

President Jose Manuel Barroso
Vice President Viviane Reding
European Commission
1049 Bruxelles/Brussel

14 September 2012

Dear Vice-President Reding,

Dear President Barroso

WOMEN ON COMPANY BOARDS

Further to the debate at the 17th February Employment & Social Affairs Council, and in advance of your discussion on whether to adopt a proposal on EU mandatory quotas for women on company boards, we thought it useful to write at this stage to set out our views.

We agree with the Commission's stance that there are still too few women on the boards of publically listed companies.

The myriad barriers women encounter throughout their career are unacceptable from a gender equality point of view. They are among the factors preventing the optimal use of the skilled workforce potential.

Therefore, we share the Commission's view that, both in the Member States and throughout Europe, fair chances and opportunities for women in executive posts should and must be promoted.

In line with the subsidiarity principle, it is first and foremost up to the Member States to find their own national approaches to achieving this goal. Many of us are considering or have implemented various and differing national measures on a voluntary and, if appropriate, legal basis to facilitate raising the proportion of women in boardrooms.

These efforts must be granted more time in order to establish whether they can achieve fair female participation in economic decision-making on Europe's company boards.

For these reasons, we reiterate that any targeted measures in this area should be devised and implemented at national level. Therefore, we do not support the adoption of legally binding provisions for women on company boards at the European level.

LETTER SIGNED BY:

TOTYU MLADENOV, Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Bulgaria
JAROMÍR DRÁBEK, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Czech Republic
HANNO PEVKUR, Minister of Social Affairs, Estonia
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CHRIS SAID, Minister for Justice, Dialogue and the Family, Malta
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