



“VOTE FOR WOMEN” NEXT JUNE!

In June 1994 three hundred and forty-five million Europeans will be voting to designate their representatives in the European Parliament. They will be electing the men and women who will defend their interests at European level.

It has to be said, unfortunately, that women remain practically invisible in decision-making bodies. At the last European elections in 1989, women accounted for only 19.3% of this Parliamentary Assembly (100 women out of 518 Members). Even though this percentage is high compared with the average for the Member States of the European Union (a mere 11.3% women), the European Parliament is still a good way from parity! There is a case for asking why so few women are present in politics at a time when they no longer have to sit on the sidelines. In recent times there has been a considerable change in the political attitudes and opinions of women in Europe. In a number of countries, more women are voting at elections; voices are increasingly raised in protest against the idea that women should not concern themselves with public affairs or that they are not interested in them.

Arguments such as: women are not concerned by “political matters”, they are not trained to have access to them, etc. no longer hold today, for the situation of women has changed, they have made up the leeway: they are studying to an increasing extent (girls’ education is making distinct progress throughout Europe) and they are increasingly active in working life (they account for over 41% of the labour force within the European Union). These two aspects, which are considered essential factors in developing interest in politics, should consequently promote the entry of women into decision-making bodies. And yet, although many agree in saying that their under-representation in decision-making bodies causes a real “democratic deficit”, this situation persists.

To promote their participation would tend to give new impetus to democracy, to reach towards an active democracy in which every citizen – man or women – would be represented fairly in positions of power, where everyone would have their say about the way in which the business of their town, region, State or Community should be conducted.

The European elections next month could provide the opportunity to achieve greater parity between men and women in European decision-making. “Vote for balance between women and men” would be the opportunity to instil diversity in equality, to give a new approach to political affairs, to bring to the fore new concerns for society, finally to move towards active, participatory democracy.

WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

Dear readers,

The European elections are just a few weeks away and one strong message must go out to women accross Europe. That message is, to vote candidates who support, promote and believe in equal opportunities between men and women. The 1990s are tough years for most European women and their families. Women earn less money and have less free time than men. The recession has weakened member states’ resolve to implement effective equality legislation. Women’s inequality is found at work and at home and is fed by chauvinistic and out-dated attitudes. Women are the majority of the poor and dispossessed in the European Union. Black and ethnic minority women are particularly threatened by poverty. Women work in part-time, temporary and seasonal jobs, which are very vulnerable to the increasing casualisation of the labour market.

For all these reasons, it is essential that the struggle for better conditions, for equal pay and proper pension rights, for adequate childcare and for effective legislation in favour of women, continues unabated.

The European elections offer an opportunity to women all over Europe to put into power those political representatives who will bring energy and commitment to the struggle for women’s rights.

The Women’s Rights Committee of the European Parliament has, for ten years, been a clear voice for Europe’s women. The MEPs who have been members of that committee have demanded a fairer deal for women in European legislation on maternity rights, childcare access, combatting sexual harassment at work and part-time working. They have also raised numerous issues outside the legislative process ranging from the situation in Central and Eastern Europe, to women in science and technology, the feminization of poverty in Europe, violence against women and the lack of women in the decision-making bodies in our countries.

The Women’s Rights Committee, which I have had the privilege to chair for the past five years, has fought for the development of women’s training programmes, to equip women for the new information technology challenges of the 21st century. The Committee has also held a major international conference on the rape of women in former

(follows page 2)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Since the last European Parliament elections in 1989, a large number of changes have occurred at this institution: the Maastricht Treaty, which has now entered into force, brought with it substantially increased powers for the European Parliament.

A 1993 Directive alters the voting rights at Member State level for the European elections and the composition of the European Parliament will change too: from the elections next June, there will be 567 members (instead of the present 518), broken down as follows: Germany: 99; United Kingdom, France, Italy: 87 each; Spain: 64; Netherlands: 31; Belgium, Greece, Portugal: 25 each; Denmark: 16; Ireland: 15; and Luxembourg: 6.

The new Union strengthens the powers of the European Parliament

The democratic character of the European institutions is strengthened by several major innovations in the Treaty on European Union, principally through the allocation of new powers to the European Parliament. In its original version (1957), the Treaty of Rome confined the powers of the European Parliament merely to issuing *opinions* in the Community decision-making process. The Single Act of 1986 strengthened the legislative power of the Parliament by introducing a *cooperation* procedure involving two readings of Commission proposals, one by the Parliament and one by the Council. Parliament’s right to amend certain instruments adopted by the Council by qualified majority was extended.

With the Treaty on European Union, the European Parliament now has a power of *co-decision* which allows it to act nearly on an equal footing with the Council on certain questions relating in particular to the internal market, research, the environment, consumer protection, education, culture and trans-European networks. On the other hand, for certain decisions, such as those regarding farm prices, Parliament has only advisory power. There are plans to extend the scope of the co-decision procedure during an intergovernmental conference planned for 1996 to revise the Treaty.

On certain decisions of major importance (international agreements, new accessions...), the Council can only take a decision when the European Parliament has given its *assent*, which therefore gives the latter the power to reject or to approve the decisions of the Council. This existing procedure is extended by the Treaty.

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Parliament is also becoming a relay for the citizen since it can now set up "temporary committees of inquiry" to examine any shortcomings in the application of Community law, receive petitions from citizens of the Union and appoint the ombudsman to whom citizens of the Union who have been the victims of maladministration by the Community institutions can turn.

The Treaty on the Union also associates the European Parliament in the appointment of the European Commission. It is therefore very likely that Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights will exert pressure during the procedure for the appointment of the new Commission for the number of women Commissioners to be at least proportional to the number of women Members of Parliament elected at the June elections.

Among the many powers of the European Parliament, its essential role regarding the budget should not be forgotten, since it is responsible for adopting or rejecting the budget and subsequently for monitoring its implementation.

Mention must also be made of the nineteen committees which prepare the work for the plenary session. Amongst them, one is of direct concern to women: the Committee on Women's Rights, which recently celebrated its tenth anniversary.

"European" right to vote next June

This old battle of the European Parliament has finally ended with the adoption of the Directive giving any Community national established in another Member State the right to vote and to stand in elections to the European Parliament. In adopting this Directive on 6 December 1993, the Council implemented Article 8b(2) of the Treaty on European Union, which stipulates that: "every citizen of the Union residing in a Member State of which he is not a national shall have the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament in the Member State in which he resides, under the same conditions as nationals of that State".

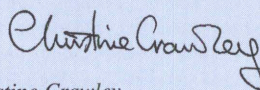
The nationals of the Union must of course have full rights to vote and to stand as candidate in their home country and make an official declaration that they are not voting or standing as candidates in two countries at the same time.

The Directive has to be transposed into national legislation. At present, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Luxembourg and Portugal have already done so. In the other Member States, the procedure is under way. Each State will nevertheless be able to impose a minimum period of residence.

The European Parliament considers that this right to vote and to stand as candidate constitutes a very important step towards a people's Europe and the formation of political Europe.

Continuing of the editorial

Yugoslavia in response to the concern of very many women's groups across Europe. The Women's Right Committee has worked closely and productively with the Equal Opportunities Unit of the Commission and with the European Women's Lobby and especially when it comes to the financing of their work, as the Parliament is the budgetary authority in the European Union. The European Union will soon be enlarged with four new countries, Austria, Sweden, Finland and Norway. These countries will have a welcome and energizing effect on the equality agenda of the present twelve countries and their presence will signal a determined and collective challenge to the undoubted difficulties, paradoxes, and opportunities that women across Europe face as we enter the 21st century.



Christine Crowley
Chair European Parliament's Women's Rights Committee

SITUATION REGARDING THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE PARLIAMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES AND AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Although women make up more than half the population of Europe, it has to be said that the proportion of women in the national assemblies and the European Parliament is very low. Even though the European Parliament has far more than the average contingent of women in the national Parliaments, we are still nowhere near parity.

Variations on the theme of parity at national level

The situation of women in the national parliaments of the Twelve varies from one country to another. Greece holds the sad record of the lowest proportion of women in its national Assembly: 4.7%; France follows closely behind it with a "score" of 5.45% (average for Senate and National Assembly). It is Denmark which holds the record for the best representation of women within its national assemblies, with one third of members being women; the Netherlands, for its part, has 25.35% (average for the two chambers) women in its assemblies.

The same scenario can be found in the governments of the Member States. The Netherlands has the highest proportion of women ministers (24%), followed by Denmark (21.5%) and Germany (17%). The lowest rate of participation of women in the European Union is in the United Kingdom and, at a different level, the European Commission has only one woman Commissioner. On the other hand, the new countries

applying for accession to the European Union have a far higher rate of women's representation within their assemblies: Finland: 39.80%; Norway: 39.70%; Sweden: 34%; and Austria: 21%. Examples to be followed!

It is also noticed that the objective of parity is seen in different ways depending on the countries and the European parties. Belgium, Germany and the Scandinavian countries are moving towards a threshold of 30% to 40%. The measures introduced to move towards equality are binding to a greater or lesser extent from one Member State to another. Belgium is adopting a law providing for sanctions in the event of non-compliance. Other countries, such as France, accept a kind of "code of conduct". The example of Italy should be noted, where a law has just been adopted (the first of its kind in Europe) guaranteeing women increased presence in political bodies. The law stipulates that "neither sex may have more than two-thirds representation in terms of numbers on lists of candidates (for local government elections)". Even better, a new law concerning general elections provides that elections to the lower house will be undertaken according to a mixed system: 75% of voting will be uninominal, 25% from proportional lists. For the latter, the law provides that "male and female candidates will be listed alternately". This means 50-50 distribution between candidates of the two sexes. Another example to be followed!

TEN YEARS OF RELENTLESS HARD WORK FOR WOMEN

The European Parliament has 19 specific committees. Of these, one concerns women directly: the Committee on Women's Rights. Today, this committee is celebrating its tenth anniversary. Even though the European Parliament has always been interested in equal treatment for men and women, it took many years and a great deal of work and will-power on the part of women Members of the European Parliament for it to be established.

Readers of the Women of Europe Newsletter are informed regularly about the work of the Committee on Women's Rights. Today, on the eve of the European elections and to mark its tenth anniversary, we take the opportunity to give a brief presentation to our readers of its origin, its powers and its struggles and to congratulate this committee on its remarkable work during these ten years.

A brief history

As we have already noted above, the Committee on Women's Rights was not created in a day. It was in 1979, the date of the first direct elections to the European Parliament that the latter's activities in the field of equal opportunities for women and men became far more systematic and took on a more con-

Variations in the European Parliament on the basis of countries and parties

The table below establishes the percentage of women Members of the European Parliament, broken down by Member State and by membership of the political groups in February 1994. When analysing this table, it is seen that only the Greens are close to achieving a balance between men and women with 38% women. The women's representation in the Rainbow Group is just a quarter, whereas not even a quarter of the members of any of the other groups are women!

When analysing these data by country, it appears that some are less misogynous than others. Luxembourg achieves true parity with 50% women, Germany and Denmark arrive at one third women at the European Parliament. Although these countries have percentages close to parity, it has to be said that Greece today no longer has a single woman Member of the European Parliament and that Ireland has only 7% women at the European Parliament!

Analysis of the participation of women within the various parliamentary committees is also significant. There are some on which very few women sit: Budgets, Economic Affairs, Defence, Production and Trade, Foreign Affairs, Public Accounts. On the other hand, in other committees, women account for half or more of the members: Social Affairs, Health, Education, Environment and, of course, Women's Rights! Unfortunately, this shows once again that when women do occupy positions of power, they tend to be confined to areas said to be typically female.

	B	DK	D	GR	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	P	UK	TOT
PES	25%	67%	39%	0%	22%	29%	0%	12%	0%	38%	25%	15%	22%
EPP	29%	25%	31%	0%	12%	8%	25%	11%	67%	20%	0%	12%	17%
LDR	25%	50%	20%		20%	22%	0%	33%	100%	25%	11%		23%
G	33%	0%	67%		0%	50%		14%		50%			38%
EDA				0%	0%	0%	0%						0%
RG	0%	50%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%				0%	100%	25%
LUG	0%		0%			43%					0%		23%
TGER				0%		11%							8%
NA		0%	25%	0%	40%	0%	0%	43%		0%		0%	24%
TOT	25%	38%	36%	0%	18%	21%	7%	15%	50%	28%	13%	15%	21%

- PES: Party of European Socialists
- EPP: European People's Party
- LDR: Liberal, Democratic and Reformist Group
- G: Greens
- EDA: European Democratic Alliance
- RG: Rainbow Group
- LUG: Left Unity Group
- TGER: Technical Group of the European Right
- NA: Non-affiliated

Source: Eurostat, in *Info Mémo*, Directorate-General for Information and Public Relations, European Parliament.

crete form, with a scope far exceeding the provisions of Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome: "equal pay for equal work". Equal pay is not enough to introduce genuine equal opportunities for men and women. Aware of this fact, the European Parliament then set up in 1979, three months after it had been constituted, an ad hoc committee responsible for preparing a major debate on women's rights. In February 1981, this ad hoc committee presented a proposal for a resolution on the situation of women in the European Community. The resolution in question was adopted by the European Parliament on 11 February 1981. In order for this resolution not to remain a dead letter, the women Members of the European Parliament set up a Committee of Inquiry responsible for monitoring the application by the European bodies of the guidelines adopted by the European Parliament in the

resolution of 11 February 1981, and following the developments in the situation of women in the countries of the Community. This was the first Committee of Inquiry of the directly elected European Parliament. After two and a half years of work, the Committee presented an important report accompanied by a proposal for a resolution, which the European Parliament adopted on 17 January 1984. In this resolution, the European Parliament extended the mandate of the Committee of Inquiry until the end of its term, at the same time calling on it to continue its monitoring brief. It also expressed the wish for the European Parliament newly elected in June 1984 to set up a standing committee to guarantee the protection of the *acquis communautaire* and the development of equal opportunities. In July 1984, at the end of a searching debate, the newly elected European Parliament

decided to set up a standing Committee on Women's Rights, of which there are few examples in the world. Parliamentary practice has shown that the possibilities of achieving results are greater for a standing committee, which is fully integrated into the normal work of the European Parliament, than for special committees.

Essential tasks for women

The Committee on Women's Rights of the European Parliament is certainly the place where women are able to make known the different view they have of political action. The task assigned to it by the European Parliament is essential for the women of the European Union. The Committee's first assignment is to monitor the application of the directives already in force in the field of equal treatment and to formulate new ones in this field. It also undertakes analyses and inquiries into other areas of activity concerning women.

More precisely, the Committee, resulting from the 1989 elections, is competent for questions relating to the following:

- the definition and development of women's rights in the Community, on the basis of the European Parliament resolutions on the subject;
 - the application and finalization of directives relating to equal rights of women and the preparation of new directives;
 - social, employment and training policy concerning women and young women and measures designed to combat women's unemployment;
 - information policy and studies concerning women;
 - the evaluation of joint policies as far as women are concerned and the consequences for women of completing the internal market;
 - problems associated with women's professional activities and their family role;
 - women in the Community institutions;
 - women's questions in the international context (UN, ILO, etc.);
 - the situation of migrant women and partners of migrant workers, and the status of women who are both European citizens and nationals of non-European countries, in the context of European legislation relating to the single market.
- To carry out its duties, the Committee on Women's Rights took action on all possible fronts with the resources available to the European Parliament, at least until the adoption of the Treaty on European Union: participation in the legislative process, adoption of own-initiative reports, oral questions to the Commission and the Council. In doing this it sought to influence Community legislation so that its objectives and priorities were taken into account. For example, the Community Directive on maternity leave and the proposal for a Council Recommendation on child care owe their existence to the action taken by the Committee on Women's Rights.

Apart from legislative measures, the Committee on Women's Rights also inspired and obtained operational measures from the European Commission (Social Fund, Third Community Action Programme to promote equal opportunities for women and men, NOW, IRIS, ILE and just recently, the reform of the Structural Funds).

This is only a pale reflection of the action undertaken by this Committee. To discover more, the Committee on Women's Rights has published its activities report from July 1984 to February 1994, which covers all its activities. This document (EP 145. 089/rev. 3) is available from the Committee on Women's Rights, European Parliament, 97-113 rue Belliard, B-1049 Brussels.

WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

Objective parity

With the approach of the European elections in June, the European network "Women in Decision-Making" is campaigning for parity between men and women. The purpose of this action is to make the general public aware that women constitute a large proportion of the potential of our society, an enormous reserve of qualities and knowledge, talent and energy which is lost if it remains untapped. "Vote for balance between women and men" aims to use this potential, to strive towards parity in decision-making bodies.

In 1989, 100 of the 518 Members elected to the European Parliament were women. So that the June 1994 elections can improve on this, the European Network on "Women in Decision-Making" was assigned the task by the European Commission (the Equal Opportunities Unit of DG V) of developing an awareness campaign calling people to vote for balance between men and women at these elections (for further details, see Women of Europe Newsletter No 39).

This campaign comes within a far broader framework than that of the elections proper. The Commission, in launching its Third Action Programme to promote equal opportunities for women and men in 1991 (which is to end in 1995), included among its objectives the improvement of the status of women. Amongst other things, this objective involves better women's representation in decision-making bodies. In 1992, the European Commission therefore set up a network of experts on "Women in Decision-Making", which was assigned the priority task of analysing the obstacles to better women's representation in decision-making and of encouraging action to improve the situation. At the end of its first year of work, the Network organized a conference in Athens in November 1992 on the subject of "Women in Power". Some twenty prominent European women in (or having been in) key positions throughout Europe signed a Declaration pledging to promote the participation of women in decision-making in accordance with the principles of equality

and democracy. Ministers, Members of the European Parliament and national assemblies called for fundamental changes to decision-making procedures to ensure that women's interests and values are properly reflected in the creation of a better society.

Making up the "democratic deficit"

The "Athens Declaration" is the basis of the action conducted by the Network with regard to the June 1994 elections. It proclaims that, given the democratic deficit, it is necessary to achieve a balanced distribution of political and public power between women and men.

The signatories include Vasso Papandreou, former Member of the European Commission, Rita Süßmuth, President of the Bundestag; Leono Beleza, Vice-President of the Portuguese Parliament, Simone Veil, Melina Mercuri, Edith Cresson, Mary Robinson, who all condemn the "democratic deficit" arising from the exclusion of women from positions of power and decision-making centres. This Declaration advocates the need for co-responsibility (the expression used by Hannah Arendt) of men and women in taking political decisions.

Athens Declaration

Formal and informal equality between women and men is a fundamental human right.

Women represent more than half the population. Democracy requires parity in the representation and administration of Nations.

Women represent half the potential talent and skills of humanity and their under-representation in decision-making is a loss for society as a whole.

A balanced participation by women and men in decision-making would produce different ideas, values and styles of behaviour suited to a fairer and more balanced world for all, both women and men. The under-representation of women in decision-making prevents full account being taken of the interests and needs of the population as a whole.

We proclaim the need to achieve a balanced distribution of political and public power between men and women.

We demand equality of participation by women and men in public and political decision-making.

We underline the need for changes to the structure of decision-making procedures in order to ensure such equality in practice.



VOTE FOR BALANCE BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN
European Elections 1994

"Why does 81% of the European Parliament have to shave each morning?"

Further to the undertakings made in Athens, the Network has launched a vast campaign to combat the political machismo and to revive the question of balanced participation by the two sexes in the decision-making process in all Member States of the European Union. This action has a two-fold objective. Firstly, it aims to inform and increase awareness among the general public of the need for balance between women and men in politics. Secondly, it tries to encourage women in general and all women's groups – whether they are politically active or not – to be active on the political front and to support the efforts of individual women candidates for the 1994 European elections. The message of the network is clear, it is contained in a slogan and a logo which will very shortly be appearing in the media: "Vote for balance between women and men".

To support this initiative and inform the general public, an "action pack" has been prepared which is available from the network. This public awareness campaign is based on a logo and a slogan "Vote for balance between women and men" which has been translated into the nine Community languages and may be adapted to the different needs of associations, individuals and institutions wishing to promote parity. The slogan has variants which may assume a humorous, convivial tone: "Can you imagine a world with 81% Romeos and 19% Juliets?", "Can you imagine a world with 81% fathers and 19% mothers?" or "Why does 81% of the Parliament have to shave each morning?". All the tools (logo, slogan, campaign material, video clip..) are available to people or groups wishing to campaign for parity. If you wish to use this material or would like further information, contact the Network on "Women in Decision-Making", rue Marcelis 33A, B-1050 Brussels, tel. (32 2) 512 77 23, fax (32 2) 514 40 28 or the advertising agency direct: HARPO, boulevard du Souverain 410, B-1150 Brussels, tel. (32 2) 770 20 00, fax (32 2) 770 23 52.



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