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General Director

of the Robert Schuman Foundation



## Women's Europe <sup>[1]</sup>

**ABSTRACT** The place of women in society is evolving towards ever greater integration into positions that have been almost exclusively occupied by men in terms of hierarchy and the question of their representation is the focus of debate at present. However women who comprise more than half of the world's population still face opposition as far as reaching the top is concerned. An analysis of their occupation of the posts of responsibility in the 27 EU Member States, likewise their situation in the rest of the world reveals the challenges women still face in both economic and political spheres. Having now conquered all professional sectors and in spite of many studies showing the advantages of having a greater share of women in business which seem to illustrate a change in the situation they are still often less well placed and notably less well paid than men. Their situation in the political world is also a sign of the progress they still have to make

**INTRODUCTION** The "*feminine*" question, that is to say the place and role of women in society is increasingly becoming a part of debates. Every political leader, company manager, journalist, etc. is gradually becoming aware of the fact that the current situation cannot go on because women represent over half of the world's population. The economic media have recently headlined on women, for example "*Women at the Top*" Financial Times 17<sup>th</sup> November 2010, "*Female Factor*" International Herald Tribune 27<sup>th</sup> November 2010 and "*Le pouvoir des femmes*", L'Expansion January 2011 – who study, work, consume and in spite of the resistance that continues to exist, are making their mark at the top.

The new decade ahead should therefore see things evolve still further. One should remain extremely vigilant, however, because things do not unfortunately go without saying and there is a temptation to keep certain obstacles or "*glass ceilings*" in place. Indeed, it is only too clear, for example, that one of the rare top French companies to be directed by a woman (Anne Lauvergeon at AREVA, ranked 15<sup>th</sup> of the 50 women in the FT ranking), is the object of intensive manoeuvres orchestrated exclusively by men with the aim of getting rid of her and, in fact, taking her place.

2010 saw the advent, in France particularly but also

throughout Europe and worldwide, of the question of women's representation on company boards/management teams. Based on the model in Norway, which is the only country with a rate of over 40% women in top jobs in companies, economic stakeholders are being forced to make up lost time and show proof of a situation that is better than their competitors, by rapidly appointing women to their management boards. It was about time too. Why didn't they do it before?

In the political field, two women were elected Prime Minister of their country in Europe in 2010 (Iveta Radicova in Slovakia and Mari Kiviniemi in Finland) thus bringing to 3, from a total of 27, the number of women government chiefs in the EU; they join Angela Merkel, who no longer stands alone. In Brazil Dilma Rousseff has been elected President, along with Laura Chinchilla Miranda in Costa Rica. Micheline Calmy-Rey will chair the Swiss Confederation in 2011. However, here again vigilance is needed because the old macho demons are still alive and well. In Hungary, despite a resounding victory on 25<sup>th</sup> April, Viktor Orban has not appointed a single full-time woman minister! The same is true in the Czech Republic after the elections of 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> May last year! One can scarcely believe it!

And yet for many women Europe is a model, but if we do not take care and do not use all our strength,

1. Cf « Rapport Schuman sur l'Europe 2011, l'état de l'Union ». Éditions Lignes de Repères, Paris, mars 2011

the European star will begin to fade. Our political leaders would be better inspired to take part voluntarily in change rather than having it imposed on them.

Because, in the end, promoting women is truly one of the most efficient ways to take civilisation forward, contribute to progress and strengthen democracy.

### WOMEN IN ECONOMIC LIFE

Women have gradually conquered every professional sector worldwide.

More and more women are working; in the European Union, for example [2], an average of 62.5% women is working. However, 31.2% of them work part time, that is a percentage that is four times higher than amongst men. Moreover, with equal qualifications women are still too often less well paid than men (average gap of 17.8% in the Union), which is real discrimination.

Women are also more highly qualified than men, they achieved 58.9% of the degrees from universities in the European Union last year. Although highly qualified and coming onto the employment market in increasing numbers, women still remain in the minority in managerial positions in companies or the world of politics, particularly at the highest level.

On average 33% of women hold positions of responsibility in the Union. In banks a study shows that only 5 of them had, on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2010, a percentage of women close to or over 30% [3]. The Bundesbank, the German Central Bank appointed on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, for

the very first time, a woman, Sabine Lautenschläger-Peiter to be a member of its board.

Amongst the largest stock-market listed companies, there is an average of 12% of women (26% in Sweden and Finland) sitting on the management boards or supervisory committees of European companies and only 3% are chairs of these boards (13% in Bulgaria). Only Norway has almost 40% thanks to a law passed in 2004. On 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011 [4] France passed an equivalent law. And other countries may follow, such as Germany [5] or the UK [6] for example. Even the European Union [7], by way of Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament and Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the European Commission considering this.

Because the Charter of Fundamental Rights, published on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2010 in the Journal Officiel of the EU stipulates in article 23 that "Equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay. The principle of equality shall not prevent the maintenance or adoption of measures providing for specific advantages in favour of the under-represented sex." It might therefore be quoted by anyone who believes that gender equality is not being respected.

2. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0491:FIN:FR:PDF>

3. [http://www.globewomen.org/CWDI/tOP%20bANKS%20\(w\).pdf](http://www.globewomen.org/CWDI/tOP%20bANKS%20(w).pdf)

4. <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000023487662&dateTexte=&categorieLien=id>

5. Voir aussi la désignation le 15 février dernier d'une femme chez Daimler <http://www.daimler.com/dccom/0-5-7153-1-1368502-1-0-0-0-0-0-9293-7145-0-0-0-0-0-0.html>

6. <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/business-law/docs/w/11-745-women-on-boards.pdf>

7. [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/01/opinion/01iht-edbuzek01.html?\\_r=1&scp=1&sq=buzek&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/01/opinion/01iht-edbuzek01.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=buzek&st=cse)

### Women directors in stock market-listed companies

Rank	Country	Number of companies studied	% of companies chaired by women	% directors
	NORWAY*	16	13	39
1	FINLAND*	24	4	26
	SWEDEN	26	0	26
3	LATVIA	33	9	23
4	SLOVAKIA	10	10	22
5	ROMANIA	10	0	21
6	DENMARK	18	0	18

\*A non EU Member

Rank	Country	Number of companies studied	% of companies chaired by women	% directors
7	THE NETHERLANDS	21	0	15
8	HUNGARY	13	8	14
9	GERMANY	30	3	13
	UNITED KINGDOM	49	0	13
	LITHUANIA	28	3	13
12	POLAND	19	5	12
	FRANCE	31	3	12
	CZECH REPUBLIC	11	9	12
15	BULGARIA	15	13	11
16	BELGIUM	19	0	10
	SPAIN	34	3	10
	SLOVENIA	17	6	10
19	AUSTRIA	19	0	9
20	IRELAND	19	5	8
21	ESTONIA	14	7	7
22	GREECE	19	0	6
23	ITALY	38	3	5
	PORTUGAL	19	0	5
25	CYPRUS	19	5	4
	LUXEMBOURG	10	0	4
27	MALTA	18	6	2
	EU TOTAL	588	3.77	12.25
	LUXEMBOURG	10	0	4
27	MALTE	18	6	4
	TOTAL UE	588	3,77	12,25

Source : <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=777&langId=fr&intPageId=675>

### Women company directors (SME)

Rang	Country	Number of women company directors (1.000s)	% of women company directors
1	LATVIA	19	36
	SPAIN	413	36
	FRANCE	287	36
4	ITALY	556	35
5	UNITED KINGDOM	331	34

Rang	Country	Number of women company directors (1.000s)	% of women company directors
	ESTONIA	20	34
7	GERMANY	317	33
	POLAND	166	33
9	LITHUANIA	19	32
10	BULGARIA	49	31
11	BELGIUM	81	30
	THE NETHERLANDS	168	30
	AUSTRIA	47	30
	PORTUGAL	74	30
	HUNGARY	33	30
	GREECE	121	30
	SLOVAKIA (2009)	19	30
19	CZECH REPUBLIC	48	29
	ROMANIA	40	29
20	SWEDEN	24	27
	SLOVENIA	14	27
22	DENMARK	22	25
23	IRELAND	35	22
	LUXEMBOURG	2	22
25	MALTA	1	20
26	FINLAND	17	18
27	CYPRUS	1	14
	EU TOTAL	2 914	29
25	MALTE	1	20
26	FINLANDE	17	18
27	CHYPRE	1	14
	TOTAL UE	2 914	29

Source : <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=779&langId=fr&intPageId=680>

It would now seem as if we have reached a turning point because many studies show all the advantages there are in having more women on management teams and boards.

Thus, according to a study undertaken by the World Economic Forum [8], of the 10 countries where the place of women is best assured and where therefore life is best, 7 are in Europe and 4 are EU Member States (Finland, Sweden, Ireland and Denmark).

In its report entitled "More Women in senior position : key to economic stability and growth" [9] the European

Commission considers that the economy would gain from both women and men being duly represented in top level positions and shows that there is a positive link between the proportion of women in positions of high responsibility and company results.

Finally, on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011 the UN created an agency for sex equality and the autonomy of women, [10] directed by the former president of Chile, Michelle Bachelet.

It would appear, therefore, that women's time has finally arrived.

8. <http://members.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap/report2010.pdf>

9. [http://bookshop.europa.eu/is-bin/INTERSHOP.enfinity/WFS/EU-Bookshop-Site/fr\\_FR/-/EUR/ViewPublicationStart?PublicationKey=KE3109271](http://bookshop.europa.eu/is-bin/INTERSHOP.enfinity/WFS/EU-Bookshop-Site/fr_FR/-/EUR/ViewPublicationStart?PublicationKey=KE3109271)

10. <http://www.unwomen.org/fr/2011/01/un-women-begins-its-work/>

**WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE**

In the parliaments that are supposed to represent the population as a whole, women are still under-represented: according to the Interparliamentary Union (IPU) [11] on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2011, of the 45 668 members in parliaments worldwide (including both lower and upper chambers), only 8 674 are women, that is a proportion of 19.2%.

The European Union (24.2%) is ahead of the Americas (22.4%), other European countries (20%), Sub-Saharan Africa (19.3%), Asia (18.3%), the Pacific States (12.6%) and Arab countries (12.5%).

With regard to the number of women elected in Parliaments, European countries hold 6 of the top 10 places in world ranking. According to the IPU [12] on 31<sup>st</sup> January

2011, of these 6 countries, 4 were Member States of the EU (Sweden, the Netherlands, Finland, Belgium).

In terms of the number of women who preside one of the chambers in Parliament, of the 38 women listed by the UIP [13] on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2011, 14 are Europeans, 10 of whom are from EU Member States (Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Romania and the United Kingdom), 9 are from African States, 5 from American States, 6 from the Caribbean Islands and 4 from Asian States. Women only represent 14% of the leaders of Parliament.

Since 1<sup>st</sup> January, the average percentage of women in Parliaments in the European Union is 24.22%.

11. <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-fj/world.htm>

12. <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

13. <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-fj/speakers.htm>

**Women in the 27 national Parliaments (lower or single chambers)**

	Member States	Parliament	Date of election	Total seats	Number of women	%
1	SWEDEN	RIKSDAG	2010	349	161	46.13
2	THE NETHERLANDS	TWEEDE KAMER	2010	150	60	40
	FINLAND	EDUSKUNTA	2007	200	80	40
4	BELGIUM	LA CHAMBRE	2010	150	59	39.33
5	DENMARK	FOLKETINGET	2007	179	67	37.43
6	SPAIN	CONGRESO	2008	350	128	36.57
7	GERMANY	BUNDESTAG	2009	622	204	32.80
8	AUSTRIA	NATIONALRAT	2006	183	51	25.87
9	PORTUGAL	ASSEMBLEIA DA REPUBLICA	2009	230	64	27.83
10	ESTONIA	RIIGIKOGU	2007	101	23	22.77
11	CZECH REPUBLIC	POSLANECKA SNEMOVNA	2010	200	44	22
12	UNITED KINGDOM	HOUSE OF COMMONS	2010	649	142	21.88
13	BULGARIA	NARODNO SABRANIE	2009	239	51	21.34
14	ITALY	CAMERA DEI DEPUTATI	2008	630	134	21.27
15	POLAND	SEJM	2007	460	94	20.43
16	LATVIA	SAEIMA	2010	100	20	20
17	LUXEMBOURG	CHAMBRE DES DÉPUTÉS	2009	60	12	12.20
18	LITHUANIA	SEIMAS	2008	141	27	19.15
19	FRANCE	ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE	2007	577	109	18.89
20	GREECE	VOULI	2009	300	52	17.33
21	SLOVAKIA	NARODNA RADA SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKY	2010	150	23	15.33
22	SLOVENIA	ZBOR	2008	90	12	13.33
23	IRELAND	DÁIL ÉIREANN	2007	166	22	13.25

	Member States	Parliament	Date of election	Total seats	Number of women	%
24	CYPRUS	HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	2006	56	56	12.5
25	ROMANIA	CAMERA DEPUTATILOR	2008	334	38	11.38
26	HUNGARY	AZ ORSZAG HAZA	2010	386	35	9.07
27	MALTA	KAMRA TAD DEPUTATI	2008	69	6	8.70
	TOTAL EU			7121	1725	24.22

Source : Fondation Robert Schuman ©

In governments, women represent on average, on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2011 in the European Union, 26.07% of ministers. Finland is the only country with more female than male ministers (55%). Two European governments do not include any women at all: Hungary and the Czech Republic.

8 women are currently Prime Minister in their country, of whom 5 are in Europe – 3 in the EU (Germany, Finland, Slovakia), Croatia and Iceland -, 1 in Australia, 1

in Bangladesh and 1 in Trinidad and Tobago.

10 women are Presidents, including 4 in Europe (Ireland, Finland, Lithuania, Swiss Confederation), 1 in Argentina, 1 in Brazil, 1 in India, 1 in Liberia, 1 in Costa Rica and 1 in Kyrgyzstan.

#### Women ministers\* in the 27 governments

Rank	Member State	Date of election	Minister members	Number of women	%
1	FINLAND	2007	20	11	55
2	DENMARK	2009	19	9	47.37
3	SWEDEN	2010	24	11	45.83
4	SPAIN	2008	16	7	43.75
5	AUSTRIA	2008	14	6	42.86
6	GERMANY	2009	16	6	37.5
7	BELGIUM	2008	15	5	33.33
8	SLOVENIA	2008	19	6	31.58
9	FRANCE	2007	23	7	30.43
10	PORTUGAL	2009	17	5	29.41
11	POLAND	2007	18	5	27.78
12	LUXEMBOURG	2009	15	4	26.67
13	MALTA	2008	9	2	22.22
14	ITALY	2008	23	5	21.74
15	LATVIA	2010	14	3	21.43
	THE NETHERLANDS	2010	14	3	21.43

Rank	Member State	Date of election	Minister members	Number of women	%
17	IRELAND	2008	15	3	20
18	CYPRUS	2008	11	2	18.18
19	UNITED KINGDOM	2010	23	4	17.39
20	GREECE	2009	18	3	16.67
21	SLOVAKIA	2010	14	2	14.29
22	LITHUANIA	2008	15	2	13.33
23	ROMANIA	2009	17	2	11.76
24	BULGARIA	2009	18	2	11.11
23	ESTONIA	2007	13	1	7.69
26	CZECH REPUBLIC	2010	15	0	0
	HUNGARY	2010	10	0	0
	TOTAL EU		445	116	26.07

Source : Fondation Robert Schuman © -

\* N.B.: The Prime Minister has been counted but not Secretaries of State.

In the European Parliament, whose role and powers are on the increase, specifically with the Lisbon Treaty, women chair 9 committees and 8 delegations. 6 are vice-chairs and 2 are quaestors. They have a much greater presence in the European Parliament (35.05%) than in national Parliaments (24.22%). Only 1 Member State (Malta) has not sent any women to the European Parliament.

### Women in the European Parliament

	Member State	Number of MEP	Number of women	%
1	FINLAND	13	8	61.54
2	SWEDEN	18	10	55.56
3	ESTONIA	6	3	50
4	THE NETHERLANDS	25	12	48
5	DENMARK	13	6	47.22
6	FRANCE	72	34	45.83
7	AUSTRIA	17	7	41.18
8	SLOVAKIA	13	5	38.46
9	LATVIA	8	3	37.50
10	GERMANY	99	37	37.37
11	BELGIUM	22	8	36.36
	HUNGARY	22	8	36.36
	PORTUGAL	22	8	36.36
	ROMANIA	33	12	36.36

	Member State	Nombre de Députés européens	Nombre de Femmes	%
15	SPAIN	50	18	36
16	BULGARIA	17	6	35.29
17	CYPRUS	6	2	33.33
	UNITED KINGDOM	72	24	33.33
19	GREECE	22	7	31.82
20	SLOVENIA	7	2	28.57
21	IRELAND	12	3	25
	LITHUANIA	12	3	25
23	ITALY	72	16	22.22
24	POLAND	50	11	22
25	CZECH REPUBLIC	22	4	18.18
26	LUXEMBOURG	6	1	16.67
27	MALTA	5	0	0
	TOTAL EU	736	258	35.05

Source : Fondation Robert Schuman ©

**CONCLUSION** Women are gradually entering political and economic bodies. The move is of course still only relatively timid and incentive measures are needed to encourage the trend. Mentalities and education must be changed, and that will take time. However, if the movement is not increased deliberately, it will be inevitably or under the demands of necessity. Because qualified and capable women are ready - and willing - to take up the challenge. It would be wrong to deprive ourselves of their know-how and talents. The decade now beginning, and this 2nd decade was indeed important in both the 19th and the 20th centuries, could well be the decade when women gain access to key positions in every sector of activity, because the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the century that will see the advent of women's power.



**Auteur : Pascale Joannin,**

General Director of the Robert Schuman Foundation. Lecturer at the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA), former auditor at the Institute for Higher National Defence Studies (IHEDN) - she is the author of "*Europe, une chance pour la Femme.*" Paper by the Robert Schuman Foundation No22 2004.

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Publishing Director: Pascale JOANNIN

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