

EU Commissioner
Vera Jourová

Ministry for Children,
Education and Gender
Equality,
The Minister

Frederiksholms Kanal 21
1220 Copenhagen K
Denmark
+45 3392 5000
Fax 3392 5547
E-mail uvm@uvm.dk

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Dear Commissioner Vera Jourová,

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal for a directive on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures (COM (2012) 614).

Many countries have already taken steps to regulate in this area – adjustments that take into account the different ways of running companies in the individual countries.

Denmark has introduced legislation requiring the approximately 1,200 largest companies to set up target figures for the underrepresented sex in the companies' board, and to develop policies for promoting gender equality in the other management levels. The Danish legislation is based on the principles of the two previous voluntary initiatives for gender balance in company boards, Operation Chain Action and Charter for More Women in management.

The first reports on the Danish model show that about 73 per cent of companies - that do not have an equal gender balance – have set target figures, and that the average target figure is 25.5 per cent. This should be seen in relation to that the gender balance of the companies' boards where average of women representation was 15 percent at the time of reporting and 85 percent men. We expect the second report in a couple of months.

If we only look at the largest listed companies the average of women on boards increased from 8 to 11 per cent from 2013 to 2014. This indicates that the regulatory framework which respects the individual companies' managerial rights can contribute to the companies' focus on promoting gender equality.

Although Denmark welcomes initiatives for improvements in the area of gender equality, Denmark does not believe that recruitment for boards is a matter that should be regulated by the EU. This position is fully supported by the Danish Parliament. We therefore regret to inform you that Denmark will not be able to support the adoption of this proposal.

Kind regards,



Ellen Trane Norby

Minister for Children, Education and Gender Equality