



Bu proje Avrupa Birliđi ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti tarafından finanse edilmektedir  
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## SECOND REPORT October 2015

### FINDINGS OF THE FIRST REPORT, TRAINING PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK, FINDINGS OF THE ROUND TABLE AND FEEDBACK GATHERED FROM THE SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE

The second report of the project *“Women in Management. Strengthening the mutual cooperation of Italian and Turkish CSOs in the field of occupational equal opportunities and women's access to managerial positions” (Yönetimde Kadın) TR2010/0135.01-01/329* was firstly provided in form of draft to the participants in the European Round table (Istanbul, October 20, 2015), as a tool for promoting a fruitful debate. It was then drafted in this final version, including the findings of Round Table and the feedback gathered through the provision of the second questionnaire. The meeting was the final activity of the project and represented a platform of debate among Italian and Turkish CSOs interested in promoting better equal opportunities at the workplace and greater chances for women in accessing to managerial positions (both in terms of company boards and executive roles). The European Round Table was addressed to European, Italian and Turkish actors of the Civil Society Organizations and institutional bodies, concerning models, policies and proposals to be supported in the Turkish context.



The strengthening of long-term relationships among Italian and Turkish CSOs represented the main objective of the EuropeAid-funded project. Thanks to the comparison with the Italian best practices and the reference to the European model, the debate among CSOs aimed at stimulating a better understanding of new strategies and policies to be promoted at policy-making level. The establishment of a stronger network among Turkish CSOs on the topic of equal opportunities at the workplace and women's access to managerial positions was conceived as the first step towards the promotion of these issues to national and local policy-makers, in order to strengthening Civil Society Dialogue.

This short report is composed of four brief sections: the first section focuses on the analysis of the first report, provided to participants during the training course held in Istanbul in June 2015; the second section refers to the feedback gathered from the training course participants (representatives from both Turkish private companies and trade unions); the third one includes the findings of the European Round Table and the fourth section refers to the feedback gathered from participants through the provision of the second questionnaire.



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## 1. FINDINGS OF THE FIRST REPORT

The first report, drafted by SindNova, Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini and external experts, with the support of project partners KAGIDER and AIDDA for the selection of Turkish and Italian private enterprises, addressed the topic of women in managerial roles and the policies implemented by Italian and Turkish private companies

The exchange of knowledge on the EU legislation and country policies was underlined by the first section of the report with a specific focus on the presence of women in company boards and EU initiatives related to women's access to managerial positions. The report underlines the positive impact that the presence of women in company boards has on company performances, also in terms of organizational excellence, decision-making and economic results. The country cases covered Norway, Belgium, France, Italy, Latvia and a brief focus on Turkey. Binding legislation, self-regulatory measures and lack of any official instrument underline different approaches used at national level among European Union countries. Following the European Commission proposed Directive, binding quotas for non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges represent a significant input in improving women's access to managerial positions. However, the fact that the proposed legislation does not apply to small and medium-sized enterprises and does not include sanctions remains a great challenge.

While in 2003, when the first numbers were released, women made up only 9% of the members of the boards of public listed companies, in October 2014 the EU average was 20%: a sign of progress, certainly, but well below gender parity on boards, and also below the 40% that the EU would like to reach by 2020.

The evolution varies from country to country, some registering a successful improvement (France + 20% since October 2010, Italy + 19.6% in the same period, Belgium +11.9%), while others unfortunately registering spectacular drops (Romania -10.4%, Czech Republic -8.7%).



Figure 1 - Summary EC intervention; representation of women and men on boards of large listed companies (October 2003 – October 2014)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> EC, Gender balance on corporate boards: Europe is cracking the glass ceiling, available at [[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/140303\\_factsheet\\_wob\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/140303_factsheet_wob_en.pdf)].



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Moreover, considering the difficulties faced by women in accessing to managerial positions, the first section offers an overview of company policies implemented at European level for improving gender balance and equal opportunities at the workplace. It positively supports the idea of strengthening the following topics:

- setting up gender diversity indicators;
- the development of “Diversity & Inclusion” (D&I) policies;
- scouting and promoting female talent;
- building awareness among men;
- work-life balance;
- adaptation of the human resource management process;
- implementing recruitment and selection processes;
- coaching, network building, mentoring and sponsoring.

The second section refers to company policies and it is structured on the findings gathered from the interviews carried out with Italian and Turkish private companies. Based on an interview format, company representatives from HR departments were asked to provide further information about their company policies related to specific fields of analysis:

- Working hours;
- Corporate services, allowances and benefits;
- Facilitation services, career support and training;
- Recruitment policies.

Moreover, the second section investigated the relevance that unions can play in the dialogue with company management concerning the signature of the so-called “Transnational Framework Agreements” (TFAs), strongly supported by the European Commission. Differently from the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) that offer a self-regulatory commitment, the TFAs, targeting multinational companies, involve trade unions as a guarantee of monitoring and effectiveness of the agreements.

The second section of the report offers the feedback gained from trade union representatives concerning women’s experiences in accessing to trade union executive positions and their role within these positions. The main barriers refer to the social and cultural context, such as industry sectors where the presence of men is predominant. Patriarchal structures are reflected also by the lack of family-oriented policies aimed at facilitating women in their career path at the workplace.

As a final remark, the report underlines the fact that improving gender equality and women’s access to managerial positions requires a synergy of policies, including institutional, legislative, or voluntary-based agreements. In this regard, company culture represents the framework in which women-oriented policies are implemented. Hostile company environments



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can undermine the promotion of women to managerial roles, while positive company policies can potentially counterbalance the lack of legislation on the topic.

## 2. TRAINING PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

On June 2015, Turkish employees from private companies and Turkish trade union representatives attended in Istanbul five days of training on specific modules focused on equal opportunities and access of women to managerial roles. The comparison among European, Italian and Turkish experiences was useful for sharing best practices and models, as well as for underlying the critical gaps in the promotion of women's access to managerial positions.

Through the provision of a questionnaire, participants were asked to provide their feedback on the usefulness of the contents of the training course, in terms of increasing their knowledge on the topics covered by the training course. They affirmed that the rich diversity of the contents was useful in order to gain a broader perspective on the topic (both from a trade union and company management perspective) and a deeper awareness.

Concerning their perception of gender equality at the workplace in Turkey, they recognized its importance and underlined the need to encourage it through different tools such as company policies, legislation and government decisions. Within the private company sector, the HR department was identified as the relevant actor in charge of putting the subject in the agenda of company managers.

On a general basis, the current situation in Turkey regarding equal opportunities was considered as undermined by Turkish traditional society and culture, including religion. For those women who decided to do household works as caregivers, the lack of social services often obliged them to quit their jobs due to the challenges posed in terms of work-life balance. Moreover, participants identified the following elements as obstacles to gender equal opportunities at the workplace:

- Overrepresentation of men at the workplace;
- The decision of women to quit their jobs due to the pressure imposed by men regarding marriage and motherhood;
- Men's and women's attitudes and behaviors reinforcing subordinated positions of women;
- Companies' priorities for maximizing their profits, that undermine women's role;
- Lack of awareness on equal opportunities at the workplace;
- Lack of gender-based education;
- Presence of more occupational opportunities targeted to men, due to their physical skills.



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Big enterprises and trade unions provide gender based trainings and seminars, addressing specific policies for enhancing women's career development. Among the best practices implemented by companies, participants underlined the following ones:

- Flexible working models
- Programs which support technical development of women;
- Targets for numbers of women in managerial positions;
- Formation of Women's Day organizations with a focus on development.

When asked whether company policies can be considered an effective tool for changing company culture and mindset, participants affirmed that their application should be reinforced and become compulsory. However, it was underlined the inadequacy of referring just to company initiatives and the necessity of improving the legislation on the topic. In this regard, legislative policies are considered as a precondition for the definition of company policies.

Moreover, the role played by union through collective bargaining agreements is considered important, in order to increase the number of women managers.

With reference to the Corporate Social Responsibility Codes, participants stated that in order to be effective, they should be required by the Board of Directors and become part of the company culture.

### 3. FINDINGS OF THE ROUND TABLE

The Round table, held in Istanbul the 20th of October 2015, was conceived as a platform for debating the role played by CSOs in the promotion of equal opportunities and women's access to managerial positions.

Among the participants, there were representatives from Turkish and Italian NGOs, private companies' management, trade unions, research and academic institutes, as well as European representatives from the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Trade Union Confederation.

The Round Table was organized around two main panels:

1. First panel: how to address equal opportunities at the workplace and women's access to managerial positions. Italian and Turkish trade unions, NGOs and private companies. Models, policies and proposals.

2. Second panel: the European perspective on equal opportunities and women's access to managerial positions. Best practices, legislation and models.

Supported by the presence of a panel moderator, the participants in the round table were asked to provide their opinions and to share their experiences on the topic.

A NGOs' representative pointed out the efforts made by Turkish non-governmental organizations in monitoring the harmonization process according to the EU parameters. A lot of expectations



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have been put into the dialogue with the government for the definition of equal opportunity policies. Among the results achieved, it was mentioned the amendment of the Civil Code with the articles on gender equality and the amendment in 2008 of the Constitution with the introduction of the statement mentioned in the article 10 in which it is affirmed that “Men and women have equal rights. The State shall have the obligation to ensure that this equality exists in practice”. Moreover, the NGO representative pointed out the legislation aimed at protecting women against violence and the fact that Turkish laws should be strengthened with the introduction of positive discrimination. However, despite the goals achieved, full gender equality at the workplace and in the labour market is still considered not feasible. According to the current statistics, the participation of women in the labor force is around 30%. Despite an increase compared to the previous years, the Global Gender Gap Report 2014<sup>2</sup> affirms that with reference to female labour force participation, Turkey is ranked 128th, out of 142 countries overall.

Turkish NGOs are essential in this regard for monitoring the activities carried out by the State, especially for what concerns the target of 41% of women in the labour force. A legal framework exists but this does not mean that it is enforced or implemented effectively.

One of the reasons that impede full participation of women in the labour force is the fact that women are responsible for home care services and that there is a lack of child care services at the workplace. The lack of obligatory, cost-free and accessible kindergartens and breastfeeding rooms at the workplace is due to the high threshold required for opening such structures. It is well known that around 96% of Turkish companies has less than 30 workers.

Turkish NGOs operating in the field of equal opportunities asked for a “National Employment Strategy” and a “Dynamic Population Structure Conservation Program” to be implemented and monitored. Women’s organizations, trade unions and professional organizations should be considered as the principal stakeholders of this process. Moreover, the government has to be responsible for the preschool education, and further public institutions must be established for education and care assistance. Sufficient financing has to be provided in this regard. The NGO representative also stated that the Labor Code’s scope has to be extended. The presence of women in decision making bodies is still poor and there are no gender quotas in favor of women due to the decisions of political parties.

Turkish women operating in CSOs asked for the application of temporary measures in areas where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged: the allocation of additional resources where needed in order to accelerate the advancement of women. Nowadays, all these measures are left to the discretion of third parties. Few or no steps to develop gender equality and women’s access to managerial positions have been taken. Legislation is considered a fundamental element.

<sup>2</sup> World Economic Forum, The Global Gender Gap Report 2014  
<http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2014/economies/#economy=TUR>



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According to the NGO representative, the Turkish government should align domestic laws with international conventions, EU legislation and standards including LGBT policies. The Turkish government should develop and adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and enforce special measures.

During the preparation of the G20 meetings held in Istanbul, the number of female CEOs was relevant but only due to the fact that the women represented were part of the families owning the companies. The patriarchal situation does not make it easy to change the current situation. Positive discrimination is essential but it must be based on the legislation.

From the perspective of the Turkish trade union representatives who took part in the round table, it was affirmed that the number of unionized women is low and the number of female trade union leaders is poor. However, women request to be more active in the trade union environment. According to a trade union representative, the role in the family impedes the access of women to career paths, causing the difficulties in accessing to trade union decision making bodies and therefore leaving the male predominance in this context. Women are underrepresented at the workplace.

The role played by women in the trade union movement has always been considered as invisible, because men have always managed trade union strategies and kept trade unions under their control. The care of children and elderly relatives, in addition to house chores, overloads women and impede them to take part in trade union meetings. Turkish trade unions asked for more positive discriminations in favor of women. As already pointed out, the need of childcare kindergartens is considered as a priority in order to support women in their access to the labour market. But the situation is critical both for public and private kindergartens. Also the opening hours of the kindergartens are important because they must be tailored according to the work schedules. Trade unions try to carry out their activities in cooperation with NGOs.

In order to enhance the role of women and improve the communication flow, specific Women Committees have been established, and thanks to which trainings and equal opportunities activities have been implemented. Especially training courses carried out at the workplaces have been considered an important goal, because they were carried out in cooperation with employers. From a trade union perspective, trade union structures are completely managed by men. Women committees are therefore important in order to facilitate meetings on a regular basis.

A representative from a women managers Association underlined the role played by the Association for the adoption of the Italian legislation on the presence of women in the boards of listed companies (Law 120/2011). In her view, it is important to focus both on the legislation as



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well as on the actions carried out by associations and private citizens, in order to achieve a substantial generational turnover.

The participants in the round table also affirmed that women committees are very important but they can be effective only if they can count of sufficient economic resources for functioning. In Italy there are Guarantee Committees that are not based on clear mandate or resources. The Committees should not be based only on voluntary work but also on the role played by people selected according to their competences in the field.

Employers' representatives underlined that the burden of improving equal opportunities should not be covered only by private companies. Gender quotas were not considered effective from all the participants in the round table. A representative from the employers side affirmed that quotas are not necessary because women should be selected according to their merits and skills. As underlined by many country cases, such as Pakistan, gender quotas have not positively changed women's roles. Concerning the participation of women in company boards, companies could gain value from women's presence in terms of productivity and economic profits, regardless of quotas. The presence of women would have positive effect also on other aspects of daily life such as the decrease of corruption. However, in the EU institutions, the situation seems still unbalanced, considering the lack of women in managerial and representative roles.

The G20 meetings represented an important opportunity for NGOs, academicians, opinion leaders to promote the topic of gender equality and women's access to managerial opportunities. Moreover, the Turkish presidency of the G20 was crucial for Turkish CSOs because it gave them the chance to prepare a strategic document focused on women's role both in C20 and W20 engagement groups. W20 was established during Turkey's G20 Presidency. More in detail, the W20 meetings were structured on the presence of women in the economic system, by promoting a stronger involvement of women in the labor market and at the workplace. The main priorities expressed by the participants in the W20 meetings were the economic, social and political support, education, presence of women in the labor market, women's access to finance and equal opportunities in the recruitment process. The topic of gender quotas was addressed during the meetings, and W20 participants agreed in proposing a target of 20% for women on Boards to be reached by 2020. Specific yearly monitoring strategies should be implemented, thanks to the use of specific scorecards. Other relevant strategic priorities were represented by the support given to women owned enterprises, and better working conditions aimed at supporting women workers.

Participants in the round table also underlined that gender quotas should not be considered solely as "pink quotas", but they should refer to a balanced presence of men and women.



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#### 4. FEEDBACK GATHERED FROM THE SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE

The participants of the round table were asked to fill in a form for the evaluation at the end of the meeting. Several questions were asked such as suggestions for improving the effectiveness of this type of meeting, and questions concerning the role played by CSOs.

According to the results gathered through the questionnaire, participants affirmed that the European Round Table was an interesting platform for promoting the debate on equal opportunities at the workplace and women's access to managerial positions in Turkey. They also proposed some suggestions for improving the effectiveness of this type of meeting:

- More debate on the topic of gender equality instead of equal opportunities;
- The participation of representatives from different women organizations;
- The drafting of common recommendations;
- The increase in the duration of the round table, in order to have more fruitful debates among Turkish and European organizations.

Concerning the main elements in the Turkish society that undermine gender equal opportunities at the workplace and women's access to managerial positions, the most remarkable elements specified by the participants were the patriarchal social structure; the existing perspectives of government; gender roles; cultural structure; trade union culture that encourages male participation and discourages female participation; negative stereotypes that hinder women's participation; the economic crisis; the lack of female self confidence in leadership positions; the presence of the glass ceiling.

All the participants affirmed that the dialogue among Turkish CSOs should be reinforced and new networks among CSOs should be put in place with the aim of supporting a common strategy towards the improvement of equal opportunities at the workplace and the access of women to managerial positions.

In reply to the question whether Turkish CSOs could play an active role in promoting the adoption of binding legislation concerning the presence of women in Company Boards, most of the participants stated that CSOs can play an active role in this regard. However, the main obstacles are represented by the lack of collaboration, common targets and activities among CSO's; the social structure; the lack of joint actions among trade unions and CSOs based on a joint platform; conservative structure of government and the existing political views.



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Participants were asked whether company policies could be an effective tool for changing company culture and mind-set, and potentially counterbalance the lack of legislation on the topic of equal opportunities at the workplace and women's access to managerial positions. Some of them disagreed with this statement because in their perspective public policies, government regulations and applications are more binding. Their scales and sanctions cannot be compared with the laws. In their opinion, company policies are important at micro level but more powerful sanctions are required for the macro level, and companies can engage in activities without legislation. Workplace policies are considered as not sufficient. Most of the companies do not have HR policies aimed at empowering their female employees. Additionally, government does not take action on this issue, actual legislation does not provide equal opportunities for women.

In the Turkish society, the main element that undermines gender equal opportunities is the local culture itself. Also several participants affirmed that CSO's cannot play a significant role in the monitoring of HR policies implemented at company level. They recommended the following strategies:

- Monitoring by public institutions;
- Companies should impose quotas for women and these processes should be supported;
- CSOs should be strengthened;
- Collaboration and network among CSOs should be established;
- There might be more collaboration with the companies;
- Communication about HR policies and their activities should be improved;
- CSOs should be more active in media (including social media).

With reference to the role played by trade unions in strengthening equal opportunities at the workplace and women's access to managerial positions in Turkey, participants affirmed that trade unions should be effective in governmental policies; they should determine women members' positions, increase their access to managerial positions, and their role in the Collective Bargaining Agreement processes; they should encourage women workers and support their rights; they should set common goals with employers and follow up these goals; they should organise common activities with companies.



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Moreover, all the participants think that the dialogue among company management and trade unions should be strengthened in order to negotiate collective bargaining agreements on the topics of equal opportunities at the workplace and access of women to managerial positions.

Also trade union representatives agreed that binding policies are needed. The involvement of women and men at all levels of Collective Bargaining Agreement as well as in workers' representation structure is a basic value of trade union movement and it offers new perspectives to be integrated into the bargaining agenda, taking into account the experiences, knowledge and skills of female trade unionists.

In reply to the question about which role might be expected from trade unions on equal opportunities at the workplace and women's access to managerial positions in Turkey, participants underlined the importance of addressing the image and culture of unions; to build trade union organizations so that workers' activism and involvement in decision making roles exist at all levels; to ensure that trade union organizations promote gender diversity through their own internal HR; to provide gender disaggregated data; to make arguments for gender balance as core trade union priority; to introduce statutory rule changes and gender balance; to prepare women for decision-making and leadership roles.

To a more general extent, participants were required to provide some suggestions towards new strategies to be implemented for the promotion of women's access to managerial positions and equal opportunities at the workplace in Turkey. The main elements gathered were the following ones:

- Gender mainstreaming in all of the spheres;
- Common struggle of men and women in all areas;
- Relieving women from care responsibility through care services;
- Women in management should be models for encouraging other women;
- Statement of gender equality in regulations and application of sanctions against discriminations;
- Quotas for women should be imposed for each company management level;
- CSOs should take active roles, create and follow up specific goals;
- Human resources policies should be improved;
- Internal company activities for supporting careers of women (like leadership and training programs) should be organised;
- Dialogue with HR departments of companies and implementation of common projects.



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