

Equality still far from reach for women in management

Management is still mostly a man's game. The limited presence of women in management roles in European workplaces, despite years of gender equality policy, illustrates the magnitude of the challenge in achieving gender equality at work and highlights the need for more concerted effort and comprehensive long-term strategies to drive change.

Eurofound's new policy brief, the first of its kind, focuses on women who have overcome the barriers and advanced into management. It shows that, despite rising participation in the labour force, women's careers remain concentrated in specific jobs and economic sectors, and their career mobility and advancement through the ranks into management remain limited.

On average, women still make up just 36% of all managers in Europe, and despite some progress in recent years, men outnumber women in management positions in most sectors. There is also significant variation in the share of women managers in different parts of the EU. In Lithuania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Latvia over 40% of managers are women – more than 5% above the EU average – whereas in Greece and the Czech Republic less than 30% of managers are women.

The women that make it into management are more likely to be in non-supervising management roles where they manage operational responsibilities but not staff. Among those who do supervise staff, women are more likely than men to be managing other women, younger workers and workers on non-standard contracts. Women are also more likely to be in precarious leadership positions that have a higher risk of failure – either because they are appointed to lead an organisation or team that is in crisis or because they are not given the resources and support needed for success.

Female workers often have less physical risk in their working environment than male colleagues, but for those that make it into management this advantage shrinks, with female managers reporting having to lift and carry heavy loads on the job almost to the same extent as men. Women also generally report more negative spill overs between work and family life than men and this holds true for managers as well, with female managers reporting higher tensions between work and non-working life.

When it comes to addressing unequal representation of women in management, and some of the specific pitfalls of management experienced by women, the policy brief recommends addressing management cultures that disincentivise women, promoting positive role models for young women wishing to pursue a career in management, promoting flexible working arrangements that can help to reconcile the imbalance between work and family life, and further progressing European-level commitments to strengthen gender equality at work.

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ECOFIN: Progress achieved on VAT, including agreement on equal VAT treatment for e-books

The European Commission has welcomed the progress made today by Member States on much-needed improvements to how Value Added Tax (VAT) works in the EU, and which should help to shut down fraud and evasion in the sector. Amongst others, ministers agreed to allow Member States to align the VAT rates they set for e-publications, currently taxed at the standard rate in most Member States, with the more favourable regime currently in force for traditional printed publications. They also agreed on new rules to exchange more information and boost cooperation on criminal VAT fraud between national tax authorities and law enforcement authorities, as well as measures to cut VAT compliance burdens for companies. *“New figures released by the Commission just weeks ago show that Member States are still losing €150 billion in VAT each year. Today’s agreements are another step towards addressing that problem and changing VAT rules for the better. Now is the time to seize the momentum and agree on solutions for the more fundamental problems facing the system today.”* said Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs following the agreements. The measures agreed today should individually help in the day-to-day running of an EU VAT system which is in urgent need of further far-reaching reform. The reboot would improve and modernise the system for governments and businesses alike, making the system more robust and simpler to use for companies. More information is available in a [press release](#) issued today and in the [published speech](#) of Vice-President **Dombrovskis** at the press conference following today’s meeting. *(For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)*

L’UE investit pour des connexions internet nouvelle génération en Sicile et un meilleur transport ferroviaire en Slovaquie

La Commission vient d’adopter deux projets cofinancés par les fonds de la politique de Cohésion en Italie et en Slovaquie, pour un montant total de près de 190 millions d’euros. Tout d’abord, le Fonds européen de développement régional (FEDER) investit près de 55 millions d’euros pour établir les infrastructures nécessaires au déploiement du haut débit axé sur le réseau de nouvelle génération (NGN) dans les zones blanches de la Sicile. 142 municipalités sont concernées par ce projet, soit plus de 2,3 millions d’habitants. *“Ce n’est pas seulement le haut débit qui arrivera dans les foyers siciliens, c’est aussi de nouvelles opportunités économiques, des services publics plus accessibles et une ouverture nouvelle sur le monde,”* a commenté la Commissaire à la politique régionale Corina **Crețu**. Ce projet vise à atteindre une couverture quasi complète de la région en haut débit (> 30 Mbits/s). Il permettra également la connexion à très haut débit (> 100 Mbits/s) pour certains utilisateurs de la région aux besoins de connectivité

importants, comme les petites et moyennes entreprises. Ce projet financé par l'UE s'inscrit dans le plan national de l'Italie pour le déploiement du haut débit axé sur le réseau de nouvelle génération. Il devrait être achevé en 2020. Sur la période 2014-2020, près de 2 milliards d'euros de fond européens sont investis dans les infrastructures et services numériques en Italie. Ensuite, le Fonds de Cohésion investit 134,5 millions d'euros pour améliorer le transport ferroviaire dans la région de Žilina, au Nord-Ouest de la Slovaquie. Cela permettra l'achat de 25 véhicules modernes et confortables pour le réseau régional. La Commissaire **Crețu** a commenté: *"C'est près de 2 millions de passagers qui devraient bénéficier de cet investissement, qui rendra le transport ferroviaire plus attractif dans ces régions et promouvra donc une mobilité plus propre en Slovaquie."* Ce projet vient compléter les investissements de l'UE dans la modernisation des infrastructures ferroviaires dans la région au cours de la période budgétaire précédente. (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

EU-funded scientist among Nobel Prize winners in Physics

The Nobel Prize in Physics for 2018 has been awarded with one half to Arthur **Ashkin** and the other half jointly to Gérard **Mourou** and Donna **Strickland** for their ground-breaking work in laser physics. In 1985 Gérard **Mourou** and Donna **Strickland** have paved the way towards the shortest and most intense laser pulses ever created by mankind. Such high-intensity lasers are today used for both industrial and medical applications, including the millions of annual corrective eye surgeries. Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: *"I warmly congratulate Arthur Ashkin, Gérard Mourou and Donna Strickland on their achievement. I am proud to say that EU funding has supported one of this year's Nobel Prize laureates to help perfect laser physics. Their discoveries will help us all to stay at the cutting edge of scientific frontiers."* Gérard **Mourou** has later in his career received EU funding under the previous research and innovation programme. The pioneer of ultrafast lasers was supported from 2012 to 2015 with €500,000 for the ambitious international project ICAN (International Coherent Amplification Network) that unifies laser and high-energy physics. The goal of the project was the development of a new laser system composed of thousands of fibre lasers. Such a system can transform nuclear waste, which today can 'survive' for thousands of years, into materials with much shorter live spans, ultimately alleviating the problem of nuclear waste management. Mr **Mourou** was also the initiator and coordinator of the [Extreme Light Infrastructure \(ELI\)](#), which is part of the [European ESFRI Roadmap](#). More information is available in a [news item](#) and the [press release](#) of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Mirna Talko – Tel.: +32 229 87278)

Le Parlement européen approuve les règles révisées pour les médias audiovisuels à travers l'Europe

La session plénière du Parlement européen a approuvé aujourd'hui la directive révisée sur les services de médias audiovisuels (AVMSD). Faisant partie de la

[stratégie du marché unique numérique](#), les nouvelles règles ouvrent la voie à un environnement réglementaire plus équitable pour l'ensemble du secteur audiovisuel, y compris les services à la demande et les plateformes de partage de vidéos. Ces règles soutiennent les productions audiovisuelles européennes et garantissent l'indépendance des régulateurs audiovisuels, renforcent la protection des mineurs et consolident la lutte contre les discours de haine dans tout contenu audiovisuel. La nouvelle directive promeut les œuvres européennes en garantissant une part de 30% d'œuvres européennes dans les catalogues à la demande. Elle maintient également le principe du pays d'origine en tant que pierre angulaire de la réglementation audiovisuelle de l'UE, en précisant plus clairement les règles des États membres applicables dans chaque situation. Le vice-président Andrus **Ansip**, responsable du marché unique numérique, et la commissaire Mariya **Gabriel**, chargée de l'économie et de la société numériques, ont salué le vote positif : *«L'Europe a besoin de règles audiovisuelles adaptées à l'évolution du paysage audiovisuel. Tous les opérateurs feront désormais partie d'un environnement réglementaire plus équitable, dans lequel les Européens, en particulier les enfants, seront mieux protégés contre les discours de haine et les contenus préjudiciables, et où les productions européennes pourront s'épanouir »*. Le Conseil de l'UE adoptera la directive dans les prochaines semaines, avant son entrée en vigueur d'ici à la fin de l'année. Une fois les nouvelles règles officiellement adoptées, les États membres disposeront de 21 mois pour les transposer dans leur législation nationale. Plus d'informations sont disponibles est ce [mémo](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tél .: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tél .: +32 229 50698)

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of sole control over Generali Lebensversicherung by Cinven

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control over Generali Lebensversicherung Aktiengesellschaft ("Generali Lebensversicherung") of Germany, by Cinven of the UK. Generali Lebensversicherung is an insurance company licensed for and primarily active in the provision of life insurance products. Cinven is a private equity business engaged in the provision of investment management and investment advisory services. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given the minor horizontal overlaps and the lack of vertical relationships between the companies' activities. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.9081](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of control over a joint venture by Alphabet (Verily) and ResMed

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of control over a newly created joint venture in the US, by Verily Life Sciences ("Verily"), belonging to Alphabet, and ResMed, all of the US. The joint venture will study the health and financial impacts of undiagnosed and untreated sleep apnea and other breathing related sleep

disorders, and develop software solutions that enable health care providers to more efficiently identify, diagnose, treat and manage individuals with these types of disorders. Verily, formerly Google Life Sciences, is a research organisation. ResMedis engaged in the development, manufacturing, distribution and marketing of medical devices and cloud-based software applications that diagnose, treat and manage respiratory disorders and other chronic diseases. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns as the joint venture will be active in the US and has no foreseen activities in the European Economic Area. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition website](#), in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8991](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of KLX by Boeing

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of KLX Inc. by The Boeing Company, both of the US. KLX is a distributor of aerospace parts and chemicals, including in particular aerospace fasteners. Boeing is active in the aircraft, defence and space industries and related services, and is also a supplier of security systems and provider of aftermarket services for the aerospace market, including the distribution of aerospace parts and chemicals. Both companies are active across the European Economic Area, as well as worldwide. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the companies' activities in the distribution of aerospace parts are, to a large extent, complementary, and they face the constraint of several alternative competitors. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition website](#), in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8985](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

European Commission study reveals problems with advertising and marketing practices on social media

The European Commission today published a study that identifies unfair and manipulative advertising and marketing practices on social media. Evidence collected shows that consumers are often not aware about the way social media providers target them for marketing purposes. For example, one third of the participants surveyed were unaware of the commercial nature of native advertising, i.e. paid ads in an online publication which resemble the publication's editorial content. Conversely, consumers usually are able to quickly recognise a typical magazine advertisement. Likewise, two thirds of consumers are misled by a common practice on Facebook, which consists of showing "likes" from their friends next to other products than those that they had actually "liked". Practices forbidden under the EU Unfair Commercial Practices Blacklist such as false offers and false prize winning competitions were also found to be commonplace. Věra Jourová, European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, said: "This study brings evidence for

concerns we already had about social media advertising. Some of the techniques used are unfair and manipulative and we would simply not allow them in the offline world. I will bring this case to the attention of national consumer authorities who will see whether coordinated EU level action is necessary. Offline or online, companies must not unfairly trick consumers. They need to fully respect EU consumer rules.” Last week, Commissioner Jourová and national consumer authorities met with Airbnb and Facebook to take stock of the progress made on [two ongoing consumer enforcement actions](#). Today’s study can be found [online here](#). (For more information Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

Eurostat: Les prix à la production industrielle en hausse de 0,3% tant dans la zone euro que dans l’UE28 (Août 2018 comparé à juillet 2018)

En août 2018 par rapport à juillet 2018, les prix à la production industrielle ont augmenté de 0,3% tant dans la zone euro que dans l’UE28, selon les estimations d’Eurostat, l’office statistique de l’Union européenne. En juillet 2018, les prix avaient augmenté de 0,7% dans la zone euro et de 0,5% dans l’UE28. En août 2018 par rapport à août 2017, les prix à la production industrielle ont augmenté de 4,2% dans la zone euro et de 4,7% dans l’UE28. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d’informations: Lucía Caudet – Tél.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tél.: +32 229 55040; Mirna Talko – Tél.: +32 229 87278)

[Upcoming events](#) of the European Commission (ex-Top News)

[ESMA updates its Q&As on MiFID II and MiFIR commodity derivatives topics](#)

These Q&As provide clarification on issues related to the MiFID II/MiFIR regime for commodity derivatives, including on position limits, position reporting and ancillary activity.

New or revised answers are provided on the following topics:

- On the ancillary activity test Q&A numbers 3 and 10 were updated, and Q&A 13 was deleted.
- On position limits and reporting, two new Q&As clarify the treatment of legacy positions on OTFs and specifies further the types of firms that have to submit weekly position reports.

The purpose of these Q&As is to promote common supervisory approaches and practices in the application of MiFID II and MiFIR. They provide responses to questions raised by market participants in relation to the practical

application of the level 1 and level 2 provisions relating to commodity derivative issues.

ESMA will continue to develop these Q&As in the coming months and will review and update them where required.

Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the situation in Nicaragua

Five months after the outbreak of social protests in Nicaragua, the situation in the country remains of serious concern to the European Union and its Member States. Basic principles of democracy, accountability and rule of law continue to be severely undermined by the repressive environment, which creates a climate of fear and mistrust. The national dialogue with the aim of reaching political solutions to these problems is now stalled due to lack of engagement by the authorities.

The lack of official cooperation with the international missions investigating human rights abuses prevents full accountability and justice to be served and encourages impunity. To this end and in line with previous statements, the European Union and its Member States urge the government of Nicaragua to allow the return of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) and enable it to continue its mission in the country as well as to provide the necessary support requested by the Follow-Up Mechanism on Nicaragua (MESENI) and the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI) to carry out their mandate.

We call on the government of Nicaragua to stop the disproportionate use of force against demonstrators, halt arrests based on laws which criminalise peaceful protest, free peaceful demonstrators and re-establish the full respect of due process for all detainees. We also call on the government of Nicaragua to act on the findings and recommendations by the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR) and UNOHCHR, in particular to ensure full accountability for perpetrators of human rights abuses and the disarming and disbanding of armed groups.

The European Union and its Member States continue to support an inclusive dialogue on justice and democracy as the way out of the current crisis and reiterate their willingness to contribute to this process as a means to deliver on the legitimate democratic aspirations of the Nicaraguan people. To this end we renew our call on the government of Nicaragua to resume the national dialogue and we stand ready to further support this process.

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Remarks by Vice-President Dombrovskis at the ECOFIN press conference

Thank you Hartwig.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the Austrian Presidency on a very productive ECOFIN meeting today. As the Minister said, we reached agreement on several files improving the functioning of the Value Added Tax (VAT) system in the European Union.

The Ministers today agreed on new rules to improve the day-to-day functioning of the current VAT system until the overall VAT reform strategy has been implemented. These so-called 'quick fixes' would reduce compliance costs and increase legal certainty for businesses. Once the European Parliament has published its report on this file, the new rules should be enforceable by 2020.

The Ministers also adopted a new measure to allow EU countries to align the VAT rates they set for e-publications. Today's decision will ensure an equal tax treatment of paper and digital products – which I think is an important signal we send for the development of the digital single market and, more broadly speaking, for a digital mind-set.

Ministers also formally adopted rules to exchange more information and boost cooperation on criminal VAT fraud between national tax authorities and law enforcement authorities. Without this information exchange, our fight against cross-border VAT fraud cannot be efficient.

And finally, ministers today formally adopted reinforced rules to control illicit cash flows in and out of the EU, an important measure to fight against the financing of terrorism. Today's formal adoption tightens cash controls on people entering or leaving the EU with €10,000 or more in cash. Authorities will be empowered to act on amounts lower than the declaration threshold of €10,000 where there are suspicions of criminal activity. Customs controls will also be extended to cash sent, for example, in postal parcels and to precious commodities such as gold. So we are now calling on the European Parliament to ratify these rules.

The measures adopted today follow the VAT Action Plan which we presented in April 2016 and the Commission's proposals for a deep reform of the VAT system presented in October 2017.

Our common goal should be for EU countries to agree on a much broader reform to cut down on VAT fraud in the EU system, as proposed last year by the

Commission. So that we can seriously address problems with VAT collection and VAT fraud.

The cost of this fraud is estimated at around €150 billion in VAT revenues lost every year. So clearly there is still work that needs to be done.

And finally, today we presented our recent proposals aimed at making sure that anti-money laundering rules are enforced effectively across EU countries.

National supervisors will remain in charge. However, we propose to empower the European Banking Authority to ensure an effective information exchange among different supervisors and, if need be, request investigations into alleged breaches of the rules.

The European Banking Authority should, for example, be able to require national supervisors to investigate alleged breaches of individual banks and consider – as a last resort – taking decisions or sanctions. Europe needs to become better at detecting breaches and pinning them down early on.

And I would say that today's first discussion in ECOFIN showed that there is a broad support for his initiative, so I hope we will be able to make practical progress on this.

Thank you.