

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3325/09
by Erika Mann (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Achieving more women's representation in management, the workplace, research and political offices

In light of International Women's Day on March 8, 2009 and the upcoming European elections many discussions are being held on the equality of women, especially in the workplace. In a recently released sociodemographic analysis by the Public Opinion Monitoring Unit of the Commission, it was found that on average in EU27, the employment rate for women was 14% lower than that for men. Despite initiatives like the Equal Pay information campaign launched on 3 March 2009, the pay gap has been widening and is on average 17% in the EU.

Women represent on average 25% of members of national parliaments and 31% in the European Parliament. Only 11% of top management posts in large companies are held by women. Equal representation of women in the institutions (throughout all positions) must be ensured to achieve a truly democratic European Union. Currently, political parties are still acting as gate-keepers and need to nominate more female candidates to get a larger percentage of women elected.

Women account for 52% of the EU population. It is unacceptable that this is not reflected in the number of women in high-level key political positions.

1. What is the Commission doing in the run-up to the European elections and the reconstitution of the Commission to promote equal representation in the EU institutions, the Member States' governments and national and European diplomatic services?
2. Can the Commission provide recent data that gives a complete overview of the number of women in high positions within the institutional (including national and European diplomatic services) and administrative structures of the European Union?