

Women in Science and Technology in the Private Sector

A Wake-up Call from CEOs

This position paper is a joint, public commitment of Chief Executive Officers of companies based in Europe, who are eager to enlarge the reservoir of talent in Europe¹. We want to see, in the first instance, twice as many women graduating in science and engineering. At the same time, we want to ensure that their skills are used by industry to the best advantage. We sense an urgency to tackle this problem, but we also need to make a commitment to longer-term strategies.

Our companies have different cultures and operate in a diverse range of industries and countries. We are also at different stages in developing policies to recruit, retain and promote women effectively and efficiently. However, we all want women to play a much more important role in decision-making in industrial R&D and we are committed to working together to put this issue on the agenda publicly.

We are ready to take the following actions:

- *Taking a Stand*: Each CEO and their top management will demonstrate their company's approach at public events.
- *Sponsoring a Role Model*: Each company will fund a major programme, such as endowing a Chair at a university, to create a strategic partnership with the education sector to encourage women in science and engineering.
- *Promoting Change*: Each company will be a catalyst for change: internally, by promoting awareness, initiating or improving specific company measures, defining strategic goals and monitoring progress; and externally, through co-operation with other companies and universities.
- *Making Use of Existing Programmes*: Each company will take full advantage of existing national and European programmes designed to support women in industrial research.²
- *Analysing the Business Case*: A panel of experts (sociologists, economists, scientists, etc) will review existing research, analyse the results and assess the business case today to strengthen public communication.

We should also like to trigger changes in the perceptions of women in high school and university, and throughout their careers. These changes are designed to encourage them to take up and pursue careers that will lead to the strengthening of the science and engineering workforce. This will require a contribution from a range of partners in society - primary and secondary education, government and public and private sector industry. We hope that our actions will produce a snowball effect on these other sectors of society.

We are working together as a group to make an impact. The challenge is an exciting one; addressing it successfully will enrich and diversify our corporate cultures. We are committed to sustained action on all of these initiatives. We are aware that these actions will demand investment; yet to do nothing would cost much more.

We welcome other companies that are joining us in this venture and we look forward to working together on this long and interesting journey.

¹ Rubsamen-Waigmann, H. *et. al.* (2003) *Women in industrial research: A wake up call for European industry* Luxembourg : Office for Official Publications for the European Communities

² Example: Marie Curie Actions in the Sixth Framework Programme of the European Commission (<http://europa.eu.int/mariecurie-actions>)