcare called for by the network and the Third Action Programme.

The network also discussed a report on the EC structural funds and childcare options and the planned exchange visits. After a discussion on the problem of combining work and family the network decided to tackle at its next meeting, scheduled for June, a proposal to revise the draft Directive on parental leave, which is still waiting for adoption by the Council of Ministers.

Coordinator: Peter Moss, Thomas Coram Research Unit, University of London, 41 Brunswick Square, London WC1N 1AN, UK.

EMPLOYMENT

The **Experts Network on Women in the Labour Force** met on 28 March to draw up their report on the situation of women in the textiles industry which should be published shortly. The experts examined the consequences of the internationalisation of this sector on women during this transitional stage in the completion of the Internal Market. The effects are varied: company re-

... location, increased work in the black, and stiffer competition because of the movement of goods or plant closures. The network called for special sectoral or regional measures in areas where textiles are important. The report examining women in banks will be finished shortly. With regard to the Third Equal Opportunities Action Programme, the Network said it could play a monitoring role on women's employment in Europe and carry out a longitudinal analysis of the situation during this period, with emphasis on the indirect effects of certain measures. Fiscal aspects should also be examined.

Coordinator: Danièle Meulders, DULBEA, CP 140, 50 avenue Franklin Roosevelt, B-1050 Brussels.

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NEW ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMME

The Commission has set up **Poverty 3**, an integrated programme of support, research, actions and evaluations, to better combat social exclusion. This Third Anti-poverty Programme was launched officially on 29 March by Vasso Papandreu, EC Commissioner for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs.

The ranks of the poor in Europe are swelling alarmingly. Some 44 million people live on less than half the average income in their respective Member States, versus 38.7 million ten years ago. New trends are visible: while the elderly still make up the largest group, the number of long-term unemployed and lone-parent families living near or below the poverty line is also growing explaining the rise in the number of women in this situation of socio-economic marginalisation.

Mention should be made here of the support given by the Unit for Social Security and Social Action to the **Women and Poverty** programme

launched by ENOW (European Network of Women).

Over the next five years (1989-1994) **Poverty 3** wants to promote the re-integration of the most underprivileged groups with emphasis on three key principles: participation (the people that the programme is designed to help should participate in the projects); partnership (notably between local initiatives and national governments, the public and private sector, the European Commission and Member States); and multidiscipline (to go beyond the strictly economic aspects of poverty and examine all facets of the problem, such as housing, health, education and training).

In this context, the European Commission decided to put more money into the programme (a total of 55 million ECUs over the five years) and concentrate on a small number of pilot projects.

Twenty-seven of these projects are large-scale "model actions" and 12 "innovative initiatives" focusing on specific groups or problems. A network of nine research and development units will be the link in the Member States and help the projects. **Poverty 3** is coordinated by the Unit for Social Security and Social Action, Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs of the Commission of the European Communities.

Information: GEIE Animation et Recherche, 93 rue Royale, B-1000 Brussels, Tel.: (32.2) 219.79.70.

EUROPE FOR THE ELDERLY

The Commission of the European Communities adopted on 28 March a Communication on the elderly in Europe. Longer life expectancy and lower birth rates continue to be the demographic trends.

Employment and social security problems can be expected. There are already more than 100 million people over 50 in Europe, close to 14.4% of the population. An estimated 19% of the population will be over 65 in 2020. The majority of the elderly are women.

To cope with these problems, the Commission has proposed a two-year campaign (to the tune of 2.4 million ECUs for 1991 and 1992) to raise

public awareness and making 1993 the year of the elderly and of harmony between generations. Member States could contribute by carrying out studies and awareness campaigns and setting up an information network on these issues.

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

In adopting a Resolution by Nel Van Dijk (Greens, NL) by 146 to 60, with 11 abstentions, at its plenary session on 13 March, the European Parliament has taken a stand in favour of legalising abortion in Europe. It asked Member States that have not yet legalised abortion to do so and called on all Member States to give women faced with this problem assistance and financial aid. The Parliament emphasised that the number of abortions performed has fallen in some countries where abortions are legal, such as the Netherlands and Germany, because of major information campaigns.

(Following the Belgian Parliament's adoption of the partial legalisation of abortion at the end of March, Ireland is now the only Member State which continues the ban).

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

FORUM: Women and the job market in the nineties

The second annual forum sponsored by the Committee on Women's Rights brought national and European parliamentarians together in Brussels on 19-20 March to discuss women's role in the job market of the future.

... In his opening speech, Enrique Baron, President of the European Parliament, emphasised the importance of dialogue between the national and European legislators. Equal opportunity, he said, is in line with the Social Charter which must be implemented to achieve the social dimension of the Internal Market.

Christine Crawley, Chairwoman of the EP's Committee on Women's Rights, started the seminar proceedings by listing employment priorities for women in the coming years. The 1992 forecasts do not all give the same message indicating there could be problems for women. The current situation of increased competition has already given rise to an increase in atypical jobs, and the reinforcement of male/female employment segregation. The impact of the Social Charter could be beneficial to women by giving them more support. However, women continue to be faced with the problem of the demands their family makes on their working life.

The lack of childcare facilities (and services for the elderly) is still a major obstacle to women's work possibilities. Crawley also warned of the additional discrimination faced by migrant women and women from ethnic minorities on the labour market. Given the demographic trends that will characterise the next twenty years, Crawley hoped that national governments would develop workable strategies to improve women's positions on the labour market.

Perspectives for 1992

The descriptions given by the national parliamentarians of women's positions in their countries revealed some major differences but also a host of common problems, e.g., rising female unemployment, inadequate training or training in "traditionally female" areas, difficulties of combining family and work.

Commissioner Papanreou spoke about the positive and negative effects of the completion of Internal Market on women. She underlined the inequalities that were likely to worsen and the need to safeguard the rights of women who work part-time, the needs of women returners and the protection of pregnant women in the workplace. She deplored the Council's blockage of the draft Directives

on parental leave and on shifting the burden of proof in discrimination cases.

The role of associations in the lobby

According to Commissioner Papanreou, groups and organisations that can exert pressure must be better informed and coordinate their actions to pressurise the Council of Ministers to improve its equality record. The European Women's Lobby which is being set up (see *Women of Europe Newsletter No. 7*) should be able to play a major role by bringing together associations from the twelve Member States and structuring their demands, participants said.

The participants underlined, in the forum's conclusions, the importance of positive action to broaden women's occupational horizons and improve their position on the labour market.

Career and family life

Access to childcare services is the *sine qua non* for women's equal participation on the labour market. Without it, their freedom of movement in the post-1992 Internal Market will be hampered. This is why participants called on the European Commission to propose a directive on childcare. Efforts must also be made to improve working conditions and the status of the personnel of childcare services and rural areas must not be forgotten. The Forum also asked that the Council stops blocking the proposals awaiting adoption, especially those on parental leave (concerning both parents) and the burden of proof.

Women from non-EC countries

Six types of action were identified to combat discrimination against women from non-EC countries or belonging to ethnic minorities: the ratification of relevant international conventions, recognition of diplomas and vocational skills, fighting racism, guarantees for non-EC nationals resident in the Community, the creation of a lobby for women from ethnic minorities and examination of demographic problems.

Education, training and retraining

Positive action is necessary to help a large number of women return to the labour market after a break (usually to raise their children). Education, training and retraining continue to be priorities for the nineties. The Forum urged the European Commission and national governments to devote more resources to these issues to improve that women's position in the world of work. Finally, positive action at the workplace is needed both to inform women better of their rights and opportunities and change the attitudes of their male colleagues and employers.

PUBLICATIONS

The Impact of the Completion of the Internal Market on Women in the European Community — 1992, V/506/90-EN, Pauline Conroy Jackson. Working paper drawn up for the Commission of the European Communities.

Information: Equal Opportunities Unit, Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.

IRIS: Annual Report 1989. Report on the 1989 activities of IRIS — the European Network of Vocational Training Programmes for Women. It includes conclusions of the seminars and inter-programme exchange visits of last year and presents the 1990 activities.

More information from: IRIS Unit, CREW, 38 rue Stévin, B-1040 Brussels.

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