

# Progression of women in the Spanish legal sector

**Guillermina Ester**

Perez-Llorca, Madrid  
gester@perezllorca.com

**Marina Sabido**

Perez-Llorca, Madrid  
msabido@perezllorca.com

In Spain, only 15 per cent of leading law firms' partners are women. It is undeniable that there is a long way to go in achieving equality between men and women's careers as lawyers. However, we should not forget that the first Spanish woman to become a member of a bar association happened in 1922; it seems like only yesterday.

The integration of women into the legal profession took place after men started to work in this sector, and, in addition to that, women have historically faced and overcome many social and cultural barriers in order for their effort and talent to be recognised.

Despite the fact that the goal of achieving equality is still a long way off, we should nevertheless be aware of the important progress and changes that are taking place in the legal sector, not only in terms of strengthening female lawyers' aptitude and abilities, but also in order to keep working in the right direction.

Today, 44 per cent of lawyers in Spain are women, which is a significant percentage given that 15 years ago female lawyers accounted for only one-third of lawyers. With regard to lawyers with less than five years of experience, we find the number of female lawyers exceeds 50 per cent, which means that new generations are changing the legal sector. Moreover, there are more women than men graduating law school. This is in part due to the fact that women are achieving higher grades than men (on average) and also because female candidates have certain abilities and strengths which are attractive not only to the legal profession, but also to a law firm.

After several years in the legal profession, women deal with a series of obstacles that stand in the way of their professional development in a law firm. Many articles have been written on women and the so-called 'glass ceiling'. We cannot deny that the glass ceiling does exist, but we also cannot ignore the emergence of new social and cultural elements that are facilitating and encouraging women's professional development. The glass ceiling will not disappear through any one single event but with the creation

and consolidation of an environment that will make that ceiling disappear – and that environment is now being created.

In achieving this objective, many law firms are changing their structures and the conventional concept that the legal sector used to have about the professional career of a lawyer. In addition, now that the legal sector has moved away from the traditional concept of a lawyer as a solitary worker in favour of a lawyer working as a member of a team, any woman is able to lead an organisation with the indispensable support of her team and an adequate delegation of work.

It is also worth highlighting that in Spain there has traditionally been a culture of presenteeism, namely staying longer hours than you need to, which has been largely overcome. Unlike before, female lawyers now have the opportunity to benefit from a good work-life balance in order to organise their personal and professional lives, without automatically having an adverse impact on their professional development. Moreover, technological developments and progress in communications have provided fundamental tools in order to help employees demonstrate that there are multiple ways of working effectively and being fully committed to an organisation.

Female lawyers, as well as male lawyers, have the necessary abilities to fight for their professional progression and reach the goals they set themselves. This goal is not only possible but also necessary in order that a law firm can benefit from a female lawyers' talent.

Most of the institutions that represent the Spanish legal sector are a clear illustration of the changes that are taking place, and of the need to develop female lawyers' leadership. For the first time in Spanish history, a woman is leading Spain's General Bar Council. Moreover, this institution, through its foundation, has created a working group for promoting equality and for strengthening training among members of the legal sector on the grounds of gender. One of its goals is to help address the inequality that exists between men and women in this profession.

In conclusion, despite the fact that we all need to work hard to overcome gender-related differences that still exist in the legal sector, we also need to focus on the

important structural and social changes that are occurring, which are narrowing the mentioned gap and encourage all involved to keep working towards this end.

## Rūta Pumputienė

Ruta Pumputiene Law Firm, Vilnius

ruta.pumputiene@  
arpk.lt

# The future of healthcare: how should policymakers prepare?\*

**T**he world's healthcare systems continue to face major challenges. Therefore, it is sometimes hard to think, speak and be understood when talking about healthcare futurism. However, what seemed impossible a few years ago is now a widely discussed reality, with everyone, including the mainstream media, joining in the conversations about artificial organs, artificial intelligence and human body enhancements on an almost daily basis.

The much talked about 'Fourth Industrial Revolution' will connect the physical, virtual and biological worlds, affecting all areas of the economy and state. The new inventions and technologies this revolution will create will bring with them many ethical, technical and regulatory challenges for policy makers. In order to find the right answers to these challenges, first we have to know what questions to ask.

## Main healthcare tendencies in the future

Many different opinions exist on the subject of where and how healthcare systems will move in the future. However, all prognoses can be grouped into six major areas or tendencies.

### *The first tendency: wearable or implanted medical devices*

These devices can either be worn (such as the widely popular 'Fitbit') or implanted into organs, teeth, jaw etc. The common added value that runs through all of them is a motivation to voluntarily monitor and improve one's health. It is also an important technology for doctors and other healthcare workers, as it will allow easier monitoring of patients' health and treatment.

### *The second tendency: body enhancement or cyborgisation*

Artificially grown organs and body parts printed using 3D printers is already a reality. It is thought that in the future, people will not only use body enhancement techniques in response to illnesses or trauma, but will also do so simply because of a desire to become stronger and/or faster.

### *The third tendency: robotisation*

It is generally thought that nurses will be replaced by robotic assistants in the future. Smaller robots – so-called nanorobots – will also assist doctors and surgeons from within the human body where they will function autonomously, working on such techniques as restoring tissues and monitoring physiological indicators.

### *The fourth tendency: virtualisation*

Virtual medical consultation, diagnostics and even dissection will be possible in the future. Another important area of virtualisation is the scanning of people's neurological information and transferring this data to the cloud, thus possibly fulfilling the sci-fi dream of the eternal life of human consciousness online.

### *The fifth tendency: do-it-yourself type biotechnology, medicine and biomaterials 3D printing*

Healthcare futurists such as Dr Bertalan Mesko believe that biotechnologies are the IT of the 21st century, in terms of decentralisation and eventual accessibility for everyone. It is thought that technological progress in this area will eventually allow