
COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

NIKI PRIZE: CHANGING THE WAY WOMEN ARE PORTRAYED ON TELEVISION

One of the objectives of the third action programme of the Commission of the European Communities on equal opportunities for women and men is the improvement of the position of women in society. In order to achieve this aim, mentalities will have to change, and the media can make a contribution to this process. In his message looking ahead to the NIKI prize ceremony, European Commissioner João de Deus Pinheiro said that "the media play a key role in helping to change mentalities by encouraging a new attitude towards women, thereby promoting genuine equality of opportunity". Accordingly, the Commission, conscious as it is of the role played by the mass media, has implemented various media programmes designed to combat the exaggerated stereotypes of women in society. This is the objective of the NIKI prize, which will be awarded on 7 March 1994 in Lisbon, the day before International Women's Day.

The NIKI prize is a European initiative managed for the Commission by the BBC (United Kingdom), which is working together with other European radio and television companies. The prize, which was introduced in 1988 by the Directorate-General for Audiovisual Media, Information, Communication and Culture following a proposal from the European Parliament, is awarded every two years for television programmes which portray the current position of women and which focus on the efforts made by women to play a role in society which is active and equal to that of men. There are three programme categories: document (documentary, in-depth reporting, reporting of current affairs, magazine), fiction (drama, episode of a serial, situation comedy) and children's programmes (either a full programme – document, fiction, entertainment – or a magazine contribution). These programmes must be pitched at children aged between 6 and 12 years). A prize is awarded in each of the three categories of programmes.



WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

Dear Readers,

By decreeing that the Maastricht Treaty is compatible with the German constitution, the judges of the German Constitutional Court have removed the last barrier to the implementation of the Treaty on European Union.

Germany's ratification has ended a long period of uncertainty. It has made it possible for Europe to emerge from a period of "waiting and sadness" and has given new impetus to the construction of Europe, in the words of the President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors. The Treaty which was signed on 7 February 1992 will enter into force on 1 November 1993. As a result, the European Economic Community will become the European Community, and the union will be more than just economic, since it will also include a political dimension. While the Treaty regulates the powers of the European Parliament, the introduction of the single currency and the European Central Bank, it also introduces European citizenship, under which the citizens of the Twelve will have the right to reside and to move freely within the Member States, but also to vote and to be elected to certain positions in their country of residence in European and local elections. Thus the Treaty places citizens and democracy at the centre of the construction of Europe.

With the elections to the European Parliament only a few months away, ministers will have to lose no time in tackling the work of harmonising the voting arrangements for the European elections in the Member States. These elections are an opportunity to improve the representation of women in decision-making bodies. This is important because where the number of men and women participating in decision-making is balanced, different ideas, values and behaviour patterns tend to emerge, resulting in a more balanced and more equitable world for both women and men.

As we look ahead to the elections, let us hope that "the Maastricht era" will open up new opportunities for women.

Anne-Blanche Haritos

Anne Blanche Haritos

Who can take part? The competition is open to national public and private television bodies of the Member States of the European Community and certain other European countries (the countries of the European Economic Area – Austria, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – and the countries of central Europe who have signed Europe agreements with the European Communities – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia).

The award ceremony for the 1994 prize will be held in Lisbon in cooperation with Radio Televisão Portuguesa (RTP). Participants must submit their registration forms and written documentation by 1 November 1993. Cassettes and additional documentation must reach the BBC by no later than 1 December.

It should also be mentioned that, with the assistance of the Equal Opportunities Unit of the Commission of the European Communities, a conference on the theme of "Parity in prime time" will be organised on 6 and 7 March in Lisbon in association with the 1994 NIKI Prize. Priority for participation in this conference will be given to the programme makers and those with ultimate responsibility for the programmes of the 21 countries entitled to participate in the 1994 NIKI prize.

If you know of a programme which might be suitable or if you would like to receive registration forms or additional information, please contact: Jane Krish, Coordinator of the Niki Prize, BBC, Broadcasting House, Whiteladies Road, UK-Bristol BS8 2LR, tel. (44 272) 733 082, fax (44 272) 239 416 or the "Women's Information Unit", DG X, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels, tel. (32 2) 299 94 16.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The Committee on Women's Rights of the Parliament met in Brussels on 22 and 23 September with Christine Crawley in the chair (PSE, United Kingdom). Two public hearings were on the agenda: ...

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on the Community's NOW initiative (New Opportunities for Women) and the other on women and poverty in Europe.

NOW

The public hearing on NOW which was held on 22 September set out to assess how the programme is functioning in the Member States and to identify the various options for the future of the project. It brought together the coordinators of 11 Member States (the United Kingdom was not represented), the representatives of IRIS, LEI and the European Women's Lobby. All the members and coordinators emphasized once again the importance of the NOW initiative and reiterated their wish that it be continued for at least another three to five years. This is essential, since NOW has helped to ensure that equal opportunities are incorporated into the programmes of the Member States, has established genuine partnerships and synergies with networks such as IRIS and ILE, has given a higher profile and greater prestige to programmes for women and has naturally been an essential factor in the occupational integration of women.

Agnès Hubert, Head of the Equal Opportunities Unit of DG V, emphasized that the Commission will have to address the question of the insecure employment of women and the funds to be placed at their disposal in its Green Paper on European Social Policy. She also stressed that the rules governing the Structural Funds provide for the promotion of equal opportunities programmes in areas as diverse as regional development, research and industry.

In conclusion, Christine Crawley restated the need to introduce a specific programme for women (NOW II) in order to ensure mainstreaming and that account is taken of the efforts already made to combat growing unemployment among women.

Women and poverty

The report by Lissy Gröner (PSE, Federal Republic of Germany) on women and poverty in Europe served as the basis for a public hearing on this subject, which was held on 23 September in the Committee on Women's Rights. The debate mainly concentrated on the causes of poverty and the means to be used to combat this condition, which, as Christine Crawley pointed out, affects 50 million European citizens, most of them women.

Most members of Parliament and representatives of anti-poverty organisations consider that the social security schemes

which discriminate against women in certain Member States make a major contribution to their insecure position, or reinforce that position. This is because benefits are calculated on the basis of wages/salaries, thereby penalising women in low-paid jobs (far more women than men being in this situation). What is more, the lack of childcare facilities and the radical changes in family structures (such as the ever increasing number of one-parent families) mean that more and more women are living below the poverty line. These factors – and there are many more – are part of what Lissy Gröner referred to as “the vicious circles in which women are caught”, which must be combated at all costs. This makes certain measures necessary, such as those currently carried out by various organisations or implemented under the third poverty programme. However, these programmes cannot be fully and effectively implemented unless sufficient funding is provided and policies are developed which treat women as *sui juris* individuals, with the aim of achieving genuine equality.

On behalf of the Commission of the European Communities, Odile Quintin gave an account of the new commitments entered into by the Community for combating poverty. A new programme has been set up to combat social exclusion. Three types of measures will be supported: integrated multidimensional measures in a given geographical area and at different local levels (urban and rural), measures coordinated at national level (with the social partners etc.) and transnational project networks. In order to ensure the success of these measures, the level of funding has been doubled in comparison with the previous programmes. The Commission has adopted an extremely comprehensive strategy for combating poverty. Under the third Community poverty programme, innovative measures are being implemented in various local projects targeted particularly at women. Moreover, other measures proposed by the “networks of one-parent families and underprivileged women” are supported by the Commission. Mrs Quintin also mentioned the existence of specific projects to assist women, which are included in the NOW initiative, and she stressed the importance of preventive strategies (the European Social Fund helps, among other things, to anticipate poverty). Marijke Van Hemeldonck (PSE, Belgium) said that the problem was serious and that it was getting worse in the current recession in which women were the first to be affected, and she insisted on the need to amend legislation

to bring it into line with reality. Even if poverty is a problem which affects the whole of the Community, it still needs to be quantified. Accordingly, Honourable Member Teresa Domingo (NI, Spain) wanted to see all the Member States using a homogeneous method to assess this problem so as to produce an overall assessment of the real level of poverty in the Community.

By way of conclusion, Lissy Gröner reaffirmed the need to create a social Europe for women, and Christine Crawley called on the European Community to look at the feminization of poverty and for pressure to be brought to bear on the Budgets Committee to do its utmost to tackle this problem.

Reports

The draft opinion of Marie-Claude Vayssade (PSE, France), on the draft budget lines for the financial year 1994 which directly affect women, was adopted at the same meeting. The rapporteur reiterated her demands relating to the budget for women, namely that 12% of the appropriations for the information activities of the Commission be earmarked for information for women, which was something which had not yet been done. Moreover, various members expressed their fears concerning the reductions in the sums allocated to specific activities, such as activities for women, whereas it was women who were suffering the most from the economic crisis. Marie-Claude Vayssade argued that measures such as the cut in the funds granted to the European Women's Lobby were outrageous: the amount allotted had been cut by 65% in comparison with the previous year (a budget of ECU 350 000 in 1993 reduced to ECU 100 000 in 1994). Barbara Helfferich, the Secretary-General of the Lobby, called on the Committee on Women's Rights to put pressure on the competent authorities to restore the budget of the European Women's Lobby to its 1993 level.

Two reports by Astrid Lülling (EPP, Luxembourg) concerning the Staff Regulations of officials of the European Communities were also adopted at this meeting. The first concerns sex discrimination in Community recruiting procedures. The report advocates raising the age limit for women entering employment with the Community (which is generally fixed at 35 years and may be extended to 45 years under exemptions, such as for the years spent caring for family members or bringing up a child) with a view to applying the

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... principle of equal treatment for men and women in the Community institutions. The second report adopted on the Staff Regulations of officials concerns an amendment to the Staff Regulations of officials of the European Communities and the conditions of employment of other servants of the Communities with regard to equal treatment for men and women. Members took the view that there was a need to incorporate the Community legislation on equal treatment and the Council Recommendation on the promotion of positive action for women into the Staff Regulations of officials and other servants in order to reduce the under-representation of women and hence to combat *de facto* inequality. Lastly, the vote on the report of Anna Catasta (EUL, Italy) on the sharing of pension rights for divorced or separated women in the Member States was postponed until the meeting of 12 and 13 October. We will come back to this subject.

Useful address: European Parliament, 97-113 rue Belliard, B-1040 Brussels, tel. (32 2) 284 21 11 or Plateau du Kirchberg, L-1919 Luxembourg.

COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

ENTITLEMENT TO FULL FINANCIAL COMPENSATION FOR THE VICTIMS OF SEX DISCRIMINATION

On 2 August 1993, the European Court of Justice ruled that, in accordance with Council Directive 76/207/EEC of 9 February 1976 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, a victim of discriminatory dismissal is entitled to full compensation.

This ruling was given following an action brought by Mrs M.H. Marshall who had instituted proceedings in 1986 against her employer, the Southampton and South West Hampshire Area Health Authority, accusing it of sex discrimination after her compulsory early retire-

ment. At the time, the Court established the right of women to continue work beyond the retirement age, which is 60 years for women in the United Kingdom. A British court awarded the plaintiff financial compensation of UKL 18 405, which included more than UKL 7 000 in interest covering the period between the date of her dismissal and its ruling. However, her employer argued that, under the law on sex discrimination, compensation had been limited to UKL 6 250 at that time and therefore that the interest claimed would not be paid. The Marshall case was subsequently heard again by the Court of Justice, which ruled that victims of sex discrimination must be compensated for all the loss and damage incurred and that national legislation may not place arbitrary limits on the level of compensation paid to them. In other words, no upper limit may be established for the level of compensation, which must ensure genuine and effective legal protection and be an effective deterrent for employers.

INFORMATION- COMMUNICATION

SECOND EUROPEAN WOMEN'S SUMMIT: "WOMEN, ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL POLICY"

The first European women's summit was held in Paris in 1992. The idea came from the International Council of Women (ICW) and the summit was organised in association with the Conseil National des Femmes Françaises (CNFF = National Council of French Women) and with the support of the Commission of the European Communities and the French Government. The main question facing Europe at that time was the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. The summit set itself the task of raising women's awareness of European Union.

Given the economic and social climate at that time and in view of the completion of the Single Market, it proved necessary to organise a further summit in order to, in the words of the President of the ICW, Lily Boeykens, "launch a dialogue between those at the top of the decision-making process and those directly affected by the decisions". This is important, since much is at stake in the future for women: in order to guar-

antee their place in society and to increase the role they play in it, they must make their voice heard and get involved in the debate.

The second summit, which was entitled "Women, economics and social policy", was held in Brussels on 27 September 1993. It was organised by the ICW in cooperation with the Commission of the European Communities and the Belgian Government and provided an opportunity to put questions to women and decision-makers and to prepare the fourth world conference on women, which will deal with the struggle for equality, development and peace and will be held in Beijing in September 1995.

By being present in large numbers, women (representatives of national councils, women's associations etc) showed their interest in European policy. The decision-makers, represented by, among others, Miet Smet, the Belgian Minister for Employment and Equality, Pádraig Flynn, the European Commissioner responsible for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, Christina Alberdi Alonso, the Spanish Minister for Social Affairs, and Gabriele Albild-Schindler, the person responsible for international affairs in the German Ministry for Women and Youth, were there in force.

The summit concentrated on two main subjects: first, women and overall economic and social policy in the post-Maastricht era and, second, unemployment and employment arrangements. The various speakers pointed to the key role played by the Commission of the European Communities in promoting women's rights. However, further progress still has to be made. Women still face various obstacles on the labour market (low wages, atypical work, problems with childcare, etc.), and their position is not being helped by the current economic situation. Accordingly, Miet Smet stressed the need to establish a flexible labour market in which people would be able to determine their own career development in order to allow women – and men as well – to combine work and family responsibilities. To this end, the European Commissioner stated that future Community employment measures would seek to make working time more flexible, which would make it easier to combine work and family life, and to reduce unemployment. Another subject dealt with by many speakers was part-time work, an issue which mainly affects women. While part-time work may make it easier to combine work and family life, Mrs Joanidou spoke of the importance of introducing adequate protection for these workers in

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the European Community. Simone Veil, the French Minister for Social Affairs, Health and Urban Policy, warned against those who might see part-time work as "a way of excluding women from the labour market in order to try to solve the problem of unemployment".

The Spanish Minister, Christina Alberdi Alonso, stressed that atypical work, insecure employment, low wages etc. showed the importance of introducing specific positive action for women.

Miet Smet and Pádraig Flynn informed the summit of the results of the informal meeting of the Council of Ministers of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities held in Bruges in September. The signs are encouraging for the adoption of the two outstanding directives (on parental leave and the reversal of the burden of proof). However, as we have seen on previous occasions, the adoption of directives alone is not enough to improve the position of women; their standing in society must also be increased. To this end, the Commission is endeavouring to promote the participation of women in politics. The Commissioner reaffirmed that women could rely on the Commission's support in this area.

In connection with Mrs Veil's message, it was also pointed out that women's associations have always been in the forefront of efforts to achieve equality and that they must continue their work and join forces so that Europe becomes a genuine opportunity for them. In her closing address, the summit's chairwoman said that the ideas and results of the summit would be forwarded to Mrs Mangela, the person responsible for this area at the UN, so that they could be used in the preparation of the fourth world conference on women.

For any further information, please contact Lily Boeykens, International Council of Women, 62 rue Belliard, B-1040 Brussels Tel (32 2) 238 27 40 (41-42-43).

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE

Issue No 37 of the Women of Europe Newsletter contained an article on sexual harassment. A guide entitled "How to Combat Sexual Harassment at Work" has just been published by the Commission of the European Communities. This subject was considered to be taboo until very recently, but this is now no longer the case. Businesses are beginning to give serious consideration to the problem, since it costs a lot – in terms of

both time and money – to ignore it. Even though the Commission now has a code of practice, various Member States have adopted legislation in this area and sexual harassment is no longer completely taboo, it is still by no means easy for victims to talk about it.

It appears that prevention policy and measures are bearing fruit in this area: a pilot project was launched in Belgium in July 1993 by the Belgian Minister for Employment and Equality, Miet Smet, in cooperation with the Flemish Sexology Association. Under this project, a telephone line has been installed allowing people to talk free of charge to sexologists who provide information and advice on sexual harassment at work. This service is designed both for the victims of sexual harassment and for people who deal with this problem in businesses and institutions.

It should be noted that, while the project is intended initially for the Dutch-speaking part of the country, the sexologists also answer in French. They may be contacted every working day between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. and between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the following number: (32 78) 11 22 30. Let us hope that there will be more and more measures of this type in the Member States.

For any further information, please contact the *Equal Opportunities Unit*, 51 rue Belliard, B-1040 Brussels, Tel. (32 2) 233 40 39.

EUROPEAN TELEMATICS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS TRAINING FOR WOMEN

The project for European telematics and telecommunications training for women, which was established and initiated by CREW (the independent Centre of Research on European Women) is entirely new. Given that women are under-represented in this sector of rapid change, this project seeks to meet the needs of businesses seeking an increasingly versatile and highly skilled workforce and hence to open up new job prospects for women.

The course is targeted primarily at unemployed women and women who would like to return to the labour market after a career break. It comprises training in communication techniques, management and personal development, including language courses, with an emphasis on the European dimension. This project is part of the NOW (New Opportunities for Women) programme

of the Commission of the European Communities and is being implemented throughout the Community in cooperation with numerous training bodies in various Member States.

Information: CREW, 21 rue de la Tourelle, B-1040 Brussels, Tel. (32 2) 230 51 58/58 37.

Publications

The 1993 Employment in Europe Report, the annual report of the Commission of the European Communities which analyses the characteristics of, prospects for and policies on employment in the Member States. It provides many statistics on the various aspects of the labour market, analyses how they interact with other variables and indicates the possible consequences.

To obtain this document, please contact the *Employment Policy Unit*, DG V/A/1, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.

Employment, equality and caring for children, the annual report of the European Childcare Network. This report covers the work of the network in 1992 and analyses, among other things, the Council recommendation on child care. It also contains various articles on the results and development of the measures conducted by the network in various Member States. This document is available in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Danish and Portuguese from the *Equal Opportunities Unit*, DG V/A/3, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.

Workers with Family Responsibilities, a study produced by the International Labour Conference (80th session, 1993), which details the extent to which effect has been given to the Recommendation and the Convention of the International Labour Organisation, adopted in 1981, concerning Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities. This study may be obtained from the *International Labour Office*, 40, rue Aimé Smekens, B-1040 Brussels. Tel. (32 2) 736 59 42.

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