

European issues

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Gender Balance, a European Model[1]

By **Pascale JOANNIN**General Manager of the Robert Schuman
Foundation**ABSTRACT:**

On the occasion of International Women's Day, Pascale Joannin, General Director of the Robert Schuman Foundation, presents the European gender equality model. She observes that the European Union is the region in the world where women's rights are the best respected and the States of the Union have achieved major progress over the past few years in terms of women's participation in business administration. However inequalities continue, notably with regard to wages, where the situation is far from ideal. Although women's representation is growing on the boards of companies in Europe, it is regressing in the political sphere. The economic crisis has worsened this situation. The Lisbon Treaty has established a Citizens' Initiative, a new tool to bring the European Union closer to its citizens. Women may use this and put forward an initiative to request the real application of the principle of equality between men and women as it is stipulated in the treaties. European women want parity in all professional sectors.

INTRODUCTION :

Just as Europe is being criticised on all sides, we should recall some basic facts, and the first of these is the position of women in our society. Indeed if we look at this more closely, where is the quality of a woman's life best if not in Europe? Where are there more women in government and in parliament in the world, even if the situation still has to be improved, if it is not in Europe? Finally where has the rise of women's position in business been strongest in 2011 if again it is not in Europe?

Of course it is not easy to be satisfied with the present situation which still leaves far too many women in a state of gross inequality. But a trend is emerging that will bring leaders, whoever they are, to promote greater inclusion of women in positions in the hierarchy that until now have been held almost exclusively by men. Soon it will no longer be acceptable to have a management board or a campaign or government team that comprises only men. Those who lag behind would do well to wake up otherwise they find themselves forced to take action or be badly considered.

It may be true that Europe is experiencing difficulties but many world players who think it still has some assets and advantages, watch it closely. Of course these would stand out more if Europe promoted in a self-regulating or regulated way - as planned by European Commission Vice-president Viviane Reding[2] by March 2012 - a European model of gender balance in which women occupy the real place they deserve, based on their abilities.

In this time of crisis the "women's" issue is now more relevant than ever before. It does not lie in "a return to the home", as some dare to imagine, but in greater involvement of women in the business world. Women are equally, and often more qualified than their male counterparts. Better qualified, women are also better equipped in times of crisis because they are often experienced managers and organisers. It would indeed be a pity not to involve them at this difficult point in time. But these vital developments are struggling to emerge naturally; stumbling blocks still exist and maintain a "glass ceiling" that is becoming increasingly difficult to bear. Change is occurring rather according to incentive and force. Many laws were adopted in 2011 in Europe to overcome reticence and to speed things up on companies' boards. The effects were felt immediately. France alone is catching up with the US. Moreover French women produce more children than other European women. Are there any other specific features about France as yet unnoticed?

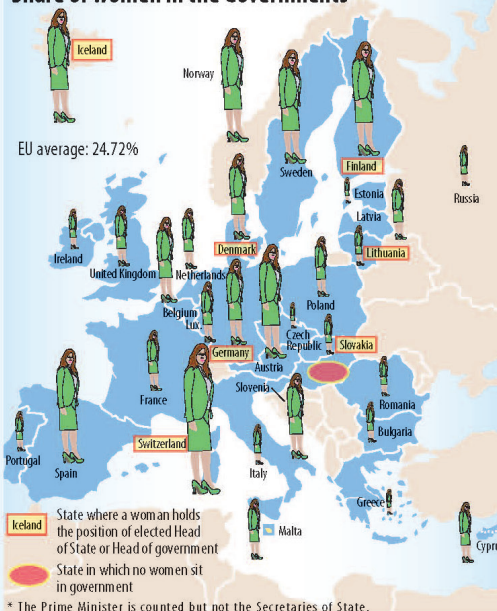
Feminisation is still progressing too slowly in some countries but it is occurring. All of Europe is experiencing this phenomenon. According to management training specialists, future female managers are preparing for their new posts with surprising energy because they want their capabilities to be acknowledged. They will force men's involvement and oblige them to review the way they think and organise things. It was about time the situation changed. But can it last?

1. This text is published in the Schuman report on Europe, State of the Union in 2012, Springer-Verlag (to be released).

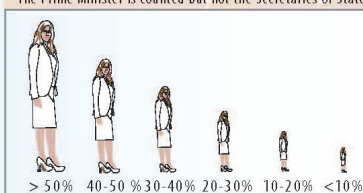
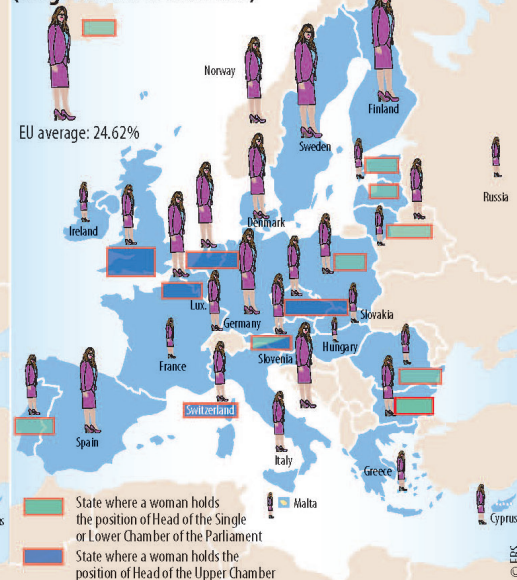
2. http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/leding/multimedia/news/2011/03/20110301_fr.htm

Women's Europe on 1st January 2012

Share of women in the Governments*

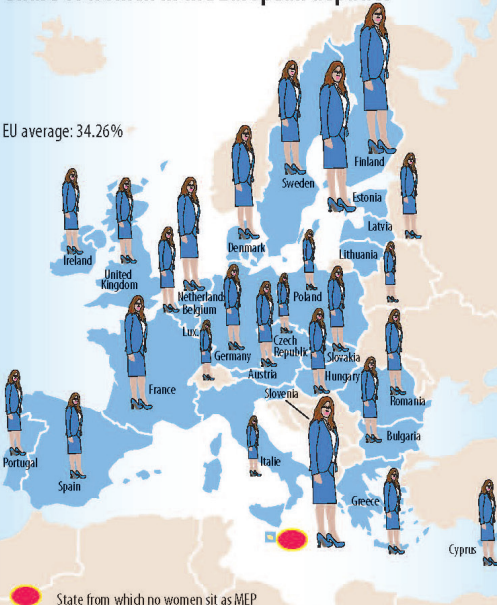


Share of women in National Parliaments (Single or Lower Chamber)

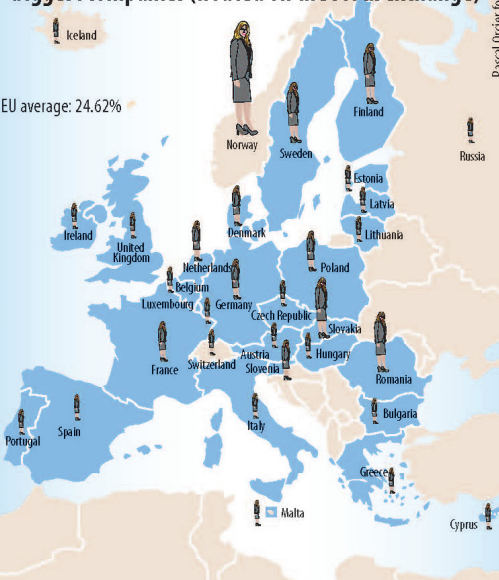


Non-EU States average
 Women in the Governments: 23.93%
 Women in the Parliaments: 21.06%
 Women involved in decision making in the biggest companies: 10.5%

Share of women in the European deputies



Share of women involved in decision making in the biggest companies (floated on the stock exchange)



Source: Compiled by the Robert Schuman Foundation.

MORE AND MORE WOMEN ARE INVOLVED IN BUSINESS

More and more women are going out to work; in the European Union, 62.5% of women work. However 31.4% of them work part time, this is four times the figure of part-time male workers. Moreover women with equal qualifications are far too often less well paid than men; the average wage gap in the Union is 17.5%, which is true discrimination.

Women are also more qualified than men; they hold 58.9% of the degrees delivered by European universities. Although they are highly qualified and arriving in ever greater numbers on the labour market, they are still in the minority in positions of responsibility in companies, notably at the highest levels. But things are changing.

THE QUOTA EFFECT

Norway set the example in 2005 by establishing quotas for the presence of women on company boards. Hence it is the country where women are represented the best: 36%. But many other, notably European, countries (Spain, France, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands etc.) have followed suit by taking similar legislative measures to bring about radical change to old habits of strictly masculine co-optation. At the end of 2011 the first results of the implementation of these quotas show significant progress in the number of women who have one or several mandates as an administrator and everywhere there has been an increase in the number of companies who have included women on their boards.

68% of companies in Europe now have at least two women on their boards against 74% in the US[3].

Progress is particularly strong in France, for example, where after the law of January 2011, the number of women appointed to company boards, indexed on the stock exchange rose to total 20.8% amongst CAC 40 companies. Since the law is being applied progressively this trend should gather pace.

TOWARDS TRUE GENDER BALANCE

However these encouraging results must not hide the reality of a situation that is far from ideal. This is for the simple reason that although legislative measures have led to significant progress with regard to gender balance on company boards, this is not true as far as executive committees are concerned. Women are not so well represented on the latter. In Europe for example only 20% of companies have an executive committee on which at least two women sit against 50% in the US. Yet it is within executive committees that the most strategic decisions are taken. Therefore a great deal has to be done to move into these realms of power. The quota principle that is criticised for so many reasons, has a positive, highly influential effect, takes opinion forward, and disrupts the established order and the way people think and so it takes women's cause forward in business. It is certainly unfortunate to have had to use this legislative tool, but the masculine representatives of society would not have spontaneously taken the initiative to move things forward. The time of single sex company management seems now to be over.

3. <http://www.20-first.com/1550-0-where-the-worlds-top-companies-stand.html>

Women directors in stock market-listed companies

	Countries	Number of companies studied	% women managers
	Norway	25	35,6 (40,1)
1	Sweden	40	27,3
2	Finland	28	24,5
3	Latvia*	33	23
4	Slovakia*	10	22
5	Romania*	10	21
6	The Netherlands	30	14
7	Denmark	24	13,9
8	Lithuania*	28	13
9	France	101	12,7 (CAC10 : 20,8)
10	Germany	81	11,2
11	Poland	15	10,8
12	Bulgaria	15	11
13	Slovenia*	17	10
14	Ireland	19	9,5
15	Spain	43	9,3 (IBEX : 11,2)
16	United Kingdom	398	9,1 (FTSE 100 : 14,3)
17	Greece	24	8,8
18	Czech Republic	3	8,3
19	Belgium	24	7,7
20	Austria	22	7,5
21	Estonia*	14	7
22	Hungary	4	6,1
23	Cyprus	19	4
24	Luxembourg*	10	4
25	Malta*	18	4
26	Italy	52	3,7
27	Portugal	11	2,3
	TOTAL EU	1093	11,32

Source : GovernanceMetrics International, Catalyst, Commission européenne*

STILL TOO FEW WOMEN IN POLITICS

As a comparison the situation is stagnating, and is even worsening, as far as women in political life is concerned. The crisis is leading to the formation of governments comprising technocrats in which women are poorly served (Greece, Italy) and, it has to be admitted, rightwing governments do not do as well in terms of parity as their leftwing counterparts, even when they succeed them as in Spain. Often then, political will crumbles as cabinets are reshuffled, invariably revealing a trend whereby a man is appointed in place of a woman if she is leaving her seat. For example in France when Christine Lagarde was appointed as head of the IMF, her previous job was not taken over by another woman.

In parliaments which are supposed to represent all of the population women are still under-represented: according to the Interparliamentary Union (UIP)[4] on 30th November

2011, of the 44,984 members of parliament in the

world (upper and lower chambers together), only 8,710 are women i.e. 19.8%.

The European Union (24.62%) is ahead of the Americas (22.6%), other European countries (20.5%), Sub-Saharan Africa (20.4%), Asia (18.3%), the Arab countries (13.5%) and the Pacific States (12.9%).

With regard to the number of women MPs the European countries occupy 7 of the top 10 places in world ranking. Of these 7 countries, four are EU Member States (Sweden, the Netherlands, Finland, Belgium).

With regard to the number of women who lead one of the chambers of Parliament, of the 41 women recorded by the UIP, 16 are European, 13 of whom come from EU Member States (Austria (both chambers), Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Romania), 10 represent African states, 7 the Caribbean, 6 Asian states and 2 the Americas. Women represent only 15.6% of the leaders of parliament.

As of January 1st 2012, the average number of women in parliaments in the EU stands at 24.62%.

Women ministers in the 27 governments (Lower or single chambers)

	Member State	Parliament	Election Date	Total number seats	Number of women	%
1	SWEDEN	Riksdag	2010	349	157	44,99
2	FINLAND	Eduskunta	2011	200	85	42,50
3	NETHERLANDS	Tweede Kamer	2010	150	59	39,33
4	BELGIUM	La Chambre	2010	150	59	39,33
5	DENMARK	Folketinget	2011	179	70	39,11
6	SPAIN	Congreso	2011	350	124	35,43
7	GERMANY	Bundestag	2009	622	204	32,80
8	SLOVENIA	Zbor	2011	90	29	32,2
9	AUSTRIA	Nationalrat	2006	183	51	27,878
10	PORTUGAL	Assembleia da Republica	2011	230	61	26,52
11	POLAND	Sejm	2011	460	110	23,91
12	CZECH REPUBLIC	Poslanecka Snemovna	2010	200	44	22,00
13	UNITED KINGDOM	House of Commons	2010	650	143	22,00
14	ITALY	Camera dei Deputati	2008	630	134	21,27
15	LATVIA	Saeima	2011	100	21	21,00
16	BULGARIA	Narodno Sabranie	2009	240	50	20,83

average
(%)
24,62

4. <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-f/world.htm>

Women ministers in the 27 governments (Lower or single chambers)

	Member State	Parliament	Election Date	Total number seats	Number of women	%
17	LUXEMBOURG	Chambres des Députés	2009	60	12	20,00
18	ESTONIA	Riigikogu	2011	101	20	19,80
19	LITHUANIA	Seimas	2008	141	27	19,15
20	FRANCE	Assemblée Nationale	2007	577	109	18,89
21	GREECE	Vouli	2009	300	52	17,33
22	SLOVAKIA	Narodna Rada	2010	150	24	16,00
23	IRELAND	Dáil Éireann	2011	166	25	15,06
24	ROMANIA	Camera Deputa ilor	2008	334	38	11,38
25	CYPRUS	House of Representatives	2006	56	6	10,71
26	HUNGARY	Az Orszag Haza	2010	386	35	9,07
27	MALTA	Kamra Tad Deputati	2008	69	6	8,70
	TOTAL			7123	1754	24,62

Source : Fondation Robert Schuman ©

In the EU countries' governments women represent on average 24.15% of ministers, against 26.07% last year! One European government has no female ministers: Hungary. On January 1st 2012, 9 women are the Prime Minister of their country, including four in Europe – 3 in the EU (Germany, Denmark, Slovakia) and Iceland – 1 in Australia, 1

in Bangladesh, 1 in Trinidad and Tobago, 1 in Peru and 1 in Thailand.

10 women are President of their country, including 4 in Europe – Finland[5], Lithuania, Swiss Confederation, Kosovo-, 1 in Argentina, 1 in Brazil, 1 India, 1 in Liberia, 1 in Costa Rica and 1 in Kyrgyz Republic.

Women ministers in the 27 governments

	Member State	Election Date	Ministers members of government	Number of women	%
1	FINLAND	2011	19	9	47,37
2	SWEDEN	2010	24	11	45,83
3	AUSTRIA	2008	14	6	42,86
4	DENMARK	2011	23	9	39,13
5	BELGIUM	2010	13	5	38,46
6	GERMANY	2009	16	6	37,50
7	SLOVENIA	2008	19	6	31,58
8	SPAIN	2011	14	4	28,57

5. The outgoing president, Tarja Halonen, has been replaced on 1st March 2012 by Sauli Niinistö, elected on 5th February.

average
(%)
24,62

Women ministers in the 27 governments

	Member State	Election Date	Ministers members of government	Number of women	%
	LATVIA	2011	14	4	28,57
10	LUXEMBOURG	2009	15	4	26,67
11	CYPRUS	2008	12	3	25,00
	NETHERLANDS	2010	12	3	25,00
13	MALTA	2008	9	2	22,22
14	POLAND	2011	19	4	21,05
15	UNITED KINGDOM	2010	24	5	20,83
16	FRANCE	2007	25	5	20,00
17	ITALY	2008	18	3	16,67
	PORTUGAL	2011	12	2	16,67
	BULGARIA	2009	18	3	16,67
	ROMANIA	2009	18	3	16,67
21	SLOVAKIA	2010	14	2	14,29
22	IRELAND	2011	15	2	13,33
	LITHUANIA	2008	15	2	13,33
24	ESTONIA	2011	13	1	7,69
25	CZECH REPUBLIC	2010	16	1	6,25
26	GREECE	2009	18	1	5,56
27	HUNGARY	2010	10	0	0,00
	TOTAL		439	106	24,15

Source : Fondation Robert Schuman ©

* N.B.: The Prime Minister is counted but not the Secretaries of State.

There are more women in the European Parliament (34.26%) than in the National Parliaments (24.62%). With the Lisbon Treaty the number of MEPs rose from 736 to 753. But of the 17 new members there are only five women. 1 Member State (Malta) has not sent any women.

08

Women within the European Parliament

	Member State	Number of MEPs	Number of women	%	
1	Finland	13	8	61,54	
2	Estonia	6	3	50,00	
3	Slovenia	8	4	50,00	
4	Denmark	13	6	46,15	
5	Sweden	20	9	45,00	
6	France	74	33	44,59	
7	Netherlands	25	11	44,00	
8	Slovakia	13	5	38,46	
9	Germany	99	37	37,37	
10	Spain	54	20	37,04	
11	Belgium	22	8	36,36	
12	Hungary	22	8	36,36	Average(%) 34,26
13	Portugal	22	8	36,36	
14	Romania	33	12	36,36	
15	Latvia	9	3	33,33	
16	Bulgaria	18	6	33,33	
17	Cyprus	6	2	33,33	
18	Ireland	12	4	33,33	
19	United Kingdom	73	24	32,88	
20	Greece	22	7	31,82	
21	Austria	19	6	31,58	
22	Lithuania	12	3	25,00	
23	Poland	51	11	21,57	
24	Italy	73	15	20,55	
25	Czech Republic	22	4	18,18	
26	Luxembourg	6	1	16,67	
27	Malta	6	0	0,00	
	TOTAL	754	258	34,26	

Source : Fondation Robert Schuman ©

Women should harbour no illusions. They will achieve nothing if they do not fight a daily battle against red-tape, habits, stereotypes and other clichés that are still rife at the beginning of this, the 21st century. It is not a question of bringing women into conflict with men; they are complementary – on the contrary it is a question of ensuring that there is a better balance between the two sexes. Given the challenges that await us it will certainly take two to face and overcome them.

There are many hurdles, mentalities change slowly. But if nothing changes then incentives, and even binding measures will win through. Several instruments now exist and some have already been implemented. Others are set to be developed in the near future. In Europe for example, the Citizens' Initiative established by the Lisbon Treaty gives European citizens an opportunity to have their say as of 1st April 2012. Women could use this to ask for the real application of the equality principle which is included in the treaties. The Robert Schuman Foundation has already met many European women who would like to be involved in a Citizens' Ini-

tiative to take European legislation forward[6]. European women cannot be satisfied with the present situation.



Pascale JOANNIN

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6. <http://www.femmes-europe.eu/>

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