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## Report Gender Balance in Business Leadership in EU

**The new report on Gender Balance in Business Leadership finds that on average women make up 12% of board members in the biggest publicly-listed companies across the EU and only 3% of board chairs. The figures vary by country, from 26% female board members in Sweden and Finland to 2% in Malta. Studies show that businesses with more women at the top outperform »men only« companies. Their operating income is higher and they are better at attracting talent and understanding customers. Making the most of Europe's female talent in the workforce is not just good for business – it also benefits the economy and society as a whole. Women represent 60% of university graduates, but continue to be under-represented in economic decision-making posts.**

While progress on reaching a reasonable balance (40% of each sex) has been slow in Europe, some countries are making progress. Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark have introduced corporate governance codes and/or voluntary charters that have led to more women getting on boards. Legislation on quotas has already been introduced in Norway and is now being implemented in France and Spain. It's also under discussion in the Netherlands, Italy and Belgium.

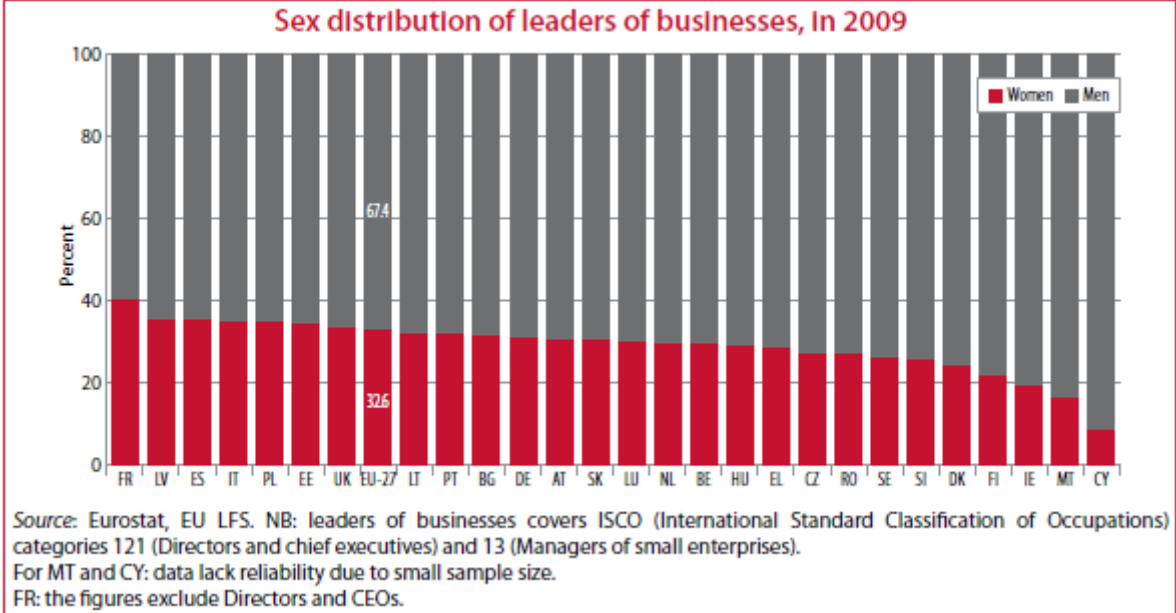
Figure 1: Share of women and men in decision-making positions - 2010



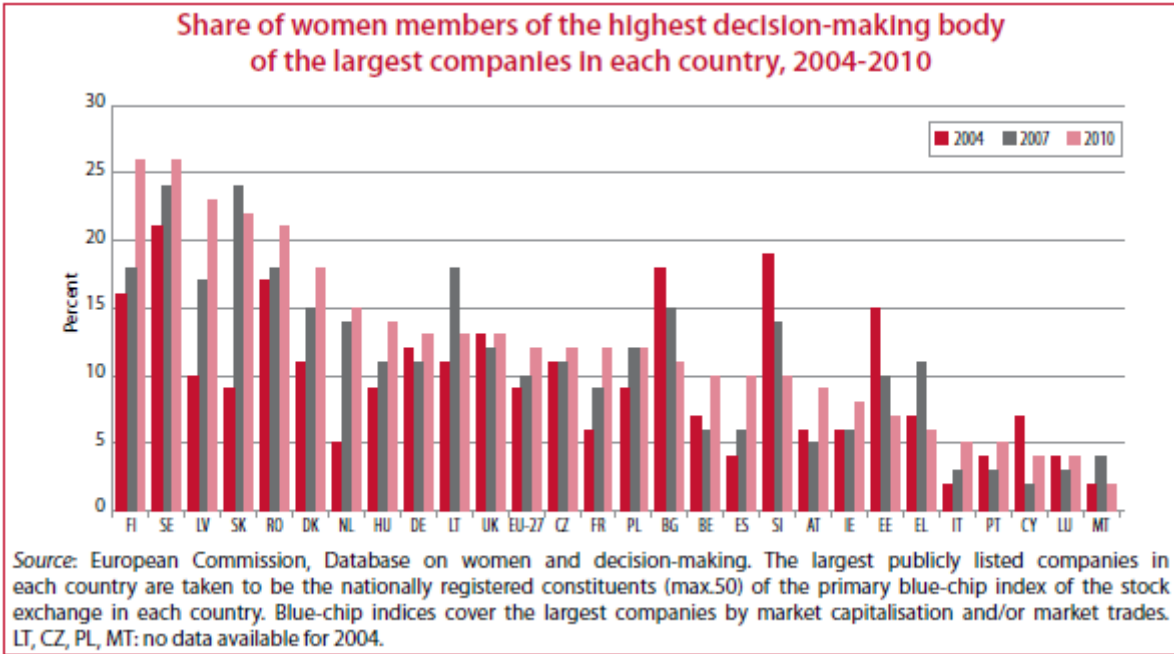
In terms of companies not listed on the stock market, women still represent only one-third of leaders of EU businesses. Yet the majority of the population are women and their participation in decision-making can make for more targeted policies and stronger and more prosperous democracies. The

business case for having women in senior positions has been boosted by independent research(21) suggesting a correlation between companies with women in decision-making positions and good performance. It also seems that gender diversity brings a number of vital benefits to boardrooms, such as higher returns, better overall performance, better risk management and greater employment of female talents.

**Figure 2: Sex distribution of leaders of businesses, in 2009**



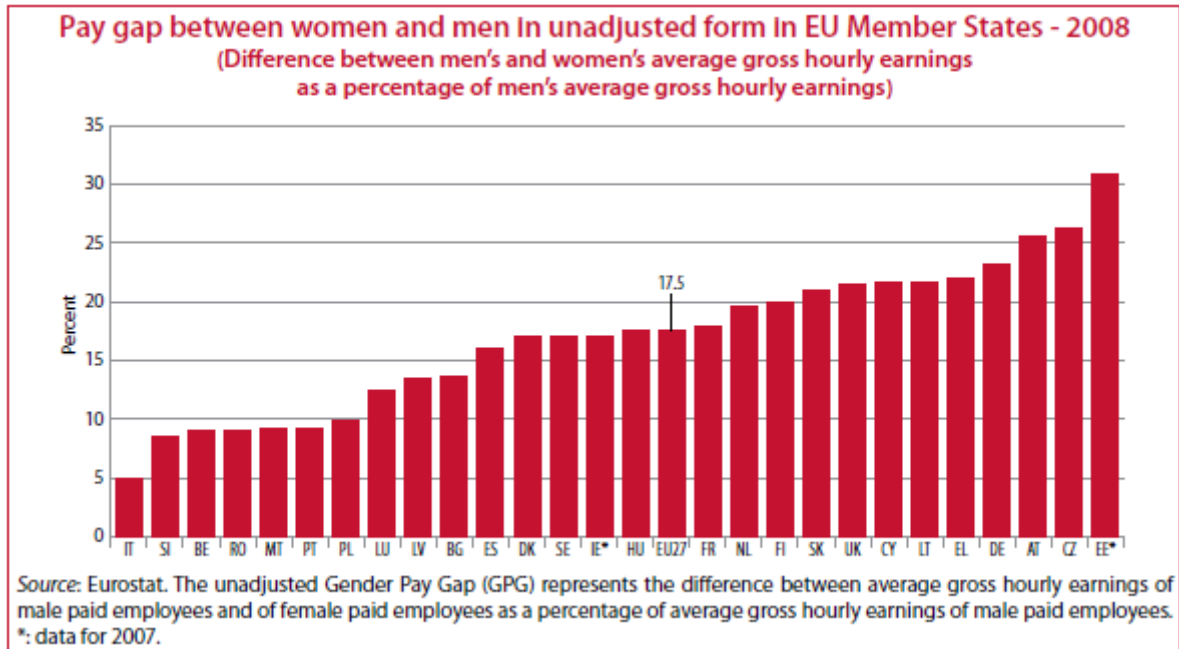
**Figure 3: Share of women members of the highest decision-making body of the largest companies in each country, 2004-2010**



More than 50 years after the signing of the Treaty of Rome, which affirmed the principle of equal pay for men and women for the same work or work of equal value, women across the EU earn 17.5 % less on average than men and there has been no reduction of the gender pay gap in the last few years. A narrow gender pay gap may be explained by the fact that the female employment rate is low, and that those who are working earn higher salaries (level of education, profession). One of the main reasons

for unequal pay is women's and men's educational and professional choices. Women are concentrated in often lower-paid sectors (health and care services, education, etc.) while more than 64 % of graduates in computing and engineering are men.

**Figure 4: Pay gap between women and men in unadjusted form in EU Member States 2008**



**More:**

- Report on Progress on Equality between Women and Men in 2010:
- <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=6562&langId=en>
- Web page Gender Equality:
- <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=sl&catId=418>