Draft Council resolution concerning action to combat unemployment amongst women

(COM(84) 74 final)

(Submitted by the Commission to the Council on 22 February 1984)

(84/C 65/10)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaties establishing the European Communities,

Having regard to the draft resolution submitted by the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee,

Whereas various actions have been taken at Community level to promote equal opportunities for women, and in particular the adoption by the Council of Directives 75/117/EEC (1), 76/207/EEC (2) and 79/7/EEC (3) concerning equal treatment as between men and women;

Whereas the Council resolution of 12 July 1982 on the promotion of equal opportunities for women (4) emphasizes in particular the need, in a period of economic crisis, to intensify action undertaken at Community and national level, by the implementation of positive measures in order to achieve equality of opportunity in practice;

Whereas the Council resolutions of 11 July 1983 (5) on vocational training in the 1980s, of 2 June 1983 (6) on vocational training and new technology, and of 23 January 1984 (7) on the promotion of youth employment provide for specific measures in favour of women;

Whereas the European Parliament has on many occasions stressed the need to develop Community measures to combat women's unemployment;

Whereas unemployment amongst women in the Community, which is noticeably higher than male unemployment, is a source of growing concern and requires the adoption of appropriate measures to reduce the level of this unemployment and to improve the situation of unemployed women;

Whereas the progressive reduction of the rate of female unemployment must form part of a general reduction of unemployment;

Whereas female unemployment also has special characteristics requiring appropriate measures,

HEREBY ADOPTS THIS RESOLUTION:

1. Notes the Commission's communication (8) on unemployment amongst women in the Community, and undertakes to implement the measures it sets forward;

2. Emphasizes the principles which must underlie the measures to be promoted, namely:

   — the equal right of men and women to work and to seek economic independence, regardless of the economic situation;

   — the extension of equal opportunities between men and women in the context of measures to stimulate economic recovery and to promote employment growth;

   — the development of positive measures to correct *de facto* inequalities and thereby improve female employment prospects and promote the desegregation of employment;

3. Considers that the following guidelines for action should be implemented to help combat female unemployment:

3.1. In respect of job creation and recruitment:

   — measures aimed at encouraging the recruitment of additional labour, especially of

(1) OJ No L 45, 19. 2. 1975, p. 19.
(2) OJ No L 39, 14. 2. 1976, p. 40.
(3) OJ No L 6, 10. 1. 1979, p. 24.
(4) OJ No C 186, 21. 7. 1982, p. 3.
(5) OJ No C 193, 20. 7. 1983, p. 2.
(6) OJ No C 166, 25. 6. 1983, p. 1.
(7) OJ No C 29, 4. 2. 1984, p. 1.

(8) COM(83) 653 final.

young people, must comprise positive action to benefit young women, in particular to facilitate their access to non-traditional jobs;

— recruitment premiums should be selective and focussed on people who are in greatest need of work, many of whom are women;

— adequate measures must be adopted to promote a more balanced proportion of women in the industries of the future, especially the high technology industries;

— the public sector must make a special effort to promote equality of opportunity as regards its own employees and thus set an example (1) notably in those fields where new information technologies are being developed;

— all initiatives aimed at the reduction and a reorganization of working time (2) should make a positive contribution to the promotion of equal opportunities in the area of employment, especially by enabling greater flexibility in working hours;

— the development of voluntary part-time work (3) should avoid accentuating segregation in the labour market;

— measures to promote and encourage the development of local employment initiatives (4), which offer interesting employment prospects for women and which contribute to the improvement of their working conditions, should guarantee them equal access to financial and other facilities available for the creation of businesses.

3.2. Measures should be further developed in the field of education, initial and continuing vocational training and guidance with a view to:

— taking systematic action to give women a wider choice of jobs in particular to enable them to participate more equitably in the future growth sectors;

— strengthening the efforts made to respond to the needs of female workers particularly affected by industrial restructuring and innovation, of unemployed women and women seeking to return to work, with a view to providing them with more marketable qualifications;

— ensuring that there is a better balance of men and women in the major training programmes, especially those connected with new technologies.

3.3. Measures should be taken to ensure that placement, guidance and counselling services are staffed with skilled personnel in adequate numbers in order to provide a more personal service and greater expertise in the special problems of unemployed women, in particular through the presence in the relevant services of persons playing a specific promotional and monitoring role in this area.

3.4. The collecting of data on the situation of women on the labour market must be considerably improved in order to be able to monitor progress in the desegregation of employment and identify female unemployment trends more accurately.

4. The Council stresses the value it sets on the positive contribution of the European Social Fund to the implementation of these guidelines for action.

5. The Council considers that the principles and guidelines set out above should be incorporated into action undertaken at every level by public authorities as well as by both sides of industry.

6. The Council stresses the importance of accompanying measures, especially regarding social infrastructure and all measures to encourage greater sharing of family and parental responsibilities; it invites Member States to adopt the measures and develop the action necessary in this respect.

7. The Council asks the Member States to rapidly develop information campaigns aimed at encouraging the change in attitudes needed to improve equality of opportunity in employment.

(1) In accordance with the Council resolution of 12 July 1982 on the promotion of equal opportunities for women.

(2) COM(83) 543 final.

(3) COM(81) 775 amended by COM(82) 830 of 17. 12. 1982.

(4) COM(83) 662.

8. The Council emphasizes the importance it attaches to the swift adoption of the proposal for a Directive submitted by the Commission under the new Action Programme on equal opportunities which concerns parental leave and leave for family reasons.

9. The Council asks the Member States to send to the Commission by 1 January of each year all relevant information on the implementation of the actions and measures provided for in this resolution.

It asks the Commission to report to it at regular intervals on the basis of such data with a view to making an assessment on progress accomplished not later than three years following the adoption of this resolution.