



Geneva

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Statements on behalf of the EU

UNECE Beijing+25 Review Conference - Item 9. Women in Leadership: Women's representation in policy- and decision-making

Thank you, Mme. Moderator,

On behalf of the European Union and its Member States, we would like to thank the panelists for this valuable discussion.

Encouraging progress has been made within the EU on this issue. However, progress has been slow, uneven and differs across Member States. In a democracy, gender parity in political office is an important way to contribute to achieve gender equality in political office does matter. Still only one in three members in the parliament and senior ministers is a woman. Only 15% of mayors across the EU are women. Women's participation in decision-making makes a difference. Women bring new ideas and priorities to the political process as a whole and more inclusive decisions. But powerful women continue to elicit strong, negative reactions, which remain a barrier to women wishing to enter - and thrive - in politics and other areas of leadership. The level of harassment directed at women in politics because they are women, and sometimes because of their increased presence, is a growing concern and might deter women from engaging in politics because they find the environment too toxic.

Also the presence of women in economic leadership remains challenging. Today in the EU, women account for only 28% of the members in company boards and for around 7% of CEOs. Women's under-representation in economic leadership does not reflect women's true professional potential. Evidence shows that a broad range of talents and skills in the boardroom contributes to better decisions and economic growth. Furthermore, in a context of a battle for talent at a global level, the case for achieving gender balance in leadership has never been so strong.

The EU has this topic on its political agenda. The 'equality in decision making' is one of the priorities of the EU Strategic engagement for gender equality (2016-2019); at national level, EU Member States have introduced a wide array of policies, including legislative and voluntary quotas or targets and measures to remove obstacles. However, there is still a general lack of comprehensive and long-term strategies. Men occupy the vast majority of leadership positions and are the "gatekeepers" to the positions of power. Engagement of senior leaders is one of the driving forces for change. Inclusion of and equal opportunities

for women is not only a rights issue - there is also a strong business case for this.

Madame Moderator,

What concrete steps should be taken until 2030 to bring cultural and structural change in this field and ensure greater gender parity in leadership positions in all fields of society?

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