

SHEARMAN & STERLING

NEWS & EVENTS

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SHEARMAN & STERLING ADVISES ON THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES IN SUPPLY CHAINS UNDER FRENCH AND EU LAW

As part of the firm's diversity and inclusion program, Shearman & Sterling advises [WEConnect International](#) (WEConnect), a global network that connects women-owned businesses to member buyers around the world in support of women-owned businesses' success in international supply chains.

Through a dedicated database, WEConnect hosts the profiles of women-owned businesses that its member buyers may consider as potential suppliers. WEConnect's "Women-owned businesses" are companies that either self-register for free on WEConnect's website or are certified as a "Women's Business Enterprise" by WEConnect, on conditions that include being independent and at least 51 percent owned, managed and controlled by women.

Shearman & Sterling assessed how WEConnect's platform could be used in France by companies seeking to receive commercial tenders from women-owned businesses. In particular, we examined prospective buyers' concern as to whether the French and European legal frameworks prohibit private entities in France and/or otherwise subject to French law from using the online database developed by WEConnect. The analysis shows that neither French law nor EU law prohibits the use of WEConnect's database and that its use is not in and of itself discriminatory. It studies elected examples of recent national, regional and international initiatives aimed at promoting female entrepreneurship.

Detailed findings were presented by partner Yas Banifatemi (Paris- International Arbitration) at two roundtables co-organized by the Government of Canada, the *Réseau des Femmes d'affaires du Québec* and WEConnect International in Paris on June 13, 2019 and January 30, 2020. Shearman & Sterling will continue to closely monitor developments in this area on a worldwide basis.

WEConnect and Shearman & Sterling have started sharing the analysis and the findings with partner companies. If you are a company and interested in the above, please contact [Yas Banifatemi](#), Shearman & Sterling's partner who led the project.

The team also includes associates Chloé Vialard (Singapore- International Arbitration), Peter Petrov, Matthew Rogier, Georgios Andriotis, Andrés Lema-Sanz Guerrero and Paschalis Paschalidis (all Paris- International Arbitration) .

This work is part of our Paris office's Shearman#Elles initiative for women empowerment, which includes legal and policy work to support equality between women and men and to promote equal opportunities for all.

The Team

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PRACTICES

International Arbitration

REGIONAL EXPERIENCE

Europe

KEY ISSUES

Environmental, Social and
Governance (ESG)

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