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EMPLOYMENT, EQUALITY AND CARING FOR CHILDREN



EMPLOYMENT, EQUALITY AND CARING FOR CHILDREN



## **FOREWORD** FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

1994 was a significant year for the development of social policy in the European Union, not least in the area of equal opportunities. Two major policy documents were published by the Commission. Both recognised that to face the structural changes in the labour market effectively, the EU needs to develop new attitudes towards employment, social and family life.

The first of these was the White Paper on "Growth, Competitiveness and Employment". This announced the Commission's intention to:

strengthen equal opportunities policies for women and men in employment by eliminating any potentially discriminatory fiscal and social protection policies ... by improving women's existing career opportunities (and thereby generating demand for support such as childcare) ... and by ensuring that taxation and social security reflect the fact that women and men may well act as individuals in seeking employment and reconciling family and working life.

These commitments were reinforced by the subsequent White Paper on "European Social Policy - A Way Forward for the Union". It recognised that supporting the reconciliation of employment and family life would play a major part both in achieving the desegregation of the labour market and ensuring that new flexibility of employment does not restrict women to particular patterns of working. The Commission agreed to:

follow up the Childcare Recommendation by assessing its implementation across the Member States ... and to undertake an economic assessment both of the job creation and reflationary potential of child and dependent care infrastructures and services.

The Member States also made some progress on equal opportunities issues during 1994. At the European Council held in Essen in December 1994, they agreed a Resolution on Women and Employment. This followed the themes identified by the two White Papers, additionally recommending that the Commission reinforce its equal opportunities objectives within the framework of monitoring employment policies in the Member States.

But elsewhere in the Council, progress was not so rapid. The proposed Directive on Parental Leave and Leave for Family Reasons has been a subject of debate for 10 years, having been initially proposed in November 1983 with an amended proposal going forward a year later to the Council. In 1993-94 discussions focused on a working document prepared by the Belgian presidency in 1993. This proposed a period of Parental Leave for a minimum of 3 months, with no obligation on either employers or the State to pay workers on leave. Leave for family reasons was mentioned, but no minimum entitlement was specified. However, despite the renewed efforts of the German presidency in 1994, the opposition of the UK to the proposed directive proved insurmountable.

Despite this setback, the Commission expects the new social policy impetus to continue into 1995. Following the Council meeting of 22 September 1994, which saw the draft Parental Leave Directive blocked yet again, the Commission announced its intention of using the procedure laid down by the Social Protocol for the adoption of measures in the area of social policy. As the first stage of this procedure, the Commission has drafted a consultation text for the social partners, and in February 1995 invited them to give their views on reconciliation of employment and family life, embracing not just Parental Leave but also the issue of training leave and the other areas identified in the Council Recommendation on Child Care.

The new year brought with it a new Commission

and three new Member States - Austria, Finland and Sweden. It has also seen an increase in the profile of equal opportunities issues, reflected by the inauguration of a new group of Commissioners for Equal Opportunities presided over by Jacques Santer. Membership, though open to any Commissioner, is mainly composed of a core group of 4 Commissioners, including Padraig Flynn who will be responsible for employment and social affairs. The group will meet every 2 months and will consider how best to integrate equal opportunities into all EU policies.

In September 1995, the UN will convene the fourth World Conference on Women, "Action for Equality, Development and Peace". The conference will be held in Beijing and has been called to review progress since the establishment of the "Forwardlooking Strategies for the Advancement of Women" at the Third UN World Conference in Nairobi in 1985. The EU interest in the Beijing Conference is twofold. The Conference will identify areas of concern and action to be taken by the EU and by Member States in relation to the advancement of women within the European Union. At the same time, in view of their major involvement in development cooperation, the EU and Member States are interested in the areas of concern to women in developing countries and action to be taken by development donors or by governments of those countries. While there is considerable agreement between the regional platforms on the areas of concern, inevitably priorities and action to be taken may differ between developed and developing countries.

This year, 1995, also marks the final year of operation of the Commission's Third Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. The Commission has already begun preparing the text of the Fourth Action Programme to replace it, and expects to conduct an consultation exercise with the social partners and others during the course of the year. It is intended however that, following on the successes over previous years, issues of reconciliation of employment and family life will form a significant part of the new programme.

The Commission is grateful for the hard work and commitment during the past year of all members of the Network on Childcare and Other Measures to Reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities. It looks forward to continued progress and partnership to further equal opportunities in this area in the year ahead.



Agnès Hubert

Head of Equal Opportunities Unit
Directorate-General V
(Employment, Industrial Relations
and Social Affairs)
European Commission.



## THE BACKGROUND TO THE NETWORK

The Network was established in 1986 as part of the European Union's Second Equal Opportunities Programme. It was initially named the European Commission Childcare Network.

The Network has continued during the EU's Third Equal Opportunities Programme, which began in 1991 – but it was renamed the European Commission Network on Childcare and Other Measures to Reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities (it is referred to below as the 'Childcare Network'). This new name reflects the Network's focus on reconciliation of employment and caring for children and its interest in a broad range of measures to promote this objective. In particular, it concentrates on younger children, aged under 10 years.

The Childcare Network is one of 8 'equal opportunity' networks, covering a wide range of issues concerned with promoting gender equality in the labour market. All of these networks have been established by the Equal Opportunities Unit in Directorate-General V (DG V). DG V is the part of the Commission which deals with Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs. There are other networks and observatories in DG V, and elsewhere in the Commission.

A new Network – the Positive Action Coordinating Group – was established by the Equal Opportunities Unit of DG V in 1994<sup>1</sup>. One of the priority areas of work for this group is 'reconciliation' measures in the workplace as part of a total approach to positive action.

In 1994, the Family Policy Unit of DG V also established a new Network – the Families and Work Network. This Network will also concentrate on the workplace. Its aims include the identification, study, stimulation and dissemination of innovative and exemplary practices in companies and other employing organisations intended to improve the

balance between family life and employment. A particular interest is the support provided to geographically mobile professional workers, and identifying examples of good organisational practice (for example, providing assistance with children's schooling, the employment of the spouse etc).<sup>2</sup>

Networks and observatories are one of the ways in which the Commission supports cross-national cooperation and exchange of information. Exchange and cooperation is one of the methods available to the Commission to develop and implement social policy. Other methods are legislation, financial support through the Structural Funds and the Social Dialogue.

The Childcare Network consists of an expert from each Member State and a Coordinator. In 1995, it will be joined by members from the 3 new Member States - Austria, Finland, Sweden.

The Childcare Network's tasks are defined in the Third Equal Opportunities Programme: "to monitor developments, evaluate policy options, collect and disseminate information and establish criteria for the definition of quality in childcare services".

The Third Equal Opportunities Programme comes to an end in 1995; work has begun on developing a Fourth Programme.

<sup>1</sup> For more information, contact the Coordinator, Janet Hemsley, Equal Opportunities Commission, Overseas House, Quay Street, Manchester M3 3HN, United Kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> For more information, contact the Coordinator, Frédérique Deroure, ECHO, 1 bis La Haule, F-14 111 Caen-Louvigny, France.



# THE WORK OF THE NETWORK IN 1994



**Peter Moss** Network Coordinator

During the year, the Network has continued its programme of work, developed in agreement with the Commission's Equal Opportunities Unit within the framework of the Third Equal Opportunities Programme.

This programme is also guided by the Council Recommendation on Child Care, adopted by all Member State Governments in March 1992 (see the Network's

1992 Annual Report for the text of the Recommendation and an article about the Recommendation).

The objective of the Recommendation is "to enable women and men to reconcile their occupational,

family and upbringing responsibilities arising from the care of children". To this end, the Recommendation identifies the need for initiatives in 4 areas:

- services for children;
- leave arrangements for parents;
- supporting increased participation by men in the care and upbringing of children; and
- making the workplace more responsive to the needs of workers with children.

The Childcare Network's programme focuses on the first three of these areas. While recognising the critical importance of the workplace, the Network has had to prioritise. It has been helped in doing this by the presence of the two other DG V Networks with an interest, and specific expertise, in the workplace.

## SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

This area of work accounts for the main part of the Network's activities. An important topic continues to be quality. The Network has been working on this subject for nearly 5 years, starting with a European seminar in Barcelona in 1990. In 1992, the Childcare Network published a discussion paper Quality in Services for Young Children, co-authored by Irene Balaguer, Spanish member of the Network. This paper has been widely disseminated and welcomed not only in Europe, but in North and South America. It has proved to be relevant and useful in widely differing societies, because it treats quality as a relative and dynamic concept and

emphasises the need to encourage discussion and debate rather than prescribe uniform answers. The discussion paper was used as the basis for a consultation exercise by the Network, involving a wide range of organisations throughout the EU, the results of which were summarised in the Network's 1993 Annual Report.

Building on this work, the Network in 1994 began to prepare a report on *Quality* Targets in Services for Young Children, which will be

published in all official languages. Descriptions of quality targets will be accompanied by examples showing how each target has already been put into practice in parts of the EU.

This report builds on the principles and objectives contained in the Council Recommendation on Child Care (see Box A, page 13, for a summary of these principles and objectives). Another view of what the Council Recommendation might mean for children, parents and staff if put fully into practice is contained in a video *Can you feel a colour?* produced by the Network in 1994. The video illustrates good quality services which incorporate the principles of the Recommendation, using examples from Denmark and Italy of both well-established services and new and innovative services.

Can you feel a colour? was made for the Network by Claus Jensen, a Danish expert with a wide knowledge of Italian services – and a gifted photographer. It is beautiful to watch, and also inspiring and stimulating, raising many issues for discussion. The world premiere was in Århus Denmark in March 1994. Originally produced in Danish,

**QUALITY IN SERVICES** 

FOR YOUNG CHILDREN



English and Italian versions, it is now also available

in Catalan, Dutch, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

In addition to this more general work on quality, the Network has been conducting a number of projects on more specific themes. A report on *Childcare Services for Rural Families* was completed in 1994, and will be available during 1995 (in English, French, Spanish, Greek and Portuguese)<sup>3</sup>. This report has been prepared for the Network by Bronwen Cohen, UK member of the Network, and is the culmination of nearly

5 years of work on this subject by several Network members.

A report on Family Day Care in Europe was also completed during 1994, and again will be available during 1995 (in English, French, German, Portuguese and Swedish). As well as the 12 former Member States, this report covers the new members – Austria, Finland and Sweden – and Norway. The preparation of the report reflects the importance in many countries of family day care as a service for young children and the large numbers of women employed as family day carers. The report has been

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<sup>3</sup> A full list of Network publications, and details of how to obtain reports and the Network video, can be found at the end of this report

prepared for the Network by Malene Karlsson, a Danish expert now living in Sweden and one of the European Coordinators for the International Family Day Care Organisation – IFDCO. Like the report on *Childcare Services in Rural Areas*, this report combines information on the situation in individual countries with a general overview, discussion of issues, conclusions and recommendations.

Two other reports were published in 1994. Challenging Racism in European Childcare Provision (available in English, French, German and Italian) brings together material from a project, in which the Network was actively involved, which

included both exchange visits between workers from services in Belgium, France, Italy and the UK and a European seminar. The report's publication is particularly timely given the emphasis on combating racism contained in the Commission's White Paper on Social Policy following the European Council's agreement in 1994 "to develop a global strategy at Union level aimed at combating racism and xenophobia" (White Paper, para.24).

A report on Monitoring

Childcare Services was published (in English and French) in early 1994. Prepared for the Network by Perrine Humblet, the Belgian (French Community) member of the Network, the report deals with a critical issue, too often neglected. It reviews information currently collected in Member States about services for young children, analyses the range of information needed to plan and develop good services and makes specific recommendations. The Network will be taking forward this issue at a European seminar in October 1995, which will cover information needed not only for services for children, but also for other measures to promote reconciliation, in particular leave arrangements.

Finally, two other reports are in preparation. Work began in 1994 on a report on *School Age Child Care* 

in Europe, which is due to be completed in 1995. This report (which will be available in English, French and German) will cover the new Member States. It is being prepared for the Network by the European Network on School Age Child Care - ENSAC (for more information on ENSAC and IFDCO, see the Network's 1993 Annual Report). Work is well advanced on a report on The Costs and

Funding of Services for Young Children. The report considers not only what different types of services cost in different countries, but also how the costs are divided between public authorities and parents, the overall level of public funding and the ways in

which public funding is allocated as subsidies to services themselves and subsidies to parents (through grants or tax relief). It will be completed in 1995, and should be available in all official EU languages.



## LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR WORKERS WITH CHILDREN

A report covering Maternity Leave, Paternity Leave, Parental Leave and Leave for Family Reasons, and including the new Member States and Norway, was published in 1994 (in English, French and German). The report describes current statutory leave arrangements, discusses their relationship to collective and company agreements and reviews evidence on the use of leave arrangements, by mothers and fathers, and the costs involved. It also discusses a number of major issues, including whether future developments should move towards some kind of 'career break' or 'time account' system, giving workers the possibility of taking

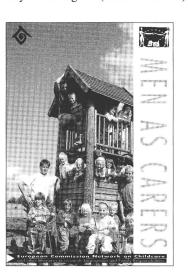
periods of leave throughout their working lives and for a variety of reasons, not just for the care of very young children.

Because leave arrangements change quite frequently, the Childcare Network has already prepared a short update, for insertion in the main report, covering changes in leave arrangements during 1994. It is hoped to undertake annual update exercises of this kind.

### AS CARERS

MEN

The European Union has recognised for some time that reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities requires more equal sharing of family responsibilities between men and women (see Box B for statements from the Commission and Council of Ministers on this subject). How to encourage and support more equal sharing has been a long-standing interest of the Childcare Network <sup>4</sup> Work on this subject has been taken forward by a small working group including the Network members for Belgium (Flemish Community) (Fred Deven), Denmark (Jytte Juul Jensen) and Italy (Patrizia Ghedini).



In 1993, the Network (in association with the Regional Government of Emilia Romagna) held a seminar in Ravenna, which brought together experts from 8 countries (Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the United States). The aim of the seminar was to examine how to support increased participation by men in the care and upbringing of children, an explicit objective of the Recommendation on Child Care (cf.Article 6). The report of

the seminar – Men as carers: towards a culture of responsibility, sharing and reciprocity between women and men in the care and upbringing of children – was published in 1994 in all official languages (except Finnish and Swedish). The report is in two parts: the first presents conclusions and recommendations; the second offers a resumé of the main points made in the papers given at the seminar. For those wanting to read the full papers, the proceedings of the seminar will be available in English and Italian during 1995.

In 1994, the Network was funded by the

<sup>4</sup> The Network has also regularly presented information on the employment of fathers as well as mothers. The most recent information is given in the Network's report "Mothers, Fathers and Employment 1985-1991".

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colleagues from the UK nursery, and will be published (in English, French, German and Italian) in the second half of 1995.

Taken together with the report on leave

Commission to monitor coverage of fathers and fatherhood in the newspapers. This monitoring exercise was undertaken in seven Member States (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and UK) during the month of June and covered nearly seventy newspapers. Particular attention was paid to whether and how the issues of sharing family responsibilities between men and women and men as carers were presented, and to what extent the care and upbringing of children and reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities were presented and discussed as women's issues or issues for women and men. A

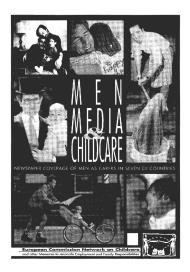
report on the project – Men, Media and Childcare – was prepared in 1994 by Fred Deven, the Belgian (Flemish Community) member of the Network, and was published (in all official EU languages, except Finnish and Swedish) in early 1995.

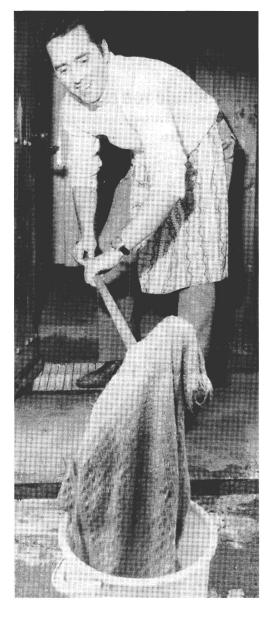
Two other reports are in preparation. A discussion paper on Men as Workers in Services for Young Children is being prepared by Jytte Jensen, the Danish member of the Network. Drawing in particular on

experience from the Nordic countries, this will look at the case for more male workers in services for young children and consider ways of achieving this objective. The report will be completed in Spring 1995, for publication in all official languages.

Finally, a report is being prepared which looks at ways of increasing fathers' involvement in services for young children and at the role of nurseries as centres for promoting cultural change with respect to gender roles, identities and relationships. The report draws on unique work undertaken in a UK nursery and in nurseries in the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy and an exchange project between the workers and parents in these services. The report is being prepared by Patrizia Ghedini, the Italian member of the Network, in collaboration with

Taken together with the report on leave arrangements, which looks in some detail at fathers' use of leave, the Network has developed a unique programme of work which focuses on how the EU's long-standing commitment to supporting more equal sharing of family responsibilities can be put into practice.





# WORK PROGRAMME FOR 1995

The main new work for the Network in 1995 is the preparation of a third review of services for children under 10 years in the European Union <sup>5</sup>, including all 15 Member States. When published, in late 1995 or early 1996, this will be available in all official languages.

The other new work is a review of policy statements and other materials produced by European and international bodies (for example, the Council of Europe, the International Labour Organisation) on the subject of reconciling employment, family responsibilities and social life. This work is being undertaken jointly with the Positive Action Coordinating Group; the Childcare Network's input is

provided by Virginia Bras Gomez, the Portuguese member of the Network, and the Positive Action Coordinating Group's input by Inès Alberdi, the Spanish member of the Coordinating Group.

Otherwise, 1995 will be mainly a year of consolidation for the Network. We will concentrate on producing the reports 'in the pipeline' and disseminating the Commission's work on reconciling employment and caring for children.



<sup>5</sup> The Network's reports on the two earlier reviews are "Childcare and Equality of Opportunity" and "Childcare in the European Communities 1985-1990".

### **BOX** A

## COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION ON CHILD CARE PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES FOR SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

"It is essential to promote the well-being of children and families, ensuring that their various needs are met and taking into account the fact that responsibilities arising from the care and upbringing of children continue up to and throughout the period of children's schooling." (Preamble)

Article 3 identifies the following principles and objectives:

#### Services should:

- be affordable
- combine reliable care with a pedagogical approach
- be available in all areas, both urban and rural
- be accessible to children with special needs and meet their needs
- be flexible and diverse to increase choice and meet different preferences, needs and circumstances
- work closely with local communities and be responsive to parental needs
- be coherent between different types.

#### There should also be:

• Initial and continuous training for workers which is "appropriate to the importance and the social and educative value of their work".

### BOX B

## STATEMENTS BY THE COMMISSION AND COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON SHARING OF FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

"The sharing of family responsibilities between parents is an essential part ... of strategies designed to increase equality in the labour market."

Explanatory Memorandum for the proposed Directive on Parental Leave (1983)

"Existing attitudes, behaviour and structures based on the idea of a traditional division of roles in society between men and women (has prejudicial effects on women in employment and seeking employment)."

Council of Ministers Recommendation on Positive Action (1984)

"For women with children ... to be properly integrated (into the labour market) considerable progress in the reconciliation of employment and family life needs to be made. This situation also requires that men – as well as women – should be able to benefit from the full range of measures directed towards the reconciliation of working and family life and thus be enabled to take on a fair share of family responsibilities."

Third Community Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (1991)

"It is recommended that Member States should promote and encourage, with due respect for freedom of the individual, increased participation by men (in the care and upbringing of children), in order to achieve a more equal sharing of parental responsibilities between men and women and to enable women to have a more effective role in the labour market."

Council of Ministers Recommendation on Child Care (1992)

"The gender-based division of family and employment responsibilities not only constrains women's lives but deprives men of the emotional rewards resulting from the care and development of children."

European Commission Green Paper on European Social Policy – Options for the Union (1993)

"Greater solidarity between men and women is needed if men are to take on greater responsibility for the caring role in our societies and if flexibility in employment is not to lead to new pressures on women to return to the ranks of the non-salaried population or be obliged to accept paid work at home in isolation from the community."

European Commission White Paper on Social Policy – A Way forward for the Union (1994)

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION NETWORK ON CHILDCARE AND OTHER MEASURES TO RECONCILE THE EMPLOYMENT AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEN AND WOMEN

## **NETWORK PUBLICATIONS**

#### SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

#### Childcare and Equality of Opportunity (1988) (EN, FR)

The Network's first review of services for children aged 0-10 years in the European Union, including conclusions and recommendations.

#### Childcare in the European Communities 1985-1990 (1990) (All languages, except FI, SV)

The Network's second review of services, with national profiles, including conclusions and recommendations.

## Childcare Needs of Rural Families (1990); Childcare Workers with Children Under 4 (1990); Quality in Childcare Services (1990); Men as Carers for Children (1990). (All languages, except FI, SV)

Reports of four seminars held in 1990. Each report includes the main papers given at the seminar, a summary of the seminar conclusions and recommendations.

#### Quality in Services for Young Children (1991) (All languages except FI)

Recognising the diversity of values, ideas and experience in Europe, this discussion paper deals with two important and related questions: how should we define good quality? what conditions are needed to promote good quality services?

#### Monitoring Childcare Services: information needs (1994) (EN, FR).

A discussion paper which reviews the information that is currently collected on services for young children by Member States, and makes proposals about the kind of information that is needed to enable services to be developed and evaluated.

#### Challenging Racism in European Child Care Provision (1994) (DE, EN, FR, IT)

The report of a seminar which examined how issues of ethnic diversity and inequality are addressed in different Member States.

#### Childcare Services for Rural Families (1995) (EL, EN, ES, FR, PT)

A review of childcare services in rural areas in the EU. The review examines issues affecting the delivery of services in rural areas and trends in their development, and concludes with recommendations.

#### Family Day Care in Europe (1995) (DE, EN, FR, SV) (Report covers Austria, Finland and Sweden)

A review of family day care in the EU, covering both private services and organised, publicly funded family day care. The review concludes with discussion of a number of issues.

#### LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS

#### Leave Arrangement for Workers with Children (1994) (DE, EN, FR) (Report covers Austria, Finland,

Sweden and Norway)

A review of statutory leave arrangements in the EU, covering Maternity Leave, Parental Leave and Leave for Family Reasons, together with evidence on the use of leave by women and men and the costs involved. The review concludes with discussion of a number of issues.

#### **MEN AS CARERS**

Men as Carers: towards a Culture of Responsibility, Sharing and Reciprocity between Women and Men in the Care and Upbringing of Children (1994) (All languages except FI, SV)

The report of a seminar which examined how to support increased participation by men in the care and upbringing of children. The report summarises a wide range of contributions, covering initiatives from 8 countries, and offers detailed conclusions and recommendations.

#### Men, Media and Childcare (1995) (All languages except FI, SV)

A report of the results of a project to monitor newspapers in 7 Member States, to analyse their coverage of fathers, fatherhood and men as carers for children.

#### OTHER PUBLICATIONS

#### Network Annual Report 1992 (1993) (DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PT; part DK)

In addition to information on the Network's activities, the Annual Report includes the text of the 1992 Council Recommendation on Child Care and a commentary on the text, together with articles by Network members on a wide range of issues.

#### Network Annual Report 1993 (1994) (All languages except FI, SV)

Provides information on the Network's activities in 1993, together with articles by Network members on a wide range of issues.

#### Mothers, Fathers and Employment 1985-91 (1993) (EN, FR)

A wide-ranging analysis of the employment situation of mothers and fathers with children under 10 in the EU, based on a series of special analyses of the Labour Force Survey conducted by Eurostat for the Network.

#### WHERE TO GET NETWORK PUBLICATIONS

From European Commission Equal Opportunities Unit (DG V/A/3), 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium. All are free of charge.

#### THE NETWORK'S NEW VIDEO

Can you feel a colour? (Available in Catalan, Danish, Dutch, English, French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish.)

This video is about good quality services for young children, using examples of established and innovative centre-based services in Denmark and Italy. A beautiful, stimulating and inspiring video, which will be of interest to many groups from parents to politicians, from practitioners to managers

For details of costs and how to obtain a copy, contact your national expert on the Network.

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#### **EUROPEAN COMMISSION NETWORK ON CHILDCARE** AND OTHER MEASURES TO RECONCILE EMPLOYMENT AND **FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **NETWORK COORDINATOR:**

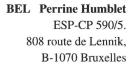
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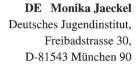


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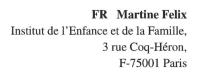
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