



### Creating strong GEMA NETWORK for further improvements in the field of gender balance

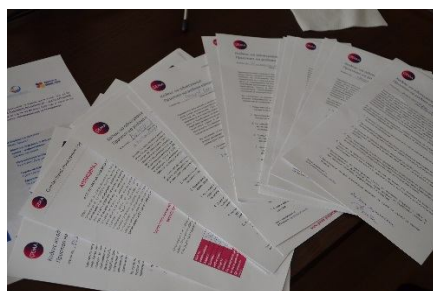


Equality between men and women is one of the founding principles and values of the European Union. Yet, women continue to be under-represented in boards and top management teams of companies. This gender imbalance in the highest decision-making teams in companies is not only a social but also an economic concern. Data

we collected in this project show that **improving gender balance** in boards and top management teams improves board dynamics and **leads to better governance, strengthens stakeholder relations and CSR, and ultimately reflects in improved company performance.** Promoting gender balance is therefore as much a matter for competitiveness of companies as it is for social justice.

During **GEMA project** we have developed **knowledge transfer activities** that equip organisations to set up or adopt effective policies, strategies and services for gender-balanced boards. Thus, you are **warmly invited** to become part of **GEMA network** to facilitate collaboration, be a joined-up voice in this field and assist in the further sharing, development and enhancement of knowledge and expertise. You are welcome to subscribe to the **FREE Voluntary code of conduct** to secure a gender-equal approach to your management team and on boards and use the **GEMA label** on your webpage/social profiles, signalling to other companies that you are a gender-equality friendly company. The project has been **financed by the EU** thus **your membership is FREE of charge.**

For more information, please visit: [www.gema-project.eu](http://www.gema-project.eu)



HRVATSKA UDRUGA POSLODAVACA  
CROATIAN EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION



BIZNIS KONFEDERACIJA NA MAKEDONIJA



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## GEMA Country Reports

### GEMA Slovenia



In Slovenia, the GEMA campaign on gender balance in decision-making was being implemented between December 2015 and August 2016, namely among **companies' and social partners' representatives** on national and international levels, as well as among other relevant stakeholders. Participants from more than **40 companies** and more than **10 social partner organisations** received GEMA materials and were acquainted with GEMA research and key findings on how and why gender balance in economic decision-making can add value to

organisation. Meetings were held with representatives of different **national and international institutions** (such as Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Science, The Managers' Association of Slovenia, University of Wolverhampton Brussels, BUSINESSEUROPE, European Parliament) and information on project findings exchanged.

During the meetings, workshops and presentations among different stakeholders the following were **identified**:

- ✓ according to companies' experiences **gender diverse boards are more efficient**, because the needs and expectations of both male and female stakeholders in the organisation are taken into account and thus more comprehensive decisions are taken;
- ✓ while some companies are aware of the importance of advantages of gender balanced boards and top management teams, the **majority still lacks awareness** on this topic or faces the challenge on how to implement adequate measures in practice;
- ✓ activities for **awareness raising will affect** corporate governance and appointment to the board and will encourage women to apply for management positions;
- ✓ the creation and use of **social networks, mentorship and recruitment methods** and processes (focused on talent management) is needed as well.

### GEMA Bulgaria

Bulgarian Industrial Association (BIA) held in the period from December 2015 till July 2016 **over 40 meetings** with **representatives of the social partners and companies** on the issues of gender equality and the participation of women in management teams. The results of the research conducted within the GEMA project, the legal framework, the real situation regarding the issue in Bulgaria, and the Code of Conduct were presented and discussed during the meetings. The results of the meetings can be summarized as follows:

- ✓ representatives of the trade unions are mainly **concerned about the unequal pay for women** in Bulgaria, the higher **risk of unemployment**, the difficulty of **reconciling work and private and family life**;
- ✓ with representatives of the employers' branch organizations, as well as in meetings with companies an opinion affirmed that **women in Bulgaria are more educated nowadays**. However, it is harder for them to find a job. The biggest challenge for women is to move from the middle to the higher management level and this mostly happens only if no male candidate is available.



As a result of the meetings and cooperation established within the project, BIA together with representatives of women's associations are drafting a **training programme** to be possibly included in the **new curricula** of the **New Bulgarian University for women leaders** to boost the career development of Bulgarian women.

The Ministry of Economy also invited BIA to participate in an **inter-institutional group** to develop a **strategy for promoting women entrepreneurship** in Bulgaria. In addition to BIA, the group includes representatives from different ministries and gender organizations.

## GEMA Croatia



The Croatian Employers' Association represents more than 6,000 companies and has made considerable efforts to encourage companies to hire more women in management positions, executive directors, members or presidents of management boards, as they are still significantly underrepresented in comparison to men. **GEMA project** involved more than **40 companies through individual project meetings, 2 of the strongest trade unions** and **many participants in workshops with social partners**. With regard to the project's Code of Conduct, it has been noted that most of companies already have gender policies embedded in their HR or other internal policies. **Social partners** have **implemented the Code of Conduct**, which is a very positive step to promote it further within the companies.

Although women in Croatia represent the majority of the total population, they remain in a minority with regard to their impact in economic, political and social life, therefore:

- ✓ it is of **great interest and importance** to **encourage women** to better integrate into the national economy and encourage their growth and development. Croatian initiatives should help reduce the unemployment rate of women by encouraging self-employment and growth of employment in the segment of women entrepreneurship;



- ✓ **increased involvement** of women in economic terms will **contribute to strengthening** the national economy and the long-term impact on the change in social values and society as a whole;
- ✓ any initiative for **joint work, networking and sharing of experiences** that will provide women with the opportunity to gain additional knowledge and skills for success in business and entrepreneurship, is considered to be of **national interest**.

### GEMA Macedonia

In Macedonia, the GEMA project brought **successful results beyond what was expected**. The era of talking loudly and prominently about the problems with the gender balance in management has started and the topic is becoming very popular lately. For generations, the corporate world has largely adopted a male definition of leadership. Women can be just as ambitious and career-driven as men, but they tend to have a different perspective on life. Thus they need to have an opportunity to say: *“I am a woman, a mother, and a wife. And I am an executive director.”*



To succeed in **developing a more diverse and gender-balanced workforce**, corporate leaders must be prepared to stand up to:

- ✓ their **executive committees, driving commitment and ensuring accountability** even if the initial perceptions are negative;
- ✓ they have to do what they believe is right not just to improve an organization's performance but to create a

better world.

As a conclusion of all these activities, we can proudly say that the **movement for gender balance in decision-making positions** in Macedonia has **started**. We have made **historical changes**, now we can speak openly about the need for a change and more involvement of women on decision-making positions. We need to keep actively working in this field, in order to increase our visibility and gather better results, and change the mentality about the capacity of women to deal with big challenges.