

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights met in Brussels on 25-26 April 1994 – for the last time before the new Committee on Women's Rights is established after the June elections – with Christine Crawley (ESP, United Kingdom) in the chair. During this session, two progress reports were adopted: that of Marijke Van Hemeldonck (ESP, Belgium) on research and development scientists and that of Margaret Daly (EPP, United Kingdom) on the position of women in small businesses.

The Committee on Women's Rights was addressed by Anne Taylor, the new chairwoman of the European Women's Lobby, who set out the Lobby's priorities. Its work will focus on the future of social policy in Europe, the June European elections and the preparation of the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing in September 1995. She also described the contributions of the EWL to the European Commission's Green Paper on the social policy of the Union. The EWL has made a great many proposals, including: the introduction of a minimum wage for all citizens of the Union, the creation of a Directive to regulate the various types of employment contracts and the drafting of a European Constitution making explicit reference to equality and equal treatment of men and women. Anne Taylor also underlined the EWL's criticism of the Green Paper which, in particular, takes no account of the effects of enlargement, brings out no contradictions between growth and competitiveness, makes no mention of training for women, etc. The EWL wishes to promote part-time job-sharing, greater flexibility of work, equal pay for men and women, and once again brings up for discussion the problems of the directives pending before the Council. At present, the EWL is working towards increasing the presence of women within the European Parliament.

Another guest at this meeting, Ms Gomez de Enterría, Chairwoman of COPEC (European Parliament's Joint Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men), informed Committee members of the activities conducted by COPEC to promote equal opportunities for women within the European Parliament. Ms Gomez de Enterría stressed that legal obstacles have limited progress in this



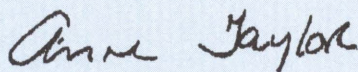
WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

Dear Readers,

In the light of the enlargement of the European Union, the European Women's Lobby (EWL) has been in close contact with women's NGOs in the Nordic countries and Austria. Some of their concerns mirror those of women in the Member States of the European Union.

Women account for around 51.3% of the Union's population, but only 19.3% of those elected were women in the last European elections. The imbalance is even worse at national level, where only 13.3% of MPs on average are female. As a result, issues of concern to women like equal pay, equal opportunities and discrimination have simply been neglected. As the largest women's NGO in Europe, the EWL exists in order to make sure that issues that affect women in particular assume a prominent place on the agenda of European policy-makers. Not only do we strive to prevent that the clock is turned back on us, but we are actively pursuing the improvement of the situation of all women living in the European Union. We regard it as vital to increase the number of women in decision-making positions at all levels – especially, at this particular point in time – campaigning for more women in the European Parliament. We believe it is crucial that women go to the ballot box and make use of their democratic right to vote, bearing in mind that we need more women in the decision-making institutions in Europe.

But the European Women's Lobby also looks at issues beyond the European elections. At a European Union preparatory meeting in Toledo in April 1994, in preparation for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the EWL set the agenda for women's NGOs in Europe. We identified four areas of concern for European women: social and economic exclusion, women in decision-making, women and violence, and women in development. We believe that European integration policies need to address these issues if Europe is to live up to its promises of a better and fairer European society.



Anne Taylor
President of the European Women's Lobby

field and that it is necessary to work on legislative reforms and to recognize COPEC as a statutory body to increase its effectiveness. Although not so much progress has been made as had been hoped, there has been a significant increase in the number of women appointed to grade A posts (administrators) – the percentage of women occupying these posts has risen from 11.5% to 17.8%. The imbalance between men and women in certain types of occupations is also significant. Amongst other examples, there is a concentration of women in the translation departments, while few are to be found in other administrative fields, particularly the Legal Service. COPEC also looks into other problems encountered by women, such as the right to retirement and the age limit for appointments of female employees. In general, it can be said that, despite the efforts to promote equal opportunities, the tangible benefits for women are minimal.

Another item on the agenda for this meeting was the meeting in Toledo, held from 14 to 17 April 1994 and attended by several Members of Parliament, to prepare the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995. Although the work on the whole proved to be very interesting, the main observation concerning the content of this meeting is that a more national than Community approach was adopted in the discussions. Terésa Domingo Segarra (NI, Spain) pointed out that it would have been better to present a European view setting out the strategies implemented by the Union, rather than to hear the repetition of identical programmes at the level of the Twelve. Furthermore, she considered that the Committee on Women's Rights had not been adequately represented and that, in consequence, it had not been possible to present its political and technical experience. Following criticisms made by NGOs, she highlighted the need for better organization of the work and better dissemination of the information.

Representing DG V, Irene Kingston of the Equal Opportunities Unit recalled that the European Commission's role in Toledo was to listen to the discussions and assist as observer in the work, not to present a common position. She stressed that all the Member States will be represented in Vienna and expressed the hope that the chair will allow the Union's message to be heard. For more details about this conference, see the article in this issue of the Women of Europe Newsletter.

Agnès Hubert, Head of the Equal Opportunities Unit of DG V of the European Commission, informed the Committee on Women's Rights about the Commis-

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sion's priorities with regard to women: reconciliation of professional and family life, equal pay for men and women, participation of women in decision-making at the work place.

Information: Committee on Women's Rights, European Parliament, 97-113 rue Belliard, B-1040 Brussels.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Men and Women equal with regard to night work

The European Commission brought proceedings before the European Court of Justice against five Member States of the Union Belgium, France, Italy, Greece and Portugal – which, at present, prohibit women from working at night. On the basis of the judgment of the Court of Justice of 25 July 1991 ("Stoetzel" judgment), the Member of the European Commission responsible for social affairs, Mr Pádraig Flynn, called upon Member States whose national legislation prohibits night work solely for women, to amend their legislation to make it non-discriminatory. This judgment stipulates that to prohibit night work for women – when such a prohibition does not exist for men – is an infringement of the principle of equal treatment of men and women in the context of access to employment, training and promotion at work, a principle laid down by the Community Directive of 9 February 1976.

In its judgment of 25 July 1991, the European Court of Justice affirms that the objective of protection which lay at the basis of the prohibition of night work for women was no longer founded and that, in principle, apart from in cases of pregnancy and motherhood, the risks to which women are exposed in performing such work are identical with those to which men are exposed. The Court refutes the grounds advanced by the defendant States. The risks of attack put forward can be remedied by special measures. As for the excessive burden of work in relation to family responsibilities, the Court affirms that this question lies outside the scope of the 1976 Directive on equal treatment of men and women and that the organization of the family and the division of tasks between the couple are private matters. The final verdict of the Court therefore establishes the obligation for

Member States not to make the prohibition of night work for women into a principle of law. Pádraig Flynn, Member of the European Commission, goes further by commenting that at this time of high unemployment, when jobs are scarce, prohibiting women from working at night could result in depriving them of any opportunity to work and would in any case deprive them of the increased wages and bonuses associated with night work.

The European Commission, advocating equality between men and women in the context of night work, does not overlook the need to establish European legislation defining the conditions on which this work can be performed. The Directive of 23 November 1993 introducing minimum protection for all night workers, without any distinction between men and women, is a first step towards this.

Toledo Meeting

The European Commission, in close cooperation with the Instituto de la Mujer (Spain) offered Union Member States and acceding countries a unique opportunity of meeting at Toledo (Spain) from 14 to 17 April. The consultative meeting was held with a view to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women to be organized in Beijing in September 1995, when Spain will be holding the Presidency of the European Union. A special heading for the Conference was entered in the budget by the European Parliament, on the initiative of members of Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights. The objective of the Toledo meeting was to give delegations the opportunity to discuss and put forward the questions relating to equality which seem to be the most important and urgent in Europe (which, of course, includes relations with the countries of the South), and to compare notes on the preparations for Beijing at national level. In parallel to the official conference, an NGO Forum, also co-financed by the European Commission and organized by the European Women's Lobby, was held in Toledo. This was attended by government representatives, as well as by equal opportunities experts, delegates from Central and Eastern Europe, Members of the European Parliament and representatives of international organizations. The presence in Toledo of Gertrude Mongella, Secretary-General for the Beijing Conference, was particularly

appreciated. Ms Mongella, who addressed both the official conference and the NGO Forum, stressed the need to recognize the diversity of women, not to accentuate their difference, but to celebrate the wealth of their potential. She also explained the structure of the draft "Platform for Action" (which will be the working document in Beijing), as being an attempt to emphasise and concentrate on 11 priority fields, rather than putting forward 372 intimidating paragraphs of progressist strategies, as was done at the Nairobi Conference in 1985. Agnès Hubert, Head of the Equal Opportunities Unit of DG V, described the Toledo meeting as "a first", one of the most significant events organized at European level in recent years. She stressed the value of an effective, united contribution from the European Union in Beijing, whilst reminding delegations of the very successful experience of the previous United Nations Conference in Nairobi in 1985. "The results, as far as equal opportunities in the Community are concerned, are something of which to be proud", she declared. Agnès Hubert also took stock of a subject which arose several times during the meeting, that Beijing is a process as much as an event the preparatory period already providing the opportunity to boost interest at national level on questions of equality.

The Conference programme was discussed with the national coordinators designated to supervise the preparations for Beijing during a meeting organized by the European Commission in Brussels. The six working sessions covered the following fields:

- women as an invisible force at work;
- new opportunities on the labour market: growth and competitiveness;
- women and decision-making;
- women and the media;
- women and solidarity in Europe;
- solidarity with other societies.

Two working sessions were attended by the Queen of Spain.

As expected, broad consensus was reached on the most pressing problems, and many discussions took place on ways of solving them.

Full consideration will be given to the discussions and reports of Toledo in the European Union's preparations for Beijing and, prior to this, for the regional preparatory conference organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe to be held in Vienna in October 1994.

Information: for aspects concerning the European Union for Beijing: Irene Kingston, Equal Opportunities Unit, DG V, European Commission, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels; Information concerning the European regional conference: ECE Task Force on Women, UN

Economic Commission for Europe, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Tel (41) 22 917 26 94; Information on the Beijing Conference: Secretariat of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Division for the Advancement of Women, DC2-1234, Two UN Plaza, USA-New York, NY 10017, Tel (212) 963 8385, Fax (212) 963 3463.

INFORMATION/ COMMUNICATION

European Commission Positive Action Programme

The European Commission has been trying from the outset to promote equal opportunities for men and women. Its current policy takes the form of the Third Community Action Programme, which aims to promote women on the labour market, to improve legislation in their favour and to improve their status. In order to practise what it preaches, the Commission has adopted positive action programmes designed to promote equality between men and women within the institution itself. An Equal Opportunities Unit in DG IX was set up specially to monitor the implementation of the Second Positive Action Programme among women and men (devised within the Commission itself) and to ensure general awareness at the institution of the equal opportunities policy and enhance this dynamism. Today, to achieve its self-imposed objectives more effectively, the Equal Opportunities Unit is launching a regular "bulletin", as a forum for information, reflection and exchanges for all Commission staff interested in sound management of the human potential of their institution.

Information: Laura Viqueira, Equal Opportunities Unit, DG IX, European Commission, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.

Guide and application form for grants for local employment initiatives for women

The European Commission network of local employment initiatives recently published a guide for those wishing to

apply for grants for local employment initiatives for women. This very clear, very practical guide assists applicants in presenting their local employment initiative projects to full advantage.

Projects are selected every year, the purpose being to reward and encourage women who create jobs and to promote the role of women in the economy. Two types of grant are available: one of ECU 2 000 to assist women in the start-up phase of their businesses, and one to assist job creation in young, innovative businesses, set up and directed by women, which have been in existence for less than two years, in their consolidation phase. The amount of the latter grant depends on the number of jobs created for women. No time limit has been set for the submission of applications. However, the application must be sent before the official declaration of the establishment of the business.

Information: LEI Grant Management Unit, Comitato Impresa Donna, 1 av. de la Joyeuse Entrée, B-1040 Brussels, Tel (32 2) 280 00 54, Fax (32 2) 280 09 01 or CID/Headquarters, 22 viale Aldo Moro, I-40127 Bologna, or the coordinators for the network of local employment initiatives, Breakthrough Consultants, 12 bd. Clovis, B-1040 Brussels, Tel (32 2) 732 51 19, Fax (32 2) 732 73 19 or Headquarters, Vas. Georgiou Street 36, GR-54640 Thessalonica, Tel (30 31) 840 625, Fax (30 31) 861 100.

CONFERENCES

Feminist perspectives on technology, work and ecology, second European feminist research conference, Graz (Austria) from 5 to 9 July 1994. This Conference will be centred on the feminist perspectives on technology, work and ecology. Subjects as varied as technology and health; information, technology and organization; women's careers; feminist approaches to ecology; challenges in the field of women's education, etc. will be tackled during this Conference in a European perspective.

For all information, please contact: IFZ (Inter-University Research Center for Technology, Work and Culture), Schlögelgasse 2, A-8010 Graz, Austria, Fax (43 316) 810274.

Mothers in Europe – an international comparison (Mütter in Europa – ein internationaler Vergleich der Situation und Problematik), a congress organized in the context of the International Year of the Family, in Dortmund (Germany) on 23 and 24 September 1994.

Information: Landesverband der Mütterzentren NRW, Adlerstrasse 81, DE-44137 Dortmund, Tel (0231) 14 16 62, Fax (0231) 16 21 74.

PUBLICATIONS

La situation socio-économique des femmes seules en Europe. A publication from the series "Women of Europe Supplements", No. 41. Currently available in French, the other languages will follow. This publication is available from the *General Public Information Unit, Women's Information Service, DG X, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.*

Combattre le harcèlement sexuel sur les lieux de travail. L'action menée dans les Etats membres de la Communauté européenne. This document, which is part of the European Parliament's "women's rights" series, takes stock of the legal situation, the existing provisions and the employer's obligations in the field of sexual harassment at the work place in the European Union, as well as in Japan and the United States. *This document can be obtained from the European Parliament, Directorate-General for Studies, Budgetary, Cultural and Comparative Law Matters Division, Andrea Subhan, L-2929 Luxembourg, Tel: (352) 4300-1, Fax: (352) 43 40 71.*

European Journal of Women's Studies. A new magazine designed as a forum for research into feminist studies in Europe. *Information: Sage Publications, 6 Bonhill Street, UK-London EC2A 4PU, Tel (44 71) 374 06 45.*

Ideas for business. A document in the "Women and business" series of guides published by the European network of local employment initiatives. This guide was devised as a practical tool for women considering setting up or launching their own businesses. This guide answers key questions for anyone launching their own business: How to be different? How to bring out innovative ideas? This guide can be obtained from the coordinators of the network of local employment initiatives: *Bld. Clovis 12, B-1040 Brussels, Tel (32 2) 732 51 19, Fax (32 2) 732 73 19.*

Returning to work – a directory of education & training for women, 7th edition of the annual directory of The Women Returners' Network. This guide supplies useful addresses for training (more than 1500 courses and programmes in the United Kingdom) and essen-

tial information for all women wishing to rejoin the labour market. *This directory is available from: The Women Returners' Network, 8 John Adam Street, UK-London WC2N 6EZ, Tel (071) 839 81 88, Fax (071) 930 86 20.*

All the documents below are available from the Equal Opportunities Unit, DG V, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.

Contribution de l'Europe à la promotion économique des femmes rurales (Europe's Contribution to the economic advancement of rural women). This report, prepared for the meeting of the International Steering Committee on the economic advancement of rural women, of 24 and 25 February 1994, takes stock of European development cooperation. It examines the way in which European countries, NGOs and the European Union assist rural women in developing countries. The document is available in English and French.

Environnement, nouvelles qualifications et compétences d'avenir. This study on the environment focuses in particular on the law applicable on the subject and on waste management in five Member States (Belgium, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Greece). In accordance with the objectives of the Third Community Action Programme for equal opportunities (1991-1995), the work also aims to inform women about qualifications and new skills required in this occupational sector. V/494/94 available in French.

Monitoring Childcare Services for Young Children. This survey describes the routine data concerning childcare in the various countries, thereby aiming to improve the comparability of the descriptive data used and the definitions adopted. Three types of information are examined: the information concerning the requirements, supply and demand of childcare services outside the family. V/460/94 available in English and French.

Homeworking in the EC. This manual takes stock of the position of women working at home in the manufacturing and services sectors. Often, in many European countries, the legal status of homeworkers is similar to that of the self-employed, whereas in reality, homeworking is more akin to work done by employees. V/7173/93 is now available in English, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish. To be published in Greek and Danish.

Wage determination and sex segregation in employment in the European Community. This document is the result of research into the position of women in the working world within the European Community. A large number of areas are covered: women and minimum wage regulations, women's pay and collective agreements, payment systems and "equal pay for equal work", occupational segregation, future trend and future development in the wage determination institutions. V/408/94 available in English and French.

Female repatriates from Eastern Europe. Comparing problems and strategies of occupational integration in Germany and Greece. This document reports on female migration from Eastern to Western Europe. It pays particular attention to the problems of occupational integration encountered in Greece and Germany. V/410/94 available in English.

Handbook on equal treatment between men and women in the European Community. This is an overall view of the judgments of the European Court of Justice, between 1971 and 1992, in cases concerning equal treatment of men and women. The work contains a bibliography (subdivision by Member State) allowing the subject to be examined in greater depth. V/51/94 available in English.

Equal treatment after Maastricht. The report is based on the reports of the network of experts who examined the implementation of the equality Directives and on the contributions published in the "Newsletters" of this same network. The text reflects the material available in autumn 1993. It should be noted that Luxembourg and Portugal have not been studied. V/653/94 available in English and French.

Looking back planning for the future. This document, written by Lotte Valbjorn and Merete Hansen in 1993, is a code of conduct for women wishing to make a career for themselves. It should be noted that the code in question was drawn up on the basis of Danish experience. V/401/94 available in English.

Women in the Europeanizing of industrial relations. A survey conducted in five Member States (France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom) on the participation of the two sides of industry in the creation of a single European market. Amongst other things, this report seeks to discover how women's interests are represented in the social process. V/664/94 available in English.

Sex equality litigation in the Member States of the European Community.

This report, the result of cooperation between the DG V Equal Opportunities Unit and the network of legal experts in the field of equality, paves the way for more detailed research to be conducted in the course of 1994. It contains studies at national level, for each Member State, and a comparative overall view of the approaches adopted in law throughout the Community. Two themes are dealt with: the extent to which individuals can assert their rights, on the basis of principles of equality, by legal means and the extent to which "direct discrimination" can be called into question, i.e. the discriminatory measures of conditions of employment. The work comprises: a legal analysis based on the case law of the European Court of Justice, a survey of "forums" involved in preventing disputes in the field of equality, the possibilities for individuals to take legal action, the difficulties encountered by plaintiffs during legal proceedings, the remedies, the development of the strategies of the national legal systems and, finally, general and specific recommendations. V/407/94 available in English.

ERRATUM

In the March issue of the Newsletter, reference was made to the "Chairman" and "Vice-Chairmen" of the European Women's Lobby. While these terms have commonly been used in the past to describe positions occupied by either men or women, it is now felt to be more appropriate, and more sensitive to the equality of status of women in such positions, to use the terms "Chairwoman" and "Vice-chairwomen" when the persons in question are in fact women. Our apologies to Ana Vale, Anne Taylor, Denise Fuchs and Rena Lampsa.

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