

# WINFO

Newsletter of Women in Nuclear WIN No.10 (2/95)

## Sweden hosts WIN Annual Meeting

The Swedish city of Gothenburg was the setting for WIN's third annual international meeting and General Assembly, which were held on June 15 at the Panorama Hotel. Agenda items aside, the meeting, which was covered by some national daily newspapers, was notable for the fact that the security staff during a tour the following day were women, while the caterers were men. But WIN organisers insist that no special arrangements were made – it was just coincidence!

Coming back to the agenda, it consisted largely of country reports, election of the Executive Leading Group (see below) and discussion of various WIN projects, including a proposal for a home page on the Internet. A progress report will be discussed at the next Leading Group meeting.

The annual report of the president (Irène Aegerter, Switzerland) summarised WIN activities since the first General Assembly took place in Bonn, on May 11, 1994. She said that, as of June this

year, WIN had more than 350 members in 26 countries. The Leading Group had been enlarged to comprise all presidents and liaison officers of the national groups. Four editions of WINFO had appeared, and WIN activities at ENC '94 had included a video, a photo poster exhibition and a meeting on the subject "Public Acceptance and Risk Communication". The group had also been opened to men – provided they shared its goals – thus proving that it was not a sexist organisation.

On the Friday following the meeting, participants had the chance to visit Ringhals nuclear power plant, where they enjoyed an afternoon tour. Before that, though, there was a series of lectures on subjects ranging from the psycho-social effects of the Chernobyl disaster to the best way to attract young people and women into the nuclear industry. Fresh insights into the latter subject were given by three young women – a reactor operator, a turbine operator and a station technician at Ringhals – who talked about why they joined the nuclear field and what they think of it now.

## Election of Executive Leading Group



Caption: The Gothenburg meeting elected the new WIN executive leading group (EXLG). Pictured above are the six members, together with other members of the enlarged leading group (see below). Pictured from left to right are: Françoise Vanthemsche, Belgium; Agneta Rising, Sweden (EXLG); Marke Heininen-Ojanperä, Finland (EXLG); Ipek Yigit, UK (EXLG); Natalia Janeva, Bulgaria; France Brès-Tutino, France (EXLG); Irène Aegerter, Switzerland (EXLG); Teresa Lopez Carbonell, Spain; Jessie Chiu, Taiwan; Patricia Bryant, USA; Ludmilla Kiss-Zoltanne, Hungary (EXLG).

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The enlarged Leading Group consists of the EXLG plus 13 other representatives of member countries. Five of them are named above. The others are:

Marie Dufkova, Czech Republic; Irina Gagarinskaya, Russia; Svetlana Kiyashko, Ukraine; Sabine Knapp, Germany; Kristin Plater-Zyberg, Canada; Corinne Souwer, Netherlands; Mihaela Stiopol, Romania; Maela Viirsoo, Argentina.

## The WIN award – How to Win it!

The WIN award will be given to any person or small team deemed to have made a significant contribution to objectively informing the public about nuclear energy and/or radiation applications. It is aimed particularly, but not exclusively, at women.

Nomination of candidates may be made by any WIN member to a member of the Executive Leading Group, up until December 1. The EXLG will then choose the winner, and the award will be announced at the WIN annual meeting.

The nominee must be involved in public communications, especially with women, according to WIN goals. The following skills and attributes will be taken into consideration by the judges:

1. Personal dedication and perseverance
2. Awareness of changing public concerns
3. Demonstration of innovative approaches
4. Constructive and effective modes of presentation, using the nominee's own expertise
5. Effectiveness in providing a role model for young women.

(Nomination forms are being distributed together with this edition of WINFO. If you fail to receive one, or need an additional one, contact Iris Dornbierer at: **ENS, P.O. Box 5032, CH-3001 Berne. Fax: +41 31 382 4466.**)

## Agneta is Rising Media Star!

As mentioned above, several Swedish newspapers covered the Gothenburg meeting. One newspaper, *Arbetet*, carried a full-page article, based on interviews with Agneta Rising, who chairs the Nordic Chapter of WIN, and Vibeka Hein, who works at Beredskapsstyrelsen, a Danish regulatory authority within the field of radiation.

Agneta reflected the WIN view that much of women's anxiety about radiation can be attributed to the way in which information is presented to them by men. She told the newspaper: "The language used by men is often difficult for women to understand. They cannot express themselves in simple terms and always use a lot of technical language. With a sensitive issue like this one (potential radiation damage to babies while still in the womb), you must be able to trust the person who is giving you the information. Women don't trust men who just tell them: 'No, pregnant women are not at risk.'"

Vibeke said the need was for a "more modulated" perspective. She told *Arbetet* that it takes time for women to understand: "If a man calls me up at work and asks me about something, the whole conversation could take about 10 minutes. However, if a woman calls me up, we might well talk on the phone for one and a half hours. Women don't just want to hear technical explanations."

## Swedes Think Twice About Phase-Out

In her country report to the WIN meeting, ABB Atom's Anne Marie Stangenberg made a similar point. She said attitudes to nuclear in the host country, Sweden, were becoming gradually more positive, but women – particularly young women – were still noticeably less favourable.

In 1994, opinion polls showed slightly less than half the population (48%) wanted nuclear energy to stay beyond the year 2010. However, figures this year showed support for "staying on" had risen to 55%. One possible explanation was that the date for phasing out nuclear was now fast approaching, and people were beginning to see more clearly the practical problems it would pose – both for industry and in terms of the impact on private electricity bills.

However, Anne Marie pointed out that there was still a clear difference between male and female attitudes. While 68% of men favoured the continued use of nuclear after 2010, the figure for women was only 43%. 53% favoured the phase-out and opposition among younger women (under 30) was particularly strong – 65%.

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