



N°17 → Spring 2011

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SHIFT
mag
EUROPE TALKS TO BRUSSELS

The Story

Womanlike Europe

From feminism to femininity:
so close, yet so far

Europe & the world

'Armadillo': inside soldiers' lives

Interview with Janus Metz



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WarmUp

DrawingBoard
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Out of order

Feminine footprint

Our focus on the feminine side of Europe has prompted us to take a look at ourselves. Just as some people evaluate their carbon footprint, should we calculate our own feminine credentials as a magazine?

After a comprehensive scan, here are the main results: the publisher and editor-in-chief are both men; the deputy editor is a woman; of all the staff members to have worked on the magazine, 7 out of 10 have been men; 32.5% of our contributors are women; 42% of interviewees are female; the words 'woman' and 'women' appear 35 times in the space of 484 pages; 37% of the magazine's published photos have included women; etc.

Does this introspective exercise make any sense? Almost certainly not, but working on this issue has taught us how weighty the figures can be when talking about the current situation of women in Europe. So weighty, in fact, that sometimes you end up believing that they can explain everything. The European Commission is promoting the adoption of quotas. This will constitute parity in figures. Proper parity, however, goes way beyond statistics. In other words, having five men and five women sitting around the same table doesn't always mean true equality... ■

LAURENT VAN BRUSSEL, EDITOR IN CHIEF



Even for age-old friends, a fault can always develop on the hotline to Brussels.



The journey consisted of 140 days of travel and 70 days of driving as the car passed through 14 different countries. The project involved 100 students.

Through the lens Electric road trip

London, UK, 1 January: BBC World broadcast the first episode of Racing Green Endurance, an eight-part series and road documentary about the 26 000 km journey of an electric sports car – manufactured by students at Imperial College London – from the top of Alaska down to the tip of South America. Overcoming desert, jungle, and torrential rain storms, the team became the first in the world to drive the entire length of the Pan-American Highway in an electric car. ■

CARTE BLANCHE

Shaking-off inertia before it becomes paralysis

The good news is that European politicians are no longer in denial about the EU's decline. But the bad news is that there are no signs of a strategy to reverse it.

A refrain that is all too familiar to chroniclers of European integration is that only when external challenges are serious do EU governments overcome their squabbles and unite.

Now the EU faces the tough challenge of how to respond to its relative decline and the rise of Asia in a 'post-Western world'. But so far there's no sign of "convergence-in-adversity".

Perhaps that's not entirely fair. European leaders have committed to fashioning 'strategic partnerships' with emerging powers, and defence ministers have agreed to share defence equipment. The EU is courting Asia more assiduously and has signed a far-reaching free trade agreement with South Korea. Additionally talks with rising markets have helped return trade flows to pre-crisis levels.

NO LONG-TERM VISION

But an effective counter-strategy is nowhere in sight. From climate change to trade, EU actions are driven by short-term pay-offs rather than by rule-based principles.

What is behind Europe's short-termism? One contention is that this inertia is a result of the EU's institutional design. Hopefully the Lisbon treaty's reforms will improve this. But institutional re-design will not be a magic wand for an effective EU foreign policy.

Nor can Europe's policy inertia be attributed to a lack of awareness. Until recently, the gradual nature of European decline meant that its seriousness had not fully registered, but today's policy stresses the urgency of an effective European response. Although some Brussels officials may bristle at this, few can still claim the EU is on a path to superpower status.

So how should we explain Europe's torpor? Perhaps the financial crisis has heralded the end of an active EU foreign policy. Yet internationalism could help Europe's economic recovery. The logic of 'getting our own house in order' before turning to the world is misplaced because the way Europe deals with the world will condition its recovery prospects.

Another impediment is that the EU struggles to move beyond its soft power model of 'external governance', based on the extension of its own rules. European policymakers are realising more flexibility is needed, and states like Ukraine have alternative partners and cannot have EU rules foisted upon them. The EU is giving such states more say, but in much of its external policy the basic model is still that of influence sought through transfer of the EU's *acquis communautaire*.

More importantly, the EU continues to lack a geostrategic blueprint. Although the EU shouldn't aim for a simplistic strategy, it must engage in deeper thinking that could provide a compass for its external policies. Such a geostrategy should contain co-operative realism, mixed with internationalism, transnational linkages and regionalism. It should also work at steering the U.S. towards a less hegemonic form of multi-lateralism.

Although Europe frets about the strength of the rising powers, these states suffer from major internal tensions. What Europe needs is to be unapologetic about pursuing its own interests. But it's clear strategic reflection is needed before EU inertia mutates into terminal paralysis. ■

RICHARD YOUNGS

DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE MADRID-BASED THINK-TANK FRIDE

PUBLISHED IN THE SPRING 2011 ISSUE OF EUROPE'S WORLD

Europe's World

This "ambitious attempt to stimulate the European as well as global debate on European issues", as described by the former Swedish Prime Minister and contributor to the magazine, Carl Bildt, was launched in 2005 by the Brussels-based think tank Friends of Europe. Published three times a

year in both English and French, Europe's World is a pan-European platform on which policymakers and opinion leaders can share views and contribute to forging a consensus on key European issues. ■

► Check it out:

www.europesworld.org



TheBill

21.12.2010 – 21.03.2011

remember, erase and rewind... or not.



Solitude is - not exactly - bliss

He has his meals brought to him from a local restaurant, enjoys the exclusive use of a gym, library and television room and occupies one of six cells which make up San Marino's only jail. Well, being the only inmate, he is certainly the most pampered prisoner in the world, but this unintentional solitary confinement has something of a 'double penalty'. Since he moved in last month, the only human contact the man has is with his guards, along with occasional visits from lawyers and relatives.
(Source: The Telegraph).

Bewitched MPs?

On 8 March Romanian lawmakers voted against a bill aiming to counter the pernicious effects of witchcraft, a text which had angered many fortune-tellers and clairvoyants. Under the text, they were to be licensed, pay taxes and set up professional associations. After reforming employment law in January to force witches to pay the same 16 per cent income tax as Romania's ordinary mortals, the government wanted to punish clairvoyants whose predictions fail to come true. But at the end the government seems to have sided with the witches as it called on MPs to vote against the bill, fearing it would "make witchcraft legitimate". "I am very disappointed, the bill was meant to prevent people from being deceived by so-called witches," told Liberal-Democrat MP Alin Popoviciu, who initiated the bill. "The bill angered many witches who threatened to cast a spell in order to make it fail. It seems they have succeeded," he added.
(Source: AFP)



One season within
one minute

17.12

The self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi sparks waves of protest throughout the Arab world.



01.01

Estonia becomes 17th member of the euro zone.



08.01

Belgium breaks the record for Europe's longest political impasse with 209 days without a government.

14.01

The Vatican announces a decision to beatify the late pope John Paul II on 1 May – the fastest beatification on record.

01.02

Swedish beer "Närke Kaggen Stormaktsporter" elected best beer in the world 2011.



That's your funeral!

How about a €3000 cheque to cover your own funeral? German local radio station 'Radio Galaxy' recently organised a controversial competition, inviting people to send their own epitaph for their headstone. Defending the competition, one of the station's presenters, Jens Pflueger, explained it was aimed at breaking society's "taboo" about death and getting young people to talk about it. "We wanted to raise awareness about this difficult topic among young people. (...) We want to demonstrate that it's good to get death insurance".
(Source: BBC)

Timetable dispute

Belgium proved that leading the EU 'without government' is possible but is this state of affairs possible for a campaigning government? According to observers Poland might be holding a general election in the middle of the nation's six-month presidency of the EU. Anyway the Polish junior minister for EU affairs, Mikolaj Dowgielewicz, has promised that upcoming elections will not disrupt Poland's EU chairmanship. "The scenario with elections before the presidency would have been much worse, because spring of this year is crucial for preparing for the presidency and ministers have to be active on the European front instead of campaigning or dealing with the formation of a new government. If we have elections during the presidency, everything will already be in place," he explained. What does not bode well for the Danish presidency – starting on 1 January 2012 – while Denmark will elect their national government in November 2011...
(Source: The EUobserver).

TheWord

"I [...] possibly lost track of the sources in one or two places."

German Defense Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, explaining his decision to give up his doctor title after being accused of plagiarism. (Source: Der Spiegel)

"We ought to take it slow and think about how best to start."

Flemish journalist Kris Janssens quoting Flemish Christian Democrat politician Rik Torfs following his statement after over 200 days of unsuccessful negotiations to form a government. (Source: You Tube)

"Tunisia has joined the general historic model."

French historian Emmanuel Todd who predicted the upheaval of the Arab World in his 2007 book "Le Rendez-vous des civilisations", in an interview with Libération.
(Source: Libération)

"The internet has wonderful things and, if you are a clean person, looking for work-related content or things for leisure, you can find God."

María Jesús Galán, a Spanish nun expelled from her convent after creating her own Facebook page. (Source: El País)

"Since Berlusconi's private life seems to be so intense, he should return to it."

Pierluigi Bersani, leader of Italy's Democratic Party; opposition parties have called for Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi to resign over sex-scandal allegations. (Source: Reuters).

"For some people it's a dream to kick this kind of people (hooligans), so I did it for them, so that they are happy [...] But it was a mistake."

French ex-footballer, Eric Cantona, freshly appointed director at The New York Cosmos, talking about his kung-fu kick on a Crystal Palace fan in 1995. (Source: BBC Sport).

"The film was chosen because of the theme of soccer as well as other interesting themes such as multiculturalism, equality and tolerance."

Peter Hughes, British Ambassador to Pyongyang, as Bend It Like Beckham becomes the first Western movie to be screened on North Korean TV. (Source: Korea Times).

13.02

Swiss voters reject proposed tighter controls on gun ownership.

16.02

Hungary amends its controversial media law to ensure it complies with press freedom provisions.

17.02

Day No 249: Belgium beats 'world record' in talks to form government.

17.02

The European Space Agency's new space freighter 'Johannes Kepler' is blasted into orbit.



01.03

WikiLeaks, the Internet and Russian human rights activist Svetlana Gannushkina are among a record 241 nominations for the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize.



07.03

Jacques Chirac becomes France's first former head of state to go on trial over corruption.

The Diary

The spring cleaning can wait...

BY ALEXIA BOEHM

BELGIUM

Cinema Novo Film Festival

Bruges

17-27 March 2011

www.cinemanovo.be

The Cinema Novo Film Festival in Bruges presents new films from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Premieres, shorts and features are screened at the Liberty and Lumière art house cinemas.

ESTONIA

JAFF

Tallinn

2-11 April 2011

www.animefest.eu/JAFF4

"JAFF" is a festival of animated Japanese films during which around 20 feature-length films, all with Estonian subtitles, will be screened. Special events will also be held as part of the festival for fans of anime – an anime party, a costume play, and themed competitions and talks. The event forms part of the programme for Tallinn – European Capital of Culture 2011.

LATVIA

International Children's Film Festival

Riga

16-24 April 2011

<http://festivali.arsenals.lv/berimors/en>

The Berimor's Cinema is the venue for the International Children's Film Festival in Riga. Hosted by Berimor the Pug, the festival showcases the best new European films depicting the fantasy world of children's fairy tales. The festival will delight anyone who loves cinema, fairy tales and "man's best friend". Berimor the friendly pug will be bringing in the best new films from all over Europe and presenting them in Riga. The children's jury will vote to decide which film should be awarded the festival's main prize, Berimor's "Big Pillow", while festival audiences will decide which film receives Berimor's "Small Pillow" prize.

WORLDWIDE

Earth Day

22 April 2011

<http://earthday2011.com>

Earth Day 2011 marks 41 years of green activism and looks ahead at the potential for what can *still* be achieved. Earth Day 2011 is an opportunity for people to join together for positive, ecological change. The choices we make now will affect future generations to come. Earth Day is the largest, most celebrated environmental event worldwide. On Earth Day, individuals and organisations demonstrate their commitment to environmental protection and sustainability. We are constantly surrounded by environmental challenges as our daily actions contaminate and degrade the fragile environment that both humans and wildlife rely upon to survive.

SWEDEN

International Science Festival

Gothenburg 2011

Göteborg

10-15 May 2011

www.goteborg.com

With hundreds of activities and 100 000 visitors, the International Science Festival Gothenburg is one of Europe's leading popular science events and the only one of its kind in Sweden. For a fortnight or so each year the world of science moves onto the streets and squares of Göteborg as well as into libraries, museums and dockyards. The festival's aim is to be the best and most exciting meeting-place for researchers, schools and the general public. Different aspects of the festival will be popping up in unexpected places. The activities are open to everyone and almost all festival events are free.

POLAND

Warsaw International Book Fair

Warsaw

19-22 May 2011

www.e-warsaw.pl

The Warsaw International Book Fair, held at the city's Palace of Culture and Science, is an annual interface between Western and Eastern European publishers. A flurry of authors, publishers, booksellers, agents and editors come together for wide-ranging discussions and promotion. First held in 1956, the fair has grown from modest beginnings to include representatives from some 30 countries and nearly 600 exhibitors. There are discussions on various genres in publishing as well as readings, meet-the-author sessions and special celebrations.

andmore...

AUSTRIA

Sound: frame Festival
Vienna

25 March-9 April 2011

www.soundframe.at

UK

Human Rights Watch International
Film Festival
London

23 March-1 April 2011

www.hrw.org/liff

ITALY

Slow Fish
Genoa

17-20 April 2011

www.slowfish.it

IRELAND

Pan Celtic Festival
Dingle Peninsula

26 April-1 May 2011

www.panceltic.ie

UK

Old Master Drawings: Guercino,
Rubens, Tintoretto
Liverpool

Until 2 May 2011

www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

HUNGARY

Budapest Palinka Festival
Budapest

6-9 May 2011

www.budapestipalinkafesztival.hu

DENMARK

Copenhagen Medieval Festival
Copenhagen

10-13 June 2011

www.kmm.dk

GERMANY

Kieler Woche: welcome to one of
the world's biggest sailing and
maritime festivals
Kiel

18-26 June 2011

www.kieler-m=woche.de

CROATIA

T-Mobile INmusic Festival
Zagreb

21-22 June 2011

www.t-mobileinmusicfestival.com

ITALY

Venice Biennale
Venice

June 2011

www.labiennale.org

The Venice Biennale is a major contemporary art exhibition that takes place once every two years (in odd years) in Venice, Italy. For over a century the Biennale has been one of the most prestigious cultural institutions in the world. Ever since its foundation in 1895, it has led the way in promoting avant-garde artistic trends and organising international contemporary art events, in accordance with a multi-disciplinary model which characterises its unique nature. After World War I, the Biennale showed mounting interest in innovative traditions within modern art. Between the two World Wars, many leading modern artists had their work exhibited at the event. The formal Biennale is located in the Giardini gardens, where 30 permanent national pavilions are housed.

HUNGARY

European Dragon Boat
Championship

Budapest

19-20 June 2011

www.sarkanyhajozas.hu

Dragon boat racing, which originated in China over 2 000 years ago, is one of the most popular team water sports today. There are several championship rounds in Europe, with Budapest hosting some of the races held each year between May and September. The championship races in Budapest are also the scene for the staging of a dragon boat festival.

GERMANY

Conference on human rights in
a globalised world – Challenges
for the media

Bonn

20-22 June 2011

www.dw-gmf.de

The curses and blessings of globalisation represent two sides of the same coin. Globalisation offers tremendous opportunities to generate more universal observance of human rights, but also poses serious dangers to the fundamental rights of the individual. National and international organisations are increasingly urging that people, people's needs and human rights be placed at the heart of the debate – as advocated by the Human Rights Convention of the United Nations.

THE ARTS

Music video

Wild stages celebrate their fifth anniversary

Five years ago, the “Take Away Shows” have introduced a new meaning to the word concert, getting artists to move away from using the stage. Interview with Vincent Moon, one of the two brains behind the concept.

INTERVIEW BY LAURENT VAN BRUSSEL

Five years after its inception, how do you see the concept? Are you where you wanted to be?

Where do we want to be? Good question. I don't know. After five years, we're definitely more than happy with the project's success. Even though reactions started to arrive from all over the place after the first year, particularly in the year just ended we've been able to gauge the project's impact. We're constantly receiving links to similar projects “inspired by” or even “paying homage”.

Also, yes, the ‘concept’ idea is problematic, since the last thing you want to do when you start a project is to define limits for it which are too clear and run the risk of getting bogged down in an idea, I think it's still difficult for some people to move away from the initial idea and understand that things are changing elsewhere. In my case, it meant getting away from Paris to try something new and find something else on the road. I've been leading a nomadic existence for two years now, and it suits me.

When you devise such a concept (which ultimately becomes what the protagonists do with it and, therefore, somehow slips away from its creators), there is bound to be some anticipating of the result. Did some artists completely surprise you (positively)? Conversely, were there any disappointments?

Yes, obviously, surprises, disappointments, it happens, and for multiple reasons. But I've no desire to mention anyone, I've made over 250 films (which sounds a bit like the roster of a porn star) and I would have to look at most of them again in order to say which ones we do this way or that ...

And audiences: are they still “answering the call”?

Obviously that varies, which is all the better, but the issue of the audience is a dangerous one, particularly when you do a project with no money on the internet. How do you manage the relationship with the viewer? How can you avoid wanting to please? We've managed to make these kinds of mistakes, but I feel more free to do what I want, whether people follow or not.

Although the concept is based on the unusual and the improvised, what happens with the artists in the minutes before the concert? How is the choice of location made? What questions do they ask before the event?

Again, it's different every time. I hate this idea of putting a formula in place and repeating it any number of times. On the whole, it's often spontaneous and decided at the last minute, which means taking risks and that there are times when it doesn't work at all. It remains a game, a long way from the world of professionals.

What feedback do you receive afterwards? What feelings do your subjects express most often “as they leave the set”?

“We enjoyed that,” something along those lines. Frankly, though, I've spent the last two years steering clear of young and enthusiastic groups, looking instead for rare musicians who have different preoccupations than having fun while playing music, which is a tougher approach, that's for sure.

It's safe to assume, that you're the one who generally invites along the artists. Inversely, have you received any ‘impromptu requests’?

Obviously, more and more of them. In principle, however, we only rarely give an affirmative answer, we are now busy with our own personal research.

“I've spent the last two years steering clear of young and enthusiastic groups, looking instead for rare musicians who have different preoccupations than having fun while playing music”

What are the next steps? Where do you see the concept in five years' time?

I've started my new collection, "Small planets", in February, so as to be more in tune with my own current research, which no longer really resembles the

"Blogothèque". Mind you, we still collaborate from time to time. ■

► @ Vincent Moon
www.vincentmoon.com
<http://vimeo.com/vincentmoon>

The concept

At the beginning there were two guys: the producer, Chryde – thirty-one at that time, the man with the connections – and the filmmaker, Vincent Moon – twenty-six, the man with the ideas.

Chryde wanted to share music in a new way while Vincent Moon wanted to film it differently. Chryde suggested that he should go and film musicians in the city, and Moon seized the idea and turned it into something special.

Since 2006 they have been inviting famous as well as not-so-well-known singers and bands to perform in cities all over the world, for audiences who are not waiting for them and who are not necessarily their fans. Streets, metro stations, roofs become their stage. This new kind of configuration brings freedom and spontaneity.

These artists become not street artists, but 'artists in the street', and so by definition, have to do without the 'comfort' of their usual landmarks and mise-en-scene. They have to play with new noises, lights and atmospheres. Moon and Chryde's Take Away Shows – that break away from the usual cycle of promotion – are the direct opposite of the idea of a society where everything would have a given place.

► @ Take Away Shows
www.blogothèque.net



THE CONTROVERSY

Underneath your clothes

Trading rights for safer skies: how necessary an evil?

There is some disagreement whether undergoing a virtual strip-search before being authorised to board a plane is an acceptable trade-off for safe travel. EU watchdogs are now pointing to a mismatch between body scanners' effectiveness in tackling terror threats and the price passengers have to pay – literally and figuratively.

BY FRIEDERIKE ENDRESS

The clear upshot of an opinion issued by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on 17 February is that the scanners – producing a near-naked image through clothing using radio waves or radiation – are not fit for purpose as yet. The document was released amidst a heated debate on if and how the EU should regulate the use of body scanners at European airports. Two main concerns with regard to fundamental rights were raised: “To date, no scientific research has clearly established that the scanners do not pose a health risk. This is crucial for passengers, but also for airport staff,” explains rapporteur Bernardo Hernández Bataller, adding that “the second critical issue is the protection of privacy.”

With the cost of acquiring scanner equipment currently ranging between € 100 000 and € 200 000 per machine, the question of who would pay for an EU-wide introduction of the new technology is another key issue.

Trial runs are already under way in different EU airports. EESC Vice-President Anna Maria Darmanin recently blogged about her personal experience at Manchester airport, where she unwittingly ended up inside the scanner: “At the exit I was rather upset and told the security officer I was under the impression that these scanners are still by choice,” she writes. “If you do not want to do it, you do not fly,” she was told.

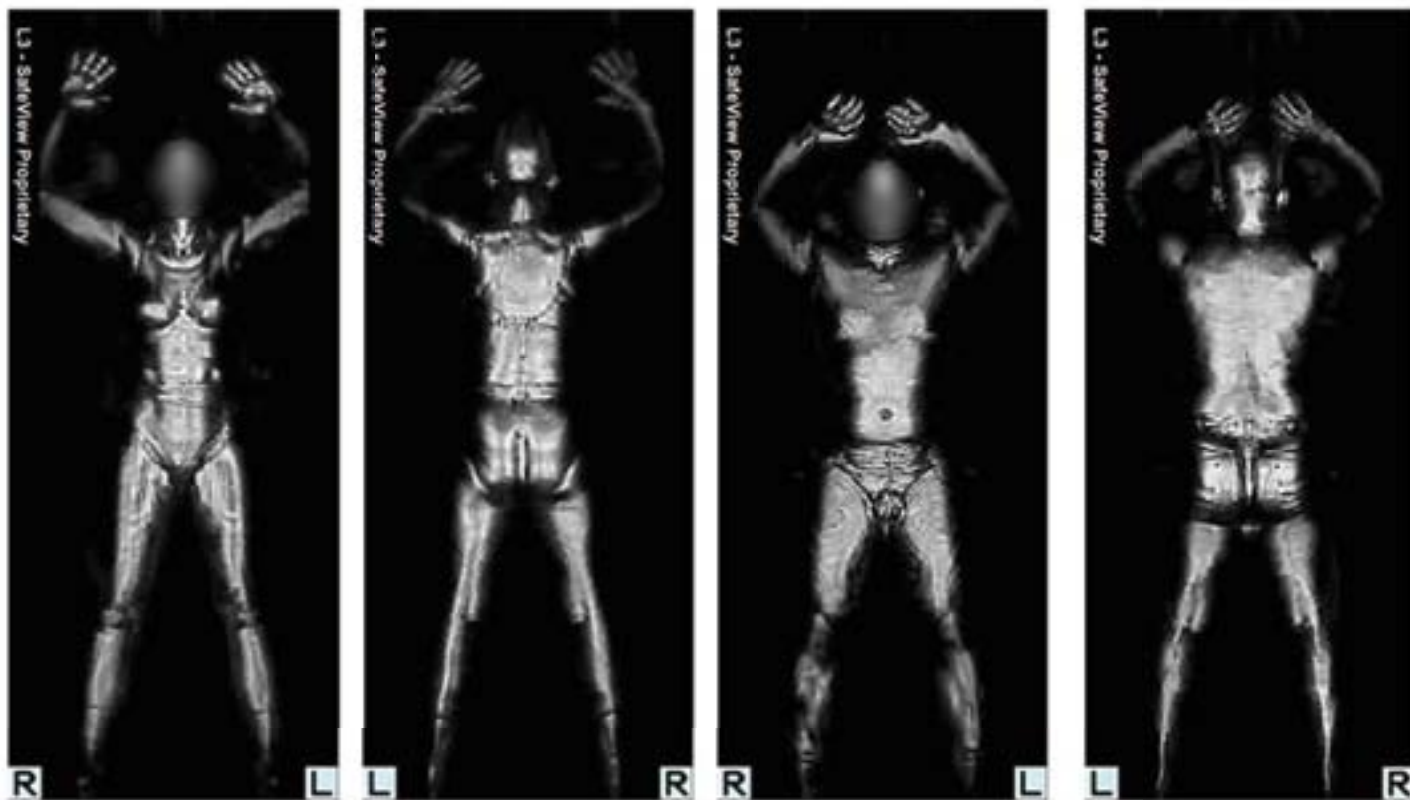
A FAIT ACCOMPLI?

Currently, the use of body scanners is not regulated at European level, the technology falling outside the scope of EU rules on aviation security. Member countries have the right to introduce them as an additional security measure or on a trial basis for a limited period. Only where an alternative procedure guaranteeing an equivalent level of security is available can passengers refuse to be screened – in practice, this is not always the case.

Following an attempted terrorist attack on a flight from Amsterdam to Detroit in December 2009 involving explosives concealed on a passenger's body, the limitations of traditional metal detectors became apparent. The UK, France, Italy and the Netherlands subsequently started testing the scanners in several airports for US-bound passengers.

“If you do not want to do it, you do not fly”

The European Commission has released plans to create common standards in this field. Preferring to refer to the machines as ‘security scanners’, it hopes to strengthen security thanks to the scanners' ability to identify non-metallic objects including plastic and liquid explosives. Other EU bodies have taken a more cautious approach, calling for deeper analysis of the implications in terms of fundamental rights before taking such steps.



Airport staff playing 'hot or not' with scanner images of screened passengers remains an unlikely scenario: multiple safeguards have been put in place to keep the invasion of privacy to a minimum. At Schiphol airport for instance, scanner operators work in a remote location from where they cannot see the passengers, faces appear blurred on the screen and the images are not saved. At the checkpoint, only a 'match stick' image is shown indicating areas where further searches are necessary.

Airport operators argue that some people may feel this method is even less intrusive than others such as 'pat-down' searches.

The scanners deployed so far in Europe use millimetre-wave technology which does not emit ionising radiation. According to studies, the effects of exposure seem to be similar to those of mobile phones and microwave ovens. However, uncertainty remains regarding the long-term consequences and the effects on vulnerable groups such as children or pregnant women.

With regard to privacy safeguards, MEPs warn that despite the measures put in place, the simple fact of being seen like this has implications for fundamental rights. And there is the risk of abuse: last year, security agents in a Florida courthouse saved 35 000 body scanner images and leaked them on the internet.

Scanners are now widely used across the US. In November 2010, 385 full-body scanners were in operation at 68 US airports, triggering a powerful civil rights protest movement. The American Civil Liberties Union stated that "passengers expect privacy underneath their clothing and should not be required to display highly personal details of their bodies such as evidence of mastectomies, colostomy appliances, penile implants, catheter tubes and the size of their breasts or genitals as a pre-requisite to boarding a plane."

WHICH WAY FORWARD?

There is consensus among all parties on the need for common rules. As body scanners are already a reality for many EU air travellers, agreeing on standards to minimise health hazards and protect the dignity of passengers would certainly mark an improvement, while adequate information provided at the time of booking would help them to make an informed choice.

"We all agree that European standards in the field of aviation security are necessary," Mr Hernández Bataller says in summary, "but security is not all about scanners."

Other key aspects include intelligence sharing, human factor analysis and profiling. Recent successes in counter-terrorism such as the prevention of the Yemen cargo terror plot have demonstrated that these elements play a fundamental role.

The acceptability of privacy restrictions and health threats is directly linked to the scanners' ability to prevent attacks effectively. In February, an undercover agent of the US Transportation Security Administration made headlines after passing undetected through a body scanner at Dallas airport with a handgun in her undergarments, raising questions about the efficiency of the method. Another weakness of the system is that objects hidden inside the body still cannot be detected.

Meanwhile, research into alternatives is under way. Israeli scientists recently created a device using mice trained to detect explosives and drugs. Even though this technology is not yet ready for deployment, the example shows that there are other avenues worth exploring. ■

EUROPE & THE WORLD

Campaigning cinema

Inside soldiers' lives

In the heat of the Afghan conflict, at Denmark's 'Camp Armadillo', Janus Metz has produced an Apocalypse Now-style documentary.

INTERVIEW BY PATRICIA FLORIC



Mixing genres, the Danish director Janus Metz offers a movie halfway between documentary and fiction which pulls no punches in terms of shock and graphic imagery. Totally dedicated to his work, Janus Metz spent months of research trying to understand soldiers' psychology and the rules of war.

SHIFT mag chatted to him about his experiences and working methods.

Is there a specifically European issue that might interest you as a documentary-maker?

I think in a lot of ways Armadillo was a film about a European war in Afghanistan. I can even sense that attention is extremely high in Europe, but that once you move across the Atlantic it is different – what I mean is that American people are more used to this kind of

movie compared to Europeans. And for once this one is about European soldiers.

The movie aesthetic used in Armadillo – stunning visuals and atmospheric music – highlights a 'softer' aspect of war, even amid all the scenes of carnage. While on location, did you experience this strange, mixed-up feeling of attraction and repulsion?

“...war is extreme, seductive even, because it really pulls you in to an encounter with yourself where you feel very alive in the face of death.”

Definitely! Of course, war is extreme, seductive even, because it really pulls you in to an encounter with yourself where you feel very alive in the face of death. And there is the whole drama – you know, war as a topic is extremely epic... and I think that's why war has always been a topic of celebration in film making. I reckon that my personal top ten films would include at least two or three war films. Apocalypse Now, for one.

You draw a lot of inspiration from Apocalypse Now, don't you?

Yes, I think in a lot of ways that Apocalypse Now is a masterpiece, because it deals with and tackles fundamental questions of humanity, as well as our notion of civilisation and barbarism – the blind spot that is present within a war.

What have been the reactions among Afghans and the soldiers themselves? Has anyone in Afghanistan managed to see your movie?

I know that Afghans abroad have seen it, but I doubt whether it has been screened anywhere in Afghanistan itself. I had reactions from the soldiers saying “you're showing one side of the image and it doesn't show all the good things we are trying to do for the Afghans”, and I had the Afghans on the other hand saying emotively that “the film really describes what we are living”, and most of them go as far as to say that “it's a diluted image of what we have to endure.”

That's it in a nutshell for me – justify the blind spot that soldiers are carrying around with themselves while trying to perform a mission when they have very little understanding of the situation there.

Do you think we necessarily need to shock when we talk about war?

Yes, I think the nature of shock is important, because it puts you in the situation of understanding what war actually is. I'm not a blind pacifist who thinks war should be abolished, whatever the cause. But it is easy to become cynical and dismiss other people's lives without any emotional reaction. And I saw this lack of reaction from the soldiers in Afghanistan – when they were killing

other people, for example, it was all professionalised and ritualised. A 'shock' effect can trigger a reaction.

The soldiers, Mads and Daniel, have very different characters. Was it essential for you to find protagonists with such a broad range of identity?

I was trying to make a film about a group dynamic and how it affects war. And I saw the potential for that in the relationship between Mads and Daniel. Mads is an open book – he looks up to the others, whereas Daniel is the most cynical character and always has an answer, always knows what to do. He is the Alpha male while Mads strives for group acceptance.

Plus, of course, it was important not to portray just one side of the characters – we needed to allow audiences to identify and wonder whether “that could be me” and “what would I have done in their shoes”.

Once you have finished a documentary, do you still keep yourself informed about the issue you have highlighted? For example, after your previous movies *Love on Delivery* and *Ticket to Paradise* do you know what is going on with the main characters?

Yes, for the Thai films I'm still in contact with them. The old woman has pretty much adopted me, in fact. So, whenever I'm in the region where they live, I drop by and have a lovely lunch... excellent

cooking (laughs). That's actually one of the big pleasures of making all these films.

Do you plan to return to the issue of marriage between Thai women and Danish men a few years from now in order to see how things have changed?

...You should never say never, and I may be interested in a film about the children from these marriages. But, you know, my interests tend to drift towards new things. ■

► **@ Armadillo**

www.armadillothemovie.com



SHIFTING WITH

Britta Heidemann

“Performing by yourself is admired and respected in China, regardless of the field”

The Olympic gold medal winner at Beijing 2008, fencing ace Britta Heidemann agreed to talk to us about body awareness, whether there are such things as men’s or women’s sports, and about her future plans.

INTERVIEW BY JULIANE GAU

Isn’t fencing more a sport for men? We’re thinking of the Three Musketeers ...

Fencing is an aesthetic, elegant sport that’s highly suited to women. You need tactics, technique as well as mental strength – and all these characteristics apply to both genders. Men are just physically stronger.

So there aren’t any sports that you would name as ‘women’s’ or ‘men’s’ activities?

No, I don’t think that there are any ‘women’s’ or ‘men’s’ sports as such – anyone can do the kind of sports he or she would like to do. It’s just that some activities in competitive sport have developed only recently – examples include women’s football in the 1980s and sabre fencing just a few years back.

You have strong ties with China. Do you see any cultural differences with Europe in relation to sport?

The Chinese have a different awareness about their body, and their overall lifestyle includes more time for contemplation. We are more factual, there is no whole between body and mind. How often do we eat fast food on the go without even thinking about it? The Chinese take a different approach to food and lifestyle, and regard physical activity much more as something natural. When I was at school in China, the grandparents of my hosts took me to a park, and I was very impressed by the sight of 80 year olds there doing stretching exercises like young people.



So the Chinese lifestyle is healthier?

They know how to balance their life. The Chinese see breaks as necessary, but nevertheless they work very hard. I’d sometimes forget to eat when busy, but my Chinese friends and colleagues would just laugh and tell me to take a break. Here in Europe, we are more focused on finishing something, but without acknowledging that breaks are necessary in order for us to regain our strength.

Would you have ever dreamed of winning a gold medal at the 2008 Olympic Games in China?

I never thought that I was going to win the gold medal, I thought that would all be too much, too perfect: first of all, I used to live in China;

secondly, the Olympic Games were being held in Beijing; and third, I was fortunate to enter the Games in top physical shape.

You graduated in Business Administration and Chinese, so do you have any plans for later in life after professional sport?

I give talks on “mental strength” and “performance management”, and so would like to develop this activity further. In sport you learn how to cope with defeat, and tactics in fencing can be related to life’s battles. It’s important to have balance in your life.

What image do the Chinese have of Europeans? And vice-versa?

Ordinary Chinese people above all take their consumer lead from “Westerners”. Many Western trends are also popular among the Chinese. In economic terms, above all the Germans score highly on account of their advanced technologies, in which China takes a special interest. China’s image in Western countries probably differs from country to country – by and large I sense that many still regard China as very foreign, and so reckon it’s time for people to get to grips with China more closely.

During an Asian tour you were able to train with Joachim Löw’s German national football team – are you a football fan?

Since my trip to Asia with the footballers, of course, I’ve been keeping a closer eye than before on the national side in particular. By and large the collaboration between football and me has grown ever closer: I am a DFB (German football association) ambassador for the 2011 women’s World Cup in Germany and, in this connection, am also a patron of the DFB public campaign, ‘Children’s dreams 2011’. These days I also attend most of Germany’s home games.

Fencing doesn’t seem to be a national sport in China – how do you explain your popularity?

It’s great to get so much recognition in China. Performing by yourself is admired and respected in China, regardless of the field. On the whole, in my case it’s probably down to the combination of winning in Beijing while also being able to speak the language and having been so immersed in Chinese culture. The Chinese like that. ■



Britta and China

Britta first encountered China while travelling with her parents. In 1999, the 17 year old spent three months as a student in Beijing. After finishing school in 2001, Britta worked as a trainee with Bayer Beijing and also embarked on her studies in Chinese and business administration. She graduated in 2009 after producing a thesis on Chinese environmental law.

A fluent speaker of Chinese, French and English and a native speaker of German, Britta divides her time between Beijing and Cologne.

Her recent career

2009: European champion – Plovdiv
 2008: Olympic champion – Beijing
 2007: World champion – St. Petersburg
 2004: Olympic silver medallist – Athens

Besides fencing

She is a goodwill ambassador for the 2011 EU-China Year of Youth

► @ Britta Heidemann
www.britta-heidemann.de

THE STORY

Womanlike

From feminism
to femininity:
so close, yet so far

Europe



Women make up some 53% of Europeans, yet are a majority in name only. We're not saying that European women have nothing, whereas men have everything,

Girl Power Better than the chief? Female leaders in politics

Today, women are finally able to compete for political leadership across the democratic world. Skirting around the remaining barriers could be the best way to make sexism a thing of the past.

BY VICTOR FLEUROT

As the world's largest single-currency economy strives to develop a model of sustainable governance, all eyes are trained on the unassuming figure of the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel. Since taking office in 2005, the skilled physician from the former GDR has quietly become one of the most respected leaders on the world stage, a reputation enhanced in recent months by her country's remarkable recovery from the financial crisis. Across the Atlantic, Latin America's own roaring economic powerhouse, Brazil, has just elected Dilma Rousseff to continue the work of the ever-popular (some would add populist) President Lula. Do these groundbreaking developments signal the beginning of a new era for women in politics, and will they change how the world is run?

LONG WALK TO POWER

It took about two centuries for modern democracy to allow women to compete seriously for elected office. Between the adoption of the US Constitution in 1788 and the election of Margaret Thatcher as UK Prime Minister in 1979, women could have been forgiven for thinking that monarchies had a better record in giving them political responsibilities. A year after Thatcher's win, Europe continued to break new ground with the election of Vigdis Finnbogadottir as President of Iceland, the world's first democratically elected female head of state. She would eventually go on to win re-election through until 1996, setting a record of 16 years in office. Today, women are running strong presidential



but in 2011 enough still remains to be done to justify the publication of a special issue on gender (in)equality.

1679

Italian Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia becomes the first woman to receive a university degree.

1791

France adopts the "Declaration of the Rights of Women and the Female Citizen".

campaigns in France and the US, while others are already in charge of countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Costa Rica.

Much has been said and written about the specific virtues of women leaders, as well as about their different approach to power. A 2008 survey by the Pew Research Center in the US¹ asked the

Instead of trying to make gender a central issue in campaigns, women should celebrate the fact that it is increasingly becoming a non-issue

public to compare men and women on a number of leadership traits. Women were considered more honest, intelligent and compassionate, while men were regarded merely as more decisive. However, when asked who made the better political leaders, 21% of the same respondents opted for men while only 6% backed women. These paradoxical results could be interpreted as a combination of two factors: public dissatisfaction with the mainly male political establishment on the one hand, which would explain the higher ratings for women's political qualities by crediting the "outsiders"; or fear of change and the power of ingrained habits on the other hand, which would explain the reluctance to call for a gender revolution. Yet this may also be missing a key point: of the remaining 73% of respondents, a solid 69% asserted that women and men made equally good (or perhaps bad) political leaders.

REAL PROGRESS: MOVING BEYOND DIVISIONS

Perhaps the revolution is already happening, at least in the minds of the public, despite calls for continued resistance by some of the more radical feminists. Activists are right to redouble efforts to

¹ See: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/932/men-or-women-whos-the-better-leader>

push for equal opportunities and political representation on the back of recent successes. But instead of trying to make gender a central issue in campaigns, women should celebrate the fact that it is increasingly becoming a non-issue. Defensive rhetoric as used by some can indeed be counter-productive in demo-

cratic debate, leading to situations where any criticism of a candidate's proposals and leadership skills are automatically met with accusations of discrimination. In this respect, Obama's landmark election showed how a traditionally discriminated status (ethnicity in his case) could be used with confidence and dignity to break new ground, yet without making it a central argument in his campaign.

Women in politics can and do use a similar approach, although some have been waving the 'sexism' card more frequently than others. Merkel seems to have always preferred hard issues to image in her campaigns, an attitude probably inspired by the relatively good gender policies of former communist countries. But the gender issue seems to be more difficult to avoid in places such as Latin Europe, where specific roles have traditionally been more defined. In her campaign against Sarkozy in the French presidential election in 2007, Ségolène Royal was happy to portray

herself as the reincarnation of one of the République's iconic figures, the revolutionary Marianne – whose models for official statues have included Brigitte Bardot, Catherine Deneuve and Laetitia Casta. Some have argued that this focus on glamour and womanhood, which came together with prompt accusations of sexism levelled at her detractors, only served as a distraction from her perceived lack of political credibility and leadership skills.

Other Mediterranean countries present a similarly poor record when it comes to women in politics, including Greece, the historic birthplace of democracy. Will history throw up another twist of fate? Within the current tidal wave of democratic uprisings across the Arab world, anything seems possible. What are the odds on a female Arab head of state breathing some much-needed life into the ailing Union for the Mediterranean? Young democracies certainly provide fertile ground for gender reforms and could inspire their more established counterparts to live up to their principles. ■

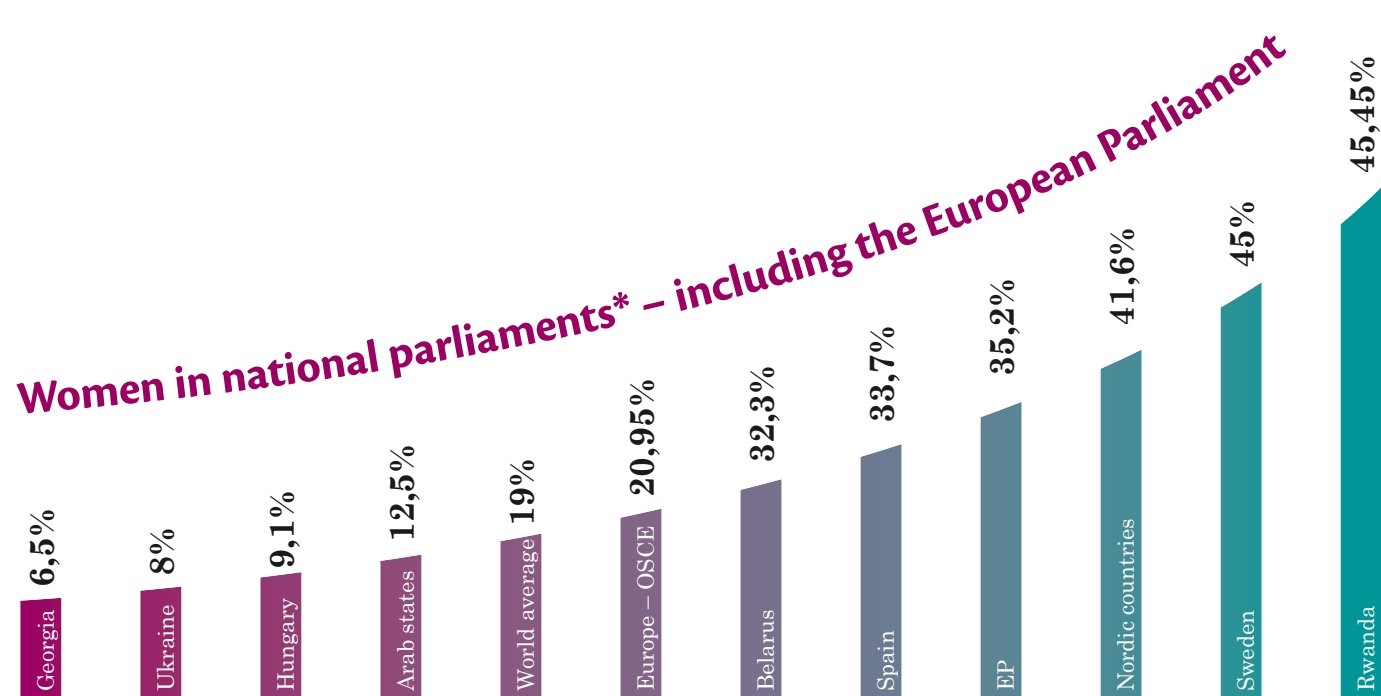


A group of women carrying signs against America's involvement on the side of the United Kingdom against the Irish, and tearing up a British flag, 3 June 1920.

Female leadership in Europe

In the 47 European countries – and their dependencies – 17 women are heads of state and government in 2011. There are currently 29 female leaders in 27 different countries or self-ruling territories in the world – this represents about 15% of worldwide leadership.

1 Queen Elizabeth II, UK; 2 President Borjana Kristo, Bosnia-Herzegovina; 3 President Dalia Grybauskaitė, Lithuania; 4 President Mary McAleese, Ireland; 5 Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor, Croatia; 6 President Tarja Halonen, Finland; 7 Premier Paula A. Cox, Bermuda; 8 Prime Minister Iveta Radičová, Slovakia; 9 Prime Minister Mari Kiviniemi, Finland; 10 Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, Germany; 11 Head of the Government Antonella Mularoni, San Marino; 12 Queen Beatrix, Netherlands; 13 Queen Margrethe II, Denmark; 14 Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, Iceland; 15 President of the Confederation Micheline Calmy-Rey, Switzerland; 16 Premier Viveca Eriksson, Åland Islands, Finland; 17 Prime Minister Sarah Wescott-Williams, Sint Maarten (no picture)



* Lower and upper houses combined

Source : © Inter-parliamentary Union 2011 – www.ipu.org

1905

Austrian novelist Bertha Von Suttner becomes the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

1906

Finland becomes the first European country to give women the vote and allow them to stand as election candidates.

East – West

Eastern European feminism feels the pinch in a globalised world

BY IOANA CÎRSTOCEA

Post-1989, Eastern European feminism has been progressively deconstructed, torn between its Soviet past on the one hand and Western globalisation on the other.

More ideological than geographical, the concept of ‘Eastern Europe’, the old division inherited from the Cold War, reflects a number of historical convergences in which the Soviet regimes and subsequent demographic transitions are fully embedded.

As experiences became shared down the years, “Eastern European women” were constructed (against their will) as a seemingly homogenous category: post-1945, they were thus used to test gender equality and were given political and social rights that would later be the subject of struggles waged by the second wave of feminist movements in the West. They also endured the formalism of equality handed down from above, a ban on associating within forums other than those of official organisations, the obligation of full employment, and even the surveillance of their private lives through communist biographical control and pro-birth policies.

A SIMILARITY OF CIRCUMSTANCES

The unifying label of “Eastern European women” was cultivated by campaigners during the 1990s in particular, reflecting the logics of ‘de-differentiation’ and ‘strategic solidarities’ which were maintained, and even fuelled at times, within the context of “globalisation feminism”. In a context of gender affirmation as the new global norm, and as stakeholders in democratic conditionality mechanisms, ‘Eastern European women’ collectively have made their entrance into more than one international arena. During the fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), for example, a manifesto entitled “The Statement from the Non-Region”, produced by women representing nongovernmental organisations based in Eastern Europe, set out to generate in international forums a feminist perspective bridging “North” and “South” and criticising the rapid assimilation of the “East” into the “North” after the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Shortly afterwards, a regional programme was introduced within the Open Society Institute, one of the most committed international aid actors in the ex-socialist countries, specifically designed to provide both the

framework and the resources necessary to express and affirm this regional perspective on women’s rights in the international sphere. KARAT, a coalition of Eastern European NGOs, which has since become a major force in international lobbying, came about in the same spirit.

CONTESTED ON SEVERAL COUNTS

Nevertheless, the preformed collective identity crumbled away and became more complex during the first decade post-2000. On the one hand, numerous criticisms were formulated in respect of the homogeneity of the ‘East’, which was perceived as a ‘post-Cold War’ model. On the other hand, the ex-socialist countries experienced differing political change, particularly from the European integration standpoint, while legacies in terms of the condition of women handed down by socialist regimes were politicised differently on the public stages in the ‘transition countries’.

Nowadays, the legitimacy of the unifying term is generally contested and only the very occasional voice still proclaims Eastern Europe’s geopolitical location as potentially conveying an innovative message for world

Topless for awareness

FEMEN – full-body fight for women’s rights

BY FRIEDERIKE ENDRESS

“First you look at our breasts, then at our banners.” This is how group leader Anna Gutsol sums up the strategy of FEMEN, a Ukrainian women’s rights group, which has gone topless on matters close to their heart: the lack of female activism in their country, an absence of female representation in government, and the fight against sexism.

Their credo: bringing about change in the society in which they live is possible – through “self-expression based on courage, creativity, efficiency and shock”. Focused on discrimination issues, but also engaged in the promotion of other civil rights, the street protest movement has drawn attention through topless demonstrations to sex tourism, the influence of Russia on Ukraine and, more recently, the execution of Sakineh Ashtiani in Iran.

Critics have accused the members of compromising their political message through overuse of the technique of undressing. The group retorts that, faced with a lack of resources, stripping off for their cause remains the most effective way to attract attention.

Founded in Kiev in 2008, FEMEN is composed mainly of female university students. It currently has around 300 members, including a small number of activists who go topless. The group’s leaders are thinking of turning the group into a political party to broaden its influence.

Use of nudity to help protest rallies gain in visibility is not a new phenomenon. Famous examples include PETA’s ‘I’d rather go naked than wear fur’ campaign and the ‘Bare witness’ movement (UK) opposing the Iraq war. ■

feminism. With interest waning on the part of international aid actors in countries which had already joined the European Union, campaigning organisations lost a fair chunk of the subsidies which had enabled them to affirm themselves within the sphere of international feminist exchanges. Ultimately, the “regional voice” has been absorbed little by little into gender’s international mainstream, in particular though the co-opting of the actors who had championed it. This is the case with Anastasia Posadskaya-Vanderbeck, a Russian feminist and signatory to the Beijing statement of 1995, who went on to turn her hand to the international promotion of women’s rights in dealings with institutional actors such as the Soros and Mama Cash foundations and, later on, the United Nations (UNIFEM). ■

► **Ioana Cirstocea is a sociologist at CNRS (PRISME-GSPE Strasbourg).**



Women and finance

Investments: some like it safe

When it comes to investing their money in the financial markets, European women tend to be more conservative than men.

BY ELODIE WITTING

More and more studies suggest that women not only invest their money differently to men, but may even be better at it. The key to their success seems to lie in their long-term approach to investing in financial markets, and their willingness to seek professional advice.

Women mostly invest their money in order to prepare their financial future and the well-being of their children, whereas men are more driven by short-term gain. With their future in mind, women therefore tend to be more conservative investors.

This careful approach is reflected in the types of asset women hold in their portfolios. A survey published in 2010 by the European online broker, Cortal Consors, revealed that women held an average of 38% of equities, while men had 50% of their portfolio invested in this more volatile asset category. This is why women achieve better average performances when stock markets are depressed, as they have been in recent years, explains the survey.

Some blame the differences on hormone levels: looking for the cause of the difference in risk approach between genders, researchers at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University have discovered that high testosterone levels are associated with risky investment behaviour.

For others, the gender-based analysis of investment behaviour is just one more boring stereotype about women. The German Institute for Economic Research, DIW

Berlin, stressed in a paper that gender is less important than socio-economic realities. DIW believes that European women tend to be more conservative, because they have less disposable wealth than men.

This situation is set to change rapidly. Women controlled an estimated 26% of the wealth in Western Europe in 2009, says a study by the global management consulting firm, Boston Consulting Group. The amount of wealth controlled by women in this region is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 9% in the next few years. This might give women the financial power to give risk a try. ■

Women controlled an estimated 26% of the wealth in Western Europe in 2009



© Dentworry

1967

Women are granted freedom of access to contraception in France (Neuwirth law).

1971

Women are granted the right to vote at federal level in Switzerland, but must wait until 1990 to receive the same voting rights in cantonal elections.

Blinkers off Domestic abuse: breaking the silence

One in four European women experience domestic violence at some point in their lives. While public awareness is on the rise, government measures all too often prove unsuccessful in the face of persistent taboos.

BY FRIEDERIKE ENDRESS

There is a Spanish phrase that says “I killed her because she was mine” (“La maté porque era mía”). Spain is known to have a tradition of machismo, but also a history of combating violence in the home. After Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero took office in 2004, he decided to crack down on gender abuse. A series of measures was launched, including the opening of specialised courts, the use of electronic tags for convicted offenders, the establishment of treatment centres for victims, and assorted public-awareness campaigns.

Six years later, the hoped-for results have not materialised: according to statistics released by the Spanish women’s institute, 73 women died at the hands of their partners in 2010 – a sharp increase

over 2009 (55), which means there has been no actual decline compared to the years before the new legislation.

These figures reveal the impotence of policy and penalties in a situation where women, despite themselves, become the accomplices of their tormentors. The vast majority of campaigns focus on encouraging victims to break the vicious cycle of shame and silence, report offenders and get them convicted. But bringing about changes in mentalities is a slow process, and the Spanish struggle is just one example illustrating the complexity of the task – violence against women is a sensitive issue in all EU countries.

Encouragingly, general awareness in Europe is on the increase. A Eurobarometer

survey carried out in 2010 indicates that 98% of people are now aware of domestic violence across the EU, while 78% recognise that it is a common problem. 84% consider that such violence is unacceptable and should always be punishable by law.

In September 2010, the European Parliament called for the establishment of a ‘European Year of Combating Violence against Women’, directed not only against domestic violence, but against any form of violence against women. The initiative, backed up by an online petition, hopes to mobilise governments and to empower victims, bringing women one step closer to equality. ■

►@ To sign the petition, go to:
www.violenceagainstwomen.eu



© Portuguese Association for Victim Support / GREY

“Murdered women: the real figures”, a study financed by the EU’s Daphne II programme and published in June 2010, revealed new figures on deaths from domestic violence. For the first time, these figures include murders of women by their husbands or partners, suicides of women caused by violence, men murdered by the woman they attacked, murders involving same-sex couples, not to mention cases of collateral murder and suicide among murderers. All in all, on average nine people a day in Europe die because of domestic violence. In the EU, Italy has the lowest rate of deaths from domestic violence (3.8 per million inhabitants) while Latvia (36.6) has the highest.

Based upon real life

Made in Dagenham

A newly released British film directed by Nigel Cole “Made in Dagenham”, or “We Want Sex” in Germany and Italy, dramatises the fight for equal pay between men and women in 1960s Britain.

BY MARK HUMPHREYS

The film is based on the 1968 Ford sewing machinists strike at the Ford Dagenham car-assembly plant, a working-class town in East London. It documents how 187 female machinists at the 55 000-worker car factory walked out in protest against sexual discrimination and over their demands for equal pay, eventually leading to the UK’s 1970 Equal Pay Act.

This was the swinging sixties of 1968, and while much of the western world was dealing with its own demons at the time, such as the student riots in Paris, Dagenham was giving birth to a revolution of its own, not so much about the 60s cliché of sex, drugs and rock ‘n’ roll, but about equality of pay, and more specifically women’s wages.

The women of Dagenham, sewing machinists making car-seat covers, came out on strike after the Ford management

had reclassified their work as pay-grade Category B (less skilled production jobs or ‘unskilled’), instead of Category C (more skilled production jobs). As a consequence of this reclassification they would be paid 15% less than the full B rate received by men, and which meant that even teenage boy floor-sweepers earned more than they did. Initially the women only demanded to be classified as partially-skilled rather than unskilled labourers. However this soon changed when they began demanding not just better pay but equal pay.

The strike ended three weeks after it began, as a result of a deal that immediately increased their rate of pay to 8% below that of men, rising to the full category B rate the following year, they were only regraded into Category C sixteen years later in 1984, following a further 6 week strike.

The ultimate result in the UK was the passing of the Equal Pay Act 1970, which aimed to prohibit inequality of treatment between men and women in terms of pay and conditions of employment, and then when the UK joined the European Union in 1973, it also became subject to Article 119 of the 1957 Treaty of Rome, which specified that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work.

43 YEARS LATER

However, a gap still remains today not just in Dagenham, or the UK but for women across Europe. On average, female workers earn 17.8% less than men and in some countries this gender pay gap is widening. The gender pay gap also has an important impact on lifetime earnings and on women’s pensions – earning lower



“Made in Dagenham” in the UK, “We Want SEX” in Italy and Germany – it’s all in the title!



pay means a lower pension which causes a higher risk of poverty in later life. This situation is the consequence of ongoing discrimination and inequalities in the labour market, and at its heart today it is linked to a number of legal, social and economic factors which go far beyond the single issue of equal pay for equal work.

While the fight for equal rights for women is still today an ongoing struggle, Made in Dagenham reminds us how far our society has come. And on a final funny note, when the Dagenham women took their cause to the Houses of Parliament back in 1968, passing cars were hooting at them as they stood under their banner which should have read 'We Want Sex Equality', however it didn't unfurl properly and it actually said 'We Want Sex', hence the other title! ■

Opposite sex It's a man's world?

The year is 2011 AD. Europe seems to be awash with policies designed for women. Well, not entirely... Some men's associations in European countries are still unflinchingly, resisting what they see as discrimination against men.

BY JULIANE GAU

Why not make women do civil or military service, like men? Or have a special representative for men and a ministry dealing with "youth, the elderly and... men"? Men could start retirement five years earlier, at the same age as women, perhaps? Discrimination against men is also reported in the media in relation to the sale of cheaper football tickets to women, in professional life when a woman gets a job because of a quota, or when associations point out that men can be victims of domestic violence as well.

FATHERS' FIGHT

At the heart of most discussions on discrimination against men are children: when it comes to parents who split up, men are often cast adrift. Scaling the gates of Buckingham Palace in Batman and Robin costumes, dressing up as Blue Santa Clauses at demonstrations to show how many of them there are in Germany and Switzerland, or wearing false breasts and wigs in Italy to draw attention to their situation and claiming more rights in relation to their children – associations campaigning for fathers' rights are standing up to be counted.

"I feel like I've been shunted into a sid-ing... I also meet more and more fathers

who are experiencing the same as me – I'd describe that as a phenomenon," says German filmmaker Douglas Wolfperger in his documentary, 'The deposed father' (in German, 'Der entsorgte Vater'), tracing the stories and feelings of fathers alienated from their children. "Using a child as a weapon in the gender war" is the subtitle of this film, in which a woman also explains her point of view.

Does the Latin term *alea iacta est* ("the die is cast") describe how things are for fathers when it comes to separation? The resistance continues: sending paving stones by post as a sign of protest to their government, instead of throwing them, is at heart of a campaign led by the 'Swiss Association of Joint Parenthood' – nearly 5000 kg of stones have been delivered. Starting on 16 June 2011 in Bregenz, Austria, the 'Papatour' – a cycle tour that also passes through Liechtenstein, Switzerland, France and Germany – aims to raise awareness about the situation facing dads. According to the organiser, a German association for fathers: "This is a European, not a national, problem, which, although pronounced individually in each country, essentially remains the same." When it comes to a child, there is no 'veni vidi vici' – neither for women or men. ■

Paternity leave Daddy's home...

The European Commission is currently working on new legislation in favour of paternity leave.

BY PATRICIA FLORIC

Concerned about parental leave, the European Union at present is evaluating the need for legislative and non-legislative initiatives on this issue.

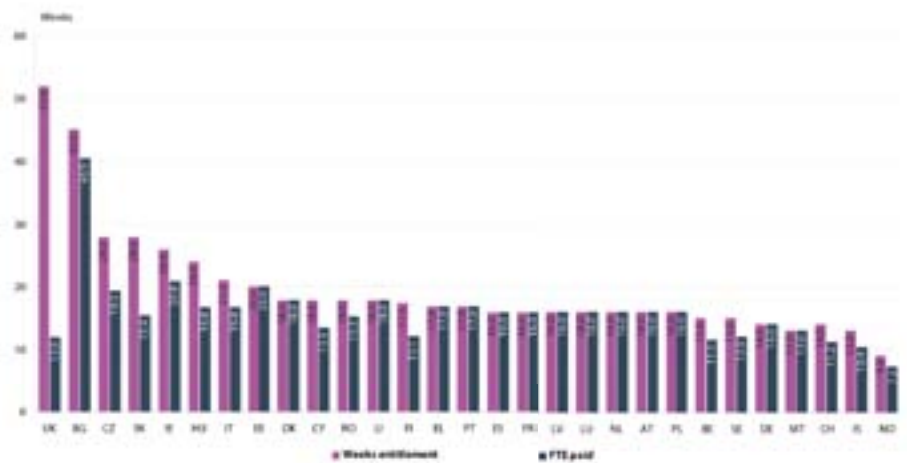
In order to complete its study of possible new measures within this area, the EU has consulted NGOs and other organisations in the field.

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) has responded positively – its report highlights the positive repercussions such a law would have on family life. "Giving fathers the legal right to paternal leave (...) will contribute to promoting gender equality, to a more equal share of paid and unpaid work between women and men, to tackling gender inequalities in the labour market, and to increasing women's employment."

In contrast, Kieran O'Keefe, Head of EU Representation at the British Chamber of Commerce, has warned the European Commission of the possible economic consequences of any new legal implementation: "Europe needs to focus on growth, not on adding new payroll costs for overburdened companies and national social security systems. A move, for example, to increase paternity leave to full pay would be particularly onerous, costing the UK £0.4bn annually."

However fathers' associations and organisations protecting gender equality are growing by the day and ready, it seems, to claim their rights. ■

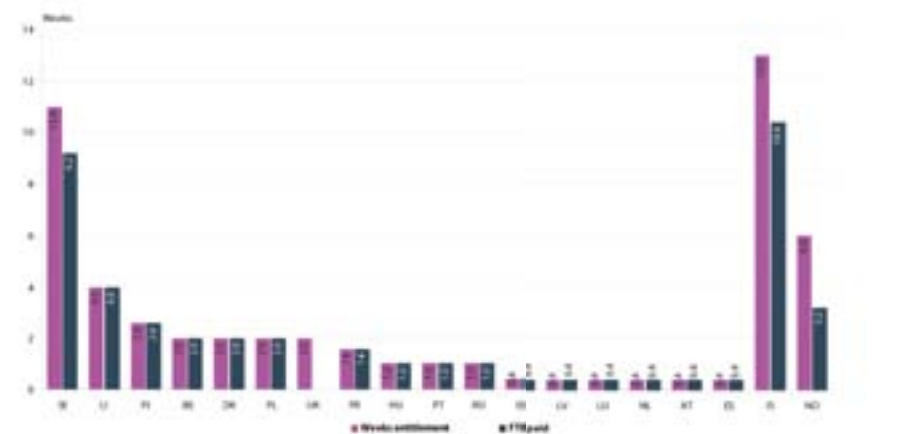
Child-related maternity leave periods, 2007



Notes: Child-related maternity leave periods by duration of unpaid leave and the duration of the full-time equivalent of the leave period if paid at 100% of last earnings, situation as of 01.07.2007 - FTE: Full Time Equivalent.

Sources: OECD, MISSOC database, "Reconciliation of work and private life: A comparative review of thirty European countries", section on leave facilities.

Child-related paternity leave periods, 2007



Notes: Child-related paternity leave periods by duration of unpaid leave and the duration of the full-time equivalent of the leave period if paid at 100% of last earnings, situation as of 01.07.2007 - FTE: Full Time Equivalent.

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Gender gap

May Day is pay day

General norms and cultural practices in a country, a patriarchal corporate culture, and a lack of role models, are the top three reasons listed in a survey to identify the greatest barriers to women's access to executive positions within large companies all over the world.

BY JULIANE GAU

The survey is part of the "Corporate Gender Gap Report 2010" from the World Economic Forum, aiming to "shed light on the economic participation and opportunity gap". As the report by Saadia Zahidi (WEF) and Herminia Ibarra (professor at Insead) explains: "Women are only working part-time", "women take time off work to have children", or "women work in areas that pay little – instead of engineering they opt for social work", are the oft-repeated arguments when it comes to explaining the pay gaps between women and men. Across Europe,

women on average earn 17.8% less than men, and the gender pay gap – the difference between men's and women's hourly earnings within the economy as a whole – is actually widening in some countries, reports the European Commission.

Equal pay for equal work? Legislation in force within the EU and other European countries is tackling direct discrimination against women. But what is the best way to tackle general norms and cultural practices in a country, or a patriarchal corporate culture? Women still seem to be banging their heads against a 'glass

ceiling' when it comes to reaching higher office – and the higher salaries that go with it: "Female employees tend to be concentrated in entry-level or middle-ranking positions, i.e. the more senior the position, the lower the percentage of women," says the WEF report on the representation of women in business. Reasons four and five in explaining the biggest barriers affecting women's access to executive positions are a lack of flexible working solutions (child care), plus a lack of opportunities for a woman to gain vital work experience and responsibility. ■

Word of the Year? Really?

Tentsletje: "making sexism sexy"

If you thought the political crisis was taxing the minds of Belgium's Flemish speakers in 2010 – think again.

BY FRIEDERIKE ENDRESS

The winner of the latest 'Word of the Year' contest is tentsletje (literally: 'tent slut'), a Dutch youth slang term for a woman who has multiple sexual partners at a music festival. The shortlist presented by dictionary publisher Van Dale also included the word cougar, denoting

a mature woman seeking relationships with younger partners.

Women's organisations are not amused. "It's no coincidence that older men dating younger girls, or boys hopping from one festival tent to the next, do not show up on such lists," says Sofie De Graeve,

spokesperson for the Flemish Women's Consultative Committee (VOK). "The shortlist and the votes show that today's society is turning a blind eye to sexism. It's ok for men to have a succession of sexual partners, but women who do the same are still regarded as sluts." ■

Choosing to choose

Abortion ‘tourism’ reveals the perverse effects of restrictive legislation

“Plane ticket to England: 300 zloty. Abortion in a public clinic: 0 zloty. Relief after a procedure carried out in decent conditions: priceless.”
The slogan from a poster campaign run by a Polish feminist organisation hints at a reality hidden away behind the official figures: making abortion illegal does not solve the issue of unwanted pregnancies.

BY FRIEDERIKE ENDRESS

While the promise of free abortions for non-residents in the UK is denied by official sources, the demand for this type of service is real. Activist groups estimate that around 200 000 illegal abortions are carried out in Poland every year, and reports on abortion ‘tourism’ to neighbouring countries such as Germany and Ukraine recently made the headlines.

The Polish case is not an isolated phenomenon. In December 2010, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the rights of an Irish woman suffering from cancer had been violated by Irish abortion laws, forcing her to seek a termination in Britain as she could not obtain recognition for the life-threatening nature of her pregnancy in Ireland.

No legislative approach to abortion can replace effective policies to prevent unwanted

pregnancies. With a hotchpotch of legislation across Europe and deeply divided opinions on the issue, a uniform approach takes on even greater importance. ■



Pro-choice activists stage a protest outside the anti-choice Women's Resource Centre in Ireland

Women and media

Where are the women?



Leanda Barrington

Only 26% of the people shown on European news programmes are women.

BY PATRICIA FLORIC

The European Union has already decided that gender equality is a fundamental right and is asking every EU Member State to respect and promote its values. In some areas, however, parity between women and men is still not a done deal.

According to Global Media Monitoring Project 2010 studies,

women are reportedly not very popular in news coverage and, depending on the topic, sometimes thin on the ground.

The European media platforms, TV, newspapers and radio would rather opt for men than women as news subjects. The harsh reality is that, according to the most recent Global Media Monitoring study, just 26% of the people who appear on the news in Europe are women.

Leanda Barrington, Communications and Media Officer for the European Women's Lobby NGO, complains that the European Union and its Member States are not doing enough: "Nothing is being done to implement the law and control the Member States in this domain. In fact, there is no proper media monitoring of this issue."

She also recognises the difficulties of changing cultural stereotypes and observes that: "Even women tend to place more trust in a 50-year-old guy and take him more seriously than a 50-year-old woman."

The European Women's Lobby is trying to reduce those cultural stereotypes and has chosen to raise awareness about

women and the media: "We regularly intervene in schools to speak with children and young people about gender equality. When we ask pupils to think about their favourite TV programmes and see how many female characters there are and who the key characters are, they quickly seem to grasp that there is something strange going on and that things are not as they should be!"

Leanda Barrington insists that not only the way in which we view men and women within basic education must change, but also the way in which journalists are trained. The NGO regularly organises sessions within schools of journalism to discuss with students new ways of making the news and choosing subjects for it. As she says: "It is quite impressive to see that, after analysing their answers, the students are shocked to discover that they have been contributing unwittingly to the propagation of stereotypes."

The issue of women in the media has yet to become a priority in European countries, and Leanda Barrington points out that the Global Media Monitoring Project, a global exercise conducted every five years, today provides the only statistics that monitor gender equality in the media.

AN IRONIC EXCEPTION...

Within Europe's media, women apparently are more easily undressed than men. As the Global Media Monitoring Project 2010 discovered: "While men are usually pictured either from the neck up or fully-clothed, the comparative frequency with which women's bodies are shown in various states of undress is far higher." ■

Woman at the top

A woman's life for the women's fight

Dedicating her work and political career to women's rights, Margot Wallström has herself become a symbol of what women can achieve.

BY PATRICIA FLORIC

Margot Wallström's role keeps expanding in its influence – from serving as a Minister in Sweden to Environment Commissioner and Vice-President of the European Union, she is now the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Her political career has given her the strength and authority to fight for women's rights.

She talked to Shiftmag about being a woman in politics and her daily fight for the respect of global women's rights.

What were your initial ambitions as a young woman when you started out on your political career?

One learns from life and experience. I don't think I would have called myself a feminist to start with, but very soon I realised that women and men are not equal and that it's important to fight for women's rights.

You are now Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict at the United Nations; as you look back on your career, would you consider it an example of what woman can do in politics?

It was a very male-dominated political life when I began in politics. My starting point is that women should be given the same rights

and opportunities as men. At the same time, it is clear that without the support of my husband and family it would have been very difficult to choose the path I've taken.

What is your viewpoint on the position of women in politics?

To me, it's a matter of democracy. Women represent half of the world or, as the Chinese say, women carry half the sky, so women must be equally represented.

In Europe we are fighting to overcome discrimination against women, and the European Union is implementing laws designed to uphold gender equality and banish domestic violence. Do you think the European institutions could do more?

Yes, I think the EU institutions could do more in making sure that women are represented. That's where it starts: recruit, promote, and integrate women.

In 2009, according to a UN report on rape, Sweden was the country with the highest incidence of reported rapes in Europe. What are your feelings on this as a Swedish citizen?

This is a very serious issue and embarrassing for a country which presents itself as being very advanced when it comes to gender equality. But maybe it could also,

to some extent, reflect the fact that victims are more likely to report this crime.

How is the UN proposing to prevent sexual violence against women in conflicts?

Fighting impunity is one of the UN's priorities, but of course this needs to go hand in hand with empowering women and mobilising political accountability, for example.

How are the countries concerned responding to UN actions?

The response from the countries concerned varies. One positive development is that the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has taken swift action recently to bring some of the alleged perpetrators to justice. But much still remains to be done.

In other activities, women are still under-represented: according to a recent report on women and the media by the Women's Lobby NGO, only 21% of women compared to 79% of men are represented in the news. What is your reaction to this survey?

The biased representation (or under-representation) of women in the media is a reflection of the general discrimination against women. This can only be changed through action on awareness-raising and by having a higher proportion of women in decision-making and in the media.



According to recent economic reports, the economic crisis has been widening the gap between women and men. What are the next important steps in order to improve the lot of women?

I believe in quotas as a means to increase the representation of women in business and government.

Women across Europe earn 17.8% less on average than men doing the same job; European governments argue that “gender equality” is a condition of sustainable growth, whereas businesses have been using the crisis as a pretext to stop investing in this field. Do we not have here a clash between social and economic vested interests and European culture?

Looking at which countries are doing relatively better in terms of economic performance, there is a clear correlation between progressive values, high equality and sustained economic output.

If you had to summarise your priorities in the field of women’s rights, what would you choose and why?

Equal pay for equal work; increase women's representation in political life; combat violence against women; and improve access to quality child care. ■

Political career:

- Since 2010 Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) on Sexual Violence in Conflict
- 2004-2010 First Vice-President of the European Commission for Institutional Relations and Communication Strategy
- 1999-2004 Member of the European Commission for the Environment
- 1996-1998 Minister for Social Affairs (Sweden)
- 1994-1996 Minister of Culture (Sweden)
- 1988-1991 Minister of Civil Affairs, Consumer Affairs, Women and Youth (Sweden)
- 1979-1985 Member of the Swedish Parliament

SNAPSHOTS



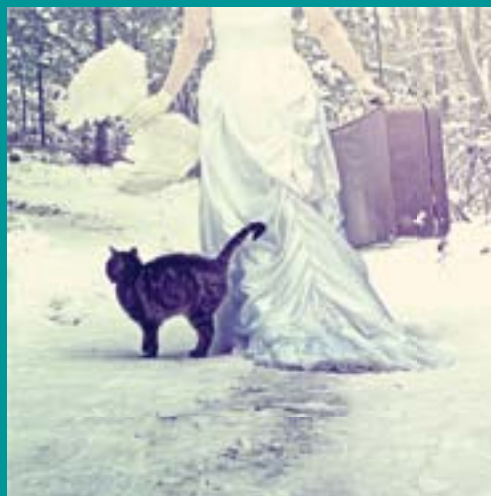
Left to chance

A photographer for not quite three years, Frédéric is emerging today as one of France's young talents and as 'one to watch'. His chosen path represents a calling to fulfil his passions, while his philosophy is "leave it to chance" – and it works!

PHOTOS BY FRÉDÉRIC ARNOULD

A qualified chef, Frédéric discovered his passion three years ago. What began as the photographing of friends quickly became his profession. The amount of free reign given to both chance and the unexpected permeates much of Frédéric's work. He defines himself as a photographer who is constantly searching. He also loves to mix things up, but is not afraid to drive a wedge between new and old, the understated and the oddball. His childhood dream was to become a magician or painter. Today, photography lets him do a bit of both.

Being a photographer in the internet age is a huge stroke of good fortune in his eyes: over 15 million people follow his work today even though his only exhibitions to date have been held in France.



The year 2010 brought recognition from his peers (publication in several notable French trade magazines, such as "L'œil"), not to mention his first proper headline exhibitions (Exposition Paris Photo at the Carrousel du Louvre, Exposition Lille 3000, Les Recontres d'Arles, etc.). There is no shortage of projects for 2011 either, including a major exhibition at the Museumotel in April-June and his first film, "Je voudrais être une star", which is due for release in April.



►@ Frédéric Arnould
www.cetrobo.com

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