Press release | 14.10.2013

Boardroom quota for women

Step forward for binding EU rules as MEPs vote to address exclusion of women from management

A legislative proposal aimed at introducing binding legislation to increase the share of women on company boards was today endorsed by MEPs in a joint vote by the two responsible parliamentary committees: women's rights and legal affairs. Commenting after the vote, Green equality spokesperson **Marije Cornelissen** said:

"This vote moves us one step closer to realising equality in company boardrooms. MEPs have recognised that self-regulation will not lead to significant improvements any time soon. With this legislation, companies will have to adjust their recruitment, selection and appointment procedures to increase female representation on their boards to at least 40% if they are below this level.

"Unfortunately, MEPs missed an opportunity to strengthen the Commission's proposal, notably ensuring the obligations apply to executive boards and not just advisory boards. This will limit the reach and effectiveness of the quota in tackling the exclusion of women from senior management.

"In spite of all the lip service, women are still grossly under-represented on the boards of large European companies, with the share of women in the highest decision-making bodies of the largest publically-listed companies at a mere 16.6%. This is not because of a shortage of qualified women, with 60% of university graduates in the EU being women, but because the voluntary approach has unfortunately failed. Binding obligations for companies have already proven successful in addressing this equality gap in European countries and it is time we built on this success by introducing binding EU-level legislation. Ultimately we should be aiming for parity in boardrooms but at least we are now moving in the right direction."

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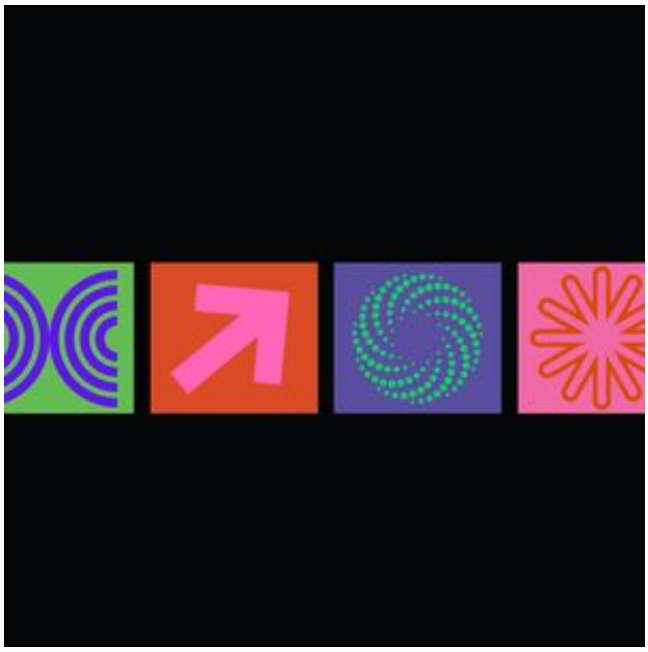
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