

## PRESS RELEASE

### Gender Balance Power Map partners publish the Best Practices Guide to promote equal access for women to decision-making positions

**Under the Gender Balance Power Map project, seven organisations from six European countries have joined forces to enhance women's participation to economic decision-making positions at the European level. The project partners published a Guide on the best practices in gender equality either in social enterprises and conventional companies with the aim of inspiring each other. During the Final Conference of the project, held on March 3 in Brussels, several renowned stakeholders – from social enterprises to managers in large companies – will bear witness of their experiences.**

The low representation of women in economic decision-making positions is a missed opportunity and a challenge for companies, countries and the European Union as a whole. This absence of women leads to under-utilisation of the biggest talent pool (women represent 60% of the graduates), while many studies confirm that women have a positive impact on the decision-making process and business performance. As the years go by, statistics continue to show that women are too often faced with a glass ceiling in their careers.

The Best Practices Guide focuses on the social sector for which women's activity data is poor. Most of them are SMEs. Even though small and medium enterprises (SMEs) represent the vast majority of employers on the continent (in 2014 they accounted for 99.8% of all enterprises in the EU28 and employed almost 90 million people - 67% of total employment), policy measures and indicators mainly focus on the biggest corporate boards.

With the publication of their Best Practices Guide, the Gender Balance Power Map partners aim to support the engagement of women in leading positions and in entrepreneurship by providing new instruments for companies to fight against the gender disparity. From talent programmes aimed at improving women's self-esteem and self-knowledge, to the certification of companies who have implemented measures to ensure a good work-life balance, or collective labour agreement on teleworking: the guide puts forward inspiring practices that can be reproduced by other companies or public authorities wanting to reach better gender balance.

#### Recommendations for SMEs

The Best Practices Guide puts forward the following recommendations for social and conventional companies to tackle the gender imbalance:

- Challenge **the corporate culture** characterised by long hours, prevailing leadership styles and lack of transparency in recruitment and promotion practices.
- **Establish figures and facts** that reveal the actual situation, they are the base for active measures.
- Integrate diversity and promotion of gender equality into the **strategy** of the company.
- Adopt a **gender-neutral language** in internal and external communication to avoid fostering and transferring stereotypes
- Develop a more **diverse picture of management** with portrayals of female and male managers working and taking care of their family responsibilities and/or adopting more participatory and collaborative styles of management rather than the stereotypical portraying the manager as a person adopting dominant or assertive behaviour.
- Set up measures with **well-defined indicators**.
- Develop transparent and gender-sensitive **recruitment and promotion systems**.
- Develop **work-life conciliation** tools and new work practices.

## **PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

- Date: 3 March 2016, from 16.00 to 17.30

In the framework of the JUMP Forum [www.forumjump.eu/brussels](http://www.forumjump.eu/brussels)

- Venue: Vlerick Business School, Avenue du Boulevard 21, 1210 Brussels

- Free access under requirement for the press

- Conference language: English only

## **PRESS CONTACT**

Estelle Huchet / Estelle.Huchet@pourlasolidarite.eu / Tel +32 2 535 06 69