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Final Report

International Conference on

"The Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe"

Submitted by:
The Center for Democracy
Subcontract No. W-92-00-7

Prepared for:
The Office of Women in Development
Bureau of Research and Development
United States Agency for International Development
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April 14, 1993

GENESYS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Report on the International Conference

Attatchments:

TABS

March 15, 1993 Letter from Miguel Angel Martinez to Allen Weinstein

Transcript of Conference Procedings

Written Statements Submitted by Conference Participants

Participants Contact List

Biographical Information on Participants

Evaluation of Conferences by Participants

Letters

Press Releases

Information on the Council of Europe and Parliamentary Assembly

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Report on the International Conference on "The Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe"

Submitted by The Center for Democracy

On October 3-4, 1992, The Center for Democracy organized an international conference on "The Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe." The conference was funded by the Women in Development Office (WID) and the Bureau for Europe of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and was held at the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg, France under the auspices of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Eighty-nine members of parliament, political leaders, and experts from the United States, Central and Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and the former Soviet Union participated in the meeting. USAID funded 26 participants from Central and Eastern Europe and six from the United States.

I. RATIONALE, PURPOSE, AND GOALS

The Center for Democracy received a subcontract from THE FUTURES GROUP'S GENESYS Project to organize and implement this two-day international conference of Central/East European political leaders and members of parliament. The conference was to be organized with the Council of Europe under the auspices of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly at the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg, France.

The Center and the WID office of USAID (with support from USAID's Bureau for Europe) organized this conference to assist in the development of aid programs aimed at addressing gender issues in Central and Eastern Europe. The purpose of the meeting was to enable women political leaders from the region and their counterparts from Western Europe and the United States to meet and discuss the role of women in the democratization and economic reform process in Central and Eastern Europe, and, conversely, the effects of the democratization and economic reform process on the respective roles of women and men.

As stated in 1990 by then-Secretary of State James Baker, the purpose of U.S. assistance to Central and Eastern Europe is to assist these countries in developing: 1) political pluralism, 2) economic reform through the development of a market economy with a substantial private sector, 3) respect for internationally recognized human rights, and, 4) friendly relations with the U.S. (see 1991 U.S. Department of State publication "U.S. Assistance to Central and Eastern Europe: An Overview").

As stated in USAID's Women in Development's Policy Paper (October 1982):

> " .. the pace of development and the quality of its outcome is greatly dependent on the degree to which women and girls fulfill their potential contribution and share in society's gains." (p. 2)

Democratic and economic development in Central and Eastern Europe will, as in other countries of the developing world, depend on the success that women achieve in becoming fully integrated into the transition process.

Initial studies conducted since the democratic revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989-1990, found that over the past several years women have indeed faced different obstacles than men and that women have been affected negatively by some aspects of this transition. (See for example, two 1991 USAID-sponsored studies by Coopers & Lybrand in Hungary and Poland on "Gender Issues in the Transition to a Market Economy," and Helsinki Watch's March 1992 report "Hidden Victims: Women in Post-Communist Poland.")

In politics, for example, a poll taken by USAID missions in the region in September 1992 found that the number of women in parliament since 1989 decreased in all the countries of the region. The range of this decrease was from a 8.5% decline in Bulgaria to a 25.5% decline in Albania. In economic terms, women have been losing their jobs at a greater rate than that of men in the former Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Poland.

USAID's ability to assist women in the region in achieving their full potential both politically and economically is thus essential to accomplishing the objectives of U.S. assistance programs in Central and Eastern Europe.

While over the past several years studies and assistance programs focusing on gender issues have been undertaken on a country by country basis, very few regional programs have been conducted. As stated, the individual country studies have found that women in the region face many common problems in the transition process. Therefore, a conference bringing together women political leaders from all these countries would provide an opportunity for the participants to compare and contrast experiences, studies, and ideas. The Center, the USAID WID office, and the Bureau for Europe organized the October 1992 conference to begin to address these issues on such a regional basis.

The involvement of women political and government leaders from Western Europe would enable the Central/East European participants to benefit from their counterparts in the West. In addition, Western experts and officials would also learn a great deal from these women who are at the forefront of the changes now occurring in the region. The conference would provide a forum for the women leaders from Central and Eastern Europe to express their views and relate their experiences to Western counterparts.

USAID has been a leader in providing assistance to the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe. Assistance has also been provided by West European governments and Pan-European organizations such as the Council of Europe. This conference would provide an opportunity for U.S. and Western European officials to better communicate with another and avoid possible duplication of assistance programs.

The Council of Europe's co-sponsorship of the conference underscored to participants the importance of the conference. The Council, founded in 1949, is the oldest of the European political institutions. Its mission is to protect and develop human rights and democracy in Europe and to forge a closer union among European democracies.

All the Central and East European countries represented at the conference are members or special guests of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly. The Assembly is a deliberative body and plays a vital role in guiding the activities of the Council. The participation by Members of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly (who also serve in their own national parliaments) would ensure that opinions and policy recommendations resulting from the conference would be disseminated by members to the national legislatures of the region. Holding the meeting under the auspices of the Hon. Miguel Angel Martinez, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, was additional testimony to the importance that the Council gave to the conference. President Martinez and other officials pledged the full support of the Council to the conference and resulting future activities.

II. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the conference were:

1) To identify issues related to the differential impact on men and women of the economic and political transition process now underway in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS.

2) To initiate an ongoing dialogue on these issues among the political leaders involved in the reform process in that region.

3) To initiate communication and cooperation in this area among political leaders in Central and Eastern Europe, Western Europe, the CIS, and the United States.

4) To help women political leaders in Central and Eastern Europe develop organizational and leadership skills relevant to democratic forms of government.

5) To inform women on how to access the media in their respective countries.

6) To integrate U.S. efforts in this area with European organizations and structures studying these issues, thereby avoiding duplication of effort and ensuring that views and perspectives from the United States are included in these ongoing debates.

7) To create a framework for the establishment of working groups for ongoing study of the issues identified at the conference. The working groups will provide continuous communication and cooperation among the participating political leaders in the area of gender issues and democratic development.

The conference was planned for October 3-4 to coincide with the Fall session of the Assembly, enabling those interested members of the Assembly to attend the conference. Therefore, USAID needed to fund only the U.S. and Central and East European participants. USAID funded 33 of 89 participants. All the West European participants were funded by the Council or paid their own expenses.

III. ROLE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The Center received excellent cooperation from the Council of Europe. In addition to assuming the costs of interpreters, room rental, and a luncheon, the Council lent its full institutional support to the conference.

The importance the Council gave to the conference was evident by the participation of both the President of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Secretary General, Catherine Lalumiere, in the proceedings. It is rare that both of these two top officials appear at the same event together. President Martinez gave the opening remarks at the conference and Secretary General Lalumiere gave the closing remarks. President Martinez also attended the final session.

President Martinez also personally invited members of the Parliamentary Assembly to attend the conference and asked that the Assembly's Committee on Social, Family, and Health Affairs hold an Open Hearing for the conference participants.

The Parliamentary Assembly is the only European political institution to include members of national parliaments from all of Western, Central and Eastern Europe. The Council also has the reputation as the leading human rights institution in Europe because it houses both the European Commission and Court of Human Rights.

The participation of both USAID and the Council was seen by participants as a cooperative effort by the U.S. and Western Europe to be of assistance to the new democracies

of Central and Eastern Europe. This cooperation, and the prestige brought by the Council, gave the conference a high level of credibility among political leaders in Central and Eastern Europe.

IV. SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants from Central and Eastern Europe were selected in cooperation with USAID field missions and U.S. embassies in the region. Center staff developed a list of possible participants by 1) consulting with scholars (both U.S. and East European) who study gender issues in Central and Eastern Europe; 2) researching newspapers and journals; 3) conferring with the Washington embassies of the East European countries; and 4) consulting with officials in the Council of Europe.

The President of the Parliamentary Assembly sent invitations to the heads of delegation of the Assembly's 27 member and eight special guest countries. In addition, representatives from appropriate committees, divisions, and bureaus in the Council of Europe were invited to attend.

V. CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Open Hearing with the Committee on Social, Health, and Family Affairs

The conference began on Saturday, October 3 with an open hearing for participants by the Parliamentary Assembly's Committee on Social, Health and Family Affairs.

The Committee held the hearing at the request of President Martinez as part of the Council of Europe's efforts to support the conference at the highest level. On September 30, at the Committee's request, Mary Fran Freedman, Director of USAID's Office for Women in Development, and Paul Nathanson, Program Director for the Center for Democracy, made presentations on the purpose and goals of the conference to Committee members and engaged in a discussion on the issues to be raised at the conference. The Committee members emphasized the inadequate situation that exists in their own countries in regard to the equality of men and women and agreed to initiate discussions about ways in which gender issues could be addressed more substantively by the Council. Committee members were enthusiastic about holding the Open Hearing and serious about assisting the conference participants in developing a useful framework for discussion at the conference.

The open hearing provided an excellent opening session for the conference. The Committee members pledged their full support for the conference, and many of the committee members took part in the conference proceedings. The participation by the Committee also was important because it is the formal structure in the Parliamentary Assembly where future activities related to the conference would be based.

Opening Session

The Honorable Miguel Angel Martinez, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, gave the keynote address (biography of President Martinez is included in the appendix). He explained the history of the Council of Europe and its work in support of equality between women and men. He noted that the emergence of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe has been marked by a decrease in women's political involvement as well as disproportional unemployment among women. He encouraged the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to ratify the European Convention on Human Rights (dealing with civil and political rights) and the European Social Charter (which recognizes equal economic and social opportunities for women and men). Pledging the support of the Council of Europe to the participants' endeavors, he explained that it is "the duty of the Council of Europe to reassert that freedom and democracy can find their true expression only in so far as women and men join together on the same footing and on equal terms in community affairs and especially politics."

As the goal of the conference was to stimulate ongoing discussion among the participants on critical gender issues emerging from the changes now occurring in the region, it was structured in a way that would encourage participates to take part in discussion and debate. The conference was divided into four sessions. The topic for each session was introduced by three or four panelists and a moderator.

Following is an overview of the conference proceedings. [The full transcript is included as an Attachment.]

Session One

Identification of Issues Related to the Role of Women in the Economic, Social, and Political Process in Central and Eastern Europe

The session's moderator was Dame Peggy Fenner, a member of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom, a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and a past Minister in the British Government. Panelists included: Barbara Labuda, a member of the Sejm (Polish Parliament) and a former leader of the Solidarity Movement; Dimitrina Petrova, the Director for the Bulgarian Institute for Social and Environmental Research, founder of the environmental movement "Ecoulastnot," and former member of the Bulgarian Constituent Assembly; Ms. Irina Vinogradova, a member of the Russian Parliament, and Ms. Mary Ellen Withrow, Treasurer of the State of Ohio.

Ms. Labuda remarked on the low number of women involved in Polish politics, explaining that this lack is significant as it is reflected in political programs which do not take into account women's problems and concerns. She attributes the absence of women in politics to tradition, education (which in many Central/East European countries encourages men more than women to take an active part in public life) and the economic situation of women (Normally

Polish women work in underpaid positions in "female" sectors. Moreover, work in the home is regarded as the women's main duty, but is considered an inferior occupation and carries no social prestige. Therefore, women do not have the experience, respect -- and time -- necessary to get involved in politics.)

Ms. Labuda also identified the renewal of a nationalist, Catholic movement as a threat to women's civil rights, citing the ban on abortion as an example. Moreover, she believes that "this ideology affects the way in which women are valued and judged." Another concern she raised was the way in which women's organizations are viewed in Poland. As most of these groups were founded by the Communists, they are still seen with suspicion by the populace: it is therefore critical to prove their legitimacy. In closing, she stressed the importance of such organizations in obtaining respect for the rights of women.

Ms. Petrova observed that women have been very active in the transition to democracy in Bulgaria and are well-represented in government at both the Parliamentary and local levels. While there were more women in government under Communism, she explained that their number was misleading because women were usually selected artificially to fill allotted slots. The first issue she raised was the importance of women being active, not only in government, but also in grassroots efforts. A second point regarded employment. She explained that, while women had always suffered poorer employment opportunities than men, this situation would likely worsen during the period of transition. She therefore suggested creating "proper institutions for affirmative action and equal opportunities in employment, in pay, in career opportunities." She also brought up women's health issues and the high rate of gynecological disease in Eastern Europe. Finally, Ms. Petrova stressed the importance -- and the difficulty -- of changing the cultural mentality which often views women negatively.

Ms. Vinogradova stated that the primary concern should be to change the traditional mindset regarding the role of women. She explained that under the totalitarian system "men found their place in the managerial structures, whereas the function of women was to shoulder the rest of the burden, bringing up children and engaging in all sorts of menial jobs." As did Ms. Petrova, Ms. Vinogradova identified unemployment and health issues as other are critical problems facing women in her country.

Ms. Withrow identified several issues critical to women in the United States, including sexual harassment, freedom of choice, equal pay, and family leave. While women are more sensitive to these issues -- and therefore it is important to include more women in government working on them -- they are actually critical to society as a whole.*

During the discussion that followed, fifteen participants made statements. Ms. Stanic, a member of the Croatian parliament, made a plea to address the tragedy occurring in the former Yugoslavia, focusing on the sexual abuse, cruelty and humiliation women and girls are suffering

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*Therefore, social equity is a pre-condition to sustainable development.

in camps in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ms. Lako explained that women had played a critical role in Albania's movement toward democracy since women had viewed democracy as a chance for freedom from their traditional treatment as second-class citizens. Among the issues currently facing women in Albania, she mentioned: poor economic circumstances and unemployment, "men's nostalgia for the old society where women were isolated by social life," and "physical violence which mirrors all the denigrating mentalities towards women." Ms. Zajc of Slovenia brought up two further issues: the need for more sensitivity in using language (e.g. specifying "chairwoman" rather than "chairman" when appropriate) and the question of whether women should be "treated differently only because and only when they rear children -- or are there other differences to be taken into account as well?"

Building upon an earlier comment by Ms. Petrova, Ms. Lokar from Slovenia mentioned the lack of self-confidence that the state had traditionally inspired in women. The state had presented women as having to fulfill three roles: wife/mother, social activist, and good professional -- "what women called carrying three watermelons under one arm and dropping them all, of course." Ms. Lokar pointed out that "this image -- largely accepted -- was of precious little help in building women's self-esteem." She explained that the desire to depart from the traditional model and choose one's own lifestyle had encouraged the women's movement to be at the forefront of the transition in Slovenia. Despite recent improvements, however, she cautioned about an undercurrent, inspired by a reactionary Catholic movement, to keep women in the traditional role; she warned that newfound individualism would again disappear if society doesn't stand guard.

Other issues raised during the discussion included:

* the importance of solidarity among women in pursuing political goals (especially stressed by Ms. Lokar);

* the particular hardships facing women during the economic transition due to a) the diminishment of social services such as child care, prenatal and postnatal care, family leave opportunities; b) unemployment (which is affecting women at a much higher rate than men); and c) the relegation of women to lower-paying jobs.*

* whether proportional representation is a better system for including women in the political process (Ms. Gjorv from the Norwegian Parliament stated this system has helped

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*Although similar problems do exist in the West, attempts are being made in the United States, for example, both by the government and the private sector to make these social services more available to its citizens. In contrast, these services in Central/Eastern Europe were provided by the state and are now being reduced or eliminated because of economic restructuring now underway. Similarly, these services in the region were often provided by state enterprises to its employees. Many of these state enterprises are going bankrupt, obviously resulting in the loss of these services. Many of the remaining state enterprises are being privatized and are unable to continue to provide these costly services.

to raise [to 37%] the percentage of women in her parliament; Dame Fenner, however, spoke in defense of the British system.).

Session Two

Action by Western Governments for Equal Participation of Women in Political and Economic Life

The panel was chaired by Ms. Leni Fischer, a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, chairperson of the Council's Committee of Culture and Education, and a member of the German Bundestag since 1976. The panelists included: Ms. Tarja Halonen, a member of the Parliamentary Assembly, a member of the Parliament of Finland, a former Finnish Minister of Social and Health Care, and a former Minister of Justice; Ms. Marijke Van Hemeldonck, a member of the European Parliament from Belgium and Vice President of Brussels University; and Ms. Gale Norton, the Attorney General of the State of Colorado.

Ms. Halonen emphasized the role of legislation in confronting discrimination. Sensing from earlier discussion that the new European democracies doubted the effectiveness of such regulations, she countered that national legislation on equality combined with a court of justice had been able to play a positive role in the Nordic countries. She also stressed the value of an ombudsman system. In closing, she mentioned that participants should explore further possibilities for using the Council of Europe and the European Parliament to strengthen international cooperation.

In discussing ways being explored in the United States to increase the number of women in the political system, Ms. Norton highlighted a) the movement toward term limits and b) the review of laws which actively discriminate against women. (As an example of the latter, she explained that women in the U.S. armed forces had only recently been allowed into combat and how this discrimination had hindered their advancement.) To encourage women entrepreneurs, she stressed the importance of mentoring programs and of enforcing laws prohibiting discrimination. She also expressed concern that social programs that may be helpful to women on one hand may, on the other, place prohibitive taxation and regulatory burdens on new entrepreneurs.

Ms. Van Hemeldonck began by commenting that 17 percent of the 518 members of the European Parliament are women, a higher percentage than most national parliaments. However, she highlighted the difference between northern and southern European countries and the left and the right of the political spectrum: there are proportionately more women from the northern countries and from the left of the spectrum. She then gave a historical overview of the struggle for equality of women within the European community. She explained how women had worked together in bringing a case to the European Court; through winning that case, they gained assurance by European law of equal pay, equal access to employment, and equal treatment on

the job. She disagreed with Ms. Norton that spending on social programs will adversely affect women's economic opportunities, pointing to Germany as the country with the highest social protection as well as the strongest economy.

Seventeen participants joined in the following discussion and debate about additional forms of action being undertaken by Western governments. Among the topics raised were the following:

* national legislation: While some participants cautioned that changes in the law alone were not enough, Baroness Lockwood, a member of the Parliamentary Assembly and British House of Lords -- and the first chair of Britain's Equal Opportunities Commission -- agreed with Ms. Halonen that national legislation can help in that it is a mechanism by which attitudes and culture can be changed. Ms. Halonen stressed that "laws and legislation should be thoroughly studied to determine whether they are directly or indirectly sex discriminatory."

* quota system: Ms. Gjorv of Norway spoke in favor of using the quota system as a tool for bringing more women into politics; she supports this approach because it encourages parties to recruit and train women. In contrast, Ms. van Hemeldonck commented that a quota system only provides for under-proportional representation and voiced support instead for the "zipper" system (choosing one man, one woman, one man, etc.) used by Greens in several countries.

* social spending: There was a clear difference between European "liberals" who advocated state spending for child care and U.S. conservatives, such as Ms. Norton, who argued that placing such a burden on small businesses would discourage entrepreneurs.

* education: Ms. Barnes mentioned the importance of a system that teaches "both males and females that anybody can do anything" and offers role models.

In his summary remarks, Professor Weinstein noted that none of the Western participants expressed complete satisfaction with the progress that has been achieved toward equality. (Mention was made of the "glass ceiling," problems with child care, and encounters with prejudice.) However, he remarked upon the advances in the following categories:

-- constitutional and legal protections (such as the United Kingdom's sex discrimination act and Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome, which ultimately came to guarantee equal pay between men and women in Europe);

-- the ongoing work of international instruments such as the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and the European Committee for Equality between Women and Men within the Directorate of Human Rights of the Council of Europe;

-- the economic and social support structures that have been instituted and maintained in a number of countries (such as mentoring programs in business and the 14 weeks of paid maternity leave available throughout Europe);

-- education (departure from subtle forms of discrimination against females in the classroom; greater choice for women regarding educational opportunities -- and more women taking advantage of these opportunities).

Session Three

Building Women's Organizational and Leadership Skills in Central and Eastern Europe: Opportunities and Obstacles, Establishing Action Networks, Accessing the Media

Ms. Joy Corning, the Lieutenant Governor of the State of Iowa chaired the discussion. The panelists included: Ms. Eniko Bollobás, Director of the Atlantic Bureau of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, former Charge D'Affaires at the Hungarian Embassy in Washington, DC, and founder of the political discussion group *Hungarian Feminists* (the first non-communist organization to address women's issues); Ms. Smaranda Enache, a leader of the Civic Alliance Party in Romania and Co-President of the Pro Europea League; Ms. Zdenka Krejcova, Specialist in Social Affairs at the Czech Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and former Member of Parliament, where she served as chairman of the Commission of Women's Position in Society; Ms. Eva Zahradnikova, State Secretary for the Slovak Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family; and Ms. Susan Davis, Chairman of the Susan Davis Companies, past President of the International Women's Forum, former President of the National Association of Women Business Owners in Washington, DC, and member of the Center for Democracy's Board of Directors.

Ms. Bollobás pointed out that women in Eastern Europe are bearing a double burden: the Eastern patriarchal tradition combined with the communist legacy. One impediment from the communist legacy is the pervasive belief in a zero sum game, i.e. that one person's gain is another person's loss. She feels it is important that this mindset change and that society realize that gains in one aspect of society [e.g. women's issues] can actually be advantageous to society as a whole. She also commented that often "Western companies come in and want to forget about affirmative action, equal opportunity, fair competition, and environmental protection," and she appealed to these companies to instead set an example by using the same standards required of them in their own countries.

Ms. Enache pointed out that in Romania under Nicolae Ceausescu a large number of women were brought into politics; however, this had "nothing to do with the rights of women," but was simply a means "to iron out individual women's personalities in order to build this utopian society." As a result, there is now a backlash in which women do not want to be involved with politics, though most know that women must be represented if their problems are

to be addressed. Ms. Enache also discussed the emergence of women's organizations in Romania. Though they are legally free to exist, there is "economic discrimination" against organizations which are not pro-government; they lack access to facilities and encounter financial difficulties. She stressed the importance of links with other women's organizations in order to share information and appealed to the West for assistance, particularly in the form of capital.

Ms. Krejcova stated that it was good to hear that the experiences of women in other post-communist European countries were similar to her own. She observed that since November 1989 at least 20 new women's organizations had been established; they now exist within political parties, church organizations, charities, and the ecological movement. On behalf of these organizations, she appealed for contacts with similar groups in both the East and West. She warned against making the drive for equality an ideology as communism had already shown how an ideology can blind one to rationality. Taking issue with Ms. Gjorv and Ms. van Hemeldonck, she commented that women should not press for a quota system or imperative representation; she feels that the top priority should simply be an effectively functioning economic and political system.

Ms. Zahradnikova related that there are eight women's organizations in Slovakia, including a Catholic organization and women's associations within various political parties. However, thus far these groups have not had much influence on the policies of the state. She noted that women constitute 11 percent of the Slovak Parliament as well as a greater percentage at the local level and that many women have recently become involved in small- and medium-sized businesses. However, she remarked that there is still "a degree of passivity and women who tend to find refuge in maternity." In conclusion, she commented that women should be given the opportunity to pursue various alternatives "so that each individual can attain personal fulfillment."

Ms. Davis focused her remarks on accessing the media, as she believes that those people who can communicate information and use the media have "ultimate power." She also stressed that women -- both on an individual and organizational level -- should not be afraid to ask for help and should be specific about their needs. She identified several organizations that can provide various forms of assistance to women: the National Association of Women Business Owners in the U.S. and its international organization, the Women Business Owners Group in the U.S., the Institute for Women in Law and Development which has overseas offices, the International Women in Media Foundation, and the International Women's Forum. In addition to providing assistance, these groups can be valuable in terms of networking. She also mentioned the *International Directory of Women Political Leadership*, published at the University of Maryland, as a good resource.

The discussion that followed involved more than twenty-five participants from over twenty countries. The following issues were discussed:

* The decrease in social protection resulting from the transition from communism to democracy: Several participants from Western Europe and the U.S. noted the difficulty in

funding social welfare programs in the West and suggested that the participants from Central and Eastern Europe should probably expect the same difficulties. Participants commented that if programs to care for children and the elderly were cut back, women would be expected to make up the difference. Ms. Peggy Simpson, a freelance U.S. journalist, pointed out that if firms in Central and Eastern Europe are required to assume costs for maternity leave and other benefits, they might decrease the number of women they have on the payroll. She already has evidence of this occurring in Poland.

* Employment: Ms. Valcu of Romania brought up the need for equal pay, promotion and training; she also remarked that women tend to be placed in poorer and more stressful working conditions. Several other participants commented on the need for helping women find work again (as so many women are losing their jobs during this time of transition) as well as the need for financial assistance in opening small businesses.

Ms. Labuda stated that in Poland a group has been established that helps unemployed women by organizing training courses "using American experience as a basis, on subjects such as how to set up a business. The Women's World Bank . . . has been very useful in this regard." Ms. Davis related that the Center for International Private Enterprise makes grants to groups promoting private enterprise and offered to help with the application process. Ms. Freedman explained some of the assistance available through AID. To encourage women entrepreneurs, AID is working to give women access to capital and credit and to provide training to women entrepreneurs. (She touched upon a program which brings factory managers in Albania to the U.S. for managerial training.)

* Domestic violence: Mrs. Lokar related that Slovenia has set up several SOS phone lines for battered women and children. Ms. Labuda said that in Poland a foundation has been established to aid women who have been raped or abused by family members. She pointed out, however, that unfortunately "in Poland and in many other countries, we don't have any data on this subject because there has never been any reliable research done." Ms. Haney from the United States related that one of the genuine contributions of the American women's movement is that the issue is now publicized and acknowledged; she stated that laws have now been passed "to make it an issue of assault and violence and not an issue of domestic relationships." Ms. Krejcova related that in the Czech lands a new women's movement called "Humanity" is trying to find a way to build shelters for women as well as to provide psychologists to help women in need; they are having difficulties, however, with finances.

* Education: Ms. Ferenczi of Hungary stressed the importance of education. In contrast to several other participants who felt the major form of assistance the West could provide was financial, Ms. Ferenczi felt it was educational. She mentioned how helpful conferences by the U.S. National Economic Alliance Foundation had been in, not only teaching skills and sharing tips on starting businesses, but exposing the women of Eastern Europe to a new mindset.

* Networking: There was general agreement on the critical importance of networking. In addition to the resources listed by Ms. Davis, Ms. Dinsdale related that the Council of Europe

was trying to facilitate networking by organizing exchanges between West European NGOs and developing NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe. To this end, the Council of Europe was creating a directory of the NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe.

* The media: Explaining that in Romania (as throughout much of the region), television is a state monopoly, Ms. Lokar stressed that it is important to "break this monopoly and find a way to present women's programs, even for one hour a week." (After this session, Ms. Davis met with several of the participants and suggested creating a television series on successful women business leaders and politicians.)

Ms. Bollobas related that in Hungary the media "has become the last outpost for conservative communists" and has played a major role in perpetuating language that is sexist and disrespectful of women. Ms. Labuda explained that in Poland "generally speaking, the image of women in the media . . . downplays women's value or degrades them." She stressed the importance of presenting a more positive portrayal of women "from books in primary schools onwards."

* Financial problems facing women's groups and researchers: Several participants cited the lack of financial resources as hindering the work of women's organizations. Ms. Lokar from Slovenia also regretted the lack of financial support for research: "We have very interesting women researchers, but little money for women to do these studies."

* Mentality against involvement with politics: Ms. Zlatescu of Romania noted a reluctance by women to get involved in politics as a reaction to the tendency under communism to artificially include women. She related that both men and women were hesitant to support women for top political positions due to the example of women who had held these types of positions before. (Women earlier had been chosen simply to fulfill quotas and were usually not very competent in their jobs.)

* Women's self-perception: Ms. Stefanoiu of Romania commented that as women become more confident in themselves, men's perceptions will also change. She suggested that it is not "so much a fight between men and women. What we're trying to do is change women's mentality and make them aware of their possibilities."

* Quota system: The debate over the quota system continued from the previous day. Speaking in its favor, Ms. Aguiar of Portugal commented that it is "perhaps not a very good system, but it's the best system," and she attributed the number of women in the Spanish parliament to its use. Ms. Corning agreed, remarking that the State of Iowa had just passed "historic legislation whereby boards, commissions and committees appointed by the governor and the legislature would be gender balanced." (In the closing session, Ms. Labuda argued that in Poland the quota system wouldn't work, but she supported the idea of Ms. Lokar from Slovenia that political parties which included 30 percent women should receive some sort of financial incentive.)

Final Session

The final session was devoted to identifying issues for further consideration and suggesting activities which participants may wish to pursue. Among the topics raised were the following:

* Addressing domestic and sexual violence: Participants emphasized the need to study this issue, to make it more public, and to provide help for its victims. Ms. Robert of Switzerland suggested holding a seminar "about the thousand faces of violence."

* Organizing either a "Women's Party" or caucuses of women within parliaments: Ms. Robert from Switzerland suggested establishing a women's party. (Others commented that if women voted as a bloc, existing political parties would take their concerns more seriously.) Ms. Labuda recommended organizing women's groups with parliaments and related her experience of doing so within the Polish parliament. Ms. Aguiar of Portugal, however, spoke out against caucuses; she asserted that these issues should be worked out by men and women together.

* Incorporating the fundamental right to equality into the new constitutions being developed in Central and Eastern Europe as well as developing legislation on equal opportunities and social policies: Ms. Dinsdale suggested that bodies such as the Council of Europe, The Center for Democracy, and the Venice Commission for Democracy through Law could encourage countries to do this as well as provide expert counseling.

* Establishing re-entry job training and career counseling for women and helping women to obtain credit and loans if they want to open their own businesses: Ms. Labuda from Poland remarked that there were individuals throughout the region who had already grown very rich and that these people "might be potential sponsors of projects to help women." Ms. Freedman stated that "USAID has been active in helping to develop small businesses and mentor programs and working with organizations such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development" and that they were currently looking at how to increase loans to women.

* Continuing research on women's social and health issues: Ms. Freedman stated that the International Center for Research on Women was undertaking critical studies in this area, and she encouraged further work.

* Developing a television series featuring successful women role models to be shown throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Susan Davis helped to establish an *ad hoc* working group among interested conference participants, and she promised to pursue funding for this project.

* Networking: Participants expressed appreciation for the networking that had already begun at the conference. Ms. Garcia suggested that women should contact such groups as the Commission on the Status of Women, the National Organization of Women, and Women in

Government. Ms. Cohen remarked that it would be worthwhile to establish links with the National Conference of State Legislators.

* Taking an active role in more than "so-called women's subjects." Ms. Robert voiced concern that focusing energy solely on women's issues enabled women to be pushed into typical women's sectors and away from the key decision-making ministries. She stressed the importance of also becoming involved in areas such as finance or defense, where the power and the money lie.

* Training programs for parliamentarians and staff for the emerging democracies of Central and Eastern Europe: Mr. Stegen indicated that the Council of Europe already had these plans underway.

* Establishing a subcommittee on the equality of men and women within the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: Mr. Martinez, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, promised to pursue this initiative.

The participants also reached a consensus on a Declaration enumerating recommendations for further activities. There was agreement to:

1) establish at The Center for Democracy a clearing house for subsequent activity to assist in maintaining a network among the participants; [The Center has remained in contact with most of the participants and has provided various information upon request.]

2) publish a transcript of the conference;

3) prepare training workshops and programs related to strengthening the political, economic, and social influence of women in their own societies;

4) assist in development for partnerships between women's groups and leaders in the new Central and East European democracies and their counterparts in the West; [the Center has provided the contact information for those in the West to get in touch with their counterparts in the East -- and vice versa]

5) prepare a follow-up conference on the same topic in 1993;

6) organize working groups from among the members to address ongoing issues related to the themes of the conference;

7) undertake other activities as might be of special use in this regard.

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Catherine Lalumiere, offered the closing address. Ms. Lalumiere traced the women's movement for equality in the West and compared

it with the current situation in Central and Eastern Europe. While she concluded that, in legal terms, women had made great progress in the West, she stated that "in practical terms the results are not often that satisfactory," mentioning as an example how women are still discouraged from pursuing many professions. She sees the reasons for the lack of progress as both practical and mental. As an example of the practical, she commented that "as long as women continue to do the housework and it is not divided evenly between men and women, we will not overcome a certain handicap that we have in this respect." In explaining the mental, she stated that the female and male mentality "has to develop . . . and this is a very progressive and gradual process. It takes much longer than changing legislation."

Ms. Lalumiere also mentioned that the Council of Europe has been working with the concept of "parity" regarding democracy: "We feel that a democracy cannot work adequately . . . if the two sexes do not participate in equal measure." Other issues that she highlighted included:

* economic: the fact that women are more affected by unemployment than men and have greater difficulty gaining access to vocational training

* social: the fact that women will have to shoulder the consequences of the dismantling of social protection measures; the care of children and the elderly will be their burden (if gender roles remain as they are today)

* "moral:" She referred to the new philosophies -- some religious and some not -- which are replacing communism and which tend to have retrograde ideas about women, upholding the notion that a woman's place is in the home.

She also spoke out in favor of quotas. While she thinks "it is a horrific policy, perhaps in this period of transition it is indispensable in order to ensure that a significant number of women occupy important positions in political life." She concluded by commenting that, while women "are irreplaceable at home, we also have an important role to play outside the home."

VI. MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE CONFERENCE

The Center worked with Jerry Brown, Deputy Director of External Affairs, at USAID on alerting media about the conference. Press releases were sent out by both the Center and USAID (see Attachment H). Mr. Brown organized radio interviews for several of the participants and arranged for coverage of the conference by Cable News Network (CNN). Unfortunately, CNN preempted the coverage because of an airplane crash in Amsterdam.

The Council of Europe included an article on the conference in its newsletter "Democracy." This article prompted requests for additional information on the conference from around the world.

VII. CONFERENCE ACHIEVEMENTS AND FOLLOW-UP

The Center for Democracy believes that the conference met or exceeded almost all the objectives that were agreed upon with USAID officials and set forth in its subcontract with THE FUTURES GROUP. Below is a review of these objectives and the Center's evaluation of how they were met:

Objective 1: To identify issues related to the differential impact on men and women in the economic and political transition process now underway in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS.

The conference clearly achieved this objective. While some of the issues that were identified had previously been reported in the West, the conference was the first opportunity for women from the region to compare and contrast the situation in their countries with that of their counterparts in other countries of the region. The most common issues mentioned included:

1. Involvement of Women in the Political Process - There has been a decline of women involved in politics under the new democratic regimes. Studies have indicated a dramatic decrease in the number of women represented in parliament and government.

2. Employment, Retraining, and Business Development - In several countries in the region, the rate of unemployment among women is increasing more rapidly than among men. Also, jobs available to women are often limited to traditional "female" sectors. Traditional views of women's roles in society and the perception that women will cost more than men to employ were identified as two important reasons for a growing percentage of unemployment among women as compared to men.

   Several participants emphasized the need for retraining programs and assistance in small business and private sector development. While many women would like to open small businesses, they lack access to financial capital. Participants also stressed the value of business training seminars and mentoring programs.

3. Social and Health Issues - The transition to a market economy has destroyed the system of benefits that existed under the communist economic structure. Services that the state provided free of charge, such as year-long maternity leave and medical and child care, are being eliminated with no clear system to replace them.

4. Cultural Issues - Women must confront the perception by many men in the region of their role as second class worker/homemaker. These perceptions pre-date the communist regimes and were identified as a major obstacle to women in their attempts to become equal partners in both politics and government.

5. Development of Women's Organizations - Women in the region understand the need to organize themselves to better promote their causes, but are experiencing difficulty in establishing the legitimacy of their groups in the wake of the artificial women's organizations established under communism. Other problems include lack of funding and the need to improve organizational skills.

Objective 2: To initiate an ongoing dialogue on gender issues among the political leaders involved in the reform process in the region.

Many of the conference participants have indicated that the conference gave them a better understanding of the obstacles women are facing in the region. It also afforded them the first opportunity to meet their colleagues from neighboring countries and compare and contrast experiences and ideas. The conference was successful in establishing a network of women political leaders who volunteered to become contact persons in their countries to help develop regional and international cooperative programs to begin to confront the issues identified at the conference.

Objective 3: To initiate communication and cooperation among political leaders in Central and Eastern Europe, Western Europe, the CIS, and the United States.

The conference exceeded expectations in this area. Almost 90 women political leaders participated in the conference from both East and West. The Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly, as a result of this conference, established an Ad Hoc Committee on the Equality of the Sexes. This Committee will involve women political leaders from both Eastern Europe and Western Europe in its activities and provide a continuous communication point for these leaders on gender issues. The Council has assured the Center that it would welcome U.S. participation in the activities of this committee and hoped that the conference was an indication that U.S. officials are open to closer cooperation on gender issues.

Objective 4: To help women political leaders in Central and Eastern Europe develop organizational and leadership skills relevant to democratic forms of government.

As indicated by the enclosed transcript of the conference, the Central and East European participants were exposed to ideas and experiences from their Western counterparts as well as others in the region. Participants shared their experiences in establishing women's groups within parliaments, political parties, and business, as well as in creating mentoring programs. Proposals were made by participants for assistance beyond funding in this area including establishing closer relations with women's organizations in the West, information on organizational structures in the West, and exchange programs to place women working on gender issues in Western organizations.

Objective 5: To educate women on how to access the media in their respective countries.

Susan Davis, President of The Susan Davis Company, a Washington-based public relations firm, devoted part of her presentation on ways in which women can better use the media. Although this issue was discussed at the conference, the Center does not believe that this objective was met. It should be noted that, per the request of USAID, women involved in politics and government in Central and Eastern Europe were given preference over female journalists in the selection of participants; therefore, the conference included only one journalist from the region. This issue would have been discussed in greater detail if more representatives of the media had been in attendance.

Objective 6: To integrate U.S. efforts in this area with European organizations and structures, thereby avoiding duplication of effort and ensuring that views and perspectives from the United States are included in ongoing debates.

The conference provided the first opportunity for the USAID's Women in Development office as well as representatives of the European Bureau and Research Bureau to engage in dialogue on gender issues with officials from the Council of Europe. The Europeans have offered their full cooperation, and there exists an opportunity for USAID, if it so chooses, to improve communication, if not cooperation, with counterpart organizations in Western Europe.

Objective 7: To create a framework for the establishment of working groups for ongoing study of the issues identified at the conference. The working groups will provide continuous communication and cooperation among the participating political leaders in the area of gender issues and democratic development.

A framework has been established for the creation of working groups. One working group was established at the conference to develop a television series focusing on women in politics and business in Central and Eastern Europe. An unsolicited proposal to USAID was submitted by the Center and the Susan Davis Company for a pilot television series focusing on women in politics and business in Central and Eastern Europe. The working group for the television series includes seven women from the region who participated in the conference. USAID recently declined to fund this project. The Center resubmitted the proposal to the United States Information Agency.

Before additional working groups can be created, funding sources to support these groups need to be identified. The Center is working to identify potential funding sources for these groups in both Europe and the United States. Proposals have been made to the Center by participants to form working groups to focus on women in politics, training for women entrepreneurs, retraining of unemployed/low wage earning women, and to study ways in which social protection for women can be restored. Recent communication with a number of participants confirms that they are still willing and eager to serve on these working groups.

As stated, President Martinez announced plans to create in the Parliamentary Assembly a Subcommittee for Equality of Men and Women. He pledged the support of the Assembly for future activities resulting from the conference. In a March 15, 1993 letter to Allen Weinstein, President Martinez informed the Center that the Parliamentary Assembly decided to create an ad hoc Committee on the equality of the sexes. The Committee will organize activities in the near future to promote equity and help resolve the issues raised at the conference. President Martinez stated:

> "There is no doubt that the Conference you [the Center] organized and which was generously sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development was the major stepping stone for this decision and will enable the Assembly to even better express its concern over questions related to equality. . . . I would therefore like to thank you again for this important initiative which I consider the first concrete measure to help establish contacts and build this 'Parity Democracy' which we are aiming at." (See Attachment A for full text of letter.)

The Center sent each participant a contact list with addresses, and telephone and fax numbers of each participant to encourage continued cooperation and communication, as well as a copy of the statement issued at the end of the conference. The Center also sent conference materials to the USAID Missions in Central and Eastern Europe, to our mailing list of those interested in these issues (close to 70 people), and to several women -- both in the U.S. and abroad -- who expressed an interest in the conference but were unable to attend.

The transcript of the conference was published and distributed to all conference participants. The transcript has also been made available to interested organizations and individuals.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations resulting from the Strasbourg conference:

1) Training programs should be instituted to help women become more involved in politics and government. While bias on the part of male politicians and the populace as a whole was recognized as an important factor in the relatively small number of women involved in politics, the participants noted that a distrust of the political system and a distaste for politics due to the artificial representation of women in official positions under the former regimes was a major factor in this decline as well. Another factor was how women perceive themselves. Women in the region tend to lack confidence in their ability to be effective participants in politics and government. The participants recommended organizing workshops to educate and train women on ways to become actively involved in politics and public life. These workshops would educate

women on the benefits of becoming politically active and teach them ways in which to become effective public citizens. Contacts with women political leaders in the West

should be promoted through organizations such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the U.S. National Conference of State Legislators.

Involving men in meetings and workshops was also strongly recommended by the participants in order to educate men on the importance of addressing gender issues in the transition process now occurring throughout the region.

2) Educational programs need to be instituted to teach women the basics of free market economics. Participants stressed that the economic changes now underway are causing increased unemployment among women. Women are being laid off at a higher rate than men in many Central/East European countries. Participants recommended that programs be established to educate women on free market economics. Existing Western organizations need to be encouraged to focus educational funds on women. Ms. Susan Davis stated that she serves on the Board of the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) which donates over $1 million per year for education programs on private enterprise and free market economics. At the time of the conference, no application from women's groups or groups focusing on education for women had ever been received.

3) Support needs to be given to Central/East European women entrepreneurs. Assistance programs focusing on women entrepreneurs were strongly endorsed by the conference participants. Participants such as Ms. Labuda from Poland and Ms. Ferencszi from Hungary emphasized that financial sponsors for these entrepreneurs can be found within their own countries. What is needed from the West is skills training and the sharing of knowledge.

4) Central and East European governments should be encouraged to institute job retraining for unemployed and low-wage earning women. Support from the West needs to be given to Central/East European governments and non-governmental organizations to encourage retraining programs for women.

5) Western organizations should support the nascent grass-roots women's organizations now being created in Central and Eastern Europe. As Ms. Dinsdale of the Council of Europe emphasized, non-governmental organizations involved in providing network support, and organizational and legal training to these new grass roots movements need to be given assistance. The Council of Europe is publishing a directory of NGO's involved with gender issues in Central/Eastern Europe and Western Europe for distribution throughout the region. A similar directory for U.S. NGO's should be distributed throughout Central and Eastern Europe. This can easily be accomplished by utilizing the U.S. embassies and consulates throughout the region.

6) Experts from the region, the U.S., and Western Europe need to examine the problem of the disappearance of social benefits for women. The demise of communism has also resulted in the elimination of many social benefits on which women were dependent. The benefits provided to families such as free child and health care and extended paid maternity leave are being eliminated. No specific recommendation on resolving this dilemma resulted from the conference because there was a vast difference of opinion between conservative participants who favor a private sector solution to this problem and liberal participants (particularly from Western Europe), who favored continued government involvement in this area. The only consensus that emerged is that this issue needs to be studied in more detail.

7) Western donor organizations should seek greater involvement by those women they seek to assist. The fact that the Central/East European women felt that they were equal participants in this conference and not present to primarily hear speeches by Western "experts" contributed greatly to their positive assessment of the conference. The participants strongly recommended that Western donor organizations seek the counsel of Central/East European women in both the planning and implementation of projects seeking to help them. While they expressed gratitude to the West for assistance, they believe that programs would be more effective if they were more responsive to the needs of the aid recipients.

8) U.S. donor organizations should seek greater cooperation with Western European institutions. As previously stated, the Council of Europe's membership includes all the countries of Europe and several republics of the former Soviet Union. Information made available in Strasbourg is disseminated to the legislatures and governments of all the member countries. Officials at the Council encourage and favor greater cooperation and participation in its activities from USAID and other U.S. donor organizations.

IX. CONCLUSION

The reaction to the conference from participants, Council of Europe officials, and USAID officials has been very positive. The conference achieved its main goal of bringing women political leaders from Central and Eastern Europe together with their counterparts from the United States and Western Europe to discuss the role of women in the democratization and economic reform process in the region. As demonstrated in this report, the conference did indeed meet its objectives and fulfilled the criteria developed in consultation with USAID and THE FUTURES GROUP that were elaborated in the subcontract.

The conference was not intended to be an intensive "skills training" course. It was convened to establish a framework for future activities. It identified priority areas on which USAID and other Western donor organizations need to concentrate and has created for USAID a network of Central/East European women political leaders who can become involved in the planning and implementation of programs aimed at assisting women in the region, thereby contributing to the initiation of a process of sustainable development.

The conference established a dialogue between USAID officials and Council of Europe officials that, should both institutions choose, can lead to cooperative efforts in effectively addressing gender issues and redressing gender imbalances. The Center encourages USAID to utilize this network and engage in constructive cooperation with the Council and other non-governmental organizations in implementing the recommendations resulting from this meeting.

Although follow-up has not been instituted as quickly as the Center hoped, recent actions by the Council of Europe and communication with conference participants shows that the network established is ready to assist in the implementation of programs. The conference will continue to be of value as USAID, the Center, and other organizations build upon this network as well as the ideas raised at the conference to implement meaningful programs of assistance to women in Central and Eastern Europe.

Council of Europe
Parliamentary Assembly

The President

Strasbourg, 15 March 1993

Dear Allen,

I refer to the Conference on "The Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe", organised under my auspices in October last year by the Center for Democracy, in conjunction with the Autumn part session of the Parliamentary Assembly.

Further to my proposal made at the Conference, the Bureau of the Assembly subsequently decided to create an ad hoc Committee on the equality of the sexes to monitor the situation with regard to questions related to this field.

The Bureau of the Assembly will decide on 25 March the composition of this multidisciplinary Committee. To date the following members of the Assembly are candidates:

- for the Bureau: Mrs Tarja Halonen (Finland, Socialist), (NN and NN);
- for the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights: Mrs Lydie Err (Luxembourg, Socialist) (and NN);
- for the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee: Mr Roland Beix (France, Socialist) and Ms Fethiye Özver (Turkey, European People's Party) and
- for the Committee on Culture and Education: Baroness Lockwood (United Kingdom, Socialist) and Mrs Leni Robert (Switzerland, Liberal).

This Committee will take up its activities in the near future and you will be kept informed on the outcome of its proceedings.

There is no doubt that the Conference you organised and which was generously sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development, was the major stepping stone for this decision and will enable the Assembly to even better express its concern over questions related to equality.

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25

The topics discussed by the Conference, as well as in the preliminary Hearing organised by the Committee for Social, Health and Family Affairs, enabled participants from the East as much as from the West to identify issues and exchange views with regard to the building of women's organisational and leadership skills. It is my strong conviction that the help and experience of the women in the West will be of benefit to all women in the East. A concentrated and uninterrupted dialogue based on mutual support and continuous exchange will contribute to overcome discrimination, intolerance and sexism, particularly present in countries undergoing the transition to pluralist democracy and market economy.

I would therefore like to thank you again for taking this important initiative which I consider a first concrete measure to help establish contacts and build this "Parity Democracy" which we are aiming at.

Yours sincerely,

Miguel Angel MARTINEZ

THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

An International Conference Co-sponsored by

The Center for Democracy
and
The United States Agency for International Development
(Office of Women in Development and Bureau for Europe)

Under the auspices of
The President of the Parliamentary Assembly
The Council of Europe

Strasbourg
3-4 October 1992

- 27

DECLARATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON "THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE"

We, the participants in the October 3-4, 1992 conference in Strasbourg on "The Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe," co-sponsored by The Center for Democracy and The United States Agency for International Development under the auspices of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of The Council of Europe,

--cognizant of the importance of this initial encounter at this Conference of women leaders and their supporters from the United States and every part of Europe (West, Central and East);

--recognizing the need for continuous communication among ourselves and other women leaders in our respective countries; and

--responding to the urgent needs especially of those among us from the newly democratizing countries of Central and Eastern Europe;

request the organizers to continue their efforts in support of the Conference's overall goal of devising practical steps to encourage the movement toward full equality of women and men in all our societies through a variety of means:

1. by establishing at The Center for Democracy a clearing house for our subsequent activity, keeping interested individuals, NGOs, parliaments and governments in touch with one another on these issues;

2. by the Center's publishing a transcript of this meeting in English and French;

3. by preparing subsequent training workshops and programs related to strengthening the political, economic and social influence of women in their own societies;

4. by assisting in development for partnerships between women's groups and leaders in the new Central and Eastern European democracies and their counterparts in the West;

5. by the Center's preparing a Conference on the same topics in 1993;

6. by organizing working groups from among our members to address ongoing issues related to the themes of the Conference; and

7. by undertaking such other activities as might be of special use in this regard, in closest consultation with the participants of this meeting.

18

THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

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Palais de l'Europe
Strasbourg, France
3-4 October 1992

29

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Participants . . . . . *i*

Opening Session

Prof. Weinstein 1,3,4,5
Mr. Martinez 1
Mr. Kelly 3
Ms. Freedman 4

Session One: Identification of Issues Related to the Role of Women in the Economic, Social and Political Process in Central and Eastern Europe

Prof. Weinstein 6,21
Dame Fenner 6,7,8,12,13,14,16,18,19,20
Ms. Labuda 6,17
Ms. Petrova 7,16
Ms. Vinogradova 8
Ms. Withrow 9
Ms. Stanic 11
Ms. Lako 12
Ms. Zajc 13
Ms. Garcia 14
Ms. Lokar 15
Ms. Lau 16
Ms. Haney 16
Ms. Zlatescu 17
Ms. Bollobas 18
Ms. Asteirsdottir 18
Ms. Kartcheva 19
Ms. Gjorv 20

Session Two: Action by Western Governments for Equal Participation of Women and Men in Political and Economic Life

Ms. Fischer 22,24,26,27,28,29
Ms. Halonen 22,27,29
Ms. Norton 23,30
Ms. van Hemeldonck 24,28
Baroness Lockwood 26
Ms. Gjorv 27
Ms. Lau 28
Ms. Petrova 28
Ms. Lokar 30
Ms. Guirado 30
Ms. Barnes 31
Ms. Garcia 31
Ms. Apprill 32
Ms. Ryynanen 32
Ms. Freedman 32
Prof. Weinstein 33

Session Three: Building Women's Organizational and Leadership Skills in Central and Eastern Europe: Opportunities and Obstacles, Establishing Action Networks, and Accessing the Media

Prof. Weinstein 34,35,58
Ms. Corning 34,35,43,57,58
Ms. Norton 35
Ms. Hojberg 35
Mr. Ternak 35
Ms. Bollobas 35,54,56
Ms. Enache 37,55
Ms. Krejcova 38,55
Ms. Zahradnikova 39
Ms. Davis 40,57
Ms. Simpson 43
Ms. Culi 44
Ms. Withrow 45
Ms. Lokar 45
Ms. McInerny 46
Ms. Dinsdale 46
Ms. Zlatescu 47
Ms. Cohen 47
Ms. Danielova 48
Ms. Joneken 48
Ms. Valcu 49
Ms. Ferenczi 49

Session Three (continued)

Ms. Robert 50
Ms. Freedman 52
Ms. Labuda 52
Ms. Stefanoiu 53
Ms. Lau 54
Ms. Veltcheva 54
Ms. Byrne 54
Ms. Haney 55
Ms. Aguiar 56
Ms. Guirado 57

Closing Session

Prof. Weinstein 59,60,61,62,63,64,66,68,73,74,76,77
Ms. Dinsdale 59
Ms. Cohen 60
Ms. Fischer 61
Ms. Labuda 62
Ms. Lau 63
Ms. Garcia 64
Mr. Kelly 65
Ms. Aguiar 65
Ms. Ferenczi 66
Ms. Robert 67
Ms. Lokar 68
Mr. Stegen 68
Mr. Klebes 68
Sec. Gen. Lalumiere 69
Ms. Freedman 73
Ms. Davis 74
Mr. Martinez 76

Statement of Ms. Ella A. Pamfilova, Minister of Social Protection of the Russian Federation 78

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33

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Ms. Eva Zahradnikova
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Ms. Anne Lucchese
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35

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Opening Session

Prof. Weinstein: I am Allen Weinstein, President of The Center for Democracy. May I indicate that these proceedings will be interpreted in English, French, German, and Russian. Welcome to Europe!

I will turn directly to the task I have at hand and introduce to you a patriot of democracy, naturally a Spanish patriot of Spanish democracy--a leader and shaper in that movement then and now--and a patriot of Europe. As an American friend of the trans-Atlantic relationship, I am proud to introduce someone you all know fondly, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Miguel Angel Martinez.

Mr. Martinez: I am happy to observe that many friends are present and to see some of you for the first time in several months after certain past encounters which took place in far less agreeable circumstances than this. Having attended this morning's Assembly debate, you know that it was very difficult. It concerned the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and, in general, the highly complex situation in former Yugoslavia, one of the most confused ever to occur in Europe. The inspired, albeit not very optimistic, address delivered this morning by Lord Owen, Co-Chairman with Cyrus Vance of the International Conference on Peace in Former Yugoslavia, provided an opportunity to restate our convictions, reassert our commitment, and reach decisions in keeping with our parliamentary identity.

I am very glad that it has been possible to hold the present meeting here. It is a meeting which, so to speak, does not differ greatly from this morning's proceedings, being consistent with the broad outlines of Council of Europe policy and with the advancement of human rights and equality between the sexes. However, the subject of discussion this afternoon and tomorrow will, I think, be less serious and alarming than the situation which we discussed this morning. Our commitment is nonetheless identical, although I must say I feel more relaxed here among you than in the plenary session this morning.

My thanks to you all and especially to Allen Weinstein for his assistance and all the support which the Council of Europe receives from The Center for Democracy. This is a golden opportunity to cooperate with our friends across the Atlantic, especially those in the United States with whom we share a number of values in our pursuit of democracy, pluralism, and a better world.

It was a great pleasure for me to grant the patronage of the President of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly to the initiative taken by The Center for Democracy in convening a conference on the role of women and the transition to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe at the Council headquarters here in Strasbourg. We are gathered to discuss a topic of indisputable relevance not only to my own concerns as a politician and a citizen, but also to the purpose, the preoccupations and, may I say, the responsibilities of the institution which I represent.

The theme is a topical one and very apposite, in that it evokes the concept of democracy and women's roles, representation, and exercise of their rights in the democratic system, particularly during the present crucial phase of transition. Thus, it involves two of the essential principles associated with the identity and the very existence of the Council of Europe.

The protection and furtherance of the universal values constituted by democracy and human rights for men and women alike, whether civil and political or economic and social rights, have in fact been central to the action of the Council of Europe ever since its inception in 1949. The Council of Europe was the first international institution to be convened in Europe as an international forum bringing together elected parliamentarians from its member states, and therefore the first to give Europe's peoples a part in the process of European unification from 1949 onwards.

The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms is the matchless expression, the tangible fulfillment of one of the Council's goals, with its machinery for the protection of civil and political rights and its unique arrangements for individual petition.

As for democracy, one may attempt to pin it down, but it is an infinitely perfectible concept, an ideal which ever remains to be realized, a horizon never finally attained although we progress further day by day along the path towards it. Democracy has a particular momentum, and of course the parliamentary dimension is vital. But, may I say in your presence, it is inadequate and unacceptable as such because the under-involvement of women in parliament points to a deficiency.

In 1949 female participation in our Assembly was not very high and was to be found mainly in the delegations of the countries of Northern Europe; at the first Assembly session on 13 August 1949, there were

nine women out of 177 representatives for all 10 parliaments of the Council of Europe founding states. Except in the Northern countries, where it dated from after the First World War, women's right to vote and stand for election was very recent, a fact which could readily account for their under-representation, although this superficially convincing explanation would scarcely have been acceptable to any democratic mentality. The recent granting of the right to vote made the shortage of women understandable, but no democrat could have left it at that.

In 1975 the proclamation of International Women's Year sparked off a good deal of controversy but also proved valuable in stimulating the activities of numerous international organizations, particularly those conducted by the Council of Europe and its Parliamentary Assembly. Equality became a political concern, and fighting for equality became a mark of kinship, sometimes a mark of differentiation between progressive and reactionary elements. In most of our member states the first move made to acknowledge the political nature of the issues was their assignment to a specific department. The creation of a ministerial portfolio, a state secretariat or an independent multifunctional body gave visible proof of the political importance attached to the question, and action to promote greater equality definitely gained in effectiveness.

The campaign for equality between women and men was integrated with the attempts and actions which were pursued to bring about a more just and equitable world. It was realized that women should have the initiative in their emancipation, and that if the cause was to prevail, men should also be enlisted and persuaded of its rightfulness in order to win their support. It was also realized that full attainment of equality required not only legislation but also new practical solutions, a more positive and active approach. Yet even today, now that the Council of Europe has expanded as a result of political upheavals and the reception of new states into Europe's democratic family, although it comprises 27 member states and representatives of the various left and right wing political tendencies are gathered together in the Assembly, our women parliamentarians nevertheless amount to only 51 of a total 420 members.

I wonder whether people realize that today only 11% of the world's parliamentarians are women despite the militant action taken, not to mention the efforts by the Inter-Parliamentary Union to strengthen representative institutions worldwide, and in particular to achieve fuller representation of women. I take this occasion to commend Mrs. Leni Fischer, the Chairman of the Committee on Culture and Education, who is in the vanguard of this struggle within the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and I appeal to all of you to read and disseminate the numerous publications, including maps, which the IPU produces to document the political awakening of women and the various practicable ways and means adopted all over the world to ensure their due representation.

In Central and Eastern Europe, the emergence of democracy oddly coincides with a sudden and very marked decrease in women's political involvement, all the more alarming in that it is attended, as is inevitable at a time of transition to the market economy, by economic choices and target-setting which often have latent adverse implications for women, and moreover directly infringe certain of their rights once taken for granted. Women are the first to be excluded from the labor market, being particularly subject to unemployment. Jobs explicitly set aside for men are reappearing. Women are being relegated to the household by the withdrawal of child care services and other facilities or assistance. There is a concomitant resurgence of patriarchal attitudes, in which the maternal stereotype is glorified and the free choice of motherhood is contested.

Thus, ladies and gentlemen, valued friends, there is a regression compared with a past situation where equality of the sexes was part of the official creed of totalitarian governments and comparatively progressive measures were taken in the field under discussion, however misguided the former governments may otherwise have been.

Though distorted under the communist regimes, such principles as equality between women and men are to be classed as democratic achievements. Reaction against the former regimes cannot and must not mean that the principles upheld by our democratic societies are now to be debased. Otherwise, when the time of reunion comes, it will be the role or, at all events, the duty of the Council of Europe to reassert that freedom and democracy find their true expression only in so far as women and men join together on the same footing and on equal terms in community affairs and especially politics.

The modern ideal of European democracy is all-embracing and excludes all forms of particularism, invariably suspected of harboring privilege and discrimination. This is why it is abstract, treats the citizen as an asexual being, denies difference and

generally applies a male sexist frame of reference. The progress achieved by a society is commensurate with its ability to produce structures giving men and women the same opportunities in every respect. Yet in our societies, democratic though they may be, everything has so far been founded on male participation, often to the detriment of female participation. Thus, if democracy is to be given substance and depth, an effort must be made to make women's involvement in civic affairs genuine and irreversible.

At a time when we face the self-imposed challenge of European construction, which will be the key to our common stability and social progress, Europe cannot conceivably be built unless men and women participate equally. If this is true for us in the West, surely it applies to all the Central and Eastern European countries which profess their faith in the universal values characterizing our plan scaled to the entire continent, the continent which we share. Equal participation is possibly of even greater concern to your countries, for they must not merely align themselves to our procedures; rather, they and you must be urged to join us in a common effort to do better.

Our values, the values of the Council of Europe, are embodied and codified in two treaties. The Convention on Human Rights deals with civil and political rights, and the European Social Charter recognizes economic and social rights and especially the right to equal opportunity and equal treatment for women and men with respect to employment and occupation. These two conventions embody our creed. Their ratification must be an immediate imperative for any state wishing to take the same course as ours, whereupon we shall be able to combine our efforts for their constant enhancement, regular updating and greater effectiveness.

Indeed, the danger of intolerance towards women is alas not the only one to rear its head. Neo-nazism, racist assaults and ethnic cleansing are also glaringly apparent, and it is more urgent than ever before to resist all forms of discrimination whether racial, ethnic or sexist. This may be the time for the Council of Europe to reassess the suitability of its legal arsenal constituted by the European Convention on Human Rights, which should be reviewed in order to ascertain whether the relevant provisions, whose limited scope has been pointed out from time to time, suffice to counter these perils.

This is what the Council of Europe has to offer; this is its contribution towards a fairer division of responsibilities between women and men. There are other avenues to explore, and other methods remain to be discovered. Ideas and initiatives will certainly emerge from your discussions, which are sure to be lively and resourceful; in anticipation of their fruitful outcome, I wish your conference every success.

Ladies and gentlemen, you will have noticed that the kind of address delivered by a President of an Assembly at a colloquy like yours is never informal, and this plainly expresses my high regard for you and for the quality of your gathering today. I do not just intend to greet you and bid you welcome here today simply by saying that we are delighted to see you.

On the contrary, I consider it highly important for the President of the Assembly to offer a pledge that he and his organization will grant you a hearing. You are in the front ranks, and we want to assure you that we are beside you in the pursuit of your goals.

Prof. Weinstein: If I may speak for all the organizers and sponsors, we are greatly honored to hold this conference in this great institution, the Council of Europe. We are pleased to welcome so many Members and staff who have joined us this afternoon and hope many of you will continue to be with us through tomorrow. We have come to the Council at a time when you are deliberating issues like Bosnia which affect the fate of all democracies, when a great burden has been placed on the Council's shoulders. For you to take the time to be here and to provide assistance and support is, I think, tangible testimony of your commitment to the work that will go on here. We are all deeply grateful.

We are going to be serious, yet informal, and move along briskly so that after the introductory remarks, we can begin the first panel which gets to the heart of the matter. And so I call upon my colleague, the Chairman of The Center for Democracy, Peter Kelly.

Mr. Kelly: First, let me remark that the last time I saw President Martinez we were in Moscow just a few days before the coup attempt, and I did not see him standing on a tank. Mr. President, I'm sure you were close to it at the time, helping to set that movement to freedom.

In the United States we have a population base that is a little more than 52 percent women. Yet, we

too are at the beginning stages of the emergence of women as the sources of power and wisdom in both government and business. It is a fairly typical American process that when a group of people first emerge--usually a national people like the Irish, or the Poles, or the Italians--they are first leaders of community activity. Then they step into political power, a dominant political power, and then they move to business. That is exactly the kind of thing that is taking place in the United States, and I suspect everywhere else in this world.

Women have historically been the backbone of American political movements. Things simply don't happen unless women are involved, because men, you know, don't worry about details and really cannot accomplish great things without the aid of those who push us along. And yet, until fairly recently women have not been a major presence in elected office.

Progress has gradually been made, and it is appropriately represented here by the US delegation to this conference. We have four women who serve as state-wide elected officials--secretary of state, attorney general, lieutenant governor, and treasurer--as well as a state senator and a member of a state house of representatives. When we conclude the election process in 1992, we expect to enjoy a significant change in the numbers of women who are in state-wide and congressional positions. We expect to see the female constituency of the U.S. Senate at least tripled, if not quadrupled, and an increase in the House of as many as three dozen women leaders. If so, we are at the beginning.

One thing I think you will find as we go through these next 36 hours is a sense of the need for solidarity in this kind of action. Nothing happens by itself. The relationships that you will find in this room, I believe, will be of great value because you need to understand each of us and try to work together to advance the cause. Relationships are everything, and this is a good beginning for them.

Prof. Weinstein: Our next speaker has been critical to the planning of this meeting. The Center for Democracy, the Council of Europe, and the U.S. Agency for International Development have been organizing this process, but primary funding support for the conference has come from USAID through the efforts of the director of its Office of Women in Development, Mrs. Mary Fran Freedman. Additional support has come from the bureau within USAID which deals with assistance to the new European democracies, represented here today by Mr. Gerald Hyman. I've asked Mrs. Freedman to share some of her thoughts with us as we begin.

Ms. Freedman: Thank you. It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, and that time is now. Who would have imagined a few years ago that democracy would be breaking out all over the world and that we would be brought together in this way, talking about how to increase our role in democracy. It is a wonderful time of opportunity. We have tremendous resources, especially in the people of our countries: bright, dedicated people who are really committed to the goal of making democracy work, and making it work for all people.

It is also the worst of times, sad to say. In most every country, domestic affairs is the big item on the agenda. Many of our countries are not having great financial times right now, the United States included. Foreign assistance is not on the front burner. I am part of the US delegation to the UN Commission on the Status of Women and part of the Women's Development Expert Group of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD. And when we met in May, I knew the United States was having a hard time trying to increase foreign assistance.

The purpose of this conference is an exchange of experiences. We want all of you to share your challenges, your problems, and your opportunities. As Peter Kelly said earlier, the United States is not stellar in its record of women in elected political positions. Women hold only 2% of positions in the Senate, 6.4% of the seats in the House of Representatives, and 18.1% of elected state offices. Mr. Kelly says we hope to double the national figures very soon, but truly I don't think we have the luxury of time for continuing at the same slow pace.

In a letter written by President Bush to our office, he spoke of our pioneering efforts, thus: "The big political changes that we witnessed last year have created new oportunities for women in the world. In the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe and in the Commonwealth of Independent States, women play an essential role in the struggle for greater political opportunity and for democratic reform. In the same manner in other regions, women become more and more involved with the issues related to education, business and government." That bodes well for the future.

In November after my first week on the job, I participated in a meeting with women from Eastern

Europe where two Polish women were present. We have talked of the diminished role of women in the parliaments, and in many countries this reduction is on the order of 10 times fewer women. This has preoccupied me, and I asked myself if those women were able to prevent this.

It seems that this is the best moment. We cannot work alone; we must work together. It is not only a question of justice, but a question of numbers, of course. We honestly believe that democracy will work in the entire world. This is our ultimate belief. Yet, democracy will not work unless it is understood by all members of a society, including, of course, all the women.

In July I went to Romania and participated in certain sessions of the democratic convention, and that was very interesting. They said it was good for us to come to the villages in February at the time of the local elections. According to the men running for office, however, nobody wanted to speak with them. I told them, "Of course not, for an hour and a half you have talked about employment and privatization. The village women make fun of these issues." What those women really wanted was a good education and safety for their children, good drinking water, housing, crops, central heating, fuel for the winter, and better nutrition and health. Little of the talk about privatization of the economy was meaningful to these rural women. If candidates do not talk about the issues of crucial importance to women, the women will not vote for them.

Democracy will not work if women do not play an essential role in the democratic process. This is why I believe this conference is so very badly needed and hope it is followed by many other encounters. The euphoria which follows liberty has passed; now the true work begins.

On behalf of the United States Agency for International Development, may I say we are extremely fortunate to be able to co-sponsor this meeting. We want to thank the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe for lending its support to this meeting under the authority of its President. We also want to thank The Center for Democracy which worked very hard to organize this conference and invited the women from all the countries of the region to contribute to this undertaking.

As a result of this conference, we hope to pursue concrete solutions for the issues which will be raised here. We hope to increase the political participation of women in a manner which encourages candidates for local offices, for mayoral, parliamentary, or deputy posts, and even prime minister or president.

Prof. Weinstein: We are delighted that 23 countries are represented here, and that representatives of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament sit on our first panel. Mr. President, this is a pioneer activity of the type of cooperation between Europeans and Americans that you and others in this room have wished for--cooperation in supporting the institutional development which is difficult in a new democracy.

Members of the U.S. Congress, men and women alike, support our efforts, although they were unable to join us here. Our colleagues in the executive branch of government are also interested in strengthening and broadening relations between the Council of Europe and the American Congress.

There is a link between the necessity to succeed in our efforts and the necessity to succeed in the efforts of the Parliamentary Assembly expressed this morning in the debate concerning Bosnia-Herzegovina and the former Yugoslavia. I would like to underline the tragic bond which exists, beyond the shadow of a doubt, between what we heard this morning and what will be heard this afternoon in the *Palais de l'Europe*.

I received word this morning that one of the delegates prepared to participate in this meeting, Mrs. Edita Tahiri, of the Women's Forum of the Democratic League of Kosova, together with another member of the Parliament of the Republic of Kosova, was arrested by the Serbian police patrol. We will try to verify this information, and we will notify you as soon as it is confirmed. This is one more reason for pursuing success in our mission at this conference.

Session One

Identification of Issues Related to the Role of Women in the Economic, Social and Political Process in Central and Eastern Europe

Prof. Weinstein: It is a great honor for me to introduce the moderator of our first formal panel, Dame Peggy Fenner. She is a Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, a past Minister in the British Government, and a very distinguished European politician.

Dame Fenner: Thank you, Professor Weinstein. We are delighted to be joined today by women from all over Central and Eastern Europe. I am privileged to be a member of the Council of Europe during a challenging time when, with guest member status, a bridge has been provided to bring in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which wish ultimately to be full members of the Council of Europe.

I will now introduce to you the distinguished panelists who are going to speak first on the identification of issues related to the role of women. I begin with Barbara Labuda, a Democratic Union member of the Sejm in Poland and chairman of a committee of women which goes right across political parties in the Parliament.

Next is Dimitrina Petrova, the director of the Institute for Social and Environmental Research in Bulgaria. We are delighted to welcome her because it was just in May of this year that we flew the flag of Bulgaria in front of this building as we welcomed that nation as the 27th in the Council of Europe.

Seated on my left is Irina Vinogradova, a member of the Russian Parliament and an expert in education. On my right sits Mary Ellen Withrow, Treasurer of the State of Ohio in the United States. Since 1983 she has increased the investment income of that state by two billion dollars. How's that for woman's work?

Ms. Labuda: We come together to insist on the same thing, to issue one message. For us this is important, because when the United States and Europe say one thing, then we are more required to listen.

Now women do not really take much of a part in politics. There are about 120 parties in Poland, but women hold responsible posts in only two of the big parties. In the Democratic Union Party, my party, women are generally helpers, shall we say. They're not people who propose things; they'd like to, but they're really set aside.

At this time no political party is proposing things or raising problems that concern women. In political programs there is nothing that concerns women's values, political ideals, or what we think about social life and our environment in general. Women have a stronger presence in business, especially in trade, which is now developing very, very swiftly. I'm talking about private business. There are women managers, company managers; business women are very much at the forefront.

How can we explain this fact, this absence of women from active political life? I feel there are several main reasons. First, there is tradition. Second is education. Education does not really impel women towards public life. And then, of course, there is poverty--together with the fact that the state is deliberately surrendering its role as the biggest employer and the biggest protector, shall we say. The state has deliberately surrendered this role in the Eastern European countries, but the new system is not yet really fully consolidated.

There is a whole field that has been left by the state and which is bereft of all supporting facilities and mechanisms. Women don't understand this new reality, this new environment, and they don't quite know how to behave.

Another factor, I think, is the renewal of tradition--a nationalist, Roman Catholic movement supported by the ideological extension and rise of the Polish Roman Catholic Church so that women feel threatened as far as their civil rights go. For instance, there is an absolute ban on abortion, and this ideology affects the way in which women are valued and judged. There's an attempt to shutter them off from ordinary life and political life and to imprison them in the traditional roles of wife and mother.

Of course, women are free in our country; obviously, they are citizens. They are full-fledged citizens and can decide their own fate, but it is an ongoing process which is going to last a long time, I feel.

We must try and get organized around all the values that are really meaningful to us. There have been women's organizations, established at the request of the communists in the past. There are about 30 women's organizations or feminist organizations that want to defend women's rights, but they must first face up to the fact that their activity is still judged according to the principles of the old regimes. They must prove that what they're doing is something true and genuine--nothing to do with the old communist regime. Then you have to tackle cultural, social, and political prejudices which consider women to be inferior beings. So we must try and make things progress.

I think women are going to organize things in such a way that those rights which are of importance to us will be respected. Most women now think that their rights are threatened by two main factors: poverty and the resurgence of nationalist movements.

Dame Fenner: Thank you, Barbara. It was fascinating to listen to such a knowledgeable presentation about one of the Central European countries.

Now may I call upon Dimitrina Petrova?

Ms. Petrova: Thank you. It is a privilege for me to address this conference, especially because as an East European I don't want to have a split personality, and for me it is extremely pleasant that American and European institutions have come together to insist on the same thing, to issue one message to us in Eastern Europe. For us this is important, because when the United States and Europe say one thing, then we are more inclined to listen.

I will try to very briefly enumerate issues we could discuss this afternoon, addressing the topic of our conference. If you look at the list which you have in your files, you will see that Bulgarian women are quite well represented in government, especially in Parliament but also in local administration. However, women are not as well represented as under communism. Women serving in Parliament under communism were usually selected artificially as allotted slots.

Maybe it is not arbitrary that Bulgarian women have been very active since the beginning of the transition, and maybe it's not so accidental that Bulgaria has become an island of stability in a region which has to live through so many difficulties right now. Women have been everywhere since 1989--I'm not exaggerating--and even before that. They are still in politics but also, and this is my first point, they're very active in what I would call civil society.

To make clear my first point for discussion, what makes Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, even Central Europe, different from the West--I think a very important distinguishing feature--is the role of the state vis-a-vis civil society. Historically, the state was always over-evaluated--not only under communism, but for centuries. It has been the high point of people's strivings. It has created a group of Mandarin-type intellectuals that we also see in China.

Communism has only amplified and furthered this historical feature of the region. The lack of self-reliance and self-government has always been characteristic of the Eastern cultures, and communism has furthered this over-centralized, bureaucratized kind of society. I claim that this is very unfavorable to women's participation because I believe women are strong in structures and in societies where what we call civil society vis-a-vis the state has autonomy, is self-sufficient and could rely on itself and address problems without necessarily passing through the state administration. This is not the case in Eastern Europe.

Therefore, my number one point in this ongoing debate is that what it means, actually, to promote democracy world-wide--and I absolutely share this view--is to promote the participation of women. More concretely, this means to promote the growth of an autonomous women's movement, a grass-roots women's movement.

When I say this, I do not mean to suggest that it is not important that we have women in parliaments and women as presidents and in local administration, and so on. I think there are women who could opt for these careers. In Bulgaria, we do have excellent women who have opted for this kind of promotion of the women's cause. Also, we have women who have opted for civil society and for NGO activity. I think that the women's movement as a whole should opt for both, should distribute its potential between the two.

In identifying issues, my second point would be the big, big issue of equal opportunities in labor and the issue of unemployment. Women who make up close to 50 percent of the labor force all over the region, and who are as well if not better educated than men, have always had worse opportunities, even under communism, never equal opportunities.

It is not my priority to settle accounts with the past, but I would like to draw the attention of this audience to the hypocrisy of the communist regime. While the communist regime always insisted on equality and emancipation, over the past ten years at least, I would say that starting in the mid-70s, mainstream propaganda meant the very concepts of emancipation and equality.

Very ironically, the communist media during the '70s and '80s created a caricature of the emancipated woman: smoking a cigarette, extravagantly dressed, sitting in cafes for hours, neglecting her children, promiscuous, abusing cosmetics. The other image created by the communist media was of an unattractive woman, heroically struggling on all three fronts of

fulfillment--wife/mother, social activist, and good professional, what women called carrying three watermelons under one arm and dropping them all, of course.

The communist regime created these images, which served to betray women's interests when you look at it from a historical perspective. This is what I call the ambiguous legacy of the communist regime or so-called socialism as it concerns women.

With regard to my point about unemployment and equal opportunities, what we definitely do not have in Central and Eastern European societies are institutions to deal with what Westerners call affirmative action, institutions for equal opportunities. This very concept is absolutely foreign to us.

If we don't want to face the unpleasant fact that during the period of transition women are likely to come off losers in many respects, now is the time to begin creating the proper institutions for affirmative action and equal opportunities in employment, in pay, in career opportunities.

My third point--just enumerating the issues rather than dealing with them--would be the devastated environment and women's health issues in Eastern Europe. I would only mention Chernobyl, the disastrous effect of Chernobyl. I remind you that the rate of gynecological disease in Eastern Europe is far higher than anywhere else, and that all matters related to women's health are quite uncertainly settled for the moment.

In Bulgaria, we don't really have the same problems with reproductive rights with which Polish and Hungarian women are faced. But I am sure that because of democratic imperatives behind the policy of encouraging a higher birth rate, we shall be faced with the same issues which are the key issues in American politics, in Western politics--an issue such as abortion--in our countries in the foreseeable future.

There are many other issues, but if I skip over at least 17 of them, my 18th but most important issue would be the cultural background. It's not easy to make progress in women's issues; it is the area in which change is really most difficult.

As an example let us look at the Union of Democratic Forces, the bearer of the democratic idea, which has taken on the historical tasks of introducing reform and establishing a democratic order in Bulgarian society. Well, this doesn't sound very democratic; let me say instead the task of promoting democracy. If you look at the cultural products of the Union of Democratic Forces, if you listen to the songs the culture of transition has produced, you will hear songs like these three hits: "Give Me Divorce" is one of them, then "Don't Promise Me Anything for Tomorrow," and the one that was so powerful in winning the election of last October, "Farewell Dance."

In all of them--and these are the cultural badges of UDF--communism was presented as the evil, as a woman, and democracy as a man, in spite of the fact that in Bulgarian as well as in all Slavic languages, communism is a masculine noun and democracy is a feminine noun.

The real image which is deeply hidden in the mass subconsciousness is that the evil from which we are trying to distance ourselves, we are trying to forget, to leave somewhere in the past, this image of evil is a woman, a woman in a red dress. This is a very difficult process of transition, a process of culture, but I would say let's not despair. And even if we despair in our hearts, let's not give up the cause, the women's cause.

Dame Fenner: Thank you, Dimitrina. I want to say that disasters have been named for women for years; every hurricane had a feminine name until very recently. It's taken us a long time to label some disasters with masculine names, so I understand just what you mean.

May I call now on Irina Vinogradova?

Ms. Vinogradova: Thank you very much. I represent Russia which is trying to rebuild in the wake of the attempted August *coup d'etat*. We're building a state based on the rule of law and the principles of democracy.

Our constitution makes reference to the equality of men and women. However, allow me to emphasize one thing. In this transitional period I would not like to see a distortion in the burden-sharing in our country, wherein it is mainly the women who are called upon to carry that burden.

I do not want to say that the political or human rights of women are impinged upon in Russia. This is certainly not the case. Yet, although women share participation in management and political leadership--mind you, Russia does not have any imperialist ambitions because sometimes this country is confused with the U.S.S.R.--and although "Russia" is a feminine noun in the Russian language, we do not have that many women in our government.

47

Mrs. Pamfilova, who was unable to attend this gathering, is the only female minister in the government, and there are also two advisers to President Yeltsin. There is an occasional woman in our regions, but that's about it.

But perhaps numbers do not really tell us the true picture. Even if we achieve a 50-50 ratio in the number of women in Parliament, what we have to keep in mind is the actual position of women in our country. If we have to shoulder the same burdens as in the past, we will not be able to say that women's issues have been resolved. If a woman works at an enterprise, she has to think not only about her salary but also about providing food for her child. Unless those problems are addressed, we will not be able to achieve a democratic outcome in our country.

What we have to think about is a correlative approach to this problem. This is something that human rights committee papers address very clearly. The term "human rights" should apply to a woman to a greater extent than to a man because she is the mother. She gives man to this world.

It is man who is independent of his ethnic origin, man as part of nature. It is the woman who gives her child to this large and sometimes antagonistic and very complex world, and tries to take care of that man. A woman is the first who struggles against war, no matter who wages war. She is totally internationalist in her approach because for her, her child is the continuation of nature. By virtue of her very nature, a woman is part of the movement that fights against pollution. She cannot put up with environmental pollution or the death caused by pollution.

Speaking about my country today, I must say that I'm proud of my position. I'm not formulating any special demands, but rather let me share some of the challenges with which we are faced. Regrettably, the totalitarian system not only oppressed women, but it also turned both men and women into elements of this terrible mechanism. Perhaps this is the privilege of men, but men found their place in the managerial structures, whereas the function of women was to shoulder the rest of the burden, bringing up children, engaging in all sorts of menial jobs.

I can tell you that women are entitled to equal treatment with men. Having said that, I will quote from the poet Yevtushenko who said that you should not humiliate woman by making her equal with man, because wherever physical labor is present, man has to give us a helping hand by providing all sorts of sophisticated technology to alleviate this burden or by simply physically helping women.

For me and for many women in Russia, the number one challenge for both rural and urban dwellers in this transitional period as we move towards a democratic and industrialized, market-oriented economy, is to improve the condition of women. After all, many women have lost their jobs, particularly in cities, which is absolutely shocking to women in our country. Ours used to be a very egalitarian society which provided incentives to women for looking at possibilities of applying their talents in practical life.

In addition to what I said concerning physical labor, I tend to agree with what Dimitrina Petrova said. Another problem is nutrition for a woman and her child--particularly during pregnancy. This is also a major issue in my country.

I believe that democracy and the rights of women should also take into account the interests of women in rural areas. There is a lot of physical labor in rural areas and virtually no equipment. Other problems here are the use of toxic fertilizers and the absence of even the most primitive amenities.

As a member of Parliament and also as Deputy Chairman of the People's Party of Free Russia headed by Vice President Rutskoi--one of the major political parties and one of the first parties to express its commitment to the principles of democracy--I believe that it is really the task of our party to address the issues of women, to rid women of such a small role in this party and in the whole governmental mechanism, and to grant a chance to have the right to pursue such goals as happiness and health for women and their children.

I would very much like you, dear colleagues, to remember the names of those Russian women who made considerable contributions to the history of Russian and European culture: Catherine the Great, Princess Dashkova, the poet Anna Akhmatova, the poet Marina Tsvetaeva, and others. It is very difficult to deprive them of their pride and dignity.

I would also like to ask you to pay particular attention to those difficulties with which our women are faced in this process of democratization. I would also very much like to ask you to provide assistance, moral and material, to our women in the process of democratization in Russia.

Ms. Withrow: It is certainly an honor to be invited to serve on this distinguished panel, and I've been in elected office in Ohio for 24 years.

I just couldn't help but think this bit of humor would be good for this afternoon. Little Red Riding Hood was going through the woods one day and ran into the Big Bad Wolf. He wanted to know where she was going, and she said, "I'm going to Grandma's house." So he took off running, and she continued on her way. When she got to Grandma's house, there was the Big Bad Wolf in Grandma's bed. Well, she reached into her knapsack and pulled out her .22 gun and shot him in the head.

Do you know what the moral to that story is? You don't fool little girls like you used to.

I told that to a group of high school senior girls, but they didn't laugh because they haven't been through what I've been through.

I believe women should support women candidates for office, and I think women should support women worldwide in their effort to advance in business, government, and in social sectors. To make any government work, it takes cooperation. Colorado businesswoman Pat Schroeder once said that women are the arbitrators; we are the cooperators and the caretakers. We work hard, and we do hard work. It is essential that our talents impact American politics.

It wasn't that long ago that there was a sign on the door saying "men only" in politics. Those rules kept many women from running for office, but some of us ran anyway. We ran because we believed that women need and deserve a voice in politics, and we ran because we thought we could do it better. I have defeated 16 men and one woman in my career. I didn't set out to do that; they just got in my way. I've been outspent time and time again in my elections. It was due to the organization of the Democratic Party and the efforts of women that I believe I was successful.

I think women have made a tremendous difference. John Nesbitt, in his book *Reinventing the Corporation*, says that society is now more interdependent and holistic. As society becomes larger and institutions become larger, we will have to rely on others. We will have to negotiate more to achieve our goals, become more understanding and open-minded, and the most valuable individuals will be those who can compromise and find solutions where everyone wins. Doesn't that sound like a women's environment to you? It does to me.

In this year's edition of *The American Woman*, a status report shows that women are more responsive to women's issues because they are usually the family caretakers, the family caregivers for children and the elderly. Thus, they can better empathize with the issues in these areas. It also says that when women serve among men in elected office, they sensitize men to women's issues and make them more aware. The men begin to think about women's concerns.

To be in a position to sensitize our male colleagues, we must continue to fight for women candidates at the grass-roots level; if we do this, we are going to be unstoppable. Our fight will ensure that the voices of women resound in the halls of the state house, the parliaments, the federal buildings, and sometime maybe in the Oval Office.

I don't think this "Year of the Woman" is long enough. I think we have worked too hard to say it's just one year of the woman. I think it should be the century of the woman or the millennium of the woman. People in government positions are going to be important because they will also increase the positions of women in other areas, no matter what those ventures may be.

This year in the United States there are many issues which will make a difference for many women voters on November 3rd. Women know firsthand the many challenges a day brings. Women know the importance of good jobs, quality education, affordable health care, and a clean environment. Women know that family leave, equal pay, choice, and sexual harassment are among issues that are often pegged as women's issues, but that they are issues critical to all citizens.

On equal pay, we should work to make sure that everyone earns fair wages, regardless of gender. Women will make sure that gender-based discrimination does not occur in federal hiring, promotion, and contracts.

I am pro-choice. I believe that the toughest decisions in people's lives should be their own, and I believe in the constitutional right of privacy as affirmed in *Roe v. Wade*.

On sexual harassment, I believe it is a serious problem in the American work place. We need to press for and enforce tough harassment guidelines in all government agencies.

On the issue of family leave, I believe that men and women should not have to choose between keeping the jobs they need and caring for a newborn or a sick parent. We in the United States need to support the Family and Medical Leave Act so America can join every other industrialized nation to provide a few weeks of unpaid leave to care for a new baby or a sick family member.

As a woman, a state-wide elected official, a wife, mother and grandmother, I care deeply about the future of my country and our world. I have seen my country and my state go through good times and bad, but this is a critical time. It is a time for hope and a time for change, a time for women to support the efforts of other women world-wide, especially in emerging democracies. That is why this conference is so very, very necessary.

I am fortunate because I have had the opportunity to visit many countries and talk to many people in elective office. I visited India, Poland, the former Soviet Union and many of the countries now involved in the European Community.

I look forward to hearing from the other panelists and the participants to see how women's issues overlap from country to country. We have just heard three different approaches to these ideas and how we must cooperate to bring the good work of women to the attention of all in both developing and existing democracies. I feel that our voices and our work together is of tremendous importance, so I look forward to hearing from all of you during this conference.

Ms. Stanic: Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to extend my greetings to the participants of this international conference and to express my gratitude for having been invited and given an opportunity to address you.

I come from Croatia, a country devastated and destroyed by war, where one-third of the territory is still occupied. Croatia has always been part of Europe and of Western civilization. It is a country of rich culture, heritage, and natural resources, which has a tragedy of bordering on a country of a different religion and civilization.

Two years ago, when Croatia had the courage to throw out communist rule and start on the path of democracy, the dark forces of its aggressive eastern neighbor, Serbia, attacked Croatia, grabbing its territory in order to realize that centuries-long dream of creating a greater Serbia. For the same reason, they are attacking the sovereign state of Bosnia-Herzegovina and performing genocide on the Croat and Muslim populations in both countries.

This is taking place in the heart of Europe. The whole world can see, but does not want to see, all the cruelty of this aggression. The world is shocked at the pictures of concentration camps but silently closes its eyes to the camps for women and girls, first in Croatia and now in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The women and girls detained in camps and brothels cannot be called war prisoners. The most productive segment of the female population of Bosnia-Herzegovina, aged between 10 and 30, is sexually abused and humiliated in these camps and brothels. To our knowledge, there are over 20 such camps in Bosnia-Herzegovina; in one of them there are 800 women, 80 percent of whom are girls under the age of 15. According to information from authentic witnesses, more than 30,00 women and girls are detained in the camps of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The camps are managed by the most cruel Serbian murderers, and absolute obedience is ordered. Even the slightest resistance is punished by death. A great number of those unhappy women have committed suicide. Each girl has to engage in sex with as many as 50 men per day. Quite often the drunken abusers leave a massacred body which is then thrown on the rubbish heap or into the river, or is fed to the dogs that guard the camp.

Since there are no hygienic conditions or medical control, infectious diseases rage in the camp. Recently, 140 women and girls were released from a camp near Sarajevo; all of them were in the advanced stages of pregnancy. Sometimes one pregnant woman is exchanged for ten Chetniks.

These activities are only part of an old Serbian design to ethnically cleanse the territory. Ladies and gentlemen, Hitler and Stalin were amateurs in comparison to the violence done by the Serbian-Chetniks. How many more slaughtered, massacred, and raped innocent victims are necessary for the world to condemn these criminals of our times? Are we not paying too high a price already on this blood-stained path from the totalitarian system toward democracy?

The United Nations and the European Community have recognized the states of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, but at the same time through an embargo on arms import it is impossible for them to defend themselves. Thus, aggressor and victim are treated in the same way. They have futile talks and conferences, only giving time to the aggressor. Is it possible that those who decide our destiny can have a clean conscience, knowing that they can stop this genocide and ethnocide of the Croatian and Muslim people? Don't they feel like accomplices, or is it for history to say?

Europe and America, we don't need your sons, but please make it possible for us to defend ourselves.

I appeal to you in the name of humanity to use your authority and influence, the United Nations and the European Community, to finally stop this inhumane war so that at least we will not have to say to future generations that we have done nothing. We should not wait to be condemned by them. Thank you.

Dame Fenner: Ms. Stanic, you will know that this morning in the Council we spent some long time talking about the barbaric horrors which are occurring in the former country of Yugoslavia. You present to us the horrors which particularly affect the women, who in all circumstances of war are particularly vulnerable, both women and children. Thank you for bringing that before us.

You will also know the President of the Assembly has made a statement for publication today. I do hope you will derive some help and assistance and reassurance of our understanding of the horrors which are so totally opposite to what the Council of Europe always stands for. Thank you very much.

Our next speaker is Natasha Lako.

Ms. Lako: My name is Natasha Lako, and I am a member of the Albanian Parliament, from the democratic party which won 65 percent.

There are three million Albanian people, and many more Albanians living in former Yugoslavia. We are an impoverished European country, but Europe is richer for our history.

Referring to the Bible, one would say that woman is nothing but a rib of man. If I quoted thousands of facts from life under the most unique communist dictatorship, one would say that during the 45 years of this regime, the Albanian woman was converted into a rib of the state. It was intended to convert her into a working tool--even for giving birth to children. It is for certain that the life of the Albanian woman has many similarities to that of other Eastern European wome. The clichés of the totalitarian communist mentality can be clearly seen, even in the presentation of woman's image in the bank notes of these countries.

In Albania, moreover, these cliches were reenforced by a mentality, according to which woman is a second-class being--a mentality imported by the long Ottoman invasion which tried to violate the natural social Euro-Albanian characteristics. This unique way of living deprived the Albanians even of the knowledge of the world-renowned Albanian, Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

It was more than natural that the Albanian woman would actively take part in the political life for changing this totalitarian society, in which she had forgotten the taste of liberty, and create a parliamentary democracy. She participated in the opposing political movement, during which she made use of even such desperate means as the hunger strike. In this peaceful solution, she strongly influenced the withdrawal of the communist government which resulted from the March elections, the first to establish pluralism in Albania. In these elections the Albanian woman expressed her free will by voting for the establishment of a parliamentary republic, which is now in its first steps.

The realization of political and economic reform toward a market economy gave to the Albanian woman some elements of modern living standards and some advantages for strengthening her personality, such as access to abortion and use of contraceptives. All this would sound quite heavenly if the opposition now in power had not insisted on the approval of laws concerning private property. Privatization is now being accomplished in the village areas where 65 percent of the entire population lives. This is a good opportunity for free initiative. Another advantage is the great mental and intellectual potential for women which exists in every field of life.

But to be more realistic, we should mention some disadvantages, which make the coalition of ideals shaky: traditional passivity, handicapped private liberties, many unsheltered and persecuted families, unemployment, men's nostalgia for the old society where women were isolated by social life, psychological terror caused by children's legal and illegal emigration, lack of food, electricity or water, and physical violence which mirrors all the denigrating mentalities towards women. In addition, I should mention woman's noble inability to convert the coalition of ideals into a coalition of interests.

In the first pluralist elections, among 250 members, nine women are in the Parliament, four from the democratic party and five from the socialist party of the communist tradition. In the March elections, only two women candidates from the democratic party won. Today, after the proportional arrangements and the party lists, among the 140 members of Parliament, there are seven women, one from the socialist party and six from the democratic party. It should be stressed that in the election of parliamentary commissions, there were many problems for including

women in spite of the needs and specific living conditions of Albanian women.

In the July elections for local administration, there was no woman candidate. Also, there is no woman taking part in the high state structures.

Let me shift in time and pay homage to all the distinguished Albanian women who have rendered valuable contributions in the political life of a nation which knew how to survive. They are part of the personality of Albanian women today, no matter how they are threatened.

It is enough for her not to wear herself out. It is enough that others are conscience of her existence. It is enough that she herself is aware of her personality. Certainly, this conference will help in this direction, and for this I am very grateful to all the participants.

Dame Fenner: I was very interested in what you said, that women had not put their names forward in the local elections. I was disappointed in that because certainly in my country, it's the way into national politics. Very often it's one of the roads for women to get into parliament, into positions of influence, because they are able, even with young families, to do the work at the local level. It's one of the steps of administration and government which teaches women so that they may arrive in parliament with administrative and governmental experience at another level.

Thank you very much, Natasha. The next name I have is that of Melita Zajc.

Ms. Zajc: I must say it's a pleasure to be here. As an editor and journalist from Slovenia, I think that this conference is an opportunity to get accurate information on the recent situation in Central and Eastern Europe regarding women, and I hope I can contribute some information as well.

First, a practical point. Mr. Chairman, I was shocked by the information that our colleague from Kosova had been arrested. Since my magazine has good ties with Albanians in Kosova, if I can help with phone calls or something else, I can try to get reliable news on this.

From the standpoint of Slovenia, I would like to point out two most accurate issues regarding women. The first is one that all women should agree on, I think. This is the necessity of a change in cultural phenomena expressed at the level of language. I will use an example. In English, it is a recent, common phenomenon that a word like chairperson would be used in general, and either chairwoman or chairman in particular. There are other languages that have had, unlike English, a gender difference built in for centuries, but this linguistic possibility has not always been used.

Germany is a good case; if there are any women here from Germany and if things have changed recently, please correct me. In the western part it is a common thing to use female forms for a woman, while in the East I would be called a "journalist," the same as my male colleagues.

Well, the same is true in Slovenia, where a woman tends to use male linguistic forms even in cases where the language allows both male and female. Changing this attitude is something we can fairly easily achieve ourselves, and I think we can all agree on this.

The other issue is more controversial, so I'd like to say that no offense is intended. We are well beyond so-called emancipation in Slovenia. But the fact is that besides the issue of equality--equal political rights for men and women, we women are different, and "differences" is the topic where the question of democracy arises.

One of the strongest questions in Slovenia regarding women right now is: are women different or should they be treated differently only because and only when they bear children or not, or are there other differences to be taken in account as well? It has become mostly a moral issue, sometimes so absurd that it resembles the Murphy Brown-U.S. Vice President affair.

We heard this morning that resources are limited, there will be less to share, and in Eastern Europe it will be even more so. With limited resources the question of morality arises, and since morality cannot be easily measured, it is often abused. Democracy is a decision-making process, so this issue becomes essential. Since it is tomorrow's topic, I will stop at this point.

Somebody mentioned grass-roots movements, and as an illustration of these possible abuses I would like to tell you this. The only grass-roots movement that is functioning now in Slovenia is a movement which distributes anti-abortion videos, for example the one entitled "Silent Scream." This is done by women, and they are showing these films to kids in public elementary schools.

Dame Fenner: Thank you very much, and for your kind offer of help with any telephoning about our participant who has been arrested in Kosova.

You made the point about language, and in Britain we have term "chairman," yes. Today we tend to call them chairwoman or chairman. I don't terribly like being called chairperson, I have to tell you, and I react strongly if you call me "chair," which I regard as a seat with four legs.

It is important for women to remember that "Member of Parliament" has no gender. "Government Minister" has no gender. We have a lot of places we can go and not worry about gender and changing the language. Thank you for that contribution.

Our next speaker will be Mary Jane Garcia.

Ms. Garcia: Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, distinguished ladies from all over the world. It's a real pleasure for me to be here. I'm a state senator in New Mexico, called the "Land of Enchantment," and rightly so. We have a beautiful state. It is very diverse culturally with the Indians, the Hispanic people and the Anglos.

I ran for the state senate four years ago, and after having won--incidentally, I am the first Hispanic woman in the state senate of New Mexico--in the first interview with a male reporter, he asked, "How do you feel being an Hispanic female going into a predominately Anglo-male-elitist club?" And I said, "What?" I didn't even understand what that meant until I got there.

Nonetheless, I was treated royally because I had run a very good campaign, and so the leadership just took me in. There are 42 senators in New Mexico, and I am one of four females. Hopefully, after November we may double that number. After I serve another term in the Senate, I hope to run for Congress.

I'm from an area that has unique problems because it is located 40 miles from the Mexican border. A border crossing is scheduled to open there soon. One of my real concerns with the border crossing is that once it opens, the American companies that have facilities in Mexico--that is, 40 miles away--will begin to transport their hazardous and toxic waste into New Mexico and dispose of it. I have a real concern about that because recently 50 children were born without a brain in Matamoras and Brownsville, and we could end up with that kind of situation.

We're being impacted by a tremendous influx from the South. Young teenage girls are coming in from Mexico to have their babies in Las Cruces, so that's impacting on our health care system. Our educational system is out of control. Some school districts require a new school every year that the state certainly cannot afford.

New Mexico is known for being the state which ranks lowest in prenatal care, but due to my efforts and those of a colleague, a bill was passed two years ago. One of my real issues is health care, children's health care in particular. New Mexico has also been written up in the news media as a state that does the least for its children, and I feel we need to turn that around. We have problems with teenage pregnancy, gang violence and narcotics because we're 40 miles away from the border.

New Mexico, although it's very beautiful and everybody wants to go there to live, has unique problems because of our proximity to the border. In fact, the current influx from Mexico is causing problems even among local Hispanic people like myself and Mexican people across the border. Some feel threatened that they'll lose their jobs.

The Free Trade Agreement is supposed to lower the wage scale in our area, and we will also see a tremendous loss of jobs because the minimum wage in New Mexico is $4.25 an hour. The American companies across the border pay $4.00 to Mexican labor in the *maquilladora* industries. So you will see an exodus of American companies to Mexico.

It's a real pleasure for me to be here because I have been watching on television the plight of the Eastern European woman and what she's going through at present--the situation in Croatia and Bosnia. I just sit there and cry every night while watching television, and I don't know what to do about it. When I was invited by The Center for Democracy to attend this conference, I was very honored to be a part of it.

I'm running for reelection right now, and I had to stop my door-to-door effort just to be here. I wouldn't have missed this for anything. This is, to me, the most important conference that I have attended in the time that I've been in office. I've attended many, many conferences, but not one such as this one with faces from all over the world.

It's beautiful just to be here, and I want to get to know all of you before I leave. I hope that we can stick together in some fashion.

Dame Fenner: Thank you, Mary Jane. We are very mindful that you've interrupted your

53

electioneering to come. As politicians, we know that greater love hath no woman than she stop electioneering to come and support her sisters in this crusade.

The next speaker is Sonja Lokar.

Ms. Lokar: I would like to say thank you for the opportunity to come to such a meeting as we have here today. I'm very glad to know all these people, men and women, who fight for the same goal. I agree with Irina Vinogradova about the domination of the state in civil society of the so-called socialist countries.

The predominant image of woman created by the state was really a heroic woman who willingly accepted the three burdens of family, profession, and social activity. But this image--largely accepted--was of precious little help in building women's self-esteem. It's a very important thing that once self-esteem is lost, women are in quite a bad psychological position.

The period of transformation in Slovenia began ten years ago. The women's movement was one of the mainstreams in these beginnings. It fought for the right to difference, to choice; I would even say it fought for women's individualism, something very new in former socialist countries.

The 1990 pre-election time in Slovenia showed that in our society we also have a hidden stream of reactionary Catholic movement which will try to change the predominant image of women, in the democracy to come, to one of woman as mother of the nation and humble housewife of her husband. Our path to a new individualism will disappear once again if we don't do anything against it.

In our first election, three phenomena, very dangerous for progressive women's issues, were created. First was a decrease of women's political representation from 27 to only 12 percent in the Parliament. Second, there was a decrease in the women's grass-roots movement. Our society was transformed from a one-party system to a plural party oligarchy, fighting only for a change in mode of ownership and neglecting workers, women, students, and children's everyday social needs and rights.

Yet, women didn't surrender; it's very interesting. We fought for our rights in December of 1991. We won the great battle for the free choice of parenthood including the right to abortion. We won because we succeeded in putting together women parliamentarians of practically all parties, women's trade unions, women's grass-roots movements, groups of women intellectuals and journalists. We fought together, and we won this battle.

I think this is the model of how to be successful in other battles too. This model has now been discovered, and all we have to do is to implement it in all cases we have to deal with.

A second point is that I think that we must defeat the achievements of welfare state even by teeth, if necessary, not only because we need its support becoming a society of equal opportunities for men and women and also for children, but also because three-quarters of our jobs are in these institutions--schools, kindergartens, research centers and institutes, health care institutions, and so on.

A third point, and with this I will end: the machinery for strengthening women's power, political power, is very diversified. We must try to find our way in political power, in governments, in administrations. Very important for me also is to be involved in foreign affairs.

For example, in the Council of Europe we have three representatives from the Slovenian Parliament. All three are men. Then in trade unions, in local self-government, we must find a place. We must sit and be present to be in a position to take decisions.

This month we took a poll in Slovenia, and we asked people two questions. First, do you believe that women must be more numerous among Members of Parliament, and 68 percent of responses were yes. Then we asked these same people, do you hold higher in esteem those parties which have 30 or more percent women candidates on their lists? Those who answered "not at all" or "it is not a very important matter" represented 16 percent of responses.

So we see that in our society--and I think it is not only the case in Slovenia--there is some sort of ambiguity about this question. It is very important to be there and to do something now when we can do it.

I am sure that I am right, because in our Parliament just a few days ago we had a bill which included an article about the financing of political parties. There was a proposition of liberal democrats--and I supported it--to pay more to those parties which have more female Members of Parliament. We voted on that bill and were only two voices short of a majority on this solution.

So I think things are changing, but they won't change without our help. We must do anything we can and as good as we can, and we must be together. Solidarity is very important.

Dame Fenner: I like the incentive for more women standing for election that your Parliament almost voted for by a majority. But I judge from the results of the survey that people wanted more women, but they didn't necessarily want to choose the party which promised them more women. So it is incumbent upon all political parties to ensure that they get more women candidates so that their women supporters have an opportunity to support women.

May I now call on Cheryl Lau?

Ms. Lau: I'm Cheryl Lau, Secretary of State for the State of Nevada in the United States. It is wonderful to be here with all of you.

All the speakers are excellent because they guide us toward the issues related to the role of women in the processes of change in Central and Eastern Europe. What have we learned? We learned that women are not in politics very much because of tradition, because of educational upbringing, and because of poverty. We've learned that there is a need to create an autonomous grass-roots movement and institutions for affirmative action. We have learned that there is a need for better nutrition, child care, rural area care, and we have learned that women need to support women, especially in politics.

Thus, one such issue related to women's role is the education of citizens, starting in the schools, and also the education of legislators regarding the equality of women. Therefore, we are talking about democracy.

I am the chair of the Women's Commission in the State of Nevada, recently created by legislation in my state. The Commission deals with child care concerns, economic concerns for women, legal ramifications, especially for women, the ways in which women can communicate with one other, and domestic violence. What is good is that the legislature is behind us. What is bad is they gave us no money.

So in essence, as Peter Kelly has mentioned, we are all pioneers, and we are all carving out that role for women. The role of women is to push for what we want wherever we are, but who do we fall back on? There is a great amount of resources and strength in The Center for Democracy, and that's backed by the U.S. AID Office of Women in Development and the Bureau for Europe. But you know who else we can fall back on, and that's us here.

Everyone here has a commonality which is very important. For education, let us start by using each other to accomplish what we need.

Ms. Haney: I'm Mary Haney, also from the United States, and I'm dazzled by this audience and most honored to be in it.

I am a consultant in Washington, D.C., working on international women's issues, recently focussing on Eastern and Central Europe. When Barbara Labuda and Dimitrina Petrova were speaking about the issues that are of greatest importance to women in their countries, I was thinking about the British feminist writer Virginia Wolff's essay and rumination on the following subject. If Shakespeare had a sister, what would have happened to her if she had been supposedly as talented as her brother?

Ms. Wolff's answer was "not much," except for a dreadful death from having been required to marry an older man with whom she didn't want to have anything to do and whom her father insisted she marry. The reason for the "not much" was that despite the fact that she may have had the same talent as her brother, she was always peeling carrots or washing dishes or sweeping the floor or ironing clothes or cleaning the chimney or doing some other work in the house.

I wanted to ask Barbara and Dimitrina how important they think it is to women's success or women's activities in their countries that the social services women have had in the past are diminishing. I understand this to be the case. I'm talking about child care, prenatal and postnatal care, and what we call family leave.

Is there any danger that these services will diminish now that the economic system has changed and is in great trouble, and if so, how will that impact?

Ms. Petrova: It is a huge problem in Bulgaria, as I believe it is everywhere around Central and Eastern Europe. The legal protection of employment of women, especially of pregnant women and mothers of young children, which was in place under communism, is now diminishing. It's still in place, but is already inadequate in terms of financial support. It cannot compensate for the rate of inflation, however stable the national currency has now become.

This help has not changed adequately with liberating prices, with the monetary stage of the

reform, so these measures of the communist regime have really become quite insufficient.

The problem is still more serious because women in Bulgaria--according to opinion polls, 64 percent of women--think that the measures under communism were good. The rest of the women think that they were not good enough, which means that women have expectations that cannot be met now in the process of transition.

What a democratic government could rely on would be, on one hand, the patience of women. Women should understand that it's a very difficult period of transition. I'm asking myself, what is transition, what is democracy, what is role, what is woman, and even what is Central and Eastern Europe? All those concepts have been topics of monographers, as you know, but I think that the key concept here in our conference is really *transition*. This is what I would insist on.

To my mind, we first have to end the transition. By ending the transition, I mean end a stage during which what we have been going through is still convertible to the past. We are in a transition now as far as our society is still in an unconsolidated democracy. It is convertible. This is why the appeal of democratic governments to the people and to women to understand, to be patient, I think should be taken seriously, though of course it's very difficult.

Ms. Labuda: I think the situation is similar in Poland. In other words, women ought to be patient--people in general ought to be patient, but particularly women.

Because of budgetary constraints, people are calling it a question of family allowances or family indemnities of all kinds. They're not just certain types of benefits but all benefits that go to women, and who knows, we're lagging behind already. Women, nevertheless, are asked to be patient.

The other thing that's happening is that people appeal to charitable organizations or to voluntary organizations, but that's a rather humiliating thing to have to do, in particular for women.

The third alternative is that the government tries to work out some system, do what it can, and allocate budgetary resources in such a way that the changes do not really take full effect all in one go.

I think women belong to a poorer category than is the case for men--and I think that is generally the situation in both the East and the West--because women are cordoned off in areas of the employment market which are badly paid: social services, education, textile industries, where one earns very little indeed.

So I think these are two things that are of importance. I think we are seeing allowances for women being reduced, and the fact that we're going to be cordoned off in low-paying jobs. Some 50 percent of women work outside the home, and very often they are single mothers who are responsible for providing the sole income for the family.

Ms. Zlatescu: First, I think we should thank the organizers for the idea of this conference and everything they have done in order to invite women from countries which are throwing off totalitarian regimes and countries that have previously known a democratic tradition. The situation of women in countries which have thrown off totalitarian regimes is something that should be the subject of consideration by sociologists and historians.

I think that the way we find solutions to a number of our problems will influence the nature of progress in countries that have thrown off totalitarian regimes.

In my own country, the women's movement sought to obtain suffrage for women so that we can voice our aspirations. We're a very important sector. We represent the majority, and we have a life expectancy that is greater than that of men. We know that a democratic system has to be well consolidated and the family established within the population.

Romania is trying to find its own way forward and aspire to freedom, authentic democracy, and link up with a tradition which is rooted in a past that goes back some 100 years. The first constitution of the Romanian state was drafted in 1866, and it was in that context that the issue of whether women should be granted suffrage was raised. It was decided that they should not. The Romanian Women's League, since its inception in 1866, has fought to ensure that women's rights be fully respected in the economic and political life of the country.

An important initiative was taken with a view to ensuring that women enjoy political rights in Article Six of the Constitution of 1923. According to that particular provision, it was stated that political rights could be extended to women by an electoral law if a majority of two-thirds voted for it in the Parliament.

Over the next 15 years women made gains in suffrage rights and serving on the town councils. Further progress was made under the Constitution of

1938, and finally in the autumn of 1946, women for the first time were elected to the Romanian Parliament.

In post-1989 Romania, as in other Eastern European countries, we've seen women playing a more modest role. Of some 509 members of the assembly and the senate, the fair sex represents only four percent of the total. That is less, in fact, than the number of women in the previous communist Parliament where 34 percent of representatives were women.

The situation isn't any better if we look to the present government, in that there are no women at all in the administration. The new Romanian Constitution adopted in 1991 calls for equality among all citizens without discrimination on the basis of sex, but there has been no structure set up by the state that would be responsible for women's rights and the rights of the family. However, there are a number of non-governmental organizations which share those concerns.

I don't want to hold you up with statistical information. Thanks to the secretariat, you will find a report available with up-to-date information on the economic, social, and political situation of women in Romania.

Dame Fenner: Thank you very much, Irina. It was very thoughtful of you to provide a brief that we can take away. Eniko Bollobas of Hungary, please.

Ms. Bollobas: I'm Eniko Bollobas from Hungary, and I will be very brief. This is basically a response to what we have heard.

I think I share everyone's sentiments that we're all delighted to be here and to hear the views about women in Eastern and Central Europe. Together with our West European and American sisters, it's a very complete view that we will take home from here.

However, there is something that I miss, and that is response to each other's comments and thoughts. I'm sure this will come, and I think it's very good too that people come with prepared statements. But allow me to respond in one way to what we have heard.

It's awfully interesting that we come from very different social, historic, geographic, and political backgrounds. Yet, the way people view the role of women in their own societies is not that terribly different. I think we can all agree that our own societies and countries are different in the degree that they grant affirmative action. In some countries, we have complete access to abortion; in other countries, there is a complete ban on abortion.

The achievements of women are very different, and yet somehow we have all learned to live with those achievements. I don't think women are much more happy in the more developed countries in terms of women's issues, and that applies to everybody who spoke today except one person. I would like to draw our attention to our distinguished colleague from Croatia and also to our colleagues from Slovenia; the kind of reality they described is very different.

I would like to commend our colleague who brought the bad news with her and who presented it to us. I would also like to somehow shake ourselves up because we cannot just pass by these terrible problems.

I always thought that the pre-holocaust world was different from the post-holocaust world. Yet, today we are living in the middle of a holocaust, and can we not do anything at all about it?

I have a very practical and minor recommendation. I know it won't change much, but is there a joint resolution, a written statement or recommendation that we can together as a whole send to the Council of Europe or somebody just to show that this is something that we will not just listen to as a conference talk and then go home and take a good night's rest?

Dame Fenner: Thank you very much. I'm sure that there may be some way in which we could respond to the request you made. We will be thinking about that.

We will now hear from Ms. Asteirsdottir of Iceland.

Ms. Asteirsdottir: Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Kristin Asteirsdottir. I'm a parliamentarian from Iceland for the Women's Party--the Women's Alliance as we call ourselves--and a member of the Council of Europe. Because I'm an historian as well, I would like to draw your attention to what Mr. Martinez said in his speech here today. He said that the women of the Nordic countries gained the right to vote after the First World War, but we actually obtained the right to vote before the First World War and during that war--except in Sweden, they were the latest--just to set things straight.

I want to tell you a little bit about my political party and the initiative that Icelandic women have taken for trying to better their situation. In my

country with only 260,000 people, the president of the country is a woman, the president of the Parliament is a woman, and the president of the high court is a woman.

Although they are quite visible, that does not mean that women are very powerful. Women are half of the working force, but they earn only about 64 percent of the average wages of men. So we have, on the one side, a rather good situation, and on the other hand very bad.

It was in 1982 that we started the Women's Party, and we did it because we were not satisfied with the situation of women in our country; we thought women should be where the decisions are made in society. When we first ran for local elections in 1982, women were six percent of the members of local governments. They are now over 30 percent. In ten years they have come up to 30 percent.

When we ran for Parliament for the first time in 1983, women were five percent of the Parliamentarians. They're now 24 percent; this happened in nine years. These are not all women from the Women's Party; there are also women from the other political parties. But the influence that we have had on the old political parties is that we have made it easier for women to come into politics and to be elected. The political parties had to react. They couldn't look upon such a political movement of women and say to their own women, "There are no seats for you." So there has been a real, real change.

The Icelandic women have often made themselves quite visible. For example, we had the women's strike in 1975, when the schools and shops had to close. Women really did show how important they were for the economy and for work in the whole of society.

I wanted to tell you about this political party, now with five Parliamentary seats out of 63 and 10 to 12 percent of the vote. The issues we stress are almost everything concerning women and children. We have been stressing environmental questions, the peace issue and disarmament, distribution of power, and last but not least the necessity of revolutionizing both men's and women's way of thinking--men's way of thinking about women and themselves, and also women's way of thinking about men and themselves.

We have to change these ways of thinking if we want to change the world, and I think we can all agree how necessary it is to change the world if we are going to survive on this earth.

Dame Fenner: I know that our colleague from Hungary was disappointed and didn't feel we had enough time to react to one another's concerns and words on issues. I do hope she will think we've been able to have enough interchange after the next panel and after the session tomorrow.

There is now a question from Raina Kartcheva.

Ms. Kartcheva: I would like to ask a question, and I do share some anxiety with you. I'd like to refer to an idea expressed by Mr. Martinez. At the beginning of his opening speech, he said that in my country or in Central and Eastern European countries in general, women are taking a step backwards from political life, they're withdrawing from political life.

Well let us not forget that the official debate of the old communist regime vis-a-vis women was all in favor of emancipation. Women had all "rights," but that was in inverted commas.

In parliament and as far as power and all sorts of organizations are concerned, there were women, yes, and they traveled right through the world and they said that in our country women had work, they were happy, they were treated well and they had everything, but that was all to be taken with a pinch of salt. Let's not forget that this went on for about fifty years. If for half-a-century you make statements in inverted commas, either they become entirely hollow or people start believing them.

Don't misunderstand me. In official feminist statements, even in the best sense of the words, you find the same expressions now. If I hear people coming from the free democratic world who have always been there, they use exactly the same words, the same expressions, the same ideas, the same concepts which for us have completely lost their meaning or we don't want to accept them because they've always been hollow.

Bulgarian women worked. They all had jobs; there was no unemployment. It's not a question of making demands and then receiving jobs. It was not like that at all. Women had to work because families couldn't live on one income.

Then democracy came. Let's not forget that this is not democracy as such, it's a transition towards democracy. The country is opening up, and now what we see is that in free democratic countries maternity leave is 15 weeks. We have 12 months, so what do you do? While our society is in crisis and moving towards a market economy, we can't afford the luxury

of having 12 months' paid maternity leave. Of course one can understand the reasoning behind it, but in practice it becomes difficult and presents all sorts of conceptual problems.

In our country, there is also a story of Little Red Riding Hood. The ex-communist Little Red Riding Hood didn't find anybody at all in her Granny's bed. She couldn't even ask herself whether she had the right person in front of her.

Often people at international conferences say to me, "The world is in change, and that's going to lead to changes either in the free democratic world or in Eastern Europe." I think one has to work towards this interaction and this symbiosis so that we can find the best expressions, the best concepts, to express our women's rights movements.

Gynecological complaints are numerous in our countries, yes, but maybe it's the result of bad preventive care. If there's poor preventive care, the same applies to all diseases and complaints, children's and men's diseases as well.

Women are now suffering unemployment in masses, but the same applies to all weak groups in our society. If women are called upon to suffer in our society, then all our societies are sick. What is suffering is our mental outlook, and that's why I think the feminist debate must change its presentation. Is that possible? That's my question.

Dame Fenner: From the discussions I had with Professor Weinstein before this conference began, it is clear that the West is certainly very well aware of these transitional difficulties, transitional traumas, in Central and Eastern Europe. We are also well aware of why the way we put things might sound the way that the communists put them, but we do assure you that our intentions are more honorable.

I served in the European Parliament, and in the section in which communists sat there were more women than in any other section. That was a sort of liberation, but we all know that it was hollow, one of quotas and the statutory woman.

I don't know that I can answer your question, but I can say that certainly the Center knows well what you mean by the hollow promises of communism and the reaction that has left among women in the Central and Eastern European countries. I think that's really one of the motives which impels this particular conference.

We have one last contributor. Madam Gjorv?

Ms. Gjorv: I'm Inger Lise Gjorv, a member of the Council of Europe and Speaker in the first chamber of the Norwegian Parliament. I asked for the floor to point out one issue which has not been mentioned by the panel and which I think is important for women's participation in politics. That is the system of election in each country.

In Norway at the moment 37 percent of Parliament are women. Half of the government are women; three speakers and two of the three deputy speakers are women. It's more or less the same as in the other Scandinavian countries.

So we could ask, how have we achieved this? It is, of course, not because we are more intelligent than other women in Europe. I don't think it's because we are tougher either. I think it's very much because of our electoral system. It's very difficult to achieve such a representation if you have one seat elected per constituency. We have proportional representation, and that is, I think, very much the difference.

Because of that, it is the political party that runs the election campaign when you are nominated. That means that it is not a question if a candidate is personally rich, as it is in the States, I think. We can run for election with no private money.

I am a little sorry when I learn that more and more of the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe adopt what we call the English system of election, because I think it will be very difficult to bring women forward with that system.

Because I'm the last speaker in this session, I would also like to thank The Center for Democracy for helping to put this very important issue on the agenda. I feel that democracy is not finished until we have almost equal representation of women and men in all elected bodies.

Dame Fenner: Madam Gjorv knows that I will take up with her at some other time the assertion that the British system of election means that I have to be rich. I would tell her that had I to be rich, I would not be a Member of Parliament. The political parties also help to run elections in Great Britain, even though we don't have the same system as Norway.

I would like to say on my own behalf and on behalf of the panel that we have found it enormously interesting to listen to your contributions. I hope, and say again to our colleague from Hungary that we hope, that the rest of the conference reassures you that we will get some interchange. We will, of course, at the

social time this evening have opportunity for some interchange.

Thank you all very much indeed. Professor Weinstein?

Prof. Weinstein: Madam Chairman, if you'll permit it, a half-minute summary.

In the sharing of experiences, we have confronted the issues--as some of our colleagues have said--of the consolidation of democracy, the problems of transition which we all pray will end. We have had a discussion of specific global gender issues related to the role of women, those of economic treatment, political influence, social and cultural roles, and the dilemmas of social services.

These issues, normal for such encounters and conferences, have been confronted with some overwhelming realities which strike us and stun us and traumatize us to some extent: the eloquence of our colleague from Croatia on these issues and the dilemma of a colleague imprisoned on her way to this conference, which we will take up later with a resolution as prepared by some of our Western European friends, as our friend from Hungary has suggested. Perhaps we can adopt such a resolution by consensus to do something to address this issue and even keep her alive or safe, or at least show that this will not be without consequence.

In addition to the overriding dilemmas of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the problems generally of the former Yugoslavia, we have confronted the gulf between rich and poor, the gulf between Eastern and Western conceptions, even linguistically and programmatically of feminist concerns. We have at least discovered, Madam Chairman, that though we may all be pioneers in this process--men and women, East and West-- some of us are riding in trains, planes, and automobiles and others in ox carts and perhaps even cruder accommodations at this point. We have to figure out some way to distribute those trains, planes, and automobiles more broadly so that we can all be moving at approximately the same pace. Thank you.

Session Two

Action by Western Governments for Equal Participation of Women and Men in Political and Economic Life

Ms. Fischer: First, we all surely agree that we must say a most hearty word of thanks to Dame Peggy Fenner, who I think was a marvelous moderator in the first panel.

The next thing is to introduce myself. I'm Leni Fischer, a member of the German Bundestadt since 1976, a member of the foreign affairs and defense committees, a leader of the German delegation to the Interparliamentary Union, and chairperson of the coordinating committee for organizing the women's conferences there for the next two years. I am also a member of the Council of Europe and chairperson of the Council's Committee of Culture and Education.

I hope to reach the heights of moderator perfection as has Dame Peggy Fenner, but first I want to introduce to you our panelists. To my far right, which is not meant politically because I think she is on my left, is Tarja Halonen. She's an M.P. from Finland, a Social Democrat, and a member of the Parliamentary Assembly. She holds a master of law degree. She has been very busy in politics; she was a member of the City Council of Helsinki, a Minister of Social and Health Care from 1987 to 1990, and Minister of Justice. I think she has been a Member of Parliament since 1979, and a vice chairperson of the League of Committee. I think she is one of those people who can tell us quite a lot about the subjects we have in our second panel.

Our next panelist sitting to my right is Gale Norton from the U.S.A. She was elected Attorney General of Colorado in 1990, the first woman in the state's history and the first Republican woman in the nation to hold that office. She graduated from the University of Denver.

Ms. Norton has been named chairperson of the National Association of Attorneys General Environmental Committee and a member of the National Environmental Enforcement Council. She also chairs the Peace Officer Standards and Training Board. In 1991 she was honored by the Federalist Society as Young Lawyer of the Year, and she was one of 20 elected officials from across the nation named by *Parade* Magazine as a leader of the future.

On my left, I would like to introduce one of my colleagues from the European Parliament. She is Marijke Van Hemeldonck, member of the European Parliament since 1979 from Belgium. She is Vice President of Brussels University, a member of the Economic Committee and the Development Committee of the European Parliament, and of course a member of the Committee for the Rights of Women.

She chaired the Resolutions Committee at the U.N. Women's Conference in 1980. This gives me the chance to remind you that we all have to be prepared and have to do a lot of homework from the very beginning right now to prepare the next women's conference, which will occur in 1995 in China. I think it will give us a good opportunity to put forward our ideas.

Thank you very much, and I'll now give the floor to the first panelist, our Finnish colleague.

Ms. Halonen: Thank you, Madam Chair. One thing I want to mention is that I have been a minister for only four years. The Fins have limits. But I think I can see the possibilities and the duties from both sides, now that I'm in the opposition.

Another thing I would like to add, because we don't mention it very often, is that I'm also the mother of a 14-year-old daughter. I remember it very well, because she is three months older than my parliamentary career.

Also important, of course, are the backgrounds we come from, our personal experience. I think it is very important. Sometimes those who attend international conferences say they hate those pieces which start, "My country is..." But I think that by telling what happens at the concrete level in different countries, we can also learn about the work of women.

I suppose it would also be important to mention that my experiences come from a country where a very high percentage of women serve in the Parliament and in the government, both about 40 percent. We have no list voting, we have no quotas, so we have had a free, but not very fair, fight with our male candidates.

It also means that during those 75 years of independence, we have experienced what it means when we have had fewer women and more women in the government and in Parliament. I think sometimes you say that quality is not the same as quantity, so in that case it may be true that quantity becomes quality. It's not enough to get one man or one woman in a certain party; get so many that it's no more a question of sex.

At this historical moment, we have a different kind of experience than the men in our society. That's why I think it is important to get this double result, to get both men and women into politics and economics in the future.

Being a lawyer, of course I do love legislation, directives and all kinds of orders. Yet, I do think there are serious limits on what legislation can do.

You can deny persons the right to do something which is harmful, but you cannot order them to be creative, democratic, nice, or happy. However, if you deny too many things, the result is not very positive.

What we should try to find is an optimum in this field. How much do we need a certain kind of legislation so as to improve the position of human beings, including men and women?

As I have listened today to this discussion, I have a feeling that--and you might correct me--in the so-called new European democracies you feel a little bit allergic concerning all kinds of regulations, or you don't believe in the power or effect of them very much.

But I believe we can do a lot of positive things with national legislation. I do believe that a court of justice can help in this kind of case. In the Nordic countries, like in many other European countries, we have a law concerning equality. We also have a system of how to go to court with that.

We have an ombudsman system in Nordic countries, which means that we have a high civil servant who's looking at society and how things are going, and people can contact him or her. We also have a mechanism where women and men from different political parties at a very high level can also try to affect the politics of the government.

I will later come back to our experience concerning the welfare society, which I think in Nordic countries--also in The Netherlands partly--and in many other countries has proved to have certain good effects in the possibilities of women to be in both economics and in politics.

I hope that we can speak about education, equal rights, equal possibilities, and also study the case why we have better-educated girls in many countries but worse-paid women. That's the situation in many countries.

Last but not least, I do hope that we can speak about the role of the Council of Europe, what we are expecting from the European Community, the United Nations, et cetera. We know that the modern architecture of Europe is changing very rapidly, and even now this is occupying the Council of Europe. The European Parliament also has the honor to meet here in Strasbourg. So we have these two possibilities to strengthen our international cooperation.

I will finish with the words of Madam Lalumiere, the Secretary General of this organization, who said it very well. We are for cooperation; we are not for integration.

Ms. Norton: Let me first say how excited I am to be at this conference. I am absolutely in awe of the women who are here.

In my country, we made the transition to a free democratic society two centuries ago. In your countries, you are doing it now. I trust that the names of many women in this room will go down in the history books and be remembered centuries from now. I am very honored to be here.

I come from a state that has a very long tradition of women in active roles. This year Colorado is celebrating the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote. One-third of the members of our state legislature are women; three out of five state-wide elected officials are women, and I am one of those.

I think I have somewhat different views on some women's issues than perhaps others who come from a different tradition. Coming from the U.S.A. society of free enterprise and capitalism, I'd like to raise some different issues.

The first issue I would like to mention is the role of women in the political system and how you go about making a transition toward having more and more women. One of the things that we have done very recently is to adopt a movement toward term limitations of those in elected office. Because women's participation in the political process is growing, forcing a faster turnover in the political system means that women will get into office more quickly. I think that's one of the things other countries might want to look at.

We have reviewed laws which actively discriminate against women, and are beginning gradually to move away from those laws that do actively discriminate. Laws have prevented women from engaging in certain kinds of employment. They used to prevent women from lifting heavy loads or working long hours in jobs; things like that acted to prevent women from getting into certain kinds of businesses.

The strongest example of that is women in the armed forces. Just recently, women were allowed into combat for the first time. That is going to have a long-term impact. Obviously it was nice at one time for women never to have to worry about being called to combat or into that kind of danger, but it also meant that men had the advantage later in life of being able to develop leadership skills, of having credentials that women could not have without having gone into combat. As we have seen, women in the Persian Gulf

action served in active combat duties and emerged as heroes.

A second aspect I would like to mention is the role of women as entrepreneurs. In the United States, women are becoming more and more active in establishing their own businesses, and there are several different factors in that. We obviously have laws in place that prohibit discrimination. Discrimination in hiring, pay, promotions, and job termination are all prohibited. We have laws that prohibit sexual harassment, and those are enforceable by complaint to a government agency. I note that if the government agency does not act quickly enough or in a satisfactory manner, a woman has the right to take those actions directly to court.

In our corporations and businesses, we see a phenomenon called the "glass ceiling." Women tend to be active in various aspects of employment but not to be as highly represented in the upper levels of business and of politics. There is progress being made. In top corporate tiers, women represented only three percent in 1986; that has grown to five percent today.

Currently, mentoring programs are being established to try to match women who have gone up the corporate ladder, who have experiences, with those women who are just starting on those rungs. That is one way in which women are obtaining the skills to move up in the corporate world.

Training and education are obviously very important, and these are areas in which women's roles are improving. I urge you to look at ways of building permanent change. We need to build a strong permanent base for women, not just a token base.

As we think about various social programs that would be helpful for women, we should also think about the costs of those programs and the way in which the costs are distributed. I started my own business, a law firm, and I would not have been able to start that business if we had had in place many of the requirements that are being discussed, those that would have put a very heavy burden of taxation or of subsidizing employees on me as a new business owner.

In the United States, there are more employees of women-owned businesses than there are employees of the top 500, the largest U.S. businesses. I think that is a very positive step for women and one that I hope will begin around the world.

Ms. Fischer: Thank you very much. I'm quite sure everyone realized that there were two very different aspects of tackling the problem.

As our panel is called "Action by Western Governments for Equal Participation of Women and Men in Political and Economic Life," I think it might be quite interesting to listen to our colleague from the European Parliament. Quite a lot of these actions by Western European governments are collected, so I think she might have a survey of what is underway, what should be underway, what is difficult to get underway.

Ms. van Hemeldonck: The European Parliament has 518 members who represent 380 million citizens of Western Europe. Of the members, 17 percent are women, which is a higher percentage than in most of the national parliaments and certainly a higher percentage than in most of the national higher houses--that is, the House of Lords, the Senate, or whatever.

There is a difference between North and South. There are proportionately more women elected in the northern European countries than in the southern European countries, and Greece at this time has no woman member of the European Parliament.

There is also a difference between the right and left of the Parliament. The left tends to have more members. The left has approximately 25 percent, and a special example is the German Socialists with 40 percent women in their delegation.

It is interesting to see how this has come about. Obviously, there is the matter of tradition. As you say, the Nordic countries have a longer tradition of women in parliament. Another element that has been mentioned is whether you have a constituency system like the British, where it's a first-past-the-post system. Another element is whether you have proportional representation, and still another element is whether you have a quota system or any sort of minimum percentages.

The quota system is something which--if you consider that democracy is the equality principle--would mean proportional representation, which in turn would mean probably 51 percent of the members of parliament, because 51 percent of the population are women. A quota system is an inferior system because a quota says one-third or 20 percent or whatever. But it helps you to attain a critical mass. That is, amongst the elected once there's more than one, one man, one

woman, you may have raised the quality of your representation once you have more. Also, people get used to women being around in politics, and that is also very important.

I have noticed that prejudice is especially present at the middle levels. You rarely meet it at the bottom, at the grass-roots level, and I have never actually met it at the top. I'll give you two examples.

I was the rapporteur in the European Parliament on monetary policy. At the beginning of the debates on the monetary union, I was sent to represent the largest group in the European Parliament and the monetary affairs committee. I was involved in dealings with the Bundesbank. Now that was a very, very male institution. Nobody moved, you know. They assumed that if I was appointed, I must have been the adequate person for the job.

In addition, I did a report on the aerospace industry, another extremely male industry with very heavy military influence, and there was no reaction. They accepted the idea that if you had been appointed, there must have been a good reason why you were appointed. It's in the middle that you find prejudice, and there certainly is prejudice.

We shouldn't forget that this year we celebrate the 200th anniversary of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* and the bicentennial of the first declaration of the rights of women, written at the time of the French Revolution. From then on, all our political constitutions have had sentences or paragraphs which state a belief in equality. This has been pure lip service. Don't you believe it because it's in a text; never believe a text. It's putting into practice which makes equality, not having it on paper.

I've been a member of the development committee for a long time, and I've been involved in the decolonization process. I remember that in the 1950s in Africa the people used to say, "Oh, after independence it's going to be perfect." And then when I came to these countries after independence, the people were hoping that it would be over because there was economic chaos and everything else. Now I go back to these countries to witness the elections, and again they say, "Oh, democracy." I'm sure that in another year or two they're going to say, "Oh, democracy, when will it end?"

It's not enough to have the formal things; you have to put something in it. Of course, you have to use the words and the systems, even if they're put in for other reasons.

The fight of the women in the European Parliament, I think, has been exemplary, and that's why I'm telling you about it. Our constitution--that is, the Treaty of Rome--had one article about women, and Betty Lockwood sitting over there knows only too well because she has used it a lot. Article 119 guarantees equal pay between men and women, and that was decided in 1957. Nobody meant it. The ones who wrote it down didn't mean that.

They wanted to make an anti-competition article. They didn't think about women when they were writing it down. There was a consensus. Everybody knew that they meant only competition, and nobody used it for what it said--that is, equality between men and women.

Yet, in 1966, women workers, trade unionists, used it as the start of a major strike of women in an arms industry. Then, women lawyers picked it up to bring a case to the European Court, and they won. They won a pronouncement from the Court which gave a content to that famous article, and from then on we got three pieces of European law--equal pay, equal access to employment, and equal treatment on the job.

If you have equal treatment, even in social security, you obviously must have equality in marriage and equality towards your children. So social law, which was out of the competence of the European Community, changed fundamentally in the E.C. countries because women had been good strategists.

I never say we got something through Article 119 of the treaty. I say we got it because women were clever enough to work together--women in politics, women in the administration, women lawyers, women in the trade unions who could find people--because it's not easy to take a case to an international court. It was good strategy.

I think that's very important, that women should learn this, and that you should use opportunities and power relationships when they come up. You know, if your agenda is such that you can't achieve it, don't forget it. Never forget anything. Put it in the fridge, and run with the ball which is running at that particular time.

I would say to the women from the Eastern European countries, don't give up anything that you already have. It is not true that your economies will crumble if you keep your social security.

The European country with the highest social protection and social security is Germany, and its economy is going very well. It's not true that your economies cannot finance social security. If you do

not finance social security, you have to look at the accounts of the nation. Okay, they say it's a choice between financing social security and education? Then you are left with an unskilled work force and unemployment for a very long time. Then you will have crime, and you will have to pay for police and security and everything else.

In these arguments, you have to look at the accounts of the nation. It is in the interest of the nation to have its children well educated, to have its elderly people taken care of, to have women protected so they do not produce babies which are neglected, et cetera.

So don't give up what you have, and fight for what you don't have. Count on a strategy in which you relate to women in other countries.

Thank you for mentioning the Peking conference, to be held in 1995. The U.N. decade, which started off as a token thing, was really a dust bin where men had put on the agenda all the dirty political problems they couldn't solve. The reason I put in my biography that I chaired the resolution committee at the Copenhagen conference is that I got rid of all that and said, "Now we speak to women's issues, stick to our agenda which is going to be health, education, employment."

We have to be careful that we do not lose what we gained through the U.N. decade. In 1995 we will pick that up again and, of course, we will actualize it. Let's work together and give them a reason to put women's issues on the agenda.

Ms. Fischer: Now there are some people who have asked for the floor. First, thanks very much to my three colleagues. As Baroness Lockwood was addressed, I think I should ask her to speak. She is one of those who have been fighting for years and years and years, and I think she could give us some good hints.

Baroness Lockwood: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I am Betty Lockwood, United Kingdom, House of Lords, and the first Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission which was set up in 1975 under my country's first sex discrimination act.

I'd like to say something about that, but first can I comment on one or two things that have already been said? I think it was the Bulgarian representative who first brought up the question of culture and institutions. One of the problems is that all of us are products of our own culture and institutions; they can be a source of constraint upon development, or they can be a source and a force for change.

I think the challenge that faces women in all our countries is to make sure that we use our culture and our institutions, which are interactive, as a force for change. If we look at our situation, we find that is what is happening.

Even one of the strongest elements of our cultures which we all share, the role of women in the family, is beginning to change. It's beginning to change because our institutions and our procedures have changed and because women are becoming stronger and are able to use their influence within the home to make sure that men now more than ever are aware of the fact that parenthood is a partnership and that both of them need to contribute. This is more true of young people than it is of people of my generation. I think that's something we've got to reinforce and take advantage of the change in attitude.

I want to talk about the Equal Opportunities Commission and the sex discrimination act in the U.K. It set up a new institution which is helping to change the culture and attitudes. I'm not saying it's perfect; it isn't. The Commission itself wants to change and improve the act. Nevertheless, it is a most useful means of making sure that principles are applied and are turned into a reality.

It affects both men and women; both men and women can take up cases under the sex discrimination act in three areas: employment, education, and the provision of goods, facilities, and services. The act has been used by both men and women, but largely by women. The act also set up the Equal Opportunities Commission, which has the responsibility to administer the act and to help individuals pursue their rights under the act.

In 1976, as a member of the European Parliament has indicated, we got the directive in Europe on equal pay. Then, a couple of years later, we got the directive on equality between the sexes coming into force. The Equal Opportunities Commission took advantage of those two directives to bring into play national legislation and European legislation. The European legislation was able to strengthen our national legislation, but on occasion our own legislation went further.

As a consequence, a number of very important cases were taken to the European Court of Justice, which has caused the British government itself to change legislation in a number of fields. I mention

this because it is an act of Parliament, and it is a model which perhaps some of our Eastern European colleagues might like to consider and to follow.

I share completely the view of the Finnish member of the panel when she says that there is a limit to what legislation can do. But equally, without legislation you don't have that framework which protects the rights of individuals and gives individuals an opportunity to pursue those rights. Whereas I don't say that legislation changes attitudes, legislation is a mechanism by which attitudes and culture can be changed.

Ms. Halonen: I'm also very optimistic that good legislation is always one step forward. But if it's too many steps, it is no longer working, and that's the way to find out.

Also, it's very important what Marijke has said, that the laws or directives do not work as papers but as tools. You must use them before they become effective.

I apologize to my American friend. We have a different kind of system, different legislatures. Most of the European countries now have a system where we believe quite a lot in the written law, while the USA and the British have a case law system. Only one member of the E.C. has this Anglo-American system, so the Luxembourg Court used it by the E.C. So it might be very powerful in the future.

Our points of view in discussing legislation are a little bit different. I think the most important thing is that if you think that the papers of the past, as you mentioned, were not so fruitful or not as effective as what you thought in your different countries, don't think that it's useless. It can be a quite useful means or system if you also get the power and the will and the economic resources to do it.

Some of the former speakers said they believe more in women's groups, NGOs, and so on. They are not less important, but the legislation will help those groups and female entrepreneurs. Laws and legislation should be thoroughly studied to determine whether they are directly or indirectly sex discriminatory.

Ms. Fischer: Before we continue, let me just give you a piece of information. Outside I found this working paper; its title, translated from the German text, is: "Institutions to promote equal opportunities of men and women in the European Community." It gives all the details and addresses and structural things that have been done in the different countries of the E.C. If you have some room left in your luggage, this might be very interesting to take along because in the Council of Europe we also did quite a lot of work on that.

There's plenty of material here. It's a collection of the Council of Europe's work relating to equality between women and men. This might be a bit too much to read right away, but there will be Christmas holidays or some time when you might have some free time so that you could work through it.

I think it's always helpful to have these things if you want to start legislation within your own national parliaments. We are so busy working that we must not use our time to invent things which have already been invented.

I was told that there are quite a number of people here wanting to get more details about what people did in the northern countries. I would like to give the floor to Inger Gjorv from Norway, as she might have some more examples.

Ms. Gjorv: Perhaps some of you would be interested to hear a little more about our experience with the quota system. In my country, four of the seven parties in the Parliament have a quota system. They each say about the same, that in every elected body at least 40 percent should represent each gender. I think it's almost the same in many other Nordic parties, as it is in Germany and Spain.

In my party--the Social Democratic Party--in the Parliament, we have a majority of women, and I would say that we take good care of the men. We quote them for every position, of course, so that's one experience.

Another interesting experience is that although three of the representative parties don't have a quota system, they have learned that in order to get votes it is more or less necessary to have many women on the list, because it's a demand among the people who elect the representatives.

The quota system has influenced not only those parties which use it, but all the parties. Of course, we don't think that a quota system is our goal; it's a tool. Also, to get more women into politics is not an aim in itself; it's a tool to get better politics.

Another experience of this quota system is that it's very demanding. Because of the quota demand, every party has to really work at recruiting new women. Many parties now have elaborate training systems to encourage women to get into politics.

Perhaps some of you would be interested to hear that our training system has been adapted for our sister party in Czechoslovakia. They have been very happy to use it, and perhaps it is something that could be brought to others.

There's another thing I would like to mention about what society could do. In Norway, when it's a question of appointing people to jobs in official society, we have also a kind of quota. We say that when there are equal qualifications, the under-represented sex should be appointed. That is also a very good experience, and it is, with some discussion, used for both men and women. For instance, we think it's good to have more men working in kindergartens; we do not want only women there. So we use it for both sexes.

Ms. van Hemeldonck: I have a comment about the quota system. Since a quota is always going to be underproportional representation, you must be careful that only women select the women candidates. Otherwise, you'll end up with the sort of women that men like and a situation like that in my local council. Counselor A says to Counselor B, "You vote for my wife, and I'll vote for your girlfriend." The result was that they each have two seats, you know.

I wanted to say that there is perhaps a better system than the quota system, which has been launched recently by the Greens in several countries. It is called the zipper system: you draw out of a hat whether a man or a woman comes first, and then you go like a zipper, one man, one woman, one man, one woman.

Ms. Lau: In the United States, the Bush Administration is looking at the equal participation of men and women in political and economic life by first setting forth an agenda for American renewal. What this encompasses is expanding free trade, better education for children, making businesses more competitive, economic security for working families, more economic opportunities, and right-sizing the government.

However, many Americans say that our society has become one of spectators, especially in politics. Many Americans say that the government is not listening to the citizens. It's very much like the story of George and Martha, do you know them?

George and Martha's marriage was not doing very well, and Martha asked her husband, "George, if I died, would you remarry?" George said yes, and Martha was very upset. Then she asked, "If I died, would you live in the same house? Would you sleep in the same bed? Would you let her wear my fur coat?" George said yes. "Would she use my golf clubs?" George answered, "No, she's left-handed."

As you can see, many people feel that the government is not listening, but the Secretaries of State in the United States are listening. We are putting together a project called Renewal of American Democracy, and the goal is to bring people and government together because many American citizens do not exercise their right to vote. In many countries, you have people dying for the right to vote, and sometimes in America people don't vote because they feel that the government is not listening to them.

This project is going to have regional meetings to understand how people are thinking and what we should do. This will done in concert with research that is carried out on this particular problem. I just wanted you to know what is happening in the U.S. This will be an ongoing process, very much like this meeting should be an ongoing process for us.

Ms. Fischer: At the end of panel one, we heard from some of our colleagues from the Eastern democracies and the newly-emerging democracies about the difficulties with women's nominations, and we have a great percentage of women in the Eastern Bloc parliaments. I know because we met them all over the world.

Now with another form of election--and that is what the President of the Assembly explained this morning--the number of women being elected to parliament is shrinking.

We made a study--the only study so far in the world--and the United Nations was very happy that we treated its members as parliamentarians in this process and how it changed, especially in the former Eastern Bloc countries.

Now that we have heard from the Norwegians and the European Community, it would be very interesting to hear one of the representatives of the former Eastern Bloc countries. I give the floor to Dimitrina Petrova.

Ms. Petrova: I don't mean to speak on political participation; I have another point to make. But I'll take the opportunity to say very frankly I think that for the moment, the idea of quotas--which I like, which is a fascinating idea--is utopian for my society at least.

I have tried to suggest this idea at meetings, and people either shrug their shoulders or they laugh and say impossible, unthinkable. So unfortunately--I think, regrettably--this is the case. I do not mean that it is not the time to discuss this and to try to raise the issue in the media.

I would like to speak, however, on another issue. I would like to respond to the appeal that our Belgian colleague made to us Easterners: do not lose what you already have. This concerns the priority problem of who should care for the children, the elderly, and disabled people. How could we build a new welfare system, if at all?

I think that three answers have materialized within the framework of patriarchy, three answers to the question of who should care--the state, the marketplace, and the family. The problem in Eastern Europe is that all three solutions are ambiguous and would be burdened with new and non-trivial, very country-specific problems.

I fully agree that we should try to keep all that we had under communism and try to build on that. But the problem is that the very idea of a patronizing state has been largely discredited with the sweep of democratic elections. Together with this, the idea of a caring, patronizing state is less popular, but this is very paradoxical.

If you ask people at the level of superficial opinion, they would say, "I don't want the state to care for me. I want to take care of myself." But there is a deeper layer, a deeper attitude of expectations. When you pursue your question, you will find out that in the depths of their hearts, people still want the state to give, as in the past, the same amount of benefits to the same categories of people. So it is a problem.

It is not easy now to inscribe the idea of a caring state into a new democratic context, because this is just exactly what people are trying to dismiss--a patronizing, totalitarian state, a society in which the state was the alpha and omega of everything.

Then there is a problem with the family as the source of caregiving. The problem is that under communism, the breadwinner/housewife arrangement was slightly shattered, even to the point that we had an achievement like paternity and grandparent leave. Things like this are now returning, and because of the hypocrisy of communism regarding women that I mentioned, the result is that now there is a very strongly conservative anti-feminist trend in social psychology. This is why the family is not the solution either.

Then there are also problems with the market. Here we have all heard the argument that to rely on the market to liberate women--to buy your way out--would mean to exploit our women, would mean to transfer the job to other women. This is a strong argument. I feel it is the case.

I would be against any dogmatic solution. I would rather say that in each of the new European countries we should try to find the optimum combination of all of those forms and not be dogmatically insistent upon one, because this would be a sure way to lose what we already have.

Ms. Fischer: On this point of the caring, patronizing state, let me tell you about a report we discussed at the plenary of the Council of Europe this week. It concerned the situation of the young generation in the Eastern parts of the new Europe. We came to the conclusion that, after so many years of communism, we need to educate young people to be full of fantasy, to be creative, to be self-reliant. We have to teach them how to organize themselves.

At the same time, women have to learn how to organize ourselves and how to get our things done. I think it's a problem with the younger generation as well as with women. If women decide that they want to lead a different kind of life than they had to lead with all the stresses in previous years, allow them to stay at home.

Ms. Halonen: I think the free choice of a different kind of life is very important. I think that also could be one possibility for women in politics--to show they don't want to make a pattern for how women should live.

We had a very long debate in Finland concerning children's day care, because 40 percent of women said they wanted to receive money to stay at home and look after their children. The other 40 percent said they wanted a good day care system and to be involved in gainful employment. There were others who said it would depend on the amount of money and the services they could get.

So we made it possible for women to choose. The only difficulty was to offer comparable amounts of money and good services. It's much easier to divide money than to create services. Now we are fairly satisfied, but we are trying to protect the system because we too have an economic crisis in our country and both choices are expensive.

United Nations statistics tell us that in America a greater percentage of the gross national product is spent on health than in Finland, but we have better services. If you have a small nation, it's not a good idea to try to create markets in all fields. We do need markets in industry and trade, however.

In education and health, a public system seems to work better, combined with the possibility of also buying private services. The market itself is not a magic word which will create everything immediately. You must know how to use it.

There are a lot of different kinds of international experience on how to do it. I think the magic word is that you should have the possibility to choose yourself how to live, but I know that it's difficult in these economic times.

Ms. Lokar: Can I say something about this discussion? It's a very interesting and crucial theme in our discussion. I am Sonja Lokar from Slovenia, now the richest of all ex-socialist states in the world. Wages are now approximately 600 deutschemarks per person. That is much better than in many other ex-socialist states.

But still one-third of women in Slovenia are single parents. Eighty percent of the families with two wages must live with an income that guarantees only elementary needs. Eighty-nine percent of women with children younger than three years are forced to work full-time.

In such a situation, and with an unemployment rate of near 12 percent with half of that representing women, we are forced not to let them destroy our child care, our health care, our equal access to work. There is no way out. We cannot afford to be placed in a worse condition than is necessary. That's the point I wanted to make.

It is true that ex-socialist states patronized and monopolized social care, and it was not a good thing to do. If we want to change that, then we must add complementary programs to it but not destroy public services.

Ms. Norton: I'd like to comment on the idea of a market system. I think it's necessary to look at a balance. Any time you're talking about paid leave to have children or the various kinds of benefits that many of the former communist countries have had, you also have to realize that there is a cost. That cost has to be factored in somewhere.

When you're talking about a large enterprise, it's very easy to say the women in that factory should have the opportunity to take time off for leave because you can spread the work among other people. But when you're talking about small businesses, the cost of benefits may impact in a way which prevents businesses from growing or from even starting up.

I think the market system allows for creativity. In the U.S. women have established businesses around the idea that they would work part time and care for their families part time. They bring their children to the office; they have ways of caring for their children as a part of the business.

Women can band together and do those kinds of things in a market system and find ways of getting ahead economically without necessarily forcing the rest of the system to accommodate us. We can make our own rules.

Ms. Guirado: I am Ana Guirado, a member of the Socialist Party in Spain. I would like to talk about women's equality movements.

In our party 25 percent of the list in the House of Representatives and in the Senate are women. If that wasn't the case, then we wouldn't be coming here. I assume it's the same in all countries. It's often said that half the population is female, but in political parties women don't make up half. They represent 12 to 17 percent, be it the Socialist Party or any other political party.

I heard a representative of the United States say something which really struck me. Almost all of Spain's economy, or 85 percent of it, is made up of small and medium-sized companies, and women have paid maternity leave. This surprised me, because I see the differences between countries on this point are remarkable.

The representative from the former Soviet Union said they used to have 12 months of paid maternity leave. We have 14 weeks, and this exists all over Europe. Nevertheless, the factories and companies have to run.

In his campaign, George Bush said that it's not possible, that even rich countries can't afford this because it would mean that companies would not hire women. Well, we have experience with this, and women can work in companies--of course, with some problems, but they do work.

We often say that rights have to be fought for; we can't take them for granted. The Belgian representative said we must always grab things with

both hands and not drop anything, which is something we learned from men. Men are everywhere; women are not omnipresent.

In the Council of Europe or the European Economic Community, there are many problems with women, and often we hear about problems with representation and work.

I serve on the migrants committee of the Council of Europe, and when we do a report there we do so after people have talked about sports, culture, legal affairs, and so on. But in the migrants committee, we have some rather unpleasant experiences. We are now drawing up a report on the situation of migrant women, and Lord Owen today talked about the situation in the former Yugoslavia.

It is true that people are dying in great masses there. Apparently, women can be killed and assaulted. Nevertheless, during our lifetimes we have to overcome many more difficulties because of the simple fact that we are women. Well, I think that is something we have to continue to bear in mind.

Half of the people who arrived in the European Economic Community as migrants are women. There's another problem, and that is they don't speak the language of the country to which they migrate. They can't obtain work permits, so they can't work legally and end up doing clandestine work.

We have to talk about women in politics, but we also have to talk about women who are not lawyers or economists, women who do domestic work or who work for people like us here. Those women don't have the opportunity to come to places like the Council of Europe to explain how they live.

Ms. Barnes: I'm Shirley Barnes, the Consul General of the United States of America. I'd like to tell you how delighted I am to be here and how impressed I am with this group of women.

Having spent a long career working with women, from the time I was in college working with groups of women across the United States until I worked in places like the African-American Institute in New York City, I've always been impressed by women who, despite many problems, have done something with their lives. It is obvious that this group of women is a good example and a testimony to doing something with one's own life and about the lives of other women.

Having worked in the civil rights movement in the 1960s--and that's giving away my age, which is okay--there's a certain expression that we used as young people. It was a song we used to sing, and it said that in order to know what I've gone through, you would have to walk a mile in my shoes.

Knowing what our sisters have gone through in Eastern and Central Europe, I can now understand, having walked a mile in their shoes. I appreciate so much being with them.

I would like to make a couple of general comments. Baroness Lockwood said something about laws and affirmative action. I must agree with that; there has to be a certain structure in the law, mechanisms which people on the outs need to have in order to get in. I don't think laws should be an encumbrance, but we certainly need laws for those who need equal opportunity in order to do things in their lives.

When it comes to gender, we need to start early in life to educate both males and females that anybody can do anything. It has to start with young boys and girls in school.

I always feel that when we're in sessions like this we seem to be preaching to people about what you should do and what you shouldn't do. I would like to say for all of us, whether it be our representatives from the Eastern countries or those from the Western countries, that one of the most important things is to teach our children to accept differences.

I think that for young men and young women, for boys and girls, if they have role models in their young lives, this is going to make a very big difference in how participatory democracy will work as these people grow up and assume roles in society.

Ms. Garcia: Madam Chair, 35 years ago--and here I'm going to give my age away--before civil rights and affirmative action when I was graduating from high school, there were two lines that formed after graduation. The girls went on one side, and the guys went on the other. The girls went to be tested for their skills in typing and shorthand, and the guys went to a poster of a figure with striped pants and a tall hat who said, "We want you"--the Army, the military. So there were those two defined roles for girls and boys. That was 35 years ago.

There's been a change of attitudes. I was out of the country through the whole civil rights movement--four years in Spain, six years in Vietnam during the war--so I had no notion of what was going on in the U.S.A. until I came home.

I chose to become an educated person. I had the resources to do it. A lot of women don't. That's one

thing we can do through legislation. I introduced a bill last session--it was killed, but I'm going to try again--to allow minority women a higher education, because I feel that without an education there's no way in the world that we can compete with males. We just need to do that.

One of the earlier speakers alluded to the role of females as entrepreneurs, and this is happening a lot. Many mature women, displaced through divorce or whatever, are returning to college, getting educated and starting their own businesses. I've been a businesswoman now for 22 years.

I also appreciate the remarks of Ms. Guirado when she talks about the women with no voice, the migrant women. There are some of those in my district, and nobody knows what to do about them. I introduced legislation to help them get housing. Those people are living in the U.S.A. under bridges, in old beat-up cars and buses.

These migrant workers come into an area to work in chili production, but it's a love-hate relationship. The farmers need them to work, or they would go broke. Yet, they want these people just to disappear at five o'clock.

The main point I wanted to make is that I feel education is very important if we're going to compete with our male counterparts.

Ms. Apprill: My name is Claudette Apprill, and within the Council of Europe I am responsible for questions relating to equality between men and women. I'm Secretary to the Committee that has been looking into these questions of equality between men and women for some 12 years now.

I'd like to give you some food for thought. On the question of equality, the Committee thought that the question hadn't been put in the right terms, and that's why we come up against so many difficulties. I think the basis of equality has been distorted in that it's based on the major texts relating to the individual, the human being as asexual, but in fact human beings are not asexual. Basically, the two parts of a human being are equal parts. We're talking about parity, and it's parity which should be the foundation for equality.

If you take parity as a foundation, that leads automatically to a democracy through parity. It's a new concept we have coined, but we think it has a life ahead of it. In particular, Central and Eastern European and the other nascent democracies, I think, should be established on solid foundations.

I think this idea of parity with regard to the human being or the individual is paramount. It's not a question of differences; it's not a question of men and women being different. There are differences between individuals, but there are none between men and women. I think we're talking about two halves which are part of a human being, and each half has to have its own identity.

I think that what men and women should understand and recognize is the legitimacy of women's identity, just as men's identity is equally legitimate.

Ms. Ryynanen: Madam Chairperson, there have been so many interesting contributions one would like to comment on, but there's no time for that.

My Norwegian colleague raised the question of why women are needed. It can't be just an aim in itself to have more women in politics. That made me think of what we heard about the dominant role of the patronizing state in the East, which people now want to get rid of, and people's lack of self-confidence and initiative.

One of our colleagues pointed out that women are especially strong in civil society. I think it is very true, and that special capacity of women is now very much needed, even in Western democracies. A democratic system is in danger when people just don't want to vote, especially the young people, and when people don't have confidence in the system and don't want to be part of it.

I think it's a very big challenge for all of us to save the system by reforming it from inside, at the grass-roots level. I'm very convinced that it's really up to the women to bridge the gap between the world and the system. On one side there's the system, the parties and the state, and on the other side there is the everyday world of ordinary people, their feelings and their experiences. If we can't bring these two worlds closer together, we'll lose very much.

Ms. Freedman: I said at the social committee hearing on Wednesday that we would be very frank, and in my opening statement I talked about how the United States stood in relation to women in elected positions. Cheryl Lau talked about how we have been bystanders in the process of elected positions. However, in the past few years we have done very well at the national level on appointed positions.

Of the 13 cabinet members, there are three women, and all in very non-traditional roles--Secretary

of Labor, Secretary of Commerce, and United States Trade Representative. In the Bush administration, over 42 percent of all the top-level government appointments have gone to women, not because they're women but because they are very qualified. At the middle-management level, 28 percent are women, and at the confidential or policy-making level, 55 percent.

I said we would be frank, and I think in elected positions we have been very slow as a nation. Lately, though, in appointed positions I think we have done a good job.

I will briefly say one other thing. I hope we don't sit back and wait until 1995 for the U.N. conference on women in Beijing. The first international event that I know of is in 1993, next September--the Global Economic Summit of Small Business Women and Access to Credit. It's coming up very soon, and we need to start thinking in preparation.

Prof. Weinstein: Earlier today our friends from Eastern Europe addressed those of us from the West, as we've defined East and West. In this session, predominantly those from the West addressed those from the East. Tomorrow will occur the intermingling and the back-and-forth that Dr. Bollobas has requested and suggested that we need.

Might I suggest several things in summary of this session? Plainly, whatever the advances made in different countries of Western Europe and North America, none of the speakers expressed a degree of comprehensive satisfaction. Gains have been made, and they have been described. But in some instances they are hardly more than beachheads.

These advances fall into different categories, and I think it might be worth noting in conclusion the categories that I've heard:

--the constitutional and legal protections provided in a variety of fields by Western governments, what Ms. van Hemeldonck correctly described as the critical masses of office holders and legislators and political leaders, women (finally) in enough numbers by whatever means, whether by quota or without quota, to be listened to, to be responded to respectfully and seriously;

--the international instruments which have proved on occasion effective for consciousness-raising, if nothing else, but often more than that--the United Nations, the European Community, and others;

--the economic and social support structures that have been maintained in a number of our countries;

--and something that I'm so glad that our new Consul General, who has gained my admiration in the last several days of knowing her, referred to as did others: education, the necessities of education.

Tomorrow morning we'll be talking about non-governmental organizations. One thing that has been debated but not enough--I think I'll express some restlessness as Eniko did earlier--is the role of economic power, economic activity. I'm waiting for the European Community to appoint a woman as successor to Jacques Delors, for example.

I'm not certain that my European friends fully responded to Gale Norton and others on the role of economic empowerment. How many women in the United States and Europe have dug their way out of difficulties precisely because of going into business or other forms of activity? That might enter into some of the discussion tomorrow morning, but that's all that I wanted to suggest for now.

A resolution, prepared by some of our Western European colleagues from the Parliamentary Assembly, has been proposed concerning the conference participant from Kosova. I can read it quickly, and I propose that we make it the first order of business in the morning so people can discuss it.

The resolution reads, "Strasbourg, October 3. Assembled at the Conference on the Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, we have learned that one of the observers expected to participate in this conference, Ms. Edita Tahiri, Member of Parliament of the Republic of Kosova, has been detained by the Serbian police. After 15 hours in a police station in Ferizaj, Ms. Tahiri was released, but she has now been summoned for a second time and death threats concerning herself and her family have been pronounced.

"Alarmed by this report, we express our strong concern for the fate of Ms. Tahiri and call on the Serbian authorities to stop immediately their provocations against Ms. Tahiri and other members of the Parliament of Kosova."

Session Three

Building Women's Organizational and Leadership Skills in Central and Eastern Europe:

Opportunities and Obstacles, Establishing Action Networks, and Accessing the Media

Prof. Weinstein: I would like to share with you a letter faxed overnight from Mrs. Edita Tahiri of the Democratic League of Kosova in Prishtina. I will read it *verbatim*.

"Dear Mr. Weinstein, On behalf of the Democratic League of Kosova and my personal [*sic*], I would like to thank you very much for inviting me to participate in conference which is due to be held in Strasbourg in October 3-4.

"Unfortunately, I will not be able to come to the conference, because I was prevented to do the necessary arrangements related to the travelling, because I was arrested by the Serbian police patrol and detained to police station in Farizaj, where I was kept for 15 hours (from 23:30 p.m. of 28th September to 15:30 p.m. of 29th September). The same happened the next day. I was arrested and kept at the police station for six hours in the so-called informative talks.

"I hope I will have the opportunity to participate in some other conferences to which I am looking forward. Wishing successful proceedings to the conference, I remain, Yours Sincerely, Mrs. Edita Tahiri, Member of Presidency."

Several of our colleagues in this meeting have requested that before we begin the panel this morning, we discuss an appropriate response to this situation.

Yesterday I read a response proposed by several of our Western European colleagues. I would like to re-read it now, if I may, and open the floor to comments or a brief discussion. I will then ask for an expression either of consensus or lack thereof to see whether we proceed with this.

In this statement I have omitted mention of the U.S. Agency for International Development as a conference sponsor because it is a government agency and might wish to avoid any complication.

"Strasbourg, October 4, 1992. Assembled at the Conference on the Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe sponsored by The Center for Democracy, Washington, D.C., we American and European delegates have learned that one of the observers expected to participate in this conference, Ms. Edita Tahiri, member of the Parliament of Kosova, has been detained by the Serbian police. After 15 hours in the police station at Farizaj, Mrs. Tahiri was released, but she was then summoned for a second time for six hours of questioning. We understand further that there were death threats directed at her and her family.

"Alarmed by this report, we express our strong concern for the fate of Ms. Tahiri and call on the Serbian authorities to stop immediately their harassment of Ms. Tahiri.".

Now the floor is open for anyone who wishes to comment on that text.

Ms. Corning: We have a question about where we are sending this resolution. To whom are we sending it?

Prof. Weinstein: My own suggestion would be to send it as a response to Ms. Tahiri and to allow her to circulate it as might best keep her from a third visit to the police station. If we send it to the Serbian authorities, it may never reach her, and she may not know that we've done any of this.

In similar encounters in the not-too-distant past, at a time when The Center for Democracy did not work with new democratic governments and parliaments but rather worked primarily in trying to keep our friends in democratic opposition civic movements out of jail or worse, one of the techniques that we and other organizations used was to spread letters and faxes everywhere we could to offer whatever shelter could be provided by way of visibility.

What one says in such communications is very simply "We're watching you, we know what's happening, you're not doing this in the dark." It's amazing sometimes how nervous people, who are accustomed to silent oppression, become when someone bangs a pot in the courtyard.

[Unidentified Speaker]: In the name of the Albanian group here, I would like to thank you, Mr. Weinstein, for the solidarity you have shown our friend and colleague Ms. Tahiri, and we are very pleased to hear the declaration you have just read.

We would suggest it be sent to the Committee of Human Rights of Helsinki, not the Parliament or the government of Serbia, because this is not the first case of its kind.

It is very difficult for the women's groups with whom we have relations in Kosova to participate in such conferences, because they are always arrested or find it impossible to get passports from the Serbians.

This case may serve as a symbol to stop the oppression they commit. We thank you for the solidarity you are showing.

Ms. Norton: May I suggest that we also might send this to the press, if that would be helpful.

Ms. Hojberg: I'm Anne Else Hojberg from Denmark. I initially raised this question when I saw Ms. Tahiri's name on the list, and I know that the Council of Europe has also been making a resolution on these questions.

Actually, it seems to be a typical repeating habit that when people from Kosova have been abroad, they are arrested when they return. It is simply the Serbian authorities who are doing this every time.

There was also a gentleman arrested with her, but we have kept him out of the resolution because we thought it should be directed towards this special case.

Mr. Ternak: According to the rules of the Council of Europe, we may prepare a written declaration not exceeding 200 words if it is signed by representatives of three different nations.

I think this proposal can be written down, a document prepared, and on Monday we can submit it. We can table the conference resolution, and it can be a written declaration from the Council of Europe, if it is agreed.

[Unidentified Speaker]: Such initiative has been taken, so it is has already been circulated and signed--at least by the Liberal group and the Socialist group.

Prof. Weinstein: That's good, but it seems to me that if you have such a declaration, and members from the Central European countries join in that declaration, it adds a moral authority that will not go unnoticed in the region. I hope that can be accomplished tomorrow.

Since this conference is not a Council event in the formal sense, it seems to me that there is every reason to do something separately through The Center for Democracy. This is not, I might add, the first time we've had this kind of experience. It used to take place quite regularly in Central America where we would have to bang a few pots before some of our participants would be released to come to conferences and other events.

If anyone objects to that procedure or may not wish to be identified with it, they can come talk to me privately. But I think the appropriate vehicle would very definitely be The Center for Democracy, and we're happy to do that.

[Unidentified Speaker]: One other question. If there is some appropriate place for sending letters independently, if we could get an address, I'd be interested.

Prof. Weinstein: I think we should make some copies of this letter from Ms. Tahiri. It has her fax number and her phone number, and those of you who wish to write expressing personal support certainly could do so.

Ms. Corning: Good morning. I am Joy Corning from the State of Iowa where I am the Lieutenant Governor, the second-highest official in our state.

Iowa is an Indian name meaning beautiful land. It is the only state in the USA bordered by two great rivers, the Missouri on one side and the Mississippi on the other. Of the top six elected officials in our state, three are women.

This morning I am pleased to moderate the panel entitled "Building Women's Organizational and Leadership Skills in Central and Eastern Europe: Opportunities and Obstacles, Establishing Action Networks, and Accessing the Media."

We have some distinguished panelists this morning, and I'm sure we would like lots of time for interaction after the formal presentations.

I would like to introduce the panel to you. Immediately to my right is Eniko Bollobas, and next to her is Smaranda Enache, then Zdenka Krejcova, Eva Zahradnikova, and Susan Davis.

We are pleased to welcome you, and we will begin with Ms. Bollobas.

Ms. Bollobas: I tried to give an outline of an assessment of the situation in Hungary in my written statement, primarily pointing out that there is a double legacy, a double burden, that women in Eastern Europe--and in Hungary especially, as an example--have to bear. One is the Eastern patriarchal tradition, the other is the communist legacy.

If we go back to the Second World War, the situation of women in Europe and the United States was not that terribly different. It was somewhat different, but it didn't show a tremendous diversity. However, since that time in Eastern Europe we had

communism, and these 40-something years halted all development that was supposed to take place around women.

The situation was bad enough and difficult enough because of the patriarchal Eastern legacy, but it got to be very complicated and very difficult after the fall of the Berlin Wall when we had to deal with this double legacy.

Still, I think what William Butler Yeats wrote about the 1916 Irish uprising, that a terrible beauty is born, still holds for Eastern Europe. We hope that as time passes one element of this contradiction or oxymoron will dominate over the other, and hopefully the beauty is going to be greater than the terrible.

However, today I have not much good news to bring you. Let me present you with two images that I think describe our situation. The first is to imagine a house with an elaborate set of scaffolds. As the scaffolds are taken down, you see that the walls actually are not there any longer; the scaffolds alone were holding up the house. Or imagine a body that was in a cast for many years, and it is the law of nature or the law of physics that the muscles within the cast become weaker and weaker. If you remove the cast, then the person will not be able to stand up any longer.

That is the way I think East European societies look today. The scaffold has been broken down, the cast has been broken down, and we are collapsing in many ways.

Perhaps you saw yesterday in the *International Herald Tribune* a cartoon that showed a Lenin statue overturned, and underneath was a little swastika flower coming out of the ground. Of course, the swastika is a metaphor for both leftist and rightist extremes, but you know very well from the news of the last year, the last six months, how these very dangerous tendencies are accelerated.

There's another tendency you can observe in Eastern Europe, that disintegration is coming closer and closer to the individual. Two, three years ago it was the major bloc that began to disintegrate, and we became very euphoric. Then various federations, bigger and smaller, began to break up; some of the break-ups were good, some bad.

Then as the months go by, you see states break off from states, countries break off from countries. Minorities are divorced from minorities. Political alliances are breaking up. Parties are breaking up. Friendships are breaking up. And I think the only reason why families are not breaking up is this very Eastern European phenomenon that the family tie is still the closest; the nuclear family is still that which gives shelter. It's that discrepancy you can see between a very strong solidarity, a strong working, helping relationship, among family members as opposed to a distrust towards other members of society.

The problem is really that we have to face a very difficult legacy in the minds of people and in society. After communism, we are left with a very atomized society, a society where relationships are based on this trust, a society whose members have very little experience of solidarity, very little experience of attention to one another, interest in one another, very little experience in turning to the problems of the other.

People live in their own closed worlds, and it's very difficult to shake up a society and convince people that the problems of others are perhaps greater than one's own problems. This is a very difficult social climate in which women can begin to organize, or any kind of interest group can organize and build networks.

In the communist years, we learned that there was one pie; if one took a piece of that pie, then the other was left with less. Perhaps often it was so, but the zero-sum game has distorted the mentalities of people.

I'm sure you all remember from your Marxist studies what exploitation was: capitalism was supposed to be full of exploitation of the individual, because if one got rich, the other had to get poor. I'm sure you all remember the story about the difference between the East European and the West European or American farmer. When God asks the farmer what he would really like, the East European, seeing the neighbor's cow, asks God to please kill the neighbor's cow; whereas the West European or American farmer asks God for a cow of his own. It is, unfortunately, a very basic difference in attitude.

I hope that as times are changing and as we are in the second or third year of our social, economic, political transformation, people will begin to realize that it is not one small pie; the pie can be extended, the pie can be enlarged. I hope they can also realize that there are mutually advantageous agreements and not just one limited set of pies. If one person gains, that doesn't necessarily mean the other person will lose; both can actually gain at the same time.

I think it is peculiar that it is through West Europeans and Americans at conferences such as this that we meet other East European women colleagues,

and also that we meet fellow Hungarians or fellow Czechs or Slovaks. So very often, the Western democratic institutions and organizations bring us together and help us network, and I'm sure we're all very grateful for that.

There is one concrete recommendation or idea that I would like to throw out here, how else the West can help. I think it's a common wish, certainly in Hungary, that when Western companies come into our country, they should not forget about the standards of a developed country.

Very often we find that Western companies come in and want to forget about affirmative action, equal opportunity, fair competition, and environmental protection. They try to evade taxes; they hire people they could not hire in their own countries. Very often, they actually hire the old communists, which is easy because they are there. The old nomenclature has had wonderful success in Western companies. That's very good in one sense because then they have a stake in our transformation, and we do not have one small limited pie, let's hope.

The only reason it is bad is that it reinforces the old habits of society. The old nomenclature will not play the democratic game, because fair competition and affirmative action employment policies will not be part of the package of the old nomenclature's working habits.

Ms. Enache: We've had such a lot of discussion on the situation in Central and Eastern Europe, and in the light of that I'd like to give you just a few ideas about the specific features of Romania.

As you may know, we're talking about one of the oldest dictatorships, a sort of national communism, the essential aim of which was the total homogeneity of society, in social and national terms as well as intellectual terms.

At the beginning of communism in Romania, women were very poorly represented in structures. Later on, when the supreme woman, the wife of Nicolae Ceausescu, became more and more prominent in politics, quotas were set at all levels of the executive and legislative power structure; this was called the promotion of women.

As of the 1970s, we saw a large number of women entering politics, the administration, and the law, and there was a single women's organization which was totally run by the communist party. It had absolutely nothing to do with the rights of women or the specific situation of women. It simply served to create obedience and to iron out individual women's personalities in order to build this utopian society.

One interesting detail was that Elena Ceausescu was never a militant in a women's organization. The communist leaders really rather despised the specific rights of women, what we still call, unfortunately, the necessary degree of positive discrimination. Hence, women were obliged to become active in these organizations, and they were forced to work because one salary was hardly enough to keep a family going. That has created a backlash reflex.

There is now almost a universal rejection of globalism, and people are returning to social and political individualism. If you ask Romanian women today what their ideals are, they would say that their ideal is not to be represented in politics or government, the administration and civil service. They would just like to have a peaceful and idyllic family life with a little Christmas tree they have dreamed about for so long. And you must have sympathy for that reaction.

At the same time, we are fully aware of the fact that the specific problems of women and equal opportunity will only be achieved if women are present in the structures themselves.

The subject of our discussion today is women's organizations. I have to say that in Romania, after the revolution, organization is now free. There is a law dating from 1924 which makes it possible to create associations. Twenty-one individuals may come together to form an association.

But given the fact that in Romania today we're still talking about neo-communist power in existence, transition is more difficult than elsewhere. There is, therefore, a type of economic discrimination with regard to setting up institutions of all types. Any organization which is not pro-government will run into these difficulties. In other words, when it comes to granting access to facilities or premises, it's often the state that runs everything, and the state is largely controlled by neo-communist power.

My own organization is a Transylvanian organization for inter-religious and inter-cultural exchanges called Pro-Europa. We have a small room in one building, and that's the maximum we could get.

I would like to take this opportunity to say to you that in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, at least in Romania, we would very much like to have ongoing contact with women's groups. We would like to have more practical links, because we need organizational know-how, and not just from women's organizations. We need information about how things

work in a constitutional state and how democracy operates.

There's something else we need as well. We need capital. If I could draw a distinction between aid and capital, generally what we've received has been in the form of aid. Aid always dries up eventually and does not stimulate the creativity of the people in the country itself. What would be important, rather, would be to have a clearer export of capital and a competitive system of granting or rewarding capital to projects on their merits.

For example, I'm a newspaper editor, and I have received a grant and been told I can use it only for the newspaper, even though I might wish to use the money to set up a small business which could give me economic independence from the newspaper.

I think that women in Western Europe and the U.S.A. could perhaps constitute a lobby to promote capital investment to be used on merit, and I do stress "on merit " There's a great temptation to give money to governments or existing structures, which is understandable. Unfortunately in the case of Romania, for example, you're going to do what Mrs. Bollobas was just saying. You're going to end up legitimating, approving, and indeed shoring up the structures of a totalitarian state, which is in deep crisis and does not allow autonomy.

That's my main message, but there's something else I'd like to say. Someone else paid tribute to women. I would like to pay tribute to the women of Romania. In my country's revolution--obviously for those who've hijacked the revolution it wasn't a revolution, but a *coup d'etat*--the symbol of dissidence against the Ceausescu regime has been that of a very fragile woman. Thank you very much indeed.

Ms. Krejcova: I must say I find myself in a rather difficult situation because I think everything has been said yesterday or this morning. I appreciate very much the speeches of our Bulgarian and Polish colleagues yesterday, and in the same way our Hungarian and Romanian colleagues this morning.

I would like to thank The Center for Democracy for organizing this conference, for giving us the chance to meet and to exchange our views and experience and also to enjoy delicious French food, I must say.

I appreciate very much the fact that, thanks to this conference, I have learned a lot not only about our colleagues from the West but also about our colleagues from Central and Eastern Europe. It is as has been mentioned, I think, because typically for a socialist system, in spite of all the declarations of international solidarity, et cetera, we knew next to nothing about our nearest neighbors, about women from Poland or from Hungary or Romania. All the meetings held during the last decades were on a very official, almost governmental level.

It's a very good feeling to confirm that the experience of women coming from any post-communist country is more or less the same. I hope I won't disappoint you too much if I say that the problem of equality of men and women is not the number one topic in today's Czechoslovakia. There are more urgent political, national, economic, and social problems we face and have to deal with.

Almost three years have passed since the so-called velvet revolution in Czechoslovakia, during which we have learned how relatively easy it was to get rid of the communist government and how difficult it is to change our way of thinking. It is very difficult to build a functioning parliamentary system, to introduce all the democratic institutions, to refresh our old traditions even in the area of the women's movement, to guarantee human rights which have been abused for so many years, et cetera.

Women in Czechoslovakia, of course, are involved in all these changes, and I think they are as active as men. In comparison with women from the West, they feel it's more important to gain and practice civic rights than to fight for any special women's rights just now. Our very sad experience with the socialist way of equality of men and women, which was a part of the official propaganda, still very strongly influences our minds.

I'm afraid that for the majority of women in my country, the fight for equality--especially the word "fight"--is not very popular because we remember the slogans about "fight for peace." Even the farmers fought for the crops, and so on. Maybe we are a little bit sensitive about the phrase "to fight" for anything.

I'm afraid that the majority of women, when they hear about the struggle for equality of men and women, either take it for an exaggerated activity of American and West European feminists, or it reminds them of the former Czechoslovak Union of Women, an important part of the communist establishment which compromised itself forever.

But it's true that soon after November 1989--I can speak for the Czech part of Czechoslovakia, at least--as far as I'm informed, about 20 new women's organizations came into existence. They are organizations or movements of very different kinds.

Some of them are part of a political party, which is especially true for left-oriented parties. The right-wing parties in Czechoslovakia have no women's section or anything like that and are not interested in having any of that.

There are also charitable or church organizations. One interesting movement calls itself Proud Mothers and is especially interested in ecology. These women are afraid for the health and future of their children, and as far as I know they are very, very active.

So there are new organizations. Of course, they have no money, no experience, but I think they are full of enthusiasm. In the same way as my Romanian colleague said, I think each of them would really appreciate personal contact with any similar organization in any other country--East or West.

There are reasons why the so-called women's question is not yet considered to be in a social and political category in present Czechoslovakia. Lack of interest in a policy of equality is the result of deformations of a totalitarian regime, while in the advanced Western countries it's a product of their development.

Provided our economic, political, and social transition leads to the establishment of parliamentary democracy and market economy, it can be expected that the question of equality of men and women will appear in a very natural and logical way as part of a modern and functioning society.

Therefore, we are very thankful for all possible cooperation. We are listening to our colleagues from the West. We are listening to you very carefully, and we would be very happy if you paid attention to our message.

As the Western women's movement quite often has signs of a socialist orientation, we can offer you our negative experience of a post-communist country. In a way, you can take it as a sort of warning, if you like to put it that way. The heart of the matter of this experience is the failure of a system which preferred ideological to economic principles. The dominance of ideology enabled those societies to mistake social justice for social equality, and economic rationality for social safety, which was so comfortable, of course. But above all, it established the uncontrolled power of a single political party.

It is necessary, therefore, to prevent the idea of equality of men and women from becoming an ideology superior to the effective functioning of an economic political system.

I personally would be very careful about the quota or imperative representation of women in political and economic life, as is required by some feminist-oriented commissions and committees of international organizations. With our experience, we are very suspicious of anything that smells of ideology.

What we need, I think, is an open dialogue between West European and East European specialists and experts in sociology of family, sociology of labor, economics, psychology, and human relations. It's obviously not possible to go on with a limited one-sex view of solving the problems of the present world. If I say one-sex view, I mean either female or male.

This is what I was going to say after you have heard so many speeches. Before I finish I would ask a favor from those of you in the West: give us some more time.

Ms. Zahradnikova: Ladies and gentlemen, it is an honor for me to be able to deliver a speech at this conference. I am here as a representative of the Slovak Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and the Family. It's not that long ago that the word "family" was incorporated into the title of the ministry.

The problems of organizations are rather similar in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. In Slovakia, there are some eight actively working women's associations, including the Democratic Union and Women of Slovakia. They have been built on the basis of the structures of a single old women's organization which has a national tradition. There's a Catholic organization with a religious tradition, as well as women's associations representing various political parties.

To date, we do not see any major interconnections between the work of these groups and the political policies perceived by the state in relation to women. The Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and the Family is, of course, responsible for this area.

I can identify two processes, in particular. Regarding the involvement of women's groups at higher levels of politics, women constitute 11 percent of the Slovak Parliament, but they represent a higher proportion at the regional level. Women are also now operational in small- and medium-sized businesses and their associations, and we find that is something new.

Women are very worried about the future. Yet, we find a degree of passivity and women who tend to find refuge in maternity. We would like to ensure that women are given the opportunity to become active, and alternatives should be offered so that each individual

can attain personal fulfillment. Not everyone will share our views; obviously, that's the problem.

Ms. Davis: First, as a member of the Board of The Center for Democracy, I have to say that there are many accomplishments of the Center of which I am very proud, not the least being the Center's involvement with Boris Yeltsin and the coming of democracy in the Russian Republics, but also the assistance in the new democracies that emerged in the Philippines and in Nicaragua and many other parts of the world.

But frankly, this conference may be one of the most significant things in which the Center has been involved, and I think you probably feel the same way. I'm hoping that we will continue this involvement over a long period of time.

I am not an elected or an appointed politician. I'm a behind-the-scenes kind of politician, and I have been working professionally and personally to get women and men elected and appointed to office in the U.S. and in numerous other countries for over 20 years. I must have started when I was about nine years old. [Laughter.]

I have a number of probably disparate thoughts this morning, but I really want to share them with you. As I listened to people yesterday and thought about how women in the United States are faring in our 200-year-old democracy and how women in Central and Eastern Europe are faring in their new democracies, there are a lot of similarities. It was very interesting to be reminded of how far some other countries have gone in terms of the social issues affecting women, how much farther they are than the U.S., how many countries have more women in elected and appointed offices than does the U.S. So we also have a very long way to go.

One thing I think is really very important is that she who has the information has power, and even more importantly, she who can communicate that information and who gains access and uses the power of the media really has the ultimate power.

We have learned that very well in the United States. I think it's extremely important to remember that not only is it critical to get information and use that information, but it's very important to use the media to express yourselves.

I think a lot of people are and continue to be afraid of using the media. Yet, we have learned that as more and more women become more and more powerful in media circles--whether it's television, radio, or the printed word--we have more and more access as women.

There are many issues for which the first person we call is a woman broadcaster or a woman reporter because we figure that perhaps she will understand better than a man in the same position. If she doesn't understand, we will make much effort to try to educate her so the next time we call she will understand. I think that's a process that will work well and does work well all over the world.

At the same time, in terms of information, I think it's very important that we who have information and are building networks of support--and frankly, even in this room, we are an elite group of people--don't forget women of different socio-economic backgrounds in each of our countries who also need that information and who we need to support.

Every country doesn't have the great communications technology of the West yet, but there is access to a phone or a fax machine almost everywhere you go. This brings me to my first point which is that women need to be more comfortable with asking for help.

I was really glad to hear what both Ms. Bollobas and Ms. Enache said this morning, because I think what we forget is that unless you ask specifically, nobody can help you. Very often I hear at conferences or in other environments, "Well, we need this or that generally," but unless you ask a specific question, it's very difficult for somebody to respond.

I can give you a good example of this in terms of what can actually happen. About eight months ago, there was a conference of women business leaders from around the world, and several women from the Russian Republics came. On the bus going from one event to another, a woman from one of the Republics was talking about how much she really needed shoes for the children in her village because of winter coming on, and she was sitting next to a woman from Missouri who just happened to have access to shoe distributors.

They got into a very good conversation, and a specific request was made to actually try to find shoes for all of the children in the village. Indeed, it happened, and it happened within 30 days. The woman from the Russian Republic said later that it never really occurred to her in any kind of setting to make that request; it just sort of happened as she was sitting and talking on the bus.

I think it points out the fact that there are an enormous number of resources available to people,

both on an individual as well as an organizational level. As each of you have needs, I think it's very important that you think about those resources and that you make specific requests.

I want to talk to you about a few resources with which many of you are familiar, but I think bear mentioning. One, of course, is the National Association of Women Business Owners in the U.S. and the international organization that goes along with it. Somebody mentioned economic power yesterday, and yes, that is critically important.

There are many women throughout the world who are starting their own businesses. Women who are running their own businesses can talk to women who are starting businesses to tell them the kinds of things they need to know. These things include information about access to resources and how difficult it is, how lonely it is when you start, how hard it is when you come from an environment where you had 30 or 300 people working around you and all of a sudden you start your own business and you have yourself and maybe one or two others if you're lucky, and the kinds of things that you have to go through when that happens.

Those experiences are similar all over the world, and the personal experiences that women have and can share are very important, I think. There are also organizations that can help.

Fifteen or so years ago, when we were starting the National Association of Women Business Owners, we realized that we needed to be politically active as well. I have to laugh when I think about how we started off, because in order to start a political action committee--we couldn't raise the money any other way--we had a bake-off, if you can imagine that.

Now the Women Business Owners group in the U.S. has lobbied very successfully for new laws and regulations; we have commissions, we have all kinds of things happening. But literally, we started with a baking contest. So you know that even in the United States, things don't always start right at the top.

There's also a group that has come together called the Institute for Women in Law and Development. I'm sure a number of you are familiar with this. There are centers in Zimbabwe, Malaysia, and Central America. So far there is nothing in Central and Eastern Europe. This is certainly an area where I think the Institute should be active, and there should be ongoing discussions with the people involved. The Institute deals with the status of women and legal strategies for women in developing countries.

Another organization is the International Women in Media Foundation. These are women who work in the media from around the world. It is a group that really supports women in the media and their needs, but at the same time is a tremendous resource for women in any country.

Still another organization that some of you are familiar with because you are members is called the International Women's Forum. We are now in about 20 countries, I believe, and in 35 of the United States. We started this organization 10 or 12 years ago. The idea for it was that women who are now getting into positions of power in corporations, in businesses, in government, in academia, even in the sports and entertainment world, felt lonely in their particular areas. We felt that it would be really wonderful to get to know women from other areas of business, other areas of government, et cetera. Since everyone is working so hard in their own areas, they don't have time to build new networks outside of their own specific interests.

I was involved in getting it started in Washington. When I first heard about it, I thought, oh no, another women's organization, I can't see how we're going to find people who are interested. What we did was put together a list of women who were at the top of their particular professions and send out invitations to come to a meeting. We included a list of everybody who'd been invited, and we had almost 100 percent response. The women who came all said the same thing: "I've wanted to know so-and-so, but I've never had the chance or the time. This is a great opportunity to do so."

We have now developed a leadership foundation for the International Women's Forum. We are raising money quite successfully, and what we want to do is help young women in the U.S., as well as women throughout the world, to gain leadership positions. So this is another resource, and I would be happy to talk to anyone about it after this meeting.

Last but not least, I want to mention this directory; some of you are in it. It is called the *International Directory of Women Political Leadership*. It is put out by a woman named Shin-wha Lee from the University of Maryland, and although an excellent resource, it is quite inadequate in terms of names of people. Many of you are not in here, and you aren't in here only because they don't know about you. I think each of you should take a look at this before you leave. It's another resource, and they would like to hear about you.

My point number two is that women's networks are significant and important. I need to say this because I know from experience that a lot of people think women's organizations are feminist organizations, and "feminism" is a bad word in many countries. As a matter of fact, it's still not such a great word in the U.S.

What we've learned in my country is that as we are trying so hard to accomplish our goals, we get tired, we lose confidence, we lose energy, we sometimes don't think there's value in ourselves and what we're trying to do. With apologies to the men in this room, the truth of the matter is that other women who are experiencing the same thing can understand much better than men, and you don't have to be a feminist to really believe that.

I have a fantasy--which probably will never come true--that in a democracy where it's the votes that count, women will vote as a bloc. If we don't, it's very hard for us to convince men that there really is significant power among us. I would hope that somewhere, in some country--I hope we can do it in the U.S.--we could show that at least on one issue, health care, child care, I don't really care what the issue is, women are concerned enough to come together and say "Enough, already. You know we feel strongly enough; listen to us." If we can ever do that once, I think it'll scare the hell out of the men, and that will be all we need to win the battle.

My next point is that what we've learned in the U.S. is that we can't be so like men that nobody sees our added value, and we can't be so dissimilar to men that they feel threatened or a fear for what we're going to say or do. We must pick our fights. I know you all know that, but I think it bears reminding.

I will share a little story that happened to me about eight months ago. I am one of a few women on the Board of Directors of the Greater Washington Board of Trade, which is a group of business leaders in the Washington, DC area. I received a telephone call asking me to serve on the nominating committee, and I was shocked. I thought it was incredible. I hadn't been a member of the Board very long, and I was going to be on the nominating committee. Of course, I went to the meeting with my list of other women I wanted to be nominated.

As I walked in the door, the president grabbed me and said, "Now listen, don't fall on your sword." I said, "What do you mean?" He continued, "We've already decided who's going to be nominated. I know you well enough to know you came with a list, but we've already decided. So don't start nominating other women, because then you won't be nominated either."

That was a big surprise, and I had to decide what to do. I decided to do exactly what he told me because I figured if I got on the executive committee of the Board, I could really push to get other women in the organization. Indeed, that is what happened. It was tough. I didn't like it, but I understood that I had to work within the system in order to make some change.

Now we are making a major effort to get women on various committees and to get them on the Board. It was a bitter pill, but it was worth swallowing.

Another extremely important point is that we've got to stick together; as we celebrate our successes, we also need to be there when women fail. This is one of the areas I believe we think less about, and we probably should think more about it. We may be successful in some areas, but especially when women lose a political office or must leave an administration--we'll probably see more of it in Washington in a couple of months--it will be very important to be there to support people.

As we all know, we're not alike. We have to respect our differences and realize that we may be adversaries or we may be allies as women on some issues. One serious issue in my country is whether women in the military should go into combat. I will tell you that the strongest lobby against women serving in combat is women. Similarly, the strongest lobby against free access to abortion in the U.S. is women. That's just the way it is. We have to learn that those people who may support us on one issue are not going to be there on the other issue, and that's okay.

Certainly at The Center for Democracy we know how to co-exist. On our Board we have the chairman of the Republican National Committee and the chairman of the Democratic National Committee; we have Republicans and Democrats, and we get along. Not only do we get along, but we really support one another as much as we possibly can--except, of course, when it comes to the elections, but we'll be back in one group in a month or so.

The last thing I want to say is this, and you may be surprised when I say it. I think it's extremely important that we remember to teach our daughters, as well as our sons. These problems never stop, and one thing we see in the U.S. is young girls coming out of school--high school or, particularly, university--and saying, "So what's the big deal?" They don't understand what we've gone through. They don't

realize, and it will take them a few years before they see that we have not resolved the problems in any way. It isn't all over.

As a matter of fact, while our issues may change, they're never going to be totally resolved. What is important is how we think and how we act, and I believe it has to be on two tracks: One, what we as women can do for other women and for ourselves; two, what we as women can do to change the destructive paths of our countries in the world. I believe this is not only our right, but our responsibility.

Ms. Corning: Thank you to all our panel members. I have the names of ten people who now wish to speak, so I will simply go down the list as it was given to me. The first person is Peggy Simpson.

Ms. Simpson: I'm a free-lance reporter from Washington, D.C., working out of Warsaw. I've been in and out of Poland and other Eastern and Central European countries since 1990, covering issues of economic and political transition.

As someone who for two decades has covered the U.S. Congress and legal issues, economic issues, and labor issues, and knowing what a difficult fight it is to get many of the social welfare benefits that are now in question in the Eastern bloc, I'd like to speak about who pays for these benefits--especially maternity leave, paid or unpaid.

The U.S. President just vetoed a bill that Congress had passed which would require employers to save jobs for women who take maternity leave. In the Eastern bloc, employers are required to keep a job for three years for someone on maternity leave, but all of that time is not paid leave. Earlier we were talking about unpaid maternity leave, with the employer required to keep a job for somebody up to a certain specified period of time, and that was vetoed in the United States.

These issues don't look like they have costs attached to them, but in the minds of the business community they do. And it is the business community which has very successfully opposed these benefits.

One of the things that affects women the most, and that is least understood by the women in a change of systems or by the women in the West who come over and try to be of use to people in Eastern Europe, is the whole benefit structure.

One begins with a benefit structure that looks like it has been provided free for the last 45 years, in the sense that the users, the individual women, have not paid for them in many cases. Now, all of a sudden, in the new system these benefits have price tags on them at least in the minds of the government or business-state-operated or new private business. Who is going to pay for them?

This can be a very formidable kind of trade-off. I don't think the trade-off is very well understood. You're trying to establish a new benefit system, and you're inheriting a policy of 12 months' maternity leave. How are you going to pay for that in a new economy?

In one particular Polish factory where the regional Solidarity Union put me in touch with the Solidarity workers and the plant manager, those men were very clear. There were going to be fewer jobs, and they wanted them. The men said there should be no question about it; women cost too much.

Sometimes women cost too much because they take time from work to care for their children. Sometimes they cost too much because the factory was asked to subsidize child care. Sometimes they cost too much because while maternity leave benefits were paid under a national law and ostensibly paid by the national treasury, the factory was required to save the job.

They were saying that the factory should not have to do this anymore. Forty percent of the workers are going to be fired from this car upholstery plant. They're saying, "We're technologically advanced, we want to be privatized, we want to do everything we can to make ourselves attractive to foreign investors and to Polish companies."

The male workers believe that what should happen is most women should go home and leave these jobs to the men who can do them better. The factory should not have to save these jobs for women any more; women should just take themselves out of the work force.

These are very difficult trade-offs. They're dollars and cents trade-offs, a function of one system melting down and another system just now emerging. These are among the most difficult questions that have to be addressed. They are difficult in terms of expectations as well as in terms of where you get the money to pay for these benefits.

Yesterday one colleague said not to give up any of the benefits you have. But when you're talking about trying to save a whole factory, and the union

says it wants to save the factory, this is not a moral crusade; this is a capitalist market decision. Women cost too much; therefore, they should not seek to keep these benefits. Or, if they keep these benefits, they should probably not keep these jobs for very long because the company cannot afford it.

One of the useful things that this conference may lead to would be to have specialists from different countries talking about these difficult issues that aren't necessarily going to be resolved the same way in each country. How they will be solved will be different, but if you can get an idea of the kinds of dilemmas you're faced with, I think this is a good first step.

Ms. Culi: I'd like to thank all the organizers of this meeting, and The Center for Democracy for the invitation, because 1992 is the year in which the representatives of Albanian women participate in European and international conferences after a very long and unimaginable isolation.

The question of opportunities and obstacles in the process of establishing actions, organizational and leadership skills in our countries, especially in Albania, has a specific background. We live in the Balkans and it is the most complicated, the strangest region of Europe with religious, social, and mental contradictions. It's the region of Greek and Illyrian mythology, culture and civilization, to a very important degree the base of future European civilizations. It's also the region where Christianity and Islam are mixed, where we see the greatest love for women in legend, verse, myth and literature, and at the same time the greatest oppression of these women.

There existed in Albania an ancient law called Canon which organized the life of Albanians and under which women were treated little better than animals. We cannot even be so sure that in much more cultivated European countries the laws for women were so different. The famous Code of Napoleon states: "The right to vote is for everyone, with the exception of children, women and the mentally disabled."

Our friends from the Eastern countries have explained very clearly what women's emancipation was like during the communist system, and I will not explain these things any more. I also appreciate the idea of Mr. Martinez who put his finger on the danger of women returning home because of unemployment.

As representatives of women's organizations, we say we cannot work totally on women's problems in the way of the women of Western Europe or the United States. Their main topics are equality of men and women, contraception, abortion, et cetera. Our women would say to us, "We have nothing to give our children to eat. What are you telling us now? The problem for us is one of survival." So we try to work in this field, but mainly to concretely help this hard economic situation.

We try to work in development projects with small businesses and to rebuild groups of women who are without work, in collaboration with other NGOs in Europe and in other countries. We are very grateful for the emergency food aid that the European Community is giving to us, but I think it would be much more helpful to support projects that put people to work instead of asking them to wait for a package of sugar or cooking oil from outside. I insist on this because the economic reinforcement of our country would avoid further political complications in the region.

Being very near the war and listening to the debate on the former Yugoslavia in the Parliamentary Assembly yesterday, I think that this terrible war--that looks so absurd after such a wonderful and hopeful idea of a united Europe--is really enveloped with ethnic and nationalist hatred. But at the base, there are always economic reasons.

To speculate about nationalistic feelings, to make people hysterical with atavistic and primitive potions of ethnic pride, and to hide the real social and economic situation of the country--these were the main methods of communist dictatorships, and now of Serbian totalitarianism. Genocide and oppression of the simplest rights in Kosova have existed for years and years.

Let me give only one example, because everyone is fed up with the enumeration of crimes and cruelty. No Albanian woman in Kosova goes to recover in the official gynecological hospitals because of the fear of sterilization and other diabolical methods to assimilate this population. It's not an exaggerated story, but the simple truth. Go to Kosova and listen to the women, what they say about the hospitals.

I would like to suggest that such important organizations as The Center for Democracy and the Council of Europe think a bit more seriously about the women in Kosova, organize a workshop or network and conference about the terrible situation they have in their lives.

Although desperate warnings came from Albanians for years and years in both parts of our country, nobody listened and now we have this horrible war in the middle of Europe.

For us, the role of women in politics is very important, because in Albania we have many well prepared and able women to participate in the government and everywhere. In general, to us political activity also means to help concretely our tired society from the very long night of dictatorship, to give examples of united and working groups to a people exhausted and divided by the ideological class struggle, to give hope that it's not the democratic system that creates the problems but the loss of initiative.

I think we have to give up thinking about the past all the time, and think more and more about the future. In listening to all the representatives of the Eastern countries, it appears that we feel the same thing together, and Albania is the worst of all these countries. We must begin thinking of the future, and the real beginning is to begin to work and not wait for the others. We need to collaborate and work together, not wait, like waiting for the gods in a socialist system.

Let's work and hope that one day--maybe it will not happen for us, but other generations of women--in such conferences as this, people will no longer say East and West countries or East and West women.

Ms. Withrow: I would like to share with you a program that, as State Treasurer, I started in Ohio, to let you know that there is interaction between the public sector and the private sector. If the private sector does well, the public sector does well.

It was a way we could use money twice and help our own people in small businesses and agriculture. As you probably know, small business is the backbone of any economy, and agriculture is the number one industry in Ohio.

This is a program that presents no risk to the State of Ohio; we are using money that has been appropriated but is not yet needed. The legislature permits me to take 12 percent of the state's investment portfolio to use in this manner--$100 million every year for agriculture and about $136 million for small business.

This money is available to be borrowed at a reduced rate of three percent less than the money could normally be borrowed. We receive three percent less on a certificate of deposit that is invested in this bank. So it is fully collateralized and there is no risk.

This method has created or saved more than 27,000 jobs in Ohio, and the legislative budget office determined that every dollar invested in this program yielded $3 to $4 back in tax-paying citizens. It's been recognized all over the country, and 21 states have now copied this idea, some with just the small business program and some with the agricultural program.

The thing I want to stress is that it doesn't have to be used in any certain way as long as it creates jobs in the small business sector. I'm very sensitive to women's businesses, and we've invested in many, many women's businesses. Probably one of the most difficult things for women is obtaining credit in the U.S. business world.

This is something that I feel has been a real help to women in Ohio, as well as other regions of our society. The whole idea is to stimulate the economy, which is certainly necessary now in all of the United States.

Ms. Lokar: I would like to say something about women's organizations in Slovenia and how they may be needed in our situation.

We have a lot of women's organizations and women's initiatives in Slovenia. It's a tradition which has lasted ten years or so and was especially good in the years before the first plural-party elections.

At this time, there are women's factions in practically all political parties represented in the Parliament. It began in the left-wing political parties, but then all parties were forced to create women's initiatives in their party bodies.

Another very interesting thing is that we have many autonomous women's groups, but their memberships are not great in number. For example, we have several SOS phones for battered women and children, a women's movement for liberty of sexual choice, a group of women managers organized as part of our managers' club. We also have an association of families in which women are the most active members and a new Planned Parenthood association, and so on.

All these small groups have the same main problems: no money, no place to meet, very difficult access to media, and so on. We have very interesting women researchers, but little money for women to do these studies. A lot of things which could be done are not done.

The most difficult thing is for the trade unions to deal with women's issues. There are trade unions with a majority of women members, but without any sense for women's issues.

I would like to say something about the question of who will pay for the women's rights we had in the past. I agree that businesses alone cannot pay these costs. But if we don't fight--I hate to use the word

fight, but I don't speak English well enough to find another adequate word--at the system level, we will lose all our social security benefits. That is not good and not only for the women of Eastern and Central Europe. It is bad for all women of this world because wages will be diminished in our region and will also have consequences for women's wages in Western Europe. There is a danger for the rights of women in Western economies.

Perhaps we must create some sort of women's lobby to force every state, and every system of social security in each state, not to try to diminish the price of work on the backs of women and children. If all those facilities and benefits women have and have had in Eastern and Central Europe are destroyed, I think we will experience social disintegration, and it will cost us much more than the higher cost of labor.

I would like to remind you of the history of Europe. In times of greatest economic crisis, Americans invented the New Deal, and Europe invented fascism and Leninism. You know how it ended, so I wouldn't like to see something like that repeated in our situation.

If I can ask for some concrete help, I would like to know if it is possible to find the opportunity for Slovenian women to come and study women's questions in other European countries or in the USA. We have many young, talented researchers who cannot develop because we have no material means to facilitate their studies.

We also really need help for women who work in the media, who want to work on women's issues but cannot do it. Their bosses in the media are not very interested in women's issues. When women do something really important, their achievements are minimized or it is not even shown on television, for example.

One very important thing for Eastern and Central European countries is that television is a national institution with a great monopoly. If we can break this monopoly and find a way to present women's programs, even one hour a week--we have enough women journalists, activists and researchers who could produce such a program--then this information, as Susan Davis spoke about, can be spread and work as an encouraging force for other women to come, to act, and to be in this movement.

Ms. McInerny: I would like to make one suggestion and a comment. I am a specialist of what used to be known as Soviet Studies, which means that I studied the Russian empire in its Soviet form, and I work in a Russian studies institute in Washington, DC. I can tell you that the number of people who really know this area is very small. Russian experts are overwhelmed now by people who are getting involved in direct contacts.

I would like to thank Dimitrina Petrova and Zdenka Krejcova for their very articulate remarks. When you do make person-to-person contacts with women's organizations in the West, you will have to explain again and again what it meant to live in a totalitarian system, why you don't want to "fight for your rights," because you will be dealing with people who don't know totalitarian systems. I would encourage you that those remarks were extremely articulate, and they're much more needed than you might think.

Our speaker from the Czech ministry said she was suspicious of anything and everything that smells of ideology. Let me say that many women in the U.S., myself included, have a problem with the extremes of certain feminist movements in my country.

It has become highly ideological; certain groups are working on a very ideological basis which promotes a lot of anger. There are women who are angry and other women who don't like the women who are angry, and so there is a problem of ideology and feminism in America.

Central European women could do a lot to wake people up to that. I would say you have a lot to contribute. It's not that you have so much to learn, but you have a lot to tell us.

[Unidentified Speaker]: May I ask for your attention for one moment? I'd like to invite you to think about one thing during the coffee break, because next year we will have the world conference on human rights.

I want to propose that the term human rights, in French *droits de l'homme*, be changed to *droits de les personnes*. At the end of our conference on the role of women, we could adopt a resolution by the conference and put forward that proposal to the United Nations.

Ms. Dinsdale: For those of you who don't know me, I work in the Secretariat of the Council of Europe, dealing with equality issues, among other things. I want to react to the comments made by our colleague from Slovenia, because she drew attention to

a certain number of needs over and above purely financial assistance.

She referred to the importance of putting people into contact with one another and networking; this is something that we in the Council are trying to do. We have a special program and funding for cooperation and assistance with Central and East European countries, and this program covers, among other things, the area of equality.

What we're trying to develop at this point in time--not an easy task, but a very simple one--is, first, exchanges between West European NGOs, grass-roots organizations, and women and developing NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe. To that end, as a first step we are trying to develop lists, a sort of directory, of NGOs both in Central and Eastern Europe and Western Europe so that we can start this important function of networking.

Second, we have the ambition to try and place national officials from Central and Eastern Europe, who are working in the area of equality, in the equality machinery of Western Europe. As you know, the equality machinery has been fundamental and instrumental in placing equality issues on the political agenda in Western Europe. We believe it is extremely important that similar mechanisms be developed, if possible, at the highest political level in Central and Eastern Europe. So the placement of officials can be a means of helping to set up such machinery.

The third area we are trying to work on--and we need to develop cooperation within our Parliamentary Assembly for this--is the placement of women politicians and members of women's associations in political groups in Western Europe. In this way, they can build on the experience that has developed here and then try and adapt it to their own particular needs.

A final proposal is the placement and exchange of researchers dealing with women's studies and equality issues. A lot of this, as our friend from Slovenia said, does not actually involve money; it's federating efforts, both public and private. The goal is putting people into contact with one another so networking can develop, because without it I don't think we will get very far.

Ms. Zlatescu: I want to stress two points concerning women in society, particularly in Romania. First is the fact that women have almost disappeared from government and Parliament. This spring we had local elections, and only a few women, candidates for counselor or deputy mayor, were involved.

I think this phenomenon can be explained, as has already been said by other women from Eastern Europe, as a kind of general reaction to the earlier tendency to propel women into positions of power, stick them into parliament, mayors' offices, and so on.

Apart from the percentages, at the moment we see there is a certain hesitation of men, but of women too, to support women as candidates for these posts. This is something we've seen in all political parties. Each party has a so-called women's organization, and each party can take advantage of the fact that women make up more than half the population in Romania. Women are in the majority, the majority who could be voting for women candidates.

To give you some idea of the situation of women, I can tell you that there is a newspaper which appeared recently. It's called "The Time of Women in a Country of Men." There are about ten NGOs dealing with this publication, covering issues like education and scientific research. Three of these organizations have dealt with very specific, practical problems.

The organizations are called the National League of Women, the National Association of Women, and the National Union of Women. Each of these groups has been created by old structures, and they have taken the old capital of the communist National Women. We don't know what they did with these resources, but we do realize that they are really trying to educate women and do something for them.

Of all the NGOs that I know, there is only one association of women's rights, set up by women lawyers who are trying to carry out a women's education program. I've been working with them to publish a kind of handbook to provide primary information on education. Of course, to do this we need money, but the money is held by the organizations that I've mentioned. We find ourselves in a vicious circle.

We hope that after these elections, with the new executive which was set up with the help of all these NGOs, we will be able to set up a state body--a body such as in Slovakia which deals with the situation of women.

Ms. Cohen: I'm Naomi Cohen from the State of Connecticut, which is in a part of the United States referred to as New England. I want to share a couple of observations on comments made by the panel.

In the U.S. we have a little saying that's partly a joke and partly serious, that the best man for the job is often a woman. If we believe this, I would say we

really need to support the statement "never give up," and find the delicate balance of where to pick our battles, because clearly we are in this for the long haul.

I am in the Connecticut state government, representing parts of two towns and 20,000 people, and I want to share some of my legislative experience with you.

First, in terms of picking your battles, one of the things that we do in the U.S. every ten years which has a major impact on women's opportunities to serve in government is to redraw the maps of all the legislative districts. This occurs in state governments as well as in the national Congress and is based on a census of the population taken every ten years.

In Connecticut, the way we redraw the map is to have the eight leaders of the state house and the state senate appoint a committee, and the committee draws the map. It has implications for women because often, by moving just a few little lines on the map, women find themselves in a completely new elective district. They may find themselves in a district with another member who happens to be a man, and so it's really an important political tool.

Last year, knowing that this was coming, I wrote to my leader, the speaker of the house, and said as politely but as bluntly as I could that it would be a sham to have this map drawn by eight men. I think I embarrassed him because when the committee was appointed, there were seven men and me. I am pretty secure in feeling that had I not written, there would have been eight men.

The other comment that struck me concerns asking for help. I've been involved in, and last year was the chair of, the National Conference of State Legislatures Women's Network. It is the organization that represents the 1,500 women who are elected state legislators all over the country. One of the things we have found out--and I think women are probably better at this than men--is that we know we don't know it all; we know we need to ask for help and draw on each other's experiences. And from that, our knowledge will be our power.

We have networked at all kinds of meetings and found out about our common problems. We have shared information and promoted women in leadership. About six years ago, this organization had a male president who announced at a meeting that only over his dead body would a woman ever be the leader of the organization. That is when the Women's Network was founded. This year, we had the happy situation, after a lot of fighting, of having a contest between two women. There will now be a woman president of this organization.

So although we get tired and sometimes the situations never change, it's worth it. I'm delighted to be here with you all.

Ms. Danielova: I am a member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, representing the movement for a democratic Slovakia. I come from the town of Bardejov, famous for the East-West conference.

I'd like to say that the emancipation of Slovakia must be considered as a new opportunity rather than a new isolation. The philosophy of this is the great truth that the world doesn't know any universal life form other than the final state of the world; its unity is in the diversity of cultures.

I would like to make several remarks on the number of women representatives and the reality of the legal status of women. To help women means to help the family as the basic unit of society. Families have been touched by a moral crisis, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. So, the woman and her rights implies the rights of the woman and the family, the woman and her children, and the woman and her profession.

A wise Czech man once said that the educated, working woman can give much more to her child than can a woman who stays at home.

The Slovak Republic has two female ministers. Twenty members of Parliament are women, and of the 26 women in the National Council of the Slovak Republic, 17 favor a democratic Slovakia.

Our prime minister, Vladimir Meciar, has personally tried to encourage women to take prominent places as candidates in elections. He says that women's ability to cooperate is better than that of men because of their solidity and reliability. I think this is a reason to be optimistic.

Finally, I found interesting the question raised by one of the delegates: why are women needed? Please consider the following thought. If women were in the governments of the world, there would surely be no wars. In this way, women are needed.

Ms. Joneken: I represent the Women's Committee of Disabled Peoples International, a non-governmental organization. I, too, feel privileged to be here and appreciate very much the contributions of

the morning panel, yesterday's discussions, and the discussions in the lobbies and corridors.

I feel that important bricks in democracy building are the various organizations that are needed, not only political parties, but all the other interest groups and organizations where we get involved as individuals. In the Nordic countries where I come from, these organizations are a very important and legitimate part of democracy. They are asked to serve as advisors in society when that is appropriate, and that's where my organization fits in.

DPI is a world-wide organization with assemblies from 110 countries at this time, 15 of them in Europe. We are planning various actions in Europe, and in this I ask for your cooperation.

We consider ourselves a liberation movement, an empowerment movement. That's very important because if disabled persons do not consider themselves important, then they cannot make the contributions needed of them for society.

We have found difficulty in cooperating with women's organizations, because it's not self-evident that we are included in the work of these organizations. Two years ago, we had a conference in Vienna, organized under the auspices of the Commission on the Status of Women of the U.N. A set of 90 recommendations concerning the disabled was the result. Now we are pursuing each and every one of the recommendations.

We have succeeded in convincing the CEDAW (Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women), which follows up the Convention of the same name, to include the concerns of disabled women in each and every country's reports to CEDAW. We are trying to include disabled women in the mainstream.

We are also trying to hold a European conference in 1994 so we can provide input on disabled women to the China conference in 1995. I am searching for partnerships of various kinds; perhaps UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the European Community, The Center for Democracy, and specific countries which are interested, could help us.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here. I'm looking forward to continued contact.

Ms. Valcu: I'm a judge in Brasov, and I want to add something about the differences between what is written in laws and what is happening in reality in Romania.

The constitution of 1965 established equality between the sexes, but only certain women--and not the competent ones--were promoted in many jobs because an important leader of the country, Elena Ceausescu, was a woman. This statement was never guaranteed, and *de facto* Romanian women were humiliated by degrading treatment and examination as baby-producing machines. It will take time to reinstate women's dignity and to reassure them that they do have a right to choose the number of children they want and that abortion is not the only way to achieve this.

The constitution of 1991 establishes the same stipulation, but of course there is no guarantee for respecting it. The role played by Elena Ceausescu created a handicap for Romanian women, who are excluded from political jobs. The absence of women from Parliament does not encourage women to think of themselves as potential leaders capable of making decisions.

To fulfill ourselves means to fight for equal pay, promotion and training, and equal employment opportunities for men and women, because any woman who chooses a so-called "man's job" risks a loss of approval if not total hostility.

For example, this year women who graduated from law school were advised to choose a proper job for themselves, and not to become judges or prosecutors. These were men's jobs, and under no circumstance should a woman be in a position competitive with or superior to that of a man.

In 1987 there took place in Brasov a strong demonstration against communism, and women with their children were right up front. As a reward, today women represent 66 percent of the unemployed, and two-thirds of them are graduates.

Another sad fact is that most women equate success with escape. They're running abroad to seek a better life for themselves and their children. They are trying to run away from child mortality, insufficient medical staff, lower levels of education and health services, stress and bad working conditions.

So we are still the second sex as Simone de Beauvoir said, but we must remember that one woman was once called the "Iron Lady."

Ms. Ferenczi: My name is Andrea Ferenczi, and I'm from Hungary. After having worked in a state foreign trade company, one year ago I decided to start my own business--a foreign trade consultancy and representation.

I would like to report to you about some positive things. In Hungary, there are 600,000 entrepreneurs

at the moment, and 40 to 50 percent are women. We have several entrepreneurial associations and organizations in Hungary, and women have a major organization called the Association of Hungarian Women Entrepreneurs.

This association was founded because an American woman decided to come to Hungary in 1990, with some other American women, and hold a conference. These women represented the National Economic Alliance Foundation in Washington, D.C. About 200 Hungarian women who participated in this first conference decided to found a similar Hungarian organization.

Their second conference took place one year ago, and I was lucky to participate. I think Hungarian women can learn many things from the Americans, and not only about their skills and their private businesses. Of course, we did learn how to start a business and how to develop a business; we got a lot of tips and tactics.

But at the same time, we learned two major things from the Americans: that women's organizations exist in the Western countries, because we didn't know it before; and that a positive attitude can bring success in business, which was also very strange for us because there are still some problems with our mentality.

People in my country think that in competition--and competition is, of course, bigger than ever in Eastern European countries--they will not be successful when they help each other. These American women tried to explain that we will be much more efficient and much more successful in our business when we come together, help each other, and exchange ideas.

The Hungarian association had many difficulties at the beginning because of our mentality and human behavior, but now we are in a position to grow. We have more and more members, not only in Budapest but all over Hungary. If anybody is interested, we are ready to share our experiences with entrepreneurs in the other Eastern European countries.

I would also like to mention that the major assistance Western countries can give us is not financial assistance, but education. All such conferences like this and seminars or any course which can be made available for Eastern Europeans gives us good opportunities to learn about the experiences of developed market economies and to share our experiences with businesswomen and business owners from the West.

It is not only we Hungarians or Eastern Europeans who can profit by such conferences or other educational seminars, but the organizers and Western speakers can learn a lot about our experience. On such occasions, many people can come together and exchange ideas. Another association of German women entrepreneurs has given us a lot of help and organized several conferences in Hungary.

I would also like to mention that the Association of Hungarian Entrepreneurial Women developed its own foundation a year ago, with the purpose of promoting the development of private enterprises run by women which are viable but without resources or which have just been started. We hope to be able to assist women entrepreneurs in temporary difficulties through no fault of their own, to promote the possibility of acquiring entrepreneurial knowledge, to organize professional courses, and to work out entrepreneurial projects.

Ms. Robert: My name is Leni Robert, and I come from Switzerland. I am here at the Council of Europe as a representative of the Swiss Parliament. I come from a small country of six million people. It is a multi-cultural country with four official languages and four different cultures, as well. It is a very democratically-organized country, even down to the very smallest level, the municipality, but we have only recently discovered that women too are a part of democracy.

We have had a very long struggle to achieve this. For 30 years I was involved in the struggle for women to accede to democracy, and I think there were some major disadvantages. Of course, the great advantage of the 30-year struggle was that we now have a very strong network of many women and women's organizations which is still intact. This network is a result of the 30-year struggle and covers many different areas.

Although we are a very small country, I think that the specific call we've heard for cooperation is something that we would very likely go along with. I would be more than willing to make a specific contribution to this effort.

I wasn't in Parliament for 20 years, but I was in government. I was a minister for education and culture in one of the cantons, and I was also the first minister for ecology in Switzerland--the second woman to hold this position.

Despite 20 years of traditional, official, political experience, I was active and have been very faithful to

non-governmental organizations because I think they are very important. These organizations are important because the government has become rather rigid; they are the pepper and salt, if you like, of the work. NGOs act as a link between the population and the political leadership.

I think the need for this is constantly growing. This is something we were complaining about yesterday, and I think the NGOs, of whatever kind and in all their various nuances and qualities, big and small, have a very important role to play.

I also think the NGOs are significant because they do work which is more adapted to women's issues. I think women feel more at ease, more at home, in the NGOs than they do in traditional state organizations. They can be more adaptable, more flexible than other organizations which may be male-dominated and more suitable to male needs.

From the very interesting discussions of yesterday and today, I would like to pick up two points. One is the return to individuality; I find this quite comprehensible, but also very dangerous. We should not lose sight of organizations as a whole, and we should support them.

I find it highly dangerous to keep separate our struggle for daily existence and our lives as women. We must not make this mistake; we must not repeat the mistakes of the past.

Our method of living has led us to the brink of ecological catastrophe and has not brought about social justice. Switzerland is one of the richest countries in the world, but still has half-a-million people living on the verge of poverty. This concerns the rich and poor alike, and is happening increasingly in the rich nations where a free market economy reigns. Of these half-million people, a great majority are women. In our economies, I think it's the women who suffer most from this phenomenon.

For many years, I have been involved with development corporation aid in the Third World, and for decades we have given our blessing to the development of a market economy. I think we've now reached a point of deadlock. Suddenly, people discovered women and they said, "Oh, development aid, women haven't been involved on an equal basis. This is what has led to a breakdown in the situation, and more use should be made of women." I hope that is the case.

A lot of good is being done in the West, but nevertheless we must be highly critical. Everything that glitters is not gold, and I think that in women's matters, which has been said repeatedly, we must bear this in mind. We are still pioneers, although we've been making the same demands for the last 150 years that we're still fighting for today.

If women are not involved in policy- and decision-making all over the world, we may never get out of the vicious circle of relations which always ends up sooner or later in warfare. We have not been able to deal with human beings and interpersonal relations and the relationship of men and women to nature. Only if we maintain better relations with each other and with our environment will the world become truly human.

I would like to put a demand to the Council of Europe of which we are members. It was with great pleasure that I heard what the representative of the Council of Europe had to say about its future plans, and I think that the Council of Europe really must be the forum in which these questions are tackled at a pan-European level.

After all, this institution was built from the viewpoint of men and of Western Europe. We have had to learn to speak a common language. We have had to see that people have had completely different experience from us. What they're saying contains joint efforts, but the different experience makes it difficult for us to cooperate together.

What I'm saying is that the Council of Europe, it seems to me, is the proper body, the proper organization in which to be able to learn this kind of thing. It seems to me that the Council really must look into our structures and methods to see whether it is able to consider this new struggle as a struggle for pan-European identity, and whether these methods and structures actually provide the best means in which to do so.

We have to look at the situation, at women and women involved in policy. It seems to me there are not enough projects in the Council of Europe dealing with women—projects specifically to do with women, and general projects involving women as well. It seems to me that insufficient consideration is given to the fact that women can contribute and must contribute their own specific viewpoint, and I think this applies also to national projects.

I have heard about the latest projects in Switzerland and women's involvement there. I see many, many projects, particularly training projects for 50 diplomats. Well, frankly, it is not only the content, but also the language. I mean, it just said diplomats. In German, of course, there's a gender distinction for

nouns in the language. But this isn't just a matter of gender in the language; the content is not properly reflected in such projects. I think greater attention should be paid to this.

Due to the fact that all these things are happening, it seems to me very important that we women, representatives of the Council of Europe, should work together more. We don't have a full women's party. We have liberal, socialist, and conservative groups. The conservative group, of course, has a whole pile of English lords in it and all that, but we don't have a group of women, a political group of women.

I think that we must look at our own special significance, each project, each particular; why not have a women's political party? I have said in Switzerland that we ought to set up a women's political party in the Parliament. It would be very useful to look at politics from the women's viewpoint, through a woman's eyes. I would like to be able to be more effective in cooperating and put our forces together to achieve better results.

I'd like to thank you very much for organizing this conference. I think it has provided a wealth of information. It has provided great enrichment for us, and I hope we will be able to continue and to implement what we have learned here. We are here to share a common vision, and I think that we have been able to do this in our conference.

Ms. Freedman: First, I would like to very strongly reiterate what Leni Roberts just said. From the lessons we've learned in the U.S. over the past 30 years of working with developing countries, we finally realize that we have not used one of our greatest resources--women--in these countries.

The Agency for International Development works in over 90 countries, and I think that's one of the reasons we have not had the kind of performance we need to have. That's the reasoning behind funding conferences like this one and very specific work that focuses on women. Otherwise, good development and progress are not going to work.

I will also say, as Ms. Enache said earlier, that while this conference focuses on women's inclulsion in the democratic process, one of my strong beliefs is that women must have capital and access to credit. We're working to help women in this area throughout Eastern Europe.

We are involved in training women entrepreneurs, in encouraging their work to develop and expand their businesses. We are also working very closely with the National Economic Alliance Foundation mentioned by Ms. Ferenczi.

In Albania there is a project concerning 12 rug factories which employ 10,000 people, 95 percent of whom are women. We are bringing the managers, including a good number of women, to the U.S. for managerial training, showing them clean, safe factories, some of which have child care in the workplace. That's just the first step to help that industry in Albania.

USAID and all of the other multi-lateral and bilateral donors are working at trying to be very responsive to your needs. We do want you to ask for help; we don't want you to be shy. We have an AID office in every country of Eastern Europe, and we want to work closely with you; that's how we focus our work.

We are also working to help reform legal structures. We have two attorneys on-site in Romania, one man and one woman, and they're doing wonderful work.

Let me repeat: please do walk in the door. Please ask for help. That's what we're here for.

Ms. Labuda: I want to pick up on what Ms. Freedman mentioned and comment along the same line--support for women, especially during this period of transition.

We all know that this has to be done on all fronts, and there are 101 things to be done simultaneously--intellectually, politically, socially, economically. We have to tackle them all at once.

I'm going to try to sum up in a few words what my experience of helping women has been, together with my Polish friends and with the support of Western women--especially the Americans, feminists and non-feminists alike.

We have organized a group of women within Parliament, an act very poorly viewed by most of my political friends and enemies. These women come from a whole raft of political parties which take basically differing political views. In the group are former communists, people like me, women who were in prison, who were tortured, interrogated by the police, and who were militants opposing the communists.

We think there's such a lot to be done for women in Poland that we need to organize together. The most important thing now is to support women. What we try to do is work together and double-check budgets,

anything that concerns women in the budgets and distribution of public monies. We try to promote women's interests at that level too, make sure they are center stage.

We formed eight groups, but I'm only going to mention two which are issue-specific. The first is a group that helps unemployed women. We have organized training courses, using American experience as a basis, on subjects such as how to set up a business. We train women by explaining how to write business plans, what marketing involves, how to find money and obtain credit. The Women's World Bank, with headquarters in New York, has been very useful in this regard.

We are working on the image of women in the media too; I think that will be one of the subjects today: the image of women in the media, the press, TV, and radio. Generally speaking, that image downgrades women. We think there's a lot of important work to be done here, and of course we reject an image of women projected on television, especially that which downplays women's value or degrades them. We want to pick up images of women from books in primary schools onwards and make sure that we have proper values ascribed to women.

We have a foundation to support women which deals especially with women who have been raped or abused by family members. In Poland and in many other countries, we don't have any data on this subject because there has never been any reliable research done. We don't know how many women have been battered in their own homes.

My experience as a member of Parliament tells me that most probably there are a great many because a good number of women come to see me with these problems. I think we need to set up structures to help these women. I spend time trying to find money, because often they need emergency medical aid, legal aid, as well as financial aid.

We organize training courses in a number of cities which allow women to find their place in a new economic reality. We also want to be able to provide services for women in the countryside, where they really are out on a limb.

We've had a lot of support from our Western friends, men and women, who are training women for public life. We don't yet know how to speak in public, for example, because public life in the genuine sense did not exist previously. How do you get involved in public speaking, how do you present your targets, how do you encourage people to support you in practical terms, and so on?

Ms. Stefanoiu: I am Cristina Stefanoiu from Romania. I represent the Pro-Democracy Association, which is the largest non-governmental civic education group. We did a lot of election-related work this year, and now we're planning to move forward after the elections.

First, I want to thank the organizers for giving me the opportunity to be here with you and to hear so many different ideas from the women of Central and Eastern Europe.

One of the things we noticed during our civic education work during the elections is that while it is true that neither women nor men vote for women, it's also true that nobody addressed women's issues during the campaign. The political parties did not have platforms to get women to vote for them, and the result is that 62 percent of those who didn't vote were women. This should probably be a signal to the political parties, and I think this is true not only in Romania, but everywhere in Eastern Europe.

I also want to agree with what Ms. Enache and Ms. Bollobas said earlier, that there is a lot of distrust and suspicion in these countries. This has consequences not only in the field of relationships between men and women or among women themselves, but consequences in politics and economics.

I am one of five people on the board of directors at Pro-Democracy. We organized the largest network of domestic observers to send to the polls. For the September local elections we had 6,500 people, but this number has now decreased to 4,500. It was a constant struggle to get these people out, to convince them we are working for democracy and trying to ensure credibility of the process.

The overwhelming majority of observers were men. Women who participated in this effort did so because they were brought by their husbands. There were very few who came on their own and said they wanted to be part of this process.

When we're talking about networking, I think we're talking about active women. We are trying to find these women at the local level. If we find that good programs can be successful at local levels, this will be something to give confidence again; women can gain confidence in themselves and gain confidence in the process. If women are more confident in themselves, I think men will follow.

I don't think it is so much a fight between men and women. What we're trying to do is change women's mentality and make them aware of their possibilities.

There are so many things that need to be done in a lot of different areas. I think we could probably prioritize some of these things and get involved in very specific issues--projects that can help women become more visible and get the attention of the press and other people.

This small business project should be one of the first priorities. I have to say that, to my knowledge, there is no such thing in Romania. I don't think there is yet such a group in Romania to support these issues, and I think this is one of the important things.

Ms. Lau: Just a brief observation. We have had such extraordinary panels, thanks to The Center for Democracy, and this panel is no exception. We have heard today the entire spectrum of the stages of communication among women in certain countries.

To Ms. Bollobas: Even though the people in Hungarian society have very little experience in solidarity and being interested in others, the nuclear family is still very strong and hopefully will be the catalyst towards a society that is not atomized.

To our Romanian and Czechoslovakian colleagues who spoke of needing practical contact with the West, needing more time and the sharing of information: Your points are very well taken.

We have heard so many fine ideas here. To Professor Weinstein: Is there a list of names and addresses of all of us here so we can share our experiences? We are talking about contacting and networking. I think that is very important, because our strength is in our solidarity, as Susan Davis has suggested. Our wealth is in our friendships, so we should never forget each other.

Ms. Veltcheva: First, I'd like to introduce myself. I am the youngest female member of the Bulgarian Parliament. Moreover, I represent a political party in which women form the majority of members, the United Democratic Center. We got a lot of advice from other sister parties, and were told to form a women's section of the party.

The women reacted by saying, "Why have a women's section?" These are women who don't want to be just co-workers; they want to be co-decision makers. They felt they were really being put down and suggested we ought to have a men's section rather than a women's section in our party.

I think that communism has affected Bulgarian women--indeed women in all the socialist countries--and has turned them into men. Now that we are free again, we can choose our pattern of life. Women in the former Eastern bloc countries now have to fight to reconquer their femininity, and that's very important for me.

Women have already shown that there is no restriction or limit on their abilities. All of us have to believe that women must have greater opportunities in political and business life. I think men have known this for quite a long time.

Ms. Byrne: I am Kristen Byrne from the United States. I work for an organization called the International Republican Institute. As you heard from Ms. Freedman, USAID has played a major role in democratic initiatives. IRI is one of the organizations that receives grants from USAID to do work in Central and Eastern Europe.

Over the past several years, we've done major work in Bulgaria, Romania, and Albania, and also in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. We receive grants for election observation missions, seminars, training, and democratic development. In recognizing the importance of women in positions from leadership to volunteer, the IRI will be conducting programs to increase the role of women in society.

I do have a question for the panelists. We have seen a major trend over the past three years of the role of young men and women in the transition to democracy. I was wondering if you could comment on what the role of these university-aged women has been in the new organizations for women. And what is the view of university-aged men towards these women who now want to become more involved in society?

Ms. Bollobas: Again, I guess there isn't much good news to tell. Women as women have not been active in the political transformation. I guess it's because women have not identified their problems in terms of gender issues, which is at least partly correct.

Actually, there have been some organizations like that of the entrepreneurial women. Most major parties have women's groups, and perhaps this is beginning to happen. But if you look around East-Central Europe, you will see that at this point those societies are so

preoccupied with political and economic problems that they push gender problems away for a while.

Women are so tired, so overburdened, that they cannot take on new burdens. Perhaps if they are given a choice of paths for their future over the next few years, it will be a choice for women's issues and for less of the traditional feminine ideals.

At this point, it is not yet a choice, and it certainly was not a choice for the last 45 years.

Ms. Enache: I would say that in Romania, it has been a little bit different. I am very proud to say that many women were, and are, very involved in transitional activities. Unfortunately, this has not been true of the leadership of the parties. In Romania the parties of a very right orientation had more women than the new parties.

What is very important is that we can find many women engaged in civic movements. At times some of us had more courage than some of the leaders of our parties to join, for instance, a militantism for inter-ethnic or inter-cultural dialogue. Some of the leaders of even our democratic parties said, "We will lose some votes if we engage too much in those problems" –which are the most burdensome for our societies.

Many women have had the courage to join the movements which are, let's say, a kind of fanatic work for democracy. So there are women who declare things which are shocking to our very traditional and very centralized society.

I have to say something about the danger of individualism. We have to notice that everywhere in the world there is a return to simple identities and the rejection of globalism and imposed universalism. I think we have to be careful not to allow a totalitarianism of sexes or of economics to follow ideological totalitarianism. We have to transgress the militantism of totalitarian structures and go to autonomous structures all over the world, not only in Europe.

Ms. Haney: I was going to talk about something that was brought to mind listening to Sonja Lokar. She was the first person who mentioned the issue of battering and abuse of women. Since then Barbara Labuda has brought it up, so I won't belabor the point.

It is interesting that, at least so far, little attention has been paid to a subject which seems to be a universal problem for women. I think it's a particular problem in countries where there's a great deal of alcohol consumption.

I wonder if anyone else from Eastern or Central Europe wanted to say something about what is being done or contemplated with regard to this issue.

I think one of the genuine contributions of the American women's movement is the response to that issue, the publicity, the fact that people talk about it, acknowledge it, and that laws that have been passed to make it an issue of assault and violence and not an issue of domestic relationships. There is also the fact that we created alternative places for people to go; one of the problems has been that women and their children had no escape.

Ms. Krejcova: As far as I know, in the Czech lands at least, the demand for building centers or shelters for women in need is being considered. Among the new women's movements or societies, there is an organization called "Humanity." It's a group of intellectuals who are trying to find a way to build such shelters for women. They also think of the necessity for psychologists to help women in need, not only to provide them with shelter.

But the difficulty–I'm sorry to say or I feel ashamed to say–is again the financial problem. Earlier I mentioned the former Czechoslovakia Union of Women. The Union still exists in the Czech lands, and those women still own a big building in Prague. There is no way to get a building back to use for some other purpose. They are owners of a big publishing house, and they have plans to privatize it.

One of the aims of women members of the Czech Parliament in the last term–and I was involved in the fight, I must say–was to manage to find a way to get this property. We want to divide it, if possible, in a fair way to make a foundation so that each new organization could have use of it. But it's very difficult.

I don't know what the experience of my colleagues from Central Europe and Eastern Europe is, but this is a real problem. There is no law which would make them give up their property so that shelters for women in need could be built.

We feel we are absolutely helpless, because while the property of the former communist party in Czechoslovakia was nationalized, it is not possible to do it with the property of that communist ideological union of women. They still would love to play a very important role. I don't mind. I think everybody has

the right to exist, but I insist that the other organizations enjoy the same rights.

Ms. Bollobas: While women's shelters are being developed--and I've heard of a few in Hungary--one problem that relates to this is verbal abuse and sexist language. Not much has changed in Hungary, for example, and the simple reason is that politically correct language is not familiar to most people. Also, the media has become the last outpost for conservative communists.

The least change has occurred in the various areas of the media, and those people are not really sensitive to the nuances of language to which we are very sensitive.

Ms. Aguiar: I am from Portugal, the most Western country speaking in this seminar on Eastern and Central Europe. I think my country has something in common with that region because we were one of the few Western countries to suffer a long dictatorship and to have a democratic revolution in 1974. I think our experience may be of some interest from political and economic points of view.

We changed our laws immediately, so we are very aware of the fact that changing the laws does not necessarily and immediately affect the people. On the contrary, things may very well go on as they are. In fact, in many ways things are as they were in Portugal.

But I don't want to be so pessimistic. We have a woman prime minister, and when this was announced, she was not criticized because she was a woman. She was applauded by people from the left because she was a leftist and not very well accepted by the right. I think that was a very positive response to the fact that a woman holds the position of prime minister.

We had many professions forbidden to women--for instance, judges and prosecutors--and now we see that a majority entering those professions are women. Also, we now have universities with a very competitive system. We see that almost 60 percent of students are women, and not only in traditional humanistic studies but in technology and science studies.

But Portugal is not a very good example; it is a European average. The Parliament is made up of about ten percent women. We have still less at the local level, and that has to do with the electoral system. I quite agree with an intervention I heard yesterday. I think that the British system of constituency would make it more difficult in our country for women to become candidates.

We see that there are more women participating at a high level in the Parliament than at the local level because women's issues are political issues, and leaders of political parties tend to favor the appointment of women.

I want to go back to what Ms. Kartcheva said about the artificial political promotion of women in Eastern countries. It makes you resentful, so women and political parties may tend to forget the issue and to forget the benefits of a quota system, of having a target for a proportion of women from the demographic situation to the political situation. I think the quota system and positive action is perhaps not a very good system, but it's the best system.

If you look from Nordic countries to the south, from the position of Anita Gradin in Sweden to the position of Simone Weil in France, you see they are from socialist-liberal positions. They are both very aware that women's emancipation and women's participation in politics can only with great difficulty be worked out without the quota system or the equivalent of a quota system. That is a very positive intervention of political leaders and those who are decision makers. They're interested in having more women on the lists or in political participation.

In Portugal we are very aware, because of our own situation, that freedom and democracy are not the same thing. You have freedom in the West, but it's not institutionalized as democracy. It's very important that women gain by it, not just lose.

What worries me most is to see in Eastern Europe nowadays a very negative trend, the decrease of political participation by women. It has to be stopped; something has to be done.

We must remember that 100 years ago, in the French revolution, women did not gain the right to vote. They didn't gain the right to die for their cause. Well, we don't want women to suffer all the difficulties of going into democracy without having the advantages. So let's go back.

Communism was wrong, communism was evil, but many of its remedies--even if they were propaganda--were not that evil. I think what happens in the Nordic countries is a very good example, but we can't just copy the examples of other countries. It may not result in our countries.

The women's movements and women's political parties worked out in Norway. Norway is now the number one country in the world in terms of women's

participation, but it also worked out in Spain. Women are getting more and more possibilities and opportunities of participation in Spain because the socialist party adopted a 25 percent quota. It's a modest target, but they are getting there with it.

I want to offer my total solidarity, my wish to work together with you. I always say I'm a feminist, and by this I mean I will fight for women's equality until we get there. I quite agree with Ms. Roberts when she says that she looks at pictures of meetings and of organizations like parliaments or even the Council of Europe and sees that women are really a minority. While women are a minority in these institutions, we have to go on being feminists. I don't expect to quit being a feminist until the end of my days.

I will do anything I can to help with my own experience, and in this Council we will go on trying to institutionalize our relationships and our solidarity.

Ms. Guirado: I am a member of the Spanish socialist group in the Parliament and in the Council of Europe. I would like to say that in Spain, thanks to the quota system, there are many women in the Parliament. But due to the economic crisis and also the socialist party which is not yet mature, I think that our participation will drop.

We are the lowest of the low in the electoral list. We're the lower echelons of the electoral list, yet we make up more than 20 percent of the congress and senate. But all women who are members were at the bottom of the list.

We should try to improve the situation, and we hope that in the next candidate year, 1993, we will be able to get a better position.

In any case, I would like to say that it is very important that in all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe we should set up institutional bodies which deal specifically with the problems of women.

In Spain, there's something called the Institute of Women, set up with the socialist government. It is thanks to this organization that the laws which give us equal rights apply to all countries, but I think that these laws must be applied to women. In all countries these laws must be regulated, and we must make sure they apply to women and that we also have women's associations and links with NGOs. We should encourage women to participate in politics and all the centers of government.

Ms. Corning: I have found it interesting to hear you talking about quotas under the communist regimes. Just a few years ago in the State of Iowa, we passed what we considered to be historic legislation whereby boards, commissions and committees appointed by the governor and the legislature would be gender balanced. So whenever the governor makes an appointment to the Board of Regents, Department of Transportation, Department of Education, whatever, those positions must be gender balanced.

We considered this a real break-through and a very positive thing to happen for women in our state. Those boards and commissions have been springboards for women to gain experience in policy making and then to run for office.

[Unidentified Speaker]: I appreciate, Madam Chairperson, what you were saying about quotas, but I think we have to make clear what we're talking about. I believe what you were referring to is what we would call quotas. But when referring to the situation in Central and Eastern Europe during the former regimes, I don't think you can consider that system as quotas within your meaning.

According to my understanding, women were just placed alongside other segments of the population. You had so many women, but you also had so many peasants, so many trade unionists, et cetera. This explains why the quota system in a former regime was a very bad system in terms of women's rights. I just wanted to make sure that the message is clear.

Ms. Davis: Just a brief comment, and then I want to offer a little action step here.

I am on the board of an organization called the Center for International Private Enterprise. A number of years ago, the U.S. Congress passed a law that enacted the National Endowment for Democracy. The money goes to the two political parties, the National Republican Institute and its counterpart, the National Democratic Institute. Labor also gets money, as does the U.S. Chamber of Commerce for Business.

Each of these organizations has activities of its own, but the Center for International Private Enterprise makes grants around the world to promote free market economies and private enterprise. We have given $1 million out this year. In the three years I've been on the board of directors, I have never seen an application, much less an approval, for a women's group promoting private enterprise from anywhere in

the world. I have never even seen an application from an organization headed by a woman.

I would hope that we can change that and involve some of the organizations that are emerging in Central and Eastern Europe. I certainly would be willing to help shepherd your application through the process. I can't promise it will go anywhere, but certainly--particularly in Hungary with your organization--this may be an opportunity.

These are not funds for setting up businesses, but for educating people about free market economy and private enterprise or trying to help change laws.

In addition, we are having an ongoing discussion about the possibility of trying, through The Center for Democracy, to produce and distribute a television show in Central and Eastern Europe. There are a lot of things that would have to happen in order for this to be put before the people who might fund it.

I would suggest that whose who are interested in joining this discussion could sit together during lunch and talk more about how we might proceed.

Ms. Corning: I would like to thank the members of the panel and all of you for your participation here today. I think one thing that has come through in this discussion is that we've all heard about networking opportunities and the ways in which we can work together and help each other.

Prof. Weinstein: Thank you, Madam Chairman. On behalf of all of us, I want to commend you for moderating an excellent panel.

I want to offer a response to two questions posed during this session. There was a general question as to how The Center for Democracy might be of some use in future activities. On that issue, I know that our Chairman Peter Kelly, Susan Davis and I will want to speak this afternoon.

Cheryl Lau asked if a list of names and addresses of everyone here would be provided, so that people could keep in contact. The answer is absolutely yes, and you should have the list in your hands within two weeks.

In addition, a complete transcript of these proceedings will be produced in French and English. Each delegate will receive a copy, and we'll try to provide multiple copies so that you, in turn, can distribute them further.

We hope, also, there will be other follow-up publications or informational bulletins that will emerge from this conference.

In terms of what we've already described, I suppose the Center operates as a kind of clearing house in this process, and we are prepared to continue.

Someone mentioned the variety of political parties and beliefs within the community of democratic nations, and by my count we have between three and four dozen political parties from the two dozen or so countries represented here in this hall over the last two days.

One thing that would be helpful to us would be to have the names of groups from the old regimes which are parading under the identity of democratic women's organizations now--old communist women's groups that apparently still have great property and some power in your countries. We could then brief your colleagues in the Western countries; this comes under the heading of false advertising, I believe, and we would like to know something about that.

Closing Session

Prof. Weinstein: In our final session, there are a variety of themes to be considered. As a working procedure, it seemed a useful idea to invite a cross-section of the delegates, from Eastern Europe, Western Europe, the United States, the Council's Parliamentary Assembly and staff, The Center for Democracy, and USAID, to serve as the preliminary discussants.

The session will then be opened to general discussion of the questions: What can emerge from this conference that will be of help in supporting the efforts of people involved in these issues? What is the consensus of conference participants concerning what the sponsors should do by way of follow-up?

I'm going to ask Ms. Dinsdale to begin.

Ms. Dinsdale: Let me remind you that I am a member of the Council of Europe Secretariat, and one of my responsibilities is dealing with equality issues.

I think one of the main problems facing women in Central and Eastern Europe is that gender issues as such are not on the political agenda. From my own experience in talking with male counterparts in this region, my impression is that they feel equality issues are a sort of Western luxury that their citizens cannot afford at this precise point in time.

That, combined with what I would call the return to a traditional concept of the woman as housewife and mother, means that there is an increasing democratic deficit in these countries which, paradoxically, are emerging democracies.

I think what we have to try to do is convince the men in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in our own countries, that you can't have a democracy if you deny half the population—and in some cases it is more than half—the right to integrate all spheres of the formal and informal democratic process on an equal footing with men.

We have to convince men that the sharing of power and responsibilities will lead to greater equality and greater freedom for them. Otherwise, I don't think they will readily relinquish the power that is in their hands.

As one participant said yesterday, the symbolism of language is extremely important. She said that the language of equality is a kind of anathema because it was part of the traditional hypocritical official credo. I would venture to suggest that in our West European societies there are also many men and even women who are equally allergic to that language. I think this means that in all we try to do now, we have to start rethinking our language and rethinking our strategies.

Perhaps you will allow me a brief word about what we have been trying to do in the Council of Europe. We are working out a new strategy which we call parity democracy. This would position equality as a political pre-condition for democratic regimes. We're placing it at the same level as fundamental questions like universal suffrage and the separation of powers. It's based on the equal dignity and value of both sides of humanity, the masculine and the feminine, and on the recognition of what each side of humanity can offer.

In that way, we want to develop a strategy which will lead to the full integration of women on an equal footing with men in all spheres of the democratic process, and that implies multi-disciplinary strategies on all fronts. I'm not saying that parity democracy will be the solution at the end of the day, but I think it has the advantage of making us rethink our language a little bit.

European organizations such as my own can contribute to this debate, and I would like to suggest that perhaps with our work on parity democracy we can help further the cause.

Another thing that organizations like my own can do is to set examples. Madam Robert mentioned the fact that there's no cross-party women's caucus in the Parliamentary Assembly. Why not take the initiative to do that beginning now? Another thing organizations like mine can do is to issue very clear statements on issues like reproductive rights and the free choice of women and men in this area.

I think we can also do some much more practical things, and that is federating initiatives both at the public and private levels to advance the cause of women in Central and Eastern Europe. It is important to stress, in this respect, the role of grass-roots organizations—a theme which has come up throughout our discussions—because without them we would never have succeeded in getting the gender issue on the political agenda.

We have to be able to find projects which can develop a credible grass-roots basis for promoting gender issues in Central and Eastern Europe. This is where West European non-governmental organizations can do a lot if they're given the financial and other support they need. They can provide network support, train women to manage and coordinate women's organizations, give advice on networking and on how

to work with and through the law--and that is a very important point, I think.

So I believe this should be one of the priorities identified today, and here I would insist also on the importance of coordination. We can be so much stronger if we're all working together. Resources are very short.

I'd like to mention two areas where I think it is important that we federate our efforts. First is the whole area of reproductive rights. In certain countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the issue of abortion is being taken out of the global context of the fundamental right of men and women to choose and have access to family planning services.

The second area is sexual and domestic violence, which is on the increase in Central and Eastern Europe and needs to be made visible as a major political issue.

We have noted in our West European societies how important national equality machinery is. I think it is very significant that the one and only governmental equality mechanism in Central and Eastern Europe--that is, in Poland--was recently decapitated. I think we have a particular responsibility here to support projects which will help with the establishment of national equality machinery. I can assure you that we in the Council of Europe are doing our utmost to help set up such national machinery.

Another very important area is legislative framework. Yesterday we had a discussion on the limits of legislation, but other parties then said it is important to have the law and to know how to use the law to the best purposes for women.

I think this is where bodies like the Council of Europe, The Center for Democracy, the Venice Commission for Democracy through Law, the International Institute of Democracy, can act very, very concretely. These organizations can promote the insertion of a fundamental right to equality between women and men in the new constitutions that are being developed in Central and Eastern Europe. Second, they could mount and support expert counseling missions to give advice on domestic legislation, be it equal opportunity legislation, family planning policies, social policies or family policies. I think we can do quite a lot if we combine our efforts.

The final area is training and political leadership. I think the Parliamentary Assembly could do a lot as well to train women political leaders in Central and Eastern Europe.

We have learned so very much from our colleagues from Central and Eastern Europe over the past two days, and I think whatever we do, it must be part of a two-way process. We have a lot to gain from our friends in Central and Eastern Europe.

Prof. Weinstein: I think I speak for all the visitors to Strasbourg when we compliment you, Ms. Dinsdale, others in the Secretariat, and members of the Parliamentary Assembly who have obviously been your strongest supporters in this effort, for the remarkable job you're doing in mobilizing on all of these difficult fronts.

Our next speaker is Ms. Naomi Cohen.

Ms. Cohen: It appears very clear to me that the obstacles to full participation by women in their governments is not unique to any one place. All of us bring very different and rich cultures to this meeting which has been strengthened by common goals. I would say that these goals include increasing the number of women in the political process, developing our organizational and leadership skills, and attaining, retaining, and expanding our economic and political power in order to influence decision making.

How we reach the goals is the trick and will be the success of an initial meeting like this. Obviously, we need to keep the channels open both formally and informally by sharing initiatives, by writing, by speaking, and anything else we can do to stay in communication.

As one of many women legislators in America, I see a wonderful opportunity for us to play a role with our colleagues in Europe. Through the National Conference of State Legislators as well as individual legislators, we can form linkages with women in parliaments and governments across Central and Eastern Europe to do the things that Ms. Dinsdale has mentioned. We can work together on counseling, training for leadership, and not only for issues in the traditional areas where women have been involved--education, family planning, child care, health care--but in some of those areas where we have historically had no influence: finance, commerce, transportation, international relations, and alterations to political systems.

The National Conference of State Legislatures offers an exciting model that can be translated to our experiences. It is a bipartisan group of legislators, Republicans and Democrats, concentrating not on differences but on similarities and common goals.

I would suggest that what we need to think about as one strategy is sister-state types of relationships. For instance, the women of Connecticut might be able to form an alliance with the women of one country and together dialogue more fully about the areas we need to focus on.

Women in America have found out that part of our success has come from mentoring one another, from helping each other to understand the issues and to develop solutions. I think this would be a very exciting way to do this. For a lot of us in the U.S., our roots are in Central and Eastern Europe. We have a lot in common that we have not used to the fullest extent possible.

Let me say for myself and, I believe, for many of the women in legislatures all over America, we are ready and willing, and we are looking forward to the next step. I will conclude with my favorite Italian proverb, which translates to "All the world is a neighborhood."

Prof. Weinstein: I want to thank Ms. Cohen and the other political leaders from the various states of our country for highlighting something that our friends in Europe or elsewhere in the world often forget. We are a federal republic with our public power dispersed and an enormous range of powers concentrated in the states and municipalities.

As for women in positions of political influence and power, the degree to which this has been achieved at the state and local levels, with all that remains to be done, is far in advance of the degree to which it has been achieved at the national level.

The Center for Democracy has seen in Latin America the impact that state legislators, their staffs, and state executive officials have had in assisting those new democracies; so there is a track record here.

I'm pleased now to turn to our distinguished moderator of yesterday, Ms. Leni Fischer.

Ms. Fischer: I would very much like to get into the identification of issues for consideration at future meetings and some future activities to continue the process of cooperation among us.

As far as I have understood, there is a lot of interest in obtaining more information on how things have been working and are working in this part of the world, Western Europe. It is sometimes a bit difficult with all these different European institutions.

We have at one side the European Parliament where the members are elected in the 12 respective countries. The Council of Europe has 27 member states so far, and I think in a few years we might be up to 40. The members of the Council are elected from their respective parliaments. As well as the European Parliament, the Council of Europe has done a lot in regard to equality of men and women in various parts of everyday life, in economy, politics, and family law.

As to our future activities, we should try and focus a bit more on women in the economy, in the media, and in research. These are crucial points because we have so very many well-educated women. Yet, if we look at the universities, women very often occupy the medium range positions but not the top level positions.

If we want support for our issues in the media, we must see to it that women sit in the higher ranks of the media as well. The women working there really rely on our support, because their job is as difficult as our jobs in politics, research or everyday life. We have to learn that we need to create networks not only of women in politics on one side, women in the media on the other, but to try and get them together because everyone has had the experience that equality in principle is not equality in practice.

We could probably prepare some recommendations for governments, because we need help in organizing these private women's networks as non-governmental organizations. They have proved—especially in the U.S. and Canada—to be very valuable, but they haven't been so far in Western European countries. There are some very good examples in recent years. Ms. Ferenczi told about the work done in Hungary with the help of a German association; this started quite a long time ago.

We need to put women together, those in politics and society, trade unions, and NGOs. We have to build up a range of information and training structures. We need specific things for re-entry job training and for women in urban and rural regions, because the needs they have are completely different.

We need retraining programs for those who are out of work or who spend time in their families although they would have preferred to stay in their jobs. For this, we have to seek government's help because when organizing these retraining programs we need at the same time provisions for child care. Otherwise, it's not worthwhile to offer retraining programs if those people who want to participate don't know where to leave their children.

We need career counseling and job search assistance for employees as well as employers. We need on-the-job assistance, after training, to develop career ladders, to give employees self-reliance, and to show employers that they're going to get high-skilled people.

One thing which always strikes me is the experience we have in the Federal Republic of how very difficult it is for women to obtain credit and loans if they want to open their own businesses. They are always asked for more security than are men.

This is one of the big issues, especially in the Federal Republic, but also for countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Women want to pursue their own jobs and careers and be entrepreneurs, but then they realize that the first difficulty and the greatest difficulty might be to get the money. This is true even though it may be a comparatively small amount of money. Yet, everyone knows that female business owners in all the developed world are much more reliable in paying back their interest rates.

I think we should go in and get different groups working together on these financial schemes, to set up revolving funds or whatever you can imagine. I would very much appreciate it if, in future times, we could organize special seminars for these things because they are the most crucial points. It's very seldom that my colleagues inform us about the best ways to obtain credit and the opportunities to become small entrepreneurs.

If I look at what we have done in recent years as to helping women in the developing countries of Africa and Southeast Asia, there are quite a lot of good programs in which women came together to develop a kind of bank and common savings to help each other. This is quite an interesting grass-roots movement, but we can't have it within our economy. I think we have to find another financial scheme.

I would be very happy if those who organized this seminar could in the future stress training women and providing them with the information for developing good ideas and help and good counsel. Women normally are creative and have the will and strength, but what they need is initial help for self-reliance. I would very much support holding such a special seminar in the future.

Prof. Weinstein: That's a large agenda, Ms. Fischer, and you have also pointed out a critical element in this discussion. It is that those from North America bring special strengths to the table in this process, and those from Western Europe bring special and very different strengths.

The fact is that the whole is much greater than the sum of its parts here and can be quite critical in assistance to our friends from Central and Eastern Europe, one of whose distinguished leaders, Ms. Barbara Labuda, will speak next.

Ms. Labuda: I think there are three main problems with which women in Eastern countries need help. All women know very well what these are.

The question is: How can we help women to enter political careers? I think the solution we need is a very simple one. It's a matter of helping them to obtain training and to learn how to behave in public life, because the dominant system has favored men so far.

What we could do together, if the organizers accept this idea, of course, is to help women obtain the training which will make them more prepared to move freely in political life.

Then we should try and do something about political parties accepting women. There was a proposal which referred to a quota system, based on the Swedish or Norwegian model. It's a very rich and vast system, and we shouldn't confuse it with a system which gives a forced head start to women.

I know that in Poland, for example, a quota system wouldn't work. We could then think of something different, as proposed by Ms. Lokar from Slovenia, and that is trying to find a new way of financing political parties which include 30 percent women. This is an idea I would support, and I'm going to propose it at my commission in Parliament, which meets next Tuesday. Thank you, Sonja, for the proposal. There are two other proposals, but this is a good one in my opinion.

Then, in order to encourage women to enter political life, we should develop a whole series of instruments which demonstrate that political life is attractive and interesting.

What I'm trying to say is that it is difficult to present a political career in a positive image. It is a profession, and one should be proud to be in it. It can be creative, very creative and interesting. And in my opinion, women are very well equipped to enter political and diplomatic life. I think we have a psychological aptitude for this type of work.

Improving the image would be a difficult task. Paradoxically, I think it would be easier to encourage male colleagues to accept a quota system or financing

electoral campaigns. It's a whole procedure which would take a long time because of preconceptions, perhaps, but I think it's something that needs doing.

We haven't used the media sufficiently, and I think that's another aspect we need to encourage: how we should behave as far as the media are concerned. There are too many images surrounding us which are negative stereotypes of women.

Another important problem in my opinion, already mentioned by Leni Fischer, is the economic aspect. We should try and think about how we could help women to better understand new economic realities, because one could compare passing from a communist to a new liberal system to jumping out of a window. You can't do that in two stages; you just do it in one go. For a lot of Polish people, this was an incredible shock. There are people who are still trying to find their feet.

So you have to take the plunge; otherwise, you don't know where you're going to land. Then, hope you find a soft landing spot.

This transition process affects women more because on the psychological, political, social and even financial levels, women are affected. We've talked about unemployment, for example. In certain towns in Poland there are large textile industries where only women are employed, and the level of unemployment is enormously high. In one town there are 5,000 women who have only two possible places of employment, but it is a rather special town. There are parts of my country where things are not as bad.

Quite a number of women find themselves having to take the opportunities offered by the free market, but nonetheless we as women have the obligation to help other women. My motto would be that each woman should undertake to do something positive for another woman. I think we have the moral duty to help women find themselves, to help them adjust to the new situation. As far as the economic sphere is concerned, it would be helpful to organize courses or seminars for women who are either unemployed or who are low earners so that they learn to acquire financial independence.

These courses could focus, for example, on starting one's own small business. Obviously, matters such as these require funds which have to be found, but there are some wealthy people in all our countries. There is a whole social group that has enriched itself very quickly. In my country that's the case, and I'm sure it's the case in other countries as well. So they might be potential sponsors of projects to help women.

Prof. Weinstein: We turn now to our American speakers who represent the state leadership process, first to Ms. Cheryl Lau.

Ms. Lau: When you look at our agenda, you see we plan to talk about issues, future activities, working groups, and assistance. Our problem is not to think of issues, but to narrow down those issues that would be practical or meaningful for a majority of us.

During the discussions, we have heard about improving information regarding the labor market, pro-active employment, child care and health considerations, and especially the health issues of peasant women who have to perform very hard manual labor. Sometimes it's difficult to even imagine the kind of labor they are forced to do just to earn a living to keep their families going.

Gender considerations in government dialogue include domestic violence, verbal abuse, quota systems, and the media. The problem is not enumerating issues; it's narrowing the list so we can do something meaningful to all of us.

It is universal that women work harder yet earn less than men. There are fewer women than men in parliaments and elective offices worldwide. Women must earn respect; men usually are born to it. And women are not taken seriously even if they work hard. What we come to is this: women must support other women.

Don't think of this final plenary session as final; think of it as the beginning of another plenary session. Our spectrum here is so wide. Some countries are just beginning, and people are starting anew. Some countries are further ahead, and so they have more specific things to do. Don't be frustrated with what lies ahead of you, because just in these past two days we have accomplished so much just by coming together.

All of you are special and important because you represent all those women from your countries who are special and important. We want to let those women know that we are sensitive to what is happening. I have wondered whether it might be possible to appeal to a larger audience about the human rights abuses that Ms. Stanic so very eloquently spoke about yesterday.

I'm wondering, Mr. Chairman, is it possible to contact the United Nations or the European Community about the issues raised by Ms. Stanic? Maybe this is something we can talk about before the end of the session.

Let me tell you how very important it is that I am here with you because you have taught me so much. Thank you.

Prof. Weinstein: In answer to your question, Ms. Lau, it's always possible to contact these organizations. They are being contacted constantly on these issues; that is quite clear.

One point that I'm certain that you, Ms. Cohen, Ms. Garcia, Ms. Withrow and all the others from the United States would want to make is that in addition to the moral support from American women leaders at the state and local level, let me assure our colleagues in Europe that the women leaders in the U.S. have been capable of the most timely and effective turnaround of genuine practical support for this process in the past. They will doubtless continue to perform in this way.

One of these American legislators speaks next--Ms. Mary Jane Garcia.

Ms. Garcia: Mr. Chairman, my fellow sisters, the question is where do we go from here? I think there's only one way we can go, and that is forward. We can't look back; we have to keep looking forward. We need to build our credibility and solidarity through conferences like this one, by staying in touch with each other, through developing a directory with everyone's specialty.

Most of the issues discussed here are issues with which we're very, very familiar. One that we have not emphasized enough, that I have a special interest in, is domestic violence. Often related to substance abuse, every 18 seconds a woman is battered or killed violently. I appropriate money every year for battered women in the shelters throughout New Mexico.

Concerning the issues of health care, education, better nutrition and sexual harassment, one very important thing we need to do is develop leadership skills. We have a program back home through New Mexico State University to develop leadership skills in minority women and Hispanic women because we've been left behind in the political arena. We are trying to address that issue, and the program is very effective.

Another thing we could do as state legislators or in Congress would be to establish female caucuses. There is a Democrat caucus and a Republican caucus; we should have a female caucus. We tried that four years ago in Santa Fe, but it didn't work because legislators are too busy during a session. We should have done it earlier and then continued to meet in the interim between sessions. That might be something to think about.

Back home we have a Democratic Women's Club, and once a year we invite all the Republican women to a forum to discuss women's issues. These issues break down the barriers of ethnicity or partisanship. We need to do more of that, networking and support systems.

Also, we need to ask for help. I mean, nobody's going to hear us if we don't reach out. Someone mentioned that the moneys are there, the opportunities, the resources; we need to use one important resource, USAID, ask for help and reach out.

Two years ago in the New Mexico state capitol there were eight female legislators. We were sitting at a table with two male colleagues when a reporter came in and asked, "Is this the beginning of the good old girl network system?" I answered yes. We're used to seeing the reverse where the women are just kept to the side. That's changing.

We need to be in touch with groups like the Commission on the Status of Women, the National Organization of Women, and Women in Government. Through these groups and networking and attending this kind of conference, I think solidarity is built.

We need to access the news media in a better way. At least back home we just don't get the publicity we need. I sent out a press release to all the news media in Santa Fe before coming here, and I'm very anxious to see if anything appeared about my participation in this conference. If not, I'm going to raise hell about it. I think it's time we start doing that. We have to be in the news media more.

One thing I wanted to touch on was the issue of language. Spanish is my first language, but two generations after me have already lost the Spanish language, although some of them understand a little. Yet we're going to be dealing with Mexico, and now the Hispanics in the Southwest will not be able to go into business with Mexican counterparts until they learn Spanish.

So one of the things I wanted to bring up was one's own native language and how important it is to retain it. You know, we're proud Americans, but we should be able to retain our own ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Again, I want to thank everyone for giving me this opportunity. One thing I know I'm not going to do is stay silent. When I go home, I'm going to speak to the whole world, particularly to every female I

know. I will tell them what went on here and how important this conference was.

Mr. Kelly: At the outset, let me say that one of the things that may not be obvious to everyone is what drives the sisterhood and brotherhood we're talking about between East and West.

I spent my college years studying political science, and ever since I have been dealing in a real way every day with politics--local, state, national, or international.

Those of us from the West are living in the 200th year of a democracy, or in the 80th year, or--in the case of Portugal--in the first 20 years of a democracy. Nonetheless, we have had our experience in democracy building taught to us from a history book and not from the reality of an experience.

So every Western "small-d" democrat will be driven by the joy of working with a democratic founder who is actually experiencing something that I think all of us would have enjoyed if we had had the opportunity. That's a powerful motivating force that cannot be ignored.

Now to the task. There's an old saying that everyone is equal; it's just that some are more equal than others. I'd like to turn around something I heard earlier and say simply that equality is not something that's given; equality is something that's earned and taken. It's something that one must work at and must win.

It requires courage, the courage to face off with others who would not want to give up power--the courage, frankly, to face off with a culture that may have placed one in a different position. It requires confidence, the confidence to try to work with those who may stand in the way, and if not, the confidence to enter a contest and beat them.

It requires competence, competence to deal not simply with gender issues--which is sometimes one of the great failings of a woman's movement--but to deal with the broad issues that affect our lives every day, issues that governments are supposed to deal with in general.

The task also requires coalition building, the ability to learn and the ability to teach. Frankly, in this instance, the learning and the teaching are going to be done by everybody, because everybody's going to learn from this and everybody's going to teach in a certain way.

Last, the task involves the ability to express with confidence what one wants to do--good communication. When you speak with confidence, things happen. When you speak with doubt, doubt overcomes.

When we deal with the five "C"s--courage, confidence, competence, coalition building, and communication--we need to understand that it is not necessary to reinvent the wheel. Everyone in one way or another has experienced the building of these five "C"s, and the relationships that begin to build here are those that should open up the doors of communication and exchange.

I would suggest that two of the things we should focus on are, first, try to develop a system of partnering, on a scale that's meaningful, between institutions of the West--be it a women's legislative group or something broader than that--with an appropriate-sized partner in the Eastern and Central European area.

Two, some form of clearing house should be established, where communications can be received and sent, where perhaps a program can be developed in at least a conceptual way, and people can know what everyone is doing with one another.

Again, there's no need to reinvent the wheel. All we need to do is make sure that the lessons of history are shared with everyone.

Ms. Aguiar: I think this has been a very successful meeting, and I agree with those who say that a very successful meeting should not have an end. It should continue, and I hope this one is going to continue.

I would make a concrete proposal. I don't know if it's possible for some of us to meet, for instance, yearly, or to meet periodically and try to make a survey of what's happening in the East--in Central and Eastern Europe--and in the West. We should try to speak the language of truth, try to be objective, because the system is one thing and the way it functions is another.

As I said before, I am very much in favor of the quota system. It does not have to be an exact quota system, but a goal that states, at a certain point, that there would be no decrease of women's participation. What is happening in many Eastern countries, as we learned in this seminar, is the contrary. Political participation is decreasing, and this should not happen.

I think a recommendation to prevent this could be presented to the governments so that they try their best to at least maintain women's participation. The quota system or any other system that insists on promoting

women should not promote women just because they are women, but because they deserve it. We know that women deserve to be there--they are able; they are capable.

The reason why the system in Eastern Europe under the communists did not function was because it did not promote women on their merit. Women were promoted for propaganda reasons. But let's forget that old system. Let's speak the same language, and the language we all speak is "Let's help women to be in the democratic party as they deserve."

Actually, I think that all countries--including the Western countries--are, in a way, in the transition to democracy. Why? Because women aren't equal. You cannot speak of a perfect democracy while people are not really living it as equals.

When, for instance, we speak of women's factions or sections of parties, it's an option. In Portugal, the majority of political parties do have them. My own political party, which is the leading party, does not. Why? Because we think this is an issue for men and women together, inside the political party. But this is just an option. Both things can function or not function.

The truth is that in Portugal and in other countries, very often those sections are headed by the wife of the leader or someone connected with the power. They are there merely to support the leader and not to support the cause of women. We know that.

So I think in the seminars or meetings which bring us together, it would be important to try to have that very objective view on our own system, our own successes, our own failures.

I think the statistics are already important. If women make up more than 30 percent, they will necessarily play a role. But if they are under that number, they are just a number. Very often, as we heard our Spanish colleague say earlier, the quota system puts women forward, but they are at the bottom of the list and sometimes do not occupy very important positions in a parliament.

We sit in our Parliament. Women represent about ten percent of the members, but we don't have ten percent of the leaders.

One last comment is that I think it will be important to hold seminars or meetings with male political leaders and leaders of trade unions and discuss these issues with them. I think women's meetings are very important, but it is also important to include the men. We must make them discuss the issues not only as women's issues but as very political issues in our society and in our democracy.

Ms. Ferenczi: I will be brief because all the wonderful ideas have already been discussed. As a very purpose-oriented and business-oriented person, I would like to draw attention to the importance of the position of women in economic life.

When women have equal access to education and jobs and they have the chance to prove their capabilities, I am sure they will encounter fewer obstacles in a political career, as well.

I am not only Vice President of the Association of Entrepreneurial Women in Hungary, but also serve on the board of the Women Managers Organization. In this group, there are women who are really in high positions in several Hungarian corporations and Western joint ventures.

I would like to offer my help and the help of the organizations I represent. If anybody needs contacts in Hungary, because they need help from Hungarians or want to offer help to Hungarians, I am ready to help. Please consider me as your contact in my country.

I would like to suggest that we consider another conference. It can take place in Budapest, and we can invite participants not only from the Eastern European countries but from the United States and Western European countries. We can choose major issues for the next conference.

It's one more task for us. The formation of working groups, I think, is on the agenda. As far as business is concerned, I am available.

Prof. Weinstein: I have sensed from the discussions among the participants, both in and around this table and at our social occasions, that if a subsequent meeting of this kind is held, it should certainly be somewhere in Central or Eastern Europe. And I've never known a soul to turn down an invitation to Budapest.

I applaud you, Ms. Ferenczi, and others of your colleagues who have made offers of assistance because this breaks through psychological barriers. All too often in the West, we have become accustomed to the fact that our friends in the new democracies in many parts of the world would rather talk to us than to each other.

The point of this conference, as much as anything else, is to encourage in the strongest possible way that you recognize that your truest allies--simply because

they are your closest resources and more capable of helping you in an immediate sense--are your immediate neighbors in the region.

In turning to our next speaker, Ms. Leni Robert, may I offer my personal compliments on her intervention this morning in which she reminded us with great eloquence that neither Western Europeans nor Americans can look with comfort or equanimity on the state of these issues in our own countries. Much as we may be here primarily to be of help to our friends in Central and Eastern Europe, we have a great deal of work that can be done with one another, men and women.

Ms. Robert: I have learned in political life how important women's contributions are. We need everybody. We need all the extremes and the middle of the road as well, as far as women's participation is concerned. I've also learned that today we have a common denominator, and the smallest common denominator among women is still a good contribution to our work.

I give a lot of importance to books and lists that we will be obtaining now, giving us good and bad recipes that have been tried out in the past. I think that it is important for us to receive this type of information, but, of course, I think personal contacts are much more important. If we are not encouraged with personal contacts, all this material is going to end up in some desk drawer.

Mrs. Lokar, I would like to say that I would gladly welcome your sons on their holiday so that you can concentrate on the important work you're doing in your own country. I think that's a contribution as well, proving that personal contact can facilitate our work.

Another important thing is we should ensure that women reach the point of critical mass, as was said yesterday. That is very hard work, and I was made aware of it when I was an education minister. We know the road ahead is a hard one, and it will take us a long time. But I do think that the quality of politics is important, as well.

The key concept for me is politics free from violence, and I would like to be able to talk at a future seminar about the thousand faces of violence. In view of the situation, if violence has already been inflicted on children, then our future is rather grim. I'm not saying it's a male disease, but it is a disease of male history over the last thousand years.

Language is important as well. The language we use can also be a type of violence. If women don't come forward in expressing themselves, that is actually violence against women because they're not being allowed to express themselves. I think this is sometimes boring for men to listen to, but if we do not try and change matters, we have to continue insisting and boring the men occasionally. It's a job that must be done.

The road ahead is still quite a long one. Brecht wrote a poem saying that the mountains are behind us, and ahead of us is a wasteland. Perhaps we have already put the mountains behind us in the Eastern countries, but that does not mean we've come to the end of the road. There's still a lot to be done.

For me, education is extremely important. When we look at the school textbooks, we see that animal protection organizations have had much more success as far as prominence of place than have women.

All of this is important. I don't think there is any patent medicine or specific strategy; there are thousands of possible solutions. The important thing is that we put our case forward as positively as possible and plead for the strategy that we think is the most appropriate at the right time.

I would like to plead for tolerance among women, and something else. Perhaps women do become a bit boring because they always talk about women's subjects. Yet, if we don't, who is going to do it for us?

It's important for me as well that women should not deal only with so-called women's subjects, but try and do something to prevent women being pushed away into the typical women's sectors. If we don't have women in key decision-making ministries like finance or defense, we are not going to be in the places where decisions on power and money are made. We will again end up doing health work and so on. Let us, therefore, not allow ourselves to be shut off.

I personally will try and make my contribution in the Council of Europe. I will plead for the organization of a women's group so that everything is done from the viewpoint of a woman. I'll do the same in my own country, of course.

I would like you to know that my address both here and in Switzerland is not something that comes to an end now. I will be available to anybody who wishes to contact me. I must say that I have benefitted a lot from this seminar.

Ms. Lokar: After this conference, I am more certain than ever that matters of equality of the sexes is something of fundamental importance to democracy, to development, and to improving the quality of our lives.

I think we have to make the best use of the time available to us to change the world and try to make the world a democratic place. We should not, however, lose any ground without putting something in its place. We should not lose what we have already achieved.

I think we have to carry out this reform on the basis of experience gained in Western and Eastern Europe and in the United States. We need to set up some networks, and I think we could start to do that right here in this forum.

We need to set up innovative female policies. I intend to begin this tomorrow in my electoral campaign. As did the women in Poland, I will put forward the idea that we form a government made up of women, of highly-qualified, highly-capable professional women from all political tendencies. I think ordinary women will then place their trust in the hands of these women. This is a marvelous idea, and I'd like to thank Barbara Labuda for giving it to me.

I'd like to thank Leni Robert for having invited my boys to her home. I would like to thank The Center for Democracy and everyone for giving me the opportunity to listen to you, to share your hopes and experiences because they are mine, as well.

Mr. Stegen: Mr. Chairman, I have just a few words to express appreciation on behalf of the Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly for this colloquy which you have organized here in the *Palais de l'Europe*.

As usual, a Center for Democracy conference is not only the occasion for an East-West encounter but for an East-East encounter. I think it's most valuable, this possibility for exchange of views, because it is among members of the various delegations from Eastern Europe who so far have had only the rare occasion to meet.

This conference fits very well in the work of the Parliamentary Assembly, its various committees, and in particular the work of the Social Affairs, Family and Public Health Committee, where this work is overseen by the general rapporteur, Ms. Halonen, whom you all met yesterday.

Mr. Martinez made a particular motion in the Assembly for a recommendation on equality which was tabled a few years ago. It showed his real interest in these matters, and in his introductory remarks here, I think he made that quite clear again. The two meetings we had with the Committee provided very good input for its work.

This meeting is also interesting for all the members in the Parliamentary Assembly who either represent the member states or have special guest status. Every single country on the list of participants has its place in the Parliamentary Assembly, and this means that the Assembly can automatically be a multiplicator for all the ideas being put forward.

With regard to follow-up activities, we're planning training programs now for parliamentarians and staff for the emerging democracies of Central and Eastern Europe. The issues treated in this conference will no doubt be included in the topics, and I think it will be possible to offer unbiased and non-paternalistic advice.

Prof. Weinstein: I think it's important to recognize how much the Parliamentary Assembly and the Council of Europe in general have already done and continue to do in the areas we've been discussing.

In that connection, it's a particular privilege for me to welcome a good friend, a friend of The Center for Democracy, and a friend of democracy, the Clerk of the Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Heiner Klebes.

Mr. Klebes: As you said, as an old friend of the Center, let me say how glad I am that you have come here. I'm impressed looking around, seeing this wide representation of women from countries of Europe and overseas, and I'm sure that this exercise was a valuable one. I believe the few interventions that I've heard have proved this, and I'm very sorry that I've been unable to be here for all the proceedings.

As you know, the Parliamentary Assembly is meeting at this time. Therefore, it was only after lunch today that I was able with great pleasure to join you. I'm very much looking forward to reading the record of the meeting, which I'm sure will inspire our future work.

Prof. Weinstein: It is now my distinct honor, on behalf of the sponsors of the conference, The Center for Democracy, our Chairman Mr. Kelly, the U.S. Agency for International Development, Ms. Mary Fran Freedman, the Director of its Office of Women in Development, to welcome you, Madam Secretary

General, and to again welcome the President of the Parliamentary Assembly as we come to the close of this conference.

Madam Secretary General, I want to say what I think is already known to the people in this room--from both sides of the Atlantic--that your intense, personal commitment to the success of the processes of democratization in the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe as in our own, older but not necessarily wiser at all times, has been demonstrated tangibly through your setting of the agenda of the Council of Europe and through your own difficult personal travels around the world in pursuit of its success.

We thank you for that. The Center for Democracy shares this commitment, and we hope in the future we can find occasions for demonstrating it in common programs. It is a great honor for all of us that you join us to speak at this time.

Sec. Gen. Lalumiere: Ladies and gentlemen, I have been asked to make the closing comments at this conference. In fact, it is not really the end of your meeting. I had to come rather earlier because I have various other commitments.

I would like to thank The Center for Democracy and the United States Agency for International Development for having come up with the idea of convening this conference. I am also very pleased indeed that you chose the *Palais de l'Europe* for your conference. I think this was a good choice.

I think you have also made a good choice of title for your conference, a good choice of subject matter, first of all because the transition to democracy in Eastern and Central Europe is of major importance. It is a major challenge in today's world, and we are not sure that we will be able to meet this challenge. We are not sure that this transition will prove to be a success.

All the countries of Eastern and Central Europe have very clearly stated that they wish to undertake this democratic process, that they wish to become democracies, and this is a very good point of departure. There remains a lot of work to be done in order to make this a reality, but the first step has been taken.

Your subject matter has been well chosen because it places emphasis on the role of the woman in this process of transition. I am very much interested in this, and I'm sure that many men are also interested in the roles that women have to play in this period of transition towards a democracy.

I feel that women have a very special role to play in this construction or reconstruction of countries situated in the East of our continent. Democracy, on the one hand, and the role of women in this democratic process, on the other, are two issues which the Council of Europe has had on its agenda since it was set up in 1949.

We find that the subject matter you have chosen for your conference, then, is something with which we are very much concerned. Nonetheless, any proposals I may have to make to you, any comments I may make, you may think are not far-reaching enough. You might think this because my grasp of the situation and the existing potential for action is fragmentary or incomplete in nature.

Of course, I am perfectly aware of the situation of women and the role of women in the countries of Western Europe, and I'm very much aware of how our democracies work in Western Europe. However, I don't have the same knowledge in relation to North America, especially the United States of America. I have perhaps a bit more knowledge of these matters in relation to Canada, especially Quebec.

I am very much aware of the power and dynamism of women. They have really come into their own after decades of relative silence. Canadian women are now being heard, especially the women of Quebec, which is wonderful.

In regard to the situation of women in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe, it is true that I travel a lot and have visited many countries of Eastern Europe. However, I realize that I am not completely familiar with the reality of the situation in those countries despite my numerous visits. Therefore, I say that you may find my proposals, my comments, not far-reaching enough.

I feel that the problems are different in the West and in the East. Western countries started off by setting up democratic governments with liberal economic policies; they were rather prosperous nations then. This process got underway at the end of the 19th century, and in one way or the other has continued until the present time.

In this already democratic and prosperous framework, we situate the problem of equality between men and women, and women's claims for equality should be viewed with this background in mind.

Our European ancestors had a rather limited concept of democracy. Only men could become

involved in this process. Women were left to one side, were forgotten, a mere matter of detail. Women were not important, and this was normal during the 19th century and into the 20th. Women should have begun to claim their rights, should have asked for equality in political terms and in all sectors.

Equality is a democratic concept, after all, but we're talking about countries which were prosperous and democratic. However, this was not the case in Eastern Europe. The principle of equality is something that was accepted under communist regimes. At the present time, priority is allotted to the democratic process, to a struggle towards democracy. All their energies are focused on that. The problem of equality is not something that has been left to one side totally, but it is only one element of this battle, the struggle towards prosperous economies and democracy in that part of the world.

So in my opinion, there is a rather important difference between the way in which these problems are tackled in the West and the way these problems are tackled in the East.

Let's have a look at where these differences lie. First, let's look at the situation in the West. In the past, women in their private lives brought great influence to bear, especially in the 17th century. Women had great influence in the home more than anything, not really in professional circles and certainly not in public life.

Little by little in the 19th and 20th centuries, women brought their influence to bear. Their personalities developed and the feminist movement developed--first in North America and then in Europe. The result of all of this in the West can be summed up as follows.

In legal terms, the situation is adequate. The principle of equality is enshrined in the legal texts, and I'm talking here about both public and private life. However, in practical terms the results are not often that satisfactory.

Women are prohibited in many professions, even though legally and in theory there is no reason why women should not have access to certain professions. I see this paradoxical situation arising in the Council of Europe.

Everything is fine in theory, legally speaking, but it seems that women could never gain or have access to any job worth its weight in this organization. I benefitted from men's bad conscience, however. They had a bad conscience about this and said well, something's got to be done to remedy the state of affairs. I was the beneficiary of this bad conscience.

Of course, there are some women who have benefitted from a change in men's way of thinking, but not enough is being done. There are not enough women in positions of power. Women in positions of power in this house and other organizations is a rarity. So there remains a lot to be done in professional life.

As regards politics, matters are not that much better in the countries of the Council of Europe, and I'm sure you were told this. If you look at average figures, voting rights for women have been granted in all the countries that are part of the Council of Europe since 1968. But one had to wait until 1984 for all women of the member states of the Council of Europe to have the right to vote, including the Canton of Appenzell in Switzerland.

Concerning the presence of women in the parliaments of member states of the Council of Europe--and these are statistics from 1990, very recent ones--they account for only thirteen percent of members. I mean, it's a shameful statistic, is it not?

Women usually occupy positions in ministries of social affairs, and the figures speak for themselves. The average for all governments of member states of the Council of Europe is 5.7 percent women. If you look at statistics of women in political parties and trade unions, you find more or less the same figure.

Despite what progress is achieved in theory and in legal texts, in practice in the West there remains a lot to be done. The situation is far from satisfactory. Now what are the reasons for this? I'm sure you've already discussed them.

The problems are of a practical nature. I feel personally that as long as women continue to do the housework and as long as this housework is not divided evenly between men and women, we will not overcome a certain handicap that we have in this respect.

Then there's the problem of mentality. I am talking about both the female and the male mentality here. One's way of thinking has to develop, has to change, and this is a very progressive and very gradual process. It takes much longer than changing legislation.

However, there are major discrepancies between geographical regions. In the Scandinavian countries, there's much more equality between men and women than in the countries of Central Europe or even in the countries of Southern Europe, isn't that right? I mean,

the situation of France is not very good in this respect, is it?

I look with admiration upon the situation in Norway. In Norway, half of the positions in government are in women's hands, including that of the prime minister. Consequently, there are major discrepancies from country to country.

In the Council of Europe, we have dealt with this problem. We have discussed it, and I'm sure you have heard talk of the concept which really sums up our position. I am referring to the concept of equal democracy, parity when it comes to democracy. We feel that a democracy cannot work adequately, it cannot be wholly satisfactory, if the two sexes do not participate in equal measure.

In our opinion, both the female and the male have contributions to make to democracy, and a democracy cannot be wholly satisfactory if it is not based on contributions from both the male and the female sectors of society.

This concept of democracy based on equality, then, has led us to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach. What we want to do is practice equality in all sectors of society. This concept of a democracy based on equality is full of potential, and it is one of the fundamental principles upon which the Council of Europe bases its activities.

In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the people are struggling toward a full democracy and a prosperous economy, and these two things are intimately linked. Then there is this problem of equality between men and women as one element of the struggle towards these two things.

The basic premise for this equality is satisfactory, i.e., achieving equality between men and women, and this is something which is present in all communist texts. It's a dogma of communism, and women benefitted from certain numerical quotas. A numerical quota for women was established, and it was a very important element in the policies of communist regimes.

However, this policy actually hid a deep inequality and imbalance in the position of men and women. In Eastern Europe there was no real culture based on equality of the sexes, nor was there a feminist movement. Society was based on the presumption of equality between the sexes; therefore, this was not open to discussion. There was no need for a movement representing the rights of women.

I'm sure that many of you have more information than I on the situation, but my personal impression is that the situation of women has worsened since the democratic process was launched in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. I gained this impression after a colloquium we organized in April of this year in Poznan, Poland.

During the symposium, entitled "Equality Between Men and Women in a Changing Europe," we listened to statements made by representatives of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. They bore witness to the fact that there is a great deal of inequality between men and women. The economic problems in these countries have a great impact, especially on women. They are much more affected than men by unemployment. They face more problems than men in gaining access to vocational training.

As regards social problems, it is women who have to shoulder the consequences of the dismantling of social protection measures--for instance, social benefits for the elderly. Who is going to deal with the elderly now? Who is going to take care of them? Women will. There is a lack of child care. There are problems with schooling for very young children, and who bears the brunt of this? Women.

To these social and economic difficulties, one must add what I call moral difficulties. On the ashes of communism rose a great number of new philosophies, concepts, religious or not, which all have one common denominator in relation to women and the role of women. These are retrograde ideas. They uphold the notion that a woman's place is in the home. This helps reduce unemployment figures and does not encourage women to seek employment in professional or political circles.

These are backward ideas, retrograde ideas, but in the light of communism, perhaps not really. Yet, they do not make women's lives any easier. To all these difficulties, one must add the difficulties that exist at the political level in these countries. Quotas that existed under the communist system have disappeared in most cases; therefore, the number of women now represented in political fora has decreased.

The nomination of the Polish prime minister, Mrs. Suchocka, is an exception to this rule. It is an exception, however, that proves the rule, I would say, that the number of women in important positions in political and professional circles is on the decrease. I hope there will be further exceptions to this rule, and that there will be other Mrs. Suchocka's in the future.

Nonetheless, the role of women in political and professional life in Eastern Europe at the moment has worsened, and this gives rise to many problems--

problems of a moral, social, political, and economic nature. In political circles, today women in Eastern and Central Europe have many burdens to bear, and it is with this background that we must consider their role in the democratic process underway in these countries.

Let me begin by telling you what my personal convictions are. Eastern and Central Europe is a big building site at the moment in which construction or reconstruction is taking place. A process of economic reform is underway in this part of Europe, and in this process of reform women should and will contribute. I am not trying to be a feminist here. This is my conviction on the basis of what I have seen personally in countries of Eastern and Central Europe.

At the present time there is much talk of reform. Reform is a very difficult process to carry out because it first entails a worsening of the situation. One needs a good deal of will power to continue with the process of reform in the light of a worsening situation.

As one has seen in the past and in other regions of the world, women very often have a very special intuition, and because of this intuition they understand how important modernization is. Very often they are much more sensitive to this sort of thing than men. They are much more sensitive to what is new than men. Of course, there are always exceptions to the rule, and there are men who have been major reformers in the past.

Nonetheless, very, very often in countries which have had a backlog for many years, it is women who have felt that change was necessary. They have realized how best to achieve that change, how best to achieve progress. Women are more practical than men more often than not.

I am not among those who feel that there are basic differences between men and women. When one has a job to do, whether you are a man or a woman, all you have to do is get down to it. But sometimes differences do appear between men and women, and one has to know how to make use of these differences. Yes, women are more practical.

In Eastern countries at the present time, men often get bogged down in debate, in discussion, and they don't act often enough. If women had more of a say, they might act rather than speak--action rather than words, and women are very often more brave. One needs a lot of courage nowadays to carry out this process of reform in Central and Eastern Europe.

In addition, women are very often less directly involved. They don't have self-interest in mind as much as men do. They try and defend the interests of their children and their families rather than their own self interests. They don't put themselves first, and they are more pugnacious.

It is also true that we should not generalize. I don't think that women are angels, and men are devils; I would never say that. But I do think that in the framework of the struggles at the present time in Eastern and Central Europe, women have an important role to play.

I think one should make use of the inherent advantages of being a woman in these countries. Women are fighters, and one should make use of this. They will shoulder the future of their countries, and they will try to ensure that these democratic, economic reforms succeed in these countries, despite the fact that the odds are very often stacked against them.

Then we also have the problem of equality, an important problem. If we want women to play a part in this process, then societies in Eastern and Central Europe will have to be based on an equality of the sexes so that women's potential can come to the fore. Otherwise, it will not be used. Women's potential will be lost, and this will not further the aims of democratic reform in these countries.

Therefore, we have to improve the situation with regard to equality between men and women in these countries at all levels. The symposium at Poznan tabled a series of proposals which I think were very good. I won't go through all the proposals made on that occasion; you can, I'm sure, obtain copies of the Poznan documents.

After the symposium, it was proposed that in order to improve the current situation with regard to the equality of sexes in these countries, one must first carry out a process of reform with regard to texts existing in organizations such as the Council of Europe. These texts should be rendered more explicit than they are at the present time.

For instance, in the European Convention on Human Rights we could include a provision on the equality of the sexes. We did not do that because we thought it was self-evident. Perhaps we should not leave this as implicit, but make it explicit in the Convention. We could perhaps add to the Social Charter along the same lines. We could amend legislation on the family, on family planning, et cetera.

And apart from amending existing texts, we could take some action. For instance, we could promote action in all the member states of the Council of Europe, and in those countries which are not members.

We could set up ministries or departments that would promote equality of the sexes, because equality of the sexes is not something that becomes a reality without difficulty.

We could also take action in political circles. I mentioned the matter of quotas. I think it is a horrific policy, but perhaps in this period of transition it is indispensable in order to ensure that a significant number of women occupy important positions in political life and take part in the decision-making process.

In Poznan we decided that in 1995 we would launch a campaign on equality of the sexes, so a whole series of proposals were made on that occasion. I think they are very good proposals which should be put into practice as soon as possible.

So Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, these are the comments I wish to make on this occasion. I always find it frustrating to make comments at the close of a conference in which I have not really participated. One runs the risk of repeating something which has already been said or contradicting what has been said during a conference. One's comments are sometimes incongruous in nature, and this is not always a good thing.

I decided to give you my personal impressions. I decided to tell you what I think and how I feel about this. I am ignorant of many facets of society in Eastern and Central Europe, yet I have visited these countries and know something of the situation at the moment.

I am very much aware of the obstacles that remain on the road to democratic reform in these countries, but I am convinced of the fact that economic and democratic reform in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe will only be a success if the role that women have to play in the process is recognized. We will always have a role to play at home; we are irreplaceable at home. But we also have an important role to play outside the home. That is my personal opinion.

There is a lot that remains to be done. Thank you, and see you soon.

Prof. Weinstein: Ladies and gentlemen, we have reached the point in our conference when decisions must be taken, when time is running out and is of the essence, and when--at the risk of behaving in a somewhat undemocratic fashion--I'm going to suggest a mode of procedure, ask for consensus, and move forward deliberately with it.

Shortly I will suggest to you some steps which could be taken by this assemblage in order to maintain continuity and move forward in the process we have begun, which virtually all of you in your interventions have urged.

I will then ask for brief commentaries, adjustments, amendments or additions to the suggestions for continuity which are presented. I assume there will be such amendments, as it is in the nature of such gatherings. Then we'll open the floor to a brief discussion of the text and understandings, after which we will see if we have a consensus.

Before doing so, however, I will call on two panelists who were not afforded an occasion to make comments earlier and may now wish to do so briefly. First, Mary Fran Freedman.

Ms. Freedman: First, I want to thank The Center for Democracy for a stellar job in bringing everyone together. I'd like to say that all the issues discussed here are very relevant, and I don't consider them as strictly women's issues. It is a matter of emphasis and how these issues affect our daily lives.

Women's rights are human rights, and we need to keep that in mind. Basically, we have concentrated on one aspect of what I call the PEST factors in life--political, economic, sociological, and technological.

Follow-through of conferences is critical, putting ideas into action, in short, increased improvement instead of postponed perfection. How do we take this conference as a baseline? Where do we want to be a few years from now? How do we get there?

We have to examine grass-roots activities, access to the media, which is critical for women, women in public life and leadership skills, and work to build the organizations that support democracy and support women.

In the economic realm we have considered access to credit and how women play out in privatization, especially in Eastern and Central Europe. My office is working on that currently, looking at privatizing child care and how to get more women owners and managers involved in the privatization process. USAID has been active in helping to develop small businesses and mentor programs, and working with organizations such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. I met with representatives of the Bank in July, and we're looking at how to increase loans to women.

Sarah Tinsley of the International Center for Research on Women is here with us. That

115

organization is doing critical research, especially in the social areas. They are doing amazing work on the AIDS epidemic and women's health issues. We have to be concerned about this, because if we aren't, no one else will be.

With regard to technological factors, when women go home, especially in Eastern and Central Europe, they face a tough job. They don't have the modern conveniences and technological equipment we have in our homes, and we have to look at that as an element in helping to improve women's lives. Life on the farm can also be improved with equipment and machinery and other things we don't always think about. And through technology, how can we correct mistakes and protect the natural environment?

We have to get the word out to the media, to bilateral and multi-lateral organizations, the United Nations, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, all the other donors in Europe, on how they can assist in these activities because everyone does have a role to play.

The last thing I'd like to say is thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Martinez of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe for hosting this event. Thanks to all the incredible women here in Strasbourg; your talents are staggering. The contributions of all our participants have given us very real ideas of where we need to go and how to get there.

Ms. Davis: I'd like to say that it's very exciting to be a part of this meeting, and I'm proud that The Center for Democracy played a role in bringing us all together.

I am honored to have this opportunity to meet women from Central and Eastern Europe. I have never been with women of such courage. I applaud you and respect you a great deal, and hope that there will be many more opportunities for us to continue meeting. I feel like I will come away from this meeeting with much more than I have been able to give.

An *ad hoc* working group met at lunch today, and we have come up with a proposal for a television show that could be shown in each of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. If organized in the right way, it could probably be shown in every country of the world.

Representatives of six countries, including the United States, met in this working group. We actually have what we think is the beginning of a very exciting proposal that we hope to get funded, quite possibly with corporate support. We may not even have to approach the foundations.

We would produce 30-minute programs to be aired once a month for a year at least. Half of each show would be a videotape featuring successful women role models from a variety of countries--Western and Central and Eastern European countries--and half would consist of a discussion among women from a particular country, talking about what they had viewed on the videotape and how those kinds of role models might be applicable in their own country.

I have asked each of the women in the working group to provide five different things, and it would be exciting and very important if each country's representatives who may be interested in this project could also provide us with a number of things. First, we need at least three stories of successful women who could be part of an original pilot. The second item is to make suggestions of candidates for a host of the talk show portion of the program.

We also need to determine the production costs in each country for a 30-minute show of this type, just to get a sense of budget requirements. Depending on the time of day and the day of the week when a television show is aired, there are different costs.

We would need information on why this show is important to offer in each country and why it would be successful. The last thing is what each woman could do and what others could do in their country to promote this show, because anyone who finds it will want to know how it's going to be promoted in that country.

Within ten days we would like this information, and we will put together a proposal through The Center for Democracy to see how successful we can be in finding the funding. It may not work, but it may work. I think it's really worth trying.

We are only going to be as successful as the information you give us, because there will be many questions about how this can proceed. I know it will take quite a while to put together, but I think it is very exciting. It is a significant step forward in the direction that we all have been saying we want to go.

Prof. Weinstein: That is an extremely exciting idea, Susan. You obviously had a very productive lunch. Those of you unfamiliar with The Center for Democracy must now understand what men on the Board of Directors such as Chairman Kelly and I often experience. We deal with *coup d'etats* and *faits*

accomplis over lunch with our colleague, Susan Davis. Now we are to produce million dollar television shows.

I want to acknowledge the presence of the extremely important and effective Secretary to the European Commission of Human Rights, Dr. Christian Kruger. Thank you for being with us.

I'm sure we all wish to thank the Council of Europe, and most particularly members of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Secretariat General who have participated throughout these proceedings.

Others who richly deserve our gratitude are Mr. Heiner Klebes, Mr. Bruno Haller, Mr. Joern Stegen, Ms. Farida Jamal, and others who have played a particular role in planning for this conference, in addition to our excellent liaison in Strasbourg, Ms. Rashida Stegen.

Now to business. We men all take separate roads toward an understanding insofar as we can achieve that understanding--an awareness, at least--of the issues and concerns for which we have gathered here. In some instances, we have learned from the women in our families--mothers, sisters, aunts, daughters--strong, determined, dedicated women seeking the equality that men often find matter-of-factly in a democratic society. For others, a heightened awareness comes from teachers and the educational process.

For still others, a greater understanding has grown out of the process of struggle against cruel dictatorships in which there are no differences between men and women in the agony they have confronted and will continue to confront as they fight bravely, as they go to jail, as they are tortured, as they are prevented from coming to meetings such as this. No one asks whether you're a man or a woman in the process of achieving democracy; they just ask if you will help. It is only once democracy has begun to be achieved that some of the old questions and the old ways are unfortunately taken up again.

You may ask, why should a man be chairing this final session? I don't know. I won't apologize, but I don't know except that I am here. In my own case, I believe I have been well taught by a strong mother, other strong women in the family, and fine, intelligent teachers.

I have also been especially influenced by sixteen years of having taught splendid young women at the United States' largest women's college, Smith College. Sometimes I feel that I'm much more a part of the "old girl network" than the "old boy network." Out of that network and the experience of those years (1966-1981) came a certain amount of awareness.

What follows is a suggested text that attempts to encapsulate the specific recommendations that we have all made. I might mention that I offer this text solely as the president of a non-partisan organization dedicated to the principles and processes of democracy --not to political parties or persons. We do not take instruction from government, our own or any other. We march to our own music, and we have always respected the integrity of true friends of democracy around the world.

"We the participants in the conference, International Conference on the Role of Women in the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe at Strasbourg on October 3-4, 1992, cognizant of this successful first encounter of these women leaders and others from the United States, Western Europe, and Central and Eastern Europe, recognizing the need for continuous communication among ourselves and other women leaders in our respective countries, responding to the urgent needs especially of those among us from the newly democratizing countries of Central and Eastern Europe, request the organizers to continue their efforts in support of the conference's goals of devising practical ways to encourage the movement toward the full equality of women and men in all our societies through a variety of means, including:

1) Establishing a clearing house for our subsequent activity, keeping interested individuals and organizations in touch with one another;

2) Publishing a transcript of this meeting and distributing it widely in all our countries;

3) Preparing subsequent training workshops and programs related to strengthening the political, economic and social influence of women in their own countries;

4) Assisting in the development of partnerships between women's groups and leaders in the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe and Western democracies;

5) Preparing a conference on the same topic for 1993; and finally

6) Undertaking such other activities as might be of special use in this regard in closest consultation with the participants of this meeting.

Now the floor is open. Yes?

[Unidentified Speaker]: No objection. Your points are acceptable, but I do have a very modest and specific proposal to make about language. Could a small *ad hoc* group be formed so that the

Americans and Western and Eastern Europeans get together on what kind of international approach we're going to use, what kind of language we want to use?

I've been encouraged by one of the Council of Europe's recommendations on the elimination of sexism in language. That's not quite what I mean, but I do propose that we do something against traditional speech as it stands now. Through language, I think analyses are made, and things can be rethought in a more positive manner. Thank you.

Prof. Weinstein: Thank you for that suggestion. May I suggest a more generic wording as follows, to add as a purpose: "To organize such working groups from among our members to address ongoing issues related to the themes of this conference." Does that cover it?

Then, hearing no request to speak from the floor, hearing no objection to the statement, I will consider the text adopted provisionally--subject to whatever comments, criticisms, or requests for changes any of you wish to make once you see the written text.

I will now turn the floor over to the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Mr. Martinez: Well, thank you very much. It was absolutely unforseen that I would be here at the close of your conference, but I can never resist such a temptation.

I have spent the entire morning in a big program with the Jewish radio of France, discussing problems of democracy and referring to Jewish aspects of the question. Then we had lunch with nearly 30 bishops and cardinals who are the leaders of the different European Episcopal Conferences of the Catholic Church. They are very much involved in the construction of Europe, and we were happy to have the opportunity to exchange non-religious views with these outstanding leaders.

When I was coming here I thought, well, this morning has been the Old Testament and lunch has been the New Testament; what will it be for the afternoon? I think the reflections we have heard in this conference are mainly instructions and inspiration for action.

What becomes quite obvious--not only from what you may have discussed, but even from the fact that this colloquium has been organized--is that equality of men and women is a requirement which is not fulfilled in Central and Eastern Europe. It is not more fulfilled, not less fulfilled, than in the rest of the continent, and it is not more fulfilled across the Atlantic than it is here.

We call ourselves democrats, and we define our goals as democratic goals. I think we all should be pretty ashamed of the limited success we have had with respect to building democratic societies in such a way that a very high percentage of our citizens, women, are not participating at a level equal to that of men.

The conclusion to that should be that equality is a definite priority for democrats, and this applies to all our societies. This is one of the fields in which we in the West have not a single line to teach anybody else. The only thing we may teach is our failure, confessing our failure and trying to solve the problem together. That is my first conclusion.

We are talking about democracy, and we are proud of our democracy. We have been boasting sometimes when there is not so much to boast about. I think there is a very, very long way in front of us, and this field of equality is one of the big, big changes.

Sometimes I'm very worried that when we speak about equality of men and women, we are asking or it is intended is that women become men, which would be a pity and a shame. Probably, in order to keep our differences, what we should do is each walk half the way and both become human beings, which is what we are not very often: stop being men and women in the way we have been for so long in our societies, and convert in the middle of the way where we should all be equal in terms of human beings, remaining indeed men and women.

As President of the Assembly, I come here to commit myself to provide support to your initiatives. I have seen in this meeting a number of my colleagues from the Assembly, and I think it's very good. You see, a President of the Assembly very often has to be worried and sorry and sad because of misbehavior of some of the members. Yet, he may also be proud and satisfied to see that while other members of the Assembly are invited out to drink wine, enjoy themselves, and listen to music, some of the members would rather come here and think and cooperate and invest their efforts to benefit wide-ranging goals.

So I want to thank those colleagues of mine who are here today, giving a good name to the Assembly. I think the fact that you have been here is very important for the Assembly.

What should also be important is that you press the Assembly for more concrete actions, and you are going to have the support of the President in this

effort. Besides ideas which I have found here, I want to propose at least one concrete thing which would be, in my view, a good idea. It won't be an easy battle, but I'm ready to fight it.

I think it would indeed be a good idea if, in our Assembly, we would create wherever it may be relevant a subcommittee for equality of men and women. This is missing. It exists in many of our parliaments, and I think it would be a good initiative, a concrete initiative where there is plenty of work to be done.

There is one more idea I want to mention, which may surprise some of my colleagues and Mr. Klebes and Mr. Haller. We have a body called the International Institute for Democracy here at the Council, and often we do not know what to do.

The Institute was created in order to promote democracy in Eastern and Central Europe–democracy in a rather limited spirit, that of having free and fair elections. Now free and fair elections are developing almost everywhere. Perhaps the Institute could think about the requirement of equality in democracy. Perhaps there is a certain field of research and work to which the Institute might devote some energy. Instead of going to the Third World and to the overseas countries to preach, perhaps we should look into our own shortcomings and miseries, and perhaps the lack of equality is a misery in our democratic aspirations.

My last word is difficult because I don't know how to say it properly in English or in French. In Spanish we have the word *conjura*. It's an old word and not very pleasant. At the end of the last century, people who believed in something, and usually people who wanted to change things, met in an underground room to swear together that they would do something.

So I would hope that the people in this meeting are not only people who believe and who practice, but people who believe and practice, but, moreover, people who take the modern version of a blood oath of commitment.

It would be very good if we all leave this room convinced that we have taken a kind of oath here, and that we are going to work very hard for what is written here, for what has been said here. Otherwise, one gets the feeling that the investment of effort in meetings like this get very little return on the investment.

We want to be productive. So if we want these meetings to be productive, let us not view them as isolated events. Let us share a standing and long-term commitment which will probably bear better fruit.

I thank you very much, Allen, and the bodies that have helped to organize this meeting here at our home, which is necessarily your home insofar as you bring your efforts together with the ones in which we are investing.

Prof. Weinstein: Thank you, Mr. President. I want to conclude the expressions of thanks, without which it would be unthinkable to end this gathering.

Again, never too often, our thanks go to the President, to the Secretary General, to the members of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Secretariat, the staff of the Council, and to the skilled interpreters.

I also want to express my personal gratitude to all of you who have been a part of this gathering through two very long days. We've really done a week's work in this short time. I'm grateful for your patience as we have listened hard to one another.

It has been the privilege of the Directors and staff of the Center to bear witness to this process, as we have watched people in new democracies all over the world listen to, gain respect for, and use one other as the resources we all are.

I would like to thank Mary Fran Freeman who has been the sparkplug for this entire effort at the Agency for International Development, together with Gerry Hyman of the Bureau for Europe, Travis Horel, Jerry Brown, and other staff members of their offices.

To my own staff from the Center's Washington office, special congratulations for a job well done: Paul Nathanson, Vice President for European Programs; Donna Gold, my wonderful assistant; and Jennifer Arangio. And as always when the Center joins forces with the Council, we are deeply grateful that Rashida Stegen remains our permanent and excellent representative here in Strasbourg.

Thank you very much once again. It is wonderful to be here in Strasbourg, and we shall return.

Statement submitted by Ms. Ella A. Pamfilova, Minister of Social Protection of the Russian Federation

Honorable Chairman
Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen:

First of all, allow me to thank the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Ms. Catherine Lalumiere personally, and The Center for Democracy and Allen Weinstein for the opportunity to discuss the problems of women in Central and Eastern Europe and to develop concrete proposals, using our combined strengths, for their resolution.

The process of democratization in Russia began during an economic, political, and national crisis and during the formulation of a new socioeconomic infrastructure.

The Ministry of Social Protection, which I have directed for the last ten months, is struggling– in this period which is very difficult for the general public–with problems afflicting the most vulnerable sectors of the population. For me, as a Minister, it is difficult to separate women's problems from those problems currently troubling the disabled, elderly, people without families, the homeless, refugees, and the poor. But, being the only woman in the Russian Federation Government, I am unable to ignore the role that women could play in the economic, political, and social stabilization of society, and I cannot help but see the obstacles that hinder them from fulfilling that role.

This transitional period contains many deep contradictions, particularly regarding women. On the one hand, the quick transformation of the economy to a market system under a Government which still cannot be called law-based inevitably will increase the vulnerability of women. The growth in the number of women among the unemployed and poor, and the displacement of women from the labor pool and process of privatization are unfortunately becoming a reality. On the other hand, the process of democratization is directed at guaranteeing those individual rights and freedoms which are essential for realizing one's personal potential. Private entrepreneurship opens possibilities for women which were formerly closed.

Resolving these contradictions is impossible without the active participation of women themselves. But, in addition to the objective obstacles to women's adaptation to new conditions and integration into new economic and social structures, there are obstacles within the public consciousness and stereotypes within the thoughts of women themselves. Our women have become used to paternalistic relations with society. In most cases, a woman expects to receive from society a modest, but guaranteed, social and professional position. In turn, it is very difficult for public opinion to accept the ability of women to lead, to be independent, objective and politically active. It is essential to break this vicious circle of contradictions. On the one hand, it is necessary to change the thought processes of women themselves and to have women take more responsibility both for themselves and for the country. On the other hand, it is necessary to correct the public opinion of women and to assist in establishing a high social and professional position for women. This is only possible with the guidance of positive international experience, strengthened by the achievements and cultural traditions already existing in Russia. During our country's transition to a market economy and to a democratic society, the experience of solving analogous problems in other countries is particularly valuable.

Leaving that topic for now, I would like to bring up several issues which are critical for Russia. Our country needs new conceptual approaches for resolving women's issues. The questions of "women and society" should not be a side issue for research interests. The first steps in this direction are being undertaken. First, in Russia a complex interdisciplinary study is being conducted on "Women of the Russian Federation: Guaranteeing Equal

Rights and Opportunities in Society." High level government officials will receive a national paper entitled "On the Position of Women in Russia."

A thorough, scholarly analysis of the position of women is essential for creating a legal foundation and defending the interests of women. It is necessary to examine legislation related to these issues, for example "The Convention on Removing all Forms of Discrimination against Women" and other legal norms. For this, it would be useful to form an international group of experts.

During the past three years, the number of women in the middle and higher echelons of management has declined. In previous years, the representation of women in echelons of power was in essence a formality which was strictly regulated. This is one of the reasons that public opinion does not hold the authority of women leaders in higher esteem. For this reason, perhaps today is not the best moment for the promotion of a representative number of women to positions of authority, although this possibility is currently being considered by the Government. In this situation, it would be very helpful for us to receive information about the possibilities for bringing women into government agencies and the issue of quotas for female members of parliament.

To be objective, another reason is the insufficient professional training of women. It is imperative to establish a base for the specialized preparation of women for movement into the economic, social, and political spheres. Work on this project is going forward. Under the Russian Government, an International Institute of Management for Women was recently established in St. Petersburg. It uses new methods to prepare women to be managers and entrepreneurs.

Centers for the education and professional training of women have begun to function in various other regions of Russia. Sad figures called for their creation: more than 80% of all registered unemployed workers are women, the majority of them with higher and mid-level specialized education.

In our country, the average level of education among females is historically higher than the average level among males. Thus, Russia possesses a huge female intellectual potential. A large number of women, highly qualified workers, are unemployed as a result of conversion of the military-industrial complex. The Government's task is to provide these women with opportunities to realize their potential, display their talents, and use their creativity. To this end, work is being conducted at the federal and local level to develop special long-term programs regulating women's occupations and encouraging the economic participation of women in the developing market. In this regard, during this meeting I would like to find opportunities for uniting efforts in the sphere of organizing professional preparation and re-training for women.

Honored Ladies and Gentlemen:

Russia for many years lived under conditions of extensive economic development which demanded the widespread participation of women in the economy. Women were required to work and to care for their children. Of course, an obligation to work hindered women from devoting themselves to motherhood. But now a newly adopted law on occupations has proclaimed a transition from mandatory employment to volunteer and freely-chosen occupations. Unfortunately, the economic situation of our society today is such that in one third of all families the women is the sole provider, and in half of all families the woman and man are on equal footing as providers.

Caring for women/mothers and families is one of the fundamental tasks of the ministry which I direct. In connection with inflation and the rise in prices, all forms of support, compensation, and payments for children are increasing. However, we are not only concerned with women and children who are in a crisis situation. While protecting the very poor, society should grant social guarantees to healthy, able-bodied women.

In this regard, the Russian Government intends to develop measures toward equalizing pay for men and women, with the goal of giving women the possibility to accumulate enough capital to fully participate in the process of privatization and entrepreneurship.

From this viewpoint, we are very interested in the experience of other countries in the development of small and medium sized businesses run by women.

Unarguably, the experience of other countries with developed market economies is relevant to addressing this question. We are open to business contacts and the formation of joint programs. I hope that this meeting serves as a start for a new era of cooperation in the resolution of women's issues.

Thank you for your attention.

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3/30/93

Center for Democracy

The Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe

Strasbourg, France, October 3-4, 1992

Enikő Bollobás /Hungary/

Around the fall of communism Hungarian women started to do some serious thinking about their role in society. Those of us wishing to live an "inspected" life had to comprehend the double legacy of a pre-World War II patriarchal society and the post-World War II communist ideology.

The pre-war legacy is well-known to feminists of the US and Western Europe, since similar trends, although existing to different degrees, were identified in those societies too: limited choices, traditional feminine ideals, and in general, the secondary role of women. But after the war in the Eastern part of artificially divided Europe, communists halted all social development, petrifying certain spheres of social life. The pre-war patriarchal mentalities changed little. I would like to describe this double legacy by clarifying THREE MYTHS around women's issues that often appear in analyses of Western observers, and then to delineate THE PROBLEM that I consider the gravest.

Myth One

"The situation of woman has deteriorated in the last 2-3 years, since democratization began in Eastern and Central Europe."

Often the picture of communist Hungary, and especially that of the role of woman played in the society, was misapprehended by observers. Visitors to Hungary often got the impression that women were very "Western"

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in Budapest - they dressed well, looked educated, led a semi-Western lifestyle. What could not be visible to short term tourists, however, was how much time, money and energy had to be spent in keeping up this Western, but still immensely modest, lifestyle. Furthermore, women were used by those in power when put into parliament, abortion was often meant to serve as birth control and maternity leave only gave a rather precarious job security at best, because not even full paying jobs granted existential security.

According to the belief widespread primarily in Western countries, women were better off during the decades of communism because they enjoyed various benefits such as full employment, free health care, maternity leave and accessible abortion. These benefits, however, sound much more appealing to foreign observers, to whom different realities are evoked than to East-Europeans. In Hungarian - as well as Czech, Slovak, Polish, Russian, etc. - these words sound pitiful, cheap, poor and gloomy, because that is the reality they evoke. When we hear about full employment, we know that it had the effect of killing ambition and initiative in millions of people and masked unemployment. When we hear about free health care, we do not picture an American hospital, but an overcrowded, undermanned, under-equipped, underdeveloped East European hospital. When we hear abut maternity leave, we know how much it pays, and also that the practice generates underachievement.

Another part of this myth holds that communist societies stood up for the rights of women. Today those of us who care for women's rights suffer from the consequences of this belief as we battle the negative prejudices of the silent, anti-communist majority within Hungary. Both men and women seem be still quite hesitant about how they should view feminists, most probably because they still identify the complete set of women's problems as part of communist propaganda - which they wholeheartedly reject. The truth is, however, that communists banned all thinking and action that challenged the role of the single official women's organization, the Soviet-type "National Alliance of Hungarian Women".

Myth Two

"Woman have become the victims of economic transformation; the feminization of poverty is widespread in Eastern Europe".

Although unemployment has reached the alarming number of 10 % in Hungary, affecting perhaps every fourth family in some manner, woman have refused to allow themselves to be victims of these unfortunate but inevitable tendencies. According to statistics, women are not over-represented in any way among the unemployed. Although women, during communist times, were as a rulad occupying under-achieving jobs, suffered under a 20 % wage gap, today they are coping with the changes, it seems.

Women in Hungary have proved to be among the more mobile strata of society. With the mushrooming of small enterprises, women appear to be active participants in the formation of these enterprises, contributing to the shrinking wage gap. A mobile segment of middle class women are trying to get rid of their disadvantages. Several very prominent and successful woman have emerged recently: the president of the Budapest Stock Exchange, partners at newly launched public relations firms and investment companies, and many successful entrepreneurs, all of whom serve as the most visible positive role models.

Myth Three

"The communist system put women in public office, thereby initiating a historic tradition of women with public responsibility."

As always, there is some truth in this myth as well. During the 43 years of communist rule in Hungary woman were always present in Parliament /25-30 %/; they were, however, supposed to fill - often overfill - quotas. No woman was ever a member of a body with real political power.

This relative absence of women from politics even today has

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several reasons. There is the patriarchal legacy keeping women in their still traditional roles in the family and household, even if these roles have changed in some strata of society since pre-World War II.

Women have not yet made a breakthrough in politics. We have had one woman member of the Cabinet at the ministerial level, one Government Commissioner in a key position /responsible for the 1996 World Expo/, our Surgeon General is a woman, but this is only the beginning. Only 28 members of the 386 seat Parliament are women. Even this number is misleading: of the 28 only 5 were elected by their constituencies /four in the Hungarian Democratic Forum, one from the Agrarian Union/. They are the ones who have direct responsibility to their constituency, who can be held accountable for their votes and actions. The rest, 23, became parliamentarians on party ballots, which means a totally different kind of responsibility and accountability.

In spite of these slow beginnings I still see an unmistakeable awakening. Women in parliament, government administration or political organizations are not puppets moved by some greater power: they act for themselves, as they were elected or appointed for themselves, and can thus be vocal in an unprecedented way.

THE PROBLEM

As in most post-communist societies it is true for Hungary as well that the severest damage has been done upon mentalities. When discussing the woman's problem during the totalitarian decades of Hungary, we have to talk about the general control of the individual. When we speak about the oppression of women, we have indeed to speak about the oppression of men, children, and not in the least: the environment. We can say that the aggression of history affected

woman in different ways that it did men, but men in Hungarian society were also not allowed to be autonomous subjects. Hungary became, under Soviet oppression, a country of spiritually and intellectually injured persons, and in such a society, man, woman, children and the environment are all instrumentalized and crippled.

Lack of autonomy as an individual or communal value meant that totalitarian control reached the individual, the personal, the "private". Women were forced into early marriages for material well-being and survival, manipulated into early child-rearing, overburdened and stressed by housework, feeling guilty about childcare, and confronted with deteriorating health resulting from a low health consciousness and poor environment, abused by pornography, and in general, with very low self-esteem.

Communism has proved to be a devastating experience. What is bound to remain a very long-term effect is that the social fibre as a whole became rotten as communism created in what was in many ways a morally devastated, materialistic society with an encouragement to dishonesty.

It would have been difficult enough to strengthen the fibres of society, to create a dynamic civil society without our communist interlude of forty odd years, since the Eastern mentality created patriarchal dependence and an exploitation of women. In totalitarian systems people grew up with the conviction that they were merely acted upon by forces larger than themselves. Women, especially, tend to accept life's "trials" - exhausting housework, abortion as birth control, lower salaries, lack of prestige - as part of a "natural catastrophe". Today as Hungary slowly but irreversibly returns to the community of European democracies, one of the greatest tasks is to change this, establishing values like sovereignty, self-reliance and autonomy, to convince the more passive part of society to become more adventurous, to take the initiative and take risks, even if

one fails. The present situation of women is transitional, often incompatible with "Europeanness" and involved neglect and a lack of awareness and incentives. The builders of Hungary's new democracy are confronting a rigid, immovable mentality towards women, and unlimited devotion, energy and time will be needed for this fossil's destruction.

30.9.92

Barbara Labuda
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WOMEN IN POLAND AND THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES

Poland has more than 38 million inhabitants, 51% of them women.

What are their civic rights? What are their professional and political activities? What is their social condition, now that the system is changing? What benefits and dangers does the new system bring with it?

There follow some comments on these questions.

Polish law gives women the same rights as men in all areas of social, political, economic and cultural life. They have, for example, the same rights as men to education, employment, vocational training, career development, remuneration, holidays, health services, social security and participation in the public life of the country. There are also measures specifically protecting women in certain areas. They apply to all mothers, particularly unmarried mothers and the mothers of handicapped children.

Women in Poland were given the right to vote and stand for election in 1918, well before women in most other countries.

They are active in practically all trades and professions. 47% of women work outside the home, mainly in agriculture, the civil service and the textile industry. They are particularly numerous in teaching, the medical services and public administration, and also play a dominant role in the private business and service sectors, which are developing rapidly at present.

Polish women are well educated. They account for nearly half of all those who have completed higher vocational training, and more than half of those who have completed secondary education.

In spite of all these encouraging signs, it would be hard to say that women exercise an important social and political influence. There is, in fact, a serious discrepancy between the constitutional guarantees of equality and the daily lives of millions of Polish women.

130

Their status is lower than that of men, and they are considered less serious, less credible, less deserving of respect and weaker. They are under-represented in the National Assembly (9%), the Senate (7%), municipal councils (10%), senior civil service grades and university rectorships (four women). It is some consolation that a woman was appointed Prime Minister two months ago, but this, alas, has little effect on the real situation.

Collectively, women are poorer than men. They work in underpaid "female" sectors. Fewer of them have careers, and they do more part-time, insecure and poorly-paid jobs.

Women are also more affected by unemployment, a phenomenon unknown under communism, and account for 53% of the 2 million unemployed.

Work in the home, which has always been regarded as a woman's main duty, is seen as an inferior occupation and carries no social prestige.

Women play little part in associations and, above all, politics, which has traditionally been a male preserve. Although they can now express their political ideals freely for the first time in 50 years, there are very few women in the political parties. Women discharge secondary functions only and occupy senior posts in only two of the approximately 120 parties at present on the scene: the Democratic Union and the Social Democratic Party. The overwhelming majority of parties take no account in their programmes of problems which concern more than 50% of the electorate, ie women. As a result, politics do not reflect women's values and aspirations.

Women, however, are far more numerous in business, where they are increasingly taking on responsible posts in the private firms which have been multiplying in the last three years.

The discrepancies which exist between the law and its implementation are mainly due to a highly traditional perception of women's role, talents and inclinations. This is the source of the psychological and cultural barriers which prevent men from seeing women as partners. This is a loss both for the community and women themselves. They make up more than half of the population - in other words more than half of the country's human talents, abilities and potential. This represents an emormous loss for the new democratic system.

The collapse of communism and the emergence of democratic institutions and the free market have opened up entirely new prospects for women, as they have for other citizens. But it takes time to adjust to the new situation and to take advantage of the new possibilities. A whole process is involved, in the course of which the peoples of the post-communist countries gradually become accustomed to political,

economic and intellectual freedom. For many people, making the transition from communism to the new system is rather like jumping from the window of a burning building - one can't do it gradually and one never knows whether the landing will be soft or hard. Many people never understand the new situation in which they find themselves, which is totally unlike the old one. Some of them adjust quickly and painlessly. Others start cautiously to follow new behaviour patterns: working for themselves, outside the previously omnipresent state economy; risking their money and savings in the hope of improving their position; using the tools of democracy, such as genuinely free elections.

Women have been fairly quick to grasp the new situation and to seize the opportunities offered them by the market economy, with its abundance of goods and services. They are the first to appreciate the disappearance of the old nightmare - the endless queues and empty shops, which were an inseparable part of "real socialism".

It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that the new political and economic system brings growing dangers for women, as well as many benefits. The main threat is to their civic liberties. This is due to the growing ideological influence of the Catholic Church and the re-emergence of conservative, nationalist and Catholic political parties, leading to new legislation which, for example, bans abortion and makes it a crime. The propagation of an ideology which reduces women's status and the launching of a vast propaganda campaign against contraceptives and the women who use them are the logical outcome of this situation.

Some of women's social rights are also in danger. The gap left by the State, when it abandoned its role as main employer and supervisor, has yet to be filled. The new regime has not been consolidated, and social protection for the victims of unemployment - unknown in the old communist countries - has yet to be introduced. The budget deficit threatens family allowances, while the ways in which maintenance is assessed and its payments secured are obsolete, and need to be reformed.

The weakness of women's organisations is another factor which increases the threat to women. None of the organisations set up by the old communist regime was taken seriously and fulfilled its function properly. Today, new organisations are being set up to defend women's rights - but suffer the negative political effects of being associated with their predecessors, even as they try to overcome other cultural, psychological and social prejudices.

This is why they are not yet able to support women in their various fields of activity, help them to come to terms with the new economic and political realities, and work effectively to improve their status in public life.

One can always hope that women's growing awareness will lead them to mobilise around defence of their rights and interests.

Polish women are now free and live in a free country - it is up to them to decide how they want to use this freedom.

September 1992

WOMEN'S POSITION IN ROMANIA

by Mrs. Irina Ciätescu - Deputy Director
of R.I.H.R.

Women's position in the post-totalitarian political life as well as within the family is something to think about for the present-day politician, economist, sociologist and, why not, historian. The way the solutions to this problem are found and the depth of the solutions will undoubtedly have an impact on the establishment of the state of law, on the progress of our nation.

It is a well known fact that all women's rights in a democratic state originate in the struggle to gain the female suffrage since it is this right that has a generating role by means of which all aspirations of this most important segment of the population - majoritary in number and with a greater hope of life than the other segment, the men's - have been translated into life. It is also known that the democratic system should penetrate not only in depth but also horizontally, at the level of a whole people.

Having got rid of a dictatorship of almost half a century, Romania is in search for its own way along the vital directions of authentic freedom and democracy, trying to resume a tradition whose roots are much older than 100 years. At that time - and that is when the first Constitution (1866) of the new state emerged as a result of the union of the two Romanian Principalities, in January 1859, was issued - it was for the first time that the problem of the female suffrage was raised at the basis of the modern Romanian state, but it was not legislated.

"The Romanian Women's League" has continuously militated ever since it was established in 1866, to obtain the necessary women's rights in the country's economical and political life. There followed a series of petitions and memorials (those in 1895 1917 and 1918 were the most important ones) which resulted in a parliamentary initiative for a project of law which was to confer full civil and political rights to women.

An important initiative meant to confer political rights to women was written in the Constitution of 1923, Art.6, Pgf.2.

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The constitutional provision stipulated that political rights could be extended to women by an electoral law provided that it was voted positively by a qualified majority of two thirds. The Parliament of Romania gave a partial solution to this requirement. Thus, a first step was the Law of June 13th, 1925 concerning the administrative union which provided the cooptation of two to seven women in the Town Councils. The second step was a provision in Art. 375 in the Law concerning the organization of the local administration on July 29th, 1929 which granted the suffrage right to certain categories of women. The administrative Law on March 27th, 1936 maintained this provision. The Regulations for the application of this law provide , among other things, that the members of the Town Councils could be elected irrespective of sex and age.

The administrative law issued after the Constitution of 1938 provided in Art.61 that, under certain circumstances, the electors for the two parliamentary chambers are men and women.

After the war, in the autumn of 1946 there were women too elected in the Parliament.

In post-1989 Romania, as in the other East-European countries, the role of women is a minor one. Except for some reduced representation in the Parliament (the feminine sex has only 22 representatives, that is 4.3% of the total of 509 deputies and senators) women hold very few important political and administrative positions (there is no woman in the government, for instance).

There is no state structure respons ble for women's and family's rights. Instead, there are numerous non-governmental organizations with such concerns. Here is an illustrating list:

- ARODF - The Romanian Association for Women's Rights, whose scopes are education, formation and research in the field of women's rights;
- The National Union of Women;
- The National Federation of Women;

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- The National Women's League;

There are also non-governmental organizations such as:

- AROLID - The Romanian Association for Individual Freedom; and Human Dignity;
- ARDDVT - Romanian Association for the Human Rights for the Third Age;
- Family Forum
- LIRDO - The Independent League for Human Rights at Culture and Health
- AROMES -The Romanian Association for A Healthy Environment
- LIRDOCT - The Independent League for Human Rights for Children and Young People;
- ANUROM - The Romanian Association for United Nations;
- UJDR - The Union of the Democratic Jurists in Romania.

The statistical data below is meant to illustrate a few facts concerning the position and role of women in Romania. To this end, several categories of indexes have been selected to enable a characterization of the demographic situation, women's education and their involvement in the country's economical and political life.

I. Social features

a) Population

Demographically, Romania generally follows the tendencies characterizing the great majority of other countries in the world.

Thus, since the previous census in Romania made 15 years ago (January 5th, 1977), the country's population increased by 5.6% at the beginning of this year (the census of January 7th, 1992) - that is from 21,559,910 to 22,760,449 inhabitants. During the same period, the female population increased by 5.9% - that is from 10,933,855 to 11,578,159. The more rapid increase of the female population - in absolute figures, by 644,304 as compared to the male population which increased by only 556,235 - also determined an increase of the proportion of women in the total sum of the country's population from 50.7% to 50.9%.

Across the territory this proportion varies between 49.9% (the districts of Alba, Galați, Harghita, Tulcea) and 52.5% (Bucharest - 51.57% in the district of Timiș, 51.28% in the district of Sibiu, a.s.o.

Except for the districts of Arad, Caras-Severin, Giurgiu, Olt, Sibiu and Teleorman, the female population increased in 1992 as compared to 1977 by a percentage oscillating between 125.6% (the district of Constanța) and 100.3% (the district of Călărași).

Mention should be made of the fact that the total number of women exceeds the total number of men beginning with age groups of over 45. The difference is even greater with the population of over 60 years old, the proportion of women being 56.50% in the sum total of the population of the same age.

On the same date (July 1st, 1990) the total number of women of 60 and over 60 years old represented 21.8% of the sum total

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of female population. The proportion of the feminine sex up to 14 years old as compared to the total number of women is 22.74%, while compared to the country's population of the same age it is 48.9%.

b) Family

In Romania, the wedding rate[1] scored a relatively increasing dynamics for the last two decades. Thus in 1970, 145,531 weddings were officiated with a wedding rate of 7.2‰, in 1980 there were 182,671 officiated weddings, which represents 8.2‰, while in 1990 there were 192,652 officiated weddings, the rate being 8.3‰. During this period, there were such high indexes as 9.2‰ in 1977 and 1978, 9.1‰ in 1976, while they went down to 7.1‰ in 1985. The explanation lies both in the highly precarious life standard during the last period of communist dictatorship and the relatively frequent modifications in the respective legislation.

Mention should be made of the fact that the wedding rate calculated by the age group of the wife in 1970 was higher with women younger than 10, with a proportion of weddings of 41.7% of the total number of weddings. The next age group was that of women between 1 20 and 24 years old, with a proportion of weddings of 38.9% of the total number. In 1980, the largest proportion was with age group 20-24, representing 39.4%, while with age group of under 20's it was 35.29%. In 1990, the same age group, that is 20-24 went up to 49.24%, while the age group of under 20's represented 29.75%. With the other age groups, that is 30-34 years old, 35-39 years old 40-44 years old and 45 and over 45 years old, oscilations are, with a few exceptions, slightly increasing, age group 25-29 scoring a more accentuated sinuosity (1970 - 7.75%, 1980 - 12.14%, 1990 - 8.67%

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1) Wedding rate (wedding frequency) = thenumber of officiated weddings per 1,000 inhabitants within a certain time interval.

Mention should also be made of the fact that, during the first half of 1992, the number of weddings went down by 9,616 as compared to the same period of the previous year, which thus determined a decrease of the wedding rate from 7.1 to 6.3 weddings per 1,000 inhabitants. The explanation is similar to that previously mentioned, that is, it also lies in the economic difficulties our country is facing at present which are not encouraging the foundation of new couples.

The divorce rate[1)] scored a relative increase during the last two decades, from 0.39‰ in 1970 (when 7,865 divorces were registered) to 1.54‰ in 1980 (34,130 divorces) and 1.42‰ in 1990 (32,966 divorces).

The low divorce rate in the early 70's is the result of the modifications of the respective legal provisions, which made the legal procedures much more difficult to follow. Their effect was that in 1966 (the year when the respective measures were taken) the number of divorces went from 25,804 (in 1966) down to 48 (in 1967), while it became constantly higher year by year afterwards (with some exceptions in 1977).

During the first half of 1992, the divorce rate was 1.28‰ representing a decrease by 4,480 cases of divorce as compared to the first half of 1991. About two thirds of the registered divorces are related to the urban population,.

The divorce rate calculated in terms of the age groups of the wives was in 1970 higher with age group 25-29, with a percentage of 24.11% of the total number of divorces passed in that year: next was age group 20-24 with 21.68% of the total number and then age group 30-34 with 20.91%, the percentage gradually decreasing with the other age groups. In 1980, there was a similar situation: the highest rate was with age group 25-29 (27%), while with age group 20-24 it was 20.37% and with age group 30-34 it was 17%.

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1) Divorce rate (divorce frequeny = the number of divorces per 1,000 inhabitants within a certain time interval.

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In 1990, the highest rate (21%) was with age group 20-24, followed by age group 30-34 (20.13%) and age group 25-29 (28.88%).

The fecundity rade[1] in Romania, with women between 15 and 49 years old, was 56.2‰ in 1990 representing a considerable decrease as compared to 1980 when the rate was 8‰ and 1970 when it was 81.2‰. The causes of this phenomen are the same. The policy of increasing the birth rate by force imposed by the communist regime resulted in a high jump from 55.7‰ in 1966 to 105.5‰ in 1967, while it gradually decreased in the years to follow.

Calculated for age groups, the highest fecundity rate was with age group 20-24, which in 1970 represented 201.4‰, followed by age group 25-29 with 151.6‰ and age group 30-34 with 94.9‰. The fecundity rate with women between 15-49 was 81.2 ‰ in 1970, while in 1980 it was 74.8‰ of which age group 20-24 represented 200.4‰, age group 25-29 represented 126.8‰, age group 15-19 represented 72.3‰, and age group 30-34 represented only 58.3‰. In 1990, the highest fecundity rate was with age group 20-24 (145.2‰) followed by age group 25-29 with 97.8‰ and then age group 15-19 with 51.5‰, the average fecundity rate with women between 15-49 being 56.2‰.

As to the total number of newly born alive, calculated in terms of the age groups of the mothers, the situation was as follows: in 1970, out of the total number of newly born alive, 34.75% were born by mothers between 30-34 years old, 22.65% were born by mothers between 25-29 years old, 17.49% by mothers between 30-34 years old, and 13.16% by mothers between 15 and 19 years old. In 1980, it was also the age group of 20-24 years old mothers who gave birth to the largest number of babies alive (43.31%), followed by age group 25-29 with 27.82%, then the order changed: 12.65% were born by mothers of age group 15-19, while 10.77% were born by mothers of age group 30-34. In 1990 the order was the same: the mothers of age group 20-24 gave birth to 44.66% of the total number of babies born

1) Fecundity rate (the actual fecundity level) = the average number of newly born alive per 1,000 women of fecund age (15-49 years old).

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140

alive, age group 25-29 to 21.16%, age group 15-19 to 15.03%, and age group 30-34 to 12.38%.

During the first half of 1992, the number of newly born alive decreased by 4,501, which determined a decrease of the birth rate from 12.1 to 11,9 babies born alive per 1,000 inhabitants as compared to the same period in 1991. More than a half - that is 52.2% - the number of babies were born by women living in the countryside.

Mention should be made of the fact that the great majority of the newly born alive saw the light of day in the specially created health units. Thus, the babies born alive in such units as compared to the total number of babies born alive was 99.1% in 1990 (in comaprison, for instance, with 89,5% in 1970 and 98.5% in 1980). Across the territory, the ratio varies between 99.7% (the districts of Arad, Hunedoara, Maramures, Mureș, Suceava and the city of Bucharest) and 97,2% (the district of Gorj).

Throughout the country, there are some territorial differences. Thus, there are districts scoring a higher level of the birth rate, such as the districts of Bacău, Bristrița Năsăud, Botosani, Iasi, Maramureș, Suceava, Vaslui, where the birth rate[1] exceeds 14‰, varying between 15.7‰ (Suceava) and 14.2‰ (Iasi). Other districts scored thelowest birth rate - below 10‰, as the case is with the district of Brăila (9.9‰), the city of Bucharest (8.2‰), or 10.2 ‰ in the district of Timiș, 10.3‰ in the district of Cluj.

The census of January 1992 registered 7,317,563 households[2] in Romania, that is 650 thousand more than registered by the census in January 1977, which represents a 9.8% increase. Out of the sum total of households, 54.5% are to be found in the urban environment, their number increased by 37% in 1992 as compared to 1977, while thenumber of households in the countryside decreased by 11.4% during the same period.

The average size of a household went from 3.21 people in 1977 down to 3.05 people in 1992.

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1) Birth rate (birth frequency) = the average number of babies born alive per 1,000 inhabitants within a certain interval of time.

2) Household = a group of two or more people, usually dwelling together and generally linked together in kinship, who

The census in January 1992 registered 7,664.3 thousand dwellings, that is 1,284 thousand more than registered by the previous census (6,379.8)thousand). The urban environment is registered with 4,078.8 thousand dwellings which represents a 1.5 times higher number as compared to the number of urban dwellings registered at the census in January 1977. All in all, the increased number of dwellings between the two census represents 120.1% and it is also accompanied by an improvement of the structure of the dwellings, illustrated by both the increase of the average number of rooms per dwelling - 2.5 rooms in 1992 as compared to 2.2 rooms in 1977, and the increase of the average dwelt surface per dwelling - 33.6 sq.m. in 1992 as compared to 29.6 sq.m. in 1977. The average surface per dwelling room is 13.7 sq.m., while the average dwelling surface per person is 11.5 sq.m. in 1992, that is 2.6 sq.m. larger than in 1977 (8.9 sq.m.).

Mention should be made of the fact that the number of households per 100 dwellings went from 103.9 in 1977 down to 96.2 in 1992 and there was also a decrease of the number of persons per dwelling, from 3.4 in 1977 to 2.9 in 1992.

Regionally, in comparison with the census in 1977,the greatest increase of the number of dwellings was in such districts as Constanta (38.4%), Brasov (33.0), Maramures (28.9%), Cluj (28.0%), Covasna (27.4%) and the city of Bucharest. The housing resources increased by 26.1%. The average dwelt surface per person is larger in the western districts of the country: Arad (14.2 sq.m.), Timis (13.9 sq.m), Sibiu (13.0 sq.m), Caras-Severin (12.6 sq.m.), Sălaj (12.6 sq.m), Bihor (12.5 sq.m.), Cluj (12.3 sq.m.) and in the city of Bucharest (12.8 sq.m).The less large average dwelt surface per person is registered in such districts as: Iasi (9.5 sq.m), Vaslui (9.6 sq.m), Botosani (9.8 sq.m).

The increase in the housing resources, particularly in large cities and towns, is also accompanied by an improvement of living conditions of the population with regards to the supply with the most important household facilities. Thus, the

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142

number of dwelling equipped with water supply installations, either from the public water pipe system or self-owned, increased between 1977 and 1992 from 1,882.8 thousand to 4,113.6 thousand, that is 218.5%. Out of the sum total of dwellings, those equipped with water supplies represent 53.7% in 1992, as compared to only 29.5% in 1977. The urban dwellings thus equipped are 88.4% the total sum. 1992 also scored an increased number of dwellings connected to the national electric network (7,361.6 thousand in 1992 as compared to 5,437.o thousand in 1977, therefore by 135.4%, representing at present 96.1% the sum total of dwellings in our country).

There was also an increase (from 1,298.9 thousand in 1977 to 2,963.9 thousand in 1992, that is by 228.2%) of the number of dwellings equipped with a central heating system (connection to the public heating stations or self-owned heating stations).

The ratio of dwellings connected to the national electric network reached 99.1% in the urban environment and 92.6% in the rural one.

c) Health

The hope of life at birth for the sum total of the population went from the age of 69.08 (in 1972/1974) up to the age of 69.56 (in 1988/1990) of which for the female population (for the same period of time) from the age 71.29 to the age of 72.65.

Mention should be made of the fact that the hope of life is lower in the rural environment than in the urban one. Thus, in 1979/1980 the hope of life at birth in the urban environment was up to the age of 69.93 and eight years later, in 1987/1988, it was up to the age of 69.65 while in the rural environment for the same years, it was up to the age of 68.41 and 68.47 respectively.

As to the districts, the hope of life at birth for the above mentioned period went down with 23 districts and the city of Bucharest, but it went up with the other districts, the differences being large enough (for instance, the age of 70.99 in the district of Brasov, but the age of only 66.20 in the district of Satu Mare).

The difference between the hope of life at birth for the feminine sex and the masculine one favoured the former by 5.37 year in 1979/1980 and by 6.09 years in 1988/1990.

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142

In spite of the increase of the hope of life at birth scored in the course of time, a series of demographic phenomena to be illustrated further on made this statistical index for Romania become one of the lowest in Europe.

The general death rate[1] tended (with some variation) to become higher during the last two decades. Thus, in 197' there were 193,255 registered death cases, that is 9.5 cases per 1,000 inhabitants. In 1980, the number of deads was 231,876, with a rate of 10.4‰. In 1990, the total number of deads was 247,086, with a rate of 10.6‰.

Thus Romania scored a regress, characterized by the increase or high oscillation of the general death rate (and, as shown further on, of the infantile death rate). High oscillations were scored in the last decade, such as these in 1987, when the general death rate went up to 11.1‰ as compared to 1986 when it had been 10.6‰ or 1981 and 1982 when it had been 10.0‰.

So, Romania became the European country with the highest general death rate (as well as the highest infantile death rate).

The general death rate for the first half of 1992 went up to 141,478 as compared to the same period of 1991 when 129,247 deads were registered. The rate per 1,000 inhabitants increased from 11.2 to 12.5. Out of the 141,478 deads registered in the first six months of 1992, more than 60.2% had lived in the rural environment, the general death rate being 77% higher in the rural environment than in the urban one.

Across the territory, the general death rate is characterized by great differences, from a low rate of 9.3 deads per 1,000 inhabitants in the district of Constanta up to a maximum one of 17.4‰ in the district of Arad.

As regards the specific female death rate reached 93,957 deads in 1970, that is 48.62% of the total number of registered deads. In 1980 111,438 women died, that is 48.06%, while in 1990 there were 115,262 deads, that is 46.65% of the total number.

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1) General death rate (death frequency) = the average number of deads per 1,000 inhabitants within a certain interval of time.

The specific female death rate in terms of the causes of death indicates the diseases of the circulatory system as primary causes: 69,855 in 1980, that is 62.69% of the total number of death causing diseases; next come the diseases of the breathing apparatus - 13,714 deads that is 12.31%; tumors -13,172 deads, that is 11.82%; the diseases of the digestive system with 4.11% a.s.o. In 1990, the diseases of the circulatory system caused 76,370 deaths, that is 66.26% of the total number of death causing diseases: there was also an increase of the number deaths caused by various tumors up to 14,001 cases, that is 12.15%;the number of cases of diseases affecting the breathing apparatus went down as such diseases caused 9,219 deaths, that is 8.0%, while those affecting the digestive apparatus caused 4,560 deaths, that is 3.96%, etc.

The infantile death rate (children who died before reaching the age of one) with 1,000 babies born alive scored a decrease, from 49.4‰ in 1970 to 29.3‰ in 1980 and 26.9‰.

The increase of the general death rate also affected the less than one year old children, from 22.5‰ in the first half of 1991 to 23.6‰ deaths in the first half of 1992. The infantile deaths rate was higher during the second part of the first half of 1992, when the registered level was 25.0 less than one year old children for every 1,000 born alive who died.

The infantile death rate is much higher in the rural environment (26.2‰) as compared to the urban environment (20.8‰).

Across the territory, such districts as Botosani, Constanta and Ialomita are characterized by an infantile death rate of over 34.0‰, with such districts as Buzău, Harghita and Sibiu the infantile death rate was below 17‰.

Mention should be made of the fact that the highest infantile death rate scored by the district of Botosani is 2.3 times higher than the lowest infantile death rate scored by the district of Sibiu.

As to the natural growth rate of the population, we must show that, since 1970, when it was 233,779, it has been continously decreasing (with slight variations) reaching 167,028 in 1980 and only 67,660 in 1990. Calculated for 1,000 inhabitants, the

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natural growth rate of the population decreased as follows: 11.6‰ in 1970, 7.6‰ in 1980, 3.0‰ in 1990.

During the first half of 1992, the number of the people who died was by 6,714 greater than that of the babies born alive, which determined a decrease of the populati: .

The balance between the newly born alive and the deceased is positive with 18 districts and negative with 23 districts and the city of Bucharest.

The districts where the number of the deceased is much greater than that of the newly born include Arad, Bihor, Dolj, Teleorman, Timis and the city of Bucharest. In such districts as Bacău, Iasi, Suceava, the natural growth rate is more than 4 persons for every 1,000 inhabitants.

II. Education

In Romania, the first 8 school years are compulsory,which brings a child to the age of 16.#

Our education system is structured as follows: pre-school, primary school and intermediate school education which is, as provided by the law, compulsory; then there is high school, trade school, additional or apprenticeship school, technical school,special post-high school and foremen training school, and college education.

In school year 1990/1991, the school age population totalized 5,036.3 thousand of which 752.1 thousand were kindergarten children (pre-school education), 4,091.4 thousand pupils (in: day evening and attendance free schools), and 192.8 thousand college strudents..

Regarding the school age population from a dynamic perspective one can find that there is a 15.4% increase in school year 1990/1991 as compared to school year 1970/1971, but there is almost half a million (548,442) decrease in the same school year as compared to school year 1980/1981. As to the school age feminine population, it follows the sam curves: in comparison with school year 1970/1971, thenumber of girls enlisted in various forms of education in 1990/1991 their number only represents 92.2

With this form of education the pupils' number decreased in1990/1991 as compared to 1970/1971, representing only 91.8%; in comparison with 1980/1981 the percentage is even lower, that is 81.6% only. Generally speaking, the decrease of the children's number in primary and intermediate schools - the compulsory form of education - corresponds to some extent to the tendency for a decrease of the newly borns in kthis period. Another cause for the decrease of the pupils' number is the higher degree of non-attendance within this segment of the school age population.

Taking into account the fact that kindergartens allow children of 3-5 years old, it comes out that this form of education includes about 70.5% of the total number of children,

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girls representing 71.8% of the total number of female children.

The number of children attending a pre-school form of education increased in 1990/1991 by 67.8% as compared to 1970/1971, but it decreased in comparison to 1980/1981, the percentage being 80.4%. With the exception of some slight differences, the number of female children had the same evolution.

As to the high school form of education - consisting of the 9th-12th forms - which is roughly attended by youngsters between 16 and 19 years old, there were 996.7 thousand pupils in 1990/1991 of which 533.0 thousand were girls, that is 53.5%.

With complementary or apprenticeship schools, technical schools, special post-high schools and technical schools for foremen, the ratio between sexes fabours the masculine sex, the feminine sex representing only 34.5% of the sum total.

The same holds true with colleges, where the female students only represent 47.2% of the total number of college students. From a dynamic perspective, the students' number in 1990/1991 is constant as compared to 1980/1981, while it increased by 39.3% in comparison with 1970/1971.

With regards to the teaching staff, in 1990/1991 the sum total of teachers for all forms of education was 265.848 of which 185,043 women that is 69.05%.

The teaching staff in kindergartens entirely consists of women. Mention should be made of the fact that their number increased in comparison with 1980/1981 when it reached 96.1%.

The female teaching staff in primary and intermediate school was 72.8% of the sum total in 1990/1991 which represents a 30.7% increase in comparison with 1970/1971 and a 5.7% increase in comparison with 1980/1981. The situation is somehow similar with the female teaching staff in ghigh schools. Their number increased by 124.0 % in 1990/1991 as compared to 1970/1971 and by 30.9% as compared to 1980/1981. With regards to the professional schools, apprenticeship schools, technical schools, technical schools for foremen, the percentage of the female teaching staff is much lower.

The female teaching staff in colleges was only 27.9% in 1990/1991, their number being smaller in comparison with 1970/1971 and 1980/1981.

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the number of those with average qualifications - 66.5% of the corresponding category, while the number of unemployed college female graduates was 53.2% of the total number of unemployed college graduates.

Across the territory, at the beginning of the second half of this year the greatest numbers of unemployed were registered in the city of Bucharest with 5.89% of the total number of unemployed throughout the country, and such districts as Dolj with 4.63%, Suceava with 4.44% while the smallest numbers were registered in such districts as Gorj with 0.61%, Covasna with 0.92%, Călărasi with 1.36%, Timis with 1.34%, etc.

However, for the future, though not a very near one, there are signals that in our country the job offers for women will increase too, because the present stay-at-home population represents an important resource and it mainly consists of women (70-80%).

There is no doubt that the policy of the former dictatorship led to an exaggeration in the use of female labour in absolutely all fields. Female labour was overdimensioned in such fields as industry, constructions, sylviculture, transports, while it was much underdimensioned in the field of services.

The increase of the number of salaried women in the period 1972-1990 by 196.60% is much greater in absolute figures in the industrial sectors (937.7 thousand) with a percentage of 226.1%. The highest percentages are to be found in sylviculture (505.55%), science and scientific research (309.57%), transports (280.97%), agriculture (263.35%), etc.

With regards to the female workers, the increase, during the same period scored 225.40%, that is 1.331 thousand in absolute figures; a great increase was scored with the industrial sectors, that is by 229.77%, or 844 thousand in absolute figures, as well as with the transports (by 335.6%) and agriculture (by 280.39%),etc.

Another effect of the transition towards a market economy is the fact that the female labour force is and will still be strongly affected by unemployment since it is at present engaged mainly in branches with a high unemployment rate. Moreover, a large part of the salaried women have a level of instruction and qualification which is lower than the men's with important discrepancies between the knowledge acquired and the future needs of a modernized production.

The statistical data concerning unemployment for the first half of this year reinforce the statement above. Thus, on December 31st, 1991, the sum total of the unemployed was 337,440 of which 208,457 were women, that is 61.78%. On January 27th, 1992, the number of unemployed reached 386,033, of which 233,971 were women, that is 60.61%. On May 11th, 1992, the total number of unemployed reached 549,896, while on July 13th,1992, it reached 675,633.

On December 31st 1991 and on January 27th,1992, - the proportions are approximately stil the same - the unemployed female workers represent about 83% of the total number, those with an average qualification are about 14%, college graduates are about 3%. Similarly, with all categories of instruction, the number of unemployed women is greater than that of unemployed me Toward the end of January this year, the number of unemployed female workers was 57.5% of the total number of unemployed workers

III. Economic features

The female labour force in our country represents a remarkable part of the labour force because, on one hand, the proportion of women in the sum total of the population exceeds 50%, on the other hand, our country also scored the phenomenon of women entering and remaining in the labour market, particularly during the last two decades. In our country as with all countries in the world, this phenomenon is generalized in the sense of promoting a policy aimed to attract women in the sphere of productive activities.

In 1972, within the total number of salaried people (5,360.6 thousand), salaried women (1,679.9 thousand) represented 31.34%. In 1992, the ratio was quite changed: out of 7,902.4 thousand salaried people 3,302.7 thousand are women, representing 41.8%.

Within the total number of salaried people in 1972 workers represented 4,029.8 thousand of which 1,061.4 thousand were women that is 26.34%. In 1992, the proportion of female workers went up to 38.8%, that is 2,392.4 thousand of a sum total of 6,167.7 thousand.

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	1972			1990			1990/1	
	Total salaried people x 1,000	Of which women x 1,000	% 2/1	Total salaried people x 1,000	Of which women[2] x 1,000	% 5/4	% 5/2	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
TOTAL	5.360,6	1.679,[illegible]	31,34	7.902,4	3.302,7	41,8	196,6	
-industry	2.303,6	743,6	32,28	3.818,5	1.681,3	44,0	226,1	
-constructions	703,8	58,6	8,33	604,5	88,8	14,7	151,5	
-agriculture	359,8	51,3	14,26	555,9	135,1	24,3	263,3	
-sylviculture	20,4	1,8	8,82	40,4	9,1	22,5	505,5	
-transports	331,2	28,9	8,23	609,4	81,2	13,3	290,-	
-telecommunications	59,6	26,6	44,63	97,2	53,7	55,2	201,[illegible]	
-goods movement	466,1	219,6	47,11	636,0	407,4	63,7	184,6	
-communal services, non-productive services	272,4	73,8	27,09	442,7	164,0	37,0	222,1	
-education, culture arts	369,5	225,9	61,11	443,3	260,7	65,6	128,	
-science and scientific research	47,9	13,9	33,25	133,3	58,2	43,7	309,[illegible]	
-health protection, social assistance physical culture	227,7	162,5	71,35	303,9	228,9	75,3	140,[illegible]	
-administration	67,8	21,5	31,71	64,5	23,1	45,1	135,[illegible]	
-other fields	110,8	47,1	42,51	153	77,0	50,3	163,1	

THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Ms. Ligia Valcu, Judge, Romania

When totalitarian systems come crashing down, as they so gratifingly have since 1989, democratic ones do not automatically rise up in their place. After enforced silence, people are searching questions about the so-called triumph of democracy.

Revolutions create new boundaries and priorities which in turn give rise to new responses and different visions.

I think there are five points that provide a framework for this inquiry into the history of women:

- the definition of women as a group in relation to other groups;
- the women's level of collective self-awareness and their perception of themselves;
- the definition of women's place in a period of transition;
- the actual role of women in the same period;
- the external conditions which encourage the possibility of change.

It is true that nothing is ever equal, even in the beginning observs a biopsychologist. The tests support the notion that men and women perceive the world in subtly different ways and a growing number of scientists believe the discrepancies reflect functional differences in the brains of men and women.

To make the problem even more difficult, women constitute the only group which is treated unequally as a whole but whose members live in greater intimacy with their oppressors than with each other.

It is important to keep in mind that humankind consists of men and women whose interests are not always similar; that women's interests are often ignored or denied; that inequality in man-woman relations is not natural but man-made; that what is considered good for men is often deemed good for mankind and thus for women as well.

These periods of transition should and often do keep alive our capacity to adjust to new circumstances and to learn new rules and roles.

Womensplace in the changing world has two parts to it - women and the changing world. Of course, hearing suhh a title women would tend to think first about the first factor - their own role, status and position. We have been told for so long that we have a special role in a special place, we have been told for so many years to stay there and fulfill ourselves at home, within our families and our inner space, that we have come to think in these terms even when we want to get out of our old place and change our old role.

For the changing world is the primary factor.

Women have looked so hard at the new challanges which today's world sets them, many consciousnesses have been raised, politics activist groups have been formed of all varieties of politics and all degree of activity.

Action and policy from women's perspective implies that that interests of women are explicitly acknowledged and taken into account in such a way that women's interests are at least not harmed and possibly served.

In Romania, the Constitution of 1965 had established the equality between the sexes, but only certain women - not the competent ones - were promoted in many and various jobs because an important

leader of the country was a female - the wife of the dictator.

This statement was never guaranteed and de facto the Romanian women were humiliated with that degrading treatment and examination as "baby-producing machines". Women between sixteen and forty-five have no right to decide whether an unwanted pregnancy to term, nor is it any of their business. That was decided for them by the state. It will take time to reinstate their dignity and to reasure them that they do have a right to choose the number of children they want and the abortion is not the only way to achieve this.

The Constitution of 1991 establishes the same stipulation, but of course no guarantee for respecting it.

The role played by Elena Ceausescu created a handicap for the Romanian women which are avoided from political jobs, are kept in a dangerous isolation, with no acces to power.

Any woman who chooses a so called man's job automatically risked a loss of approval, if not total hostility. This year, the women who graduated the law school were adviced to choose a proper job for themselves and not to become judges or prosecutors. Under no circumstance should a woman be in a position competitive with or superior to that of a man.

Income differentials between men and women increased over tim and most women are employed in low-paying positions which offer no chance for advancement.

In 1987 november 15 th when it had took place the most protesting movement against comunism, women were in front but as a reward nowadays women are 7o per cent from the unemployed people and in this number two thirds are graduated.

In that context one of the crucial preconditions for greater equality is that men and women to share employment and home responsablities.

In Japan women do all the domestic labour. Men are working long hours and they don't do much work when they come home.

In U.S.A. there are both men and women in the work force and both of them at home.

In Romania women are working and do all the domestic labour alone. They are mantaining the traditional role of women of being good wives and mothers, economically dependent upon men, but there are also women who have a career and do all the housework.

The sad fact is that most women equate success with escape with running abroad for seeking a better life for them and their children. They are trying to run away from child mortality, insufficient medical staff, the lower levels of education and health services, the stress and bad working conditions.

Sex discrimination in business and political life, the absence of women from Parlament, Govern do not encourage women to think themselves as potential leaders, capable of making decisions.

To fulfill ourselves means to fight for:

- equal employment, promotion and training opportunities;
- equal payment for equal work;
- equal offer for work for men and women.

We must try to believe in ourselves and to talk and act on our beliefs. That means joining together with other human to take political action. Group action at political levels can be very effective if it is patient, persevering and longheaded. We have to ignore the superior atitude of men because military

prowess no longer depend on superior musculature and a woman with her lower body weight and oxygen consumption may be the natural cosmonaut/ astronaut.

The key to the process of change however was the complicated inter-relationship of external and internal forces. Perhaps the best way to conceptualize the relationship is to see outside developments as creating the context within which collective movements for ideological and institutional change can occur.

We are as Simone de Beauvoir saw and said as well not only the second sex but the other. But one woman once was called "the iron lady" - Margaret Thatcher and none of the men on earth was called in this way.

So, it is our right to say " I belong here, I am part of the whole, I understand."

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160

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Representative - Spanish - Socialist

President of the Parliamentary Assembly

Born 30 January 1940 in Madrid. Studies (medicine, psychology, philology) in Madrid, Toulouse and Vienna. Active in the antifascist resistance and a leader of the underground socialist youth and student movements. In 1960 joined the then illegal Socialist Party. Arrested, tried and imprisoned under the dictatorship. In exile from 1962 to 1975 (France, Vienna and Brussels). During this period participated in international youth and trade union movements. Was the first elected President of the European Co-ordination Bureau of International Youth Organisations. Vice-President of the Governing Board of the European Youth Centre and Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe 1972-74. Returned to Spain in 1976. Participated in the reorganisation of the trade unions (UGT) and the Socialist Party. Elected member of parliament for Ciudad Real (Castilla-La Mancha region) in the first general elections in 1977. Re-elected in 1979, 1982, 1986 and 1989. President of the Spanish group within IPU since 1983; President of the Political Affairs, International Security and Disarmament Committee 1986-88; Vice-President of the IPU Executive Committee 1988-92. President of the Spanish delegation to the Assembly of WEU, and Vice-President of that body since 1990. President of the Spanish delegation to the Madrid Conference for the launching of the CSCE Parliamentary Assembly 1991. Married, two children, one grandchild.
Representative to the Council of Europe Assembly since 1983; President of the Spanish delegation. Elected President on 4 May 1992.
Address: Congreso de los Diputados, Floridablanca, 28071 Madrid.

160

Council of Europe
Conseil de l'Europe

Biographical particulars of Catherine Lalumière Secretary General of the Council of Europe

The 26 member states of the Council of Europe:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom

166

Catherine Lalumière was born on 3 August 1935 at Rennes (Ille-et-Vilaine) into a brewing family from Alsace.

It was there, in her native city, that she graduated as a Doctor of Public Law, with a Diploma in Advanced Studies in Political Science and History of Law, before obtaining an appointment, in 1960, as Assistant Lecturer at the University of Bordeaux I and the Bordeaux Institute of Political Studies.

On 4 April 1960 she married Pierre Lalumière, *Professeur agrégé* of Public Law, who belongs to an old Girondin family. From then on, she was not to leave Bordeaux, even when, in 1971, she was appointed to a lectureship at the University of Paris I-Panthéon-Sorbonne.

It was alongside her husband and François Mitterrand that she was to fight her first political campaigns. She joined the Socialist Party in 1973 and was one of the team of experts formed around the First Secretary of the Party, François Mitterrand, who helped draft his briefs as a candidate in the 1974 and 1981 presidential elections.

In 1975 she became the Socialist Party's National Officer for the Civil Service.

After François Mitterrand's victory on 10 May 1981, she entered Pierre Mauroy's first government as State Secretary for the Civil Service.

After being elected Member of Parliament for the 3rd Gironde constituency in June 1981, she was appointed Minister for Consumer Affairs.

In March 1983 she led the opposition to Jacques Chaban-Delmas as a Presidential Majority candidate in the Bordeaux municipal elections.

In December 1984 she was appointed State Secretary for European Affairs at the Ministry of External Relations, succeeding Roland Dumas. In that capacity, she represented France in negotiations for the entry of Spain and Portugal into the European Economic Community and took part in the drafting of the Single Act.

In March 1986 she led the Socialist Party regional list for the General Election and returned to parliament. As a Member of Parliament, she was a member of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly from January 1987. She was re-elected Member of Parliament for the 3rd Gironde constituency at the June 1988 General Election.

Appointed by her peers to be Vice-President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French National Assembly alongside Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, she also became Vice-President of the delegation for the European Communities.

On 10 May 1989 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe elected her to the post of Secretary General. She thus succeeds Marcelino Oreja, former Foreign Minister of Spain, who had held that office since October 1984.

She officially took office on 1 June 1989, after giving up her seat in the French Parliament.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Palais de l'Europe, Room 9
3-4 October 1992

PARTIAL SET OF BIOGRAPHIES OF CENTRAL/EAST EUROPEAN PARTICIPANTS
9/29

AIDA SHEHU
Albania

Chief of Press, Republic of Albania

Ms. Aida Shehu currently serves as the Chief of the Press Bureau for the President of the Republic of Albania.

Ms. Shehu finished her studies in economics in 1983 and continued her education with a one-year course in journalism. After completing her formal education in journalism, Ms. Shehu worked as a journalist for the Tirana Radio Station from 1984-1992.

On April 10, 1992 she was appointed to the position of Chief of the Presidential Press Bureau.

SUZANA MALAJ
Albania

President, League of Democratic League

Ms. Suzana Malaj currently holds the position of President of the League of Democratic League, an independent and non-governmental organization.

She finished her education at the Institute of Agriculture, Department of Economics in 1977. Since completion of her formal studies, she has held the position of Director of Economic Information in the Ministry of Finance.

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DIANA CULI
Albania

President, Forum of Albanian Women

Ms. Diana Culi currently holds the position of president of the Forum of Albanian Women (FAW), an independent and non-governmental national forum.

Ms. Culi received a degree in 1973 for her studies in foreign and Albanian literature and completed a one-year graduate course for journalism in 1974. Upon completion of her graduate studies, Ms. Culi worked as a journalist for the Drita newspaper from 1974 - 1979.

Ms. Culi held the distinguished position of Chief Editor of Le lettre Albainese from 1979 through 1991.

NATASHA LAKO
Albania

Deputy, Democratic Party of Albania

Ms. Natasha Lako received a degree in journalism in 1972 and has since maintained a career as a free lance journalist and script writer.

Ms. Lako is currently a Deputy of the Democratic Party of Albania in the Albanian Parliament.

RAINA IVANOVA KARTCHEVA
Bulgaria

Press Attache to the President

Ms. Raina Ivanova Kartcheva was born in Sofia in 1946. She was a professor of Romance Languages at the University of Sofia, and is currently the Press Attache and official French interpreter for the President of Bulgaria, Zhelyu Zhelev.

DIMITRINA PETROVA
Bulgaria

Director, Institute for Social
and Environmental Research

Ms. Dimitrina Petrova is currently the director of the Institute for Social and Environmental Research. In addition, she is a consultant to the President of the Republic of Bulgaria on pardoning prisoners, teaches philosophy to lawyers at the Kliment Okbridski University of Sofia, is a member of the editorial board of the quarterly "Critique and Humanism," and has lectured in universities in the USA, Ireland and Denmark.

Ms. Petrova maintains research interests and contributes to numerous academic publications in the fields of modern western philosophy, utopian studies, the post-communist transition, women's studies, environmentalism and human rights. In addition, Ms. Petrova is the founder of the environmental movement "Ecoulastnot," and served as a member of the Constituent Parliament from 1990 to 1991. Ms. Petrova is also active in several international academic organizations and non-governmental networks.

ZDENKA KREJCOVA
C.S.F.R.

Specialist in Social Affairs, Ministry of
Labor and Social Affairs

Ms. Zdenka Krejcova is currently a specialist in social affairs at the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and has held that position since October 1991. Prior to this appointment, Ms. Krejcova was elected as a member of the Czech National Council in the first free elections in 1990. As a Member of Parliament, Ms. Krejcova served as chairman of the Commission on Women's Position in Society.

Ms. Krejcova attended Palacky University Olomouc where she studied English and Czech and earned a degree in philosophy in 1966. From 1968 to 1990, she was a teacher at the Language School in Prague.

Ms. Krejcova is currently a member of the Civic Democratic Party.

VERA STANIĆ
Croatia

Member of Parliament

Vera Stanic was born in Omis in 1940. She then graduated from a technical school in Split, and went to work as a town planner. She now holds the position of "independent planner" in physical planning.

She was elected to the Croatian Parliament and appointed President of the Parliamentary Committee for Physical Planning. She was reelected in 1992.

ENIKO BOLLOBAS
Hungary

Director, Atlantic Bureau of Ministry
of Foreign Affairs

Eniko Bollobas currently holds the position of Director of the Atlantic Bureau of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Prior to this post, she served as Deputy Chief of Mission and as Charge d'Affaires at the Hungarian Embassy in Washington, D.C. representing Hungary's first democratically-elected government since World War II.

Ms. Bollobas studied in Budapest, Minneapolis and La Jolla, and received her Ph.D in Literature from the University of Budapest in 1978. Between 1977 and 1990 she taught English and American literature at the Eotovos Lorant University in Budapest and at Jozsef Attila University in Szeged. She was a Visiting Fulbright Professor at the University of Oregon from 1986 to 1987. Ms. Bollobas has written extensively both in Hungarian and international scholarly publications.

Ms. Bollobas was a founding member of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), the largest opposition party to emerge during the revolutionary changes of 1988-89 and the one that went on to win the free elections of 1990.

As part of her commitment to human rights, in 1989 she founded the political discussion group Hungarian Feminists, the first non-communist organization to address women's issues. As a diplomat posted in Washington, D.C., she lectured nationwide on East-Central Europe's democratic transition, ethnic tensions and regional cooperation, Hungary's foreign and security policies, the Hungarian Jewish community and women in Eastern Europe.

ROZA HODOSAN
Hungary

Member of Parliament

Roza Hodosan was born in Dabas, Hungary in 1954. She finished secondary school in Puspokladany and later moved to Budapest where she continued her studies at the University of Budapest art faculty, where she received a degree in art education. During her time at the University, she began to cultivate connections to the democratic opposition. She participated in the publication of the so called "samisdat" literature and in the Fund for Helping the Poor. Due to her relationship with the opposition, she could not find a job for a long time. Since 1987, she has been a lecturer in secondary school, and spent a year in the United States with the help of the Institute of Research and Publication.

In Parliament, she is a member of the Committee on Local Government, Public Administration, Internal Security and Police Forces.

DR. KRISZTINA KAPITANFFY
Hungary

Board member, Hungarian Women's Union

Dr. Krisztina Kapitanffy was born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1954. She graduated from the Technical University of Budapest and then spent several years at a research institute while finishing a post-graduate course. Following a six-month scholarship in France, she submitted her doctoral thesis.

It was at that time that private business began to be established in Hungary, and Dr. Kapitanffy chose to work in this sector. She is now the managing director of a successful limited company.

Dr. Kapitanffy joined the Hungarian Democratic Forum in 1990. She is a member of the presidium of the party's women's section as well as that of the Hungarian Women's Union, an alliance of several organizations accepting Christian democratic and/or conservative principles.

ANNA ROGUT
Poland

Professor, University of Lodz

Ms. Anna Rogut is a professor at the University of Lodz and published five research reports in the field of business start-ups and entrepreneurship.

Professor Rogut obtained a master's degree in Sociology from the University of Lodz in 1976. She has completed post-graduate work in company finance and accounting, management and small business operations.

Ms. Rogut has also co-authored publications entitled Policy on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Central and Eastern European Countries, An Overview of SME Policy and Organization in Poland and Main Problems of Entrepreneurs Education in Poland 1992.

BOGUMILA BOBA
Poland

Member of Parliament

Bogumila Boba was born in Cracow. In 1971, she graduated from the Wroclaw Medical Academy as a child surgeon and subsequently was employed in the Academy. She was then transferred to a hospital at Sroda, and during her work there specialized in traumatology-orthopaedy. She then worked in the Clinic of the Silesian Medical Academy at Ustronic. Presently, she is a surgeon at the Pszcyna Hospital.

She also participated in the organization of the "Zjednoszsnie Chrzescijansko-Narodowe" (Christian National Union) party in Bielsko-Biala, where she lives. In 1991, she was elected to parliament from nine candidates on that party's list. She currently serves on the Parliamentarian Commission of Education, Science and Technical Progress and on the Commission of Constitutional Responsibility.

BARBARA LABUDA
Poland

Member of Parliament

Barbara Labuda was born in the city of Zmigrod in 1946. She earned her university degree in Philology at the University of Wroclaw, completed her post-graduate degree studies at the University of Paris VII and received her doctorate from the University of Wroclaw in 1984.

Ms. Labuda taught at the University of Wroclaw from 1973-1981. In 1980 she became a member of the national Solidarity movement, and was imprisoned during Martial Law in 1982. In 1989 she was elected to the parliament of Poland, and in 1990 became a founding member of the Democratic Union party. She was reelected to Parliament in 1991.

Ms. Labuda serves as the President of the Parliamentary Group of Women, and is a member of the Foreign Affairs Commission. She is also founder and president of the "Aid for Women" and "Assistance for Abandoned Children" foundations.

HALINA MARIA NOWINA-KONOPKA
Poland

Member of Parliament

Halina Maria Nowina-Konopka was born in Tarnow. In 1966, she graduated with a degree in architecture from the Cracow Technical University. She has designed the Skansen at Sanok and received the national prize in 1971. Since then, she has worked as a faculty member of the Olsztyn Agro-Technical Academy, the Department of Land Construction. She has published many scientific papers and raised seven children.

Before the free elections in 1989, she was a co-founder of the Citizens' Committee in Olsztyn, which was established to break the Communist Party's political monopoly. She later became its chairperson. In 1991, she was elected to parliament from the Catholic Action list in Olsztyn. She is a member of the Board of the Christian National Union Parliamentary Caucus. She is the Vice President of the Parliamentary Commission on Education, Science and Technical Progress, the Vice President of the Extraordinary Commission for the Preparation of the Act on Legal Protection of the Conceived Child, and a member of the Parliamentary Commission for Culture and the Mass Media.

SMARANDA ENACHE
Romania

Civic Alliance

Ms. Smaranda Enache was born in Tirgu-Mures, Transylvania, Romania in 1950. She received her university degree in modern languages from the University of Bucharest.

Ms. Enache is a leader of the Civic Alliance party of romania, and Co-President of the Pro-Europe League. She is currently active in conflict resolution strategies and inter-ethnic dialogues in her country.

IRINA MOROIANU ZLATESCU
Romania

Attorney

Ms. Irina Moroianu Zlatescu is a practicing attorney specializing in international and comparative law. Ms. Zlatescu most recently served as an Observer at the 44th Session of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

From 1975 until 1990, Ms. Zlatescu was the editor, heading editor and chief editor of the Romanian Review of Law. After leaving the Law Review in 1990, Ms. Zlatescu became an associate professor at the Academy of Economic Science at Bucharest and a practicing member of the Bucharest Bar Association.

Ms. Zlatescu received her law degree from the University of Bucharest in 1973, completed her formal studies of journalism in 1977 and received a Superior Diploma in Comparative Law in 1981. Ms. Zlatescu is currently a candidate for a doctorate in Civil Law and a doctorate in Constitutional Law and Political Institutions at the University of Bucharest.

Her professional accomplishments include serving as the Deputy Director of the Romanian Institute for Human Rights, assisting the Women Division of the United Nations as an independent expert representing Romania and contributing as an independent expert on minority's problems at the C.S.C.E.

EVA ZAHRADNIKOVA
Slovakia

State Secretary for the Ministry of Labor,
Social Affairs and Family

Currently serving as the State Secretary for the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family, Ms. Eva Zahradnikova completed her studies of pyschology at the Department of Philosophy, Comenius University in 1975.

Before accepting the position as Ministry Secretary in 1992, Ms. Zahradnikova worked as an advisor to the Slovak Parliament Deputy in the area of employment and social policy.

From 1978 to 1984 Ms. Zahradnikova worked for the Economic Research Institute where she devoted herself to researching work condition problems, wages and working hours. During the last five years she lead the research team involved in the social and economic conditions of working women.

In addition, Ms. Zahradnikova has written many publications concerning employment, work conditions and women in the work force.

MELITA ZAJC
Slovenia

Editor-in-Chief, *Mladina*

Ms. Melita Zajc is editor-in-chief of *Mladina*, an independent publication (circulation 27,000) currently the only weekly Slovenian magazine. She received a degree in journalism and the social sciences, and she recently began post-graduate studies at the University of Ljubljana, Department for Sociology of Culture.

Ms. Zajc is a member of Prener Club, an informal discussion group of independent female scholars, journalists and public officials involved in promoting Women's issues in Slovene society.

A few months before the March 1990 free elections, Melita Zajc wrote about abortion in *Mladina*. The subject soon became one of the main pre-election issues as several political parties differed considerably on their pro-life or pro-choice stance.

Ms. Zajc is following the changes in Slovene social life and politics, as well as providing a forum for advocating women's issues and various public opinions.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Palais de l'Europe, Room 9
3-4 October 1992

BIOGRAPHIES OF U.S.A. DELEGATION

NAOMI K. COHEN
United States

Member of Connecticut Congress

Naomi K. Cohen was first elected to the Connecticut House of Representatives in 1983, and has continually served. In the House, she has chaired the Education Committee and served on the Reapportionment Committee.

She is currently a member of the National Assessment Governing Board, the Education Commission of the States, National Conference of State Legislators Women's Network (immediate past chair,) New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Connecticut Humanities Council, and Democratic Women for Progress (co-chair.) She also belongs to many charitable and humanitarian organizations such as the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, where she serves on the State Wide Advisory Committee, Greater Hartford Special Olympics, and Bushnell Memorial Hospital Community Relations Committee.

In the past, she has served on the Governor's Commission on Quality and Integrated Education, the Interim Task Force on Teacher Retirement, the Blue Ridge Alcohol Treatment Center, and Mt. Sinai Hospital. She served on the Bloomfield Board of Education, including as Vice-Chair, from 1975-1983, before she was elected to state office.

She has been presented with awards from the American School for the Deaf, Connecticut Coalition for Children, Hartford Association of Retarded Citizens, Connecticut Commission on the Arts, and Connecticut Education Association.

JOY CORNING
U.S.A.

Lieutenant Governor, State of Iowa

Ms. Joy Corning was elected Lieutenant Governor in 1990 for the State of Iowa. Prior to her present position, Lieutenant Governor Corning served in the Iowa State Senate for six years. In the State Senate she was chosen as assistant minority leader and served on several committees; her most active roles were in the areas of education and human services.

Lieutenant Governor Corning received a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Northern Iowa, and taught school in Greenfield and Waterloo.

Ms. Corning was director of the school board in Cedar Falls, Iowa for 11 years and president for nine years. She has taken an active role in state activities including the Iowa Association of School Boards, the Iowa Peace Institute and the Youth 2000 Committee. In addition, she has been a member of the Education Commission of the States.

MARY JANE M. GARCIA
U.S.A.

State Senator, State of New Mexico

Currently a State Senator in New Mexico, Ms. Mary Jane M. Garcia is also a highly regarded businesswoman. She has been a successful businessowner since 1972. Ms. Garcia earned a B.A. in anthropology from New Mexico State University in 1983 and completed a master's degree in anthropology from the same university in 1986. She is currently planning to pursue her Ph.D. in anthropology in the fall of 1992.

Ms. Garcia has earned many professional honors and appointments during her career. In 1985, she was named in Marquis Who's Who in the West and in 1986 she was named in Marquis Who's Who of American Women.

Ms. Garcia currently serves on the Board of Trustees for the Memorial Hospital Foundation and the Board of Trustees of the New Mexico Community Foundation in Santa Fe. Ms. Garcia is also a member of the New Mexico Historical Society and Gangs Task Force in Las Cruces.

GALE A. NORTON
U.S.A.

Attorney General of Colorado

Gale Norton was elected Attorney General of Colorado in 1990, becoming the first woman in the State's history to hold that office and the first Republican woman in the nation to become a state attorney general. Ms. Norton earned her Juris Doctor and Bachelor of Arts, magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa, from the University of Denver.

Ms. Norton's experience includes clerking for the Colorado Court of Appeals and working with the Mountain States Legal Foundation as a senior attorney. During the Reagan administration, she was Associate Solicitor at the U.S. Department of the Interior. She also served as Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Agriculture.

Norton lecturered at the University of Denver College of Law and was a National Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace.

As Attorney General, Norton has been named chair of the National Association of Attorneys General Environmental Committee and a member of the National Environmental Enforcement Council. She chairs the Peace Officer Standards and Training Board and the Parole Guidelines Commission. In 1991, she was honored by the Federalist Society as Young Lawyer of the Year and was one of 20 elected officials from across the nation named by Parade Magazine as a leader of the future.

MARY ELLEN WITHROW
U.S.A.

Treasurer, State of Ohio

Mary Ellen Withrow was first elected Treasurer of the State of Ohio in 1982 and re-elected to this post in 1986 and 1990. In 1990 Treasurer Withrow initiated a technical assistance program with the new government of Poland, bringing seven Polish government officials to Ohio to study the Treasury's accounting, auditing and investment practices. During the spring of 1991, Treasurer Withrow also led a delegation offering technical assistance to the officials of three Soviet cities.

Since taking office in 1983, Treasurer Withrow has earned Ohio a record $2 billion in investment income and has created a variety of outstanding economic plans including: The Withrow Plan of Linked Deposits, recognized nationally by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, the Council of State Governments and Standard and Poors; the Withrow Plan of Agricultural Linked Deposits, established in 1985 to help Ohio's farmers; and the State Treasury Asset Reserve of Ohio (STAR Ohio), an investment

alternative for local governments and school boards.

Treasurer Withrow is the recipient of many distinguished awards and acclamations and an Executive Committee member of the Democratic National Committee, a member of the board of directors of Women Executives in State Government, an inductee into the Ohio Women's Hall of Fame and the recipient of a Women Executives in State Government fellowship to Harvard University.

EVALUATION OF THE CONFERENCE BY PARTICIPANTS

Each participant funded by USAID was asked to fill out an evaluation form. Nineteen participants returned their forms to Center staff. These forms were unsigned to ensure that the evaluation would be objective. (Forms filled out anonymously avoid the possibility of the participants believing that a positive evaluation would somehow improve prospects for receiving invitations to future activities.) The questionnaire asked for responses to seven statements. The choices were "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree." A summary of the responses follows:

1) The Conference identified issues related to the differences in men's and women's roles in the economic and political transition processes now underway in Central and Eastern Europe.

Strongly Agree: 9
Agree: 10

2) The Conference facilitated dialogue on gender issues with other U.S. and European officials and political leaders.

Strongly Agree: 13
Agree: 6

3) The Conference assisted me in establishing and broadening networks in the region.

Strongly Agree: 12
Agree: 6
Disagree: 1

4) The conference sessions were focused on issues which were pertinent to my work.

Strongly Agree: 7
Agree: 12

5) The panelists were knowledgeable in their subject matter and communicated effectively.

Strongly Agree: 14
Agree: 5

6) The logistical organization of the conference (airplane reservations, ground transportation, and hotels) was satisfactory.

Strongly Agree: 16
Agree: 2

(One respondent wrote "Agree" for hotels and "Strongly Disagree" for air and ground transportation)

7) I consider events of this type to be beneficial for me and my country.

Strongly Agree: 18
Agree: 1

(Copies of the evaluations follow this summary)

The Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe
October 3-4. 1992
Strasbourg, France

Evaluation Form for Participants

Please circle your response to the following questions. Your answers and comments will greatly assist us in the organization of future programs.

1. **The conference identified issues related to the differences in men's and women's roles in the economic and political transition processes now under way in Central and Eastern Europe.**

   Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. **The conference facilitated dialogue on gender issues with other U.S. and European officials and political leaders.**

   Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. **The conference assisted me in establishing and broadening networks in the region.**

   Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. **The conference sessions were focused on issues which were pertinent to my work.**

   Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. **The panelists were knowledgeable in their subject matter and communicated effectively.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. **The logistical organization of the conference (airplane reservations, ground transportation, and hotels) was satisfactory.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7 **I consider events of this type to be beneficial for me and my country.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please use the space below for additional comments on the conference. Thank you.

Comments:

As an American, I found it very valuable to hear the views of women who are ~~trying to~~ struggling to shed the legacy of communism. I gained an understanding of the obstacles to a free market democracy — & discovered that many of my preconceived ideas were quite wrong. The participants were diverse & impressive.

Suggestion: Next time, invite a few more business women in addition to the politicians.

The Role of Women and the Transition
to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe
October 3-4. 1992
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1. **The conference identified issues related to the differences in men's and women's roles in the economic and political transition processes now under way in Central and Eastern Europe.**

   Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

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   Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. **The conference assisted me in establishing and broadening networks in the region.**

   Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. **The conference sessions were focused on issues which were pertinent to my work.**

   Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. **The panelists were knowledgeable in their subject matter and communicated effectively.**

Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

6. **The logistical organization of the conference (airplane reservations, ground transportation, and hotels) was satisfactory.**

Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

7 **I consider events of this type to be beneficial for me and my country.**

Strongly Agree — Agree — Disagree — Strongly Disagree

Please use the space below for additional comments on the conference. Thank you.

Comments: Always dialogue is constructive and this conference was not only very good and in a very convinient time, but it started something new for the Council of Europe. A new task I may say, of bringing together women politians from all over the world to exchange views how to promote democratic procetures trying to make more women enter in politics. I am looking forward to ~~see~~ ~~what~~ more ~~will~~ conferences of this kind.

Rina Catselli M.P.

CYPRUS.

P.S. Please correct my name is Catselli and not Katselli.

Thank you

The Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe
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1. **The conference identified issues related to the differences in men's and women's roles in the economic and political transition processes now under way in Central and Eastern Europe.**

   Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

   0

2. **The conference facilitated dialogue on gender issues with other U.S. and European officials and political leaders.**

   Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

   0

3. **The conference assisted me in establishing and broadening networks in the region.**

   Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

   0

4. **The conference sessions were focused on issues which were pertinent to my work.**

   Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

   0

5. The panelists were knowledgeable in their subject matter and communicated effectively.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

0

6. The logistical organization of the conference (airplane reservations, ground transportation, and hotels) was satisfactory.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

0

7 I consider events of this type to be beneficial for me and my country.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

0

Please use the space below for additional comments on the conference. Thank you.

Comments:

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5. **The panelists were knowledgeable in their subject matter and communicated effectively.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. **The logistical organization of the conference (airplane reservations, ground transportation, and hotels) was satisfactory.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7 **I consider events of this type to be beneficial for me and my country.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please use the space below for additional comments on the conference. Thank you.

Comments:

The Role of Women and the Transition
to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe
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Evaluation Form for Participants

Please circle your response to the following questions. Your answers and comments will greatly assist us in the organization of future programs.

1. **The conference identified issues related to the differences in men's and women's roles in the economic and political transition processes now under way in Central and Eastern Europe.**

   Strongly Agree (X) Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. **The conference facilitated dialogue on gender issues with other U.S. and European officials and political leaders.**

   Strongly Agree (X) Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. **The conference assisted me in establishing and broadening networks in the region.**

   Strongly Agree (X) Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. **The conference sessions were focused on issues which were pertinent to my work.**

   Strongly Agree Agree (X) Disagree Strongly Disagree

192

5. The panelists were knowledgeable in their subject matter and communicated effectively.

Strongly Agree (X) Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. The logistical organization of the conference (airplane reservations, ground transportation, and hotels) was satisfactory.

Strongly Agree (X) Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7 I consider events of this type to be beneficial for me and my country.

Strongly Agree (X) Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please use the space below for additional comments on the conference. Thank you.

Comments:

The Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe
October 3-4, 1992
Strasbourg, France

Evaluation Form for Participants

Please circle your response to the following questions. Your answers and comments will greatly assist us in the organization of future programs.

1. **The conference identified issues related to the differences in men's and women's roles in the economic and political transition processes now under way in Central and Eastern Europe.**

   Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. **The conference facilitated dialogue on gender issues with other U.S. and European officials and political leaders.**

   Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. **The conference assisted me in establishing and broadening networks in the region.**

   Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. **The conference sessions were focused on issues which were pertinent to my work.**

   Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

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Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

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Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7 **I consider events of this type to be beneficial for me and my country.**

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please use the space below for additional comments on the conference. Thank you.

1) **Comments:** IT WOULD BE VERY USEFUL TO GO WITH THE ISSUES WITH THE SAME DELEGATE AFTER INTRODUCING PROBLEMS OF VARIOUS IT WOULD BE NICE AND FRUITFUL TO START REAL WORK

2) THE PROGRAM WAS VERY INTERESTING BUT TOO CROWDED — 2 DAYS WITHOUT A BREAK
THE COMPLICATION OF THE 2 DAYS WITH 12 HOURS OF CONCENTRATION WAS IN FACT AGAINST THE PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHO HYGIENE

The Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe
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Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please use the space below for additional comments on the conference. Thank you.

Comments:

I hope that in the future [illegible] from the United States will be [illegible] to [illegible] such conferences and [illegible]

The Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe
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200

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Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

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Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please use the space below for additional comments on the conference. Thank you.

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Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

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Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please use the space below for additional comments on the conference. Thank you.

Comments:

~~C'est~~ C'était l'une des meilleures conférences à laquelle j'ai assisté et il y en avait beaucoup. Merci pour tout !

Barbara Lilienfeld

202

Le rôle des femmes et la transition vers la démocratie en Europe centrale et orientale
3-4 octobre 1992
Strasbourg, France

Formulaire d'évaluation pour les participants

Veuillez entourer d'un cercle votre réponse aux questions ci-dessous. Vos réponses et observations nous seront d'une grande utilité pour l'organisation de futurs programmes.

1. **La conférence a identifié les problèmes relatifs aux différences entre le rôle des hommes et celui des femmes dans les processus de transition économique et politique actuellement en cours en Europe centrale et orientale.**

Tout à fait d'accord | D'accord | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord

2. **La conférence a facilité le dialogue sur les problèmes relatifs à l'égalité des sexes avec d'autres fonctionnaires et dirigeants politiques d'Europe et des Etats-Unis.**

Tout à fait d'accord | D'accord | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord

3. **La conférence m'a aidé à établir et à développer des réseaux dans la région.**

Tout à fait d'accord | D'accord | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord

4. **Les sessions de la conférence étaient axées sur des problèmes ayant trait à mes activités.**

Tout à fait d'accord | D'accord | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord

5. **Les experts connaissaient bien leur sujet et communiquaient efficacement.**

Tout à fait d'accord | D'accord | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord

6. **L'organisation logistique de la conférence (réservations de places d'avion, transports terrestres, hôtels) était satisfaisante.**

Tout à fait d'accord | D'accord | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord

204

7. **Je considère que les réunions de ce genre sont profitables pour moi-même et pour mon pays.**

Tout à fait d'accord D'accord Pas d'accord Pas du tout d'accord

Veuillez utiliser l'espace ci-dessous pour toute autre observation sur la conférence. Merci.

Observations: J'aimerais que les futures conférences fertent sur les aspects concrets identifiés au cours de celle-ci, pour être vraiment vu sur l'esprit de continuité.

Le rôle des femmes et la transition vers la démocratie en Europe centrale et orientale
3-4 octobre 1992
Strasbourg, France

Formulaire d'évaluation pour les participants

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206

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Veuillez utiliser l'espace ci-dessous pour toute autre observation sur la conférence. Merci.

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Tout à fait d'accord D'accord Pas d'accord Pas du tout d'accord

Veuillez utiliser l'espace ci-dessous pour toute autre observation sur la conférence. Merci.

Observations:

Sofia, November 20, 1992

Dear Mr. Nathanson,

Please excuse my french, as the next time I will write in english: perfect english. Thank you for your October 16 letter. The list of participants was very useful, I have appreciated all the contacts established at Strasbourg - it was all of the remarkable women. I place my name to the "Statement on the Detention of Ms Edita Tahiri" - unluckily this twentieth century did not spare us of several acts of violence. I approve of the Declaration of the International Conference on the role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. It is a project that is filled with action and is very interesting.

I, if I may, must insist on my proposition which is also supported by several participants, of undertaking concerted studies on the talk which concerns women. For the women, unfortunately, the memory is still very much alive. It seems that all the different problems poses risk to bring about horrible misunderstandings and feelings of reject from the past. I believe that it would be better to prevent these events by dialogues and studies, realized thanks to the efforts of the several among us.

In the waiting and with the hope of further encounters, Mr. Nathanson, please accept my sincere message of friendship.

RAINA KARTCHEVA
Communications Attache
President of the Republic

210

Sofia, le 20 novembre

Dear Mr. Nathanson,

Excusez bien mon français, la prochaine fois, ce serait en anglai a perfect American English. J'Aibien reçu votre lettre du 16 octobre et je vous en remercie. La liste des participants - ce sera fort untile,j'ai beaucoup apprécié tous les contacts établis à Strasbourg - c'était toutes des femmes remarquables. Je me joins au "Statement on the Detention of Ms Edita Tahiri" -malheureuseme ce 20-ième siècle ne nous a pas épargné quelques drames violentes J'approuve la "Declaration of the International Conference on "Th role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Easte Europe". C'est un projet d'action fort intéressant.

Moi, je me permets, tout de même, d'insister, sur une proposition fromulée par moi, mais appuyée par plusieurs des participantes, d'entreprendre Des études concertées sur le discours concernant les femmes. Pour les femmes appartenant aux deux mondes, malheuresement le souvenir est encore très vif, il s'agit de problèmes différents, mais de discours parallèles ce qui risque d'entraîner d'Affreux malentendus, des phénomènes de rejet. A mon avis, ce serait mieux de prevenir ces événements par des dialogues, par des études, réalisées grâce aux efforts conjoints de plusieurs parmi nous.

Dans l'attente et dans l'espoir de nouvelles rencontres, veuillez agréer, Dear Mr. Nathanson, mes meilleurs amitiés.

RAINA KARTCHEVA
Attaché de Communication
Président de la République

211

THE ROMANIAN INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
Bucharest - Romania
Fax: 40-0-12.83.87

FAX: (202) 293-1768

TO: Mr. PAUL NATHANSON
The Center for Democracy
Washington D.C., U.S.A.

FROM: Mrs. IRINA MOROIANU ZLATESCU

Dear Mr. Paul Nathanson,

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in the Conference on "The Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe", which have been very usefull to me and I hope to all the participants.

My presentation "Women' Position in Romania" was also presented here at the training course "Human Rights in the Administration of Justice organized in cooperation with the United Nations Centre for Human Rights in Geneva.

I send you herein enclosed the two first pages with some modifications.

Thank you once again for everything,
Best wishes,

Irina Moroianu Zlătescu

IRINA MOROIANU ZLATESCU
Deputy Director

2/2

STATE OF OHIO
Office of the Treasurer

Toll-Free Information in Ohio
Voice and T.D.D. 1-800-228-1102

MARY ELLEN WITHROW
Treasurer of State

October 20, 1992

Professor Allen Weinstein
#505
1101 15th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Professor Weinstein:

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Center for Democracy's recent conference in Strasbourg on "The Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe."

My participation was a wonderful experience and I believe it was an excellent opportunity for women throughout the world to discuss and discover our roles in the future.

For my colleagues in Central and Eastern Europe, I believe this conference was very enlightening as well as encouraging, for their efforts to gain equal rights and equal opportunities are just beginning.

Again, I very much appreciate your kind invitation to join you and other members of the American delegation in this very important conference. I believe the result of this conference will benefit many as they fulfill their roles in government and throughout society.

Best regards,

Mary Ellen Withrow

MARY ELLEN WITHROW
Treasurer of State of Ohio

30 EAST BROAD STREET · COLUMBUS, OHIO 43266-0421

213

INTERNATIONAL
REPUBLICAN
INSTITUTE

1212 New York Avenue, N.W.
Suite 900
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 408-9450
Telex: 5106000161 (IRI)
FAX: (202) 408-9462

9 October 1992

Professor Allen Weinstein
President
The Center for Democracy
1101 15th Street, NW
Suite 505
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Professor Weinstein:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in a very exciting and informative conference on the role of women and the transition to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. I felt priveleged to be among so many courageous women who have risked their lives for the cause of freedom and democracy.

I was struck by how much it meant to each of the participants to know that they shared similar struggles and that women and men from the U.S. and Western Europe are committed to helping them realize their goals. This conference can only lead to many avenues of success as friendships were formed, key issues were discussed and plans to begin a working group were solidified.

It is my hope that IRI can be involved in the process of bringing training, hope and vision to women throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Thank you again for including me both in the conference and in all of the functions, as well.

Sincerely,

Kristen Byrne

Kristen Byrne
Assistant Program Officer

THE
WOODROW
WILSON
CENTER

KENNAN
INSTITUTE
FOR ADVANCED
RUSSIAN STUDIES

HON. GEORGE F. KENNAN
FOUNDING CHAIRMAN

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DAVID BETHEA
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

ELLEN MICKIEWICZ
EMORY UNIVERSITY

DANIEL ORLOVSKY
SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

ALEX PRAVDA
OXFORD UNIVERSITY

JUDITH THORNTON
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

WOODROW WILSON
INTERNATIONAL CENTER
FOR SCHOLARS

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SUITE 704
WASHINGTON, DC 20024-2518
202-287-3400
OR
202-287-3000 (EXT. 237)

TELEX 264729

FAX 202-287-3772

October 13, 1992

Dr. Allen Weinstein
The Center for Democracy
1101 15th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Dr. Weinstein:

I wanted to thank you for inviting me to the conference on "The Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe" in Strasbourg, France earlier this month. The conference was interesting, exceptionally well-organized, and beneficial both professionally and intellectually.

Thank you again and congratulations to you and your staff on a job well done.

Best Regards,

Peggy Mcnerny

Peggy Mcnerny
Editor

/pm

215

Council of Europe

The Clerk of the Parliamentary Assembly

Strasbourg, 16 October 1992

Dear Allen,

Many thanks for your fax of 13 October 1992. I do understand the advice given to you by your faithful staff, by your doctors and your Board of Directors. In fact, I have often wondered how you are able, physically, to undertake so much travelling.

Of course, I am also sad because, in the meantime, I have been persuaded to go to Australia by Hans and Farida as well as by the Australians. The latter did not want to call off the event nor transform it, as considered for a moment, into a sort of planning meeting. The participation perspectives seem to be much better now. The Japanese are also coming. The continental Chinese are pouting because of the presence of our friends from Taiwan. But, for my part, I can live with that.

Nonetheless, we can not be sure yet that the Colloquy will be a success. I shall not fail to tell you about it when I am back.

Thanks for your words concerning our assistance with the Strasbourg Colloquy on Women. However, it was above all a success of the Center for Democracy on which I would wish to congratulate you. President Martinez, as you know, has been very impressed and has taken up his suggestion of creating an ad hoc Committee in the Bureau of the Assembly.

I do hope to be able to visit Washington next Spring (or earlier in 1993) and I shall take this up again in due course.

Wish many good wishes,

Sincerely,

H. Klebes

Professor Allen WEINSTEIN
President
The Center for Democracy
1101 15th Street, N.W.
Suite 505
USA - WASHINGTON, D.C. 200005
Fax 19 1 202 293 17 68

Postal address: B.P. 431 R6
F 67006 Strasbourg Cedex

Telephone: (33) 88 41 20 00
Telex: Eurco 870943 F

216

The Center for Democracy

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
September 17, 1992

Contact: Jennifer Arangio
202/429-9141

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IN EASTERN EUROPE TO CONVENE IN STRASBOURG

(September 17, Washington. DC) Women political leaders from the U.S., Europe, and the Commonwealth of Independent States will meet on October 3 - 4 at the Palais de L'Europe in Strasbourg, France, to consider "The Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe," Professor Allen Weinstein, President of the Center for Democracy, announced today.

The conference, organized by the Center, is being sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development's Office of Women in Development and Bureau for Europe, and held under the auspices of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. It will bring women leaders from Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States together with their counterparts from the United States and Western Europe to examine strategies for bolstering the political influence of and participation by women within a democratic society.

The delegates from over twenty countries include prominent legislators, government officials, judges and scholars. The Strasbourg meeting will inaugurate an ongoing dialogue on relevant political issues among women in leadership roles from East and West at this critical juncture in trans-Atlantic relationships.

Members of the media interested in covering the conference will need to pre-register with the Center at the telephone number above or via facsimile at 202/293-1768.

For more information on the conference please contact Jennifer Arangio at the Center for Democracy (202/429-9141).

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The Center for Democracy
1101 15th Street Washington, D.C. 20005
202/429-9141

217

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

USAID

NEWS RELEASE

WASHINGTON, DC 20523

OFFICE OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

#92-79
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, September, 17, 1992

CONTACT: Jerry Brown
(202) 647-4201

CONFERENCE ON DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION DRAWS WOMEN LEADERS FROM U.S., EUROPE & FORMER SOVIET STATES

Some 50 women political leaders from the United States, Europe, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet states will meet October 3-4 in Strasbourg, France to address the role of women in the transition to democracy.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is sponsoring the conference, which will discuss ways for women to increase their political influence and participation in a democratic society.

Key topics will include opportunities and obstacles to women in building organizational and leadership skills in Eastern and Central Europe, establishing political networks and grass roots organizations, and gaining access to the news media. The conference is organized by the Center for Democracy.

Leading the U.S. delegation will be Mary Fran Freedman, director of USAID's Office of Women in Development.

She termed the conference a "major first step in the involvement of women as major political actors in societies which now are opening up avenues to real participation that have been closed off for decades."

(more)

218

"I am proud that the United States is taking the leadership role in co-conducting this conference," she added, noting that USAID has been a leader in promoting democratic pluralism in Central and Eastern Europe.

Other prominent U.S. women political leaders participating in the conference include Joy Corning, Lieutenant Governor of Iowa; Cheryl L. Lau, Secretary of State of Nevada, and Gale A. Norton, Attorney General of Colorado.

Overall, the Agency has invested over $77 million on programs to encourage democracy in the region and build institutions that support it.

The conference is being held under the auspices of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

-0-

The Center for Democracy

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
September 29, 1992

Contact: Susan Orttung
202/429-9141

SEVENTY-FIVE AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERS TO MEET IN STRASBOURG FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

(September 29, Washington, DC) Over seventy-five women political leaders from the U.S., Europe, and the Commonwealth of Independent States will meet on October 3-4 at the Palais de L'Europe in Strasbourg, France, to discuss "The Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe." The conference is being organized by the Washington-based Center for Democracy, Chairman Peter G. Kelly announced today.

The conference, sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development's Office of Women in Development and Bureau for Europe, is being held under the auspices of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. It will bring women leaders from Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States together with their counterparts from the United States and Western Europe to examine strategies for bolstering the political influence of and participation by women within a democratic society.

The delegates from over twenty countries include prominent legislators, government officials, and scholars. The Russian delegation, for example, is lead by Ms. Ella Pamfilova, Minister for Social Protection in the Russian Federation. The bipartisan U.S. delegation will include Naomi Cohen, Member of the Connecticut General Assembly (Democrat), Joy Corning, Lt. Governor of Iowa (Republican), Mary Jane Garcia, Member of the New Mexico State Senate (Democrat), Cheryl A. Lau, Nevada Secretary of State (Republican), Gale Norton, Attorney

(more)

The Center for Democracy
1101 15th Street Washington, D.C. 20005
202/429-9141

220

General of Colorado (Republican) and Mary Ellen Withrow, Treasurer of Ohio (Democrat). A list of participants is included with this release.

The Strasbourg meeting will inaugurate an ongoing dialogue on relevant political issues among women in leadership roles from East and West at this critical juncture in trans-Atlantic relationships.

The Center for Democracy is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization which seeks to promote the democratic process and strengthen democratic institutions in the United States and abroad. The Center has organized a series of international conferences in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States that bring key political leaders together to discuss issues related to the democratization and economic reform process in the region. The Center maintains a field office in Moscow at the invitation of the Russian Government, and a liaison office in Strasbourg.

A press briefing on the conference will be held on Friday, October 2 at 11:30am at the Council of Europe Press Center in Strasbourg. Members of the media interested in attending the briefing or covering the conference will need to pre-register with Ms. Susan Orttung at the Center for Democracy in Washington (tel. 202/429-9141, fax 202/293-1768), or Ms. Sabine Zimmer at the Council of Europe Press Center in Strasbourg (tel. 33-88-41-25-97, fax: 33-88-41-27-90).

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DEMOCRACY

No. 12

February 1993

Newsletter of the Strasbourg Conference on Parliamentary Democracy

published by the International Insutute for Democracy

WOMEN'S CONFERENCES

In autumn 1992 several conferences on the role of women in politics and business took place at different places and in various contexts in Europe. Reports on three of them follow below.

Strasbourg

Over seventy women political leaders from the United States and Europe met from 3 to 5 October 1992 in Strasbourg, in conjunction with the autumn part-session of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly, to debate "The Role of Women and the Transition to Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe". The conference, organised by the Washington-based Center for Democracy, was held under the auspices of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly and sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development.

Women in leading functions from Central and Eastern Europe, as well as from the United States and Western Europe came together to examine strategies for bolstering the political influence of and participation by women in the democratic process. Topics discussed included the "Identification of issues related to the role of women in the economic, social and political process in Central and Eastern Europe", and "Building women's organisational and leadership skills in Central and Eastern Europe".

The truncated equality from which women benefitted under the communist regimes in the Central and East European countries has been stigmatised and the fact that it was accompanied by a distorted language has led to suspicion, and even refusal of what is said in the West to support women's autonomy and their participation in public life.

The passage towards pluralist democracy and market economy may well become fatal for women. The number of women present in national parliaments is falling dramatically. The return into their homes is almost inevitable because of the suppression of assistance and infrastructures in the social field, because women are the main victims of unemployment, and because of the glorification of women as mothers. Intolerance, sexism and nationalist ideology are intensifying.

Although the situation of women in the West was still far from ideal, their help and experience was regarded indispensable. Participants agreed on concentrating on an uninterrupted dialogue between East and West, on mutual support and continuous exchange in order to achieve the sustainable involvement of women at the highest level of decision making in the political, economic, financial and commercial sectors.

The Secretary General, Mrs. Catherine Lalumière, clarified the Council of Europe's approach with the term "Parity Democracy" and Mr. Miguel Angel Martinez, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, proposed setting up an Assembly committee on equality between women and men.

A transcript of the proceedings, which includes the opening and closing remarks by Mr Martinez and Mrs Lalumière, will be published by The Center for Democracy. To obtain a copy, please contact Paul Nathanson at the Center for Democracy, 1101 15th St. NW, Suite 505, Washington, DC 20005, USA, tel: +1 202 429 91 41; fax: +1 202 293 17 68.

221

The parliamentary Assembly: Europe's democratic conscience

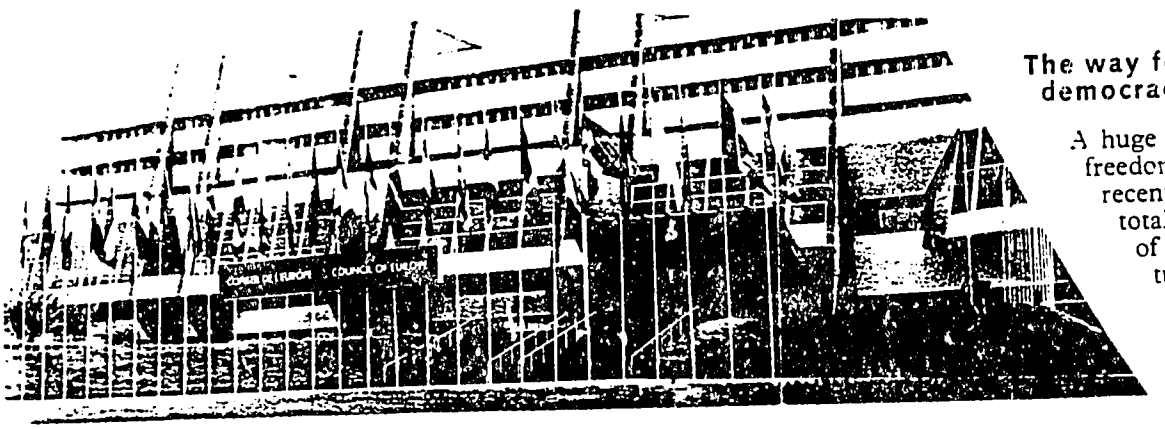
The work of the Council of Europe is based on co-operation between its two main bodies: the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly. While the first takes decisions and guides policy, the second is a forum for debate and reflection. The continual dialogue between them leads to real steps forward on the road to democracy and European unity.

Today, the Council of Europe is made up of 27 member states. It was created in 1949 when war-torn Europe had hardly awoken from a totalitarian nightmare. Its mission: to forge a closer union between European democracies, so that together they can guarantee peace, social progress, freedom and human rights. The Council of Europe has continually striven to build bridges between the peoples of Europe, encouraging them to understand each other better and above all to live in closer harmony. How? By protecting human rights and helping to harmonise legislation and national policies throughout Europe. It now plays an active role in many different spheres, including: human rights, media, social affairs, education, culture, youth, health, local government, environmental issues and legislation. Military defence is the only issue that remains outside its scope.

The democratic conscience of Europe

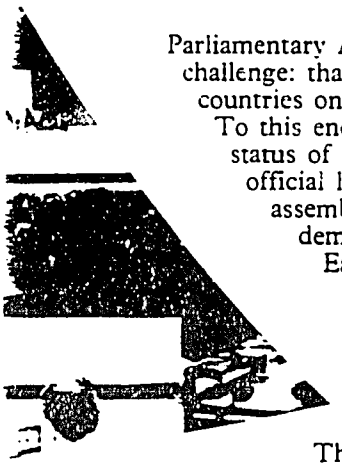
The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe was the first European assembly to be created in the history of our continent, and to this day is the most widely based. It serves as a forum where all political currents in Europe can be freely expressed. The Parliamentary Assembly plays a vital role in guiding the various activities of the Council of Europe and determining their impact in member states.

- Since it is essentially a deliberative body, the Assembly has the freedom to be innovative and bold in its thinking. It is at liberty to choose what subjects it will discuss and can therefore tackle, in a forward-looking spirit, those issues which concern every European.
- It has a genuine influence on governments, since its ideas are carried forward by parliamentarians into their own national parliaments.
- Its pluralistic membership gives it the democratic foundation, essential for building Europe on a sound basis.



The way forward for the new democracies

A huge popular surge towards freedom and human rights has recently brought the old totalitarian doctrines and order of Central and Eastern Europe tumbling down. This, of course has presented the



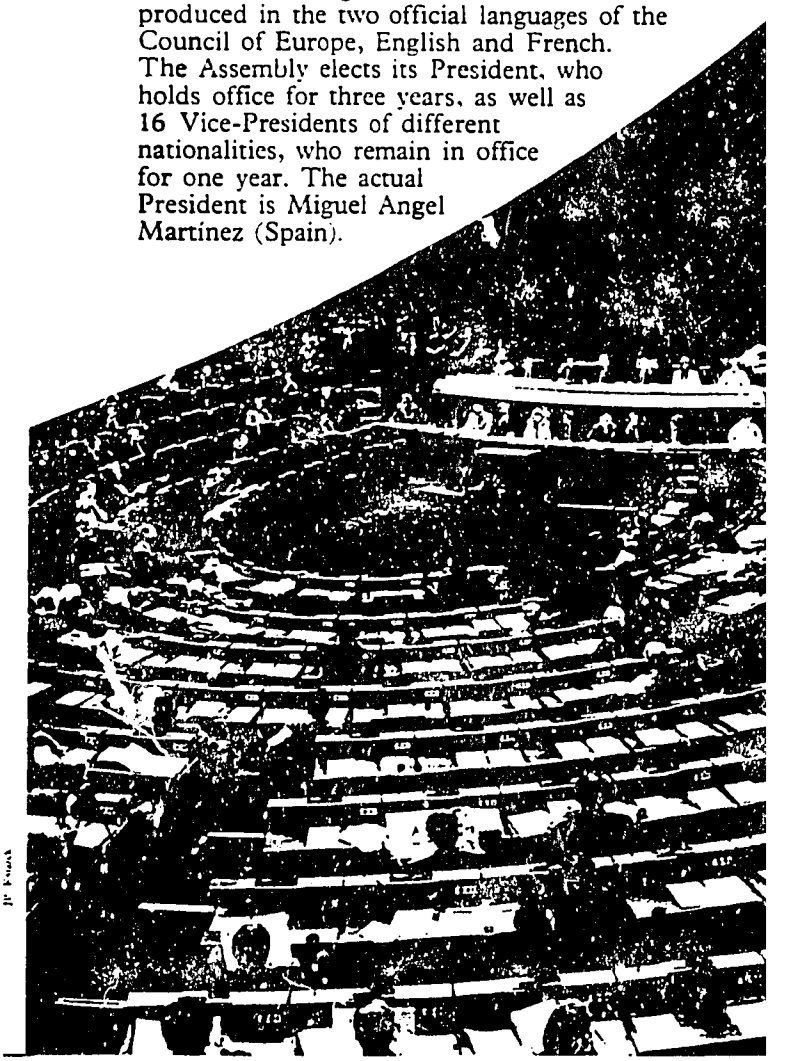
Parliamentary Assembly with a new challenge: that of reaching out to help these countries on the road towards democracy. To this end, the Assembly created the status of "special guest", establishing official links with the legislative assemblies of the fledgling democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. Those parliaments enjoying this status send parliamentary delegations, reflecting various currents of opinion, to the Parliamentary Assembly. These delegations participate in plenary sessions and in committee meetings, even if they are not entitled to vote. Albania, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Croatia, Romania and Russia currently benefit from the status of "special guest".

The Assembly's membership: reflecting Europe's national patterns

The Parliamentary Assembly must reflect the nations who are represented within it. Every political trend, therefore, finds its place, determined by its relative popularity among the citizens of each member state.
The Assembly is made up of 210 parliamentarians (members of either the lower or upper houses of national parliaments) and their 210 substitutes. They are elected or appointed by national parliaments from among their own members. Since the founding of the Organisation, 2 500 parliamentarians have sat in the Assembly Chamber of the Council of Europe.
Each country is assigned a number of seats in proportion to its population, reflecting the balance of political parties within its national parliament. Israel's Parliament has the status of observer.
In the Assembly Chamber parliamentarians are seated in alphabetical order and not by party or nationality. Their contributions are personal ones. Some members sit as independents, but most ally themselves with the five political groups which have been formed: the Socialist Group, the European People's Party, the European Democratic Group, the Liberal, Democratic and Reformers Group and the Group of the Unified European Left.

Organisation of the Assembly: a mirror of democracy

The Parliamentary Assembly makes suggestions to governments to further the European cause, and also comments on the major issues of the day.
The annual session of the Assembly is divided into three parts (spring, autumn and winter), each lasting about a week. In addition, an extra summer session is held each year in one of the member countries, the aim being to make the work of the Assembly more widely known. All these sittings are public.
The speeches are made and simultaneously interpreted into eight languages (French, English, Italian, German, Spanish, Turkish, Dutch and Portuguese). Documents are produced in the two official languages of the Council of Europe, English and French.
The Assembly elects its President, who holds office for three years, as well as 16 Vice-Presidents of different nationalities, who remain in office for one year. The actual President is Miguel Angel Martinez (Spain).

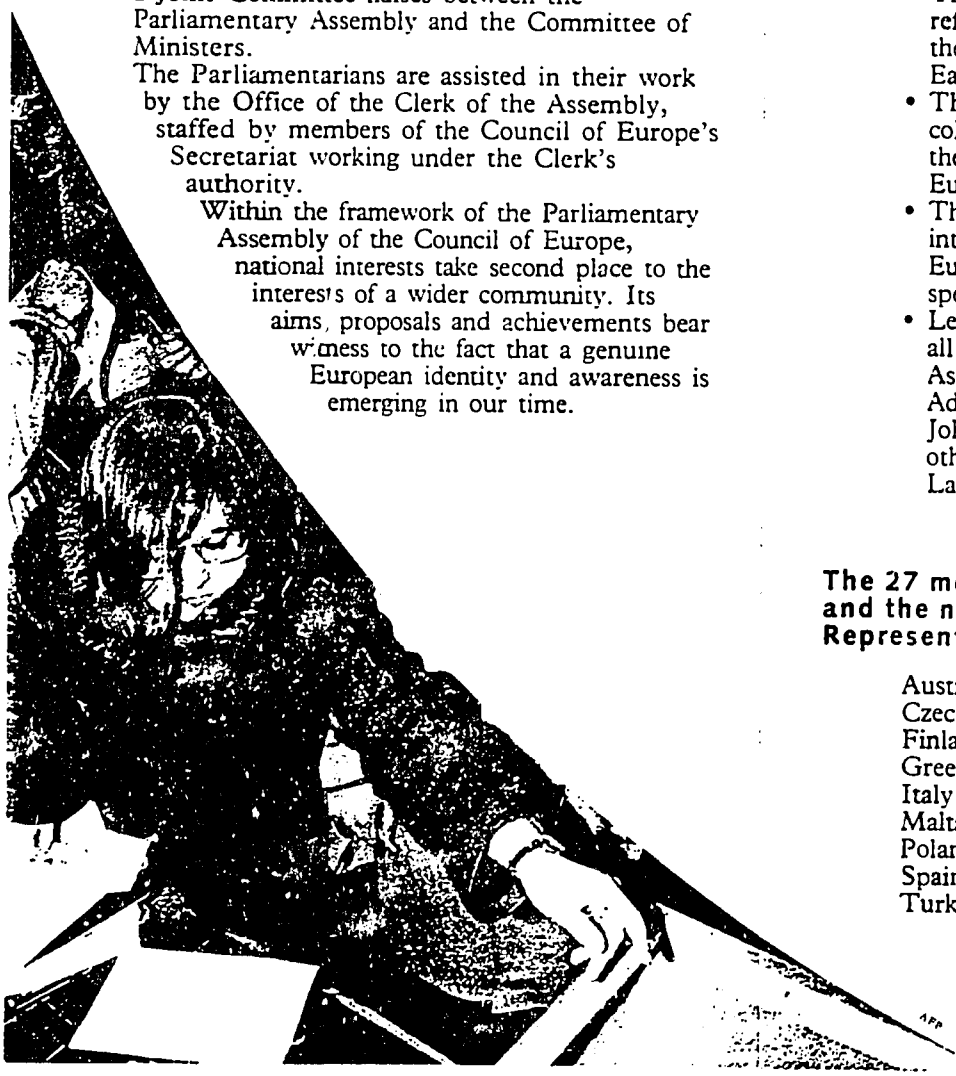


The President and Vice-Presidents make up the Bureau of the Assembly, whose tasks include drawing up the agenda and scheduling debates. The Assembly also elects the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the Deputy Secretary General, the judges of the European Court of Human Rights and the Clerk of the Assembly. The Assembly makes **recommendations** to the Committee of Ministers and forms **resolutions** to express its views on important current issues. It is regularly consulted by the Committee of Ministers, particularly on the accession of new members to the Council of Europe.

The Assembly's groundwork is carried out by thirteen specialised committees. A Standing Committee (members of the Bureau, chairmen of the committees and members appointed by the Assembly) meets at least three times a year, and a Joint Committee liaises between the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers.

The Parliamentarians are assisted in their work by the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly, staffed by members of the Council of Europe's Secretariat working under the Clerk's authority.

Within the framework of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, national interests take second place to the interests of a wider community. Its aims, proposals and achievements bear witness to the fact that a genuine European identity and awareness is emerging in our time.



Achievements and milestones

- The initiatives of the Parliamentary Assembly have resulted in the drawing up of numerous **conventions.** These are international treaties which play a crucial role in the development of legislation. The best known of these is the European Convention on Human Rights; thanks to an Assembly campaign a protocol banning the death penalty in peace-time has now been added to this Convention.
- Some other important conventions include the European Cultural Convention and conventions on the conservation of wildlife and natural habitats, transfrontier co-operation, the suppression of terrorism and the prevention of torture.
- The major political debates of the Assembly reflect the concerns of the European public: the Middle East, the North South and East/West dialogue, the defence of democracy...
- The Assembly regularly organises conferences, colloquies and public parliamentary hearings on the major problems facing society today and on Europe's relations with the rest of the world.
- The Assembly also serves as a forum for other international organisations, such as OECD, the European Space Agency and a number of specialised United Nations agencies.
- Leading figures from every sphere and from all over the world have come to address the Assembly: Winston Churchill, Konrad Adenauer, Juan Carlos, François Mitterrand, John Paul II, Mikhail Gorbachev and many others, including leaders from the Middle East, Latin America, the USA and Asia.

The 27 member states and the number of their Representatives

Austria (6), Belgium (7), Bulgaria (6), Czechoslovakia (8), Cyprus (3), Denmark (5), Finland (5), France (18), Germany (18), Greece (7), Hungary (7), Iceland (3), Ireland (4), Italy (18), Liechtenstein (2), Luxembourg (3), Malta (3), Netherlands (7), Norway (5), Poland (12), Portugal (7), San Marino (2), Spain (12), Sweden (6), Switzerland (6), Turkey (12), United Kingdom (18).

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THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe was the first European assembly created in the history of our continent. It is the largest political forum in Europe where ideas can be expressed freely.

The Parliamentary Assembly plays an important part in determining the general direction of the Council of Europe's activities.

The historic events in Central and Eastern Europe gave the Assembly a unique chance to contribute to the integration of these countries into the family of European democracies and promote parliamentary co-operation in Europe.

FORUM FOR EMERGING DEMOCRACIES

"Special Guest Status" was introduced by the Assembly in June 1989 to forge closer links with the legislative Assemblies of the emerging democracies of Central and Eastern Europe.

States with "Special Guest Status" send parliamentary delegations reflecting the different currents of opinion to plenary sessions in Strasbourg and, when invited, to Assembly committee meetings. At present, Bulgaria, Poland, Yugoslavia, Romania and the Soviet Union enjoy special guest status.

It aims at encouraging the countries concerned to continue the process of democratisation in order to enable them to meet, as the case may be, the conditions for admission as a member state of the Council of Europe. Hungary and Czechoslovakia are already full members.

The Assembly is currently preparing opinions for the Committee of Ministers on the requests of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia to become members. For Poland, an opinion has already been adopted pending the holding of free general elections.

227

Non-governmental organisations take part in a certain number of committees as observers and provide a valuable input to important events in the Assembly.

The texts adopted by the Assembly give guidelines to national governments, parliaments and political parties. The Assembly has also been the instigator of many Conventions (international treaties), which form the basis of a truly European system of legislation. The best-known of these is the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Assembly also holds regular conferences, symposia and public parliamentary hearings on major topical issues such as : violence, environment, genetic engineering, drugs, Aids, media.

"STRASBOURG CONFERENCES": ENHANCING AND STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY IN THE WORLD

The "Strasbourg Conferences" launched in 1983 provide a forum for parliamentarians from pluralist democracies from all corners of the globe to meet for a few days every four years to study ways of improving and strengthening democracy throughout the world.

The 1991 Conference will deal with the struggle for democracy in developing countries.

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Do not confuse the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe with the European Parliament.

The **Parliamentary Assembly** comprises representatives of the 25 Council of Europe member states elected or appointed by national parliaments.

The **European Parliament** comprises the directly elected representatives of the 12 member countries of the European Communities. It also meets at the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg.

268