

**Question for written answer E-015635/2015
to the Council**

Rule 130

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Subject: Follow-up Directive Women on Board

In 2012 the Commission proposed a directive aiming to improve the gender balance within non-executive boards of listed companies. The legal basis for the proposal is Article 157(3) TFEU, aimed at ensuring the application of the principle of equal opportunities in employment and occupation issues, including by means of positive action.

The proposed directive included effective measures such as establishing an objective of at least 40 % of women on non-executive boards by 2020. Member States would be obliged to lay down appropriate and dissuasive sanctions for companies in breach of the directive. Qualification and merit would remain the key criteria for jobs on non-executive boards.

Having met approval in Parliament, with a clear majority of 459 votes in favour, and earned support in other reports, such as the one from the Committee of the Regions, the proposal for directive was blocked in the Council.

Meanwhile, women continued to be heavily underrepresented (18.6 % in 2014).

Considering these facts, Article 157(3) TFEU and the outcome of EPSCO's last meeting on 7 December 2015, the Council is asked to answer the following:

1. Which Member States are blocking the adoption of a common Council position? Which Member States have changed their positions since the last Council meeting?
2. Does it consider that the proposed Directive can be adopted in 2016, in compliance with the Commission's Work Programme 2016? If not, what are the main elements hindering adoption?