

## TIMETABLE FOR EQUALITY

23-24 March

Meeting of the Women's Rights Committee at the European Parliament

24 March

Meeting in Brussels to prepare a new European network of Women Journalists

25 March

"Women and democracy" – a conference held in Brussels and organised by Marie-Claude Vayssade (MEP)

29-30 March

Presidential conference on employment, held in Aalborg

31 March

Presentation to the Commission of the "De Clercq report" on European information and communication

16 April

Symposium in Innsbruck on "Women in Europe", organised by the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Tyrol Women's Department. Information campaign associated with Austria's application for membership of the European Community

20 April

Award of the German "European Women's Prize" to Susanne Tiemann, Chairperson of the European Community's Economic and Social Committee

23-24 April

General Meeting of the European Women's Lobby in Antwerp

28-29 April

Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities

## THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

### THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS COMMITTEE

The Women's Rights Committee met in Brussels on 23 and 24 March. This session was the first meeting of the Committee to be attended by Mr Pdraig Flynn, the European Commissioner for Social Affairs. The Committee Chairperson, Ms Christine Crawley (S., United Kingdom), underlined the Committee's dissatisfaction with the Council's failure to adopt important directives concerning women (including directives on the reversal of the burden of proof and parental leave), dissatisfaction which was exacerbated by the absence of the phrase "equal opportunities" from the annual programme of the Commission of the European Communities. Highlighting the



# WOMEN OF EUROPE NEWSLETTER

Dear Readers,

*For many citizens – both men and women alike – the formerly magic word "Europe" has now become an abstract concept which sometimes inspires fear. Scepticism towards European union, as recently revealed by the Danish and French referenda on Maastricht, provides food for thought on the way in which information is relayed within the twelve EC Member States. In order to restore confidence in men and women and reinforce the idea of "European citizenship", it is now essential for Europe to speak another language: one which is clearer, more useful and more in tune with the needs of the individual.*

*Concerned by the lack of knowledge on European integration, the Commission of the European Communities entrusted a group of experts with the task of examining its information and communication policy at the beginning of December 1992. This group, which was made up of representatives from the various institutions and independent experts and which was chaired by Willy De Clercq, Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on External Economic Relations, completed its deliberations at the end of March.*

*The report recommends that special attention be paid to certain key groups, including women. "Women's information" must meet women's expectations and show them not only how women can benefit from European union but also how Europe represents an opportunity for them to make the most of what they have to offer.*

*The "Women's Information Unit" has been trying for over fifteen years to establish an on-going dialogue between women and Europe. At the heart of its initiative is the conviction that "women will feel more involved in their future and in Europe if they are better informed". In the new context of the Single Market, the prime objective of the Unit is now as vital and relevant as it ever was: namely, to keep women informed about and involved in the building of a united Europe and to help them avail themselves of legislation passed for their benefit. This objective cannot be achieved by the Unit on its own. The work being carried out by a large number of women, networks and women's groups to promote equal opportunities within their particular local authority, region or country, whether at a European or international level, makes the Unit's objective a feasible one.*

*Although considerable progress has been achieved as regards women in Europe, our work is not finished yet since it is an inescapable fact that there is an almost total absence of women in decision-making positions. We must carry on our work in order to ensure not only that the collective voice of European women is heard at European level but also that equal opportunities becomes a reality and that Europe becomes an asset to women.*

*Anne-Blanche Haritos*

Anne Blanche Haritos

fact that votes cast by women will have a crucial effect on the outcome of not only the 1994 European elections but also the referenda held by countries which have applied for membership of the European Community. Christine Crawley reaffirmed the need to take account of female public opinion.

### Meeting with Mr Pdraig Flynn

The Commissioner told the Women's Rights Committee that "economic development goes hand in hand with social development". Reiterating the fact that the Commission has to lay down legislation in order to build on existing directives and ensure that they are implemented more effectively, Mr P. Flynn highlighted the fact that the need to resolve outstanding directives on social affairs and to ensure that they are adopted by the Council as quickly as possible was a matter of urgent priority. He also said that once the Maastricht Treaty has been adopted, the Commission will publish a green paper defining social policy for the end of the century, thus making the proposals set out in a white paper to be published at the end of 1994 a realistic target. Mr Flynn called on the members of the committee to contribute to the production of this green paper.

Conscious of the issue of women's employment, Mr Flynn pointed out the need to increase resources devoted to creating jobs for women. Citing the success of the NOW programme, he expressed his commitment to giving the necessary attention to the issue of equal opportunities in connection with reforms to the European Social Fund, and to continuing the NOW initiative within the context of this reform process.

Similarly, in stressing the importance of the participation of women in the decision-making process, he added that it was necessary to promote initiatives in this area in order to alleviate situations which are "anachronistic and sometimes non-democratic". Various issues were addressed by the members of Parliament during the debate. Although there was time to raise such issues as the impact of new technologies on the employment of women (Ms Randzio-Plath, S. Germany), the proportion of women involved in Social Fund programmes (Ms Randzio-Plath) and the requirement for Member States and regional organisations to provide information on any joint financing arrangements with the Community (Mr Kostopoulos, NI Greece), other questions remained unanswered due to lack of time. However, the Commissioner undertook to come back to the committee in due course.

### Initiative reports

At the same session, the committee unanimously approved the draft recommendation formulated by Marie-Claude Vayssade (S., France) concerning the use of budgetary resources for 1991. Ms Vayssade welcomed the very high level of clarity concerning the allocation of funds for women which was apparent in the Court of Auditors' annual report.

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Two reports were also unanimously adopted with amendments: the report on women and joint family responsibility submitted by Jean-Thomas Nordmann (LDR, France) and the report by Sergio Ribeiro (CG, Portugal) on job creation for women. Mr Ribeiro pointed out the importance of local initiatives (LIs) for women, which encourage the latter to set up small businesses (however, the Court of Auditors has issued comments on such schemes).

A vote on the report by Lenz (PPE, Germany) concerning the situation of women in Eastern and Central Europe was held over for a later meeting.

The draft recommendation produced by Ms Breyer (V., Germany) concerning medical research on congenital deformities, new technologies and ethical matters was the subject of vehement debate. This debate will be continued in the presence of Mr Pompidou, the chief rapporteur of CERT, at a subsequent committee meeting.

Against the background of the ever-rising number of divorces and separations, a trend exacerbated by the general recession which is affecting women more than men, Ms Catasta (Soc., Italy) raised the important issue of pension rights for divorced women. Ms Catasta is to submit a draft report on this subject in May. Mr Kontizas of DG V pointed out that two recommendations have been adopted in this area but that the main directive proposal is still pending examination by the Council. As soon as judgments due to be issued in the near future are handed down by the Court of Justice, the Commission will endeavour to revive this directive. It was also announced that a legal seminar is to be held in Oxford at the end of 1993/beginning of 1994, to which Members of the European Parliament will be invited.

Concerned about the future of the IRIS network, Ms Raymonde Dury (S., Belgium) and a number of other MEPs involved in the debate (Ms Vayssade (S., France), Ms Catasta (S., Italy), Ms Domingo (NI., Spain)) raised the thorny issue of how the network is to be funded after 1994. Ms Dury, the IRIS rapporteur, highlighted the Commission's "Employment 92" report, the precarious situation of women, the importance of training and the specific needs of women – aspects which all clearly show the need for an initiative of this kind for the benefit of women. Ms Agnès Hubert, Head of the Equal Opportunities Unit at DG V, emphasised the fact that although the network budget has remained unchanged since 1988, the number of programmes catered for by IRIS has now increased fivefold. She also informed the meeting that four-year financing had been extended by a year (until 1993), although it would now be necessary to move on to a new stage in the network's life and to organise a call for tenders.

Finally, the MEPs heard a contribution by Ms Adolphi, Director of UNIFEM (the United Nations fund for the development of women). Ms Adolphi stated that she would like to see some measure of interchange with Members of the European Parliament ahead of the fourth United Nations' conference in Peking, which is planned for 1995. She also requested the support of MEPs in developing UNIFEM support initiatives. For their part, the Members of the European Parliament requested the Committee to organise a European regional seminar so that preparations could be made for the 1995 conference. The

committee is currently preparing a report on the European delegation to be sent to Peking.

*Useful address: The European Parliament, 97-113 rue Belliard, 1040 Brussels, tel.: (32 2) 284 21 11, or Plateau de Kirchberg, L-1919 Luxembourg.*

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## THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

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### Presidential conference on employment

**O**pening the European Community's presidential conference on employment initiatives, Ms Jytte Andersen, the Danish Minister for Employment, reaffirmed the fact that the main priority of the Danish presidency was to combat unemployment. The incumbent President of the Council of Ministers stated that, for as long as 17 million people in Europe remain unemployed, the Community will need to address this problem and will have to come up with new ways of tackling unemployment in addition to using conventional initiatives. At their meeting in Aalborg held on 29 and 30 March last, the prime objective of the various parties responsible for employment within the twelve Member States was to identify and analyse the types of job which could provide the Community's jobless with new sources of employment.

By organising this event with the support of employment experts and bringing together employment and training providers, Ms Andersen stressed the practical nature of the conference.

The Danish job rotation scheme, the Dutch temporary employment programme, the START scheme, local partnership schemes such as the Talaght scheme in Dublin and also the advice and training experiments organised by Diotima in Athens and EWZ in Dortmund were cited at the conference and have all proved their worth in combatting unemployment and creating jobs.

Although these pilot schemes rightly deserved close attention so that any useful lessons could be learned, the ERGO Community programme (for the long-term unemployed) was also the subject of considerable interest at the Aalborg conference. Indeed, in its initial phase ERGO has thrown up a number of valuable lessons on the way in which employment and training schemes for the long-term unemployed should be prepared and implemented. It has also demonstrated the importance of tying in such schemes with local economic strategies and highlighted the need to come up with initiatives targeted at the jobless. Ms Jytte Andersen hopes to launch the "second stage of the ERGO programme, which will make major strides in the future by helping the Community and its Member States to improve their support to the unemployed and non-income earners".

Although the issue of women's employment was not directly addressed at the conference, the Presidential seminar to be held in Arhus during 12 – 14 May will give the various parties responsible for employment an opportunity to consider the question of equal opportunities for men and women.

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## COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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### EUROPEAN NETWORK OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS

"Help our fellow female citizens of Europe to benefit from Europe" – this was the message which Marco Piccarolo, Director at DG X, gave to the women journalists who met in Brussels on 24 March. Aware of the problem of providing women with information on Europe, the Women's Information Unit at DG X brought together more than twenty women journalists involved in audiovisual and press journalism in the twelve Member States of the European Community, thus paving the way for a European Network of Women Journalists.

Close collaboration with women journalists is essential if the campaign to provide women with information, as already supported by the EC, is to be extended – this is because "women in the media have a vital role to play in determining how the European Community can assist women in the Member States", according to Anne-Blanche Haritos, head of the Women's Information Unit.

### Women and decision-making

The participation of women in society must be increased to enable the challenges of the nineties to be met and to ensure that women have a place in the Europe which is being built. Indeed, "if women reach major decision-making positions, their voices will be heard and they will gain recognition for the contribution they can make in social, economic and financial life", according to the representative of the Women's Information Unit. The general remit of the future network is to make men and women more aware of the important role which women can play in society and to promote the participation of women in political life, particularly during European elections.

Representatives from the Equal Opportunities Unit attached to DG V, the Women's Rights Committee at the European Parliament, the European Women's Lobby and the Women and Decision-making network were invited to the meeting to ensure that the information initiative to be targeted at women could be defined in the best possible way.

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Agnès Hubert, Head of the Equal Opportunities Unit first described the various Community business initiatives directed at women and the opportunities which open up for women with the creation of the Single market. Ms Domingo (NI, Spain) then described the activities of the Women's Rights Committee at the European Parliament, a committee on which she is the Vice-Chairperson. She also expressed the main difficulties faced by women in the world of politics: putting women's issues on the political agenda, reconciling a career with a private life, the difficulty experienced by women in acting as representatives for a party, etc. During lunch, the journalists also had an opportunity to share ideas with Ms Lissy Gröner (PPE, Germany), Vice-Chairperson of the Women's Rights Committee at the European Parliament.

Early in the afternoon, Sabine de Bethune, President of the Women and Decision-making network outlined the situation of women in the decision-making process. The conclusion to be drawn was that women are poorly represented in the political arena and that the higher up the hierarchy one goes, the lower the number of women one finds holding major posts. This lack of democracy, which is characterised by a disproportionate ratio of men to women in decision-making positions, is certainly a reality. The network has already got down to work in order to rectify this problem: the main objective during 1993 will be to promote the participation of women in the 1994 European elections. Efforts will then be focused on three areas: providing information on, and heightening awareness of, the channels for expressing public opinion (and women's views in particular), promoting structural measures (legislation, quotas, etc.) which crystallise changes in thinking and, thirdly, seeking scientific evidence to support equality.

For her part, Barbara Helferrich, Secretary-General of the European Women's Lobby, stressed the importance of working as a network in an effort to influence decision-making and to pursue a consistent information policy – this would help ensure that people in the Member States do not become more detached from Europe while it would also convince women of the benefits of European union and focus efforts on increasing their interest in Europe.

### Getting information on Europe across to women

The question is: how are the messages of "Europe" and "Women" to be conveyed? According to the journalists, providing information on these subjects is not a priority for editorial staff. So how, then, is this information to be conveyed? Several journalists highlighted the need to express and disseminate "women's information" in the same way as other information, so as to maximise its impact. More specifically, such information must be passed on as much by men as by women and must not be restricted to women's columns. In other words, "treat women the same as men and don't introduce discrimination into information". The journalists also stressed the need for information from the Commission of the European Communities to be written in a clear, precise style which is understandable to citizens.

At the end of the day, the journalists expressed the need to set up a "women's information system" within the Member States. In this context, a proposal was made for the setting-up in the short term of national networks of women journalists (as already exist in Germany and France, with Italy soon to follow suit) and for the creation of a kind of "task-force" linking women journalists in the twelve Member States. A future meeting will define more precisely what initiatives should be launched in order to maximise women's awareness of the importance of the 1994 European Parliament elections.

*Information: Women's Information Unit, Commission of the European Communities, DG X Audiovisual media, communication, information and culture, rue de Trèves 120, 1049 Brussels, tel.: (32 2) 299 94 16.*

### REPORT ON THE COMMISSION'S COMMUNICATION POLICY

"Communication and information are an integral part of European integration and deserve to be treated as priority issues" such was the view put forward by Willy De Clercq at the press conference held on 31 March for the presentation of his report (see editorial). The De Clercq report highlights the veritable "crisis of confidence" experienced by citizens with regard to European integration, with the latter feeling that the kind of Europe being presented to them is abstract and imposed "from on high". This negative feeling is reinforced by a dearth of explanations and, in general, by the way in which information is passed on. The "De Clercq report" stresses the importance of European integration involving all 345 million citizens in future rather than just being the prerogative of certain political and economic elites. With this in mind, a communication strategy needs to be formulated which caters for the citizens' needs and expectations.

And what about women in all this? Placed at the forefront of a specific target group (with young people in second place), women need to be convinced and reassured about Europe. The group of experts stresses the importance of "personalising" information to women, showing the latter the advantages of European union and demonstrating how such advantages could "help them personally and benefit their lives, their family, their children and their work". The role assigned to women by the "De Clercq report" makes them into opinion leaders. Indeed, with their "propensity for intuitively recognising the existential advantages of a "better future", their instinctive opposition to war and aggression and their innate awareness of other people, morality, safety, relationships in general and their own family in particular", women can become "the most receptive group of all to information and the most active in passing it on". Commissioner João de Deus Pinheiro announced that the Commission is to submit its "draft strategy" on information and communication by the end of April. He stated that "this policy will be based on truth" and not on "propaganda". In addition, he pointed out

that this report will be one of the cornerstones on which the Commission will base its strategy.

The analyses and recommendations contained in this report will be studied in connection with the general review of information and communication currently being conducted by the Commission.

### EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

The report by Ms Leyla Onur (S., Denmark) concerning the reform of the ESF was adopted. In the context of forthcoming changes to structural Fund by the Commission, the MEPs heard that a new strategy catering for unemployment is being formulated. The report advocates a substantial increase in resources for the ESF and also more effective procedures.

### Ad hoc group on equal opportunities in broadcasting

"Men and women in broadcasting – Equality for the nineties?", a conference organised by the EBU (European Broadcasting Union) and held in Athens in November 1990 was the driving force behind the creation of an ad hoc group on equal opportunities in broadcasting. Chaired by Léa Martel of BRTN, the group is made up of delegates of the EBU and the European Community. The general brief of this group is to put forward measures which promote the image of women in radio and television programmes and which are likely to improve the professional status and working conditions of women involved in broadcasting in Europe.

*Information: Equal Opportunities Unit, DG V Employment, industrial relations and social affairs, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.*

### WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

The prime objective of Community policy on IWD (Integration of Women in Development) is to integrate women fully in general development initiatives, both as agents and beneficiaries.

The period between 1982 and 1990 saw the genesis of six conclusions adopted by the Council concerning "Women and Development". In all its conclusions, the Council highlighted the importance it attaches to the integration of women in the development process and the need to take full account of this issue in all cooperation agreements concluded between the Community (the Com-

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mission and Member States) and its partners in development. The fourth Lomé Convention has also highlighted the importance of the economic and social role of women in development policies.

Many years have passed since the IWD work programme requested by the Council in 1987 was developed. DG VIII felt that it was now necessary to take stock of what IWD work had been carried out to date and to assess the extent to which the objectives defined by the programme had been achieved. The results of this stock-taking exercise were on the whole positive. A large number of initiatives have been undertaken to stimulate the integration of women in the development process. These include initiatives designed to heighten awareness and provide staff training on IWD, technical support initiatives, assessments of the effectiveness of support given to integrating women in the development process, etc. In actively pursuing their activities, DG I and DG VIII are currently paying special attention to preparations for the fourth world conference scheduled to be held in Peking in 1995.

*Information: For the ACP countries, Ms Chapman, DG VIII, Commission of the European Communities. For the ALA/MED countries, Ms Esmerelda Hernandez Aragonés, DG I North/South Foreign Affairs, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.*

## INFORMATION-COMMUNICATION

### European Women's Documentation and Information Network

The newly formed "European Women's Documentation and Information Network" (EUDIF), which was set up in April, represents a further step forward as regards women's information. This international association currently represents six EC Member States (Belgium, France, Spain, Greece, Italy and Portugal) and will gradually come to include the others. The aim of this new network is simple: to collate and promote the dissemination of information on the rights and situation of women within the Community from the point of view of "European citizenship". Indeed, for EUDIF, information provides a way of changing the attitudes of men and women to European citizenship. Its experience and professionalism in the field of information will mean that EUDIF will be ideally placed to relay information between the target group – primarily but not exclusively women – and Europe. As a genuine interface linking women with the official and associative European authorities, "the network will provide women with as much information as possible on their rights and opportunities and will pass on to the European authorities details of women's needs so that available information sources are brought more closely into line with information requirements".

In order to maximise the impact of the network's activities, various forms of association are planned in conjunction with the European authorities: a working party with the European Women's Lobby and the Women's Information Unit of the Commission of the European Communities (DG X); a specific partnership with the Equal Opportunities Unit of the Commission of the European Communities (DG V) and also with various international organisations such as UNESCO and the UN.

EUDIF will concentrate on three main tasks. Firstly, to pass on information between members of the network. Secondly, to analyse European information and the ways in which it can be processed with the aid of professional networks. And thirdly, to provide direct access to information by providing advice in women's information centres and also by organising meetings with journalists, publishing guides and brochures and arranging public seminars. The network will organise an annual seminar on "the state of women's information", which will act as a kind of European yardstick for gauging the provision of women's information. The central theme of the first seminar will be women's expectations as regards information, their capacity for remembering information and the ways in which women obtain information. The network thus hopes to gradually identify the ways in which women's culture is likely to be enriched in the Europe of tomorrow.

*Information: EUDIF, Marie-Thérèse Destercke, Maison des Associations Internationales, rue Washington 40, 1050 Brussels or The Women's Information Unit, Commission of the European Communities, DG X Audiovisual media, communication, information and culture, rue de Trèves 120, 1049 Brussels, tel.: (32 2) 299 94 11.*

## SEMINARS

**"Equal treatment for men and women: a Community requirement"**. A conference organised by the Luxembourg office of the European Public Administration Institute on 22 and 23 April. Information: European Administration Institute, 2 Circuit de la Foire Internationale, L-1347 Luxembourg. Tel.: (352) 46 62 30.

**"European meetings, women of the Mediterranean"**, to be held between 13 and 15 May in Montpellier. The meeting will address three main topics: "Is there a common identity among Mediterranean women?", "Changes in and the accessibility of public administration" and "The new identity-related strategies".

*Information: Françoise Michaud, CNIDFF (National Information and Documentation Centre for Women and Families), 7 rue de Jura, 75013 Paris.*

**"Women, Nations, Europe. Nationalism and internationalism in women's movements in Europe"**, an event to be held in Paris between 14 and 16 May and organised by the University of Paris VII, the Contemporary Inter-European Research and Study Centre and the International Women's Scientific Foundation. The aim of this event is to examine the place and role of women in the Europe currently being created by looking at the history of women in Europe.

*Information: Marie-Claire Hooock-Demarle, University of Paris VII, 2 place Jussieu, 75251 Paris Cedex 05.*

**"The language used by women"**, an event which is to be held in Antwerp between 13 and 15 May. This will be the first European congress covering the type of language used by men and women. It will examine the different forms of language used by men and women and the effect that these differences have on social, cultural and economic life. Information may be obtained from the IRDECE (European Culture Research and Development Institute), rue de Roumanie, 50, B-1060 Brussels. Tel.: (32 2) 537 97 60.

## PUBLICATIONS

**Advantages, obstacles and guidelines**, V/1604/92/-FR – a report published by the Positive Action in Companies network. This publication summarises the advantages and obstacles involved in setting up Positive Action programmes in companies and provides guidelines on future organisation. This report, which is available in French or English, can be obtained from the Equal Opportunities Unit, DG V, Commission of the European Communities, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels.

**Women around the world between 1970 and 1990: Figures and ideas, statistics and social indicators**. This publication, which is produced by the United Nations, aims to disseminate simple yet detailed information on the economic, political and familial role of women. It assesses changes in the status of women in the various regions. Information: Secretariat of the United Nations, publication number F.90.XVII.3.

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