

Press release, 7 March 2018

#equalitymeansbusiness

Over 60 Swiss CEOs send a clear signal

Swiss businesses are working towards achieving gender equality. With each year, there is progress, while not in big leaps, every step counts. Progress is also attributed to the steady efforts of the Advance initiative and impressive examples from some of the world's largest companies: Sandoz Switzerland, for instance, employs 66% women overall and 50% in management. At Biogen Switzerland a quarter of all its managers are female. Gender parity also prevails at IKEA Switzerland. At tomorrow's International Women's Day, more than 60 CEOs and opinion leaders have publicly committed to specific courses of action, and are supported by 15 business networks.

Advance is a leading Swiss organisation working to actively increase the number of women in management. Companies that take efforts to systematically integrate talented women can only benefit. The business case is clear: such companies are more innovative, productive, and profitable. The topic of gender, however, is not the only focus. The discussion surrounding work-family balance, for example, also requires having the men on board as family has long since ceased to be a women-only domain. True gender parity means an equal distribution of responsibilities in all spheres of life.

Positive pressure in the business world

The number of female members on executive and supervisory boards is increasing each year in Switzerland – albeit slowly, as is reflected in the Schilling Report 2018, published yesterday. 'This is why our initiative is so important,' says Alkistis Petropaki. The General Manager at Advance sees positive progress: 'We notice that culture, mentalities, and work structures are moving in the right direction every year. Our strong growth is also worth noting: our business network already has over 75 member companies. They are leading by example, which results in positive pressure on the whole business world.'

The solution: structural changes, voluntary "quotas" and targeted advancement programs

Many leading organisations take their responsibility seriously: they have recognized the advantages of mixed teams and are not waiting for "quotas" to be imposed. They take action voluntarily and announce them publicly on 8 March – with various approaches:

Novartis across divisions with **Sandoz** in particular focus on flexibility at work for both genders. Company support in managing the demands and priorities of career and personal life, enabling every associate to be their best self and realize their full potential, e.g. through the possibility for more time off and part-time positions - without being career killers - as well as the implementation of systematic job postings with 80-100% flexibility and job-share option, serve as strong talent levers. **EY** also offers flexible work models and an inclusive, open culture. The goal is to reach at least 25% female partners by 2020. For 2018, **Citi** developed transparency metrics for the hiring, advancement and retention of female employees on all levels. And **IKEA Switzerland** announces the launch of a programme aimed at facilitating the return to work after maternity leave. Mothers on maternity can be kept up to date on workplace developments during their absence and can participate in optional trainings during extended maternity leave. A three day onboarding upon their return additionally facilitates their re-entry to professional work life.

Voluntary, self-imposed “quotas” are another avenue: **Biogen** wants to increase the number of female managers to at least 40% by 2020. At the Luterbach site, 35% of all employees across all functions are female. **Accenture** has set out to reach a ratio of at least 30:70 in leadership positions by 2021; **Deloitte** is aiming for 30% by 2020 and **Adecco** 35%. **PwC** is working towards achieving at least 20% female partners within the same timeframe. Some companies have already met their intermediate targets: in 2017, more than 40% of board hires by **Egon Zehnder** were female; at **McKinsey**, almost 50% of recruits over the last two years are women.

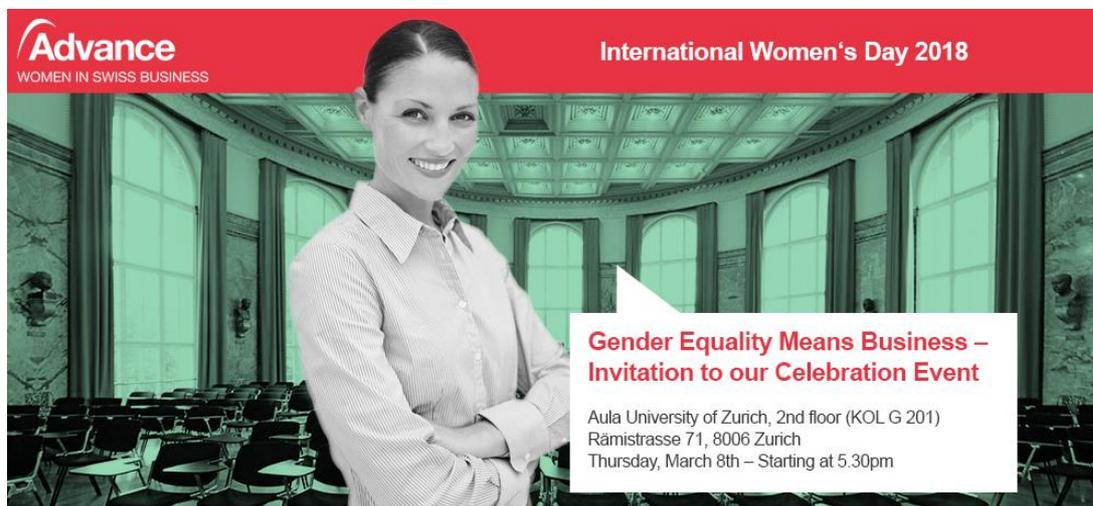
What is also remarkable is that more and more industrial and technology companies are becoming involved in this public initiative. In addition to **ABB** and **Siemens** already participating in 2017, this year, **Schneider Electric**, **Bühler** and **Hilti** also decided to join the Advance initiative. Targeted empowerment programmes, such as mentoring, sponsorship, competence development and the sharing of best practices for an equality-promoting working environment, provide important benchmarks. Advance is offering its member companies just such a comprehensive program. **All statements are attached and can be found on www.equality-means-business.ch from 8 March.**

CEO panel as part of International Women’s Day tomorrow

In cooperation with the University of Zurich, Advance will be hosting an event for around 300 invitees tomorrow evening. **Kristine Braden**, President of Advance and Citi Country Officer for Switzerland, Monaco and Liechtenstein will open the event on "Gender Equality Means Business". The banker will present figures supporting the economic argument for the systematic integration of women. This will be followed by the CEO panel, in which **Simona Scarpaleggia** (IKEA Switzerland), **Nicole Burth** (The Adecco Group Switzerland) and **Simon Owen** (Deloitte Switzerland) will discuss the latest developments and drivers in their companies and share their outlooks on the way forward. The keynote will be given by **Allyson Zimmermann**, Executive Director of Catalyst Europe and recognized authority on the topic of inclusive leadership and diversity as a business imperative.

Media contact for further information, interview requests and image material

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Advance
WOMEN IN SWISS BUSINESS

International Women's Day 2018

**Gender Equality Means Business –
Invitation to our Celebration Event**

Aula University of Zurich, 2nd floor (KOL G 201)
Rämistrasse 71, 8006 Zurich
Thursday, March 8th – Starting at 5.30pm

About Advance

Advance is the leading association of Swiss companies that actively advocates for more women in management. Gender-diverse teams make better decisions and are more innovative, productive, and profitable. Gender equality is a competitive advantage – a win-win for men and women alike. Advance supports member companies by offering an integrated programme that specifically promotes gender equality and, in particular, equal opportunities in business.

Founding members

ABB – CEMBRA MONEY BANK – CREDIT SUISSE – IKEA – MCKINSEY & COMPANY – PWC – SANDOZ – SIEMENS – SWISS RE – IMPACT

Members

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Sponsors for 8 March 2018 event

LONZA – EY – ACCENTURE

Network partners

BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL WOMEN SWITZERLAND – FEMALE BUSINESS SEMINARS – GLEICHSTELLUNGS CONTROLLING – LEAN IN CHAPTER SWITZERLAND – PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S GROUP – PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S GROUP OF BASEL – PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S NETWORK ZUG & ZÜRICH – THE LEAGUE OF LEADING LADIES – RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITÄT ST.GALLEN – WOMEN IN DIGITAL SWITZERLAND – WECONNECT INTERNATIONAL – INSEAD WOMEN IN BUSINESS – WIN – WOMENWAY – VERBAND FRAUENUNTERNEHMEN

www.advance-women.ch