



On 6 March 2019, more than sixty women working in banking, insurance, government and other sectors met for the second instalment of the SHEconomy series, a panel discussion hosted by the BCCG and the British Embassy in Berlin to mark International Women's Day. Katharine Braddick, Director General of Financial Services at HM Treasury, was joined by Silvia Schmitt-Walgenbach of Barclays and Kathy Keppeln of Deutsche Bank for a lively and impassioned discussion on gender equality in Germany and the UK. What actions are already being taken to promote greater diversity in the sector, and what more can be done?

The focus of the discussion was the Women in Finance Charter, established two years ago by HM Treasury and reflective of the government's goal of achieving gender balance at all levels of the financial services industry, where senior female representation is particularly patchy. Thus far, 300 financial institutions have signed on to the Charter, including Deutsche Bank and Barclays. Signatories must commit to increasing the proportion of senior roles occupied by women in their organisation. Thus far, the average proportion amongst signatories has risen to 36%.

We need to see more and more diversity in senior roles in a wide range of industries and institutions if we are to combat inequality, and the charter is a great contribution to this cause.

Whilst it is encouraging to see actions like this and, for example, the Deutsche Börse's initiative to assist and educate female investors, there are still plenty of headline-grabbing reminders of why there is still much progress to be made on gender diversity. There are, for example, currently more CEOs called Thomas or Michael than there are women in senior roles in German companies. Girls and young women need to be able to see a wide range of role models in these

positions. To put it another way, women in positions of authority need to stop being remarkable.

At the March event, our speakers and audience also explored other ideas that touched on the importance of making practical improvements within organisations, such as allowing flexible working hours and provid-

ing the technology to support this, offering shared parental leave, mentoring and coaching services, use of inclusive language, and senior women supporting junior women in the sector. Crucially, organisations need to implement holistic and complete measures, rather than just the easy ones! Achieving equality is not the job of women, but that of everyone in an organisation.

A huge thank-you to our panellists and everyone who attended for a stimulating and inspiring discussion. We look forward to working together to 'better the balance, better the world'!

Region Berlin/Brandenburg

SHEconomy Lunch: Women in Finance

Ilka Hartmann

Regional Chairman Berlin/Brandenburg