

**A unique survey of SMEs in Belgium and in Europe  
maps their governance and board requirements  
ACCELERATE! A top-ranked project run by the Brussels-based Sofia Foundation**

**Accelerate! An EU-funded projects promoting women to boards of SMEs**

The top-ranked EU-funded project ACCELERATE! complements existing EU action on gender-balanced boards by targeting specifically SMEs. The starting point: a highly innovative needs analysis questionnaire to map SME governance and board requirements, and their specific needs. Next: dedicated tools developed for use by organisations wishing to accelerate women's access to board positions in SMEs.

Between June and November 2015, the process culminates in speed-dating events to connect SMEs with qualified women. They are held in major European cities including Brussels, Lisbon, Milan and Warsaw. Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Romania are among the countries surveyed.

**Gender-balanced SME boards: A timely action**

The action of ACCELERATE! is well-timed. Proposed EU legislation on gender equality in Europe's boardrooms targets specifically the EU's listed companies. By 2020, listed corporate companies will actively seek gender balance on their boards. This will no doubt generate a spill-over effect on SMEs.

**Survey key figures presented at Accelerate! conference in September in Brussels**

The consolidated results of the ACCELERATE! survey will be presented in Brussels in September during a large-scale conference. The Accelerate! kick-off event will be held in Warsaw on June 17<sup>th</sup>.

**About the Sofia Foundation :**

ACCELERATE! is run by the Sofia Foundation (Societal Organisation for Feminine Impact and Achievement) a Brussels-based non-profit researching and accelerating women's participation in economic, political and social governance across Europe both engaging accomplished women leaders on boards of organisations and promoting women as experts in the media.

The Sofia Foundation collaborates with the Global Board Ready Initiative supported by the EU, and is a partner of the Female Board Pool established by the University of St. Gallen in 2005.

[www.sofiafoundation.org](http://www.sofiafoundation.org)

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