

# France Minimizes Sexual Discrimination

An overwhelming majority in the French Parliament recently approved a new law which minimizes sexual discrimination in employment.

Yvette Roudy, French Minister for Women's Rights, declared before the National Assembly, which discussed the proposed law in the early part of December, that contrary to the law which gives equal pay for equal work, women, who represent 40% of the labor force, still receive two thirds of a man's salary for an equal amount of work. She also noted that women occupy only 25 out of 491 seats in the National Assembly.

According to the new legislation, employers who fail to apply the law of equal pay for equal work will be subject to 2 months – 2 years imprisonment or will be required to pay a \$300 to \$400 indemnity. Any discrimination based on sex will be considered illegal. Temporary measures have been established for the purpose of allowing women to catch up with men in the field of employment. One such measure is to consider experience equal to a diploma, in an effort to fill the educational gap separating the sexes. An article in the 1972 code, which permitted employers to employ or dismiss workers in a discriminatory way, was abolished.

This new legislation raises France from the last to the first rank, next to Sweden, within the European Economic Community. Previously, France was the only member in the EEC which did not provide equal treatment for men and women in the field of work.

While the new law was approved by 327 votes, the conservative opposition refrained from voting. The opposition included the rightists, who were joined surprisingly by the communists.

The project will have to be presented to the Senate before its final review by the Assembly.

(Al-Anwar, 15/12/1982)