

IT IS BEING HELD UNTIL 6 MARCH AT DFACTORY BARCELONA

BWAW advocates for the responsibility of everyone to advance towards gender equality

- The Undersecretary of Finance of the Government of Spain, Lidia Sánchez, presided over the opening ceremony of the 5th edition of BWAW, which also included the participation of the President of the Barcelona Provincial Council, Lluïsa Moret; the Deputy Mayor of the Barcelona City Council, Maria Eugènia Gay; the Secretary General of the Department of Equality and Feminism of the Government of Catalonia, Sonia Guerra; the President of the Chamber of Commerce of Spain and the Incyde Foundation, José Luis Bonet; the State's Special Delegate in the CZFB, Pere Navarro, and the Director General of the CZFB, Blanca Sorigué.
- Organised by the Consorci de la Zona Franca de Barcelona, this flagship event aimed at advancing real equality in the business sector features 71 speakers and a total of 15 sessions in this edition.

Barcelona, 5 March 2025.- The fifth edition of the **Barcelona Woman Acceleration Week (BWAW)** has started today, establishing itself as a **flagship event for equality in the business sector**. Today's session highlighted the challenges that society and the business environment face in accelerating towards real parity in key sectors of the economy.

The opening act of BWAW was presided over by the Undersecretary of Finance of the Government of Spain, **Lidia Sánchez**, who was accompanied by the President of the Barcelona Provincial Council, **Lluïsa Moret**; the Deputy Mayor of the Barcelona City Council, **Maria Eugènia Gay**; the Secretary General of the Department of Equality and Feminism of the Government of Catalonia, **Sonia Guerra**; the President of the Chamber of Commerce of Spain and the Incyde Foundation, **José Luis Bonet**; the State's Special Delegate in the CZFB, **Pere Navarro**, and the Director General of the CZFB, **Blanca Sorigué**.

Precisely, **Blanca Sorigué** asserted during her speech that ***"BWAW is an event for everyone: men and women have challenges to work on in order to advance towards gender equality in the business sector of any area of activity, whether it be health, culture, art, engineering, legal, or corporate. At the CZFB, we set out to make things happen, and here we are: celebrating the fifth edition of BWAW, with the Women's***

Council of the ZF created, and with it, further promoting the initiative Feel the ZF Power”.

Lidia Sanchez, Undersecretary of Finance and Public Function of the Government of Spain, stated that **“Currently, 73% of Spanish companies do not have women on their boards of directors. Furthermore, the gender pay gap persists, with 57% of those earning the minimum wage being women, and they receive, on average, €500 less in pension per month compared to men. To survive in a complex world, we can only do so with this commitment to gender equality, because only in this way will we be more competitive and effective, and set an example”.**

For her part, **Lluïsa Moret**, President of the Barcelona Provincial Council, highlighted that **“gender inequality remains a reality in all areas of life. We have been advocating for equality for centuries, but even today, discrimination persists that limits women's progress. Equality cannot be an isolated effort; it must be a collective commitment that generates inclusive and sustainable ecosystems. Only then will we move towards a more equitable, competitive, and effective society”.**

Meanwhile, **Sonia Guerra**, Secretary General of the Department of Equality and Feminism of the Government of Catalonia, stated that **“the dream gap is the distance between what a young girl thinks she can become and what she can actually become, and from the Government of Catalonia, we work to close this gap so that today's girls, who are tomorrow's women, can and will be able to dream. That is why today we have approved in the Government 50 cross-departmental measures to bring about effective and real equality between women and men”.**

José Luis Bonet, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Spain and the Incyde Foundation, explained: **“The Business Climate Study conducted by the Chamber of Spain shows that in more than half of companies, women occupy only 20% of management positions. The reasons cited for this absence of women in executive roles are varied. 47.7% of companies justify it by the lack of reconciliation measures; 20.6% of companies point to the underrepresentation of women in key sectors such as engineering, finance, and technology, and 18% cite voluntary resignations due to social and cultural biases. These data highlight the need to continue working from the business sector to promote not only the full integration of women into the workforce but also equal opportunities when it comes to occupying management positions and woman into the labour market, but also equality of opportunities when it comes to filling management positions and promoting entrepreneurship”.**

And, to conclude, **Pere Navarro**, Special Delegate of the State in the CZFB, stated: **“Equality is not exclusively a women's issue, it is a fundamental pillar for the development of the whole of society. If we want to build a fairer and more equitable future, it is essential that we advocate for the role of women in all areas, especially in the economy and industry, a sector where men are predominant. We cannot afford to advance**

technologically if we do not also advance in equal opportunities. Digital transformation and the new economy are essential for generating social progress, but their true impact only materialises when they are accompanied by a society that guarantees equity for all people”.

The transformative role of administrations

Once the inauguration was over, the different presentations began, which will take place **throughout today until Thursday, 6th March with 71 high-level speakers**. Today's session started with the **BPolicies** vertical and the presentation '*Policies for Equality: The Transformative Role of Administrations*' moderated by **Pere Navarro**, Special Delegate of the State in the CZFB, and the panel: **Mireia Cammany**, Vice President of PIMEC and Deputy General Manager at EPI Industries family of companies; **Marta Farrés**, Mayor of Sabadell City Council; **Ester Pujol**, Director of Social and Economic Development at the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB); **Carles Ruiz**, President of Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya, and **Ana María Sánchez**, Head of the 7th Legal Section 'Northeast' in the Legal Advisory Office of the Spanish Army.

To provide context in the armed forces sector, the first attempt to include a woman in the Spanish Air Force was in 1987; that is to say, we have only had 37 years of female presence in the Spanish armed forces. In summary, both public administrations and private companies need to implement equality plans and promote the participation of women in the political sector, **empowering women in both formal and informal circles**, thus reclaiming their role in the political and business sphere.

The genderless legal talent

Secondly, the BWAW focused on **BLegal** and the presentation '*Legal Talent Knows No Gender*' moderated by **Cristina Ozores**, Chief State Attorney in the Autonomous Community of Catalonia in the General State Legal Service and the speakers; **Laura de Rivera**, Director of Legal Advisory at CaixaBank; **Daniel I. Ripley**, Managing Partner at Uría Menéndez, and **Anna Viñas**, Director of Legal Advisory at Wallapop.

This session emphasised the importance of training in STEM careers, having knowledge of the current digital and technological world, but also seeking professionals with well-developed soft skills. According to UNESCO, **women only represent 33% of professionals trained in STEM careers**, indicating that it is necessary to seek talent, but it is also important to retain it.

The need for inclusive education

The day progressed with the **BEducation** panel '*Building Inclusive Education*', moderated by **Blanca Sorigué**, General Director of the CZFB and featuring distinguished professionals from the educational field: **Josefina Antonijuan**, Vice-Rector for Social Responsibility and Equality

at the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya – Barcelona Tech; **Jordi Díaz**, Dean and General Director at EADA Business School Barcelona; **Àngels Fitó**, Rector at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC); **Laia Pemán**, Director at Aula Escola Europea, and **Neus Pons**, Managing Director at Fundació BCN Formació Professional.

The session highlighted the importance of having an open mindset in all phases of current education and, above all, taking into account the needs of all professional activity sectors. Technology, the individual orientation of each student, and the initiatives of the teaching staff are crucial for promoting inclusion, diversity, and the proper training of new generations. Moreover, **women leading projects in the educational field encourage public-private collaboration and participation between institutions**, and this is a positive indicator of the country's GDP.

This afternoon will feature the last presentation of the day in the **BYoung** vertical '*Connecting Dreams: The Power of Young Entrepreneurs*'. Led by **Juan Castilla**, CEO and co-founder of Talent Factory, and with the panel: **Noah Tamaral**, elite athlete and current European Wakeboard Runner-up of the Spanish Water Ski and Wakeboard Federation; **Marta Hernández**, co-founder of Sorellas The Brand; **Carla Tarrés**, Executive Director and co-founder at Hanaley and **Nora Vallcorba**, founder of Nora Real Food.

Tomorrow's event, on **5th March**, will feature an address by the Secretary of State for Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence, **María González Veracruz**, at **9:30 am**. Following this, there will be round table discussions dedicated to equal entrepreneurship, culture as a platform to promote gender equality, emerging talent, innovation with a gender perspective, and the leadership of those international associations that transcend borders.

About the Consorci de la Zona Franca de Barcelona

The Consorci de la Zona Franca de Barcelona is a public company that acts as a driver for the technological and industrial development by providing support to companies in their transition to the digital age. Boosts innovation through the 3D Incubator and Logistics 4.0 Incubator; promotes the transformation of Industry 4.0 from the DFactory Barcelona technology hub and connects the new economy and its key socio-economic sectors. It organises congresses of economic interest for Barcelona, such as the largest logistics trade fair in Spain and Southern Europe, the SIL, as well as major benchmark events with an innovative format such as the Barcelona New Economy Week (BNEW) or the Barcelona Woman Acceleration Week (BWAW).

Its plenary has representatives from the Spanish government, the Generalitat of Catalonia, the Barcelona City Council, and the main economic entities of the city.

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