



# More women in senior positions

Key to economic stability and growth



European Commission

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# More women in senior positions

## Key to economic stability and growth

**European Commission**

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities  
Unit G1

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## Foreword



Women continue to be under-represented in senior positions in many fields despite the fact that they make up nearly half of the workforce and more than half of new university graduates in the EU. This report examines the current situation and recent trends as regards women's participation in decision-making across Europe. It emphasises the importance of having more women in top positions in the private sector.

Today, only one out of 10 board members of the largest companies listed on the national stock exchange of EU Member States is a woman and progress has been slow in recent years. The disparity is widest at the very top where only 3% of such companies have a woman directing the highest decision-making body. We have to deplore that women's talents are not being tapped to their full potential. If Europe is to achieve its goal of becoming a dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in a globalised world then we have to make better use of women's talents and skills.

There is an increasing body of research showing that gender diversity pays off and that there is a positive correlation between women in leadership and business performance.

More and more organisations are active in promoting the advancement of women's careers and this report highlights some good practices, such as the use of specific tools to foster the leadership potential of women – role models, mentoring and networking. I thank the European Network of Women in Decision-making in Politics and the Economy, which the Commission established to promote and raise awareness on initiatives in this area, for their valuable contribution to this work.

I encourage governments, social partners and the private sector to work hard to ensure gender balance in senior positions, which is good for our businesses and the economy. I encourage talented women to take on the challenge of board membership in companies and to put themselves forward as candidates for top jobs.

In 2010, the European Commission will renew its commitment to make further progress towards gender equality and present a follow-up strategy to its Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men. The promotion of gender balance in decision-making will continue to be one of its core priorities.



**Viviane Reding**

Vice-President of the European Commission  
Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship



# Executive summary

## Executive summary

As Europe collectively strives to recover from the recent recession and build a platform for future growth and stability, this report serves as a reminder of why gender equality issues should be kept at the forefront of the policy debate. One crucial resource for future growth in Europe lies in the untapped economic potential of women and their full integration into the decision-making process in all areas of the economy is crucial.

The report examines the current situation and recent trends regarding the gender balance in key decision-making positions across Europe. It also considers some of the ways in which the advancement of women can be supported or accelerated in order to bring about a fundamental shift in the gender balance in these positions of influence so that the men and women of Europe can have an equal voice in working together towards a better future.

Wherever possible, the report is based on a quantitative analysis of the situation with the majority of data being drawn from the Commission database on women and men in decision-making<sup>1</sup> and collected between June and October 2009.

### A balanced economy? Women and men in positions of influence

The role of the financial sector in triggering the current economic crisis has brought its key decision-makers sharply into the focus of the public eye and the lack of women in prominent positions is striking. In 2009, the central banks of EU Member States all had a male governor and their key decision-making bodies comprise 82% men and just 18% women. The situation is similar in the main financial institutions of the European Union where the combined decision-making bodies of the European Central Bank, European Investment Bank and European Investment Fund have an 85:15 male to female ratio and all three bodies are led by men.

The corporate world is increasingly aware that a good gender balance at all levels can be beneficial to business but the rate at which women are being integrated into senior positions remains painfully slow. Amongst the largest companies listed on the stock exchanges across Europe, men account for 89% of board members and women just 11%. Norway stands out as the only country where there is anything approaching gender equality, with 42% women and 58% men on the boards of the largest listed companies – a direct result of the legal quota implemented in 2006.

More efforts are needed to encourage women entrepreneurs. Women currently make up around 45% of all persons in employment but only a third of all those who are self-employed.

Strength in science, research and development is key to the innovative and competitive future of Europe but the talents of women in this area remain underutilised. Despite accounting for 45% of PhD graduates in 2006, women accounted for just 18% of the most senior researchers in the same year.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=764&langId=en>



There is also a significant gender imbalance amongst those representing the interests of businesses and their workers. Amongst the social partner organisations at European level, the decision-making bodies of trade union organisations include just less than 23% women members whilst the employers' organisations have less than 12%.

### Improving the gender balance in senior positions

The persistent gender gap at senior level across all areas of the economy stems from outdated perceptions of the different roles of men and women in life and in work. The shifts in attitude and culture necessary to support change are progressively permeating the corporate world but it is proving difficult to shift the status quo. The report looks at how role models, mentors and networks can be used to promote the advancement of women. It also looks briefly at the use of quotas and other means of improving the gender balance on company boards.

### Political decision-making – who speaks for the citizens?

Following the elections in June 2009, the European Parliament has the most gender balanced assembly since its inception in 1979, with 35% women and 65% men. The share of women in the European Parliament is around ten percentage points higher than the average for the single/lower house of national parliaments around the EU.

The new European Commission announced in November 2009 includes nine women (33%) and eighteen men (67%), the best gender balance yet for an incoming Commission.

The gender balance in national governments is improving steadily with the share of women in EU governments up from 16% in 1994/5 (EU-15) to 26% in 2009 (EU-27).

### Public administration and the judiciary

In many European countries men outnumber women by at least two to one in the top two tiers of the civil service. Moreover, there appears to be a tendency for women to be given senior positions in ministries with "soft" portfolios rather than those with key economic functions.

Although it employs more or less equal numbers of men and women, there is a significant disparity at senior levels of the European Commission Civil Service where men account for 81% of the top two administrative grades and 76% of the top two assistant grades. The difference is much lower in the smaller service of the European Parliament where women hold 41% of the most senior positions. However, the imbalance is most pronounced in the service of the Council of the EU, the smallest of the three services, where there are 84% men and just 16% women in the top two levels of the hierarchy.

At the top of the judiciary, the judges of supreme courts in all EU countries comprise 31% women and 69% men. The European Court of Justice has just four women amongst the twenty-seven judges nominated by Member States.



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***“An equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes is a democratic and economic necessity. In the current economic situation it is all the more important to mobilise all talents. This is not the time to waste skills and production potential because of outdated perceptions of women’s and men’s roles and leadership abilities.”***

*Report on Equality between women and men, European Commission, 2009*

# Introduction

Across Europe, and indeed the world, governments spent much of 2009 trying to deal with recession and rising unemployment as a consequence of the crisis that developed from the near collapse of the financial system. In such times it would be easy to put issues such as gender equality to one side and focus on recovery but this is a short-sighted view. An ever increasing body of research shows that gender equality is a key factor in achieving long-term sustainable economic growth and at the same time it is undeniable that the economic potential of women has not yet been realised. So at a time when growth is weak, it is surely more important than ever to take steps to ensure that women are at the heart of the recovery and in order to provide a basis for a stronger Europe going forwards.

The extent of the gender gap in Europe's labour market is striking - 59.1% of working-age women are in employment compared to 72.8% of men (2008 figures), women earn 17 per cent less than men for each hour worked and are often in lower quality jobs or involuntary part-time jobs (31.1% of employed women work part-time compared to 7.9% of men). Research commissioned by the Swedish presidency of the EU (2009)<sup>2</sup>, made some estimates of the economic impact of labour market equality (which is assumed to mean equal levels of employment, equal pay, and equal shares of part-time work and self-employment) in the EU and found that it could boost GDP of Member States by an average of 27%. Even though a hypothetical analysis, it demonstrates the potential economic benefits of increasing female employment and working towards gender equality in all aspects of working life.

One of the key areas that needs to be addressed is the persistent under-representation of women in leadership positions and key decision-making bodies, from parliament to corporate boardrooms. In politics, equal representation of women is a democratic right – the decisions that affect the lives of all citizens should be taken by a group of representatives that reasonably reflects the composition of the population. In business, the current lack of women in senior positions derives, inter alia, from historical stereotypes of the different roles of men and women that are surely redundant today. Moreover, there is an increasing body of evidence that shows that gender diversity pays and that companies with more women in the boardroom may have higher levels of profitability.

This report examines the gender balance in decision-making positions throughout the economy and represents a contribution from the Commission towards collecting and disseminating information on gender equality issues. The report also considers some of the tools and initiatives that are being used to break down the barriers that serve to exclude women from top positions. In doing so, attention is drawn to the work of the *European Network of Women in Decision-making in Politics and the Economy*, which was established by the European Commission as a platform to exchange ideas, information and experience, mutual learning and sharing of good practice. The report also includes a brief update of the gender balance in European and national politics, public administration and in the judiciary.

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<sup>2</sup> *Gender equality, economic growth and employment*; Åsa Lofström: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=3988&langId=en>



### Commission database, follow-up of the indicators developed at EU level in the framework of the Beijing Platform for Action and information about data

The report is, as far as possible, based on quantitative analysis of the situation with the majority of data being drawn from the Commission database on women and men in decision-making, which is freely available for online consultation<sup>3</sup>.

The Beijing Platform for Action<sup>4</sup>, which was adopted in 1995 by 189 states across the world, identified twelve critical areas for action in relation to the violation of women's rights and persistent gender inequalities, one of which was the under-representation of women in the decision-making process. In response, the European Council proposed regular monitoring of the implementation of the Platform and, as part of this process, the Council of Ministers subsequently adopted two sets of indicators (in 1999 and 2003) related to women in decision-making<sup>5</sup>. Where relevant, the report includes tables showing the development of these indicators through time based on the longest available series of comparable data.

Throughout the report, figures and tables are labelled using standard codes in place of country names (see Appendix). Values for EU aggregates are weighted averages based on the total numbers of men/women from constituent Member States unless otherwise specified.

<sup>3</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=764&langId=en>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/fwcwn.html>

<sup>5</sup> A summary of documents relating to indicators and follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action can be accessed here: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=765&langId=en>



*“Women are under-represented in all forms of leadership positions: political leadership, the senior civil service and corporate boardrooms. At the same time, the companies where women are most strongly represented are also the companies that perform best financially.”*

*Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Links between gender equality, economic growth and employment rates, October 2009*

# Section I: A balanced economy? Women and men in positions of influence

Across Europe there exists a vast pool of untapped economic potential represented by those women who are either not participating in the labour market at all or who work less than they would do if there was better provision for reconciling the work-life balance. Part of the economic growth enjoyed over recent years can be attributed to the increased employment of women<sup>6</sup> and mobilising the remaining resource will be an important aspect of ensuring further, sustainable economic growth.

Moreover, further benefits can be gained from better utilising the talents of those women that are already working. Leadership and decision-making positions in all areas of life are still dominated by men so that the ideas and opinions of women have little chance of being heard. Yet it is almost self-evident that improving the gender balance in the decision-making process would have economic benefits. More women in politics would advance the implementation of equality legislation and policies that would in turn allow more women to work and on an equal basis with men. In business, there is an ever increasing body of evidence showing that companies with a good balance between the sexes at senior level tend to perform better than those that do not<sup>7</sup>. But it is not just a question of financial performance, on other measures of organisational excellence, companies with more women at the top also do better. Moreover, women in senior positions can act as role models and mentors for the pipeline of future leaders, helping to build aspirations and support their personal and professional development.

Gender equality in the labour market is a fundamental theme of the European strategy for growth and jobs and ensuring the full integration of women in the decision-making process is a key aspect of this objective. The European Commission has an important role in monitoring the situation and progress towards policy goals and this section of the report looks at the current gender balance in key areas of economic decision-making and how it has developed over recent years.

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6 The OECD estimates that a quarter of Europe's annual growth since 1995 is attributable to narrowing the gap between the employment rates of men and women. *Gender and sustainable development – Maximising the economic, social and environmental role of women*, OECD, 2008. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/58/1/40881538.pdf>

7 Examples of studies linking corporate performance to the representation of women on boards include:

- *The Bottom Line: Corporate performance and women's representation on boards*, Catalyst, New York, 2007 <http://www.catalyst.org/publication/200/the-bottom-line-corporate-performance-and-womens-representation-on-boards>
- *Women Matter: Gender diversity, a corporate performance drive*, McKinsey & Company, France, 2007 [http://www.mckinsey.com/locations/swiss/news\\_publications/pdf/women\\_matter\\_english.pdf](http://www.mckinsey.com/locations/swiss/news_publications/pdf/women_matter_english.pdf)

## 1. Banking and finance – a very male crisis?

### Beijing follow-up indicators

The proportion of women among Governors of the Central Banks				
	2003	2005	2007	2009
National banks, EU-15 average	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
National banks, EU-27 average	:	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
The proportion of women among members of the decision-making bodies of the Central Banks*				
	2003	2005	2007	2009
National banks, EU-15 average	17.6%	15.8%	16.7%	19.4%
National banks, EU-27 average	15.6%	16.3%	16.0%	17.7%

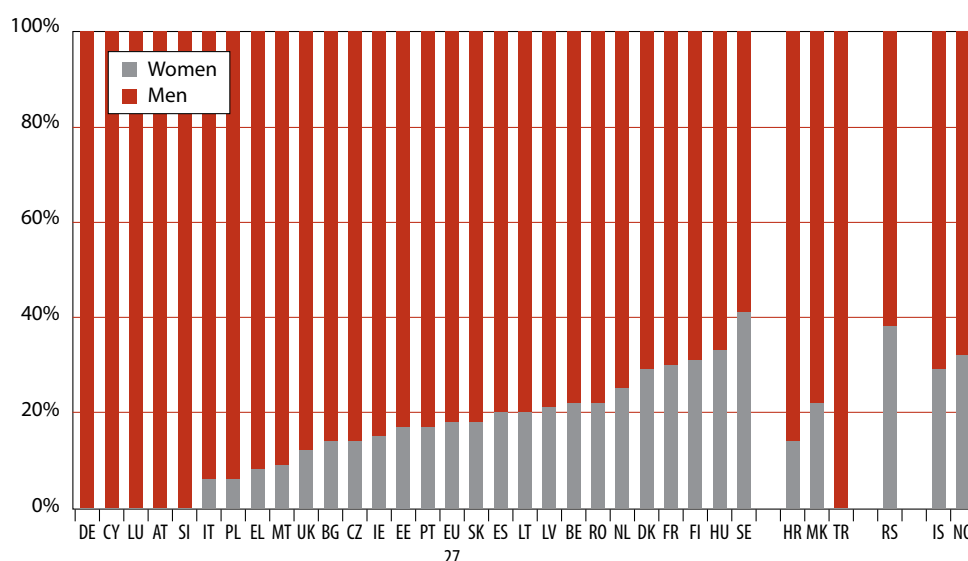
*\*In 2007 and previous years only the "highest" decision-making body of each central bank was included. Since the allocation of responsibility between different decision-making bodies varies in each central bank, the data did not have a wholly consistent coverage. 2008 data covers all decision-making bodies that are formally constituted within the statutes of the bank and which have the power to take decisions, without referral to a higher authority, that set or influence national policy, determine the policy/strategy of the bank or the framework within which it operates (statutes), or control the overall function of the organisation (day-to-day management/administration). Individuals who are members of more than one of these bodies are only counted once.*

### 1.1. EU central banks still have no women governors but the number of women in key positions is improving

The role of the financial sector in triggering the current economic crisis has brought its key decision-makers into the public eye. Since the start of the financial crisis, the central banks in each country have played a key role in protecting the savings of citizens, adapting monetary policy and orchestrating the supply of money in order to avert a prolonged period of downturn. Yet, as regulators or guardians of the financial system they could also be seen as having had an unwitting role in the crisis because they failed to curb the excessive risk taking that led to the near collapse of a number of large financial institutions. What the public will see when they look at who is responsible is that the top people in central banks are almost all men and that women have very little input to the decision-making process.

Across Europe in 2009, every central bank has a male governor and more than four out of every five members of key decision-making bodies are men. The central banks of Germany, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Austria and Slovenia do not have a single female representative on the main decision-making bodies and it is only in Hungary (33%), Sweden (41%) and Serbia (38%) where women account for at least one in three members (Figure 1). The situation is no different in the three main financial institutions of the EU (European Central Bank, European Investment Bank and European Investment Fund), which all have a man at the helm and an 89:11 male to female ratio amongst the combined members of their key decision-making bodies.

**Figure 1 - Women and men in the highest decision-making bodies of central banks, 2009**



Source: European Commission, DG EMPL, Database on women and men in decision-making.

## 1.2. Why so few senior women in the finance sector?

A recent study of the financial sector in the UK<sup>8</sup>, commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, found that women are under-represented and disadvantaged compared to men and that the sector was characterized by a greater occupational concentration by gender than the economy as a whole. Women are prominent in administrative and secretarial jobs but are significantly under-represented in managerial jobs, including those at senior level.

A culture of long working hours, imposed largely by peer pressure, can make working in the sector difficult for employees of either sex who want to combine work and family life, even when employers claim to accommodate flexible working arrangements for parents. A series of interviews with female managing directors at leading City (of London) investment banks<sup>9</sup> found that almost half were childless and that of those with children and a partner, a quarter had a partner who had taken on the role of primary carer for the family unit. These proportions give an indication of the work-life compromises necessary to reach the top in this sector.

Major financial institutions tend to recruit more or less equal numbers of male and female graduates and yet the number of women that progress to the top is limited. Some suggest that, in the mid-career period, women are more likely to evaluate their work-life balance and conclude that the disadvantages of pushing for promotion (long hours and competitive environment) outweigh the benefits of the challenge and financial reward<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Employment and earnings in the finance sector: A gender analysis*. Hilary Metcalf and Heather Rolfe, National Institute of Economic and Social Research. Research commissioned and published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, UK, 2009. [http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/download\\_\\_finance\\_gender\\_analysis\\_research.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/download__finance_gender_analysis_research.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Sealy, R., 2008, *Role models and career aspirations for senior females in investment banks*, unpublished paper, Cranfield, UK.

<sup>10</sup> *Women can't bank on the city*, Sunday Times, 3 May 2009. [http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/career\\_and\\_jobs/recruiter\\_forum/article6209923.ece](http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/career_and_jobs/recruiter_forum/article6209923.ece)

and to some extent this helps to perpetuate the imbalance at the top. Whilst there remain few women in senior posts there will continue to be a lack of role models for the next generation of female talent to follow. Many companies do take gender issues seriously and make efforts to accommodate flexible working patterns but this may not be enough – until there is a change in the underlying culture, the gender imbalance at the top will inevitably persist.

### 1.3. After the crisis – an opportunity for change

In the aftermath of the financial crisis, various commentators and even government ministers have suggested that the calamitous collapse of some of the major institutions might have been mitigated had there been more women on the boards to moderate the risk-taking culture<sup>11</sup>. This view is given credence by a number of research studies on the effect of gender on risk-taking, which tend to concur in showing that women are more risk averse than men<sup>12</sup>.

There is even evidence from the stock market to support this further. A study<sup>13</sup> of companies from the French CAC40<sup>14</sup> suggests that those with the most women in management positions were also the ones that were affected least during the crisis (in terms of stock market value), though it must be said that from such a small sample this cannot conclusively be taken to be a cause and effect relationship. In the banking sector the study highlights the example of BNP-Paribas, which had nearly 39% female managers and saw its stock decline in value by 20% during the period studied, compared to Credit Agricole, which had only 16% women managers and suffered a fall of 50% in its market value over the same time.

Relating company performance to gender balance as a causal relationship is extremely difficult because of the gamut of external factors involved. Nevertheless, several studies have now shown a clear correlation between the share of women in senior positions and company performance. For example, a comprehensive Finnish study of nearly 13 000 limited companies with more than ten employees found that firms with a female CEO were in practice around 10 percent more profitable than comparable firms with a male CEO<sup>15</sup>. A similar effect was found for companies with gender balanced boards compared to those with all male boards.

In the finance industry, one positive outcome from the recent crisis is that there is now a common consensus that the male-dominated culture must change if the sector is to behave more responsibly in future<sup>11</sup>. This argument was particularly loudly voiced in Iceland, whose economy was almost crippled following the collapse of a number of major banks, and it was noticeable that female CEOs were appointed by the government to lead both the New Glitnir and New Landsbanki banks that had been rescued by the state. In the United Kingdom, a parliamentary inquiry into the banking crisis and the role of corporate

11 Sullivan, Kevin and Mary Jordan, *In Banking Crisis, Guys get the Blame*, Washington Post Foreign Service, 2009. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/02/10/AR2009021002398.html>

12 *Why did the bankers behave so badly?*, Anne Sibert, VOX, 2009. <http://www.voxeu.org/index.php?q=node/3572>

13 *Global Financial Crisis: Are Women the Antidote?* News article about research by Michel Ferrary, <http://www.ceram.edu/index.php/Latest-News/Latest/Financail-Crisis-Are-Women-the-Antidote-CERAM-Research.html>

14 The CAC40 is a benchmark stock market index that includes 40 of the top-100 French listed companies by market capitalisation.

15 *Female leadership and firm profitability*. Annu Kotiranta, Anne Kovalainen & Petri Rouvinen, Finnish Business and Policy Forum, EVA, 2007. [http://www.eva.fi/files/2133\\_Analyysi\\_no\\_003\\_eng\\_FemaleLeadership.pdf](http://www.eva.fi/files/2133_Analyysi_no_003_eng_FemaleLeadership.pdf)

governance has spurred a further inquiry, *Women in the City*<sup>16</sup>, which is investigating the lack of women in senior positions, pay inequalities, flexible working practices and the prevalence of a sexist culture.

Without doubt, the crisis has raised awareness of the gender inequalities that exist in the finance sector and created a unique opportunity for change. The question is will the industry take up this challenge and bring about the cultural revolution that is so clearly needed.

## 2. Diversity in the boardroom

### 2.1. Women in blue chip companies – progress is too slow

The largest companies listed on the stock exchanges around Europe play a significant role in global business as well as contributing significantly to the national economies within which they operate. During the course of the recession, the decisions taken by these companies have had ramifications not only for their businesses and their employees but for the whole economy. In all but isolated cases these decisions are taken by a sizeable majority of men as women are still under-represented on company boards. In 2009, women account for an average of just 3% of the presidents of the largest companies in each of the EU Member States and less than 11% of board members. On the positive side, it must be noted that this is an improvement – in 2003 less than 8% of board members were women – but clearly there is still a long way to go.

#### Beijing follow-up indicators

The proportion of women among the presidents/chairpersons of the highest decision-making body of the largest publicly quoted firms on the national stock exchange				
	2003*	2007	2008	2009
EU-15 average	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	1.6%
EU-27 average	2.2%	2.9%	2.9%	3.0%

The proportion of women among members of the highest decision-making body of the largest publicly quoted firms on the national stock exchange				
	2003*	2007	2008	2009
EU-15 average	7.0%	8.9%	9.4%	10.9%
EU-27 average	7.8%	10.3%	10.8%	10.9%

\*2003 EU-27 averages include 2004 data for CZ, LT, MT and PL

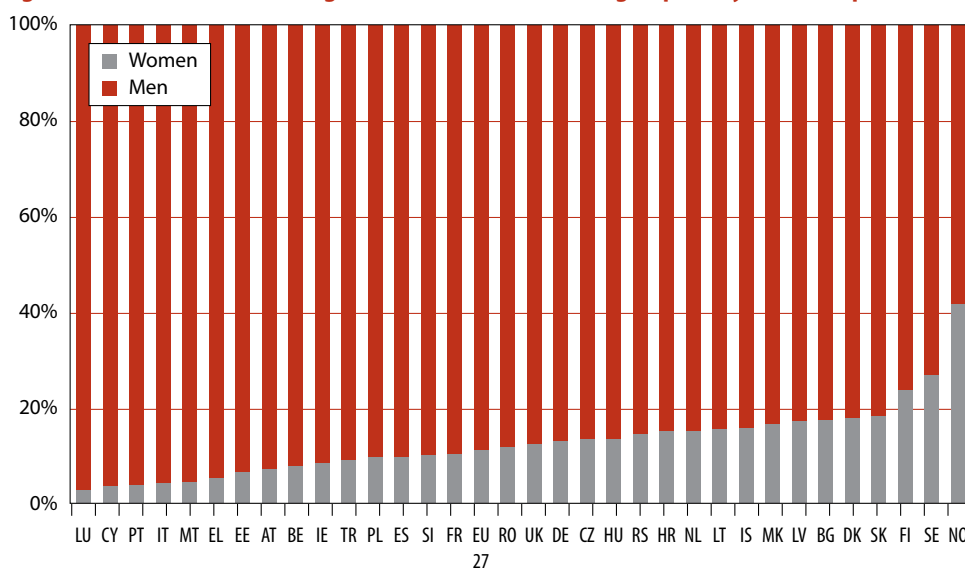
Across Europe in 2009, Norway stands out as being the only country where large companies have boards with anything approaching gender equality, with just under 42% women and 58% men – a direct result of the legal quota implemented three years earlier. Within the EU, Sweden and Finland are the only two countries with more than 20% women on boards (26.8% and 23.6% respectively). In Luxembourg, Cyprus, Portugal, Italy and Malta, the companies that make up the blue-chip indices of the local stock exchanges all have less than one woman in every twenty board members.

16 Treasury Committee inquiry: *Women in the city*.  
[http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary\\_committees/treasury\\_committee/tcwomeninthecity.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/treasury_committee/tcwomeninthecity.cfm)



Although the corporate world is increasingly aware that a good gender balance at all levels can be beneficial for business, the rate at which change is being implemented in the boardroom remains painfully slow. The latest collection of data for the Commission database on women and men in decision-making shows just eighteen women presidents of leading companies in the EU compared to 577 men. Indeed, there are fourteen EU countries<sup>17</sup> where not one constituent of the blue-chip index of leading companies has a woman president. Even in Norway, where there is now a good balance amongst board members, there are only 2 women presidents amongst the 18 nationally registered constituents of the OBX index<sup>18</sup>.

**Figure 2 - Gender balance amongst board members of the largest publicly listed companies, 2009**



Source: European Commission, DG EMPL, Database on women and men in decision-making.

## 2.2. Does size matter?

Women are clearly under-represented at the top of large, high profile corporations. But is this representative of the economy as a whole, where small and medium sized companies as well as larger companies outside the main blue-chip index are often the mainstay of employment for large proportions of the workforce? Unfortunately, data on board composition broken down by company size are not readily available but some 2005 data for the Netherlands (summarised in Table 1) suggest that the total share of women on company boards tends to be slightly lower in smaller companies – from 5.6% in the top-25 companies to 3.8% in the top-5000. Interestingly, executive boards appear to have fewest women in the largest companies (top-25) but a more or less constant ratio elsewhere – albeit only 3% – and it is the gender balance amongst members of the supervisory board that noticeably deteriorates outside the top-100 companies, which are those most in the public eye. If this pattern is repeated in other countries then it should be a cause for concern because it means that the pool of women gaining experience at the top of smaller companies is perhaps smaller than expected, thereby making it harder to fill the void in the larger, more prominent companies.

<sup>17</sup> The fourteen countries are: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, France, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Hungary, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The data refer to presidents of nationally registered companies listed in the primary blue-chip index of the local stock exchange, up to a maximum of 50 companies. For example, in the UK there are 3 women chairmen of FTSE-100 companies but all of these companies are outside the top 50 in terms of size.

<sup>18</sup> The OBX Index is a stock market index which lists the 25 most liquid companies on the main index of the Oslo Stock Exchange in Norway.

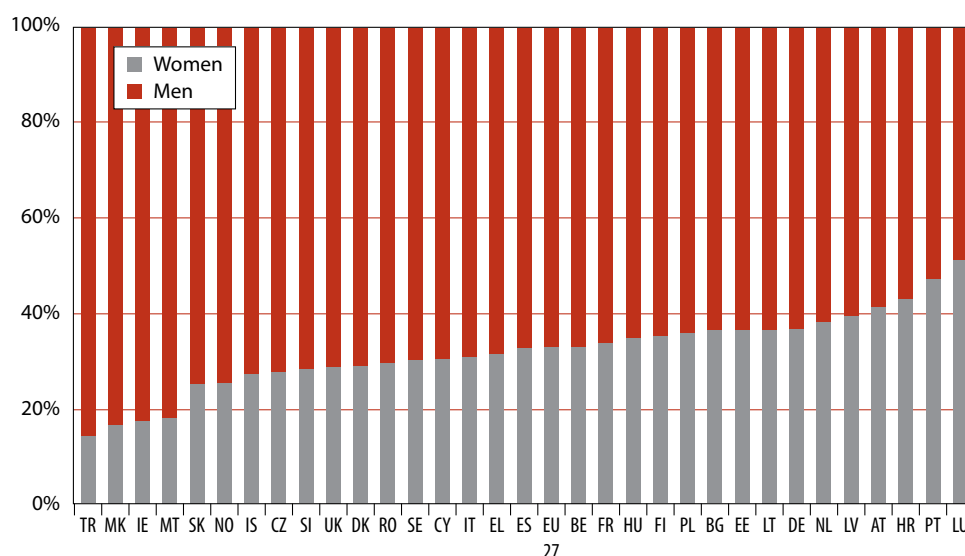
**Table 1 - Representation of women on company boards by size of company in the Netherlands, 2005**

Companies	Women members (%)		
	Executive board	Supervisory board	Total
Top 25	1.8	8.7	5.6
Top 100	3.1	8.5	6.0
Top 500	3.0	5.5	4.3
Top 5000	3.0	4.9	3.8

Source: Background information for symposium Balancing the boardroom, November 2007, the Hague.

### 2.3. More women entrepreneurs are needed - men are twice as likely to start their own business

Across the European Union, the employed population is made up of around 55% men and 45% women. Yet this distribution is not reflected amongst the twenty-three million or so people that are self-employed where there is a 2:1 male to female ratio (67% men, 33% women)<sup>19</sup>. This pattern is fairly consistently reproduced across countries, including others outside the EU, and it is only in Luxembourg, Portugal, Austria and in Croatia that more than 40% of the self-employed are women, whilst at the other extreme men account for more than 80% of the self-employed in Ireland, Malta, Macedonia and Turkey (Figure 3).

**Figure 3 - Self-employed persons by gender, 2008**


Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey.

Different studies and surveys<sup>20</sup> show that women are more likely to decide whether or not engage into self-employed activities based on the perceived ability to reconcile work and family life, including the protection granted in the event of maternity.

19 Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, 2008 data.

20 See point 3.1 of the Impact Assessment Report accompanying the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Directive 86/613/EEC, Document SEC(2008) 2529, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5697052>

At EU level Directive 86/613/EEC<sup>21</sup> aims at implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in self-employed activities. It is nevertheless commonly agreed that this Directive had little practical impact. The Commission adopted in 2008 a proposal to amend Directive 86/613/EEC aiming in particular to grant self-employed women and assisting spouses the possibility to benefit from a maternity leave of the same duration as provided for employees in Directive 92/85/EC (14 weeks). The proposal also provides that Member States remain free to maintain or adopt specific measures to prevent or compensate for disadvantages linked to sex in access to self-employment and entrepreneurship.

Once adopted, this new Directive will contribute to the response to the challenge of increasing women's participation in self-employment and entrepreneurship.

The European Commission undertakes a range of initiatives to support women entrepreneurs and is actively working with Member States to try to find ways to overcome the issues that tend to discourage women from working independently. A 2008 study<sup>22</sup> commissioned by DG Enterprise and Industry found that the obstacles confronting potential women entrepreneurs can be grouped into three main headings:

- Contextual obstacles: educational choices, traditional views and stereotypes about women, science and innovation.
- Economic obstacles: the innovation sector requires substantial investment and women may be seen as less credible financially than men.
- Soft obstacles: lack of access to technical scientific and general business networks, lack of business training, role models and entrepreneurship skills.

The "Small Business Act" (SBA) for Europe of June 2008<sup>23</sup> recognises the importance of SMEs in the economy and provides a framework for actions to promote female entrepreneurship. One of the actions proposed in the act is the European Network of Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors, which aims to use established female entrepreneurs to inspire women of all ages to set up their own businesses and was launched during the Swedish presidency of the EU in October 2009<sup>24</sup>. Other measures on the SBA agenda include a mentoring scheme for women, to be launched in 2010, and steps to promote entrepreneurship among women graduates. Moreover, the Act urges Member States to offer mentoring and support to female entrepreneurs and to exchange good practices. The SBA, in conjunction with the General Block exemption Regulation<sup>25</sup>, also allows Member States to grant up to a million Euro of State aid to support small enterprises set up by women.

21 Council Directive 86/613/EEC of 11 December 1986 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity, including agriculture, in a self-employed capacity, and on the protection of self-employed women during pregnancy and motherhood, OJ L 359, 19.12.1986, p. 56, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31986L0613:EN:HTML>

22 *Evaluation on policy: Promotion of Women Innovators and Entrepreneurship*, European Commission, DG Enterprise & Industry, 2008 [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/document.cfm?action=display&doc\\_id=3815&userservice\\_id=1&request.id=0](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/document.cfm?action=display&doc_id=3815&userservice_id=1&request.id=0)

23 [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/small-business-act/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/small-business-act/index_en.htm)

24 [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/promoting-entrepreneurship/women/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/promoting-entrepreneurship/women/index_en.htm)

25 [http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state\\_aid/reform/gber\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/reform/gber_final_en.pdf)

### 3. Science, research and development – time to plug the leaky pipe

The Lisbon Strategy – the EU's action plan for economic, social and environmental renewal between 2000 and 2010 – aimed to turn Europe into a “dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy”<sup>26</sup>. Achieving that objective demands that Europe stays at the forefront of scientific and technological innovation and development and this need was recognised at the 2002 Barcelona Summit, which called for investment in research to be increased from 1.9% to 3% of GDP by 2010.

A High Level Group (HLG) on Human Resources for Science and Technology convened in 2003 to review the measures that would be necessary to achieve that goal reported some striking figures on the shortage of human resources in the science, engineering and technology fields (SET) across Europe and estimated that an additional 500 thousand researchers would be needed. The HLG noted the severe under-representation of women in many areas of scientific research and commented – as others had before – that women remained the most obvious source of the additional resources needed. The final recommendations of the group did not hold back in stressing the need for action:

*“The proportion of women in SET careers is unacceptably low in many European countries. Although considerable efforts have been devoted to the analysis of this problem and lip-service has been paid in many policy declarations, we feel that it is now time to act. Europe simply cannot reach the level of SET resources needed for its development without finding ways to remove its anachronistic science gender imbalance.”*

Source: Conclusions and recommendations of the High Level Group on Human Resources for Science and Technology appointed by the European Commission in 2003.

The European Commission, through its “women in science” activities, has been working since 1999, together with the Member States, to address the issue of the under-representation of women in research, particularly in senior positions. In 2005, the EU set a goal of having 25% women in leading positions in public sector research<sup>27</sup> and the Commission's *Roadmap for Equality between women and men*<sup>28</sup>, released in the following year, reiterated the need for the implementation of policies to achieve this goal. However, evidence indicates that the target is still some way off. A 2008 report by the Commission's expert group on Women In Research Decision Making (WIRDEM)<sup>29</sup> highlighted the dearth of women in senior positions within both the academic and business research communities, noting that “Only 15% of full professors in European universities are women, and women are under-represented on decision-making scientific boards in almost all European countries.”<sup>30</sup>

#### 3.1. The current situation of women in science

The latest available *She Figures*, which is a Europe-wide data collection that looks at the situation of women in science from tertiary education through to the job market, report

26 Lisbon European Council, 23-24 March 2000, Presidency conclusions.

27 Council Conclusions, 18 April 2005.

28 *A Roadmap for equality between women and men, 2006-2010*, European Commission, 2006. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=12&furtherPubs=yes>

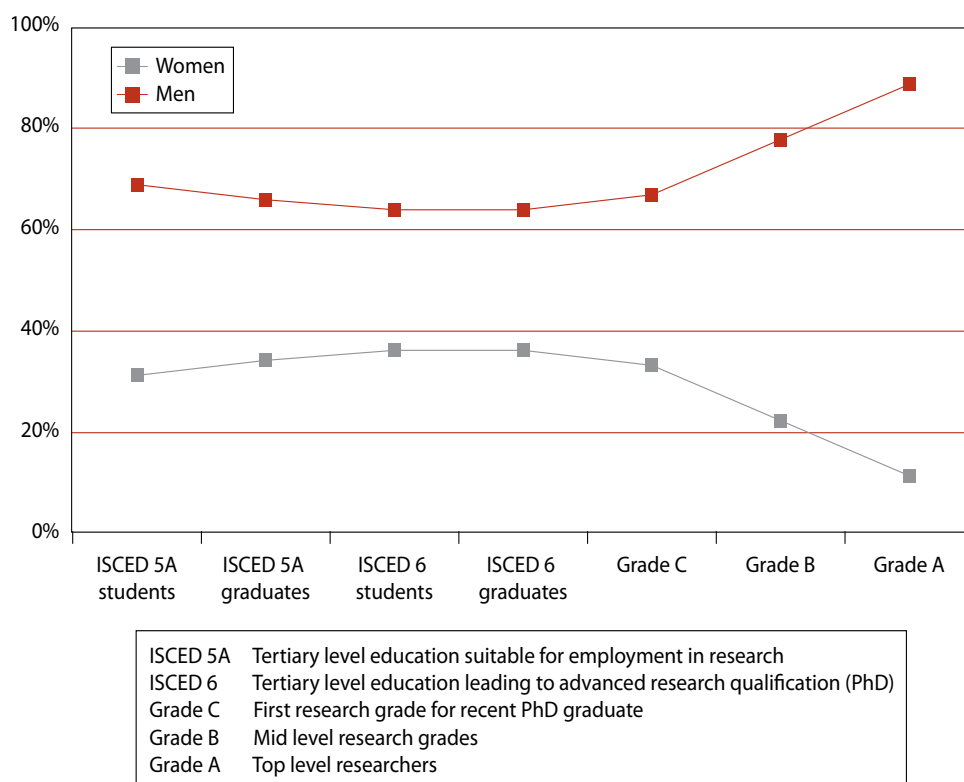
29 *Mapping the maze: Getting more women to the top in research*.

30 The WIRDEM report used data from *She Figures 2006*. More recent data from *She Figures 2009* show an improvement and indicate that in 2007, 19% of full professors were women.

that in 2006 the community of scientific researchers in the EU comprised 70% men and 30% women.<sup>31</sup> This represents a marginal improvement compared to the 2003 data when women accounted for 29% of researchers<sup>32</sup>, though the coverage (of countries) is not quite the same so that the figures may not be fully comparable. Indeed, the preliminary *She Figures* report notes that although the rate of increase in the number of researchers between 2003 and 2006 is higher for women, the fact that there are far fewer women researchers to start with means that it could take a very long time to bring about a significant improvement in the gender balance.

The problem is not the lack of female talent, rather the so-called “leaky pipeline” whereby women drop out of scientific careers in disproportionate numbers at every level. In 2006, women accounted for 45% of PhD (ISCED 6) graduates but the gender gap becomes increasingly pronounced throughout the academic career such that, in the same year, 82% of the most senior researchers were men and just 18% women<sup>31</sup>. This progressive dichotomy is particularly pronounced in the science, engineering and technology sector (SET) where women represent just 11% of full professors (Figure 4) despite accounting for 36% of the most highly qualified pool of resources from which the sector recruits (PhD graduates).

**Figure 4 - The proportion of men and women at different stages of a career in science and technology, 2006**



Source: *She Figures* 2009.

31 *She Figures* 2009. *Statistics and Indicators on Gender Equality in Science*, European Commission, 2009.

32 *She Figures* 2006. *Women and Science, Statistics and Indicators*, European Commission, 2006

### 3.2. Addressing the gender imbalance in science and research

The prevailing gender imbalance in science and research remains an important obstacle to the European objectives of enhancing equal opportunities in the field, increasing competitiveness, and maximising the innovation potential of Europe and it is clear that action is necessary. Some examples of initiatives that have been taken by Member States include the establishment of Ministries for gender equality, committed gender mainstreaming, the establishment of a women in science unit, networks for women in science, role models for women in science, gender equality plans in universities and special funding for women in science.

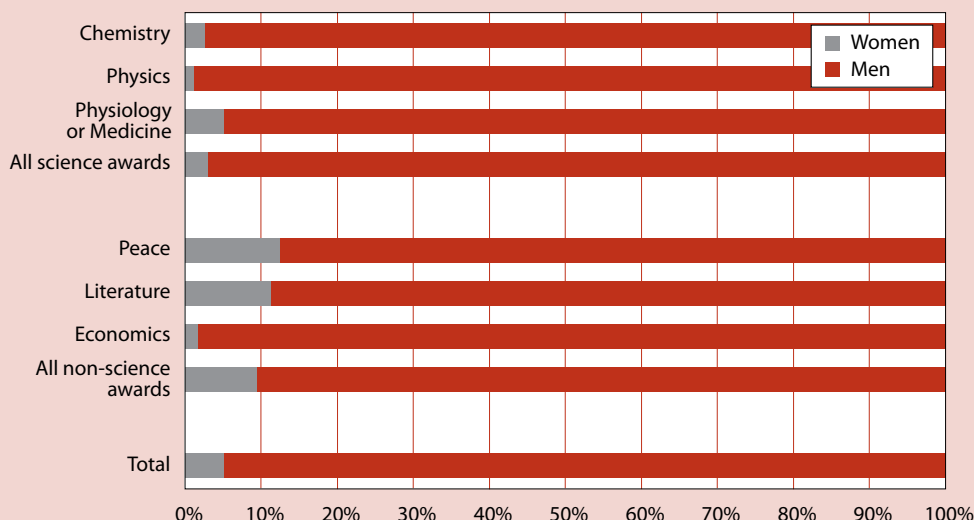
A Commission study published in 2008 attempted to correlate the implementation of such measures with the level of female representation and found mixed results.<sup>33</sup> For example, countries with a unit for women in science are more likely to have high numbers of women in professorial grades. However, this does not mean that the units have helped to secure promotions for these women: it could also be that the greater influence exerted by these women in senior positions impacts on policy and leads to the creation of such units. The study noted that measures to promote women are most likely to be in place in low innovation countries where the business enterprise sector is not well developed but high numbers of women work in low-paid research jobs in the government or higher education sectors. However, the under-representation of women in science is most acute in the business enterprise sector, where wages are higher. There is, therefore, a concern that as less innovative countries develop, and the business sector increases in importance, then the problem of gender inequality in science could actually get worse and the report recommends action to counteract this possibility.

#### **Recognising achievements in science – the Nobel Laureates are mostly men**

The Nobel Prizes are the most prestigious of awards made to celebrate achievements in science. In October 2009, three of the nine Nobel Laureates created in physics, chemistry, and physiology or medicine were women. Two of the four awards in literature, peace and economics also went to women, making a total of five out of thirteen - a record number and one to be celebrated. Indeed, this result is quite remarkable – of the total of 535 Nobel Laureates in scientific fields since 1901 just 16 are women (3%), whilst in non-science fields women account for 25 of the 267 Laureates (9%).

<sup>33</sup> *Benchmarking policy measures for gender equality in science*. European Commission, DG Research, 2008.

Figure 5 - Nobel prize winners since 1901 by gender



Source: <http://nobelprize.org/index.html>

### 3.3. The ICT sector needs to attract more women

The ICT sector contributes 5.3% of the EU's GDP, 4% of its jobs and 20% of economy-wide labour productivity growth.<sup>34</sup> What's more, the ICT sector is one of the most innovative and research intensive sectors in the EU, accounting for 25% of business sector research. However, continued growth in the sector runs the risk of being limited by a crippling skill shortage with some estimates projecting that there will be a shortage of 300 000 qualified staff by 2010. In a sector that has a reputation for being dominated by men, actively encouraging more women to enter and remain in the sector could represent the best way of fulfilling the anticipated requirement.

The leaky pipeline appears to be a serious problem in the ICT sector as women opt out of computing related areas from an early stage. At the pre-university stage there is little or no discrepancy between gender in terms of participation in science, technology and ICT topics. However, at a university level, men seriously outnumber their female counterparts, which immediately limits the available resource of qualified women<sup>35</sup>. Working culture, principally resulting from stereotypical assumptions about IT-related jobs, appears to play a significant role - the sector lacks female role models, has male orientated company procedures and is characterised by long working hours and evening and weekend work.

In recognition of this problem, the European Commission has published a best practice guide that illustrates different approaches to plugging the leaky pipeline and breaking down stereotypes at all stages of a career<sup>36</sup>. The *Code of Best Practices for Women and ICT* was launched on International Women's Day 2009 (8<sup>th</sup> March) and within six months has been

<sup>34</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/itgirls/info/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/itgirls/info/index_en.htm)

<sup>35</sup> *Women and ICT. Status and the way ahead*. European Commission, DG Information Society and Media, 2008.

<sup>36</sup> *European Code of Best Practices for Women in ICT*. European Commission, DG Information Society and Media, 2006.

supported by twenty-eight signatories including big corporations, SMEs, consultancies, NGOs, research councils and even a telecom regulator<sup>37</sup>.

Across Europe there are many different groups working to promote women and ICT but, in general, the initiatives that they co-ordinate are undertaken independently and therefore miss some of the benefits and impact that concerted action can bring. In another important initiative, the Information Society Directorate of the European Commission announced in October 2009<sup>37</sup> the launch of the European Directory for Women in ICT (EUD)<sup>38</sup>, which aims to provide an interactive electronic platform that will bring these groups together under one roof, building a community and forum for networking, exchange of knowledge, information on jobs and legislation, mentoring opportunities and so on.

#### 4. Representing the interests of businesses and their workers

##### 4.1. Chambers of Commerce and Industry

Chambers of commerce and industry are forms of networks – local organisations of businesses – whose goal is to further the interests of businesses. Typically, the members of each chamber (local businesses) elect a board of directors or executive council from the membership to set policy for the chamber. The board or council then hires a president, CEO or executive director and support staff to run the organisation.

A survey<sup>39</sup> carried out in 2004 by Eurochambres – the European Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry – found that women led less than 11% of regional/local chambers and only 3% of national level associations. The study also noted that women represented a significant part of the workforce of national chamber associations but were under-represented at management level. A further study in 2007 addressed the issue of the low participation of women in chamber boards and interviewed 2400 women about their personal considerations, experiences and attitudes<sup>40</sup>. Around two thirds of those interviewed worked up to 5 hours per month for their chamber but most noted that the impact on family/private life and time for their business was a barrier to their involvement.

##### 4.2. Social partners

The social partners are the trade unions and the employers (or their representative organisations) engaged in social dialogue. At European level, employers' and trade union organisations exist both as cross-industry bodies as well as on a sectoral basis, defending the specific interests of their members in a particular branch of the economy.

In 2009, women are better represented in the European level trade union organisations, where they account for more than a fifth of the members of governing bodies, than in the employers' organisations where men still occupy nearly nine out of every ten positions. The trade unions also have more women at the top with more than a quarter of organisations (28%) having a woman president compared to just 3% of the employers' organisations.

37 Proceedings of the workshop *More Women, Better Jobs and Boosting Growth*, 8 October 2009, Brussels.

38 European Directory for Women in ICT.

39 *Women in business and decision-making. The situation in chambers across Europe*. Eurochambres, 2004.

40 *Women on the board. Results from the survey*. Austrian institute for SME research, 2007.



**Beijing follow-up indicators**

The proportion of women among presidents of the trade union organisations (European level only)	2004	2007	2009
Average of European trade union organisations	16.7%	18.8%	27.8%

The proportion of women among members of governing bodies of the trade union organisations (European level only)	2004	2007	2009
Average of European trade union organisations	19.8%	23.3%	22.7%

The proportion of women among presidents of the employers' organisations (European level only)	2004	2007	2009
Average of European employers' organisations	5.7%	1.9%	3.4%

The proportion of women men among members of governing bodies of the employers' organisations (European level only)	2004	2007	2009
Average of European employers' organisations	7.7%	8.0%	11.7%

*Note:* Follow-up indicator originally referred to social partner organisations at national level but data in this table refer only to European level bodies (cross-industry and sectoral organisations)

The social partner organisations take the issue of gender equality seriously and in 2005 the four cross-industry European social partners (BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC) adopted a Framework of actions on gender equality<sup>41</sup>, which included four areas for priority action to be addressed by national organisations - addressing gender roles, promoting women in decision-making, supporting work-life balance and tackling the gender pay gap. The implementation of the Framework was followed through an annual report, monitoring what was being done in each country and at European level, and a final evaluation report published in 2009<sup>42</sup>.

41 ETUC: European Social Dialogue Committee: Framework of actions on gender equality. [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/dsw/public/actRetrieveText.do?id=10551](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/dsw/public/actRetrieveText.do?id=10551)

42 *Framework of actions on gender equality – Final evaluation report 2009*. <http://www.etuc.org/a/6709>



## Section II: Improving the gender balance in senior positions

The preceding section has demonstrated the persistent gender gap in many areas of the economy, particularly at senior level. The talents of women, who make up nearly half of the workforce, are clearly not being tapped to anything like their full potential. If Europe is to achieve its goal of becoming a dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in a globalised world then this needs to change.

The necessary shifts in attitudes and culture that underpin progress towards gender equality at all levels are progressively permeating the corporate world. Nevertheless, the imbalance at senior level persists and it is proving difficult to shift the status quo. With so many men in place, it is not easy for women to gain the opportunities to make their mark and the lack of women in top positions means that there are few sources of inspiration for the next generation of potential leaders. If the proportion of women in top positions can be lifted significantly – often 30% is touted as the key threshold – then the obstacles that women currently face will be removed and a natural balance should develop and become the new status quo.

The question is how to actively promote the advancement of women in order to reach this tipping point? One thing is clear – it is not a one-sided issue. Talented and ambitious men cannot be expected to hold back or stand aside in the interests of gender equality. Rather, women need to be better equipped to compete with men by becoming more ambitious and ready to promote other women. Helping women to help themselves, for example by strengthening leadership and networking skills, are therefore key elements of the process.

This section briefly considers the barriers that women face in reaching leadership positions and some of the initiatives that companies are already taking to promote the integration of women in their businesses. It then looks in more detail at some of the specific tools that are being used to help foster the leadership potential of women – role models, mentoring and networks – and how quota systems may be used to hasten the attainment of the critical mass. Throughout, it also considers the work and views of the *European Network of Women in Decision-making in Politics and the Economy*<sup>43</sup>, which was established by the European Commission to provide a European platform to promote and raise awareness of initiatives in this area.

### **The European Network of Women in Decision-making in Politics and the Economy**

The Commission's Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men (2006-2010)<sup>44</sup> has amongst its priorities the promotion of women in decision-making. One of the actions to put this commitment into practice was the establishment of a European Network of Women in Decision-making in Politics and the Economy. The network includes representatives of 15 existing European-level (and/or international) networks active in promoting the advancement of women. A full list of members is included in the Appendix.

The added-value of the European Network lies in its potential for facilitating partnerships and synergies between existing European networks and all stakeholders. As a network of networks, it provides a platform for European-level cooperation, exchange of information and experience, debate, mutual learning, and the sharing of good practice. The members give visibility to Community action in this field, disseminate the results of their exchanges in the relevant circles, and act as a relay in the relevant forums to foster gender balance in decision-making.

43 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=762&langId=en>

44 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=422&langId=en>

During the first year, the discussions focused on the importance of three inter-related topics in relation to the promotion of women in decision-making: the use of mentoring, networking and role models. Members of the network exchanged good practice examples, in particular from the private sector. A précis of some of the points discussed on each of the topics is given at the end of the relevant section below.

## 1. What are the barriers that women face in getting to the top?

Although many of the structural barriers that might impede women in their attempts to climb the corporate ladder have been removed through legislation to promote gender equality and to combat discrimination, there is no denying the reality that men continue to predominate in the upper tiers of management. The barriers that remain derive from a combination of stereotypical attitudes and perceptions, which continue to compartmentalise people and leadership qualities by gender, and the existing imbalance itself, which is self-supporting and restricts access to female role models and mentors for the pipeline of potential women leaders.

In 2002, a study by Catalyst and The Conference Board Europe interviewed 500 senior women from corporations and professional firms across Europe<sup>45</sup>. When asked about barriers to the advancement of women, two thirds highlighted stereotypes and preconceptions of women's roles and abilities as the most important obstacle they faced, closely followed by a lack of suitable female role models, a lack of relevant management experience, family commitments, and a lack of mentoring opportunities.

Without dedicating a whole report to the issue, the range of gender-based stereotypes that can influence attitudes towards women in senior positions and as leaders can be considered in two broad groups. The first and most fundamental stereotype relates to the traditional division of labour, which separates the responsibilities of providing for, and caring for, the family unit between men and women and leaves women in the home. Even though the fact that 45% of the EU labour force is now female<sup>46</sup> amply demonstrates that women contribute equally as providers, this stereotype underpins the view that women should take primary responsibility for raising the family and engenders doubts about their capacity to fulfil this role together with a professional career, particularly at senior level. A study<sup>47</sup> by Eurochambres in six EU Member States reports that 90% of the women interviewed agreed that men are in a better position to progress in their career because women drop out due to family constraints, and 80% saw motherhood as an obstacle to their career.

The second group of stereotypes relate, on the one hand, to gender-based personal characteristics and, on the other, to perceptions of what it takes to be successful in business and to be a good leader. Preconceptions as to the professional capabilities of men and women tend to pigeon-hole women into certain occupational roles and sectors of employment and exclude them from management positions. The Eurochambres study shows that nearly two thirds of the women interviewed had heard women being described as less credible in business than men, and only slightly fewer heard that women had difficulties with decision-making. The association of strong leadership and business

45 *Women in Leadership: A European Business Imperative*, Catalyst and the Conference Board Europe, 2002. <http://www.catalyst.org/publication/92/women-in-leadership-a-european-business-imperative>

46 Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, 2008.

47 Eurochambres interviewed women entrepreneurs (41%) and managers (59%) in six EU Member States. <http://www.eurochambres.be/Content/Default.asp?PageID=216>

skills with stereotypical male characteristics also makes life difficult for women, though the recent crisis in the financial sector has raised many questions about this model and could yet prove to be a trigger towards a shift in attitudes.

## 2. What are companies doing to promote gender equality?

Legislation has already lowered the barriers facing women in the workplace and further developments may contribute to a continued, but gradual, breakdown of stereotypes – for example, making leave arrangements equally available to men and women should help to diminish the view that early-stage child care is solely a female responsibility. However, the most important initiatives to promote gender equality in business will have to come from within – from the people that currently take the decisions inside companies because they are the only ones that can directly influence company policy on recruitment and career progression and the selection of their peers and successors.

A 2007 study<sup>48</sup> looking at what companies are already doing to better integrate women into their businesses identified four phases within which the different initiatives can be grouped (Table 2). The first step is to be aware of the situation within the company by introducing continuous monitoring of all human resource issues from a gender perspective, including the setting of targets against which progress can be measured. The second is to ensure that the company implements policies that facilitate a good work-life balance and allow all employees – whether female or male – to actively participate in family life without sacrificing their career development. The third covers initiatives that aim to provide the type of support needed to develop a career and which are currently lacking for many women – this includes the development of networks as well as coaching and mentoring. The final step relates to specific actions to help prepare women for leadership positions through appropriate training and hands-on experience.

The report concluded that many of the companies studied were taking steps within the first three stages of support but that little was being done for that crucial final stage of actively preparing women for leadership. Companies that already have a woman CEO are more likely to provide leadership experience for women in the leadership pipeline but the report warns that, in general, until the proportion of women in senior positions reaches that critical 30% threshold then the culture and practices of the company are unlikely to be conducive to supporting the advancement of women. Company executives need to recognise this and take action accordingly.

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48 *Inspiring women: Corporate Best Practice in Europe*, The Lehman Brothers Centre for Women in Business, London Business School, 2007. [http://www.london.edu/assets/documents/facultyandresearch/May\\_2007\\_Corporate\\_Best\\_Practice\\_Report.pdf](http://www.london.edu/assets/documents/facultyandresearch/May_2007_Corporate_Best_Practice_Report.pdf)

**Table 2 - Company initiatives to promote the integration of women**

Objectives	Initiatives
Measurement and reporting of gender equality	Gender balance on recruitment panels Representation at different levels of management Career progression Salary differences Targets and accountability Uptake of flexible work options
Enabling workers to balance professional and family lives	Work-family responsiveness Flexible work options Leave programmes Re-entry programmes
Creating supportive networks	Mentoring Coaching Formal network programmes
Preparing women to be leaders	Training Talent management Stretch assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lead important projects</li> <li>• lead business critical projects</li> <li>• overseas assignments</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Inspiring women: Corporate Best Practice in Europe, The Lehman Brothers Centre for Women in Business, London Business School, 2007.

### 3. Role models – an inspiration for the next generation of women leaders

Reaching the top of any profession requires a combination of hard work, determination and talent, though for most people it is also crucial to have the right network of contacts and visibility in the right places. Whilst self-belief is invaluable, most people also need some kind of tangible reassurance that their career goals and aspirations are actually achievable. Personal experiences and observations of the working environment and the people that currently occupy higher positions on the career ladder can be influential in this respect. Statistics show that women are progressively less well represented as the level of seniority increases to the point that only 11% of company board members are women. The women that do get promoted into senior positions therefore find themselves increasingly surrounded by men and with fewer and fewer women above them from whom they can learn and aspire to follow. For women already in power, this is not an issue – those that have made it have already dealt with being in a minority and have no need for role models – but for others still on the way up, the lack of women above them can contribute to limiting further aspirations.

Role models can be crucial in changing this perception and also help to demonstrate that women do not have to compromise their femininity (i.e. they do not have to become like men) or forego an active role in family life in order to reach the top. Of course, role models cannot be created – they have to be drawn from the existing pool of successful and talented women that are already leaders in their fields. Moreover, not all top women would choose to be promoted as role models for women because it draws attention as much to their gender as to their professional achievements. However, where they are willing to take on this responsibility, action can be taken to increase their profile and to highlight their experiences and achievements and thereby make them more widely accessible as role models for others.





### **The view from the Network: Role models**

The *European Network of Women in Decision-making in Politics and the Economy* discussed role models as a tool to promote the advancement of women during one of its meetings in 2009.

The members recognised the importance of role models in inspiring others but also in their capacity to shape changes in the working and leadership environment for the benefit of other women. From their positions at the top, successful role models can highlight issues, progress action and get responses by seeking interventions such as targets/quotas for the appointment of women, acting as 'drivers' and exposing the difference between aspirations and actions and the lack of progress towards eliminating gender discrimination. By raising issues on neutral, negative or even hostile platforms, role models can ask probing questions like "where are the women?" and thereby highlight the fact that gender is not a 'fringe issue' or 'flavour of the month'.

Role models can operate on a whole range of platforms including schools, companies, political parties, non-executive directors, internal and external networks. It is important that they are visible and emotionally attractive and that those who would like to follow a similar path can identify with them. If only men are evident in decision-making teams then women may be tempted to 'self-exclude'. Women need to be able to connect with, and be inspired by, others they can relate to, and wish to emulate – both female and male. Indeed, there is a need for many and more diverse role models that cross racial/ethnic groups, ages, disabilities, and other characteristics that are subject to discrimination.

The presence of women (and men) role models paves the way for better dialogue, more informed discussion and better decisions and outcomes.

Women role models 'show that it can be done' (in business and in politics) thus allowing more women to push aside the boundaries. This is empowering for both the role models and the women who seek to emulate them.

#### 4. Mentoring – supporting the professional development of women in business

##### Mentoring and its benefits

*“Mentoring is a supportive learning relationship built on mutual trust between an individual (the mentor) who shares knowledge and experiences with another individual (the mentee), who is ready and willing to benefit from this exchange to enrich their professional experience.”<sup>56</sup>*

A mentor is someone with experience who is willing to share that experience with a mentee (or protégé) in order to help them develop their career and maximise their potential. Usually the mentee is junior to the mentor but peer-to-peer mentoring and even junior-senior mentoring is possible, but common to all mentoring relationships is that the mentor has experience that the mentee does not. Mentoring often happens informally within companies but it may also be formalised and implemented for specific purposes such as supporting career progression and professional development, helping women and under-represented groups to break into senior management, developing a better understanding of the employing organisation, or facilitating the transfer of specific skills or knowledge.

Although mentoring is initiated for the benefit of the mentee, most mentors find that it is a mutually beneficial process.

Benefits for the mentee	Benefits for mentors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help with career and professional development</li> <li>• Advice and support to take on new responsibilities</li> <li>• Development of new skills, knowledge and perspectives</li> <li>• Advice on overcoming obstacles and avoiding pitfalls</li> <li>• Greater understanding of the people, politics and processes within the organisation</li> <li>• Access to a broader network of contacts</li> <li>• Improved self-confidence and ability to challenge assumptions</li> <li>• Changed attitudes and outlook</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to practise and develop management skills</li> <li>• Sharing knowledge and experience to the benefit of others</li> <li>• Satisfaction from helping others and seeing them progress and from the consequent contribution to the organisation</li> <li>• Improved knowledge of their own organisation</li> <li>• Increased visibility within the organisation</li> <li>• Chance to build wider networks</li> </ul>

Mentor relationships can be used at any stage of a career to support the advancement of talent but are particularly effective in the development of leadership skills. In the business world, mentoring relationships are often informal and unstructured with mentors gravitating towards colleagues with similar backgrounds and that they can relate to personally and professionally. In companies with few women at the top this can severely limit the options open to junior staff seeking a suitable mentor and studies demonstrate

<sup>56</sup> Definition from the website of the *Mentoring for Women* pilot scheme of Kings College, London <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/about/structure/admin/equal-opps/training/mentoring/>. A collection of definitions for mentoring, including variations of this one, can be found here: <http://www.coachingnetwork.org.uk/resourcecentre/Articles/ViewArticle.asp?artId=54>

that women are less likely to be informally mentored than men<sup>57</sup>. However, this is not exclusively an internal issue – even in formal mentoring programmes, for women who prefer to be mentored by other women, the most common obstacle is the lack of suitable mentors with the necessary skills and clout<sup>57</sup>.

Models of mentoring designed to work in large and medium-sized companies may not be appropriate in smaller ones, which generally lack the financial or human resources to establish mentoring programmes. The provision of mentoring programmes to SMEs, and in particular to start-ups, can yield positive returns but the implementation of such programmes is limited. In practice, the majority of SMEs adopt informal, on-the-job training<sup>58</sup> and it is difficult to convince owner-managers of the benefits of any formalised mentoring or coaching as the cost of the investment has to be justified by its return<sup>59</sup>. As a result, women working for small companies or independently rarely benefit from mentoring and have to find mentors by joining outside programmes, for example through professional women's organisations or through e-Mentoring programmes, which use internet technology to put prospective mentees in contact with suitable mentors and can be particularly valuable in rural areas.

Several successful mentoring programmes specifically designed to support women have been established across Europe and can serve as examples for others to follow. The four selected below demonstrate how mentoring programmes can benefit women in a whole range of circumstances. The first three are all national level programmes - one targets women already established in senior positions and aims to help them make that final step to board level, the second takes women entrepreneurs and helps them develop their fledgling businesses by learning from the experiences of others, the third introduces women still in tertiary education to established executives in order to better prepare them for to enter the professional world. The final case shows that mentoring programmes need not be confined within national boundaries and is an example of best practice at European level.

- The FTSE 100 Cross-Company Mentoring<sup>60</sup> scheme offers women in senior positions (just below board level) the opportunity to be mentored by chairmen and CEOs of some of the UK's largest companies. The programme was launched in 2003, when women accounted for less than 10% of directorships in FTSE-100<sup>61</sup> companies, and aims to help redress the situation by increasing the pool of women that are suitably equipped to take up board positions in major corporations. Women that have been through the programme have found it hugely beneficial and several have succeeded in moving on to board level positions, in the UK and elsewhere<sup>62</sup>.
- In Finland, the Women's Enterprise Agency<sup>63</sup> connects women starting a new business with experienced female entrepreneurs. Following an explicit set of goals established at the beginning of the process, the mentors and mentees meet regularly to discuss the business of the mentee. The experiences of the mentors help the new entrepreneurs avoid some of the pitfalls of early business development and develop contacts that

57 <http://www.catalyst.org/publication/70/creating-successful-mentoring-programs-a-catalyst-guide>

58 <http://www.business.brookes.ac.uk/research/areas/coachingandmentoring/volume/vol-4-1-peel.pdf>

59 <http://www.business.brookes.ac.uk/research/areas/coachingandmentoring/volume/6-2-3%20%20Peel.pdf>

60 FTSE-100 Cross-company mentoring programme.  
[http://www.praesta.co.uk/images/Praesta\\_FTSE-100-Mentoring-Programme\\_2009.pdf](http://www.praesta.co.uk/images/Praesta_FTSE-100-Mentoring-Programme_2009.pdf)

61 The FTSE-100 is the index of the top 100 companies by market capitalisation listed on the London stock exchange.

62 *Advice that gets women on board*. Alison Maitland, 2008. <http://www.goforgrowth.com/php/newsletter.php?id=27>

63 The Women's Enterprise Agency, Finland. <http://www.naisyrittajyyskeskus.fi/index.php?k=5547>

can benefit the new business. However, it is important that the relationship is mutually beneficial – the mentors may also benefit from new contacts and ideas that can contribute to their own businesses in addition to the personal satisfaction gained from seeing their advice benefit a fellow entrepreneur.

- The MET programme (Mujer, Empresa y Tecnología)<sup>64</sup> provides mentoring combined with ICT training for women studying at postgraduate level in the Madrid region of Spain. The idea is to give women with high potential the opportunity to learn from experienced executives and academics some of the skills that they will need to enter and progress rapidly in the business world. Good ICT skills are seen as essential in facilitating efficient business communication and innovation. The programme also offers these budding business women access to contacts and networks that would normally not be accessible to them until they became more established.
- The European Professional Women's Network (EPWN)<sup>65</sup> brings together professional women from across Europe and has established more than 200 mentoring pairs in Paris, Amsterdam, Madrid, Nice, and other cities. A series of events are organised annually to undertake mentor/mentee matching and provide training on how to become a mentor/mentee. The European PWN has also published a book<sup>66</sup> with best practices on how to set up mentoring programmes within women's networks and within companies (especially cross-gender mentoring) and makes other relevant material available to members via its web platform.

### The view from the Network: Mentoring

The meeting of the *European Network of Women in Decision-making in Politics and the Economy* in October 2008 endorsed mentoring as a powerful tool for developing women in decision-making positions. In doing so, the Network recognised that although there are plenty of good practice examples, mentoring programmes are not widely used in some Member States and that support is needed to widen their use and availability. Amongst its conclusions, the Network noted that:

- Customised training-kits with process descriptions are needed to support the development of mentoring programmes and these should encompass different strategies for different types of businesses (SMEs versus large companies) and for political parties.
- Dissemination of best practice experiences of mentoring programmes should be encouraged and, where possible, these examples should be accompanied by a model for a mentoring plan, indicating how a company/political party can launch a similar mentoring programme.
- It will be necessary to look for a range of different types of mentoring from which women could benefit and to encourage men to be more aware of the barriers faced by women. The mentoring process provides a means of tapping the abilities and experience of the most committed men and women to champion gender equality.

64 MET programme website [http://www.iemet.com/english/index\\_en.html](http://www.iemet.com/english/index_en.html)

65 <http://www.europeanpwn.net/>

66 *Mentoring – A powerful tool for women*, EuropeanPWN, 2007. [http://www.europeanpwn.net/index.php?article\\_id=51](http://www.europeanpwn.net/index.php?article_id=51)

## 5. Networks – forums for mutual advancement

Corporate networks bring together individuals seeking to develop and maintain relationships with others that have the potential to assist them in their work and career. Contacts made through networking can help to increase access to job and business opportunities and the chances of success in those ventures, but also be a source of information, resources, advice, support and whole range of both social and commercial benefits.

It is well known that men have used networking more than women but, as women have become more aware of the importance of networking to their careers, they have started to engage in these relationships as much as men. Nowadays, women's networks in the corporate sector are increasingly seen as a business activity as well as a career development tool, and companies are starting to draw on the expertise of women's networks in areas such as product design and marketing. The existence of women's networks is also proving a benefit to companies in terms of recruiting and retaining women.

Women are joining networks to network, obtain career advice/support, understand the business, help others and share experiences. A survey 'How do women network?'<sup>67</sup> shows that a typical senior international professional woman forms her networks primarily for social/personal reasons (e.g. to meet new people, personal development), and secondly for business reasons (e.g. develop own business, meet new or potential customers). However, for many, networking is seen primarily as a way to advance their career and "advancing my career", "finding a job" and "integrating at work" top the list of business reasons for networking.

Networks are established at many different levels, from internal company networks to regional and national bodies that may bring together women from a particular occupation or profession. There are also a number of international networks for women and some examples at European level include:

- The European Professional Women's Network (EPWN)<sup>68</sup> is a pan-European federation of more than 17 women's networks, which aims to provide women with the tools, networks and support they need for leadership. It assists professional women through cross-sectoral networking and training, and provides companies with a network of high-potential managers and access to information on best practices across Europe.
- The European Platform of Women Scientists (EPWS)<sup>69</sup> is an umbrella organisation bringing together networks of female scientists and organisations committed to gender equality in multi-disciplinary research.
- The Eurochambres Women Network<sup>70</sup> promotes the active involvement of women in the economy, exchanging good practices and carrying out studies – for example on female entrepreneurship and female decision-making in chambers of commerce and industry across the EU.

The value of women's networks is increasingly being realised, yet sustainability and financial resources are major challenges. Many have been set up by women themselves

67 [http://www.europeanpwn.net/files/how\\_do\\_women\\_network\\_11dec08.pdf](http://www.europeanpwn.net/files/how_do_women_network_11dec08.pdf)

68 <http://www.europeanpwn.net/>

69 <http://www.epws.org/index.php>

70 <http://www.eurochambres.be/Content/Default.asp?PageID=27>

and are run by volunteer leaders and committees. The range of activities that many networks are involved with requires considerable input and it is not always easy to find women who have the capacity and willingness to put in a sustained effort. The support that networks offer cannot be maintained without adequate financial resources - some are self-financing through membership fees but others rely on public funding or corporate sponsorship - and it is important that this support is continued or increased.

### The view from the Network: Networking

The *European Network of Women in Decision-making in Politics and the Economy* met in December 2008 to consider three questions about networking – how to get more women participating in networks, how can networks help women advance their careers, and what are the best practices for empowering women through networking? Their debate gave rise to a number of action points:

- There is a need to target potential network members, particularly younger women, using up-to-date communication tools such as social networking websites and blogs.
- Networks need to recognise that the question ‘what’s in this network for me?’ is relevant to new and existing members and will have to consider offering tangible benefits such as training/experience/social networking and coaching.
- Networks require funding and other resources to prosper and serve their constituent groups. This need not come exclusively from public funds but can include sponsorship and fund-raising initiatives.
- Women in networks can act as ‘role models’ and ‘change agents’ e.g. to assist women into businesses or political parties, to get women onto boards or to get them elected, to change company/party policies and cultures. There is a clear link between women in politics and the economic sphere - they feed off each other.
- Information is a powerful tool in influencing decision-making. Through networks, women can harness information and use it to achieve collective outcomes through coalition-building and sharing knowledge and experience.
- Networking is no longer a national activity. It takes place on a global stage hence there are no boundaries.

## 6. Gender quotas for boardrooms – a quick fix?

Despite the fact that the business case for gender balanced decision-making is more and more widely accepted, progress towards integrating women in corporate boardrooms has been extremely limited in most countries around Europe. Between 2003 and 2009 the share of women in corporate boardrooms across the European Union has risen less than three percentage points from 7.8% to 10.9%<sup>71</sup>. Recognising that something needs to be done to speed up the inclusion of women in the highest decision making level, a few European governments have adopted a legislative approach by introducing gender quotas for company boards.

71 Source: European Commission, DG-EMPL, Database on women and men in decision-making. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=764&langId=en>

The front runner in boardroom quotas for the under-represented sex is Norway where, from January 2006, legislation required a minimum representation of 40% of either sex on the boards of all privately-owned public limited companies (state-owned companies had been subject to a similar quota since 2004). As with other requirements of the Companies Act, such as timely filing of annual accounts, non-compliance with the quota can result in penalties (including fines) and, as a last resort, dissolution of the company is even possible. Companies were given until 2008 to comply and as a direct result of this action, the representation of women on the boards of large companies in Norway rose from 25% in 2004 to 36% in 2006 and 42% in 2009<sup>71</sup>.

In March 2007, the Spanish government passed a gender equality law obliging public companies and IBEX-35<sup>72</sup> quoted firms with more than 250 employees to develop plans to promote equal opportunities and to try to attain a minimum 40% share of each sex on their boards within 8 years. As an incentive to act quickly, companies reaching this quota will be given priority status in the allocation of government contracts<sup>73</sup>. Although the quota will not formally be applied until 2015 and the law provides no sanction in case of non-compliance, there are already signs of progress - the representation of women on boards of the largest listed companies in Spain has nearly doubled from 5% in 2006 to a little below 10% in 2009.

In Denmark, since 2000, the law has required companies which are majority owned by the State to have balanced participation of men and women and for this principle to be extended to board level wherever possible<sup>74</sup>. That target has now been reached and 35 per cent of board members in those companies are women. However, in the largest publicly listed companies the share of women board members is still below 18%<sup>71</sup>.

Elsewhere, there were proposals during 2009 in both France and the Netherlands to apply quotas for larger companies but neither had adopted any legislation at the time of the preparation of this report. In the Netherlands there have been various initiatives by both government<sup>75</sup> and non-profit organisations<sup>76</sup> to promote women onto company boards but the numbers remain stubbornly low. A study of over a hundred listed companies in September 2009 found that women accounted for just 7% of directors (2.4% of executive directors and 9.5% of non-executive directors)<sup>77</sup>.

72 The IBEX-35 (Iberia Index) is the benchmark index of the Madrid stock exchange.

73 *Background information symposium Balancing the Boardroom*, SER, 2007 [http://www.ser.nl/nl/Actueel/Congressen/2007/~/\\_media/Files/Internet/Congressen/2007/20071121\\_Background.ashx](http://www.ser.nl/nl/Actueel/Congressen/2007/~/_media/Files/Internet/Congressen/2007/20071121_Background.ashx)

74 *The Equal Status Act* of May 2000 was reinforced by the Gender Equality (Consolidated) Act of July 2002 and requires that boards, management bodies and committees within public administration "should have an equal gender balance". This principle is then extended to institutions, partnerships and limited liability companies that are government funded or majority owned by the state. <http://uk.lige.dk/Default.asp?Id=194>

75 For example, the Glass Ceiling Ambassadors Network established in 2000 by the Equality Unit of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment in collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Affairs. *1<sup>st</sup> report on the implementation of the European Social Charter, Netherlands*, Council of Europe, 2008. [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/reporting/statereports/Netherlands1\\_fr.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/reporting/statereports/Netherlands1_fr.pdf)

76 For example, the Charter "Talent to the Top" launched by TopBrainstorm, a non-profit group supported by both corporations and government. <http://www.talentnaardetop.nl/charter-en.htm>

77 *The Dutch 'Female Board Index', 2009*, Erasmus Institute. <http://www.toezichtencompliance.nl/publicaties?id=30>. Note that the figure of 7% is significantly lower than the 15% reported in the Commission database. There are two reasons for this – firstly the Commission database covers only supervisory boards and not executive boards, and secondly because of different coverage. The Dutch study covered 107 listed companies whilst the Commission database covers only nationally registered constituents of the main blue-chip index (AEX), of which there were 21 in 2009. Indeed, 6 of the top ten companies ranked in the study are AEX listed and the study notes that AEX listed companies are under more pressure to appoint women because of their high visibility.



Despite their capacity to bring about rapid change, legislative quotas remain controversial. One argument against quotas is that they inevitably interfere, at least during the adaptive phase, with the normal selection processes. However, this line of reasoning is based on the presumption that some of the board positions will be taken by women who do not have the requisite skills or experience. If steps are taken before the application of the quota to ensure an adequate pool of suitably qualified women candidates, then the argument becomes untenable.

Moreover, legislation is not the only answer – a softer approach is to use, for example, corporate governance codes to encourage companies to take their own action (see box). It is also possible for change to occur without specific pressure being brought upon companies. In Sweden, gender equality is enshrined in all areas of government policy, which aims to create the underlying conditions necessary to ensure equal access to, and distribution of, resources and power between men and women. With women having been highly visible in parliament and amongst government ministers for at least ten years, and therefore in a strong position to question inequalities elsewhere, the share of women on the boards of all listed companies has risen from 6% in 2002 to 18% in 2006<sup>78</sup>. However, this is still low compared to state owned companies (44%) and within Sweden there remain concerns of persistent gender inequalities in the private sector<sup>79</sup>.

### Corporate governance codes

Corporate governance codes play a major role in determining the composition of the boards of listed companies and could therefore make an essential contribution in promoting the balanced participation of women and men on the boards. At the end of 2009, the corporate governance codes of five Member States included recommendations concerning gender representation at board level in listed companies.

The Finnish Corporate Governance Code (2008) states that *“Both genders shall be represented on the board”* (Recommendation 9).

The Swedish Code of Corporate Governance (2008) states that *“The company is to strive for equal gender distribution on the board”* (4.1).

Under the Spanish Corporate Governance Code of 2006, when women directors are few or non-existent, the Board is required to state the underlying reasons and the corrective measures taken. In particular, a company's nomination committee should take steps to ensure that the process of filling board vacancies has no hidden bias against women candidates and that the company makes a conscious effort to include women possessing the target profile among the candidates who are considered for seats on the board.

The Belgian Code of Corporate Governance of 2009 states that *“The board's composition should ensure that decisions are made in the corporate interest. It should be determined on the basis of gender diversity and diversity in general, as well as complementary skills, experience and knowledge”* (Section 2.1).

In May 2009 the German Corporate Governance Code Commission decided to add clauses to the Code relating to diversity of the board and supervisory board (5.1.2 and 5.4.1).

Source: Leena Linnainmaa, member of the European Network of Women in Decision-making in Politics and the Economy and member of the European Women Lawyers Association.

78 <http://www.sweden.se/eng/Home/Work/Life-in-Sweden/Equality-in-Sweden/Facts/Gender-equality-in-Sweden2/>  
79 <http://www.thelocal.se/23184/20091110/>



# Section III:

## Political decision-making – who speaks for the citizens?

It is a fundamental principle of democracy that all citizens are equal before the law and have equal access to power. It follows, therefore, that the composition of assemblies elected by citizens to take the decisions that affect every aspect of their daily lives should reflect the diversity of the electorate. Historically, however, this has not been the case and the world of politics did not open its doors to women until the twentieth century and, although significant progress has been made, there remains some way to go before equality is achieved.

This section gives a brief update on the gender balance in political decision-making following the key European elections in June 2009 and elections and government reshuffles at national level in the twelve months to October 2009. More comprehensive coverage of the topic can be found in the 2008 report *Women in European politics – time for action*<sup>80</sup> published by the European Commission.

## 1. Progress towards gender balanced parliaments

### Beijing follow-up indicators

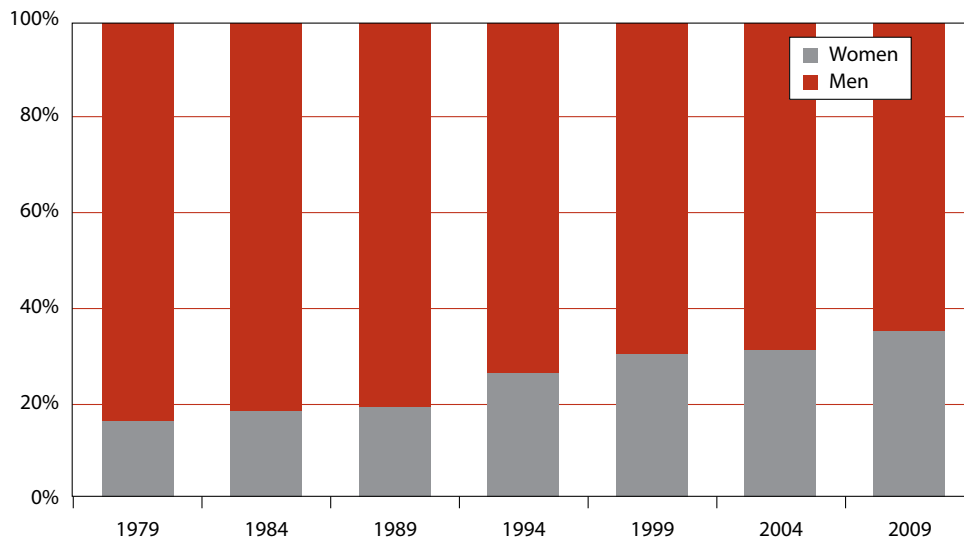
The proportion of women in the single/lower houses of the national/federal parliaments of the Member States and in the European Parliament					
	1984	1997	1999	2007	2009
Single/lower house of national/federal parliaments, EU-27 average	:	16.3%	:	23.6%	24.2%
European Parliament	17.3%	:	29.6%	31.2%	34.9%

### 1.1. Best ever gender balance in the European Parliament

In June 2009, elections for the European Parliament saw a total of 736<sup>81</sup> members of the European Parliament (MEPs) chosen to represent some 500 million citizens of the European Union. Following the elections, the members of the new parliament comprise 35% women and 65% men – the most balanced Parliament by gender since the first direct elections in 1979. Indeed, this result represents the first significant improvement since 1999 when the share of women members first reached 30% (Figure 6).

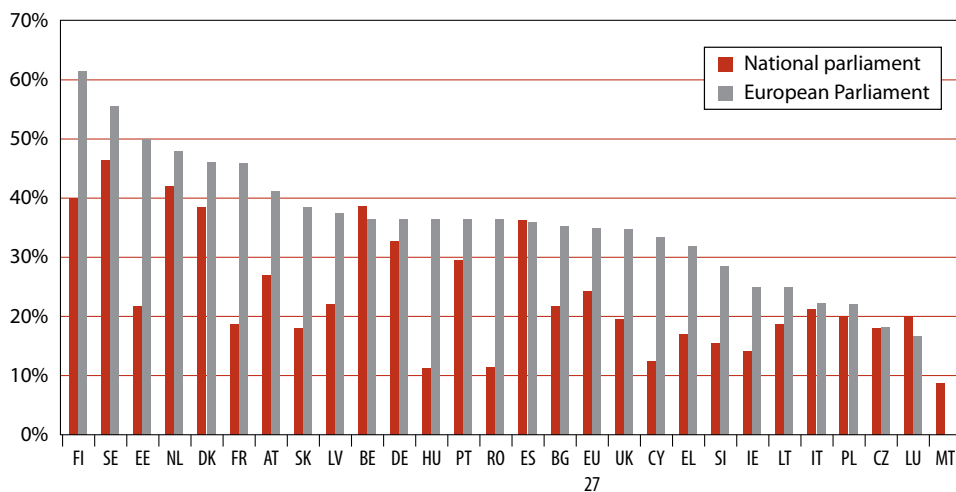
80 The report and other important documents on the gender balance in decision-making can be accessed from the list available here: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=762&langId=en&furtherPubs=yes>

81 Following the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, the size of the Parliament will increase from the current 736 to 751 (750 MEPs plus the President).

**Figure 6 - Gender balance in the European Parliament, 1979-2009**

Source: European Parliament.

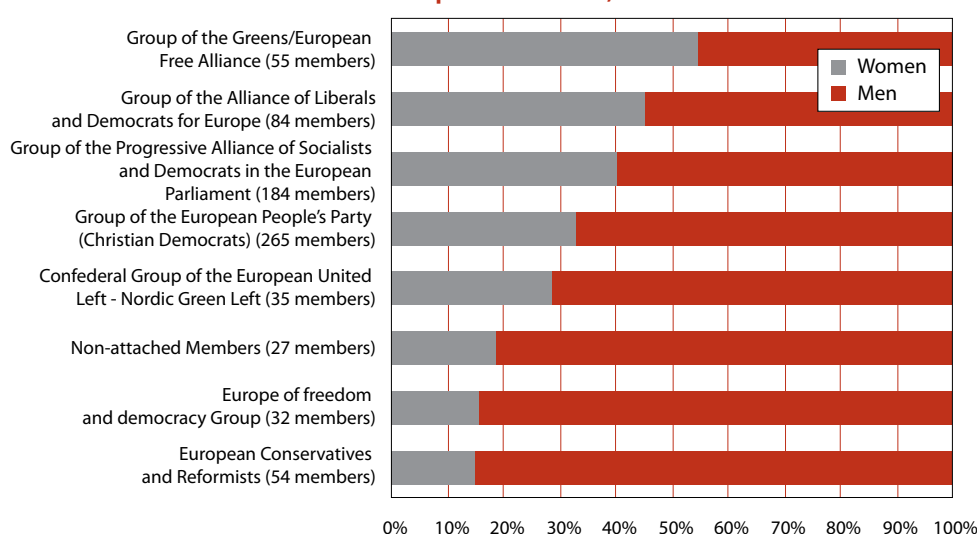
The share of women in the European Parliament (34.9%) is now just over ten percentage points higher than in the single/lower houses of the national parliaments of Member States (24.2%). Indeed, women are better represented amongst MEPs than members of national parliaments in all countries except Belgium, Spain, Luxembourg and Malta, which is the only country without any women MEPs (Figure 7).

**Figure 7 - Share of women in national parliaments (single/lower house) and in the European Parliament, 2009**

Source: European Commission, DG EMPL, Database on women and men in decision-making.

Some political groups do better than others in promoting a good gender balance amongst their representatives in the European Parliament. The Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance has the highest level of female representation with 55% women and 45% men, followed by the larger Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, which has 45% women and 55% men (Figure 8). On the other hand, the European Conservatives and Reformists and the Europe of freedom and democracy Group have very low shares of women amongst their members (15% and 16% respectively).

**Figure 8 - Distribution of women and men members of political groups of the European Parliament, 2009**



Source: European Parliament.

## 1.2. Another male president but more women vice-presidents

In July 2009 the new European Parliament elected Jerzy Buzek, a former Prime Minister of Poland, as president for the next two and half years. He becomes the eleventh male president of the thirteen elected to the position since it became an elected assembly in 1979.

The president of the European Parliament is assisted by fourteen vice-presidents and at this level the changes following the latest elections have been positive for gender equality. Six of the fourteen vice-presidents are now women compared to two in the first half of the previous term and four in the second half.

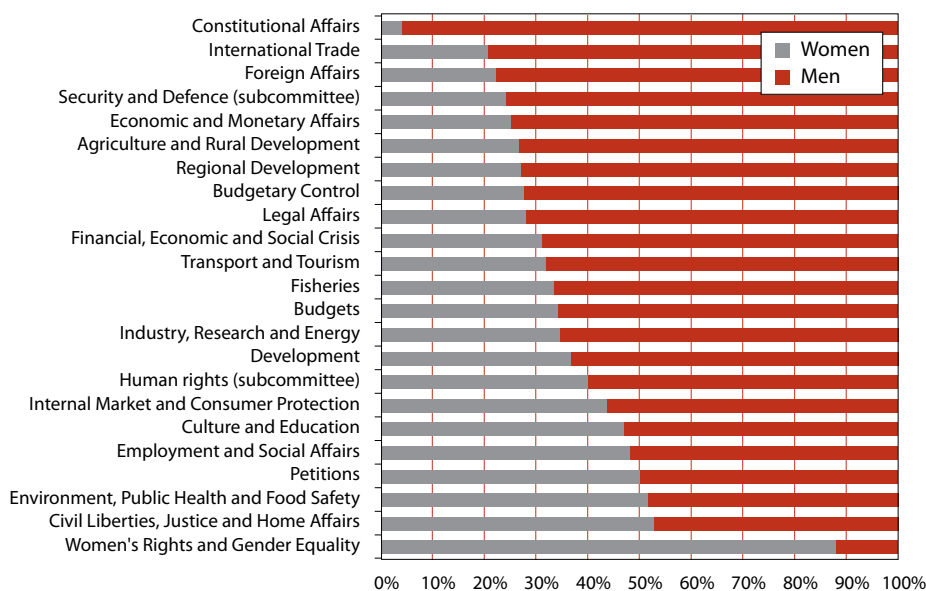
## 1.3. Women are gaining voice within the workings of the European Parliament

Much of the work of the European Parliament is undertaken by groups of MEPs brought together into standing committees, which undertake the preparatory work for the plenary sessions, including the examination of legislative proposals. The work of the committees is co-ordinated through a Conference of Committee Chairs attended by the chair of each committee. Following the 2009 elections, women chair 9 of the 23 active committees or sub-committees (39%), giving them a much louder voice in the decision-making processes compared to the two previous parliamentary terms when less than one in four committees had a woman chair. Currently, women chair the committees of Development; Economic and monetary affairs; Employment and Social Affairs; Regional Development;

Fisheries; Culture and Education; Women's Rights and Gender Equality; Petitions; and the subcommittee on Human Rights<sup>82</sup>.

The membership of two committees is highly imbalanced in terms of gender. The committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality is predominantly female (88% women, 12% men) but the more extreme case is the committee on Constitutional Affairs which is made up of 24 men (96%) and just one woman (4%). Although the balance amongst the remaining committees is more or less in line with what would be expected given the overall balance in the Parliament, there does seem to be a tendency for women to be better represented in committees concerned with socio-cultural issues and under-represented in key areas such as trade, economics, defence and foreign affairs (Figure 9).

**Figure 9 - Gender balance in the committees of the European Parliament, 2009**



Source: European Parliament.

#### 1.4. Little change in the gender composition of national parliaments

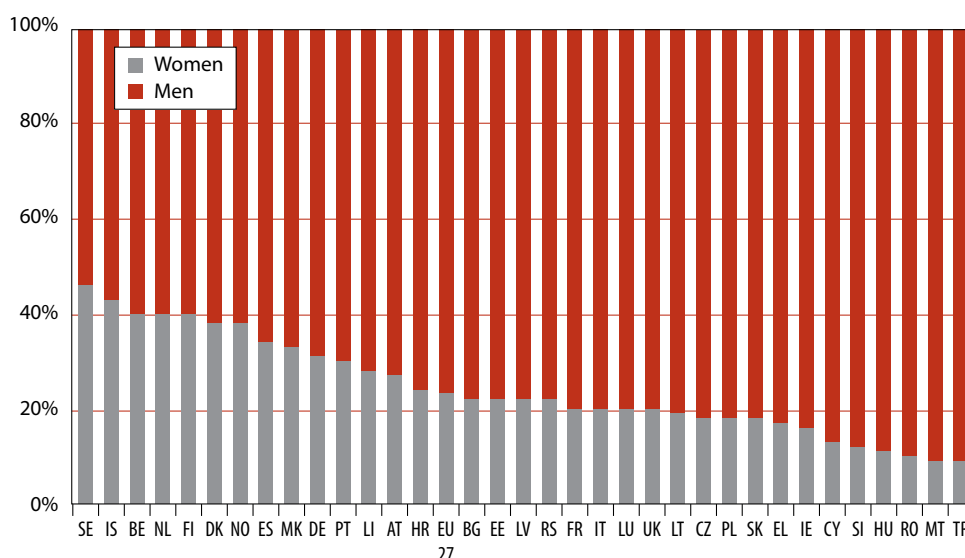
Elections at national level in the twelve months to October 2009 have had little impact on the gender share of parliaments across Europe with men still accounting for more than three out of very four elected representatives. Combining the representatives of both lower and upper houses (where relevant), women now make up 23.4% of members of national parliaments across the EU compared to 76.6% men (Figure 10).

In the period there were parliamentary elections in Greece, Germany, Portugal, Norway, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Iceland, Slovakia, Romania and Lithuania (countries ordered by election date with most recent first). In half of these countries, the results were more or less neutral in terms of gender balance with the share of women representatives in October 2009 not having changed by more than one percentage point or so compared to a year previously. There was, however, a significant improvement in the share of women

82 Source: European Parliament. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/committeesList.do?language=EN>

representatives in the single house of Iceland (Althingi: 43% from 33%) and a smaller increase in Norway (Storting: 39% from 36%). In contrast, there were noticeable falls in the single houses of Luxembourg (Chambre des députés: 20% from 25%) and Lithuania (Seimas: 19% from 23%) and in the upper houses of Romania (Senat: 6% from 11%) and Germany (Bundesrat: 18% from 22%).

**Figure 10 - Gender composition of national parliaments (lower and upper houses combined), 2009**



Source: European Commission, DG EMPL, Database on women and men in decision-making.

Following elections to an assembly, a new speaker/president is typically chosen from amongst the new members and women were selected in Lithuania, Romania (lower house), Bulgaria and Iceland. In Romania, Roberta Anastase became the first woman president of the Camera Deputatilor (lower house) since the legislature reverted to a bicameral form in 1990. In contrast, women leaders of the single house in Hungary (Orszaggyulés) and the upper house of the Netherlands (Eerste Kamer) were both replaced by male colleagues during the autumn of 2009. Overall, in the year to October 2009, the number of national/federal houses of parliament of EU Member States that are led by a woman increased from six to seven<sup>83</sup> out of the total of forty houses (18%).

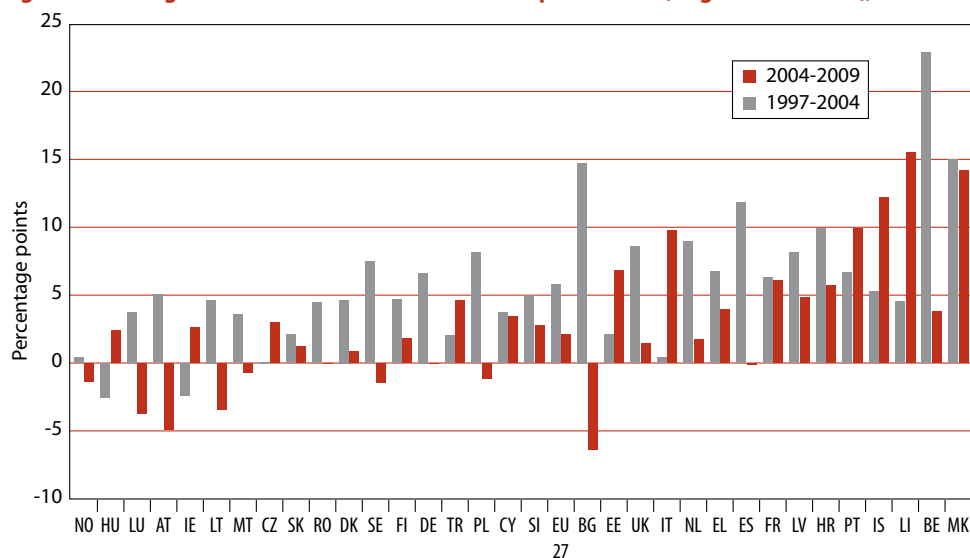
### 1.5. Longer-term analysis suggests that the rate of change is slowing

National parliaments are typically elected once every four or five years so that the opportunities to make progress towards gender balanced decision-making are only occasional and in each country there will be periods of little or no change. In the twelve years from 1997 to 2009 the share of women in the single/lower houses of national parliaments in EU Member States has risen by around eight percentage points from 16% to 24%. However, the majority of that change (six percentage points) occurred in the period to 2004 and there has been relatively little progress since that time (Figure 11).

<sup>83</sup> In October 2009, women are leaders of national houses of parliament in the seven EU countries – Single/lower house: Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Austria, Romania; Upper house: United Kingdom.

Indeed, whilst the change in the earlier period was positive for all countries except Hungary and Ireland, there are seven EU countries (Luxembourg, Austria, Lithuania, Malta, Sweden, Poland and Bulgaria) plus Norway where the share of women fell between 2004 and 2009, albeit by less than two percentage points in four of them. Although some countries have made good progress towards balanced participation (at least 40% of each gender)<sup>84</sup>, the majority of countries are still some way from this target (Figure 10) and should be seeking to promote further change.

**Figure 11 - Changes in the share of women in national parliaments (single/lower house), 1997-2009**



Countries ordered by total change 1997-2009

Source: IPU; European Commission, DG EMPL, Database on women and men in decision-making (1997=IPU Jan.1997); 2004=DG EMPL +IPU (HR, TR, FYROM); 2009=DG EMPL; Blanks are real zero.

## 2. National governments and the European Commission: edging closer to critical mass

As with recent parliamentary elections, changes in the composition of political executives at national and European levels over the past year have had a mixed impact on the gender balance. However, the underlying trend is positive and across Europe the share of women in government is edging ever closer to 30%, the figure that is considered to be the critical mass necessary to exert a meaningful influence on the decision-making process.

### Beijing follow-up indicators

The proportion of women members of the national/federal governments and the proportion of women members of the European Commission (Members of the national governments include senior and junior ministers)

	1994/1995	1999	2004	2007	2008	2009
National governments (EU-15 average)	16.2%	24.2%	23.1%	27.2%	28.8%	29.0%
National governments (EU-27 average)	:	:	20.4%	24.1%	24.9%	25.9%
European Commission	5.6%	25.0%	28.0%	29.6%	37.0%	29.6%

84 In October 2009, Sweden, Iceland, Belgium, the Netherlands and Finland all have parliaments with at least 40% of each gender.

## 2.1. Political power at European level – the Commission and high level appointments

In the last months of its term, the first Barroso Commission included eight women amongst the twenty-seven Commissioners, two fewer than at the end of 2008 when the gender balance of the European Commission was the closest to parity that it has ever been (37% women and 63% men). However, the new Commission nominated in November 2009<sup>85</sup> includes nine women (33%) and eighteen men (67%), partially redressing the recent decline and representing the highest ever level of female representation in an incoming Commission.

Moreover, following the ratification of the Lisbon treaty, the European Union now has two new high-level positions in the form of a President of the European Council and a High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security, which went to Belgian (former) prime-minister Herman van Rompuy and the (former) EU Trade Commissioner, Baroness Ashton (UK). The nomination of one man and one woman in these key positions further demonstrates the EU commitment to gender equality in the highest positions.

## 2.2. National governments – the long-term trend towards balanced participation is positive

Within each country, the supreme power in terms of economic decision-making lies with the national government and over the past decade and a half there has been a significant improvement across Europe in the gender balance amongst this elite group of men and women. At the time of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 the European Union comprised 15 countries, which had an average of just over 16% women members in their respective governments<sup>86</sup>. Towards the end of 2009, the same countries have governments that include 29% women, almost up to the key threshold of 30% - the so-called critical mass. In the full European Union of twenty-seven Member States the figure remains lower at just under 26% but this still represents considerable progress towards balanced participation between women and men, with the share of women ministers having increased by more than a quarter in the last five years.

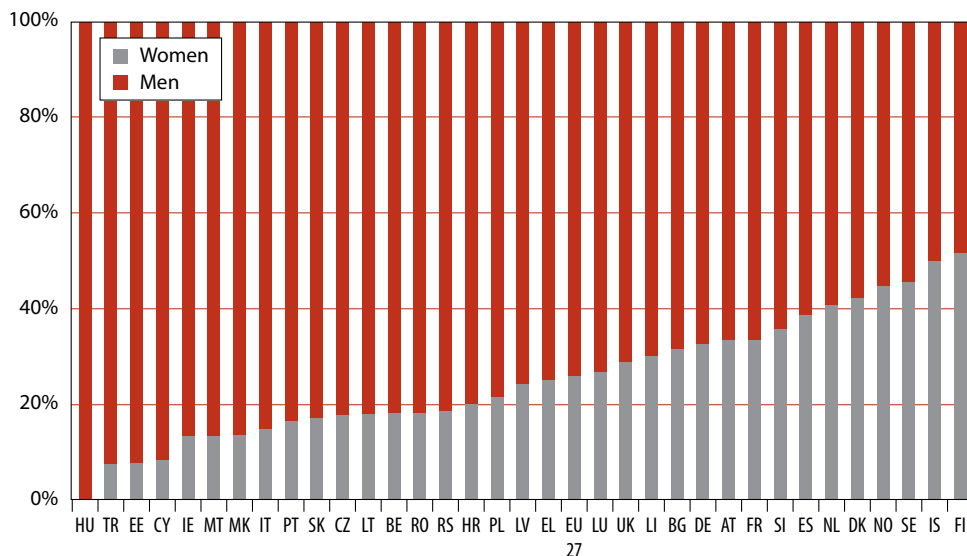
Taking into account both senior and junior ministers, the Finnish government is the only one where there is a female majority (52%) but, within the EU, the share of women exceeds 40% in Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden and is over 30% in a further 6 countries – Bulgaria, Germany, Spain, France, Austria and Slovenia (Figure 12). In October 2009, Hungary is the only country in the European Union with a wholly male government but those of Estonia and Cyprus also comprise more than 90% men and less than 10% women. Outside the EU, there is a parity government in Iceland and 45% women in Norway but the Turkish government includes just 2 women (7%) alongside 25 men (93%).

At the most senior level of government, eight European countries have a cabinet (or council of ministers) that includes at least 40% of each gender (situation at early October 2009) – Finland leads the way with 60% women followed by Spain and Iceland, both of which have parity cabinets (50%), with Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Liechtenstein and Norway all having at least 40% female senior ministers.

85 Press release listing the Commissioners designate for the next Commission. <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-ReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/09/522&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

86 The use and interpretation of the term *government* varies between countries. In some, it is synonymous with the cabinet or council of ministers, members of which are referred to here as *senior ministers*. In others, the *government* is a broader group including the cabinet plus a number of other ministers, considered as *junior ministers*. Here the term *government* refers to the combined total of senior and junior ministers unless otherwise specified. Junior ministers do not exist in all countries.



**Figure 12 - Women and men in national governments (senior and junior ministers), 2009**

Source: European Commission, DG EMPL, Database on women and men in decision-making.

### 2.3. Though recent development are more mixed

Even though the long-term trend is positive, changes in the composition of national governments in the past year (from November 2008 to October 2009) have had mixed impacts on the gender balance. The two short lists below record significant changes over this period in the gender balance amongst the senior members of national governments (i.e. cabinet members) or in the gender of the prime-minister:

#### Increased representation of women

(Percentages show the situation in October 2009 compared to October 2008)

- **Germany:** Angela Merkel re-elected as Chancellor.
- **Greece:** the new cabinet appointed in October includes nearly a third women compared to a tenth previously (31% from 11%).
- **Portugal:** three more women on the cabinet compared to the previous year (29% from 12%).
- **Romania:** the previously all-male cabinet now includes two women (18%).
- **Slovenia:** two additional women cabinet members bringing the share up to 26% from 17%, the highest level of female representation in government since the country became independent in 1991.
- **Croatia:** new woman prime minister (Jadranka Kosor).
- **Iceland:** ministerial changes made as a direct fall-out of the financial crisis left a parity government (from 2:1 male-female ratio previously) and on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2009, Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir became the country's first female prime minister.

### Lower representation of women

(Percentages show the situation in October 2009 compared to October 2008)

- **Belgium:** two fewer women with seats on the cabinet (27% from 40%).
- **Estonia:** also two fewer women cabinet members (8% from 21%).
- **Hungary:** the cabinet is now all male whilst in October 2008 there were two women members (0% from 13%).
- **United Kingdom:** half the number of women on the cabinet (17% from 32%).

### Female presidents in Europe

As well as parliamentary elections, there were also five presidential elections in 2009, which resulted in the election of four men (in Germany, Malta, Slovakia and FYROM) and one woman in Lithuania. Three of the twenty EU countries that have a president are now led by a woman: Dalia Grybauskaitė in Lithuania, Tarja Halonen in Finland and Mary McAleese in Ireland.

## 2.4. A persistent trend to limit women ministers to certain portfolios

Although the overall improvement towards gender balanced governments is positive, it does appear that there is a persistent gender bias in the allocation of ministers to different portfolios. The BEIS typology (see table below) classifies government functions into four areas: basic functions (B), economy (E), infrastructure (I) and socio-cultural functions (S). The 1999 report prepared by the Finnish Presidency reviewing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action<sup>87</sup> found that 48% of all female government ministers at that time had a socio-cultural portfolio, 24% basic functions, 15% infrastructure and just 13% economic. Unfortunately the data from that review did not give the total number of portfolios available within each category so these figures could, at least in part, reflect the distribution of portfolios by function rather than any disparity in the gender balance within each function. However, more complete data collected from 2004 onwards confirm that women ministers tend to be given the so-called “soft”, socio-cultural, portfolios and that the disparity seems to be widening. In 2004, when women accounted for just over a fifth of all government ministers (senior and junior), they were allocated disproportionately to socio-cultural portfolios, taking one third of the positions available, and were therefore under-represented in all other areas. Now, in October 2009, women hold approaching 43% of socio-cultural positions compared to 26% of all ministerial posts and are particularly under-represented in positions with basic and economic functions.

#### BEIS typology of government functions

<b>B</b>	Basic functions: foreign and internal affairs, defence, justice etc.
<b>E</b>	Economy: finance, trade, industry, agriculture, etc.
<b>I</b>	Infrastructure: transport, communications, environment, etc.
<b>S</b>	Socio-cultural functions: social affairs, labour, health, children, family, youth, older people, education, science, culture, sports, etc.

87 <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/99/st11/st11829-re01.en99.pdf>

## Beijing follow-up indicators

The proportion of women senior/junior ministers in the different fields of action (portfolios/ministries) of the national/federal governments of the Member States			
National governments (EU-27 average)	2004	2007	2009
Total	20.4%	24.1%	25.9%
Basic functions	15.6%	20.7%	19.6%
Economy	15.7%	17.7%	19.4%
Infrastructure	16.8%	21.0%	22.3%
Socio-cultural functions	33.3%	36.7%	42.6%

Positions within ministries of finance or economy or similar seem to be particularly hard for women to acquire. Currently (October 2009) three of the twenty-seven EU finance ministers (11%) are women – those from Spain, France and Lithuania – but even this low figure is an historic high and many countries have yet to have a woman in charge of the national budget. Table 3 shows the first occasion on which countries around Europe appointed a woman to any ministerial position within ministries of finance, economy or similar. Even though the list records placements in junior positions equally with senior positions, it includes only 18 EU countries indicating that there are still nine EU countries<sup>88</sup> that have not yet had one female minister of any level in the area of finance/economy.

**Table 3 - First women in ministerial positions in the Ministry of Finance/Economy or similar**

Year	Country
1947	Sweden
1971	Finland
1976	UK
1980	Luxembourg
1989	Lithuania
1990	Hungary
1991	Belgium, Turkey
1993	Denmark, the Netherlands
1994	Bulgaria, Slovakia
1995	Estonia, Latvia
1999	Slovenia
2001	Poland
2002	Portugal
2005	Norway
2006	FYROM, Serbia
2007	France
2009	Spain

Source: [http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/Finance\\_Ministers\\_Chronological.htm](http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/Finance_Ministers_Chronological.htm)

88 Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Austria and Romania.



## Section IV: Public administration and the judiciary

The policies developed by politicians have to be translated into laws and regulations that are developed and implemented by the staff of government departments and their equivalents at European level. This section of the report takes a brief look at the gender balance amongst the key decision-making positions within those groups as well as in the senior members of the judiciary.

## 1. Gender balance amongst senior administrators at national and European level

### Beijing follow-up indicators

Proportion of the highest ranking women civil servants (levels 1 and 2 combined)			
	2003	2007	2009*
National administrations, EU-15 average	20.7%	30.5%	28.5%
National administrations, EU-27 average**	24.8%	32.9%	31.7%
European institutions	13.9%	19.5%	23.4%

\* 2009 data for national administrations not fully comparable with previous years. In order to improve the comparability between countries in terms of the level of responsibility covered by levels 1 and 2 and the number of persons covered per ministry, there have been some changes in the coverage for some countries.

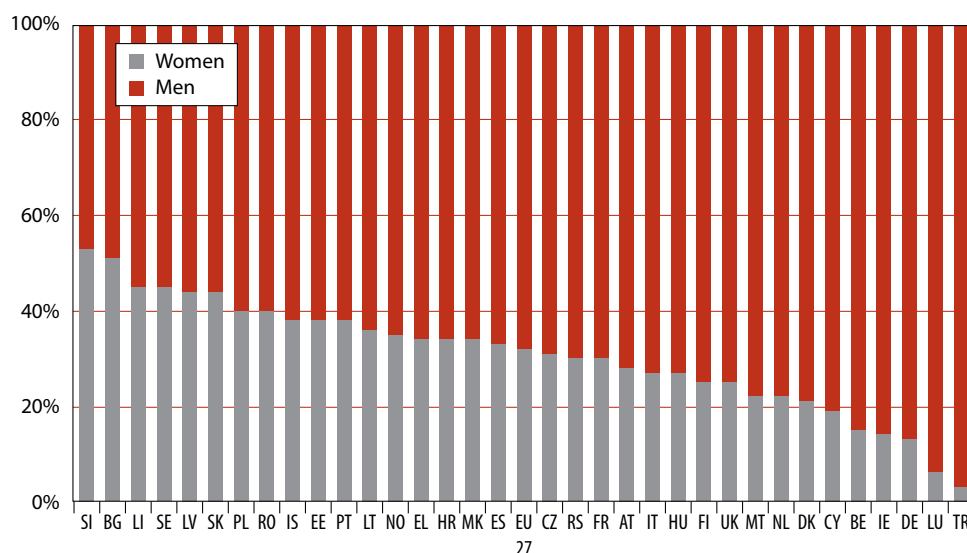
\*\* 2003 figure includes 2004 data for CZ, EL, LT, MT, PL; 2007 figure includes 2006 data for NL; 2009 data missing level 2 in FI.

### 1.1. Senior civil servants – men outnumber women by at least two to one in most countries

In 2009, the top two levels of the civil service in each of the EU Member States comprised 68% men and 32% women. This seems to show a slight worsening of the gender balance since 2007 but it is more likely that this change reflects differences in the positions covered in some countries (changes that were introduced in order to improve comparability between countries) and that the situation has in fact hardly changed. That means that there are two men for every woman in the two top levels of national administrations. In fact, at the most senior level women are even more outnumbered, with three men for every woman (74% and 26% respectively).

Nevertheless, in some countries the gender balance in the top tiers of the civil service is good. In Slovenia and Bulgaria there are actually slightly more women than men (53% and 51% respectively) and in Sweden, Latvia and Slovakia there are between 44 and 45% women (Figure 13). However, men account for more than four out of five senior civil servants in Belgium, Germany, Ireland, and Cyprus and more than nine out of ten in Luxembourg (6%). In Turkey, men have such an overwhelming hold on decision-making power that they account for 97% of the two highest levels of administrators in government departments, though this is at least an improvement on previous years when there were no women at all.

**Figure 13 - Gender balance amongst the highest ranking civil servants in national administrations, 2009**



FI: level 1 only; EL: incomplete data

Source: European Commission, DG EMPL, Database on women and men in decision-making.

## 1.2. Ministries with socio-cultural function have a better gender balance

Earlier in Section III, it was shown that women ministers tend to be associated with portfolios that have socio-cultural functions (according to the BEIS classification) and a similar pattern can be observed amongst top government employees (Table 4). When senior administrators are grouped according to the function of the ministry within which they are employed, then in ministries with socio-cultural functions women account for at least 30% of top decision-makers in nineteen countries compared to fourteen for ministries with infrastructure functions and just ten for ministries with basic or economic functions.

B = Basic functions  
E = Economy  
I = Infrastructure  
S = Socio-cultural functions

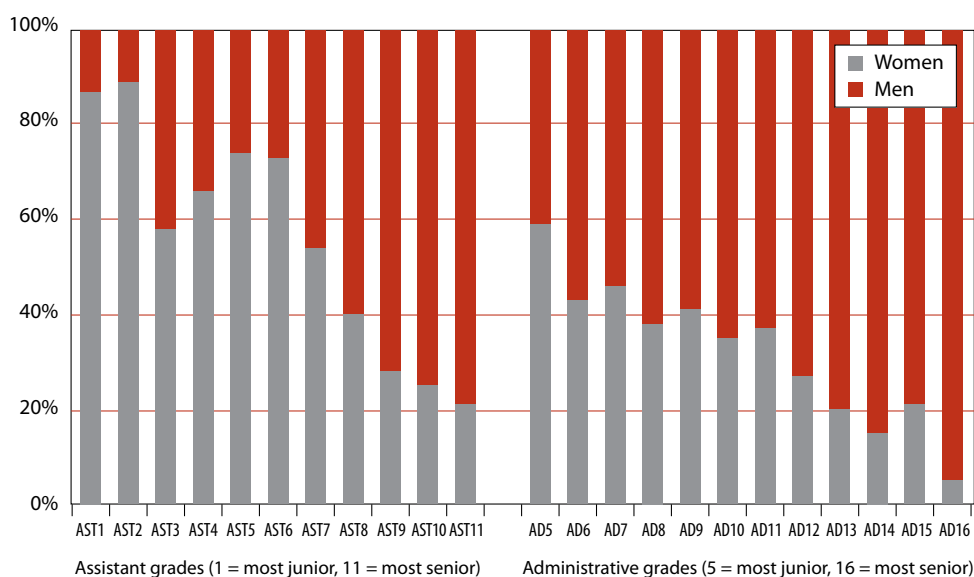
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### 1.3. European civil servants – too few women at the top, but the service of the European Parliament sets a good example

The European Civil Service serves the five institutions of the European Union, which comprise the three main institutions – the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council of the European Union – together with the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Auditors. By far the largest employer is the European Commission which, at the beginning of November 2009, employed just over 25,000 officials and temporary agents with a very equitable split between the sexes (51% women and 49% men)<sup>89</sup>. However, on further investigation, the Commission service is characterised by the same kind of occupational and hierarchical divisions by gender that are seen elsewhere. The staff are divided more or less equally into two categories of administrators, who are directly involved in the policy and legislative work, and assistants, who undertake all supporting activities from personnel and secretarial support to financial control and computing. Men account for the majority of administrators (62%) and women for the majority of assistants (65%). Moreover, men dominate senior positions (Figure 14), accounting for four out of every five positions in the top two administrative grades (81%) and three out of four of the top two assistant grades (76%).

**Figure 14 - Distribution of women and men in the different grades of the European Civil Service, 2009**



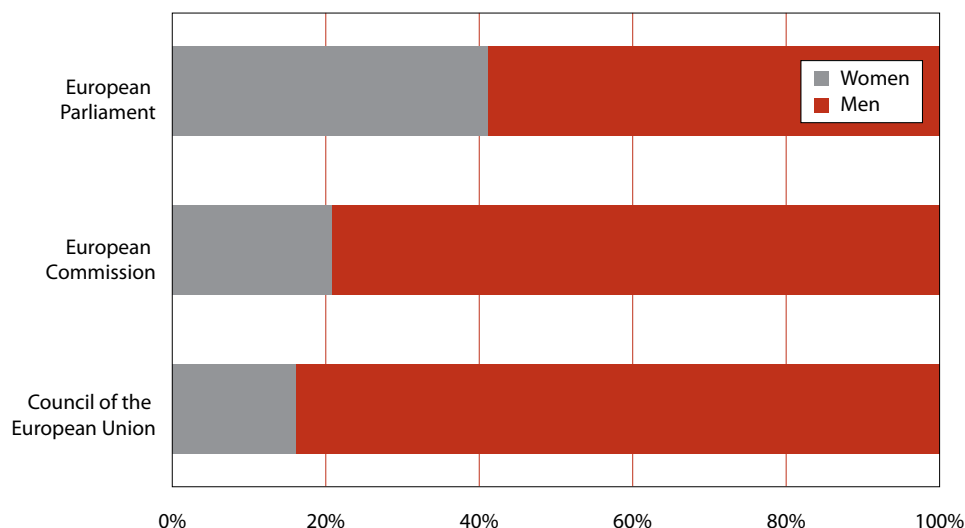
Source: European Commission civil service.

Comparing the situation in the three main EU institutions shows that the European Parliament has a much better gender balance amongst senior officials than either the Commission or the Council (Figure 15) and clearly there is room for significant improvement in the latter two cases. This is recognised in the Commission's guidelines for appointments to senior positions, which give the appointing authority the discretion to give priority to a women should there be two or more candidates of equal merit<sup>90</sup>.

<sup>89</sup> European Commission civil service staff figures. [http://ec.europa.eu/civil\\_service/about/figures/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/about/figures/index_en.htm)

<sup>90</sup> European Commission. Guidelines for candidates on senior management appointment procedures. [http://ec.europa.eu/civil\\_service/docs/guidelines\\_senior\\_mgt\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/docs/guidelines_senior_mgt_en.pdf)

**Figure 15 - Senior officials in the three main European institutions by gender, 2009**



Source: European Commission, DG EMPL, Database on women and men in decision-making.

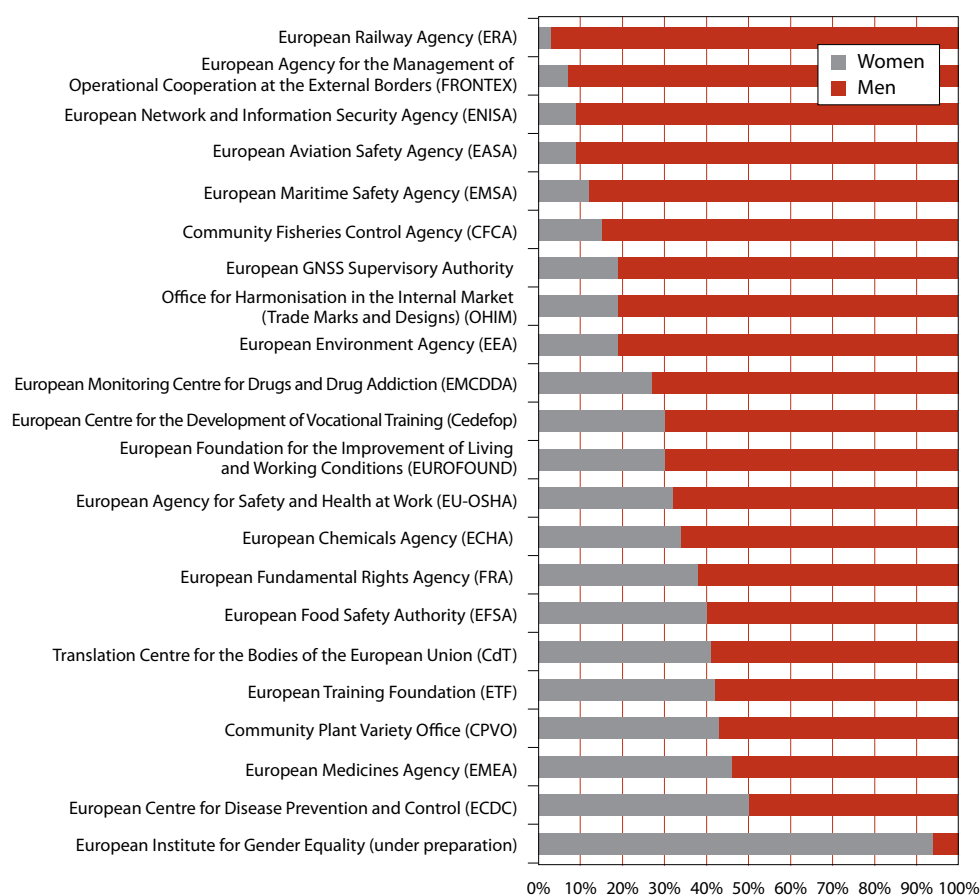
#### 1.4. European Community agencies

Community agencies are bodies governed by European law that are distinct from the main European institutions and have been established to undertake specific technical, scientific or managerial tasks<sup>91</sup>. In 2009, five of the twenty-two agencies are led by women (23%) and seventeen by men (77%). Amongst the members of key decision-making bodies there is a good gender balance (at least 40% of each gender) in six agencies (ECDC, EMEA, CPVO, ETF, CdT, EFSA) and at least 30% in a further five (Figure 16). The European Institute for Gender Equality stands out as being one of the agencies with the most gender imbalanced decision-making group, the management board of representatives from eighteen Member States comprising seventeen women and just one man<sup>92</sup>. At the other extreme of inequality, the European Railway Agency has just one woman on a board that has thirty-seven members<sup>93</sup>.

91 List of Community agencies. [http://europa.eu/agencies/community\\_agencies/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/agencies/community_agencies/index_en.htm)

92 Organisation and staff of the European Institute for Gender Equality. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=749&langId=en>

93 European Railway Authority, Members of the Administrative Board. <http://www.era.europa.eu/The-Agency/Administrative-Board/Pages/Administrative-Board-Members.aspx>

**Figure 16 - Gender balance on the decision-making bodies of European Community Agencies, 2009**

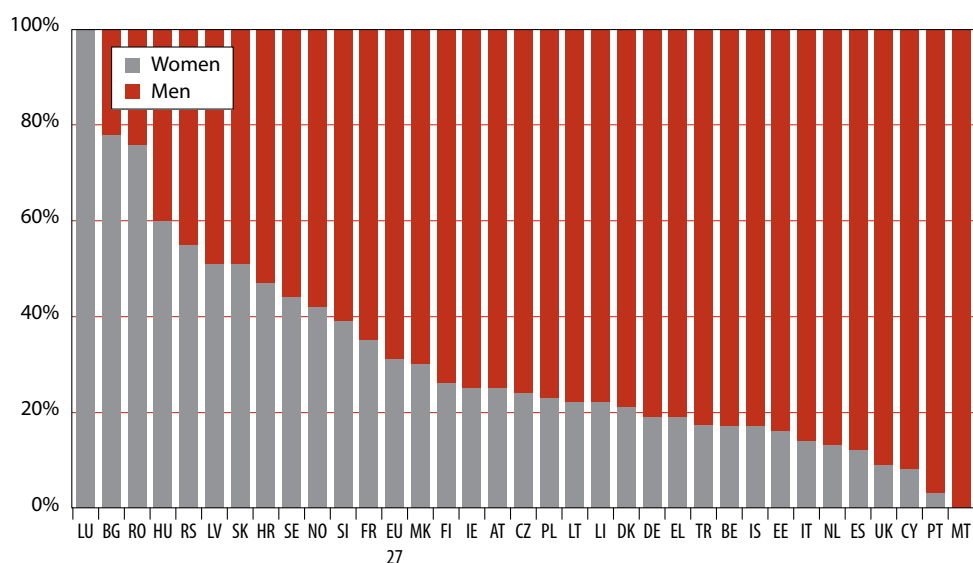
Source: European Commission, DG EMPL, Database on women and men in decision-making.

## 2. Women and men in top levels of the judiciary

EU legislation is upheld by two courts – the European Court of Justice, the European Court of First Instance and one tribunal – the European Civil Service Tribunal, which settles disputes between European Union and its civil service. The two main courts are both served by a senior group of judges including one representative from each Member State. The Court of First Instance has six women judges (22%) and twenty-one men (78%) but the Court of Justice has only four women judges (15%) and twenty-three men (85%). Overall in 2009, women account for less than a fifth of judges in the European Courts, a slight worsening of the gender balance since 2007 when they accounted for a slightly higher share, though still an improvement since 1999 when there were fewer judges and more than nine in ten were men. The smaller Civil Service Tribunal has seven judges, two of whom are woman (29%).

The gender balance is better in the supreme courts at national level where women account for nearly one in three judges (31%). However, it should be noted that this is largely due to the larger proportions of women amongst senior judges from the more recently acceded countries since the EU-15 figure is significantly lower at just 19% women. Across Europe, there are just seven countries where there is a good gender balance (at least 40% of each gender) amongst supreme court judges (Hungary, Serbia, Latvia, Slovakia, Croatia, Sweden and Norway) and there are some cases of real imbalance with less than 10% women in the UK, Cyprus, Portugal and Malta and only women in Luxembourg (Figure 17).

**Figure 17 - Judges of supreme courts by gender, 2009**



TR: data refer to 2008.

Source: European Commission, DG EMPL, Database on women and men in decision-making.

# Appendix

### Members of the European Network of Women in Decision-making in Politics and the Economy

- Jocelyne **Bougeard**, President, Committee of Women Elected Representatives of Local and Regional Authorities (Council of European Municipalities and Regions)
- Gabriella **Canonica**, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, BPW (Business and Professional Women) – International
- Helena **de Felipe Lehtonen**, President, Association of Organisations of Mediterranean Businesswomen
- Sophia **Economacos**, President, Eurochambres Women's Network
- Julia **Harrison**, Member, Women's Forum for the Economy and the Society
- Marianne **Karlberg**, Co-ordinator, European Network of Women's Entrepreneurship
- Leena **Linnainmaa**, Member, European Women Lawyers Association
- Sonja **Lokar**, Coordinator for the South East Europe Office, CEE Network for Gender Issues
- Brigitte **Mühlenbruch**, President, European Platform of Women Scientists
- Irene **Natividad**, President; Maud **Pagel**/Member, Global Summit of Women
- Bola **Olabisi**, Director, European Women Inventors and Innovators Network
- Tina **Reisenbichler**, President, European Women's Management Development International Network
- Myriam **Schervernels**, Femanet - Eurocadres
- Brigitte **Triems**, President, European Women's Lobby
- Mirella **Visser**, President, European Professional Women's Network

#### Country codes<sup>94</sup>

BE	Belgium	LT	Lithuania	UK	United Kingdom
BG	Bulgaria	LU	Luxembourg		
CZ	Czech Republic	HU	Hungary	HR	Croatia
DK	Denmark	MT	Malta	MK	FYROM (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)
DE	Germany	NL	Netherlands	TR	Turkey
EE	Estonia	AT	Austria		
IE	Ireland	PL	Poland		
EL	Greece	PT	Portugal	RS	Republic of Serbia
ES	Spain	RO	Romania		
FR	France	SI	Slovenia	IS	Iceland
IT	Italy	SK	Slovakia	LI	Liechtenstein
CY	Cyprus	FI	Finland	NO	Norway
LV	Latvia	SE	Sweden		

94 <http://publications.europa.eu/code/pdf/370000en.htm>

European Commission

**More women in senior positions - Key to economic stability and growth**

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The recent financial crisis has brought to light the lack of women in economic decision-making positions in Europe. In banking, business, politics and public administrations men continue to outnumber women in senior positions despite the increased number of women among university graduates and in the labour market. This report examines the current situation and trends and also considers ways in which the advancement of women can be supported and accelerated to get more women in senior positions.

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