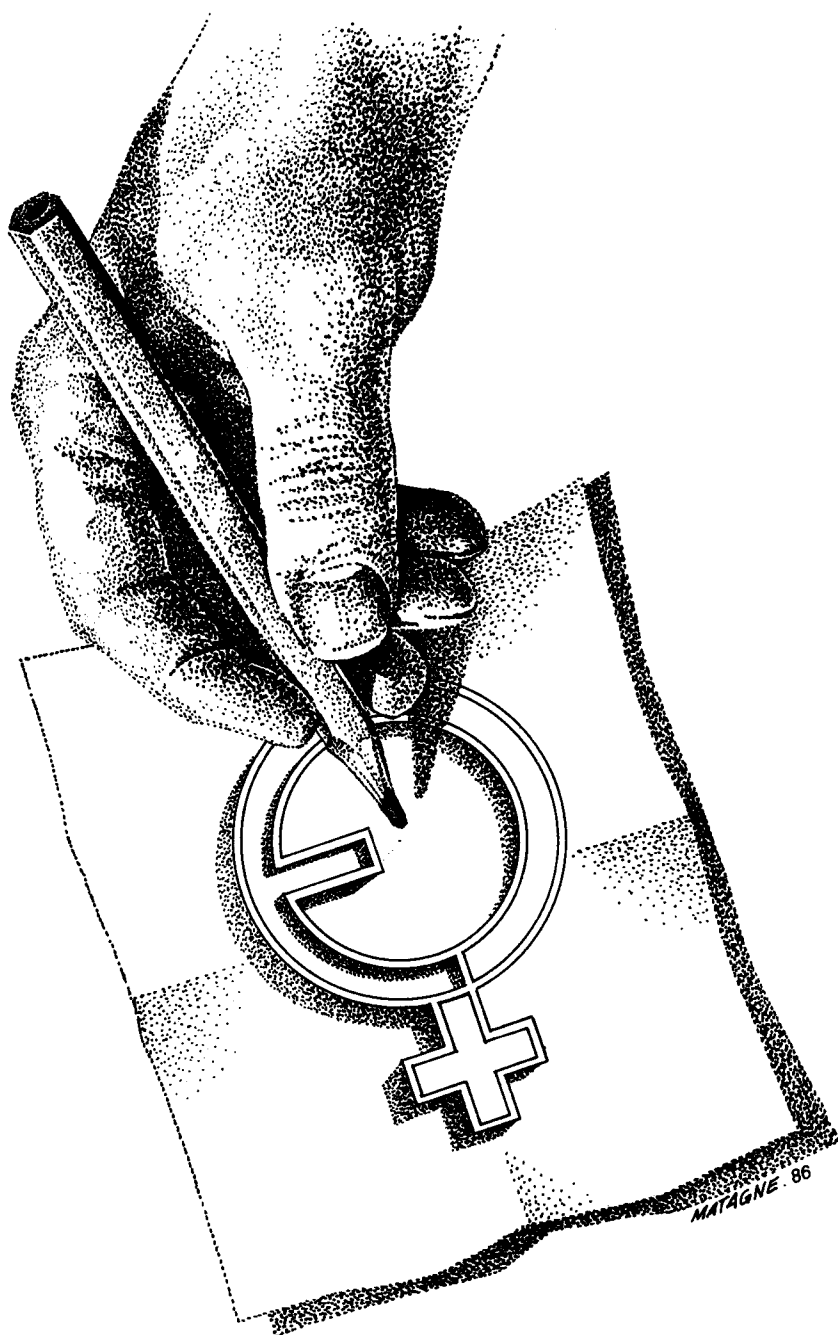


Women of Europe

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OUR CORRESPONDENTS IN THE COMMUNITY:

Belgium	Nanette Nannan, 33 rue E. Bouillot, bte 9, 1060 Brussels
Denmark	Danske Kvinder Nationalråd, N. Hemmingsensgade 8, 1153 Copenhagen
France	Jeanne Chaton, 43 Avenue Ernest Reyer, 75014 Paris
Germany	Christa Randzio-Plath, Hadermans Weg 23, Hamburg 61
Greece	Effi Kalliga-Kanonidou, 10 Neofytou Douka, 106 74 Athens
Ireland	Yvonne Murphy, 19 Palmerston Park, Dublin 6
Italy	Beatrice Rangoni Machiavelli, Piazza di Spagna 51, 00187 Rome
Luxembourg	Alix Wagner, 7 rue Henri Frommes, 1545 Luxembourg
Netherlands	Patricia Niedzwiecki, 47 rue de Roumanie, 1060 Brussels
United Kingdom	Peggy Crane, 12 Grove Park Road, Chiswick, London W4 3SE
European Parliament	Lidya Gazzo, Alexanderstrasse 22, Stuttgart

Text: Lydia Gazzo

Editor: **Fausta Deshormes La Valle**
 Women's Information Service
 Directorate General for Information
 Commission of the European Communities
 200 Rue de la Loi
1049 Brussels

THE CHANGING
EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Social Affairs Council disappointing results for women

The meeting of the Social Affairs Council in Luxembourg on 5 June chaired by Jan de Koning had plenty of work on its agenda: the directive on equal treatment for men and women in occupational social security schemes, equal treatment for the self-employed, prohibiting the use of certain carcinogens to protect workers and jobs for the disabled.

The results have not met expectations, although the directive on equal treatment in occupational social security schemes has been adopted and is to be implemented by the Member States by 1993 at the latest. Much against the Commission's wishes, the Social Affairs Council decided that actuarial computing methods (which differ for men and women) could still be taken into account. The Commission could do no more than minute its doubts as to whether the procedure conformed to the principle of equal treatment.

The Council passed the Resolution accompanying the second action programme for equal opportunities for women. Reliable media sources reported that Germany had successfully called for a proviso that positive actions should be undertaken only if the Commission has suitable resources available.

The recommendation regarding the disabled was also adopted, but without specifying how many disabled people firms should employ (Parliament had set a target of 5%).

The Council could not reach agreement on the directive on equal treatment for self-employed men and women, including farmers. Initial discussions apparently revolved around the question of granting official recognition to working spouses. Ireland and the United Kingdom were opposed to restrictive guidelines and the Chairman finally proposed suitably vague wording - "Member States will take appropriate action" - which was accepted. The second key question was the protection of maternity, which was unanimously resolved as follows: "Member States undertake to examine whether, and under what conditions...". At this point in the meeting, Ireland and the United Kingdom tried to persuade the Council to apply this even vaguer formula to the question of recognizing the work of spouses - this is what is generally known by the Committee on Women's Rights as "a last ditch stand by two Member States". Then it was the turn of Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands to oppose the wording because it was too vague and could hardly be called a directive. Commission Vice-President Manuel Marin chipped in to voice his disappointment at the text adopted.

The European Commission's information campaign on its second action programme for equal opportunities.

Information sessions attended by numerous women journalists were held in London, Edinburgh, Belfast, Lisbon, Madrid, Rome, Paris and Bonn this spring. They were arranged by the Commission's Women's Information Service, with the help of European Parliament.

Women's associations took up the initiative with great enthusiasm and wrote hundreds of letters to the Presidents of the European Commission and the Council of Ministers, asking them to adopt the all-important directives - and you already know the end to that story.

Education Council: a "yes but" for ERASMUS

Agreement in principle but no decision on budget allocations was the outcome of the Education Ministers' discussion of the ERASMUS programme on 9 June.

All the Member States were in favour of setting up a "European University Network" based on existing arrangements, to encourage student exchanges throughout Europe without tying up the system with red tape. It proved more difficult to find common ground when discussing figures: the European Commission had suggested that a total of 175 million ECU should be allocated to the scheme over three years, but most Member States felt that this sum should be cut to 85 mn ECU. Germany, which had other reservations about ERASMUS, was not in a position to pass comment on the financial resources that should be made available, whereas Greece would have been quite happy to see the scheme receive even more than the suggested 175 mn ECU. In the circumstances, the ministers decided to postpone further discussion until their December meeting, when they will have had more time to think about it.

It was the German minister again who insisted on reducing the budget for the COMETT programme, whose aim is to give a "European dimension" to cooperation between universities (or higher education institutions) and firms in matters regarding training in innovation and the development and application of new technology. The budget initially proposed by the Commission was 81.4 million ECU over four years; the Council reduced the figure to 65 million ECU at its December meeting, and finally agreed upon 45 million ECU in June this year. Following requests by Greece, Spain and Italy, the Council has decided to reconsider the budget allocation by the end of 1988.

Issue 44 of "Women of Europe" mentioned the ERASMUS and COMETT programmes as well as the "Yes to Europe" programme encouraging youth exchanges within the Community. The European Youth Forum has called on the Council of Ministers for Youth to reach a formal decision on the "Yes to Europe" scheme, and has said that the allocation of 30 mn ECU proposed by the European Commission should be raised to 50 mn ECU over two years.

An "Altiero Spinelli Action Committee for European Union" to continue the work of a great European

Altiero Spinelli - MEP. former member of the European Commission and a dedicated European - died in Rome in May this year at the age of 78. The road he travelled was hard: from the 1941 Manifesto of Ventotene, the island where this opponent of fascism spent two years under house arrest, to his membership of the European Commission (1970-76) and the first European Parliament, elected in 1979. Altiero Spinelli, visionary, motivator and man of action, was always inspired by the same ambition: to create true European union, a People's Europe. It was this ambition that spurred him, as a member of European Parliament, to start the treaty reform procedure which led to the Luxembourg summit and a "single act", which only partially fulfilled his vision.

Disappointed by what had been achieved under the reforms, Spinelli was determined to continue his struggle to create the Europe of his dreams. A few days before he died, he wrote to leading figures in the world of politics, finance and culture, stressing the need for concerted action to speed up the unification process and make more effective use of the commitment of national, democratically elected bodies. On Spinelli's death, the co-signatories of this letter (European Commissioner Carlo Ripa di Meana, Maihofer, Gazzo, Victor-Louis and Jacqu ) decided immediately to set up an Altiero Spinelli Action Committee for European Union to continue his work.

In a press release published after the funeral, Altiero Spinelli's wife and companion of 40 years, Ursula Hirschmann, and his daughters confirmed their belief in the urgent need to pursue his work.

"Women of Europe" will keep you informed of any developments. and may be appealing to you for contributions.

The funeral was held in Rome and was attended by Presidents of the European institutions, many members of the Italian Government and large numbers of federalists and young people. The first to speak was Altiero Spinelli's closest collaborator, Virgilio Dastoli, who fought beside him in the battle for reform of the European treaties. Evoking the image of "the old man and the sea" often quoted by Spinelli, he said that the struggle would continue even though the old fisherman had hauled in his nets for the last time. "Let us brave the high seas and achieve European Union by democratic means; then Altiero Spinelli will live forever".

Youth unemployment: nearly every Member State has honoured its commitment to offer young people basic training or work experience

This was the encouraging conclusion of the European Commission's report to Council on the implementation of the 1983 Council resolution on vocational training policies for the 1980s.

The Commission, however, pointed out some shortcomings and asked a few questions:

How did or would current and future policies cater for the specific needs of young women?

Do the policies answer the requirements of the jobs market in a period of rapid technological progress?

Has sufficient account been taken of the needs of underprivileged groups?

The quality of training is obviously the prime consideration. "Top of the class" as regards implementation of the resolution are Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Denmark, followed by the Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland and Luxembourg. Too little information is available on implementation in Greece and Italy to judge how much progress has been made.

Unemployment amongst young graduates was the theme of a conference held in Florence by RECAM (R seau Europ en des Cit s des Arts et M tiers), with the cooperation of the European Commission. The first course under RECAM's retraining scheme for young graduates is to be held in Etruria, Tuscany.

RECAM has suggested that private career guidance agencies linked to a "jobs observatory" be set up to encourage retraining.

Mothers' milk

A European Commission memorandum to Council on toxic substances in mothers' milk states that breast-feeding, the benefits of which are universally recognized, should still be encouraged despite the detection of certain potentially dangerous chemicals in mothers' milk.

MEPs question the European Commission:

on equality between men and women in social security matters.

Belgian Socialist Raymonde Dury asked about certain aspects of Belgian law on special rights which discriminate against women. The Commission replied that the vague wording of the law makes it impossible to say whether it complies with the directive on the progressive application of the principle of equality in this area. The Commission did, however, say that it might take action if Belgian law proved to be incompatible with the directive.

on the legal obligation of foreign wives resident in Belgium to use their maiden names.

British Conservative Margaret Daly noted the practical problems involved in having a passport in one name and a car licence in another (the law requires foreign wives to register their cars in their maiden names). The Commission replied that the Belgian authorities were aware of the problem and were going to change the regulations.

"Women and Music"

Supplement 22 to "Women of Europe", entitled "Women and Music" and devoted to women's place in the world of music, has proved a great success.

That success is undoubtedly due in great measure to the sudden awareness it has aroused in its readers, as witnessed by the many letters of congratulation we have received.

European music schools, academies, conservatories and universities are to include the report in their 1986/87 curricula.

Another reason for the supplement's resounding success lay in the extensive bibliography (of over 600 works) drawn up by authors Yves Bessières and Patricia Niedzwiecki. The biographical notes including lists of women composers' works revealed for the first time just how great a role women have played in the world of music, and is of particular interest to music lovers.

The aim of women's studies and research is to discover social realities by debunking myths and doing away with preconceptions and stereotyped ideas.

The authors are now preparing a further two reports on women in the plastic arts and women in the theatre.

Useful address: Patricia Niedzwiecki, 50 rue de Roumaine, 1060 Brussels.

E U R O P E A N P A R L I A M E N T

June Session

European Parliament discussed several matters of interest to women. It accepted the demands set out in the report by French Socialist Colette Gadioux on the outcome of and follow-up to the Nairobi Conference, which brought the UN Decade for Women to a close. Parliament called for a series of actions, ranging from the promotion of a fairer sharing of work and family obligations between men and women to specific measures for underprivileged groups of women such as the poor, the elderly, eomrn on their own and immigrants. It also demanded official recognition of the concept of "positive actions" and closer cooperation between European institutions. A meeting along the lines of the Nairobi Conference should be held before the year 2000 and the Community should give more thought to the organization of international meetings; it was suggested that MEPs, especially members of the Committee on Women's Rights, be given more say in the organization of international conferences.

Parliament also adopted the report by German Christian Democrat Renate Rabethge on development and cooperation. The rapporteur said that women were missing out and that the European Commission should join forces with non-governmental organizations to remedy this.

The main debate of the June Session centred on the report by Dutch Socialist Hedy d'Ancona on violence against women. Most MEPs voted in support of the rapporteur: 197 for and 66 against, with 50 abstentions. The European Right, while condemning violence against women, voted against. Martine Lehideux said that it was wrong to suggest that violence against women was a social problem; in her opinion, it was a direct result of "declining moral standards". French Liberal Simone Veil and many others voted for the resolution, despite misgivings about the report, which tried to cover too much ground.

The resolution, as adopted by the majority, distinguished the various forms of violence and suggested appropriate action:

- Assault and battery, sometimes resulting in death;
- Sexual abuse of minors: children must be able to protect themselves against parents who abuse them;
- Sexual harassment: the report suggests that complaints centres be set up, but the rapporteur said that a person openly accused of sexual harassment will often claim that he is being slandered;
- Violence against women from ethnic minorities: these women must be properly informed and protected, and attention devoted to the problems of second generation immigrants;
- Political violence: women victims of torture must be given political refugee status within the European Community;
- Trafficking in women and "sexual tourism";
- Prostitution: the health and safety of prostitutes must be protected, and prostitution decriminalized;
- Pornography: the resolution called for a conference on the influence of violent pornography.

Several amendments were added to these recommendations:

- Thorough training in matters concerning sexual violence for members of the legal profession (British Socialist Carole Tongue);
- Condemnation of the attitude of judges who treat rape victims as if they were the offenders (Eileen Lemass, Ireland, European Democratic Alliance);

- Night taxi services for women, along the lines of the German scheme (Brigitte Heinrich, Germany, Rainbow Group);
- Measures to prevent prostitution and help prostitutes return to a normal working and social life (Spanish Socialist Dolores Renau I Manen).

There will have to be changes in public attitudes as well as the law. Speaking for the European Commission. Vice-President Manuel Marin was sceptical about the effectiveness of a directive on violence against women.

Parliament said no to chemical weapons, which adopted motions tabled by the Socialists, Communists and Rainbow Group stating that the use of chemical weapons was unacceptable to the people of Europe.

A joint declaration against racism and xenophobia was signed in Strasbourg by the Presidents of European Parliament, Commission and Council. Just before the ceremony, Parliament voted in favour of Italian Christian Democrat Roberto Formigoni's resolution on the same subject by 317 to 22, with 22 abstentions. Some MEPs abstained because they objected to the amendment from German "Green" Frank Schwalba-Hoth, calling for the elimination of obstacles to immigrants' participation in the political, social and cultural life of their adopted country.

May Session Parliament adopted the recommendations set out in the report by French Socialist Marie-Claude Vayssade on the second Community action programme on equal opportunities. The rapporteur welcomed the new format of the programme, which allows for a more far-reaching policy for women by abandoning the old system of specifying separate actions, but she also noted several gaps in the programme and made various suggestions, which were included in the resolution. Whilst being fully aware of the current employment crisis, Marie-Claude Vayssade said that steps must be taken to improve women's situation on the jobs market and at work: firms awarded public contracts should undertake to abide by the principle of equal opportunities, and schemes applying for grants should be properly vetted to ensure that they respect the principle of equality and will lead to positive action in favour of women. She regretted that the Community was planning only two directives (on social security and on shifting the burden of proof) as there was an evident need for directives on positive actions, sanctions, pregnancy and maternity and many other issues. The rapporteur was also concerned that the Council of Ministers had failed to adopt a single new directive in favour of women since 1978. She accused Council of using "delaying tactics" and called for immediate action.

Parliament also passed several resolutions directly affecting the individual:

1. Cancer prevention: Parliament approved the Commission's action programme but called for further preventive measures and funding;
2. The old: Parliament suggested that a "Charter for the Elderly" be drawn up to guarantee respect for the status of the 50 million Europeans who are over 65. Proposed measures cover income, safety, housing, leisure activities and health;
3. Children in hospital: It was suggested that a charter be drawn up to ensure that hospital treatment for children was as non-traumatic as possible and that parents be allowed to stay with their children if this is likely to help the child.

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The ACP-EEC Joint Parliamentary Assembly discussed women's role in development at its May meeting. Rose Waruhiu presented her report on the subject and the responses to the questionnaire she had sent to all the Member States. The responses were unfortunately far from complete, but everyone present agreed that there was a need to stress the importance of population problems and women's role in development.

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Following the Parliamentary debate on violence against women, with the backing of the European Commission Socialists Yvette FUILLET (France) and Heinke SALISCH (Germany) arranged a meeting of lawyers, judges and trades unionists on sexual blackmail in the workplace. Although laws on the issue exist in the Member States, they need to be extended and properly enforced. The meeting called on the European Commission to issue a directive establishing effective Community-wide legislation against sexual blackmail.

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NORWAY SCORES A FIRST

A WOMAN PRIME MINISTER AND SEVEN WOMEN MINISTERS

The new minority Labour Government in Norway is headed by a woman, Dr Gro Harlem Bruntland, who led the Government briefly in 1981. The ministers of justice, agriculture, social affairs, education and church affairs, cooperation, consumer affairs, the civil service and the environment are also women.

Emanuele GAZZO, who said that this was "a turning point in history, a clear reflection of the dramatic changes taking place in modern society", wrote in an "Agence Europe" editorial:

"This unprecedented event marks a fundamental change in approach: women have finally achieved social equality and are about to take their rightful place alongside men in running public affairs. The only conditions with which women politicians will have to comply also apply to men: moral integrity and skill, a capacity for work, intellectual courage and a creative imagination. It was ridiculous for women's organizations to demand that the European Commission include at least one or two "token" women; equality is equality, there can be no "quotas", although a reasonable balance between men and women is desirable. It is not a question of advocating matriarchy: history teaches us that many women have exerted a great deal of influence over public affairs, albeit behind the scenes, bringing pressure to bear on men. All that is over now: the time has come for women to wield power openly, for the good of society as a whole."

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Chaired by German Christian Democrat Marlene Lenz, the Committee on Women's Rights discussed the proceedings of the 5 June meeting of the Social Affairs Council and expressed its disappointment with the outcome.

The Committee felt that the Social Affairs Ministers had lost the positive momentum that led them to adopt directives on sexual equality in 1975, 1976 and 1979. The three directives had paved the way towards a People's Europe by obliging Member States to adapt their respective laws to guarantee men and women the right to be equal.

Members of the Parliamentary Committee admitted that the Social Affairs Council had made some headway with the directive on social security occupational schemes, but the achievement was somewhat limited. It noted the Council's fear that when different factors are taken into account in calculating the incomes of men and women for the purpose of income-related allowances, this might contravene the principle of equal treatment. It asked the European Commission to ensure that this regulation did not aggravate the situation in some Member States. The Commission, it said, should take maximum advantages of the opportunities introduced by the directive.

The Committee had looked forward to the adoption of the draft directive on application of the principle of equal treatment for self-employed men and women, as well as the directives on the protection of maternity. Its hopes, however, had been dashed because of the stand taken by two Member States at the last moment.

If, as the European Commission stated, there had been progress with negotiations, the issue must be pursued further. The Committee decided to ask the British Presidency of the Council for further discussion of the directive during the second half of the year and for a decision during the December meeting of the Social Affairs Council.

As regards the draft directive on parental leave and leave for family reasons, the Committee on Women's Rights plans to meet representatives of the Member States delaying the directive to determine why those States, where women's organizations are eagerly awaiting its introduction, are opposing a system that is already in operation in the other 10 EEC countries.

Discussing the action programme and resolution passed by the Social Affairs Council, the Committee said it was extremely concerned that Member States' budgetary policy was hindering application of the action programme and there were likely to be severe cutbacks. It called on the European Commission and Parliament to fight for the funds needed to implement the full programme.

The Committee plans to organize, together with the European Commission, a conference with representatives of national parliaments in late 1986; national governments must be urged to work together to achieve the Community's aims.

During its June meeting, the Committee also held an initial debate on the draft report on restructuring the jobs market presented by Heine Salisch (German Socialist), Ursula Braun-Moser (German Christian Democrat) and Lalla Trupia (Italian Communist).

Mrs. Larive-Groenendaal (Dutch liberal) in turn presented a working document to be used in preparing an opinion on a very delicate issue, surrogate motherhood.

Useful address: European Parliament, Centre Européen du Kirchberg.
Luxembourg

AT THE COURT OF JUSTICE
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Women have a right to do any job, even if it is dangerous, ruled the European Court of Justice in the case between a woman police officer and the Royal Ulster Constabulary, which had refused to renew the officer's contract when the force was armed. The Constabulary's argument in defence of its decision was that officers now ran "additional risks of being killed".

The Belfast Labour Tribunal referred the case to the European Court, asking if it would be possible to appeal. The Court replied in the affirmative and, invoking the directive on equal treatment in public security matters, said that women could in theory undertake any dangerous occupation. The Court also defined the meaning of "protection of women" and concluded that the directive forbids the exclusion of women from any job simply because "the general public feels that women should have more protection than men against dangers that affect men and women equally". The EEC directive protects "the biological condition of woman and the special relationship between women and their children".

Exclusion of part-time workers from occupational pension schemes: if substantially more women are excluded than men, the employer is contravening the Treaty of Rome

The European Court partially upheld a case brought by plaintiff Ms Weber von Hartz against a chainstore company Bilka, but it pointed out that a firm does have the right to exclude part-time workers of both sexes from company pension schemes if it proves that it employs as few part-time workers as possible.

Married women living with their husbands have the same rights as their husbands to an invalid care allowance

Jacqueline Drake, a married woman living with her husband, who gave up her job to care for her severely handicapped mother, was refused an invalid care allowance by the DHSS, on the grounds that the 1975 Social Security Act. This Act states that married men in such circumstances are eligible for the allowance.

The European Court of Justice ruled that the Act was discriminatory and contrary to the Community directive on the application of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in social security matters.

Useful address: Court of Justice of the European Communities.
Press Office, Centre Européen du Kirchberg.
Luxembourg

COUNTRY TO COUNTRY:

FACTS, INSTITUTIONS AND LAWS

AND MILITANT ACTIVITIES

B E L G I U M

The new economy measures introduced by the Belgian Government, which penalize unemployed women who are married or cohabiting, forced women's organizations into action: after lengthy interviews with the Premier and Secretary of State for Emancipation Miet Smet, they took the unprecedented step of voicing their resentment via the Comité de Liaison des Femmes (women's liaison committee). The Committee launched a "permanent demonstration", condemning the measures as "sexist and reactionary" and calling on all women to take protest action. The women's section of PSC (French-speaking Christian Democratic Party) desisted. The groups represented by Comité de Liaison des Femmes are too numerous to list here, but they include the women's sections of Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens (confederation of Christian trades unions) and the Socialist and Communist Parties, Femmes Prévoyantes socialistes, the women's section of Fédération Générale des Travailleurs Belges (general federation of Belgian workers), Femmes Ecolo (women ecologists), Association Vie Féminine and the Women's University.

Socialist MEPs Anne-Marie Lizin and Marijke Hemeldonck put forward a draft resolution questioning the legality of the measures proposed by the Belgian Government under European law.

Useful address: Mme Peemans-Pouillet, Comité de Liaison des Femmes,
1/A Place Quetelet, 1030 Brussels.

The Women's University (Université des Femmes) found an original way of protesting against the "death" of the Directive on equality for men and women in social security matters following the Government measures: an entry in the obituaries column of "Le Soir".

"Politicians and the press stood in silence at the funeral." it said, and went on to announce that contributions towards this type of advertisement could be paid to account n° 001-1118659-34 in the name of Université des Femmes, 1/A Place Quetelet, 1030 Brussels.

Members of the Brussels branch of the Maison des Femmes expressed their resentment by marching through the streets of the city dressed as brides ("the wives of Martens VI" - Wilfred Martens has recently formed his sixth government).

Taking part in the protests against the Government measures, the group for feminist research and information (GRIF - Groupe de Recherche et d'Information Féministe) said that they cancelled out all the time, money and effort spent in creating a truly modern society. Referring back to "La nouvelle pauvreté" (the new poverty), a book it published in 1985, GRIF said that these measures increased the risk of new poverty by excluding women from the job market and affecting careers in traditional female preserves.

The Women's University (Université des Femmes) and the Women's Liaison Committee (Comité de Liaison des Femmes) have also produced a joint booklet on women and maternity.

Useful addresses: GRIF, Université des Femmes (Mme Soriano)
Comité de Liaison des Femmes (Mme Peemans-Pouillet)
1/A Place Quetelet, 1030 Brussels