

Women at Business School

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Call for more women on boards extends to US

By Charlotte Clarke

US business schools are to be given the opportunity to get involved with an initiative spearheaded by the EU Commissioner of Justice, that aims to increase the number of women on company boards.

In a call to action organised by the [Forté Foundation](#), a consortium of leading organisations that supports women in business, 33 US business schools will be invited to supply a list of at least five women they deem to be board ready. Schools include: [Babson College](#), [Columbia Business School](#), the [University of Virginia Darden School of Business](#), [Harvard Business School](#), [NYU Stern](#) and [MIT Sloan School of Management](#).



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Forté will also seek self-nominations from their network of 60,000 professional women and partner with US-based organisations, such as corporate governance consultant, [Intrabond Capital](#), to highlight the issue.

Elissa Sangster, executive director of Forté believes the need for action is imperative. "The percentage of women on US corporate boards is around 11-12 per cent and has remained flat for a decade, so obviously there's a lot of room for improvement," she says.

Ultimately, she hopes to provide access and education on the various entry points for women MBAs interested in serving on a corporate board: "We'll work with our partner organisations to identify women earlier in the pipeline, give them access to workshops and training that will assist them in navigating the path to corporate directorship, provide corporate director role models who can speak to their personal journey and finally provide the names of these women to (companies) that are searching for diverse board candidates for companies."

Forté became aware of the EU initiative when its business school members in Europe - [HEC Paris](#) and [Insead](#) in France, [IE Business School](#) in Spain, [London Business School](#) and [SDA Bocconi School of Management](#) in Italy - signed up to a [call to action](#) launched in September 2011. Keen to get involved, the organisation requested a meeting with Commissioner Viviane Reding. They will unveil the US initiative at an annual sponsor meeting today, which will

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include a panel discussion titled 'Corporate Boards: Where are the Women?'

At the **last count**, there were 7,000 vetted women on the EU list, including European business school alumnae, faculty and board members. Forté will publish a separate US-based list at the end of this year, which Ms Sangster is confident will be a lengthy one: "We expect a warm response from our schools and our board members are very enthusiastic."

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