

## Comment on the potential use of the paper

### **"Empowering Women Academics in a Global Society: the Glass Ceiling (by C.B.)"**

After having read this paper I made a quick search on the actuality of the term „glass ceiling“ and, interestingly or surprisingly, I found it mentioned twice in the recently, 2008, published report on

**„Women and men in decision-making 2007 - Analysis of the situation and trends“.**  
(ISBN 978-92-79-08135-4 / DOI 10.2767/46415)

Citation 1 (foreword):

„... women are still under-represented in all spheres of power in most Member States and in the EU Institutions.

This remains a major challenge for our democracies. If we believe in the values of democracy based on the representation and participation of citizens, then we cannot leave half of the population outside the structures of power. Gender equality is also an asset for business. Our economies must reap the potential of all human talent at our disposal, if we are to be competitive in the face of globalisation. **We must break the glass ceiling once and for all.**"

Citation 2 (page 38):

„The informal barriers that prevent women from reaching top level positions – the so-called **“glass ceiling”** – are multifaceted: ...“

The report deals with facts on decision-making as well as with monitoring tools and instruments to improve women’s participation in decision-making covering three different domains at European and national level (political, public and juridical, social and economic) .

**Unfortunately**, the situation of men and women in decision-making top-positions at universities, where the glass ceiling has remained thick, is missing. There is just a marginal notion of the fact that

„in 2004, 85% of full professors were men and just 15% women . (European Commission, Report on equality between men and women – 2007 COM (2007)49.)“

To my knowledge there does not exist any actual European-wide survey or report on the extent of the glass ceiling at academic institutions, nor any investigation of the multifaceted reasons for the under-representation of women in power and decision-making in this area. If potential tools and instruments were implemented to improve the representation of women in power and decision-making in that domain, their effectiveness never had been monitored.

I feel there is a widely undiscovered area in academic institutions, which urgently needs development, if our societies are to be competitive in the face of globalisation.

Since long time I have got the impression of a lack of important information on gender inequality and under-representation of women in power and decision-making at universities and the like.

I think it's finally the time and a

### **legitimate task and project of the University Women of Europe**

- 1.) initiating a national and European-wide investigation on the actual representation of women in power and decision-making positions at academic institutions (always in comparison to men);
- 2.) assumed an under-representation of women, investigating on its multifaceted reasons;
- 3.) monitoring the effectiveness of potential tools and instruments having been implemented to improve the representation of women in power and decision-making at academic institutions;
- 4.) finally, as a result, developing proposals for policies to improve the representation of women in power and decision-making at academic institutions.

### **How to do?**

**The attached paper by CB can be considered a pilote project on national level, on the results of which the design of a European-wide project, principally, can be developed.**

### **Open questions e.g. (list being incomplete)**

Methodology : Survey, quantitative and/or qualitative (Case studies?)  
Groups and Numbers needed for investigation  
Selection of included countries

Ressources needed : personal  
Scientific leader  
Project management (Bremen Info?)  
Project assistants  
Statisticians, etc.

Ressources needed: financial  
EU ?

Time frame : 2 years from the beginning ?