



Women are under-represented in many aspects of decision-making in the economy. This is especially evident at the level of top management teams and boards where, on average, only **16% of public listed companies' boards in the EU are women**. This figure disguises substantial national variations in women in leadership positions, with especially emerging economies lagging behind developed ones. Further, it is also skewed by top companies' recent successes in improving the gender balance on their boards. In practice, the majority of companies, especially in the Balkan region, **still have no or few women in leadership positions**. This is not only a social concern but also a serious matter for businesses and their competitiveness since research has shown how gender diversity on boards can positively impact company performance.

With financial support by the **PROGRESS Programme** of the European Union, the two-year project **Gender-Equal Management Approach – GEMA** started in September 2014, in which the employers' organizations from Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Bulgaria, Eurocoop Institute and the University of Wolverhampton, are trying to answer the question of **how and why gender balance in decision-making positions brings added value to the company**.

### GEMA is important for three reasons:

- 1. Increasing knowledge and awareness about the impacts of gender balance in boards and top management teams (TMTs)** can directly affect decision-making at the highest level, in addition to creating role models for women in other parts of the organisational decision-making structures.
- 2. GEMA also makes economic sense and sustains development in the long run.** Thus, increased knowledge on how and why gender balance can add value to organisations is an indispensable complement to societal and individual concerns for rights and justice.
- 3. Especially in these current times of economic hardship, it is crucial for companies and the European economies to increase their competitiveness by utilising the full potential of their available resources.** That inevitably includes the competences women and men bring to decision-making.



HRVATSKA UDRUGA POSLODAVACA  
CROATIAN EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION



БИЗНЕС КОНФЕДЕРАЦИЈА НА МАКЕДОНИЈА



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## GEMA Objectives, Results and Outputs

**Main purpose** of the GEMA project is to **generate knowledge and raise awareness of gender balance in teams at the apex of organisation, to be implemented through research and awareness campaigns and dissemination** (workshops, conferences, newsletters, newspaper reports, scientific articles and Women's day 2016 campaign).

**Target groups** are social partners from Balkan countries and EU, EU states' economic and social councils, companies in Balkan region and general public.

**The main project result** and output will be **raised awareness among the target groups and knowledge transferred in project activities**. In addition to the campaigns targeted at social partners, companies and the general public in participating countries, the project materials will be disseminated to EU social partners via other employers' associations and to the general public through a Women's Day 2016 campaign.

## 6 Partners from 5 Countries

The project is based on a creative partnership between employer associations in the 4 South East Europe countries and an academic institution in the UK (University of Wolverhampton) which allows for a synergy of competences and experiences. The core involvement of four employer associations from Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Bulgaria presents **a unique opportunity to translate research into practice**.



Kick-off meeting of project partners,  
Ljubljana, October 2014

Partnership of

- CEA – Croatian Employers' Association,
- BCM – Business Confederation of Macedonia,
- BIA – Bulgarian Industrial Association,
- UoW – University of Wolverhampton from United Kingdom and
- EuroCoop – Institute for European Research and Development from Slovenia

is co-ordinated by the Association of Employers of Slovenia (ZDS).