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Board Diversity in Greece: A Comparative Analysis of Female Presence, Tenure, and Age

In the evolving landscape of global business, the composition of corporate boards has emerged as a significant factor influencing firms' governance strategy and sustainability. Amidst this shift, board diversity has attracted significant attention worldwide for its potential to enrich decision-making processes and enhance corporate performance. This growing recognition of board diversity as a critical factor in corporate governance has led to increased efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in the boardroom.

Board diversity encompasses a wide range of dimensions, including but not limited to gender, age, ethnicity, skills, professional background, expertise, and tenure, all of which contribute to the richness of perspectives and decision-making processes within the boardroom.

Within this broad framework, this report focuses specifically on three key domains: female presence on boards, tenure, and age, examining their trends and implications for corporate governance in Greece and beyond.

More specifically, this report presents board diversity trends across Greek firms and compares Greece's progress to that of other European countries and global averages. By examining key metrics, such as the presence of

women on boards, the age, and the tenure of directors, we aim to paint a comprehensive picture of the current landscape and identify areas where further progress is needed.

The importance of board diversity extends beyond mere representation; it is about leveraging a broad spectrum of perspectives and skills to promote innovative thinking and resilient strategies. Diverse boards are better equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern business environment, address stakeholder concerns, and meet the challenges of sustainability and social responsibility. As companies face increased scrutiny from investors, regulators, and the public, the push for more inclusive boards reflects a broader recognition of diversity as an incentive for governance excellence and ethical leadership.

Gender diversity has been at the forefront of discussions on board composition. The presence of women on boards is not just a matter of equity; it is crucial for introducing varied perspectives that challenge groupthink and promote a more holistic approach to governance and risk management. Despite progress in some regions, the global corporate landscape still exhibits significant gaps in female presence on boards, highlighting the need for further efforts to achieve greater balance.

Moreover, director **tenure**, as a component of board diversity, offers insights into the stability and institutional knowledge within corporate boards. While long tenures can signify deep

familiarity with the company's operations and culture, they also raise questions about board renewal and the infusion of fresh perspectives. Conversely, shorter tenures might indicate a dynamic board environment but can also suggest challenges in maintaining continuity and strategic focus. This report analyses tenure trends to assess their implications for board effectiveness and adaptability in an ever-changing business landscape.

Similarly, the **age** of board members reveals important dynamics about generational diversity and its influence on corporate governance. Age diversity can bridge the gap between traditional business practices and the innovative approaches required to thrive in today's digital economy. By combining the wisdom of experience with the agility and 'tech-savviness' of younger generations, companies can advance a more adaptable and forward-thinking governance culture.

This report aims to assess the current state of board diversity in Greece by analysing the trends in female presence, tenure, and age on Greek corporate boards and comparing them to European Union and global benchmarks. Through this analysis, we seek to offer insights for companies striving to enhance their governance structures and for policymakers aiming to promote a more inclusive and equitable corporate environment.

Embracing board diversity in its various forms is not just a matter of social responsibility but a strategic imperative for driving corporate

success and long-term sustainability. This report serves as a foundation for understanding the progress made and the challenges that lie ahead in the path towards more diverse, dynamic, and effective corporate governance in Greece and beyond.

Main findings

To examine the diversity characteristics of boardrooms around the world, we draw upon two datasets. For the Greek market, we utilise mainly proprietary data from the Hellenic Observatory of Corporate Governance (HOCG), while for European and global firms, we derive data through the BoardEx database (BoardEx, 2024). Our sample period spans from 2009 to 2022 and encompasses 36,344 firms across 152 countries.

As presented in **Table 1**, our sample includes 78 Greek firms with 672 firm-year observations, 8,898 European firms with 64,075 firm-year observations, and 27,368 global firms with 179,292 firm-year observations.

Female Board Presence

Figure 1 illustrates the progress made in female presence on corporate boards in Greece between 2009 and 2022. The data, collected by HOCG, reveals a gradual increase in the percentage of women on Greek boards over the 14-year period. In 2009, only 11% of board members in Greece were women. However, by 2019, this figure had more than

doubled, reaching 24.6%. Notably, the percentage of female board members remained relatively stable from 2019 to 2022, hovering around 25% in line with the provisions of the Greek Law (4706/2020).

Despite this significant improvement, it is important to note that the percentage of female board members in Greece still lags behind the EU average. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality, in 2022, the average percentage of women on boards across the European Union was 32.2%. This suggests that while Greece has made notable progress in promoting gender diversity on corporate boards, there is still room for further improvement to align with international standards and the recent European Women on Boards Directive (2022/2381).

The data also highlights a significant gender disparity in Greek boardrooms throughout the observed period. The percentage of male board members consistently remained above 75%, reaching as high as 89% in 2009. Although the gap has narrowed in recent years, with male presence decreasing to 75% in 2022, the underrepresentation of women on Greek corporate boards remains a pressing issue.

Directors' Tenure

Figure 2a presents the average tenure of board members in Greece compared to the European Union (EU) and global averages from 2009 to 2022. The data reveals that the average tenure

of directors in Greece has fluctuated over the years, with a notable increase in the mid-2010s followed by a slight decline in recent years. In 2022, the average tenure of board members in Greece was 5.12 years, higher than both the EU average of 4.36 years and the global average of 4.75 years (source: BoardEx).

However, when examining the tenure trends by gender, some striking differences emerge. **Figure 2b** illustrates the average tenure of female board members in Greece, the EU, and globally over the same period. The data shows that female directors in Greece have consistently had shorter tenures compared to their EU and global counterparts. In 2022, the average tenure of female board members in Greece was 2.45 years, significantly lower than the EU average of 3.5 years and the global average of 3.66 years.

This relatively short tenure of female directors in Greece raises questions about the factors contributing to the higher turnover rate. It may suggest that Greek companies are actively seeking to refresh their boards and bring in new perspectives, or it could indicate challenges in retaining female talent at the board level.

In contrast, **Figure 2c** presents the average tenure of male board members in Greece, the EU, and globally. The data reveals that male directors in Greece have consistently had longer tenures compared to their female counterparts and have also exceeded the EU

and global averages for most of the observed period. In 2022, the average tenure of male board members in Greece was 5.57 years, significantly higher than the EU average of 4.62 years and the global average of 5 years.

The longer tenure of male directors in Greece suggests a higher level of stability and continuity within the male cohort of corporate boards. This could be attributed to various factors, such as a more established network of male directors, a preference for experienced board members, or a slower rate of board refreshment among male directors.

The discrepancy in tenure between female and male board members in Greece highlights the need for further efforts to promote gender diversity and inclusion at the board level. Encouraging longer tenures for female directors could help foster a more stable and experienced cohort of women leaders, enabling them to make more significant contributions to corporate governance and decision-making processes.

Directors' Age

Figure 3a presents the average age of board members in Greece compared to the European Union and global averages from 2009 to 2022. The data reveals a steady increase in the average age of board members across all three categories over the 14-year period. In 2022, the average age of board members in Greece was 61.4 years, higher than the EU average of

58.2 years and the global average of 59.8 years (source: BoardEx).

However, when examining directors' age by gender, we observe some notable differences. **Figure 3b** illustrates the average age of female board members in Greece, the EU, and globally over the same period. The data reveals a nuanced trajectory, where the average age of female board members in Greece gradually increases, reflecting a broader trend. Specifically, the data indicates an increase from an average age of approximately 49 years in 2009 to over 55 years by 2022. This trend is consistent with the global and European averages, albeit Greek female board members tend to be slightly younger on average.

The lower average age of female directors in Greece could be attributed to various factors. It may suggest that Greek companies are actively seeking younger female talent to bring fresh perspectives and innovative ideas to their boards. Additionally, it could indicate that women are being appointed to board positions earlier in their careers compared to their international counterparts. However, it is important to consider the potential implications of this trend. While younger directors can bring new insights and energy to the boardroom, it is equally crucial to have a balance of experience and expertise. Boards should strive to have a diverse mix of ages to ensure a well-rounded perspective and effective decision-making.

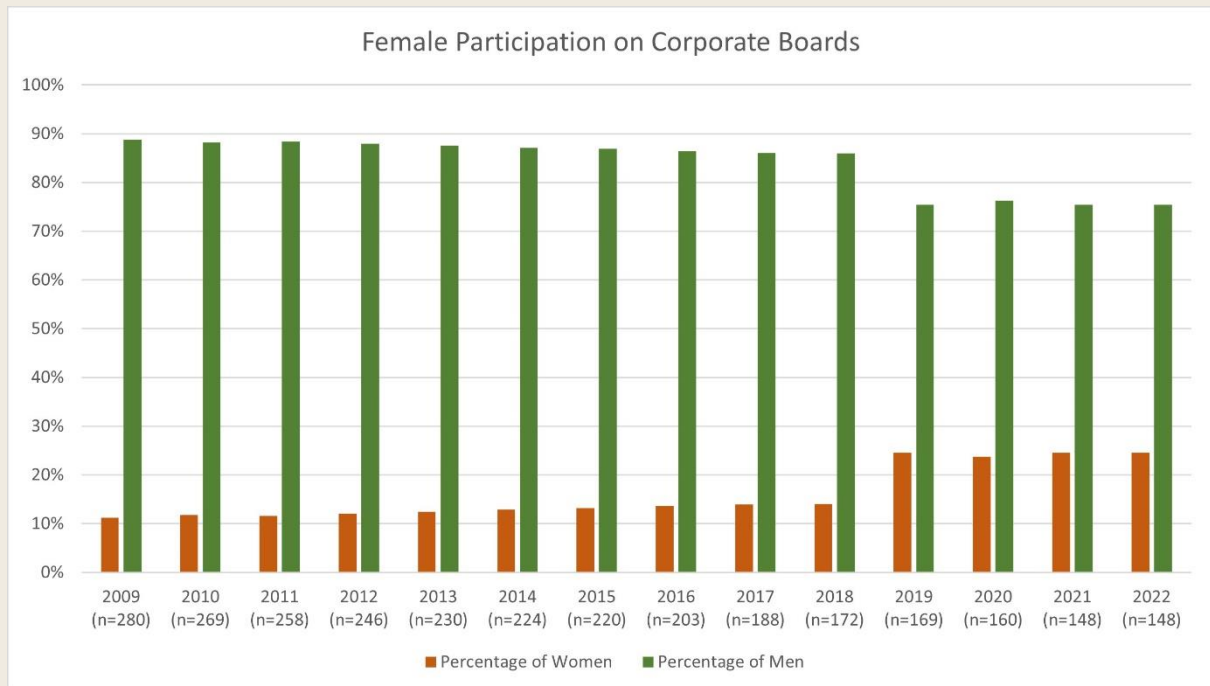
In contrast, **Figure 3c** presents the average age of male board members in Greece, the EU, and globally. The data shows that male directors in Greece have consistently been older than their female counterparts and have also significantly exceeded the EU and global averages throughout the observed period. For example, in 2022, the average age of male board members in Greece was 62.4 years, higher than the EU average of 59.4 years and the global average of 60.7 years. The higher average age of male directors in Greece may reflect a preference for experienced professionals in board positions. It could also suggest a slower rate of board refreshment among male directors, with longer tenures contributing to a higher average age.

The age gap between female and male board members in Greece highlights the need for a more balanced age distribution across genders. While experience is undoubtedly valuable, it is important to ensure that boards have a diverse mix of ages and perspectives to encourage innovation, adaptability, and effective governance. Furthermore, the higher average age of male directors compared to international averages may raise concerns about succession planning and the need to develop a diverse pipeline of younger talent for future board positions.

Table 1: Sample Composition

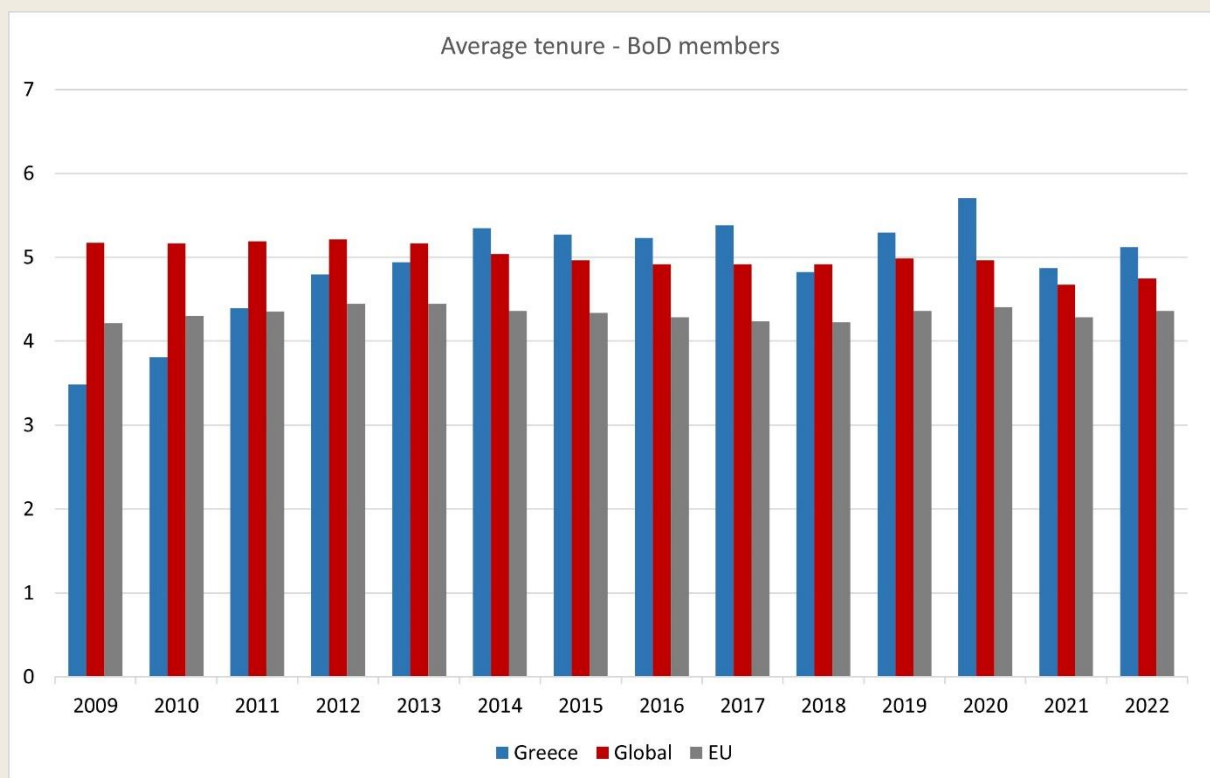
| Region | Firms | Firm-Year Observations | Percentage |
|--------|--------|------------------------|------------|
| Greece | 78 | 672 | 0.28% |
| EU | 8,898 | 64,075 | 26.26% |
| Global | 27,368 | 179,292 | 73.47% |
| Total | 36,344 | 244,039 | 100% |

Figure 1: Female Presence on Corporate Boards in Greece between 2009 and 2022 (numbers of firms in parentheses)



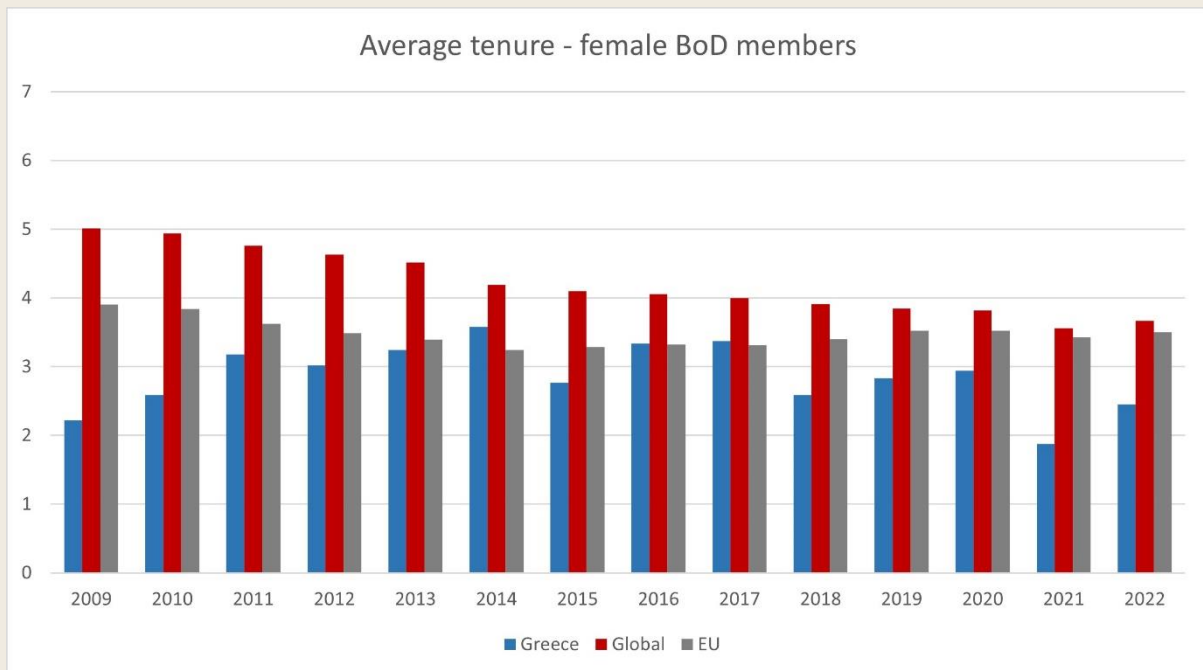
Source: Hellenic Observatory of Corporate Governance (HOCG)

Figure 2a: Average tenure (years) of board members in Greece, the EU, and globally (2009-2022)



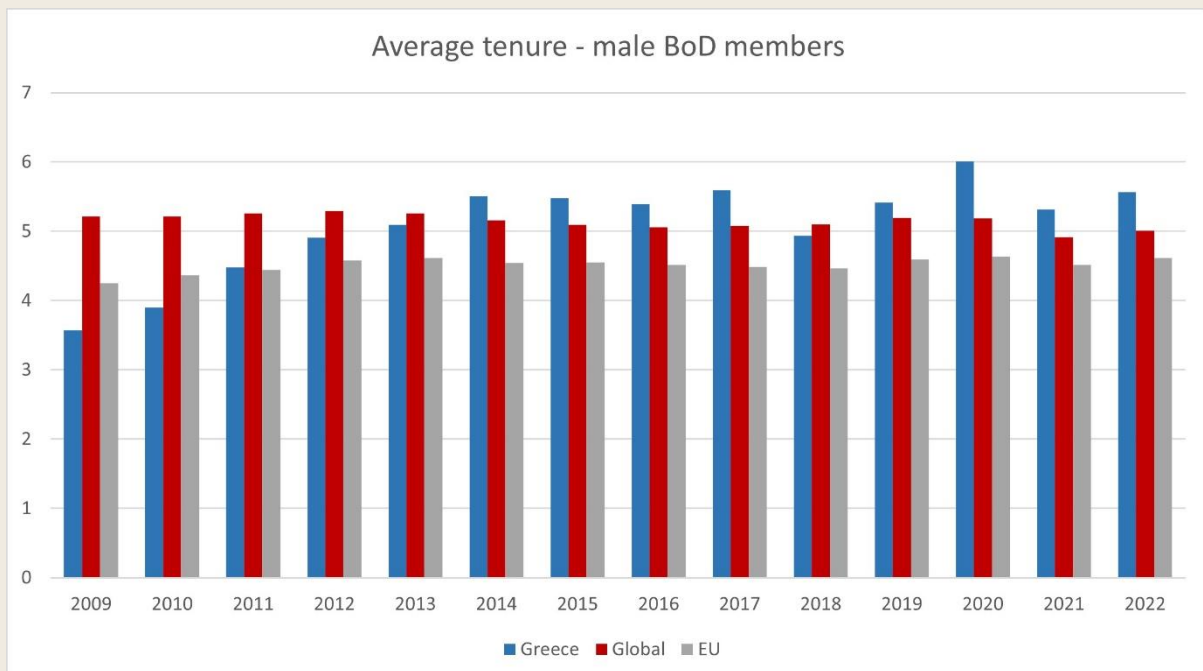
Source: BoardEx

Figure 2b: Average tenure (years) of female board members in Greece, the EU, and globally (2009-2022)



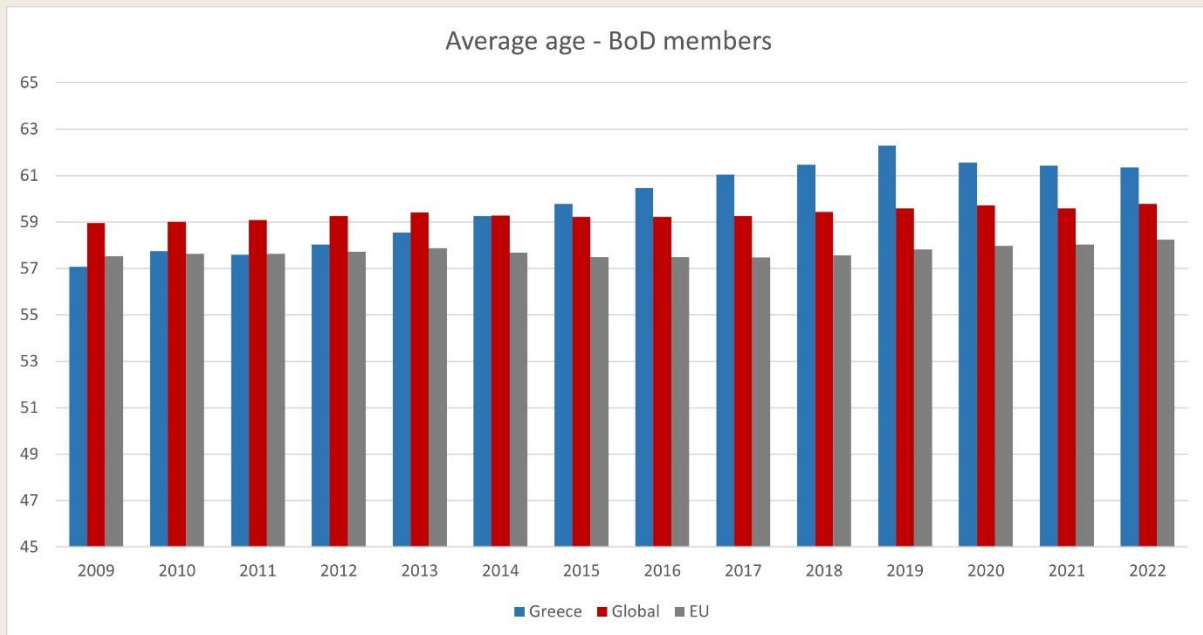
Source: BoardEx

Figure 2c: Average tenure (years) of male board members in Greece, the EU, and globally (2009-2022)



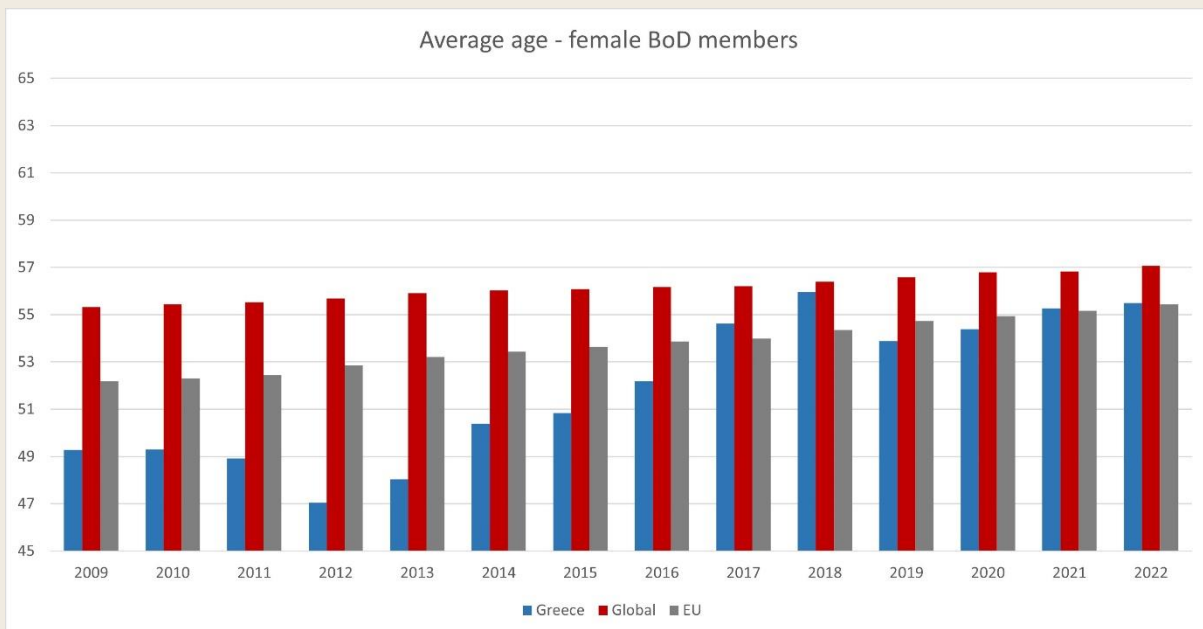
Source: BoardEx

Figure 3a: Average age of board members in Greece, the EU, and globally (2009-2022)



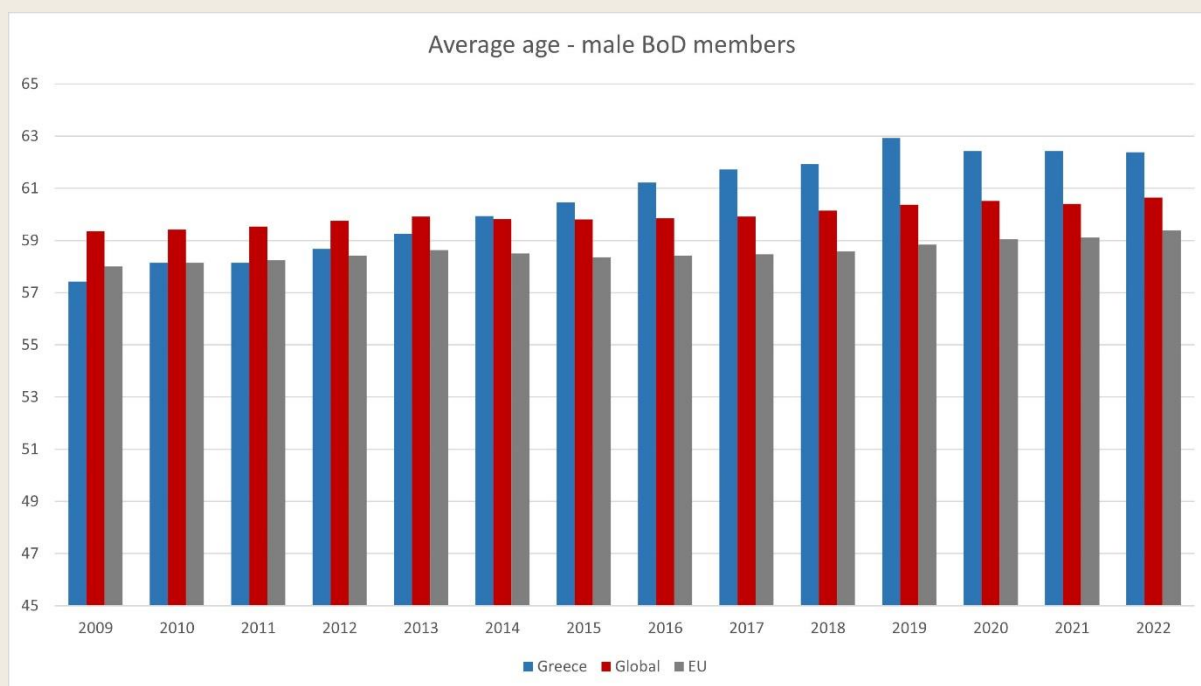
Source: BoardEx

Figure 3b: Average age of female board members in Greece, the EU, and globally (2009-2022)



Source: BoardEx

Figure 3c: Average age of male board members in Greece, the EU, and globally (2009-2022)



Source: BoardEx

Summary

This report provides an analysis of board diversity in Greece, focusing on female presence on boards, tenure, and age of directors. By examining data from 2009 to 2022 and comparing Greek trends to European Union and global averages, the report offers insights into the progress made and the challenges that remain in achieving diverse and inclusive corporate governance.

The findings reveal a gradual increase in female presence on Greek corporate boards, with the percentage of women directors more than doubling from 11% in 2009 to 25% in 2022. Despite this progress, Greece still lags behind the EU average, highlighting the need

for further efforts to promote gender parity in the boardroom.

The analysis of board tenure reveals a significant discrepancy between male and female directors in Greece. Female board members have consistently shorter tenures compared to their male counterparts and fall below the EU and global averages. This disparity raises questions about factors contributing to higher turnover rates among women directors and underscores the importance of promoting an inclusive environment that encourages longer tenures for women leaders.

In terms of directors' age, the report finds that while the overall average age of board members in Greece is slightly higher than EU and global averages, there are notable

differences when examining the data by gender. Female board members in Greece tend to be younger than their international counterparts, while male directors are significantly older and exceed EU and global averages. This age gap highlights the need for a more balanced representation of different generations on corporate boards to drive innovation, adaptability, and effective governance.

Overall, as the global business landscape continues to evolve, the findings of this report highlight the importance of prioritising board diversity as a strategic imperative. Still, it is important to recognise that board diversity extends beyond mere female presence on boards. While increasing the representation of

women on corporate boards is a crucial step towards gender equality, it is not the only factor that matters. True diversity and inclusion require a holistic approach that considers various aspects of gender equality in the boardroom. This includes ensuring that women hold positions of power and influence, such as CEO roles, board chair positions, and key committee memberships. Additionally, it is essential to address the gender pay gap and ensure that women receive fair and equitable remuneration for their contributions. By taking a comprehensive approach to gender diversity and addressing these multiple facets, companies can create a more inclusive and equitable environment that leverages the full potential of their diverse talent.

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