



## Gender Balance – Argument Booklet

### How to respond to the skeptics

#### **Quotas mean lesser equality**

The directive proposes that there be gender-neutral criteria for board positions, favoring no gender in particular. It is important that the criteria on which a candidate is chosen, as well as the selection process, are transparent. That way, it is easy to see if companies have indeed chosen the best candidate and if they have given all candidates a fair chance. The best candidate should always be selected. The Commission proposes that only in the case that there are two equally qualified candidates, that the one with the underrepresented sex is chosen.

#### **It is none of the EU's business**

It is the EU's business. Some member states have taken action. Many have not or not done enough. We need gender equality in all 27 member states. Since the 50s measures have been taken, but none of them have worked so far. That is why we need to finally have a directive at the EU level.

#### **Women are not qualified**

Sixty per cent of all university graduates are women, so it seems unlikely that qualified women cannot be found. Also the example of Norway, where gender balance quotas exist, shows that qualified women exist.

#### **Women are not interested, they do not want it**

Many will argue that women prefer to sit at home with the children and do not want to work more than part-time. Data shows that if there is a legal and practical basis for women and men to balance work and private life better, women often choose to work more. The data suggests that, more often than not, it is the circumstances that drive women to choose to stay at home, not personal preference.

### **Having women on board does not mean improvement**

To have one woman on board does not help to break masculist culture. Once women account for over 30 per cent of the board, their presence is then seen as normal and this creates a culture with more gender equality. This is why legislation with a specific target is needed.

### **Self regulation works better than government involvement**

The goals for gender equality in higher positions were set in 1957. It seems that all tools have been used, but none of them have led to gender balance. Legislation is thus necessary. Even with the best self-regulatory measures, it often seems that the number of women gets stuck at 25 per cent on boards. In order to reach real gender balance, legislation is needed.

### **Legislation leads to golden skirts**

Norway shows that this is indeed true the first six months, but afterwards there are more women. In any case, there are always more golden trousers.

### **Quotas are an infringement of the principle of equality**

The current situation is an unofficial quota for the overrepresented sex (men). Quotas for women therefore represent the fundamental right to be represented in the decision-making.