

**Question for written answer E-010412/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Gender pay gap for women in corporate decision-making positions

Although the gender pay gap has been shrinking overall, it now stands at around 16.2 % in the European Union as a whole. This gap persists despite the fact that women make up 60 % of university graduates in the EU and are often more highly qualified than their male counterparts. Moreover, the gap persists at all levels, with an average pay gap of 10 % between men and women at the start of the career and 20 % at the end of their career. Furthermore, women find it more difficult to take up posts with more 'attractive' salaries, such as management positions in companies, not least because of the difficulty in reconciling family life with professional life, leading to a career break. However, according to a recent US report¹, of the 2 500 highest-paid executives of listed companies, only 198 were women, and the gender pay gap in executive posts was around 18 %. The situation in the United States also applies in the European Union². Women taking up these decision-making positions see the biggest pay gap: 25 % or more compared with their male counterparts. Taking on more senior positions therefore leads to a bigger gender pay gap.

A pay gap that widens as women's careers progress is a serious disincentive for women to reach management positions.

1. What steps have been taken specifically with regard to the gender pay gap for women in decision-making positions in the EU, with a view to taking targeted action in response? Does the Commission have any figures on this issue for each Member State?
2. While the Commission has taken action to promote the balanced representation of men and women on the boards of listed companies, pay gaps risk deterring women and hampering the results of EU initiatives. What initiatives does the Commission plan to take in this regard?

¹ <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-08-13/best-paid-women-in-s-p-500-settle-for-less-with-18-gender-gap.html>

² Working Paper 'The gender pay gap for women in decision-making positions' European Commission's Network to Promote Women in Decision-making in Politics and the Economy, July 2011