
EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY

Women now have yet another instrument to ensure their voices are heard in Europe. On 21 and 22 September, the Constituent Assembly of the European Women's Lobby was held, marking an essential stage in the work carried out over the last few years by many European women and women's associations.

The Bureau (the Lobby's administrative body), elected by the General Assembly brought together more than 70 delegates from the various Member States who adopted the Statutes of the Lobby, elected delegates for the administrative body, adopted a budget and prepared the first work programme.

The Bureau (the Lobby's administrative body), elected by the General Assembly, consists of twenty members, one from each Member State and eight from the European Associations. **Ana Vale**, member of the Portuguese Consultivo da Comissão da Condição Feminina, was elected President. Vice-Presidents are **Anita Garibaldi** from the European Movement and **Eva Eberhardt** from the European Women's Coordination organisation. The General Secretariat is based in Brussels, and the Lobby's activities will be coordinated during its first year by Jacqueline De Groot. The Secretary General will be appointed shortly.

The decision to set up a Lobby was taken in 1987. The aim is to have an influential structure open to all women's organisations in order to ensure better defence and representation of their interests at national and European levels.

The Lobby, comprising women with a wide range of political and philosophical opinions and from all social backgrounds, will exert pressure on and raise awareness in European institutions and national authorities.

An autonomous organisation, the task of the Lobby is to follow closely the development of draft legal measures and Community programmes, put forward suggestions for the adoption of new directives, organise campaigns to ensure that the Commission's social and economic policies take account of all categories of women including the most marginalised and the most vulnerable, and finally encourage the recruitment and

WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

NEWS

ON THE EQUALITY POLICY
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Dear readers,

Welcome to the "European Women's Lobby"!

This project, which was pursued with tenacity and hope for several years by many women's associations — and by the European Commission's Women's Information Service which has constantly encouraged and supported it — is now being realised (given its background and the current political and social context) at just the right time: the time when there is a resurgence of NGOs. On the eve of the major changes occurring with the 1992 deadline, the more responsible and dynamic NGOs are wondering about the role they can play in the achievement of the '92 objective to ensure that the European citizens they represent can face up to the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities.

Of course, the women's organisations (I am in a good position to know this) did not wait until now to act as intermediaries for the citizens of Europe, offering the institutions a dialogue with a view to informing them of the needs and aspirations of the people they represent. Without this constant, stimulating presence, the policy of equal opportunities would not be what it is today, and we would not have the same number of women in the European Parliament, nor the progress in the debate in our societies that we have now: I am convinced of this.

But it is true that in a changing society where the changes are occurring not only in the area of economics but also in the social arena, and in a society which is more pluralist and multi-cultural than ever, the associations must have the necessary strength and representativeness to face these challenges.

Fausta Deshones La Valle

promotion of women to posts of responsibility.

The General Assembly decided on a series of priority areas for short and long-term action. These include budgetary issues, the Third Community Action Programme on Equal Opportunities, the Social Charter, the impact of the European Structural Funds on women, employment (including atypical forms of work), the fight against poverty, women and development, and relations with women from Central and Eastern Europe. The Lobby will also exert pressure to ensure rapid adoption of any proposals for directives that are pending and for the effective implementation of existing Community legal instruments.

Coordination: *Jacqueline De Groot*,
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COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

THIRD ACTION PROGRAMME

The Commission has just adopted (17 October) the Third Action Programme on equal opportunities (1991-1995), marking a new stage in the policy of equal treatment. The Programme proposes a more integrated and more global strategy compared with the two previous programmes. It is in keeping with the new socio-economic context (completion of the Single Market and demographic decline), and is based on the conviction that the improvement of the professional integration of women is an essential dimension of European economic and social strategy.

This new Action Programme is a continuation of the second one, and opens up new horizons while reinforcing certain principles and objectives. The Commission in fact wishes to strengthen the partnership and complementary nature of actions carried out by the various actors concerned (Commission, Member States, two sides of industry).

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Three main lines of action have been defined:

- consolidating and developing the legal framework by improving the application in the Member States of European standards, and enriching these by adopting new directives (burden of proof, parental leave, etc.) and reinforcing the equality aspect in the social dialogue.
- promoting the professional integration of women, particularly on the basis of "NOW" (Community programme proposed in July for the training and employment of women), and by intensifying actions such as "IRIS" (network of training programmes for women) and the "LEI" network (aid for local employment initiatives). Moreover, the programme proposes the development of new initiatives, for instance the elaboration of positive action plans in enterprises to guarantee equal opportunities, the development of research on women and the introduction of measures aimed at improving childcare facilities.
- improving the status of women in society by pursuing the action carried out vis-à-vis the media, and by undertaking new initiatives and publicity activities aimed at promoting the participation of women at every level of the decision-making process.

The programme must now be approved by the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament, which still has to give its opinion. It will come into force at the beginning of next year.

The full text of the Programme will be published in all the official languages in the "Women of Europe Supplement" series.

SOCIAL EUROPE

PROTECTION AT WORK FOR PREGNANT WOMEN AND THOSE WHO HAVE JUST GIVEN BIRTH

The Commission has just adopted (12 September) a proposal for a directive which contributes to the constitution of a "core" of social rights for workers, and guarantees the social dimension of the Single Market. Ms Papan-dreou, European Commissioner responsible for Employment and Social Affairs, described the context in which this proposal was made: "concern about the population decline in Europe and a certain deficit of skilled

manpower underline the need to take measures to increase the participation of women in employment while protecting their health and safety at work."

This proposal for a directive contains a set of provisions whose aim is to promote the improvement of health and safety at the workplace for women employees who are pregnant or have just given birth, bearing in mind that this increased protection must not lead to discrimination against women on the labour market.

The provisions elaborated by the Commission concern working conditions and night work, and protection against substances (chemical, physical or biological) and processes that may damage the health of pregnant or breast-feeding women. Rights connected with work (maintenance of rights during maternity leave) and dismissal (prohibition on dismissal for reasons connected with the condition of women employees) as well as maternity leave, also form part of the proposal which contains, in this connection, two essential provisions: on the one hand, the fact that pregnant employees must be granted leave which is fully paid and/or remunerated by an allowance equivalent to at least 14 consecutive weeks taken before and after the birth; on the other, the fact that pregnant employees may benefit from compulsory paid leave of at least two weeks prior to the envisaged date of delivery.

Based on Article 118 A of the EEC Treaty, the aim of which is to lay down minimum prescriptions for the health and safety of workers, particularly at the workplace, this proposal for a directive must be subjected to the cooperation procedure with the European Parliament and requires a qualified majority at the Council in order to be adopted.

In fact, this Commission proposal must still be adopted by the Council after obtaining the opinion of the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee.

NETWORK NEWS

The third meeting of the **Steering Committee for Women in High Public Office** was held in Maastricht (Netherlands) on 11 and 12 September. Chaired by the European Commission, the theme of the meeting was "career development: a strategy to optimise human resources".

The debate centred on the following subjects: the development of favourable conditions for embarking on a career, the qualitative and quantitative analysis of career development for women, the change in jobs and functions in terms of quality of work and changes in the culture of the organisation. Conclusions were adopted and will appear in a report to be published at the end of the year. The discussion was also enriched by contributions from Peter Moss (coordinator of the "childcare" network) on reconciling family and professional responsibilities, and from Ivy Cameron and Hadley Woods (human resources management consultants), who talked about equality training in the banking sector in Europe.

Contact: *Michèle Teirlinck, Equal Opportunities Unit.*

The network on the **Diversification of Vocational Choices** met in Brussels on 18 September. The national experts described the activities carried out in 1990, and Evelyne Sullerot, network coordinator, explained the layout of the summary report to be submitted to the Commission by the end of October. This report will be available at the end of the year.

Coordinator: *Evelyne Sullerot, 95 Boulevard Saint Michel, F-75005 Paris.*

The Equal Opportunities Unit and the Employment and Labour Market Policy Unit are jointly organising a meeting on the topic "**Women, employment and 1991**" aimed at women trade union representatives of the ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation). The aim is to prepare the place for women on the labour market in the context of the Single Market.

Contacts: *Michèle Teirlinck and Pauline Jackson, Equal Opportunities Unit.*

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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

European Community women's cycling race: the Commission sponsored the first European Community women's cycling race held from 6 to 14 September. More than 50 women took part in the race which crossed Belgium, the Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany and France, ending in Luxembourg. World champion, Catherine Marsal (France), won the race. The European Community cycling race for men is in its fifth year. Devised as an opportunity for making Europeans aware of the reality taking shape, this sporting event was extended this year to highlight the efforts of the European Community in the area of equal opportunities and to stress the role of women in Europe.

Two former winners of the **Women of Europe Prize**, Ms Inge Genefke and Ms Grainne Kenny, were in Brussels from 18 to 20 September at the invitation of the European Commission, and specifically of the Women's Information Service. Ms Inge Genefke, a doctor of medicine, was awarded the Women of Europe Prize for Denmark in 1987 because of her work in helping victims of torture to re-adjust. Ms Grainne Kenny was chosen as prizewinner for Ireland in 1989 for her work in combating drugs both at local level through the Irish Association of CAD (Community Action against Drugs) and at European level, through EURAD (Europe Against Drugs).

In a prepared programme, they were able to talk to senior officials at the Commission interested in their activities, members of the European Parliament and the Belgian public, particularly during conference-debates organised for the occasion.

NIKE Prize

Twenty-one television channels from 11 Community Member States will take part in the 1990 edition of the **Nike Prize**. This prize is awarded to programmes which best illustrate the position and role of women in mod-

ern society. In total, 22 programmes will be presented in three categories: documentaries, fiction/entertainment and children and adolescents. The award ceremony will take place in Athens on 9 November during the conference on "Women and Men in the Media: equal opportunities for the '90s?" (Athens, 7-10 November) jointly organised by the EBU (European Broadcasting Union) and the European Commission, in collaboration with the Greek television channel, ERT.

The 18 members of the Jury (6 per category) will meet for three days at Athens from 5 to 7 November. We would point out that Ms Gay Angelis will replace Ms Tonia Marketaki as president of the jury for the fiction/entertainment category (see **Women of Europe Newsletter no. 11**).

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Towards a social Europe

At its session in Strasbourg from 10 to 14 September, the European Parliament adopted by a large majority (195 for, 10 against and 27 abstentions) Mr Van Velzen's report (Soc., Netherlands) on the Commission Action Programme on the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers. The report describes the Parliament's priorities in the social area and the Community instruments it considers necessary. The main measures concern the following areas: the labour market, employment and remuneration; improvement of living and working conditions; freedom of movement; social welfare; freedom of association and collective bargaining, and employee information, consultation and participation.

Equal treatment between men and women with regard to pay, employment and access to vocational training; vocational training; health, safety

and hygiene at the workplace; protection of minors; the elderly and the handicapped are also specifically referred to in Mr Van Velzen's report. Moreover, the Parliament called for the adoption of a series of measures aimed at guaranteeing the social dimension of the Single Market, including the establishment of a European Labour Court to form part of the European Court of Justice.

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

At an extraordinary meeting in Strasbourg on 13 September, the Committee on Women's Rights discussed **German Reunification**. Two amendments to the Commission's proposals were put to the vote.

The first amendment concerned the chapter on the Structural Funds and the introduction of the concept of equal opportunities in the context of the Community Support Framework, which was submitted by what was then the GDR, and the second concerned the chapter on education and training so that women from the GDR could participate in the ERASMUS, LINGUA and COMETT Community Programmes. These amendments were adopted by a large majority. The Commission's proposal submitted to the Council on 31 August, sets aside three billion ECUs for the Community Support Frameworks and measures financed by the Community programmes, including NOW (New Opportunities for Women). (See **Women of Europe Newsletter no. 11**).

The Committee on Women's Rights met also in Brussels on 19 and 20 September. Following speeches by two former winners of the **Women of Europe Prize**, invited at the initiative of the European Commission, Christine Crawley, President of the Committee on Women's Rights, ensured them of her Committee's support for their activities at Community level.

The Committee adopted the **draft opinion on atypical work** submitted by Ms Hermans (EPP, Belgium) after amending it to call for the implementation of a system of "sanctions"

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rather than "monitoring" of the application of the directives. The Committee also adopted a report by Mr Roth-Behrendt (Soc. Germany) on the **unification of Germany**.

1991 Budget: more money for equality

Ms Vayssade (Soc. France) then presented a **draft 1991 budget**, stressing the fact that her proposals were made in the light of two priorities: the Third Community Action Programme and increased transparency of the budget for women by bringing together the budgetary items which thus far were dispersed in different sections. These proposals provide for a significant increase in the item for "action to ensure equality between men and women".

They also envisage an increase in the credit reserved for action in favour of women in the areas of education, vocational training and information. The allocation from the LEI programme (local employment initiatives), which is important in promoting women, provides for support for action under budgetary items relating to the 1991-1994 NOW (New Opportunities for Women) Community initiative programme and those concerning "education, vocational training and youth policy" in order to stress the importance of the balance to be maintained between girls and boys.

The more selective increases are geared to support the European Women's Lobby and the opening of a creche in the European Parliament.

These proposals were unanimously adopted by the Committee members. With regard to the report on the **European Social Fund** presented by Ms Randzio-Plath (Soc. Germany), the Committee decided that the final text would have to be based on an assessment of the reform of the European Social Fund, and that the current report would simply serve as an interim report.

Finally, the report on the **Single Market and its consequences for women in the Community** presented by Ms Van Hemeldonck, (Soc. Belgium) was very favourably received both by the MEPs in the Committee on Women's Rights and by the representatives of the European Commission.

The report stresses the need to obtain a positive, coordinated policy for women, and ensure this was pursued by the Commission, Council and Member States.

It indicates a series of measures to be taken in the context of the opening up of the labour market as a whole, the equal assessment of work, mobility, opening up of distant regions, training, quality of life, the advantages of the lowering of prices and technological progress, ethnic minorities and immigrants and finally, participation and political rights.

The report thus discusses a wide range of areas relating to equal opportunities in the family, professional and social life of men and women. It contains a series of measures to be taken by the European Community, Council and Member States such as the legislative initiatives on atypical work contracts and relations, prohibition of forms of illegal work, the introduction of professional status for women working in agriculture, the development of social infrastructure for childcare, care of elderly and sick persons, the launching of special efforts to ensure women benefit equally from Community training programmes, etc.

Address: *European Parliament, 97-113 rue Belliard, B-1040 Brussels*

PUBLICATIONS

Childcare in the European Community, 1985-1990, Peter Moss, "Women of Europe Supplement" n°31, 1990. Available in English, French and Italian, other languages- Women's Information Services.

Accompanying women in training, Frédérique Deroure, V/1192/90-FR. In French only at the moment; currently being translated into English. *Equal Opportunities Unit, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, 1049 Brussels.*

"It's up to us": video describing the ERGO programme (Community ac-

tion programme for the long-term unemployed), accompanied by a brochure containing suggestions on how to present and use the information. Available in the nine Community languages.

"To work... Getting out of long-term unemployment": this report provides practical examples of responses to long-term unemployment in five sectors: rural development, health and social welfare, energy and environment, construction and accommodation, art and culture. Published in the nine Community languages.

Information: ERGO, c/o CEI Consultants Ltd, 205 rue Belliard, B-1040 Brussels. Tel.: (32.2)230.60.68. Fax: (32.2)230.71.76

Employment in Europe, 1990. Second European Community report on employment, devoting one chapter to the employment of women. Office of Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, ISBN 92-826-1517-0.

Women and the achievement of the Single Market, Dublin 14-16 February 1990. Report and conclusions of the European seminar which took place during the Irish Presidency. *Information: Department of Labour, Dublin 4, Tel: (353.1) 765861, Telex: 93435, Fax: 689720.*

Quality vocational training for women, now and in the future. Report of the national IRIS seminar for the Netherlands, which took place in Utrecht, 31 May - 1 June 1990. *Information: IRIS Unit, CREW, 38 rue Stévin, B-1040 Brussels.*

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