



**“SHE DECIDES,
YOU SUCCEED”**

Conclusions

Accelerating business growth by
gender balance in decision-making



Centre for Inclusive
Leadership



SHE DECIDES, YOU SUCCEED

Conclusions

The “She Decides, You Succeed” project began in 2013, as a result of the slow incorporation of women into top management and leadership positions in the European business world. With the objective of promoting women’s access to decision-making positions, we have analyzed this situation and identified the benefits the private sector could enjoy as a result of a greater female presence in positions of economic leadership within companies.

The *Association of Organizations of Mediterranean Businesswomen* (AFAEMME) has headed the program through the years (2014-2016) and structured it as two phases.

In the first phase of study and analysis (September 2014 – August 2015), various European organizations focused on gender in relation to leadership and business analyzed the current situation in five European countries: Spain, Italy, Latvia, Romania, and the UK.

The *Center for Inclusive Leadership* (CFIL) studied the situation of women in top management, while AFAEMME did the same for those in middle management.

The *European Women Inventors & Innovators Network of Bawe* (EUWIIN) analyzed the presence of women in innovating companies.

The *European Association for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology* (WITEC) studied female leadership in the STEM sector (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

The results of this analysis have been presented in four different guides, one for each area of study. These guides explain the following for each of the five countries: the current state of affairs, the relevant aspects of the present legal system, the existing barriers for women in regards to accessing leadership positions, the benefits for companies in having women in these positions, and examples of certain best practices adopted by other companies.

To complete the process of analysis and study, a toolkit was created which contains the principal conclusions of the four guides and a communication strategy so as to motivate companies to increase the number of women in leadership and decision-making positions.

The complement to this analysis occurred via a **second phase** of the program (September 2015 – March 2016), during which there was direct interaction with businesses in each of the five countries.

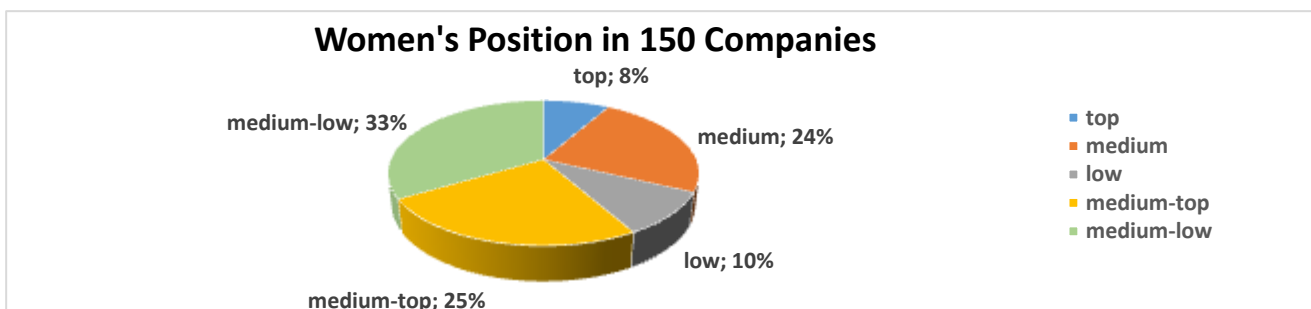
The partnering business associations in each country were as follows:

- *Organización de Mujeres Empresarias y de Gerencia Activa (OMEGA)* in Spain;
- *Associazione Imprenditrici e Donne Dirigente d'Azienda (AIDDA)* in Italy;
- *Women's NGO's Cooperation Network of Latvia* in Latvia;
- *Women's Economy (WE)* in the UK;
- *Femei in Afaceri (Women in Business)* in Romania

Through the work of 15 successful business women (“Women Leaders” – WL), the program was able to raise the awareness of 150 companies surrounding the specific benefits of a greater presence of women in the positions of economic decision-making.

These 150 meetings with private companies from the **5 European countries**, from **24 economic sectors** and of different sizes and corporate structures, have positively affected approximately **19,477 employees**, both women and men. We cannot forget that the increase of women in leadership positions signifies an opportunity to improve the company in general and by consequence the situation of all employees, gender notwithstanding.

The results of these meetings were illuminating: despite the fact that 44% of the companies’ personnel are women, **the number of women decreases systematically when ascending the decision-making ladder**. A 33% of women held middle-low positions, 24% positions of middle management, and only 8% held directive positions and leadership roles. Clearly, the actual situation is one still far from gender equality.



Furthermore, it has been observed that medium-sized companies have a greater number of women in decision-making positions and are also more open to the idea of promoting women up through the organization.

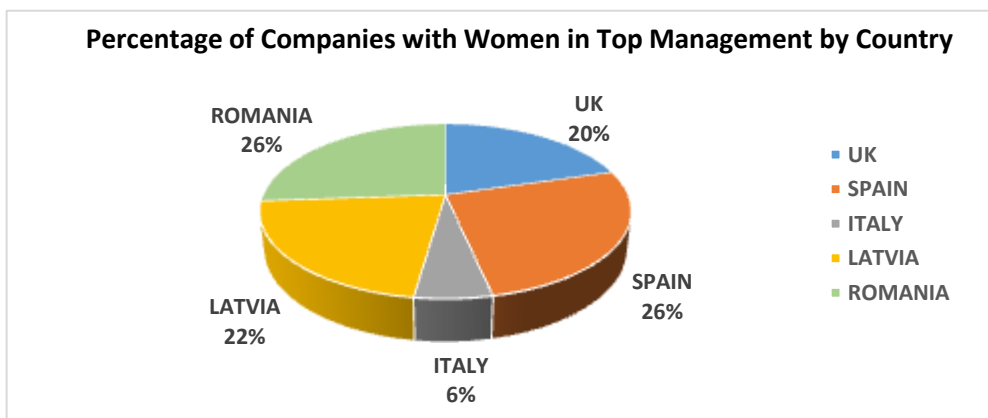
The analysis of the companies also indicated that **occupational segregation** continues to exist in relation to gender. Sectors such as industry, mechanical engineering or construction continue to be completely male-dominated, whereas female presence is high in sectors such as sales (55%), education (70%), service industry (55%), healthcare (60%), and retail (79%). Thus there continues to exist sectors which are considered typically male or typically female, despite the fact that this is changing in that regard with, for example, a 49% of women present in ICT-sector businesses.

RESULTS

Key Finding 1:

The number of women decreases as one ascends the decision-making ladder in the business world.

With respect to the presence of women in **TOP MANAGEMENT** positions in the 150 companies in question, **60% (88 companies)** have reported themselves as having one or more women in these type of positions. The majority of these businesses were location in Romania and Spain, where 26% of the interviewed businesses have at least one woman in this level of decision-making. Next follows Latvia with 22%, the UK with 20%, and Italy with only 6% of companies with women in top management posts.



The sectors in which companies with women in top management tend to operate are the service sector (24%), ICT (15%) and sales (9%).

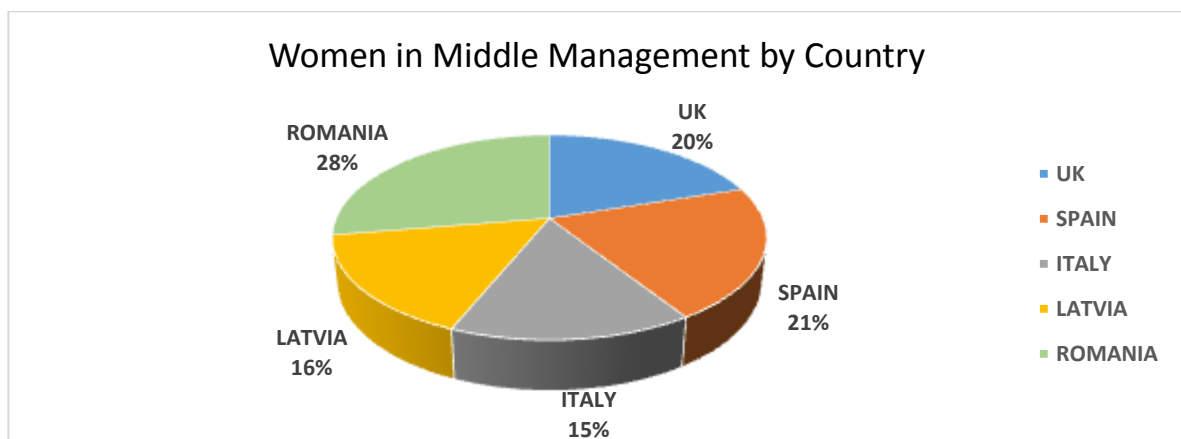
On the topic of the Board of Directors, it was found that only **38 of the 150 companies (25%)** have a woman on the board. These are companies that are active above all in the service sector (21%) and in that of ICT (18%). Another piece of data to note is that, in the countries investigated, there persists the “family relationship” phenomenon in family businesses, where women members of the Board of Directors tend to have a family tie to the shareholders.

The presence of women declines if we analyze the number of women directors in the companies: only **29 of the 150 companies (19.3%)** indicate that they have any women directors.

And this statistic decreases further in the case of businesses run by a female CEO or Director General: only **9 business (6%)**, mainly active in the service sector, sales and social sector, indicate having a woman in the position of highest authority.

Finally, it should be noted that of the analyzed companies only 4.82% present gender parity in their directing body (a balanced board).

With respect to the presence of women in **MIDDLE MANAGEMENT**, the results improve somewhat with **105 businesses (72%)** of the 150 interviewees having a women in this level of position. The majority of these business are found in Romania, a country where 28% of the interviewed companies had a woman in middle management. Spain follows with 21%, then the UK (20%), Latvia (16%), and finally Italy (15%).



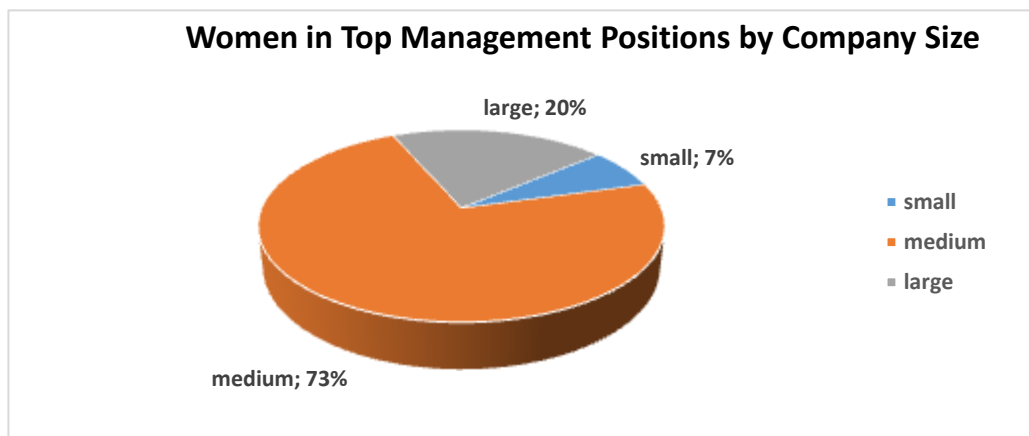
The sectors that demonstrate the greatest presence of women in middle management continue to be the service sector (24%), ICT (13%), and sale (9%), as well as manufacturing (13%).

Key Finding 2:

The SMEs are those that present greater gender equality in their structure and a greater interest in improving the situation of women in the business world.

Analyzing the size of the investigated companies (with a classification of small, medium, or large), it is observed that **the majority of companies with women in decision-making positions are those that are medium-sized.**

In regards to the companies with women in top management, **73%** are medium-sized. Only 20% are large, and only 7% small.



A 71% of companies with women in directive positions are medium-sized. And this prevalence is highlighted as well with the fact that of the companies with female CEOs and/or General Directors, 78% are medium-sized. Medium-sized businesses are also those who have more equal directive bodies, with 67% of them existing as “balanced boards.”

The same positive tendency of middle-sized enterprises is reflected in the middle management of these companies, with 105 middle-sized companies (**70%**) having this level of position filled by women.

SMEs are also those which tend to be intrinsically motivated to improve the working conditions of women and to deconstruct the barriers preventing their professional development. A **65% of the best practices** and corporate policies in this topic were **applied voluntarily by SMEs**.

As an observed trend in the 5 participating countries of the project, it can be confirmed that small and middle-sized companies are more involved than larger ones in the process of gender balance. Larger companies, although in countries such as Spain and Italy they are obliged by the law to implement inequality-reducing mechanisms, **demonstrate less true interest in encouraging a greater presence of women in directive and leadership positions**.

Many of the large companies focus in the topic of inequality as a manner of improving their reputation; more women in management positions increases their visibility and improves their social image.

Key Finding 3:

Occupational segregation exists in terms of gender, but there is a clear increase of women in the ICT sector.

Businesses within the ICT sector are incorporating more and more women into the management positions of their organizations. Of the 19 technology and innovation companies involved in the project, 73.68% have women in top management positions. In fact, 42.11% of the businesses have one or more women in their Board of Directors, and 36.84% are headed by a female CEO or General Director.

Spreading the information surrounding benefits for companies with women in top management could create a spillover effect with new corporate policy; this could lead to better gender equality in companies.

Additional findings:

From the analysis of the situation in each of the involved companies, the “Women Leaders” extracted the following additional conclusions:

- There is a **lack of statistical information in regards to the gender composition of the personnel** of companies.
- There is a **lack of information about the benefits companies would gain by including more women in their decision-making positions**.

IN SUM:

1. The number of women declines when ascending the ladder of decision-making in businesses.
2. SMEs (and in particular medium-sized businesses) are those which present the best gender equality in their structure as well as the greatest intrinsic desire to improve the situation of professional women.
3. Although occupation segregation in regards to gender continues to exist, there is a clear trend of an increase in women in the ICT sector.
4. There is a lack of information regarding the gender composition of the personnel in companies.
5. Information is lacking in regard to the benefits available to companies who have a greater number of women in decision-making positions.