

Global Board Ready Women Leadership Conference

Wednesday 8 November, 2023 @ 5 Grand Place, 1000 Brussels
14.00 - 18.00, followed by a reception & live music by "Teppaz Road"

Join us for a unique perspective on diversity, leadership and empowerment.

brought to you by



To celebrate the "Global Board Ready Women" initiative

Forté Foundation and Phoenix Executive

invite you to the

GLOBAL BOARD READY WOMEN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Wednesday, 8 November 2023, 14.00-18.00 (followed by a reception & live music by "Teppaz Road")

Venue

5 Grand Place

1000 Brussels

Join us for an afternoon of inspiring presentations, plenary debates and networking on diversity, leadership, and opportunities for advancement.

Exceptional women and men will share their insights, their perceptions, and their personal experiences with regard to Leadership Development for Women across Europe, and beyond. The focus will be on the impact of the EU Gender Equality Law 2026 and opportunities to reduce the Gender Pay Gap.

We are particularly pleased to have Ms Viviane Reding with us, former Vice-President of the European Commission and architect of the Women on Boards directive of the European Parliament. A true believer in citizen's rights to protect their data and universal access to telecommunications, she also instigated the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and introduced legislation to cap mobile roaming rates, thus leading to one European Telecommunications Market.



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EU Gender Equality Law 2026

After a decade of deliberation, the "Women on Board" directive was finally approved in November 2022. It mandates that companies across Europe must achieve a representation of 40% for the underrepresented gender among non-executive directors or 33% among all directors by 2026.

Since its foundation, the European Union has been a staunch advocate for gender equality and a more socially conscious Europe. In 2020, the European Parliament passed a resolution to evaluate the advancements in women's rights and an annual European Gender Equality Week was introduced.

We will have perspectives of both men and women from different continents and regions, including our partner from the US, to provide diversified insights into developments in countries further afield.

- How have individual European countries implemented policies in the spirit of this directive over the past decade?
- What lessons can be learned from non-European countries aimed at promoting gender equity and equality?

Gender Pay Gap

The European Parliament insisted on the implementation of specific actions aimed at reducing the gender pay gap, which refers to the disparity in earnings between men and women. In the European Union, this pay gap averaged 13% in 2020, and in some European countries was as much as 20%. In December 2022, negotiators from the Parliament and EU countries agreed that EU companies will be required to disclose information that makes it easier to compare salaries for those working for the same employer, helping to expose gender pay gaps.

Despite this, in October 2023 a Dutch newspaper published an article mentioning an increase of the gender pay gap in the Netherlands in the last two years. It attributed this development to a lack of personnel and men being more assertive and demonstrating stronger salary negotiation skills, as well as companies failing to disclose this information to female job applicants and candidates.

- How can a better pay alignment be ensured?
- What can be done to promote women or make them feel more comfortable in taking on a leadership role?

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The afternoon will be moderated by Kerstin Born-Sirkel, Sr Associate European Policy Center

14.00 -14.30 Registration

14.30 Welcome by Vera Klaus & Christine Heeger - Phoenix Executive

14.35 Introductory presentation

Representation Matters. Women in corporate and in political Leadership

Silvana Koch-Mehrin – President and Founder of Women Political Leaders (WPL)

14.50 Opening/keynote speech

Viviane Reding - Former Vice-President of the European Commission

15.15 Panel Discussion 1

EU Gender Equality Law 2026 –EU Member States approaches to achieve balanced participation of women and men in decision-making.

Karen Hoehn – Managing Director Bonstar Consulting

Dirk Anton van Mulligen – Founder Better Leadership

Corinna Hoerst – Chief Operating Officer Atlas Corps

Anja Hattingh – Executive Leader and former SVP Deutsche Telekom

16.00 Coffee break

*Book sales: Jessica Lutz - **We-Mind vs. Me-Mind: A New Vision for Leadership and Life.***

16.30 Presentation

Consequences of quotas on boards from different parts of the world and how to make these policies more effective from an academic point of view.

Esha Mendiratta – Professor Vlerick Business School

16.50 Panel Discussion 2

Gender Pay Gap – Definition, causes and actions to close the gap.

Emma Woodford – Chief Operating Officer European Policy Center

Raphaël Torfs – Owner C2GROW

Alexis Capelle – Global Human Resources Director Desmet

Elissa Sangster – CEO Forté Foundation

17.30 Presentation

Millions of Women are Board Ready. Is business culture ready?"

Marc de Guiran – Co-founder Laugh, Think, Play

17.45 Testimonials of GBRW task force & Closing Remarks

Gender Equality: Where do we go from here?

Marina Niforos – Affiliate Professor HEC Paris Business School

Founding member of GBRW

18.00 Reception & live music by "Teppaz Road"

