

**Press statement – 08.12.2015**

## **Women's Rights and Gender Equality**

Women on boards: MEPs regret Council's failure to agree position

Leading women's rights MEPs on Tuesday voiced their disappointment at the Council's failure to agree on measures to ensure that by 2020 at least 40% of non-executive directors on listed company boards are women.

"This is another missed opportunity by the member states to live up to European ambitions and values regarding gender equality. It is wrong to think that gender equality and women's participation in economic decision-making is not a priority for our Union today. Unleashing women's potential could be decisive for achieving economic and social targets. I urge the upcoming Dutch Presidency to immediately step up efforts towards an agreement," said the co-rapporteur, Mariya Gabriel (EPP, BG).

"The multiple crises Europe is facing is claiming its victims. I am disappointed that Germany's position has not moved to break up the blocking minority in the Council. It is a shame that the values that we are demanding from everybody who comes to Europe are the first values that are thrown overboard: gender equality, but also aspects of good corporate governance, transparent procedures within companies and fair chances for everybody," said the co-rapporteur, Evelyn Regner (S&D, AT).

"Once more, equality is relegated to the background. It is unacceptable that EU ministers are unable to agree on such an important issue as the representation of women in economic decision-making. How long must we still wait to see that equality between women and men is not only a principle written on paper but an implemented reality?" said Iratxe García Pérez (S&D, ES), chair of the women's rights and gender equality committee.

Note for editors

Parliament's November 2013 resolution called on member states to ensure that listed companies take effective measures to guarantee equal access for both women and men to non-executive positions on boards to ensure that by 2020 at least 40% of non-executive directors' positions are held by women. Qualifications and merit remain the key criteria in a fair and transparent selection procedure.

Further information

Council Conclusions:

<http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14325-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

European Parliament legislative resolution (20.11.2013)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2013-0488>