

**Question for oral answer O-000136/2015  
to the Council**

Rule 128

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on behalf of the S&D Group

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on behalf of the PPE Group

**Subject:** Gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges (the proposed 'women-on-boards directive')

In order to improve the persistently low representation of women on company boards listed on stock exchanges within the EU, in 2012 the Commission proposed a directive aimed at introducing an objective of at least 40 % of non-executive director board members being of the underrepresented gender. The proposed directive includes a flexible objective for executive directors, which would be set by the companies themselves. The legal basis for the proposal is Article 157(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which is aimed at ensuring the application of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation, including positive action.

The proposal had its first reading by Parliament, as co-legislator, in November 2013. The first-reading position adopted by Parliament is a very balanced text which was supported by the main political forces.

Since the Commission's draft was published, the representation of women on company boards has increased from 16.6 % at the time of publication to 18.6 % in 2014. Legislative pressure seems to be a strong factor which is helping to change existing structures.

Up to now, the Council has not formulated a common position or approached Parliament in order to discuss the proposal officially.

The current Luxembourg Presidency of the Council clearly expressed itself in favour of the proposed directive when it presented its agenda at the meeting of Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality of 14 July 2015.

Now it is up to the Council and the Member States to reach an agreement and to finalise the proposal during one of the forthcoming presidencies.

What is the state of play in the Council regarding the abovementioned proposal? What are the main problematic elements preventing the Member States from finding a common position?

What is the Luxembourg Presidency doing to promote the fast adoption of a common position, and how does it plan to include the co-legislator in its endeavours?

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