



Resolution

**by the European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions
(CESI)**

on promoting women in leading positions

Rapporteur: Kirsten Lühmann



The European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions

adopted the following resolution on xxx:

Introduction

CESI would like to allude to the fact that the equal treatment of men and women was set down in the Treaties and the European Charter of Fundamental Rights as a core principle of the European Union. In order to implement this principle of equality, European Union Member States can, in accordance with article 157, para 4 TFEU (4), take promotive measures to facilitate the professional life of the underrepresented gender or prevent/ iron out discrimination over a person's professional career.

Although around half of all employees are female and approximately 60 % of university qualifications in the EU are obtained by women, women remain seriously underrepresented in decision-making positions in industry and in the public service, in particular in top positions, where they occupy just 12 % or so of key positions.

In contrast, guaranteeing equal opportunities for men and women in positions of responsibility is one of the five priorities of the Women's Charter and the European Commission's Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010-2015).

Eliminating career obstacles for women

1. CESI observes that, in spite of the European Commission's ambitious targets, the number of women in leading positions has only risen by 0.5 % a year over the course of the last seven years. It is only in those Member States in which a quota for women in leading positions was established by law that sustainable improvement could be attained. For example, Norway introduced a binding women's quota in 2008 of 40% for women in management positions in large companies. In 2009, Norway's large companies recorded an average quota of 42% of women in leading positions.



2. CESI is calling for the active dismantling of structural career obstacles, which affect women in particular. In so doing, CESI stresses the fact that unequal pay structures between men and women also represent a structural career obstacle. Indeed, the employee's functional position and the way his/her performance is perceived and appreciated are often connected to the pay structure, although the in-house pay structure is also taken into account when promotions occur, in particular in large companies. Implementing the 'equal pay principle' is therefore indispensable.
3. Old-fashioned societal structures represent a career barrier for women. The dated societal view that women alone should shoulder family responsibilities and women's participation in the labour market is only of marginal significance is demonstrated in taxation policies, such as married couples tax allowance, which are geared to the male sole earner model. Equally, there is a lack of a country-wide, adequate supply of child-care facilities and, when one considers demographic change in Europe, there is also a need for care for older family members.
4. CESI is calling for the building of child-care facilities and care homes for the elderly to be seen as a responsibility to be shared by the whole of society and for the burdens arising from caring for dependent family members not to lie solely with the families concerned. However, CESI does not feel the current taxation policy, based on the male, sole-earner model, to be the appropriate means of easing the burden in an equal way for those families affected.
5. A further career obstacle for women can be found in the form of inflexible work organisational structures and working time schedules. However, the way that the work is organised, in particular in leading positions which are dominated by men, deliberately in such a way that it is impossible to work in a position of leadership and carry out ones family duties. Here, dated societal structures are reflected in dated personnel management and work organisation structures. At the same time, the digital age offers a multitude of possibilities for making working structures and personnel management



more flexible. Equally, variety and flexible working structures promote the capacity for innovation and creative problem solving often desired in leading positions.

6. CESI demands that, in order for a better work/life balance to be struck, more flexible work organisation and work schedules, and in particular parental leave and care time, be integrated into the working world in such a way that they may be claimed by men and women in leading positions as a matter of course and are therefore no longer seen as a barrier to ones career. In CESI's view, the work of the social partners in this field is of decisive importance.
7. In conclusion, CESI would like to allude to the fact that the current underrepresentation of women in leading positions has also led to a lack of female role models and mentors. The task of building networks for women, promoting them and representing their interests is thus made more difficult. For this reason, CESI is calling for targeted support programmes for potential female management to be set up, in cooperation with the social partners.