



Press Release

Rising numbers of women in leadership roles in European industry, but more momentum needed

BRUSSELS, 6 MARCH 2020 – The European Round Table for Industry (ERT) today publishes updated figures for voluntary targets for women in leadership roles, set by 35 of its Member companies, together with a report on their progress towards achieving these targets.

The report documents a growing corporate culture at a wide range of European multinationals which aims to promote inclusion and gender equality, by enhancing the career advancement of women to leadership positions.

Compared to a chosen baseline year - 2012, in most cases - the average share of women in leadership roles has increased by 4.8 percentage points, which is faster than the rise in their share in the companies' total workforce (i.e. by 1.4 percentage points). This suggests that companies are making progress in helping women break through the “glass ceiling”, despite the still relatively low average share of women in both the workforce (31.4%) and in leadership positions (25.4%).

Paulo Azevedo, Chair of the ERT Committee on Jobs, Skills & Impact and Chairman of Sonae commented *“Diverse workforces and teams bring complementarity of perspectives, balance and dynamism to the table, all essential for long-term sustainable company growth and development. In a context of current and foreseen talent and skill scarcity, European industry needs everyone’s talent and gender equality is an essential part of that.”*

He added *“Progress to date is below our ambition. Increasing the number of women in the talent pipeline, in the management of operations and in executive roles remains a key challenge and merits continuous and reinforced attention. This is about futureproofing European business and society.”*

ERT Voluntary Targets Summary Table:

Average evolution in percentage points (pp)
(Status / Chosen baseline)

Share of women in total workforce	Home Country	+2.5 pp
	Worldwide	+1.4 pp
Share of women in leadership positions	Home Country	+4.9 pp
	Worldwide	+4.8 pp
Proportion considered leadership positions in the total workforce	Home Country	+2.3 pp
	Worldwide	+0.9 pp

Since 2013, ERT has published annual updates on its Member companies' targets and figures on the share of women in their businesses. This initiative aims to show Member companies' commitment to enhancing gender equality by setting targets, tracking progress and exchanging good practice.

Download the reports here:

- **Voluntary Targets and Figures:** <https://ert.eu/voluntarytargets2020>

European business leaders' personal commitment to inclusion and diversity has been further articulated in an ERT [pledge](#) signed by more than 50 CEOs and Chairs, Members of ERT in November 2018. Find out more about #EmbraceDifference, the ERT campaign for diversity and inclusion in the workplace, here: <https://embracedifference.ert.eu/>

Note to Editors:

The recently released **ERT Competitiveness and Industry Benchmarking Report** highlights how companies in Western Europe have more women in Board rooms and the proportion of board seats held by women has increased sharply. However, a wide gap remains between the proportion of women and men in European board rooms. Download the report here: <https://ert.eu/documents/benchmarking-report-2019/>

CONTACT: Robert O'Meara, Communications Director
Tel + 32 2 543 10 51 - E-mail: robert.omeara@ert.eu
www.ert.eu - Twitter: [@ert_eu](https://twitter.com/ert_eu)

The **European Round Table for Industry** (ERT) is a forum that brings together around 55 Chief Executives and Chairs of leading multinational companies of European parentage, covering a wide range of industrial and technological sectors. ERT strives for a strong, open and competitive Europe, with the EU and its Single Market as a driver for inclusive growth and sustainable prosperity. Companies of ERT Members have combined revenues exceeding €2 trillion, providing direct jobs to around 5 million people worldwide - of which half are in Europe - and sustaining millions of indirect jobs. They invest more than €60 billion annually in R&D, largely in Europe.

www.ert.eu