

---FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE---

The Sofia Foundation will gather top media experts in Brussels on 26 October to discuss gender equality in newsrooms and news products

The conference, organised in a media partnership with France24, will explore gender equality and representation with women professionals and senior representatives of major media outlets through discussions, voice coaching and flamenco

Brussels, October 10th 2016 - The Sofia Foundation will gather researchers, decision-makers, professional women, newsmakers and programme directors from major newspapers and news broadcasts including the **Flemish Radio and Television Broadcasting Organisation (VRT), France 24, Süddeutsche Zeitung, BBC, and Bloomberg**, for the full-day conference "Accelerate: Women in Media 2.0: Amplify the voice of female experts" on Wednesday October 26th 2016, to explore the theme of gender equality in newsrooms and news products.

Keynote speakers Nanette Braun, Chief of Communications and Advocacy at UN Women, and Robert Baker, Senior Partner at Mercer, Board Member of Professional Women's Network Global will address the audience during the morning plenary session. In the afternoon workshops, voice coach Sabine Vandebroek will teach participants how to charm audiences by using only the tone of voice. Luisa Castellanos, flamenco choreographer and dancer, will use techniques inspired by this traditional dance to infuse confidence in women in newsrooms and beyond. Françoise Goffinet, expert at the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, will facilitate a discussion on female leadership on non-profit organisations.

While in the 21st century women shape a wide range of disciplines and industries, research shows that women experts are largely underrepresented in media. Across the world, women still only make up 24% of the persons heard, read about or seen in newspapers, on-screen and on-air («Global Media Monitoring Report, 2015 Edition»; European Institute for Gender Equality, 2013). This means that the points of view and expertise of 51% of the population are not represented on equal footing.

"Not only is balanced news reporting key for gender equality and women's empowerment. We actually need diversity of voices and fresh perspectives in the information media to understand our increasingly complex societal, political and scientific debates, and help the media to remain relevant for their multiple audiences" Claudia Ritter, President of the Sofia Foundation stated.

This conference seeks to redress the balance and go from newsroom reality, where women's presence is hindered by multiple factors, to newsroom transformation, where balanced leadership can lead to equality in reporting. Accelerate 2.0 is part of string of events, like TedxWomen Brussels on 28 October, that seeks to increase the visibility of women as decision makers, opinion leaders, and experts in their fields and an opportunity to gather top-level players to shape the newsrooms and reporting that reflect the knowledge of professional women around the world.

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For more information and media accreditations: (Download the full programme [here](#))

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Photo opportunities : Participants using their voice or flamenco dance techniques to acquire more confidence in their everyday professional interactions (14h30-16h); Nanette Braun, Chief of Communications and Advocacy at UN Women (estimated 09h30), and Robert Baker, Senior Business leader advocating gender equality, and active Board Member of PWN Global (estimated 12h45).

Note to editors:

Gender equality in the media: background information

«Decades of research – industry and academic – that confirm the appallingly low presence of women in senior media management and editorial positions, and the poor, stereotypical representation of women in the news. For example, research conducted by the **Who Makes the News** project shows that women constitute a mere 24% of news sources. And a global study by the **International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF)** shows that women make up only 36% of reporters and a quarter of media decision-makers. Other studies have revealed a growing gender gap in access to, and ownership of, online platforms». *See Julie Posetti’s blogposts on the website of the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers by clicking [here](#) and [here](#).*

About the conference organiser: The Sofia Foundation

The Sofia Foundation is a non-profit organisation headquartered in Brussels. We help accelerate women’s participation in economic, political and social governance across Europe. Our objective is twofold: first, to complement EU action engaging accomplished women leaders on Boards of organisations; and, second, to promote women as experts in the information media. The Sofia Foundation leads the EU-funded project ACCELERATE! The foundation hosted their “Women in Media” [kick-off conference](#) in Brussels on 8 April 2016.

About the Accelerate! Project

www.sofia-accelerate.eu // <http://www.sofia-accelerate.eu/event-2165153>

Accelerate! (2014 – 2016) supports the acceleration women’s engagement in economic governance and as experts in the media. Our project partners are non-profit organisations from six EU member states: Belgium, France, Italy, Poland, Portugal, and Slovenia. Our project receives co-funding from the European Commission. To achieve our objectives, we also collaborate with the European Institute for Gender Equality (Vilnius), the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men (Brussels), the European Women’s Lobby, the Council of Europe, UN Women, and the Global Alliance for Media and Gender (GAMAG), as well as professional women’s networks including Professional Women International (PWI) Brussels, Professional Women’s Network Global, Cercle Olympe, the Brussels LeanIn Circle, and Deutsche Juristinnenbund.



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