



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL JUSTICE

Gender imbalance in corporate boards in the EU

Questions for the public consultation

As set out in its Work Programme for 2012¹, the European Commission is considering a legislative initiative to improve the gender balance in the boards of companies listed on stock exchanges.

On the basis of the Progress Report "Women in economic decision-making in the EU" presented by Vice-President Viviane Reding on 5 March 2012, the Commission is launching a public consultation of stakeholders on possible measures in this context.

This consultation will feed into an assessment of possible EU-level measures to enhance female participation in economic decision-making, which will inform the Commission's decision on whether to propose action and on the form it should take.

The target group of this consultation are Member States, business or industry organisations, individual companies, civil society organisations with an interest in gender and/or social issues, trade unions, equality bodies, and other organisations or individuals.

The deadline for this consultation is **28 May 2012**.

The Progress Report annexed to this document provides the background to the subject matter of this consultation.

Stakeholders who wish to contribute to the consultation are invited to answer the following questions:

- (1) How effective is self-regulation by businesses to address the issue of gender imbalance in corporate boards in the EU?
- (2) What additional action (self-regulatory/regulatory) should be taken to address the issue of gender imbalance in corporate boards in the EU?
- (3) In your view, would an increased presence of women on company boards bring economic benefits, and which ones?
- (4) Which objectives (e.g. 20%, 30%, 40%, 60%) should be defined for the share of the underrepresented sex on company boards and for which timeframe? Should these objectives be binding or a recommendation? Why?
- (5) Which companies (e.g. publicly listed / from a certain size) should be covered by such an initiative?

¹ COM(2011) 777 final, vol. 2

- (6) Which boards/board members (executive / non-executive) should be covered by such an initiative?
- (7) Should there be any sanctions applied to companies which do not meet the objectives? Should there be any exception for not reaching the objectives?

Contributors should clearly identify themselves and indicate whether they are replying as an individual or on behalf of an organisation. For organisations, the following information should be provided:

- full name and contact details of the organisation;
- the EU Interest Representative Register ID (if available);
- the level at which the organisation operates (national / EU / international) and the Member State or other country (in case of a national organisation);
- the type of organisation (public authority / business or industry association / company / civil society organisation / trade union / research or academic institution / other).

Contributions should be submitted at the latest by **28 May 2012**,

- either by email to: JUST-GENDERBALANCE-CONSULTATION@ec.europa.eu
- or by postal mail to the following address:

European Commission
DG Justice / D1
LX 46 - 1/101
'Consultation gender balance'
B-1049 Brussels
BELGIUM

Incoming contributions will be published on the website. If contributors would like their submissions to remain confidential, they should explicitly state so in their submission.

A summary of the main outcomes of the public consultation will be included among the documents accompanying a possible legislative initiative.