



## **SME WOMEN QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER – March 2008**

### **1. FOREWORD**

#### **From the President of SME Women, MEP Corien WORTMANN-KOOL**



We have had a very good start this year with our business lunch on 'Improving access to financing for female entrepreneurs', that we organized in January in the European Parliament. The difficult access to financing continues to be a real barrier for women who would like to start their own company. All the speakers at the business lunch stressed that better provision of micro credits is an important part of the solution to this problem. But next to this, a global cultural shift is needed, a change of mindset: it has to become natural and self-evident for everybody that women start their own businesses. At this moment, too often women do not get sufficient support from their families and social environment. As a follow-up of the meeting we are promoting that the new 'Small Business Act' for SMEs, which the European Commission is preparing at the moment, will contain a chapter specifically dedicated to female entrepreneurs, in which their specific needs, problems and challenges will be addressed. I am happy that this will be part of the official position of the SME Union on this 'Small Business Act'.

In the meantime, our next activity is coming up: on April 15 you are most welcome to join us for a working breakfast on 'Women in Business and Politics'. We have decided to dedicate a business meeting on this topic, since women are still largely underrepresented in decision-making positions within businesses and in politics. The last report on equality between women and men from the European Commission shows that the presence of female managers in companies is progressing very slowly and stands at only 33 % (in the European

Union). Also, despite the fact that women represent 59 % of university graduates and have a better educational attainment, their employment rate remains lower than that of men (by 14.4 points) and they continue to earn on average 15 % less than men for every hour worked.

It is evident that more efforts need to be made to make full use of the productive potential of the female workforce. What we can do to address this challenge and how we can do it, will be discussed at our working breakfast on April the 15th. We hope to see you there!

Best wishes from your SME Women President,  
**Corien Wortmann-Kool MEP**

## INVITATION

The SME UNION of the EPP,  
The International Republican Institute (IRI)  
Women`s Democracy Network and  
SME Women

cordinally invite you to our Working Breakfast on

### **Women in Business & Politics**

Tuesday 15 April, 08:00-09:30h

European Parliament, Salon des Membres  
Rue Wiertz, 1047 Brussels

#### Introduction and Moderation

- Corien Wortmann-Kool MEP, SME Women President, EPP Vice-President, Member of the EP Committee on International Trade

#### Impulse statements

- Yvonne Boice, President of Fugazy International Travel; Member of Women`s Democracy Network of the International Republican Institute, USA
- Liora Katzenstein, President of the Institute for the Study of Entrepreneurship and Management of Innovation, Israel
- Anita Orban, Executive Senior Vice-President of International Centre for Democratic Transition, Hungary
- Milka Forcan, Vice-President of Delta Holding, Serbia (tbc)
- Emanuella Farris, Political Adviser, European People`s Party

#### Conclusions

- Ildiko Voller-Szenci, Director of SME Women

Followed by a discussion with the participants.

We are looking forward to seeing you!

RSVP until Friday 4 April 2008 to

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Project Manager: Orsolya TOTH

In cooperation with



## 2. SLOVENIAN PRESIDENCY



In the area of gender equality, Slovenian Presidency will follow the objectives and priority tasks of the European Pact for Gender Equality, the Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men (2006 - 2010), and the Lisbon Strategy.

Special emphasis will be given to elimination of gender stereotypes in society, participation and empowerment of women in society. Slovenian Presidency will continue the process of monitoring implementation of Beijing Platform for Action. Indicators on the girl child and is planned to be prepared a report on women in political decision-making processes.

An emphasis of Slovenian Presidency will also be on gender mainstreaming in all relevant political processes and areas.

### Meetings and conferences in this issue during the Slovenian Presidency<sup>1</sup>

- 10.-11. January 2008 – **Meeting of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming:**  
Members of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming are senior officials from the Member States responsible for gender mainstreaming. The Group on Gender Mainstreaming was chaired by the European Commission.
- 30. January 2008 – **Conference “Elimination of Gender Stereotypes: Mission (Im)Possible?”:**  
Gender stereotypes are one of the most persistent root causes for inequality between women and men in all areas of life and in all life periods. The Conference "Elimination of Gender Stereotypes: Mission (Im)Possible?" will address possible ways to eliminate traditional gender roles and gender stereotypes, especially in the areas of education, training, labour market, culture and media. The Conference was supported by the European Commission.

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.uem.gov.si/en/areas\\_of\\_work/gender\\_equality\\_and\\_slovenian\\_presidency\\_of\\_the\\_eu](http://www.uem.gov.si/en/areas_of_work/gender_equality_and_slovenian_presidency_of_the_eu)

- 31. January 2008 – **Informal Meeting of Ministers for Gender Equality:** Informal Meeting of Ministers for Gender Equality is the most important event in the area of gender equality during the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU. Ministers discussed participation and empowerment of women in society. This topic was the framework for addressing issues of the balanced participation of women and men in political decision-making, the empowerment of girls in order to achieve gender equality, and the importance of gender equality policies in development cooperation.

For more information on the activities, please visit:

<http://www.eu2008.si/en/>

### **3. TOPIC OF THE YEAR: “SMALL BUSINESS ACT FOR EUROPE”**

SME UNION of the European People’s Party chose the Small Business Act for Europe as its topic of the year. For that reason, we have organized a working Breakfast on 23 January 2008 together with UEAPME and SME Circle discussing the need for and the opportunities of such an Act.

Setting up legally-binding quotas regarding access for small and medium-sized enterprises to public procurement "no longer corresponds to our vision today", Novelli told reporters on 25 January, after presenting the EU's Enterprise Commissioner Günter Verheugen with France's proposals for a "European Small Business Act".

On 6 February 2008 a Commission Hearing on the proposal for a “Small Business Act” for Europe took place in Brussels. Presided over by the Commission SME Envoy, Ms Françoise Le Bail, representatives from the European Institutions first gave their impression on the necessity for and the content and its effects of such an “Act”. Underneath them were Mr. Günter Verheugen, Vice-President of the European Commission, Tomaz Jersic, State Secretary at the Ministry of Economy of Slovenia and Othmar Karas, MEP and President of the SME Intergroup of the EP. After speeches on the views of Entrepreneurs towards the SBA and a discussion with the audience, consisting of representatives of various business associations, companies and entrepreneurs, Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, gave a closing speech in which he addressed his full and true commitment to the issue. Issues that will, due to the European Commission, be tackled in the SBA include the implementation of the “Think Small First” – principle, the improvement of SMEs’ access to financial markets (microcredits, guarantees, venture capital), aids for the SMEs’ access on third markets, intellectual property protection and entrepreneurial education in schools and universities. The main purpose is to reduce regulations and thus minimize the administrative effort of SMEs.

Entrepreneurs and their interest groups expressed their high expectations for the SBA demanding it to be a set of legally binding rules for politicians and other people in charge of the environment of a company. It also has to tackle problems concerning the whole lifecycle of SMEs and not only the founding process. The SBA can then be seen as a legal basis for further improvement.

There is an online consultation by the European Commission going on until the end of March. SMEs and their stakeholders are encouraged to take part and either fill in the online questionnaire or send a written essay in order to express their ideas and attitudes towards major issues. For that reason the Commission has published a Consultation document stating some tasks and related questions it considers to be most pressing. The results will then be included in a report of the Commission in April or May.

#### **4. MICRO-CREDITS**

An agreement has been set between the European Commission's Directorate General for Enterprise and Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs and the EIB Group. The agreement signed in April 2005 provides for a facility, which gives grants for technical assistance to credit institutions, which have approval for an EIF guarantee or EIB lending operation. The Commission's total budget of EUR 6m has been divided into three EUR 2m facilities with the EIB Group, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and a joint agreement with the Council of Europe Development Bank and Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau. This agreement's general objective is to expand and strengthen SME credit markets, notably micro-lending, in the ten new EU Member States. More specifically, by combining both financial and technical assistance, the aim is to improve the capacity of local, regional or cooperative financial institutions or banks to extend loans to SMEs and, in parallel, also develop the credit institutions' in-house administrative, assessment and monitoring abilities.<sup>2</sup>

For more information, please visit:

<http://64.233.183.104/search?q=cache:K9aMFjLFgwQJ:www.eif.org/highvap/index%3Faction%3DchangeFormat%26format%3DPRINT+Micro+credits+EIB&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=12>  
<http://www.eubusiness.com/Finance/eu-micro-credit/>

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<sup>2</sup>[http://64.233.183.104/search?q=cache:ttT\\_sn38NGMJ:www.eif.org/highvap/index.htm+Micro+credits+EI&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=9](http://64.233.183.104/search?q=cache:ttT_sn38NGMJ:www.eif.org/highvap/index.htm+Micro+credits+EI&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=9)

## 5. EVENTS

### 2008-01-17, Discussion: “Role of women in industry”, Strasbourg

**Meglana Kuneva**, Commissioner for Consumer Protection Policy, mentioned that the gender equality challenges in industry are even more acute than in other sectors. She remarked the two problems of working conditions in industry: the pay gap and the reconciliation of work and private life. She also mentioned the Roadmap for Gender Equality in 2006<sup>3</sup>, which has six priorities linked to improving the situation of women on the labour market. However, she highlighted that we shouldn't forget to consolidate what has been achieved. There are two issues that should be tackled: firstly, there are very few women in industry; secondly, those women who work in industry are working in typically female sectors, which are labour intensive and characterised by poor working conditions and low wages. She also stressed out that it is important to support the careers of female engineers via networking, mentoring and measures to balance work and private life. The European Social Fund provides essential support to provide every opportunity for training and retraining. There is a large pay gap (30%) between women and men. Therefore, in July 2007, the Commission adopted a communication on tackling this gap with the involvement of enterprises. Furthermore, the Commission will shortly relaunch an awareness-raising campaign for enterprises about gender stereotypes. European laws on employee information and consultation, social dialogue and the European Social Fund<sup>4</sup> are all instruments designed to achieve this. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund<sup>5</sup> will provide assistance of up to EUR 500 million per year and its rules provide specifically for gender equality to be taken into account. At last, she stated that she sincerely support this way of tackling the difficulties in this specific area.

**Avril Doyle** (EPP-ED, Ireland) stated that the role of women in the industry affects all facets of society and has wide-ranging implications for employment and welfare policy, family and child policy, and economic policy. She added industry needs women at all levels and society needs children, we all must respect maternity and paternity leave as fundamental social values.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A6-2007-0519&language=EN&mode=XML>

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<sup>3</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/gender\\_equality/gender\\_mainstreaming/roadmap\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/gender_mainstreaming/roadmap_en.html)

<sup>4</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/esf/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf/index_en.htm)

<sup>5</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/egf/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/egf/index_en.html)

## 2008-01-22, SME Women Business Lunch on “Improving access to finance for female entrepreneurs”

On Tuesday lunchtime, 22 January, the SME UNION of the EPP organized a Working Lunch in the European Parliament on: “Improving access to finance for female entrepreneurs”. The Working Lunch was hosted and moderated by Corien WORTMANN-KOOL MEP, President of SME Women. In her introduction statement Wortmann-Kool first of all thanked her SME Women team for organizing the 1st working lunch of the year 2008, she welcomed all the speakers and stressed the importance of addressing the theme of finance for female entrepreneurs.



The first speaker was Philippe de FONTAINE VIVE, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank. He gave an overview of the funding and financing instruments issued by the European Investment Bank especially targeted to SMEs and female entrepreneurs. By the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP), the Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises initiative (Jeremie) and special micro credit schemes SMEs are supported through national financial intermediaries. Furthermore he mentioned that the European Investment Bank gives warranties and risk capital to start ups. As the practice of the EIB has shown especially micro credits are used by female entrepreneurs. In addition to that Mr Fontaine Vive explained that a lot of the available money is not used by SMEs because the applications are often too time consuming and bureaucratic.



The second speech was held by Angelika NIEBLER, Chairwoman of the EP Committee on Industry, Research and Energy. She emphasized the importance of national and local support for women in business. Concerning the aspect of microcredits she stressed that all studies show that commercial banks are keen on giving microcredits to women. She came up with statistics

regarding women in business and she mentioned that in the male dominated sectors women presence is still very low. Furthermore she argued that women are very successful in founding new businesses and at the same time have to divide their time between their business and family life. Angelika Niebler MEP stressed SME policy is the key element for growth and jobs.

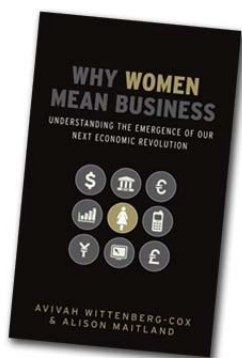
Alessandra PERRAZZELLI, Head of International Affairs of Intesa Sanpaolo was the third speaker during the SME Women Lunch Debate. In her daily work she is

dealing with “Commercially viable businesses” since the banking fees (its evaluation method) are very strictly profit-oriented. For example: innovative business linked to energy or town related solutions. She argued that women entrepreneurs are more related to businesses in the area of services and they have the ability of translating ideas into business. For her, one of the most important issues is to have more women at the top level of companies. The next speaker was Anna DANTI from DG Enterprise and Industry, Unit E1 'Entrepreneurship'. She mentioned two important issues for the women in business today: on the one hand the access to network



and on the other hand the access to financing. Regarding the access to financing the European Commission already increased the financing instruments available for 2007 – 2013. Because the access to financing is often quite difficult for female entrepreneurs the Commission plans to organize info-days and courses for women so microfinance becomes more accessible and less administrative. The conclusions of these interesting statements were drawn by Maria CAPPONE, Vice-President of SME Women, Bulgarian Observer in the European Parliament 2005-2006. She summed up that the most important for women entrepreneurs is the access to information concerning e.g. networks and different EU founding resources.

### 2008-02-05, Why Women Mean Business



A discussion and drink reception was organized on 5<sup>th</sup> of February to discuss the book of Avivah Wittenberg-Cox and Alison Maitland called “Why Women Mean Business”.

Women`s mass arrival in the world of work in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is emerging as an economic revolution with enormous consequences. They are becoming central to labour market solutions to the combined challenges of an ageing workforce. The position of women – in companies, countries, and governments – is seen as a measure of health, maturity and economic viability.

Why Women Mean Business takes these powerful economic arguments for change to the heart of the corporate world. This compelling new book analyses the opportunities available to companies to really understand what motivates women in the workplace and the marketplace.

Nicolaus van der Pas, Director-General of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities at the European Commission, and Bob Ulrich, Vice President, Cisco Systems, joined the authors in the debate.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2008/feb/05/business.genderissues>

### **2008-02-12, EUROCHAMBRES Women Network Closing Conference of the project “On Board”**



In the frame of “On Board”, the latest project of EUROCHAMBRES Women Network, project partners have tackled three areas of concern that prevent women from being fully included in the economy:

- 1) Women in economic decision-making – in this case Women on Chamber Boards
- 2) The reconciliation of work and family life – by "Linking Local Actors"
- 3) Access to finance for female start-up entrepreneurs

The partners of the project – Chambers from 12 European countries – have investigated and sought for solutions in which they could play a positive role to foster the female business agenda. The conference assessed the results of the project – and in particular of its three working groups – and conclude with an outlook to the future.

For more information, please visit:

[www.chamber.org.mt/businessnews/resource.asp?id=554](http://www.chamber.org.mt/businessnews/resource.asp?id=554)

## 5. WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN FINLAND



Throughout Finland, women are making great strides in overcoming the diversity between their male counterparts as entrepreneurs. Finland was the first country to grant political rights to women in 1907. After the establishment of political rights, Finnish women created their own business organization, known as The Central Association of Women Entrepreneurs, CAWE; they were the first in the world to do so. Creating networks for women entrepreneurs remains still today a very important part of societal support for female entrepreneurship. The awareness of women's presence in the workforce and as successful entrepreneurs is critical in today's society; it allows new generations of young girls who

aspire to become their own leader to have women role models to look towards for inspiration and to have doors open for them.

Today, young girls and women have more resources readily available to them in terms of education and employment and social security legislation, which also reflects in the statistics on self-owned businesses. For example, according to CAWE, in 2006, Finland had roughly 73 000 female entrepreneurs, which accounts for one third of the entrepreneurs in Finland. This large amount of female entrepreneurs indicates that women are willing to further their education and succeed despite obstacles that men normally do not face.

Yes, there are still gender related obstacles in SME environment. It is disappointing to note that nearly all female entrepreneurs' worldwide indicate a number of obstacles they face. A survey conducted in Washington, DC, USA, titled 'Common Experiences, Common Needs: Lessons for Women's Entrepreneurial Development,' polled female entrepreneurs all over the world and in its conclusions identified five main problem areas commonly recognised amongst all women in different countries: information, capital, markets, network, and validation.

Women feel that in all these areas hurdles exist to them getting more involved in the workforce as entrepreneurs because they are not able to adequately use resources to properly build their business. On the other hand, while these obstacles may prove challenging to some female entrepreneurs, overcoming them gives women the determination and strength to run their businesses successfully and a competitive edge vis-à-vis their male counterparts.

One of the challenges is also that women entrepreneurs tend to settle with SME's while male entrepreneurs are more growth-oriented. Finnish statistics carried out by CAWE have noted that only 1% of female entrepreneurs employ over 100 employees, whereas 40% do not employ any help. Some female entrepreneurs

also note that they still feel held back by the social responsibility of raising the children and taking care of elderly members of the family; this inevitably disadvantages women in business. However, through new legislation and increased social equality, women will be able to be viewed more as equals with men in business and have a more level playing field.

Even though many obstacles stand in the path of female entrepreneurs, we have seen a good increase in their overall number. This increase can be attributed to several societal, economic and legislative developments. For example, entrepreneurs have benefited from the growing trend of the Finnish municipalities outsourcing their goods and services. Also the opening of the Single Market for Services has given many women entrepreneurs new opportunities. Finally the government has created some successful tax incentives to generate entrepreneurial activity especially in sectors traditionally dominated by women. Overall, Finland has the basic accommodations and resources in place to enable women to achieve their goals in the field of entrepreneurship. Yet, without the constant contribution of the EU, it is difficult to attain sustainable and satisfactory results. If the level playing field ends at the border of one member state, growth potential will understandably be limited. Similarly, the free movement of people will not be fully realised unless anyone can enjoy equal opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship in all member states. Only by acting together in EU, women entrepreneurs all over Europe can reach their full potential.

**Piia-Noora Kauppi**

MEP, Vice-President of the SME UNION

## **6. INTRODUCING BUSINESS NETWORKS**

The Women in Rural Enterprise, **WiRE**, has been offering business support to women in rural business in UK since 1996, when research conducted by Harper Adams University College identified a significant number of farm diversifications were established by women. WiRE is now a trusted national organisation, which **helps rural women develop and grow their business** and delivers a range of services in response to member feedback and the needs of women in rural business. WiRE **lobbies on a national level** to keep rural businesses on the political agenda and contribute regularly to national policy as their advice is often sought by Government. WiRE encourages links with local and national government bodies and large companies in order to enhance the range of business services available to women in rural business. WiRE is unique in **its approach to** business help, invaluable to all rural women in business at any stage, from the established or growing business, to new or potential businesses. WiRE members are diverse in terms of geographical location, age, type of business and business aspirations.

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For more information about the organisation and about the members of the WiRE, please visit:

<http://www.wireuk.org/about.aspx>

<b>7. SME WOMEN NEWS</b>
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**Report on the situation of women in rural areas of the EU**

56% of the total population of the EU lives in rural areas (92% of the territory). Christa Klass MEP, Rapporteur of “Women in rural areas of the EU”, notes the wide diversity in rural regions. In these areas the “out-migration” of females in the economically active age groups continues to result in a degree of “masculinisation” of the rural population, with a negative consequences for the equality of life and on fertility rates. To improve this situation, Christa Klass suggests a wide range of measures, for example the support by Member States of the transition from agricultural-based areas to broader economic-based rural areas; the development of services in rural areas; the improvement of education and childcare infrastructure.

For more information, please visit:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004\\_2009/documents/pr/688/688432/688432en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/pr/688/688432/688432en.pdf)

**EU gender report finds women opting for low-paid sectors**

While increasing numbers of women are working, they remain underrepresented in sectors considered crucial for economic development which are usually better remunerated, notes the Commission’s annual report on equality between women and men. According to this report, which is the first to cover the EU 27, the female employment rate has been steadily increasing since 2000 and the unemployment rate for women has fallen to its lowest level for ten years. However, the pay gap, the labour market segregation, and work/life balance are ongoing challenges that undermine the qualitative aspect of jobs, found the report.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/socialeurope/eu-gender-report-finds-women-opting-low-paid-sectors/article-169824>

### **“Women Matter” by McKinsey&Company**

McKinsey has just released a new study, "Women Matter," developed under the leadership of Sandrine Devillard, (co-leader of McKinsey Women in Europe/Middle East/Africa), Georges Desvaux, and Pascal Baumgarten. This study was conducted as part of the McKinsey contribution to our worldwide partnership with the Women's Forum for the Economy & Society. Aiming at assessing the impact of gender diversity on company performance, "Women Matter" demonstrates that the companies where women are most strongly represented at board or top-management levels are also the companies that perform best, both on organizational and financial measures. The team unveiled its findings during the Women's Forum for the Economy & Society held in Deauville, France in October 2007. Sandrine presented the study to over 500 clients, top executives, politicians and journalists, and nearly 1400 print copies were distributed. Within a few short days, their work had been reported positively in the *Financial Times*, *Les Echos*, and *Le Figaro*, as well as on several radio stations.

For more information, please visit:

[http://www.mckinsey.com/careers/women/makingadifference/socialsectorimpact/womenmatter/Mckinsey\\_women\\_matter.pdf](http://www.mckinsey.com/careers/women/makingadifference/socialsectorimpact/womenmatter/Mckinsey_women_matter.pdf)

### **Innovation scoreboard 2007: Summary of the situation in the 27 Member States (14/02/2008)**

This memo provides a synopsis of the innovation performance of the different Member States. This analysis is taken from European Innovation Scoreboard and thematic papers on Innovation in Services and on Innovation Efficiency. Commissioned by the Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission, the European Innovation Scoreboard is prepared by the Maastricht Economic and Social Research and training centre on Innovation and Technology (MERIT) assisted by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission.

### **Capitalising on knowledge to benefit SMEs and universities (04/02/2008)**

A new EU initiative will provide EUR 400 million between now and 2013 for staff exchanges between businesses, including SMEs, and universities. It also has a special facility to help smaller enterprises to buy equipment.

For more information on financing:

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_en.html)

### **Vice-President Verheugen launches Enterprise Europe Network (07/02/2008)**

Today European Commission Vice President Gunter Verheugen launched Enterprise Europe Network, a new and powerful European support network for enterprises. All major players of the business support community in Europe have united to offer a one-stop service to assist especially small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to develop their full potential and innovative capacity.

For more information:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/192&type=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

### **Women in power still trapped by glass ceiling (06/03/2008)**

Despite recent progress, women in Europe are still shut out of top posts in both politics and business, says a new European Commission report: "*Women and men in decision making 2007 – analysis of the situation and trends*". Across the EU, 24% of parliamentarians are women – up from 16% a decade ago – with a similar proportion holding ministerial office. In the private sector, men still represent 9 out of 10 board members in top companies and two-thirds of company bosses. The report coincides with International Women's Day on 8 March and comes ahead of a new European network of women in power, to be launched later this year.<sup>6</sup>

For further information, please visit:

- Report "Women and men in decision-making 2007 – analysis of the situation and trends"

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/publications/2008/ke8108186\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/publications/2008/ke8108186_en.pdf)

- Database on women and men in decision-making

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/women\\_men\\_stats/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/women_men_stats/index_en.htm)

- 2008 Report on equality between women and men:

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/gender\\_equality/news/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/news/index_en.html)

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/gender\\_equality/docs/com\\_2008\\_0010\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/docs/com_2008_0010_en.pdf)

- More women in work, but 'better' jobs needed too (23/01/2008)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/79&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

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<sup>6</sup><http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/390&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

**Centre-right women MEPs favour competence over gender for EU top jobs. Strasbourg (12/03/08)**

In their meeting in Strasbourg, centre-right EPP-ED women MEPs voiced their support for using competence as the main criterion to find candidates for EU top jobs next year. Rather than using gender as the only criterion, as suggested by some women members of the Liberal Group, the EPP-ED Members of the European Parliament called for Member States to propose competent female candidates for the coveted posts, underlining at the same time their opposition to formal quotas.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.epp-ed.org/Press/showpr.asp?PRControlDocTypeID=1&PRControlID=7144&PRContentID=12492&PRContentLG=en>

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Please send your comments and opinion to us. Further information about your events, national studies or women projects is warmly welcomed. The next SME Women & Start-up QUARTERLY is planned for June 2008.

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