

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

THE NEW COMMISSION: FIVE OF THE 21 COMMISSIONERS ARE WOMEN

On Saturday 29 October, the next President, Jacques Santer, presented his new team of Commissioners at the Chateau de Senningen (Luxemburg).

Amongst the "changes with the past", we can highlight the significant increase in the number of women: there will be five women members. Christiane Scrivener from France was the only woman in the outgoing Commission.

This is the first time a Commission has included such a large proportion of women. This ties in with the increase in women Members of the European Parliament: 145 of the 567 Members of the Parliament who took office last July are women – over 25%, compared with 18% for the assembly elected in 1989.

Who are the women Commissioners?

Ritt Bjerregaard will handle the portfolio of the environment and nuclear security. Her past career has included terms as Minister for Education, and for Social Affairs; she has served on parliamentary committees including those on the environment and European affairs, and chaired the Danish European Movement. She is also Vice-President of the Women's Socialist International. She is noted for her candour, particularly on the European Union. Finally, she is the author of works on the role of women in politics.

Emma Bonino is Italian and comes from the Radical Party. She has been active in support of the right to abortion and the abolition of the death penalty, and against world hunger. She has also been Secretary General of the Food and Disarmament Foundation of which she is a founder member. She was a Member of the Italian Parliament and subsequently of the European Parliament. She will deal with Consumer Policy and the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO).

Edith Cresson, another woman well-known for her candour, is French and a socialist. She was François Mitterrand's Prime Minister from May 1991 to April 1992, Minister for European Affairs, Minister for Foreign Trade and Industry, and Minister for Agriculture. Her portfolios will be Science, Research and Development (including the Joint Research Centre) and Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth. She also has experience in the private sector, having worked for the Schneider Group. She is a graduate of HEC (Hautes Etudes Commerciales), the famous French business school.

Anita Gradin is Swedish and was originally a journalist. She will be handling questions linked to immigration, internal and legal affairs, financial control and the fight against fraud. She was the minister responsible for



WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

Dear Readers,

Over the last two years there has been a significant change in women's attitudes to European issues.

When the Treaty on the European Union was ratified by the Member States, women's attitudes, and the way they voted, showed that they are concerned about the maintenance and development, in the new European context, of policies relating to their rights.

Surveys have been carried out on women's awareness of Community activities and the results need to be taken into account, especially in terms of the information we have to disseminate.

In addition, the enlargement of the European Union to include new Member States where the right to equal opportunities is widely recognized and promoted, reveals a new demand for information, in terms of both quality and quantity. Women, notably those from the Scandinavian countries, will be coming into the Community area with important rights and concerns which, in certain areas, go far beyond the experience and hopes of many female citizens of Europe.

The women of these future Member States will have demands concerning information, and our service will have to respond, as far as its resources permit. Besides this, the new Santer Commission, much more "feminine" in its composition than its predecessors, has already stated that it will pay particular attention to the area of equal opportunities.

Finally, important events for women are planned for the coming months: the World Conference on Women scheduled for October 1995 in Beijing, to name but one. All this has prompted us to launch a survey on the expectations of women in terms of European information, on the one hand, and on the impact of the publications we regularly put out, on the other.

This far-reaching and detailed survey will be targeted at two groups of women: the "female public at large" and women's information networks.

It will analyse the subjective needs, motivations and attitudes of the female public regarding European information, and the way this information is perceived by the networks, and how it can evolve with a view to a wider and more penetrating circulation in these two environments.

Follows page 2

immigration issues and equality in the Olof Palme government and chaired the Council of Europe's Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography. She was also the minister responsible for foreign trade at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, before becoming Swedish ambassador to Austria and Slovenia. Since 1975 she has been Vice-President of the Swedish National Federation of Social Democratic Women.

Monika Wulf-Mathies has made her mark on the political scene: in 1971 she joined the powerful German public service and transport union – OTV (2.5 million members) where she took over a managerial post in 1976 and the chair in 1982. She studied history and economics, and began her career in the Federal Ministry of Economics. She enjoys a reputation of being calm and collected. She has been a member of the SPD since 1965.

The members of the new Commission have immediately demonstrated their interest in equality of opportunity between women and men: they have made public their intention of creating a group of Commissioners responsible for making progress in this area.

The group will consist of Commissioners Anita Gradin, Monika Wulf-Mathies, Pdraig Flynn, in charge of employment, social affairs and relations with the Economic and Social Committee, and Erkki Liikanen, who will be the Commissioner in charge of personnel and the budget.

We shall return to the establishment of this equal opportunities group in a forthcoming issue of the Women of Europe Newsletter. We will also be presenting the women Commissioners in more personalized fashion.

A CONFERENCE ON WOMEN AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE

How can we bring women in the European Union closer together? What proposals can we make to them to meet their aspirations and prepare for the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference?

These were, in essence, the issues raised from the outset at the conference organized on 17 and 18 November at the European Parliament by the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL) and the European Commission – DG V – Equal Opportunities Unit.

Since the Treaty of Rome was adopted in 1957, enshrining the principle of equal pay for men and women in Article 119, the European Community has adopted 6 directives and a series of recommendations, backed by judgments of the Court of Justice, to promote equal opportunities. It has also implemented multiannual action programmes, a third of which will be completed at the end of 1995, designed to develop and make known the legal framework of Community action, encourage the integration of women into the labour market and, by means of positive action in specific sectors, contribute to changing their status.

What is the verdict on Community action for equality between men and women over the last 20 years, in a context recently marked by the employment crisis?

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To take up the words of Agnès Hubert, Head of the Equal Opportunities Unit (DG V), "the European initiative has, at the very least, destroyed the credibility of those who wanted to place the burden of the crisis and the responsibility for unacceptable rates of unemployment on the women who entered the labour market in large numbers in the 80s. At best, this action has allowed women to affirm their position as full players, bearers of cultural changes which are essential for overcoming the structural unemployment crisis." At the same time women have been less than wholehearted in their support for the European Union, and women in the future Member States, particularly Norway, Sweden and Finland, were extremely sceptical.

If nothing else, this conference was an opportunity to analyse these questions and affirm the determination of the participants to make their presence felt at all levels in the European Union and in the pursuit of its construction.

There were many speeches: we can mention only a few of them. First, Jérôme Vignon declared, on behalf of Commission President Jacques Delors, that women were right to demand more equality and solidarity for greater social integration, "they aspire to conciliation and the sharing of professional and family responsibilities. Just as legitimately, they claim parity in the decision-making process which will bring greater democracy."

Michel Molitor, Vice-Rector of the UCL also spoke in favour of the representation of women, as a sine qua non of democracy, and participation in the democratic system is the corollary of this representation. He emphasized that "the quality but also the reality of a democratic system depends not only on its capacity to organize the representation of the multiple facets of social reality which make up a society but also on facilitating their expression."

Colette Flesch, Director General of DG X – Information, Communication, Culture and the Audiovisual Media, emphasized that, according to surveys carried out, women in general feel much less well informed on Europe than men, are less interested in European affairs and have less positive attitudes to certain aspects of European integration.

Colette Flesch also presented the five "types of European women" distinguished in the autumn 1993 Eurobarometer poll.

According to this survey, women's opinions, whether they are "enthusiastic supporters" of "more Europe", "relatively opposed" or "confirmed opponents", are not governed by any north-south divide, or national or regional cleavage. They depend more on education, social status, occupation, and type of family life.

Ritt Bjerregaard, future European Commissioner, laid stress on the importance of economic independence for women, the sine qua non of their emancipation, on the existence of social measures liberating women from their domestic tasks, and on access to education and ongoing training, and on changing attitudes.

After these introductory addresses on the subject of women's views of Europe, three round tables were devoted to "the major stages in the construction of Europe", "women and structural change" and "women's contribution to building European citizenship and an active society".

Continuing of the editorial

The results of this survey will allow us to provide information better adapted to the current requirements of the various female audiences, more accurately targeted, clear and, above all, closer to the women of Europe and their private and professional concerns.

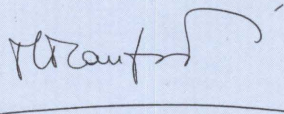
This step fits quite naturally into the information policy adopted by the European Commission in 1993, with priority to transparency, clarity and proximity.

The Women of Europe Newsletter has been in existence for 7 years and 48 issues have been published. It has become known beyond the information outlets, associations, institutions and women's groups for which it was initially intended. These developments and the whole context described above, prompt us to review not just the Women of Europe Newsletter but the Women of Europe Supplements as well, and to consider any necessary adjustments to the operation, organization and production resources of our publications.

We are counting on you, our readers, to help us with this evaluation. In the coming weeks you will be receiving a questionnaire asking for your reactions to all the information we are putting out; the objective is to secure a better idea of your expectations and requirements in terms of European information, notably with a view to the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference. We hope that you will take the time and trouble to fill in the questionnaire and send it back. Your replies will assist our efforts to provide you in future with information more relevant to you, more in line with your concerns and more attractively presented.

On the other hand, you will appreciate that this major survey may cause some disruption to our regular publication schedule over the next few weeks (in particular for the Women of Europe Newsletter) but we will all gain in the end.

So let us put our hearts into making a success of this important evaluation.



Marina Manfredi
Head of Unit
General Public

At workshops devoted to the "major issues for women in tomorrow's Europe" reports were presented by Sabine de Béthune, of the Women in Decision-making network, and by Barbara Helfferich, of the European Women's Lobby. Here the accent was put on the need for citizenship representative of women, on qualitative requirements from the European Union, on representation of NGOs in the European decision-making process, and in particular in the preparation of the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference. Finally, highest priority was given to making women aware, mobilizing and training them, through public campaigns and other measures described as "affirmative actions", in order to achieve recognition of feminine culture and human rights in general.

After these reports had been presented, Marie-Claude Vayssade, former Member of the European Parliament, spoke on "Lessons of a conference: preparing the future of an active and participative women's citizenship for the Europe of tomorrow. Message to the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference" and proposed the adoption, on behalf of all the participants, of a text calling on the European institutions and the Parliament to "organize seminars, assemblies of associations and NGOs, meetings with citizens to debate what is at stake in the reform of the treaties and specific solutions for 1996, preceded and followed up by the widest information".

Finally, the Commissioner for Social Affairs, Pdraig Flynn, chaired a panel composed of representatives of the ministers responsible for equal opportunities in the Member States and the four acceding countries on the subjects of "the involvement of women in the construction of Europe" and "expectations and contributions of the acceding countries as regards equal opportunities". We would highlight the speech of the Italian representative, who stressed that it was not just a "women's issue" but an issue for "men and women", and that the "problem" no longer lies in legal texts, but in attitudes and culture. She concluded that women needed to take power to make themselves heard. The Norwegian representative mentioned that her country applied a quota system in the public sector which had proved very effective and she called for cooperation between European women. Finally, the Swedish representative made her mark on the assembly with her candour, emphasizing that if Swedish women had voted against membership, it was because for them the E.U. was a "men in grey suits territory".

Miet Smet, the Belgian minister for employment and equal opportunities, concluded by suggesting that a number of specific objectives should be set, including the development of a strategy to increase the number of women in the European institutions, the elimination of the segregation suffered by women in the world of work through an active Commission policy and the need for financial support to conduct positive actions in favour of women.

The conference ended with an appeal to Norwegian women to vote in favour of membership of the European Union, and a call from Commissioner Pdraig Flynn to put the accent on information, which represents knowledge and therefore power.

If you would like more information about this conference, contact Marie Jouffe, European Commission – DG V – Equal Opportunities Unit – 200 Rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels – Tel (32 2) 295 36 07; or Ada Garcia, Catholic University of Louvain, 18 Avenue de l'Espinette, B-1348 Louvain-la-Neuve Tel (32 10) 47 47 46 – Fax 47 41 78

USERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL: FIRST MEETING

The Users' Advisory Council held its first meeting on 11 October in Brussels and was chaired successively by Commissioner João de Deus Pinheiro and Colette Flesch, Director General of DG X (Information, Communication, Culture and Audiovisual Media). This Council has been set up as part of the Commission's new information policy, the

essential aim being to produce more open, comprehensive, objective and user-friendly information, responding to the needs of the citizens and presented in simple and easily understood language.

This new approach is based on continuous monitoring and analysis of public opinion, and foresees the creation of a Users' Advisory Council with the purpose of allocating the resources provided and ensuring that they match the expectations of the citizens.

This body consists of 36 members: 18 represent European groups and associations from the worlds of press, media, communication, consumers, special interests and cultural or professional groups. The other 18 are chosen from national or regional press circles or specialized universities in the Member States.

This Council meets twice a year and its first meeting was an opportunity to share comments and suggestions.

Some of these, for the sake of example, were:

- the need to distinguish information production from communication measures, and improve the distribution channels for publications and documents issued by the Commission via information centres and relays,
- complementarity between written and oral communication, through regular conferences for example,
- the fundamental role of the Commission's information offices for transposing information into national contexts and cultures, the use of existing Community networks to get closer to the local and regional press, thanks to information transmission relays,
- the precise definition of targets to be achieved, taking account of the geographic and psychological diversity of European citizens, and the abandonment of a certain Community "jargon" in exchange for a language adapted to different types of audience,
- reinforcing European identity through projects based on proximity.

For any information about the Users' Consultative Council, contact Renaud Denuit - European Commission - DG X - 200 Rue de la Loi, 1049 Brussels - Tel (32 2) 295 66 07 - fax: 295 36 07

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The meeting of the Committee on Women's Rights of 11 and 12 October last was an opportunity to listen to Grete Knudsen, Norwegian Minister for Trade and Maritime Affairs, who led the negotiations for Norway's accession to the European Union.

First, Grete Knudsen explained that the purpose of her visit to the European Parliament was to discuss with the Committee on Women's Rights ways of further promoting

issues relating to equal opportunities between women and men in the European Union.

She described the position of women in Norway, the action taken in support of equal opportunities and the apprehension many Norwegian women feel about their country joining the Union: they essentially fear reductions in some of their rights, notably parental leave.

Hence Grete Knudsen's reference to all that Norway has achieved in the area of social rights and political life: for example, the Norwegian Prime Minister is a woman, and 9 of the 19 members of her government are women. 40% of the Members of Parliament are female.

The Committee on Women's Rights confirmed its desire to see Norway join the Union, believing that this membership would strengthen the position of women in all aspects of Community policy.

It also emphasized how decisive the women's vote would be in the referendum on Norway's membership.

The other issues raised at this meeting concerned the principle of equal pay for equal work, the measures taken by the Commission in the context of the implementation of the White Paper on Social Policy, the HELIOS programme and the Fourth World Conference on Women, scheduled for September 1995 in Beijing, under the auspices of the United Nations.

Agnès Hubert of DG V (Equal Opportunities Unit) reviewed current activities, especially the mid-term evaluation of the 3rd Action Programme for Equal Opportunities.

For further information on the Committee on Women's Rights, you can contact Mary Brennan - Secretariat-General - European Commission, 200 Rue de la Loi, B-1040 Brussels - Tel (32 2) 295 96 36 - Fax 296 59 57.

NOTICES - INFORMATION

FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN: VIENNA PREPARATORY MEETING

In preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women scheduled for September 95 in Beijing, under the aegis of the United Nations, and to take account of the diversity of the feminine condition and problems linked to the position of women across the world, "regional" conferences have been planned: in Djakarta for Asia and the Pacific, in Mar del Plata (Argentina) for Latin America and the Caribbean, in Amman (Jordan) for the Middle-East, and in Dakar (Senegal) for Africa.

From 17 to 21 October, a meeting was held in Vienna by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) which has 54 members, that include the European countries, the North American states, Israël and the CIS republics. 45 of them took part in the meeting.

The aim of this meeting was, specifically, to go through and confirm the text of the draft "Action Platform" consisting of an analysis of the obstacles to the advancement of women and proposals for measures to overcome them. This text, with the platforms from the other regional conferences, will serve as the basis for the final platform which will be proposed and, in principle, adopted in Beijing, after acceptance by all the delegations present.

The main points made regarding the draft Platform drawn up by the ECE experts in Geneva focused on a "lack of political sensitivity", most of the subjects dealt with being economic or social in the strict sense or "general" politics.

The draft "Action Platform" has in three major sections:

- the general objective and the world context comprising, on the one hand, considerations and commentaries relating to the promotion of equality between women and men as a priority for the international community and, on the other hand, recommendations linked to this;
- 7 critical areas requiring special attention, identified in the "region" of the world represented at Vienna.
- 12 strategic objectives arising from the identification of these critical areas, accompanied by proposals for action.

The European Union, represented by members of both the Commission and the Parliament, contributed to the preparation and finalization of this action plan.

The Commission has taken advantage of the preparation of the Beijing Conference to evaluate the action taken by the European Union for the benefit of women, stressing that the time is right for a stocktaking, as this event coincides with the end of the Third Community Action Programme for Equal Opportunities (1991-95).

The Commission has published a working document which details the measures adopted by the European Union, notably through the White Paper on social policy, and the gaps still to be filled. This document also sets out in parallel the critical areas highlighted in the Action Platform, the strategic objectives proposed and the arrangements made by the Union in favour of women in regards to equality of treatment between women and men.

In its capacity as observer in Vienna, the European Commission proposed amendments, some of which were incorporated, notably as regards cooperation for development, human rights, economic measures, etc. The representative of the European Commission in Vienna stated, during the press conference which followed the meeting, that the Union must "redouble its efforts", while highlighting the positive aspects of the White Paper on Social Policy, particularly as regards "re-evaluation of jobs traditionally filled by women".

In conjunction with this preparatory conference, a forum of NGOs (non-governmental organizations) was held. They had been invited by the ECE to present their recommendations in the form of an official document attached to the text of the "Action Platform". This document reflects the recommendations of the workshops held on themes linked to the draft text. The representatives of certain organizations also had the opportunity to

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attend the discussions of the drafting committee and speak during the conference. Other meetings of NGOs are planned in order to coordinate their work in preparation for the Beijing Conference.

If you would like to obtain more information on the Beijing Conference, contact Penny Spelling – DG V (Equal Opportunities Unit) European Commission, 200 Rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels – Tel (32 2) 296 06 56 – If you would like information about the NGO forum, contact Barbara Helfferich – European Women's Lobby – 22 Rue du Méridien, B-1040 Brussels – Tel (32 2) 217 90 20 – Fax-219 84 51.

STOCKHOLM: INFORMATION MEETING FOR WOMEN FROM THE COUNTRIES APPLYING FOR MEMBERSHIP

The Directorate General for Information – DG X-A-7 – Women's Information – actively supported a European seminar organized on 10 and 11 October 1994, in Stockholm, by the European Women's Lobby for the benefit of women from the countries applying for membership.

This "information for women on the European Union" was addressed to some fifty leaders of women's associations in Finland, Norway, Sweden and Austria.

The subjects dealt with took account of the varied interests of Scandinavian women and notably included presentations on how the Union works, on social policy, on the enlargement negotiations, and on policies linked to the environment and to information.

The meeting was facilitated by Anne Taylor, President of the Lobby, and the discussions that followed each speech raised numerous questions, most notably from participants with reservations about membership.

The press was present: it covered the event widely and reproduced in full the interview with Francisca Bennasar Tous, Vice-Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights, who made a brilliant speech on the theme "Women and politics". The need to exchange ideas and cooperate together at the European level was widely shared by the participants, as was the need to bring the associations together under "umbrella organizations".

For more information on this conference, contact Barbara Helfferich, European Women's Lobby, 22 rue du Méridien, B-1040 Brussels – Tel (32 2) 217 90 20 – Fax 219 84 51

NEWS OF THE NETWORKS

A NEW "FAMILIES AND WORK" NETWORK

In June 1994, the European Commission – DG V (Social Policy and Action Directorate) – has created, for a three-year period, a new

network entitled "Families and Work" which operates in collaboration with the "Child Care" and "Positive Action" networks run by the Equal Opportunities Unit.

The purpose of this network is to:

- identify, analyse and broadcast examples of good practice carried on in enterprises and organizations in terms of balance between private life and work;
- create and facilitate a movement of thought and action through, for example, a Social Innovation Prize awarded to an organization which encourages this balance, or indeed by means of publications or other information documents;
- constitute an advice and information centre for the organizations.

The "Families and Work" network is composed of experts in human resources whose role is that of both observer and facilitator.

In collaboration with selected partners (social partners, associations of personnel managers, media specializing in the management of human resources, researchers), their mission is to establish and run an active and autonomous national network enriched by a European dimension.

For more information about the "Families and Work" network, contact Michèle Teirlinck, European Commission, DG V – Social Policy and Action, 200 Rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels. Tel (32 2) 299 22 79 – Fax 299 38 90

PUBLICATIONS

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST EUROPEAN MEETING OF MEDITERRANEAN WOMEN

This is a collection of the papers presented at the conference which took place in Montpellier in May 1993, under the aegis of UNESCO and the European Commission DG X (Women's Information Unit) on the initiative of the FMR (Women of the Mediterranean Meeting Together), CNIDFF (National Centre for Information and Documentation on Women and Families), the Catalan Women's Institute and the Languedoc-Rousillon Regional Union of Women's Information Centres. Women from different horizons "united by cultural and historical links which make up an identity", lawyers, historians, linguists, poets, women in politics, spoke on the four themes of the conference, namely

- the Mediterranean identity
- Women of the Mediterranean and political power
- Women of the Mediterranean and economic power
- the creative Mediterranean

This document is a collection of texts – some poetic, biographical or lyrical, others historical or legal – all based on Mediterranean civilization.

This conference was intended to be "an observatory, a network allowing women to pursue and articulate thought and action from shore to shore of the Mare Nostrum".

The proceedings of the conference are available from CNIDFF Jacqueline Majourel

(responsible for distribution), 7 Rue du Jura, 75013 Paris – France – Tel (33 1) 43 31 77 00 – Fax 47 07 75 28 at the price of 150 FF (about ECU 20)

EUROSTAT – EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN DATA AVAILABLE FROM EUROSTAT – MAY 1994

The Directorate of Social and Regional Statistics of Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Community, has published the list of data relating to women available in its databases together with the name and details of the person to contact to obtain copies.

This document describes the statistics on demography, household budgets, social security, education, employment, unemployment, wages, etc.

It can be obtained in French or in English from Marta Domzalska – EUROSTAT – Bâtiment Jean Monnet – C3/102 – L-2920 Luxemburg Tel 4301-34624.

EUROPE IS A WOMAN – A girl and boy wander through the centuries of European painting

Supported by DG V (Equal Opportunities Unit) Nicole Chaillot, Victoria Man and Agnès Rosenstiehl are publishing a very special art book: it seeks to describe to children, through the work of the greatest European painters (all men), the life and condition of women over time.

This work, well-designed and beautifully presented, is divided into themes which represent a range of feminine attitudes and activities, like motherhood, production, thought, as painted and "seen" by Rembrandt, Rubens, Raphael, Picasso, Degas, Delacroix, Cranach, Velasquez, Cezanne, etc.

The illustrations, with a commentary, humorously written by Nicole Chaillot, were chosen from the most beautiful, the most famous and the most classical works of the history of art.

This work is available from Editions La Nacelle – Collection Musée Imaginaire – Paris – Tel (33 1) 43 29 69 86 or 41 25 12 05 – Fax 40 51 82 94 – or from all good bookshops.

Women of Europe Newsletter – Editor in Chief and coordination General Public Unit – Women's Information. Directorate-General for Information, Communication, Culture and Audiovisual Media – European Commission – 200 Rue de la Loi – B-1049 Brussels Telephone (32 2) 299 94 16 – Fax (32 2) 299 38 91.